



INKSLINGER

HIGH DESERT BRANCH CWC

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Mission Statement

The California Writer's Club (CWC) shall foster professionalism in writing, promote networking of writers with the writing community, mentor new writers, and provide literary support for writers and the writing community as is appropriate through education and leadership.

Carol's Comments:

Greetings to all members and interested friends:

I am very pleased to report we are coming to the end of another year of successful growth and interesting programs serving the High Desert CWC branch here in Apple Valley. We are excited and anticipating even more in our 2009-2010 year; including our 100 year anniversary of this educational and supportive organization.

For those of you who were able to attend our June meeting, I am sure you enjoyed another informative presentation by the ever popular Mike Foley. We also learned of the ideas and influence he has had on members and their writing. This is just one of the beneficial effects of membership in CWC.

If you owe, but haven't yet paid this coming years dues, we hope you will do so as soon as possible. We think you get a lot of value for your money for an entire year; most especially if you attend as many meetings as possible. We realize everyone leads busy lives and have many demands on their time but if you are serious about writing, this is really important for each of us, individually and as a group. I continue to emphasize the importance of being involved in critique sessions too.

I was pleased to receive more surveys and some written goals but know a lot of you still haven't done so yet. I hope you will turn these in. Your board members discuss these items as we are continually striving to make this branch better than ever. We need each of you to seriously consider what you are contributing to that development. You might be surprised the effect you can have, just by

making the commitment to attend meetings and encourage at least one other person to visit our web site and/or come to a meeting. My challenge continues to each of you to do this.

Please remember you can e-mail or telephone any board member with your concerns and ideas or even talk to us in person. We WANT your input. I am enjoying getting to know each of you a little bit at a time. We look forward to more opportunities to do this, to hear your writing and see some of your articles in the Inkslinger. Whatever your dreams are, they can only occur one step at a time. Are you taking those steps? You might be surprised how your ideas, attitudes and results are affecting someone else. Do you get fired up and more determined when you learn of someone looking for a publisher? How do others learn from disappointments and delays and what can this mean for you? Have you set some realistic goals for yourself this year. Some people make lists, others develop small but attainable goals and if they don't achieve everything they are hoping for, at least they are making some progress. If you haven't developed some system to measure your progress I certainly encourage you to do so. It is important to measure your success also in small accomplishments, not against what someone else has managed to do. Our individuality is what makes us the person we are and also the writer we are or can become. Remember what Mike Foley shared with us, to the effect, we all have many stories within us. If an idea comes to us, it is our choice and responsibility to write that story as only we can. I am looking forward to hearing some of these stories in the coming months. How about you?

Good luck with your many stories, Carol, and thank you for all you've done to help get our group back on a positive path!



BIO CAROL WARREN

By Anne Fowler

Carol Warren, our wonderful fearless President, left Illinois with her family at age ten to settle in Denver, Colorado. But she says her love of literature was launched two years later when they moved to a small suburb where there were few neighbors. Choosing books over TV, she read from dawn to dusk, often hiding under the covers with a flashlight to finish a particularly thrilling story.

Drawn to the service industry, Carol loved her experience as a hospital volunteer Candy Stripper, and was awarded a scholarship in three year registered nursing program. She opted for a one year program that would give her a practical nurses degree instead, in order to marry her husband, Bill. She has never regretted that choice and they will celebrate their forty-fifth anniversary in September.

Bill's career in the military took him all over the world and their growing family all over the U.S. and the family landed in the High Desert in 1968. While Bill was overseas, Carol enrolled at the Victor Valley Community College and subsequently won her degree as a Registered Nurse.

A dedicated reader all of her life, Carol is currently working on three different story lines of her own. Her major focus is on writing about her Hospice experiences during the final thirteen years of her nursing career. She hopes to convey the positive spirit that Hospice offers to persons in the final days of their lives.

BIO BOB ISBILL

By Anne Fowler

Our fabulous Vice President, Bob Isbill, first came to the High Desert in 1972 as a supervisor and trouble shooter for the Hostess/Wonder Bread Corporation. With a B.A. in Psychology and Economics, Bob went to work in 1984 for the Teamsters Union Local 166 as a Business Rep and later as an officer, where he worked as an organizer, negotiator and labor representative until he retired in 1996. The extensive education he garnered during those years prepared him for his occasional part-time role as Mediator for the Small Claims and Unlawful Detainer cases in the San Bernardino court Systems.

Bob's "behind the scenes" work for our High Desert Branch includes putting together our new web page and doing a fantastic job of publicity. It is due in **great** part to his many creative ideas and hard work that our membership has grown incrementally since he joined in January of 2009.

Bob's lifelong love of GOOD movies piqued his interest in determining what made them work, or – in too many cases – not work. He began to read scripts and to look at movies in an analytical way. A class with Michael Hauge – acclaimed script writer and movie maven spurred him on. He began to go to the Show-Biz Expos and Creative Screenwriters Magazine Expos each fall in Los Angeles. He studied memorable scenes from movies and sought out classes and seminars from the "Best of the Best" in the industry. Bob is

"What I like in a good author isn't what he says, but what he whispers."
– Logan Pearsall Smith

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The Dunes

Grains of sand –
scooped into ice-cream hills,
formed by the hand, and breath of
God.

Trickling sands –
small creatures hunt and play,
grateful for the coolness of the night.

Quiet sands –
silence fills the night with
restful peace until the morning comes.

Shifting sands –
Dunes, pale in the moonlight,
waiting the rising of the sun.

by Suzanne Holbrook-Brumbaugh

currently focusing all his efforts on creating a screenplay the working title is "Lights, Camera, Darkness" and it promises to be a spellbinder.

We are so lucky to have him as part of our group. Many thanks, Bob, for all you continue to do.

PRAISE FOR ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

by Marilyn Ramariz

As you glance through the first pages of a novel it may look like this: Title Page, Other books by that author, Copy rights, Dedication, Acknowledgments, etc. Have you ever wondered who these people are who are being acknowledged?

I assumed they were only people who helped in research, the library clerk, City of Commerce clerk, guide on a tour, etc. And they are all of the above. The exciting thing I learned is that it didn't stop there!

It is also people who volunteer to read your manuscript. You want to set yourself up with a network of people who will read your manuscript to find errors in your story. I was never so happy as when I found out that I didn't have to know everything and I could have people read my manuscript to help me write it . . . it was a tremendous relief!

One person may be good with technical stuff. Someone else may be good with grammar. Another person may pick up on time-line. If you're writing historical fiction novels, another person may pick up on some modern day word or cliché that doesn't work for a historical piece.

This is why it's a good idea, at least for beginners, to set yourself up with a network of people who will read your work. Find two to three people who are willing to network with you. A few people is all you need.

Then you thank them in the acknowledgments. The publishers

always give you a few free books. You give a book to those who have helped you get published.

Find that “someone” who will work with you. Then thank them in your acknowledgments. They deserve it!

**AN ITEM FOR
CONSIDERATION.....**

From - George Robinson

I mentioned a Poetry SIG to one of our members and found the term not familiar. It is simply an acronym for Special Interest Group. This has been used to advantage in several groups I have been involved in over the years.

Though possibly not called that, there is one now in existence the critique group. SWIM has had a very lively Study SIG for more than two years now.

Besides poetry, there might be some interest in a Screen writing, Plays, Character development for Novels, Non Fiction & Essay writing etc. With our rapidly growing membership, this could provide an opportunity for members to delve more deeply into fields that not all members are into. Each member could participate in as many of these as his/her interest and time permits.

Just something to think about.

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KEEPING TABS ON YOUR IDEAS

by Bob Isbill

I know a woman who has often said, “I won’t go out of the house without my jewelry! I feel naked without it.”

You can make your own assumptions about her from that

remark, but that’s how I feel about my pen and note pad.

Not that it’s often I do go out without my little Big Lots tablet that fits in my left rear pocket. I recognize from experience that you never know when you’re going to hear a priceless piece of dialogue, or think of an idea that may have some merit to be worked out later.

The time to snag those thoughts is at that very moment!

If I wait, trusting myself to remember, I will be wrong far too often. Those gems of observation don’t always knock on your awareness again. Maybe never.

Sometimes I use the little pad to jot down a grocery list or something I need to do; sometimes it’s to make note of a movie someone recommends, or a book they liked.

Mostly, though, it’s to capture thoughts that come to me at those magic times when I’m doing something unrelated to creativity. I’m not saying that every single thing I write in those note pads is terrific; no, not at all. However, I have had a few pang of regret for the times that I lost a thought because I didn’t get it down—right away.

For example, one thing I put in my portable journal says, “Immigration problems are like a trip to Disneyland.” That may mean nothing to you, but having written it triggers the mechanism of a theory that reminds me what I was thinking about. And to me it’s a worthwhile concept.

W. Somerset Maugham, one of my favorite writers, was awesomely prolific, and successful. He had the same habit. His notes

were often more detailed and articulate, but it's the same model. He made a note of people discussing a woman who had published a collection of passionate poems that were not about her husband.

Now, just think of this: He used that one little bit of gossip and wrote a story called "The Colonel's Lady" forty years later!

Is there any better reason for keeping your tablet on hand?



FOR SCREEN WRITERS AND MOVIE BUFFS ONLY!

An unusual opportunity has come to our attention through the Creative Screenwriting Magazine's (CSM) solicitation for ideas for articles. People in the movie business, especially free-lance screenwriters trying to break into Hollywood, are their target market. If you have an idea for an article that you think should be included, you can now submit that idea directly to CSM. For complete details, visit <http://creativescreenwriting.com/pitch.an.article.idea.html>

"We are cups, constantly and quietly being filled. The trick is, knowing how to tip ourselves over and let the beautiful stuff out."

– Ray Bradbury

(From this month's issue of Creative Screenwriting)

Bitter Lemon by George Gracyk

She sat down at the bar. Or rather, she slithered up to the elegant chrome bar stool upholstered in black and white slunk –unborn calf. This was one classy joint. She fit in perfectly, looked right at home.

"Gin and tonic with a twist" she purred. The barkeep nodded and turned to his work. I couldn't help but be impressed with her, a stunning woman about my age but way out of my league.

"Another one?" the barman asked me.

"Sure," I replied, "I've got nothing better to do and no place better to go."

"It's on me," she said, "a welcome to the party sort of thing." She knew that I was new here and that I still felt a little out of place.

"Thanks," I said, "Cheers" and lifted my glass. We parlayed a bit of small talk and then she said, "It's late, time to go."

"She was a big time movie star," claimed the barman, "they take it hard when it's over."

"Don't we all," I replied.

I got down from the bar stool OK and reached for my walker. It may have been a mistake to join this exclusive and very expensive retirement home. But I liked her and I'll look for her in the dining room at breakfast. Not many folks show up for breakfast. I liked the way she drank her gin and tonic and the way she sucked on the lemon.

MIKE FOLEY ON WRITING DIALOGUE

By Bob Isbill

Mike Foley, writer, editor, teacher, and past president of the HDCWC, once again held our members and guests enthused and entranced when he taught about “Writing Dialogue” at our June 13, 2009 meeting.

Foley generally has handouts so that his audience can follow along with him when teaching at our meetings, and this time was no exception. “Actions and Viewpoint” and “Spoken Words” were explained. He taught about using action and dialogue.

Mike Foley described a technique of talking to your own characters by using a pen and legal pad and actually asking them for help in writing the scene.

He also covered what not to do, including: (1) being too formal—not using contractions, having an aversion to writing slang and common expressions (2) using dialogue that’s heavy with adverbs (3) or too long (4) or writing dialogue that tries too hard to alter the word, “said”.

“There’s nothing like a good dialogue exchange to really grab readers,” said Foley.

Mike Foley’s closing thought was that there are millions of ideas out there and every one of them is looking for a writer. Stories find you. You’re a writer. You have a choice; you can either pass it on to another writer out there, or you can write it yourself. If it grabs you, you’re a writer and the choice is yours!

Mike Foley’s entire lesson on

“Writing Dialogue” can be heard on an exclusive “pencast” by going to our web site, www.hdcwc.org Events Page.

ROBERT E. BONSON ON “CONTOUR” SOFTWARE

By Bob Isbill

Bob Bonson, an Apple Valley writer and recent member of the High Desert CWC talked about a software program called “Contour” which is put out by Mariner Corporation. He says it’s a program “with an attitude” and is available in Mac or Windows.

They have another program called “Montage” to create, write and submit your script.

Contour is based on 4 questions and 4 archetypes. Who is your main character, what is he trying to do, who is trying to stop him and what happens if he fails?

Bonson cited examples such as “Titanic”, “Star Wars”, and “Incredible Reality?” (One of his own novels)

Archetypes in a character driven novel are: The Orphan, The Wanderer, The Warrior and the Martyr. Your main character may go through the various stages of the archetypes.

Robert E. Bonson recently authored “Creating the Perfect Character” which is a guide to creating a fictional character that is proving popular with novelists.



In our June issue, Suzanne wrote a delightful story about her wedding to Wilbur. Below is a description of the reception that followed.

Sail On, Newlyweds!

THE RECEPTION

By

Suzanne Deboard Holbrook-Brumbaugh

It was over...or was it just beginning? I stood, breathless, hanging onto the arm of my new husband, my mind a whirl. The reception line was beginning to form as the wedding coordinator pushed and pulled me into the proper position for greeting our guests. Fifteen minutes, the coordinator had told us. No more than fifteen minutes. Forty-five minutes later we greeted the last of our guests and collapsed into our seats at the head table. We had planned a duet during the early part of the reception – a song I had written thirteen years previously; a love song that, remarkably, fit *us* to a T. It was us. However, the trio had already begun their mini-concert, and as exhaustion was beginning to set in, we were content to forego our duet and sing it to each other later...

when we could finally take a peaceful breath, a tender moment for ourselves. Sigh...

Soon it was time to cut the cake and toast the toast (not literally). Our theme was 'celebration' and the cake was a lovely continuation of that theme. Dozens, it seemed, of white roses and tiny pastel florets covered the main body of the cake, while two crystal hearts, with white silk roses nestled in lace, rested at the very top. The two sections were separated by eight-inch crystal pillars, two red roses cradling a gardenia in its middle, symbolizing our union, with God at the center of our new life together. Two decorated eight inch hearts, one on either side of the main cake, added to the flavor of this celebration. It wasn't exactly as I had designed it, but lovely just the same. We had decided from the beginning, no "smash-face", so we carefully slipped each other a bite of cake before deferring to the coordinator for what was next to come.

Toast time! As our coordinator poured our glasses of Martinelli's, my 'new' son, and my youngest daughter prepared, and gave, their toasts to we, their parents. Yea! Then it was our turn. My new husband wasn't exactly certain of what he was to do,

and how he was supposed to do it, but being a quick learner, we soon found ourselves with arms entwined, taking care not to spill, as we sipped our drinks. Yummy.

The photographers snapped, the trio sang, an aura of happiness and joy filled the auditorium. Photographer? Oops, we almost forgot. I grabbed my bouquet and headed for my assigned station. As the single ladies gathered, I prepared to toss my bouquet. I remembered the whispered, "throw it my way" from some of the young ladies, but I was determined to be fair and just toss it into the crowd. Besides, how could I tell where anyone was with my back turned? Into the air it sailed. I heard a shriek, and as I turned, Christina, my youngest daughter (and maid of honor), with a grin as big as a Cheshire cat, held the bouquet high in triumph. But no one seemed to mind. After all it was all just part of the game. However, when it came time for the removal of the garter, my love was far too eager, and I found myself saying over and over again, "Not yet... The photographer's not ready." Oh well. What's done is done. He stood, with his back, of course, to the single gentlemen of all ages. Stretching the garter as tightly as he could, he let it go, landing just two feet from our little ring-bearer. In triumph he held up the garter, his grin rivaling his mother's as she hugged him, still holding tightly to the bouquet she had just caught. Who could have known?

At last it was time to go. The car was packed, we said our farewells, and the new love-of-my-life assisted in squeezing me and my tons of satin and lace into our already over-full vehicle. As we waved good-bye we had no way of knowing that the excitement of this wonderful day was not over yet. But that's another story.



Lights, Camera, Darkness

What if you were wrong...? About everything.

When a self-involved screenwriter discovers he is rapidly going blind, he must write the story he most needs to tell with the help of a man who hates everything he stands for.

Nick Christopher, an established writer, is nothing like Abe Washington, an African American tech-savvy ex-convict with gang connections. However, they are tied together by the unbreakable bond of their mutual survival that depends on each other.

In his own way, each is dishonest and not trustworthy. In this buddy "dramedy" about opposites who learn important lessons from one another, Nick and Abe take a journey that will change both of them from the inside out.

"Lights, Camera, Darkness" explores the contrasting worlds of rich and poor, black and white, success and failure and learning to face who you really are, and live with it.

Yet the theme of the story is about only one thing: Control.

This is the premise of Bob Isbill's screenplay that he is writing.

MY COMPUTER, MASTER OR SLAVE?

...by George Robinson

I always thought I wanted to be a writer. Having a bit of a tendency to be more enamored with my opinions than others seemed to be, I assumed they would pay attention if it was put into

writing. (After all, don't we tend to believe more of what we read than what we hear? If its not so, it would not have been written!) Anyhow, if one has a thought, writing it down helps to remember for those like me with a fickle memory. It's truly amazing how such a brilliantly conceived idea can be impossible to recall 30 minutes later, if not put on paper. In my case, this phenomenon did not wait for old age to begin.

One of the greatest problems is that hand writing has always been a laborious chore for me. Not only is my handwriting difficult to read and ugly to view, it is torturous to my hand, my back and my eyes. My grades in school always seemed to be marked down a bit because my teachers were not sure just what I had written and were somewhat put off with the esthetic appearance even when the meaning was clear. They didn't even like the way I sometimes made my "e"s skinny and my "l" fat with the dot halfway between. They seemed to view this a sneaky way around remembering the "l" was before the "e".

There was one thing is school that seemed even worse than handwriting. In high school, I decided to take touch typing so I could dispense with the pens and pencils. That may not have been the most brilliant decision of my life, either. It was the only subject I ever took in school where my grade was just a squeak above failing. I seemed to have dyslectic fingers which often treated the "k" and "k" as interchangeable letters. In case you wonder what all this has to do with my computer, I'm coming to that.

I like to play with phrases and words,

I peck on my keyboard just like all the nerds.

I use fancy fonts to scramble the text,

then add lots of photos and graphics next.

Writing on a computer is much easier than it was the old way. It's easy to erase, correct or rearrange words. Even someone like me with messy handwriting can format a document to look presentable, and the computer can usually correct most of my spelling. (So, it doesn't know the difference between "rite", "write", "right" and "wright", at least it will make "the" from "the".) Where me and it really get into it is when it tries to correct my grammar.

It is a bit like some of my English teachers who at times disliked some of the prepositions I ended my sentences with. That kind of grammatical nit-picking doesn't bother me too much until it gets in the way of what I want to say. I often suffer from the distorted notion that clarity should prevail over form when the two seem incompatible. An example: which is clearer? "If it aint broke, don't fix it." Or, "If it is not malfunctioning, please do not initiate any corrective actions."

Well, I have learned to override most of the senseless corrections the computer tries to make, and keep it in line most of the time. After all, I am a person, it is a machine. The trouble is that about the time I think I have it mastered, it will find some way to throw me a curve. Sometimes it just locks up mute like a stubborn child. No matter what I try, it totally ignores me. Other times it has the temerity to shift the blame. "Your program performed an illegal operation", or "your application is not responding, it may be busy". Listen you dumb machine, I'm busy and I want no sass. Stop blaming everything else and let's get on with it! Well you probably know about how much good that instruction does. I get less response than when I talk to myself, and this dad-blamed newfangled torture machine has me doing that every now and then. I also have a bad habit of sitting down at the computer to write when I really do not have anything worth while to say. That didn't happen often with pen or

pencil for reasons clear from above comments. Why don't I give it up and raise vegetable and flowers instead? I guess I'm just a masochist.

EXPLAINING TO CHILDREN

By Carol Warren

This story about our family occurred when our daughter was about eight years old. Her father was very involved in racing dirt bike motorcycles. This particular weekend he had twisted his ankle and I suggested he soak it in Epsom salt to try to reduce the swelling and stiffness. Wendy was into reading everything she could get her hands on and was watching me intently as I prepared the soak for her dad.

She was apparently reading the back of the box, when she suddenly asked, "Mom, what's a cathartic?" She already knew Dad was soaking his ankle. I tried to think of an explanation to describe the effects. I was just starting to tell her that sometimes people became what was called constipated- you know, they have difficulty pooping. Before I could go on, she immediately made the connection as she saw it and said, "You mean people have to soak their butt in a pan of water?" That would be gross!"

When I had tried, somewhat unsuccessfully, to suppress my laughter, I resumed the explanation that it works inside the body in a different way. You drink a small amount in water and this helps you to go.

She responded, "Please don't ever make me drink that." as she ran off to pursue some other play.



OUR EYES MEET

By Alyssa Schultz

When ever our eyes
meet it is hard to
pull away
when I
look into your eyes
I can see love
reflecting in your eyes
you're the only one
that I can trust
with my heart and
love.

Welcoming new members is always a pleasure! The increase in membership is a plus for you and definitely for the Branch. So, to each of you, welcome aboard, and Sail on!!

Willard Brumbaugh

Liz McGiffin

Sue Fetters

Roberta Smith

Allie Falone

Emily Pomeroy

Bonnie T. Cornelison

Lynne Hernandez

Norma Garcia

Trescia Harris

Harold Meza

George Gracyk – Welcome back!

A point of personal privilege: Thanks to each of you who submitted your work, to Bob Isbill for the program information, to George Gracyk for heroic efforts in helping put this newsletter together, and Gail Salinas for her help and support and her “Mom, SAVE IT!” -- N Ward, Editor

**All items in this newsletter are the opinions
of the author(s) and do not in any way represent the views or official position of
CWC.**

