



# INKSLINGER

SAIL ON  
HIGH DESERT BRANCH CWC

DECEMBER 2012

## To Critique or Not to Critique -- Can It Improve Your Craft?

I will never forget the apprehension I experienced over my first critique group. I was nervous and unsure of myself. Would the group accept me? Would they like my work? After all, I was the new person, untested and fresh off the street. I had to resist the temptation to check everyone for fruit and vegetables, as I hate ducking airborne produce. (Thank goodness pineapples were out of season).

I listened to each of the members as they read their work. They were a talented group with insightful and entertaining material. When it was my turn to read, I wondered if they could hear me through my chattering teeth. As it turned out, all my anxiety was for naught -- they were just as pleased with my material as I was with theirs. Indeed, the entire group was caring, professional, and dedicated to improving our mutual craft.

Since then, I've joined two other critique groups -- three altogether. With all the deadlines, rewrites, and pressures not to embarrass myself, why would I ever want to be a part of such a daunting process?

Joining the High Desert Branch of the California Writers Club and the various critique

groups have proven to be the most important and positive decisions I have ever made to enhance my writing abilities. Not only am I receiving the valuable input from my peers, I'm able to share my suggestions about their work as well. Of course, another benefit is I'm making many wonderful friends, individuals that share my enthusiasm for the written word.

So to critique or not to critique? I'm delighted to say no question about it! Every member should embrace the process by either joining or starting a group. It's an amazing and enjoyable experience to hone our skills, discover a wealth of information, encourage our peers, and sometimes learn a few things about ourselves along the way.

-- *Michael Raff*

P. O. V.



Guest Speaker  
**Paula Priamos**  
on  
Plot & Conflict  
Dec. 8th

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## NEWS YOU CAN USE

### Spry at 60

Are you turning age 60 in January? Seems to be quite a few CWC writers who share that month to celebrate their landmark year.

Of course, if you are nearing 60 or well past, you don't look at it quite the same. So, in celebration of Sixty in January ... we survived the End of The World, too ... an open invitation is hereby given to share your birthday at a luncheon on Saturday in January, tentatively the 5<sup>th</sup> at Marie Callandar's in Victorville. You will select and pay your own bill. We are just gathering to celebrate. Any questions? call Rusty (Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>) at 760-248-6777 or email to this newsletter at [Rustyl@Hughes.net](mailto:Rustyl@Hughes.net).

### Anthology Orders for Gifting

Our new 2012 CWC Anthology *Desert Gold* is in publishing phase and hopefully will be available for purchase or ordering at our next meeting, December 8. Price is \$10 per book.

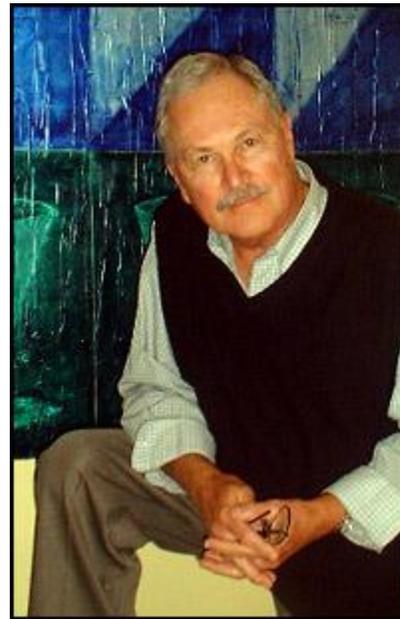
### List It & Love It

*Listmania!* is a list of products that you like. These lists can drive traffic to your book listing through both Amazon and Google. *So You'd Like to Guides* are more like "how to" tutorials. These guides allow you to promote your book using up to 5,000 words. Again, these guides rank very well in Google and will help to brand you as an expert or authority in your niche. Just Google the key words and you should be able to find the information.

Two overlooked methods for promoting books on Amazon are *Listmania!* and *So You'd Like to Guides*. Amazon Lists and Guides are excellent examples of "parasites" because of Amazon's high domain authority.

### CWC Anthology 2011

Keep your Anthology collection complete with the purchase of the first printing for only \$12.60 and the second for only \$10. See Linda Cooper to purchase.



**Ken Rotcop**, the internationally renowned founder of *Pitchmart*, to speak at Apple Valley Library, This Wednesday, Dec. 5<sup>th</sup> at 3pm.

### An Afternoon with Ken Rotcop

On Wednesday, December 5, 2012, the High Desert Branch of the California Writers Club will present the internationally renowned founder of **Pitchmart**, Hollywood's largest screenplay pitch event. The award winning feature length documentary, *Talk Fast*, will be shown, followed by Q&A fielded by Rotcop.

"An Afternoon With Ken Rotcop" will be held from 3 to 6 pm at the Apple Valley Library, 14901 Dale Evans Parkway, December 5. The HD CWC presentation is free, and the public is welcome

*Talk Fast*, winner of the LA Independent Film Fest and the Philadelphia Film Fest, is the story of Rotcop and his highly successful writers' workshop. The film follows five screenwriter hopefuls as they go through the workshop and finally pitch their scripts to top studio executives. Over the past few years, Ken Rotcop's **Pitchmart** has resulted in more than 80 projects being optioned. Of these, 16 have been made into feature films.

Rotcop is the author of the critically acclaimed best seller *The Perfect Pitch: How To Sell Yourself and Your Movie Idea to Hollywood*. He was featured on the Oprah Winfrey Show as well as STARZ' Entertainment Tonight. His book was selected as the Book Of The Month by Cyber Film School.com and featured on Amazon.com.

### Continued~~

He is a frequent guest lecturer and has taught script writing at USC, UCLA, University of Iowa, St. Louis University, University of Texas, and the University of the Philippines, among others.

All writers are encouraged to attend, even if they have not written a screenplay. Learning to “pitch” your story, whether it be fiction or non-fiction, is essential to the marketing process. For more information, visit [www.hdcwc.com](http://www.hdcwc.com) or call 760.221.6367.



### ***Priamos Shares Plot and Conflict Techniques at Next CWC Meeting***

With her first novel, *The Shyster's Daughter*, Paula Priamos will share her writing adventures as she takes her memories from her family and recalls the sleazy underworld she is qualified to share.



*Paula Priamos*

Priamos will be our guest speaker during our regular meeting of HD CWC at 10 am Saturday, Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> in the Apple Valley Library.

She teaches English and Creative Writing at California State University, San Bernardino. Among her writing accomplishments are articles in *LA Times Magazine*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Washington Post Magazine* and literary journals.

More memoir than novel, the reader follows the mysterious death of a high-profile defense lawyer and his daughter's investigation into the shady deals and characters that led to his disbarment.



### ***A Silent Keyboard... With Our Sympathy***

With great sadness we have learned that John Kizziar lost a battle with pancreatic and liver cancer. John was actively involved with our High Desert branch for several years and befriended many of us. It was easy to feel an affinity for him as he was caring and gracious with those who got to know him. He will be missed.

In the Fall of 2011, John found his high school sweetheart on Facebook and moved to Sacramento to spend his life with her in February 2012. His love, Georgiana, tells us that they experienced incredible joy and happiness together. He was so loved in their neighborhood that meals, groceries, medical supplies and things John craved were taken care of and Georgiana stayed by his side as he struggled. He died in her arms the morning of October 13, 2012.

John built and designed the *Little Free Library* and a bench is being planned in his name by the library. Georgiana has written us and mentions that John's time with our Writers Club was among what he valued most. His last gift to all was to donate his body to the UC Davis Body donation program.



### **HIGHLIGHTS FROM “E. Van Lowe’s” New Plan**

#### **From Screen Plays to Young Adult Literature**

Members of the club were treated to an inspirational talk with some solid messages from E Van Lowe at our last general meeting. E revealed his humble beginnings on the streets of the Bronx in New York and how he came to be not just a writer, but a professional writer with Oscar and Emmy nominations and a long list of well-known successful shows and programs of which his writing was a part. E, the name he prefers, discussed key issues for us to keep in mind. An important one

**Continued~~**

dealt with flexibility. He mentioned developing “new plans” about his direction in life regarding writing and being resourceful every time an opportunity presented itself.



**Figure 1. E. Van Lowe, seated in front, signs books for members and guests**

His comments on finishing your work; finishing what you started, rang true for many. He also had us think about the importance of doing more than one thing at a time.

Often we feel that we have to focus on just the project at hand and nothing else -- but he pointed out that letting ourselves focus on more than one project is important because not only is it a reality and necessary for many of us, but it opens us up to more directions in our thinking. This then can be applied to expand our creativity in whatever we write.

E has a great site for teenagers and it's really worth taking a look at. It includes not only covers of many of his books, but also a reminder of the many ways to market yourself and your work. It's a fun site and he has numerous ideas that a lot of us could benefit from.

Here is the link: [www.evanlowe.com](http://www.evanlowe.com).

His humor and openness carried forth in the Q & A period afterwards when he provided insights into how he moved from writing stories, to writing screen plays to becoming an author for young adult literature. It was evident that he was well received by our members and he, in turn, expressed delight in our members being so serious and involved with our own writing. He would be happy to present to us again in the future.

~~ **Freddi Gold**

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## ***Santa and the Deficit***

*By Linda Boruff*

I wonder if Santa has a charge account with a huge line of credit,  
Or perhaps a long list of loyal supporters who annually contribute?  
Does he have good health care for his elves, since many are up in age?  
They stay on year after year, working merrily for less than minimum wage.

Thank God for those who anonymously help Santa and his busy crew!  
Without the generosity of strangers, many children would go unnoticed.  
Santa's been hard hit by the recession, rising taxes, fuel prices too.  
So it's up to His workers to fill in the gap, no matter what they can do.

Muster up some Christmas spirit, buy mistletoe, put money in the kettle.  
Take a toy to the Victor Valley Rescue Mission Thrift Store and share a smile.  
Let's keep Santa alive and well as long as we can for kids; let the festivities abound!  
By next year Santa may be getting his pink slip, unless our economy turns around.

**Note:** Last Christmas the Rescue Mission gave over 3,500 children toys at the fairgrounds in Victorville...more are expected this year. If you'd like to donate (and receive a receipt for your taxes) you can drop off toys at the very friendly Rescue Mission Thrift Store at 17376 Main Street, Suite A (on the corner of Main and I Street near Von's) in Hesperia. If in Victorville, the Mission is located at 16857 C Street (on the corner of Sixth and C), where they have recently relocated. If you need more information or know someone who would like to register, you can call the Mission at 760-955-5958.

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## ***BAR NONE***

Two recent authors walked into a bar. They started talking about the past, the present, and the future. It was tense . . . .



## Santa Rides a 10-speed

*By Rusty LaGrange*

Santa rides a 10-speed.  
He pedals through the town.  
Keeps an eye on alley cats  
And never wears a frown.

I've seen him at the shelter  
and at the city park.  
You'll see him by the depot  
until well after dark.

He may not look like him at all,  
like the Santa we all know  
but he gets the job completed  
bringing smiles to kids of Barstow.

small ceremony at the bookstore and we received a certificate and pin. We met one other Book Giver in the High Desert, and she planned to hand out her books at the bowling alley.

Bob, Mary, Rusty LaGrange, and Dwight Norris held another ceremony at the prison in which we called each prisoner by name and had them come up and get their book and a handshake.

We are getting ready to apply again and hope we are chosen to attain additional books for our prison outreach program. The men are so appreciative and eager to receive this gift.

If you, as an individual or part of any other organization, want to be a Book Giver, the program is expanding this year. Get your group together, think of an innovative place to hand out books, preferably not a school or library, and look over the choice of classic and contemporary books, some for young adults, then fill out the application. The application process is open until January.

Then, free your calendar for April 23, 2013. The books must be distributed on that night. Go to <http://www.us.worldbooknight.org/> ❖

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## WORLD BOOK NIGHT ~~

### Free Books to Non-Standard Places

*by Mary Langer Thompson*

Last year was the first “World Book Night” in the United States, and our club participated as volunteer “Book Givers.” We gave away twenty copies of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou to inmates at the Federal Correctional Facility in Adelanto. So impressed were the main organizers of this night that on their promotional video the comment of how the prisoners applauded when they received their books is featured.

World Book Night is now celebrated worldwide on April 23, Shakespeare and Cervantes’ birthday. Book Givers fill out an application and request twenty free copies of their favorite book from a given list to distribute to people who normally don’t read or have access to books.

In 2011, Bob Isbill and Mary Thompson picked up Angelou’s books at our designated Victorville Barnes and Noble store. There was a



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## PUBLISHING HOUSE OFFERS QUICK PRINT IN TWO DAYS

**When searching for a printing house** for your new book, what services will you need? Your manuscript must be “perfect” in most cases. Each additional service you may need will have a price tag attached, so be thorough in content, proofing, design, and covers before you go shopping.

Some members have come across [www.48hourBooks.com](http://www.48hourBooks.com) . It’s a fairly new company with a slick offer and user-friendly features that could be just what you’re looking for. As a standard disclaimer, we cannot approve this company either way, but check it out for yourself and see if it will meet your demands in getting your next book out of your computer and into the hands of eager readers.  
~~ *Rusty LaGrange*



AUTHOR'S ALERT continued

**Michael Raff will be hosting** a book signing event for his new publication, *Special*, at K-Mart on Main Street in Hesperia. The date to remember is Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> from 10 am – 2 pm.



THE CALIFORNIA WRITERS CLUB,  
SACRAMENTO BRANCH  
**2013 NON-FICTION WRITING CONTEST**

**Category:** Personal Essay

**SUBJECT:**

**THE MOST INFLUENTIAL PERSON IN MY LIFE**

**Length: 750 words or less eligibility, entry fees, and manuscript requirements open to everyone**

**Awards and Recognitions:**

**First Place: \$100.00**

**Second Place: \$50.00**

**Third Place: \$25.00**

Awards will be presented at the June 2013 California Writers Club, Sacramento Branch Luncheon.

Winning essays will be published in the June 2013 newsletter.

**Entry Fees:**

\$10.00 per entry, payable by check. Writers may submit multiple entries.

**Submissions:**

Three copies of each submission must be mailed with payment to **Liz Allenby, Contest Chair**, at the address stated below.

**Manuscripts:**

Name must NOT appear on manuscript. Entries must be original and unpublished. Entries must be typewritten, double-spaced in 12-point Times Roman font, and on one side of paper only, using standard 1" margin. The cover sheet is the only place containing the author's name.

**Deadline:**

All submissions must be postmarked by the deadline of **Saturday, March 30, 2013**. The deadline is absolute; no exceptions will be made. **Failure to comply with the rules will cause the entry to be disqualified.**

**Send submissions to:**

CWC Non-fiction Writing Contest  
Liz Allenby, Contest Chair

5408 Stanmore Way  
Elk Grove, CA 95758

If you have questions please email **Contest Chair Liz Allenby** at:

[LizAllenby@appearancesdeceive.com](mailto:LizAllenby@appearancesdeceive.com)



**Be on the lookout** for unscrupulous print houses that are taking advantage of new authors. Many complaints have been posted on the Internet.

Always do a Google search for basic background; talk to someone who has used their printing services; and, look for other books in print by the print house you are considering.

If the offer is too good to be true, it often is. ❖

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**FOOD FOR THOUGHT**  
**CWC Holiday Lunch**

Right after our Saturday meeting, Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>, members are invited to meet at noon for Christmas Lunch at D'Napoli's Pizza and Italian Restaurant in Apple Valley, in the adjoining storefronts near Maxwell's.

Your choice in menu fare is up to you, and you will pay for your own meal. But to help you save money, you'll get 10% off if you're over 50. You can also download a 15% coupon from [www.MonthlyCoupons.com](http://www.MonthlyCoupons.com). Read more online about a BOGO meal... buy two meals and get one free. Join the lively conversation, and catch up on the latest news among your family of writers.





# BELIEVE



by Jenny Margotta

“Momma? When’s Santa comin?” Lissy pestered her mother. “I want a dolly that closes her eyes . . . and a pony . . . and a double set of jacks . . . and . . .” The list grew each day.

Christmas Eve arrived. The tree was decorated, the pile of wrapped presents was huge. Lissy strongly objected to going to bed that night and woke early on Christmas day. She ran into her parent’s bedroom, shouting, “Get up! I want my presents! Hurry!” Not waiting for an answer, she ran into the living room. Still in her PJs, she was so excited she could hardly sit still.

“One present at a time,” Lissy’s mother admonished.

“Aw, Mom.”

Smiling at Lissy’s brother, her father surprised everyone by saying, “Randy, you’re old enough. You hand out the presents.”

All three kids had been eyeing the unwrapped gifts Santa had left. But Lissy was puzzled. She knew the story — Santa comes in a sleigh, lands on the roof, slides down the chimney, and leaves the presents. Only their chimney led straight to the coal furnace, not a fireplace. How come Santa didn’t get all burned up?

Lissy asked her dad about this puzzle. Her dad just smiled. “It’s magic. When there’s no chimney for Santa to slide down, why he just lays his finger aside of his nose, gives a nod and . . . a chimney appears. Once he leaves the presents, well, up the chimney he goes. Then he touches his nose, gives a nod, and that ol’ chimney just disappears.”

Her brother snickered, but she paid no attention. Her dad’s explanation made a lot of sense to her, so she happily went back to opening her presents.

\* \* \* \* \*

Years passed. Gifts of dolls, roller skates, and board games gave way to radios, records, and clothes. More years sped by. Her parents passed

away, her brother and sister moved to the East Coast, and eventually the gift-giving stopped.

“It’s too hard to know what to buy, and then it costs more to mail than I spent on it,” Lissy’s sister complained.

“Here’s a check. Buy yourself something,” Randy said.

More years passed and suddenly Lissy, always the youngest, found herself the oldest in her generation. She’d never had children and long since lost touch with her nieces and nephews. Lissy tried to keep Christmas alive. She always put up a tree, decorated the house, hung lights, and made mouth-watering goodies. But, inevitably, the year came when she didn’t decorate, didn’t bake treats, didn’t bother with a tree. There would be no gifts, so why put up a tree.

On Christmas Eve, Lissy ate a can of soup, then crawled into bed early. As she was drifting off, she thought about all the wonderful past Christmases. *Too bad the magic had to end. I wish it could have been real.*

Waking early on Christmas morning, she realized she was cold. That was strange, because the average

temperature in San Diego in December was almost 60 degrees.

Climbing out of bed, she slipped into a robe, then looked out the window. Snow! Impossible! A good 6 inches. In San Diego! What was going on?

Lissy headed to the kitchen for coffee and stopped in her tracks. Right in front of her living room window stood a huge Christmas tree. Its top brushed the ceiling and it sported lights and tinsel and so many ornaments that the branches bent under their weight. Looking closely, Lissy caught her breath. There, on that branch, was the glass angel her mother had given her in 1953. On another branch was a shiny silver skate key – she'd lost a key just like it when she was eleven. Lissy realized most of the ornaments were familiar. How could that be? They'd all been lost or broken or given away over the years. But, here they were in all their bright glory.

Even more incredible, there were dozens of gifts. Most were wrapped in colorful paper, but several were unwrapped, too. Taped to the largest of these was a piece of wide-lined paper, just like Lissy had used in grade school.

Bending near, she read:

*Merry Christmas, Lissy. I couldn't find your chimney, so I just laid my finger aside of my nose, gave a nod, and the chimney arose. I took the liberty of reviewing all the lists you sent me over the years and picked the best of the items that I wasn't able to give you before. I hope you like them.*

*Christmas is magic, don't ever forget. If you believe, I will come.*

*Love, Santa*



## *Notes From the Editor --*

Contact the Editor



[RustyL@Hughes.net](mailto:RustyL@Hughes.net) &  
[Rusty@aFlairForWords.com](mailto:Rusty@aFlairForWords.com)

*Until next year, enjoy the company of those you love and the foods that bring us together— Merry Christmas*

Do you like what you see in **The Inkslinger**? I welcome all different genres of short fiction, non-fiction newsworthy items, poetry, and new age. Remember: use Arial Font, 11 point type, no need to double-space, and attach photos and /or submissions to your email. Place *Inkslinger* in the subject line of your emails. Now taking short book excerpts of about 300 words to entice new readers. Tell me if your book cover is posted on HDCWC.com and I can copy it directly to the excerpt.

Call for info: 760-646-2661 if you have any questions. Email : [Rusty@aFlairForWords.com](mailto:Rusty@aFlairForWords.com) or [RustyL@hughes.net](mailto:RustyL@hughes.net). Deadline for each month is the 15<sup>th</sup>. It won't change. That's what deadlines are for. To offer a suggestion, please contact me and we'll discuss it. I love new ideas. **-- Rusty LaGrange**

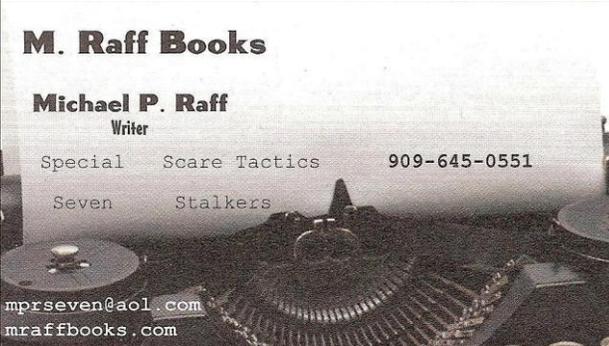
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Writer

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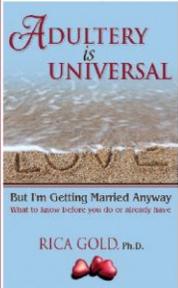
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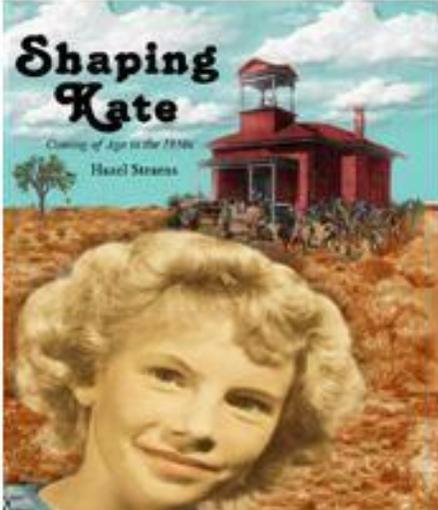
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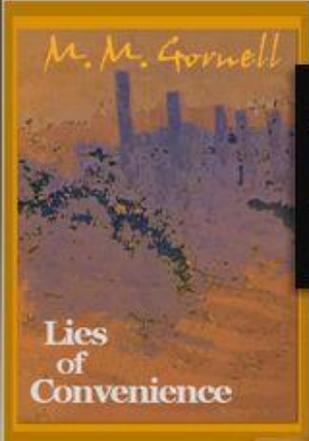
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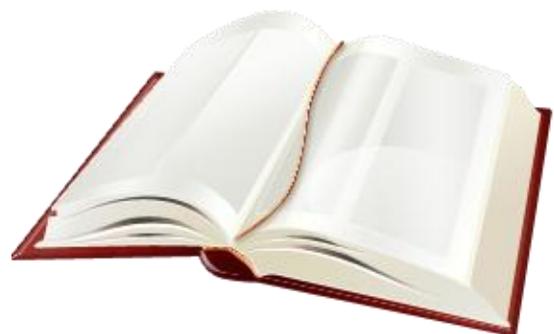
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Submit your ad along with payment to Roberta Smith by **December 8, 2012.**

You may provide them at the HDCWC club meeting or mail to:

**HD CWC**  
20258 Hwy 18 Ste 430-PMB 281  
Apple Valley, CA 92307

If you have questions, contact Roberta at [cwrlsmith@verizon.net](mailto:cwrlsmith@verizon.net)