

# INKSLINGER

HIGH DESERT CHAPTER CALIFORNIA WRITER'S CLUB

NEXT MEETING  
APRIL 11 10-12 A.M.  
APPLE VALLEY LIBRARY  
BRING A GUEST - SEE YOU THERE!

SAIL ON

APRIL 2009



## A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Greetings to all CWC members and visitors:

This is the time of year when we are supposed to be getting excited and energetic about accomplish-ing things, like planting some flowers, or writing a novel? I have so many thoughts and hopes and dreams and I bet you do as well. Now the hard job of putting your ideas into practice. If you haven't set your goal yet that I wrote about in a recent *Inkslinger*, I hope you will do so now at this not so subtle reminder. Please put one or more goals into writing and include at least one proposal for helping you to obtain that goal. More than one would be even better. We will be discussing these at a future meeting. I would like you to bring them to the next meeting and I will "put them in a safe place" so you don't need to put your name on it unless you want to. At the December meeting, we will discuss how we have each progressed toward our goals and what did and did not work.

I wanted to provide a general update on the happenings in our chapter. Our membership drive has been progressing well and we had three new members at our last meeting. I, for one, am thrilled and appreciative that Bob Isbill has taken over publicity. He has more experience than I and is getting the word out about us more efficiently. He will also take over the management of the web site as part of publicity. Thank you, Bob. And speaking of thanks, our sincere thanks to Barbara Schultz for all the extra work she took on for CWC; including secretary, temporary editor of the *Inkslinger*, and management of the web site, and High Desert representative to the Central Board meetings held quarterly. She recently resigned from these many duties to focus on some other activities and we are so glad she

will still be active at meetings.

I'm not sure how much arm twisting I did, but at least it worked. Naomi has accepted the position of editor of the *Inkslinger*. George Robinson, with his usual gracious willingness to help others, will be assisting Naomi, as she expressed "to bring her into the digital age". Welcome to this new challenge, Naomi, with our gratitude. Now, it is up to each of you to give her something to put in our newsletter. As a result of the recent member survey, it seems the majority of members would like to see the frequency changed, for now, to bi-monthly, so this gives you twice as long to submit something. Sometimes, I have members ask "What are we supposed to write?" ANYTHING, so long as it does not hurt someone else. You can write about your reaction to anything that is in the news, a short excerpt from something you are currently working on or have completed (approximately 500 words max), the weather, spring time, goal setting, your present or past pets - the options are really limitless. The 55-words that we have talked about is an excellent writing exercise and not as easy as it sounds. At least not for someone like me, who has a tendency to use a longer, sometimes rambling sentence. The pertinent data can often be said much more concisely so this is something I am still learning. Remember, we are writers so let's share some of our writing. Let us know what you would like to see in YOUR NEWSLETTER. Probably many of us have read some books on writing techniques. Would love to see some recommendations or maybe a book review of any book you liked and what there was about it that you learned or enjoyed.



## **CHALLENGE? YOU BETCHA**

When Carol indicated this would be a challenge for me she was right on! While I've done a number of newsletters, they have been simple, 8 x 10 inch-page productions, mimeographed, or reproduced from a hard copy generated on a computer! (Yes, that's how long ago I started this! And if "mimeograph" is a new word for you, please refer to the nearest antiquities museum!) With an electronic distribution, a whole new world opens up and I will be depending on those who have gone before to lead me thru the mechanics and into the digital age.

More than that, there is another challenge, not only for me, but for you. In the past, someone, the organization president, the minister, the chapter ramrod, would tell me what they wanted in the paper, and I'd write it! Piece of cake! Loved doing it! None of them was so inclined to do it, and I could make my mistakes and no one really knew the difference.

Now, however, there is another, bigger, but more rewarding challenge. I'm not going to write this one - you are. That is, if you are a member of CWC because you have a sincere desire to write, you will write! . Look at it this way: We will publish every other month - six times a year. Right now, we have 29 members, so do the math - how often will you be called upon to contribute something to the *Inkslinger* "on assignment", as it were? In addition to that, I hope that each of you will find time to help fill the *Inkslinger* folder on my desk top with the additional articles which can be used as time and space allow! This is our individual passion - to write, to let others see what we are doing, and to share our thoughts and talents. Otherwise, what are we doing in CWC? With the great speakers we've had, and are lined up for us in the future, it would be foolish to not draw inspiration from them, wouldn't it? Where else can we avail ourselves of such experience and expertise - and for free?

So, each month, once I get the rhythm going, I will call or e-mail one member, requesting an offering, in his/her own style, on any subject of their choosing. This is what we do! I hope every type of story/article comes in! I will use as many as I have room for, in each edition of the *Inkslinger* - what I can't use that month will go into our suspense file to be used when

space and time does allow!

Don't wait for me to call you - your lives are moving along and I'm sure you are thinking and mentally composing parts of whatever it is you are preparing to write, or have experienced - something you would like to share. Put pen to paper, figuratively speaking, and send it on to me for the *Inkslinger* via e-mail, if that works for you, at [ncweaw@yahoo.com](mailto:ncweaw@yahoo.com) or call me at 241-9642 for a mailing address.

Let's make this a true peer-driven Club, working together individually for the good of the individual! (Think about that...) We are here because we write! Now put your "pen" where your heart is!

Thanks for your contributions! Let's get in gear!

----naomi

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### **Report on our Guest Speaker - by Barbara A Schultz "Writing Your Own Happy Ending"**

At the March 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the High Desert branch of the California Writers Club, our guest speaker, J'Amy Pacheco, spoke to us about her career as a journalist. She currently works for the Metropolitan News Company, 108-year-old company whose offices are located in the former L.A. Times building in downtown Los Angeles. She writes "newspaper articles about things that happen in the local courts". The path that brought her to her current position with Metro News was rather serendipitous as she explained in her presentation.

She grew up in the High Desert, attending one of the high schools in Apple Valley (because there wasn't one in the city where she was living at the time!). At age 18, she moved away from the desert - vowing that she'd never return. Well, twelve years later, she was back (AND she was one of the founding members of this branch. Thank you, J'Amy!) She started her journalism career by writing feature stories for a couple of local newspapers. She told us that she "almost never says no to an interesting experience" (like police ride-alongs) because this is where she gets some of the ideas for the articles she writes. At one point, she wrote a five-part series about law and justice. As it

turned out, this series was serendipity for because this series helped her career several years later.

Shortly after she wrote this series, she found out two important things that would change the direction of her career - first, the newspaper she was working for at the time had been sold (and she didn't want to work for the new owners; and second, she was pregnant with her first (and only) child. At this point she was asked if she'd work for a San Bernardino (CA) paper to which she replied, "Sure. Why not?" (Or words to this effect). However, she was soon informed that the newspaper would become a legal newspaper, focusing on the local "court scene". Her first response was: "You know I'm not a lawyer, right?" After being assured that they still wanted her to work for them, she has been working for them ever since.

At this point in her presentation, J'Amy shared with us how she works (and this author is looking forward to the she can work that way!) She attends a function of some kind, and then returns home to write her stories. Then she e-mails them to her copy editor (someone she's yet to meet face-to-face. He edits (or proofreads or does whatever he does to her stories), and sends her a pdf of the page proof. She checks it over then sends it back to Metro News in L.A. Because all of her work is done electronically, "she's never seen a paper copy of her newspaper."

In addition to writing articles about local court happenings, she also writes a weekly column that can be found in newspapers throughout California. Her columns "have nothing to do with law". Instead, they're generally about things that make her mad (taxes and people who don't use their turn signals when driving, among other things). She told us that she gets her ideas from "anywhere she can" (including from her family), read us portions of a few of her columns. She then shared with us some of the abilities/skills she feels are needed to do her job:

- good writing skills (obviously)
- orientation to details
- good spelling skills
- being a good listener

- able to think on your feet
  - able to write fast (since some people don't like tape recorders)
  - be relatively organized (i.e. able to find things 10-15 years later)
  - able to work under a deadline and under pressure
  - be ready to take things as they come
- (Surprise! You got three pages to fill with articles)
- friendly, confident and able to earn people's trust

After this, she shared with us many of her experiences in the journalism business, including ghost writing assignments for a number of different people, as well as her work with Roy Rogers and Dale Evans who used to live in Apple Valley.

J'Amy was definitely an entertaining guest speaker, and this author came out of the meeting with several quotes from her that will be remembered for some time, but my favorite one is about "writer's block."

"I don't believe in writer's block. If you're blocked, you're not living hard enough." She then said that "if you're blocked, you need to either read OR go out and do something crazy."

She ended her presentation by sharing with us some of the things that she's learned during her many years of writing a column and about writing about the courts.

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### **NEW MEMBERS:**

**Jimmy Dabbas, Victorville  
Dawn Dale, Apple Valley  
Melanie Hanson, Victorville**

**We welcome you to High Desert CWC! We hope you will enjoy our meetings, the fellowship of like-minded people and will enjoy and participate in our activities"**

## **UNIVERSAL HEALTHCARE AND THE ROAD TO IT©**

Today there is an all consuming need for universal healthcare. Many of us have some form of health insurance but most of us don't. It is the uninsured who drive up the cost of healthcare at all stages and levels. The uninsured are forced to wait until they find themselves at the must see stage before they visit a medical facility. In most instances these medical establishments are hospital emergency rooms. It reminds me of one of my father's truisms—it is cheaper to change the oil than to change the engine. Emergency rooms are where you go when you have engine problems.

Healthcare is a national conundrum due to the lack of a readily available health maintenance system. The best and less congested road to national healthcare is to place it on the Social Security train. Health being the ultimate security and without it all else pales in comparison. To insure that all are included in this Social Security system we have to redefine work. We could start by crediting the years mothers spend nurturing their underage children. Giving birth to and raising children is the most vital work in ours or any other society. Yet we as a people give short shrift to raising children. This is done at our own peril. The value we place on today's children determines the worth of tomorrow's society. This is why motherhood should be included into the Social Security system. When this is done then we could use our military as a template for providing universal healthcare and full employment.

Everyone in the military has an occupational speciality—M.O.S. To provide the same opportunity to the society at large all who are available would be educated and trained to the best of their abilities and according to the needs of the nation. The fundamentals of this preparation would be completed in the first eighteen years of one's life. When this training is completed the individual would be assigned work in their specialty. Anyone refusing to abide would be dealt with accordingly. Enactment of this program would virtually eliminate underemployment and unemployment. Crime would be reduced to the point where only criminals would commit crime. The nation's longevity would be extended. In any given run of people the percentages of individuals who will never do wrong and the percentages of who never do right are about equal. The ones who will never do wrong we call saints. The ones who will never do right are our criminals. Everybody else simply goes with the flow.

With persuasive full employment the value of production would be greater than the value of consumption. This

would end national deficits and usher in budget surpluses. With this state of affairs in place we could afford to give-up some of our rights. Like the right to be unemployed and hungry searching for food in garbage cans and sleeping under freeway overpasses.

The American dream would no longer be a dream but a reality. I realize I am beginning to sound a bit utopian or something so I will “back off” and wait for comments.

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Where Your Love Lies  
By Alyssa Schultz

When we touch, I feel closer to you.  
When I am in your arms, I am closer to your heart.  
When I see you, I see an angel.  
When I hear your voice, I hear a choir.  
When I feel your lips on mine, I feel like I am  
in Heaven,  
but without you in my heart, where would I be?  
When I dream, you're always there.  
My heart is where your love lies.

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## **HERE AND THERE**

Schools used to teach proper grammar, editors “edited” and proofreaders were still extant, all now next of kin to the dodo. As aspiring writers we should be performing at least minimal CPR on our language. Let's start with the lowly pronoun, often mistreated and misused. In one short article in our local newspaper, I saw three glaring misuses of the word “that”.

“That” as a pronoun does not refer to people. It refers to an inanimate object. But, in this case it referred to a woman, a felon and a police officer, i.e., “the woman that opened the door”, “The man that was involved was a felon” “the officer that ran the license found an outstanding warrant”. These subjects aren't “that's, they are “who”s - “The woman who opened...” “The man who was involved...” “the officer who ran the license...” - all blue pencil corrections had there been an editor in charge! Or a proof reader. Or even a middle school teacher who taught English grammar.

To the barricades, fellow CWCers - let us stand and protect the lowly parts of speech!!

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