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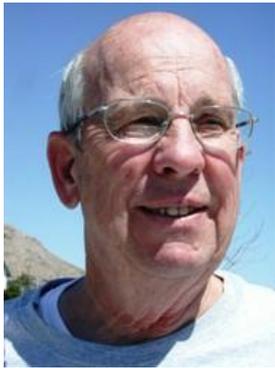
# INKSLINGER

HIGH DESERT BRANCH CWC

SAIL ON

VOL. 26, NO. 14, MAY, 2011

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



The  
President's  
**POV**  
Bob Isbill

Then, suddenly, doubts about the integrity of Baby's caring raise their ugly head and we get the feeling that the love-lyrics could be just lies. We start to think, "If there's something wrong with Baby, there must be something wrong with me."

When the muse (your Baby) comes to you, loves you, cares about you, teaches you, tells you and guides you, don't doubt and abandon him/her too soon. Just go with the flow-- the "cares about me" part. "Trust the Force!" as we say in other galaxies.

When the inspiration is long gone, and you're not as magically productive, it will leave plenty of time to wonder what's wrong with Baby. And with your work.

It's then that you can start your rewrite.

## MY BABY JUST CARES FOR ME

I just love that song.

Aside from being a flat-out statement that somebody really loves me unconditionally, the humor and irony of the lyrics are towards the end when they question what's wrong with Baby because Baby just cares for me.

This "wondering" sort of blows the preceding brilliant sentiment right out of the water, but in a cute, charming way which explains what it's like to be part of the human condition. The biting wit brings to mind the Groucho Marx comment, "I wouldn't belong to a club that would have me as a member."

The lyrics, up until the twisty end, are happily content with the fact that my baby just cares for me, and then in a self-doubting way, suggests there must be something wrong with all that. The lyrics itemize some of the things Baby doesn't care for (including some really fun stuff) which makes the listener feel very special.

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## OUR AUTHOR'S PANEL

By Frances Smith Savage

Our own Author's Panel Saturday April 9, 2011 gave a brief summary of the authors' success in getting their books published. Every aspect of publishing appeared to be covered, from finding a publisher, to finally giving up and having their books self-published, to doing the hard work themselves all for the final goal of having their book in print. None of the above is easy, they all take work, and I speak from experience. The panelists sat at head tables, and each in turn received the hand held mike to introduce themselves to the audience. For more information about each author visit the web site of HDCWC, and click on Meet the Authors.

The Moderator, Vice-President Curt James then presented each author after he made this statement, "Wish this was a roast."

**Madeline Gornell** told how she stumbled on an agent, and grabbed her for her own. She said, "The good part about having a publisher, you don't have to deal with anything like Amazon, I-pads, etc." She had a small independent publisher and spoke directly to them. Your marketing is up to you. A publisher won't even look at your work if you don't have a marketing plan. "And you need an agent, and don't give up!"

**Holly La Pat**, a prolific writer of short stories, and she has had two books published, and sold them the old fashioned way. . . by (snail) mail. She said, "It is well worth your efforts to find a publisher even if you have to try for a whole year." She advised against self-publishing because of the cost. Holly is a freelance writer for the Victorville Daily Press.

**Denny Stanz** developed a book of Food Stories, a compilation of true and sometimes humorous events of his life. "But first I had to learn how to cook." He said. "The book is written to help men improve their cooking skills especially those whose only trip to the kitchen was to get a beer from the refrigerator."

**Norm Goyer** has lots of experience! Someone asked if there was a future or career in magazine writing today. Norm replied: "The Magazine/Internet writer better learn the aspect of writing with pictures or they will not make it in the future world. Every type of writing has to have photographs. All the artists are learning visuals. Use art; work with pens, pencils and a camera." Every time Norm speaks he gives us pearls of wisdom, and we would be wise to follow his lead.

**Roberta Smith** self-published her book. She said she didn't research, and didn't know about publishing. She said, "I did it all myself, and I was in a vacuum." Roberta is now taking care of membership for our club, and gives a monthly report to the club, she is also active in a critique group. She writes paranormal suspense mysteries.

**Vic McCain-Buzzelli** Went to publishers first then had his first book self-published at Author House. They did a good job, and had a lot of packages, but they are expensive. Is it worth it? He said, "I wish I would have joined this club a long time ago."

**Mary Scott** spoke of her struggles to have her 200 page book published, because there are 50 pages of pictures. She paid for the pictures, and still had to collate every page of the book. She then had it spiral bound, and the total costs ran about \$30.00 per book. She will make more money selling the book on the internet, but still tries to make speeches at every opportunity. She writes spiritual non-fiction.

**Bob Isbill** completed the instructional meeting with Creating Your Elevator Pitch. You'll have to go back to the Club's web site to find out more, and click on Tools for Authors.



Here is part of the Authors' Panel which brought their publishing experiences to the April Membership meeting. Left to right are Mary Scott, Holly LaPat (aka Sierra Donovan) and Vic McCain-Bizzell with Moderator Curt James. Not shown: Madeline Gornell, Denny Stanz, Roberta Smith and Norm Goyer who was occupied taking the picture. Thanks Norm...



It was my pleasure to know **Emily Pomeroy**, even for such a brief time. In some ways, it seems like she was always a part of the HD CWC because she was so supportive of our branch, and was willing to share her time, talent and energy wherever and whenever she was needed. Emily served as greeter and master of

ceremonies at the Barnes & Noble Reading Festival in August of 2010, emcee at the first Book Signing Event, frequent contributor to the *Inkslinger* newsletter, and did so much in her brief time with the CWC that she was even a nominee for the recent Jack London Service Award of 2011. Emily Pomeroy was a professional in every way, and a dedicated wife, mother and friend whom we will greatly miss. She worked as a reporter and section editor for the *Glendale Independent Newspaper*, was a writer for *Swimming World Magazine*, and freelanced for news media. Emily had a degree in communications from California State University and a teaching credential from Boise State University. She also had a certificate in Gifted and Talented Education from the University of California at Riverside. She taught fifth and sixth grades for the Victorville Elementary District for nineteen years.

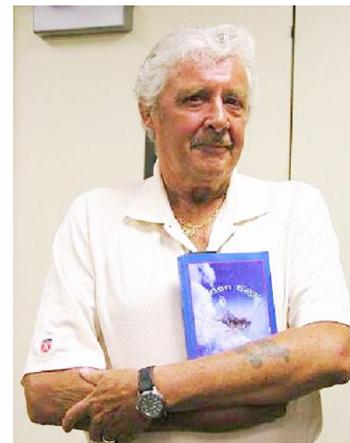
As Executive Producers for their award-winning son, Jesse Pomeroy's "World Full of Nothing", she and her husband Howard, gave their full support to that remarkable movie, and each even had a role in the film. They were instrumental in getting Jesse to speak to our club in June of 2010. Emily was journaling their experiences going through the entire process of producing and marketing an independent film in order to write a book to help others who choose that path. She also was in the process of finishing a novel.

From the start of our "Howl at the Moon" writers' conference of September 2010, Emily was there to help with the preparations for that event, sharing her energy and ideas. Ironically, she had to miss the conference itself due to health problems. We will remember Emily Pomeroy as a person who gave Life her very best. We who knew her were inspired by her to also be our best.

That is no small legacy, Emily.

*Bob Isbill/President*

**Tom Saunderson** was born December 9, 1941 in Larne, Northern Ireland. He was the only boy of five children born to George and Annie Saunderson. As a child, he experienced the unrest of Northern and Southern Ireland, seeing things he should not have seen. He joined the Merchant Navy and



became an engineer on a Shell Tanker. He traveled the world serving as an officer and had many stories to share with his friends and family. He eventually settled down in Scotland, married and had a daughter. He then went to work as a Nuclear Engineer for Rolls Royce Nuclear Division in Thurso, Scotland. Tom was an avid golfer and enjoyed the company of his mates on golf courses all over Scotland. He lost his wife of 38 years to cancer. Tom and I met by chance on an internet chat. After seeing a photo of him in his kilt, I boldly asked "What does a Scotsman wear under his kilt?" Tom answered "It depends on the occasion." We chatted for 2 months, after which Tom said he was coming to America to meet me. I didn't believe him, but to my surprise he booked a flight and we met in San Diego on March 22, 2004. We spent 16 days together and he then went back to Scotland. Two weeks later Tom said he was coming back to see me again, this time to marry me. We married on July 3, 2004.

Tom was a man of his word. If he said he would do something, he always did it. His laughter was infectious and his charm irresistible. Women loved him and most men wanted to be him. We traveled from the United States to Ireland and Scotland for 4 years, and Tom decided we should settle in America. He loved it here and the weather was his cup of tea. He loved the sun and got the most gorgeous tan. He loved the lush golf courses. He made friends quickly and never met a stranger.

Tom was a wonderful and loving husband. He loved my children as if they were his own and adored our grandchildren and great grandchildren. He left us on March 24, 2011, creating a heartache that will never heal. He was an amazing man and the 7 years we spent together were the happiest of my life.

I miss him and will love him forever.

*Charlotte Saunderson)*

## MAY 14, 2011 GUEST SPEAKER

Thelma T. Reyna has been writing for over 30 years. Her short stories, poems, and nonfiction have been published in literary journals, anthologies, textbooks, and regional media. Her new book, *The Heavens Weep for Us and Other Stories* (Outskirts Press, 2009), is a collection of 12 stories set mostly in California, Texas, and Chicago. Her stories deal with the losses, large and small, that we all experience and how we bravely reinvent ourselves to give meaning to life in the face of such hardship. Don't miss this May meeting!



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experience and how we bravely reinvent ourselves to give meaning to life in the face of such hardship. Don't miss this May meeting!

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## MARY LANGER THOMPSON POETRY WORKSHOP

The HD CWC will present a poetry workshop on Saturday, June 4, 2011 at the Hesperia Library from 10 a.m. to noon, which will be conducted by Mary Thompson.

Mary Langer Thompson's poetry appears in various journals and anthologies such as Quill and Parchment, Ragged Sky Press's, *Eating Her Wedding Dress: A Collection of Clothing Poems*, J Journal, Off the Coast, The Literary Bohemian, Popshot, Kaleidoscope, and Silk Road Review. She is a contributor to *The Working Poet* (Autumn Press), a poetry writing text. Her work is forthcoming in *Women and Poetry: Tips on Writing, Teaching and Publishing by Successful Women Poets* (McFarland).

She is a proud member of the California Writers Club, High Desert Branch.

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---- AN E-MAIL FROM HAZEL STEARNS brought this to our attention with the link for complete information .

*"Here's a contest for you: [Writer's Digest - Annual Writing Competition](#)" There's not a lot of lead time but the prizes are great. Lots of luck!*



## RE: WILLMA GORE

*(In response to Branch member queries about how Ms Gore was faring after her sudden illness caused her to cancel her anticipated program at HDCWC, Pres Bob went straight to the source for information and this is her response:)*

Greetings from Sedona for Bob Isbill and HD CWC:

Thank you for this inquiry. I was terribly disappointed not to complete my speaking tour in California, and yes, if I can arrange it, I will be back in touch for a re-date. I was stricken ill and hospitalized for four days immediately following my evening presentation in Ridgecrest. Diverticulosis. My friend who had met my Greyhound bus in San Diego and was planning to drive me to each city for presentations was commandeered to drive me home, as the MDs at the hospital said I could not spend 12 hours on a bus to get back home. So Joan brought me back by car on Mar. 14. I have completely recovered now and under MD orders about diet.

My four writer workshops that meet in my home have resumed this week so all is well. My warm appreciation to you and members who were expecting to hear me. I am mailing to you (c/o Anne Fowler) a copy of the handouts I would have given to your members. If you feel them worthy, kindly duplicate and distribute.

High Desert was the first branch of CWC which was near enough to my home so that I could attend regularly, (I lived in Crestline) so I've always had a specially warm place in my heart for your group.

Happy writing to all, Willma Gore



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## **THANKS GEORGE**

At the April meeting, President Isbill presented George Grayck with an autographed copy of *Howling at the Moon*, signed by the HDCWC members whose work appeared in the volume. George took on the responsibility for assembling the many submissions and getting them to the publisher. He also shot the striking cover picture. From all of us, thanks, George, for always being there for the Branch.



## **CAROL WARREN CHOSEN FOR JACK LONDON 2011 AWARD**

Carol Warren has been an HD CWC member since 2005. She is a retired Registered Nurse, who completed almost

forty years of service in the field, the last thirteen being spent as a hospice nurse.

Carol was born in Maywood, Illinois, and married Bill Warren, a member of the United States Air Force, in 1964. They have resided in California off and on since 1968. The Warrens have two grown children, three grandchildren and two (twins) great-grandchildren.

Carol Warren is an accomplished volunteer, and still finds time to do work for the hospice organization.

Carol served one year as HD CWC secretary, and for two years, 2008-2010, as president. She led the first of our critique groups that formed in 2009, and has been club hostess, membership chairman, greeter, and all-around enthusiast for the High Desert Branch. Carol Warren, with her positive, friendly personality, is hugely responsible for so much of the growth of our CWC branch.

The selection of Carol for our Jack London recipient for 2011 is due to her dedication and hard work on behalf of our members. Carol is currently our SoCal Rep as well as State Representative, and holds the office of Central Board Secretary.

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## **5 REASONS TO START A WRITING GROUP**

by Mark Nichol

You know about writing groups — folks who meet at regular intervals to share excerpts from works in progress, exchange tips and information, and discuss conventions such as character, plot, narrative, and tone. But you've always shrugged the idea off — yet it keeps coming back. Maybe you should reconsider. Here's why:

### **1. Discipline**

Starting a writing group helps you develop deadline discipline because you are accountable for being ready for the next meeting. Such a support structure is a great cure for procrastination and practice for turning manuscripts in on time.

### **2. Motivation**

Meeting with kindred spirits helps motivate you to keep trying in the face of adversity, whether it's in the form of a busy schedule or writer's block. Writing is by necessity a solitary pursuit — but only when you're pecking away at your keyboard. Interacting at intervals with a small community of like-minded people will give you the nudges you need.

### **3. Support**

You'll benefit from the empathy of others who have also received rejection letters or, just like you, have felt that they didn't have what it takes to succeed. A writing group will encourage you without being ingratiating.

### **4. Edification**

You'll learn from others — and feel a boost of confidence when others acknowledge the value of your advice and information. Whether or not you're comfortable with your grasp of the building blocks of writing — character and the other aspects I mentioned above — you'll note alternative approaches, and it'll make you feel good to offer your own.

Besides learning and teaching about the craft of writing, you can exchange ideas about research and taking notes; finding competitions, publications, or an agent; and preparing pitches and proposals. Remember this: Teaching is one of the most effective ways to learn.

### **5. Feedback**

Most important, you'll get objective, instructive feedback not only on your works in progress but also on your pitches. Go ahead and ask your partner or close friends to evaluate your writing, but consider how much more you will get out of honest, informed responses from people without emotional attachments to you.

### **Why Me?**

Starting your own group, rather than joining a new or existing one, allows you to call the shots — at least when it comes to forming the group. Don't be the mom; just set the parameters: group size and meeting setting, type or length of writing form, method and other ground rules for presenting works in progress, and so on. And you get to select your compatriots for compatibility with you and your goals and guidelines.

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- (1) Learn the rules before you break them;
  - (2) when you break them, know why; and
  - (3) don't be afraid to experiment.
-

### DISCLAIMER

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

**Norm Goyer** is still looking for great desert scenes for the website! The last one was outstanding! Send yours for consideration!

ELECTIONS – ELECTIONS –ELECTIONS  
WILL BE HELD AT THE JUNE MEMBERSHIP MEETING. FURTHER NOMINATIONS FROM THE FLOOR CAN BE MADE AT THE MAY MEETING. PLEASE BE THERE.

### **WELCOME!**

**To our newest members,  
“Hello” and come on in,  
the gang’s waiting for  
you.**

**Janis Brams, Robin  
Delaney Alan Flory, Molly  
Lucia, Kevin Morse,  
Avalynn Morse.**

**ENJOY!**

The next move toward another successful Writers’ Conference, slated for October 2, will be a Planning Committee meeting to be held at McDonalds, Apple Valley Rd and Bear Valley Road, on May 3, 2011, from 10 a.m. – 12 noon. Come and add your suggestions, hear the beginnings of another great Conference.

WELL, MAYBE THE THIRD TIME IS A CHARM! The first one I was angry, provoked that adults couldn’t follow a few simple rules because they didn’t think it made any difference, that he/she, personally, was above rules, and, admittedly, the result was a rather scathing commentary . It takes time to correct other’s problems and the potential for doing something to change the author’s intent, unintentionally, is always there. Better sense prevailed and I hit the “delete” button. The second one was a detailed explanation of what the *Inkslinger* “style sheet” was all about, with side comments, was inadvertently erased. (Don’t tell me we don’t have our personal angels). This one is my third try to explain what is needed to submit your items to the Branch newsletter. It’s a matter of personal discipline and understanding that in some instances, conformity is a plus. First, you should be aware that we are all curious and enjoy each others efforts. It’s great to see what our fellow members are doing, and going thru, possibly, to get their thoughts, ideas, impressions, excitement, emotional impressions – you name it – down in writing and in a way it can be uniformly presented, and enjoyed by, fellow Branch members! So, for Branch, Club, and personal information dissemination, someone came up with the idea of a Branch newsletter, with someone (an editor?) to pull it together and with everyone on the same page (editor’s choice as to which “page”) to make it work in harmony.

So, most simply, let me repeat the basics: Please **e-mail your submission** if at all possible. If you don’t have on-line capabilities, and know no one who does, call me at 760-241-9642 and alert me you will be sending it snail mail.

Send it **single spaced, in Arial 11-point font, one item per submission, and 800 words or less** – that will give us the “flavor” of your talent/skills, and will be a good introduction to you as a fellow member and potential friend! It’s great to have the Pantry full of tasty items to share with others.

And in case you should think I’m not appreciative of past efforts, believe me, I am – it’s a blast every time I receive something from you. The burden of presentation is on you – we have over 100 members, now, so, percentage wise, that’s one heck of an experience, putting out a newsletter representing the whole gang. HALP! And let me hear from you!

N.C. Ward, Inkslinger Editor

INVITE A FRIEND TO  
JOIN YOU FOR A  
HDCWC MEETING OR  
ONE OF OUR SPECIAL  
PROGRAMS AT  
HESPERIA LIBRARY –IT’S  
A FIRST STEP....

## **NOTHING TO SNICKER ABOUT**

By Vic McCain-Buzzelli

Being a single parent offers a myriad of difficulties to overcome in order to instill conscientious character in our children. My Mom was a single parent, for a good number of my childhood years, and I will never forget the many character building lessons that I learned during that time.

I was eight years old and my brother Donnie sic, on a snowbound Saturday in northern Ohio right after thanksgiving. It was my first year in the local Cub Scout Pack when my Mom began allowing me and Donnie to walk to the neighborhood market in order to pick up staples like bread and milk. On this day, my Mom had decided to make brownies and fudge for an upcoming Cub Scout event but had run out of cocoa. She bundled us up for our blustery trek to the market and entrusted me with a five dollar bill and a short list for the cashier.

The market was virtually empty, upon our arrival, allowing us the time to walk the aisle in search of the mysterious cocoa, which happened to be right next to the candy display. Without even thinking or looking around to see who might be watching, I grabbed four Snickers candy bars off the rack and stuffed them down the front of Donnie's jacket. Donnie just smiled and headed for the front door while I grabbed the cocoa and made a beeline to the cashier with my five dollar bill. Rounding the corner of aisle I was surprised to see Donnie's arm being held by the store's owner with big tears running down his face. The four Snickers bars lying in a puddle on the floor, next to his snow boots will go down in my memory as one of the most depressing sights that I can ever recall.

The store owner telephoned my Mom to tell her of our plight and within minutes she was there, soothing Donnie and glaring at me. I immediately became sick to my stomach and threw up right next to the pile of Snickers in the puddle. That sight was all my Mom needed to start crying. With tears welling in her eyes, she threw the five dollar bill on the counter, grabbed my brother by one and me with her other hand as we literally ran out of the market. My Mom didn't believe in corporal type punishment or yelling and screaming, but her sobs all the way home cut me deeper than a strap across my back. Thus, chocolate wasn't seen around our home until Easter Sunday, the following year, even though my Mom hid it in her underwear

drawer right next to her secret copy of *Peyton Place*.

This event in my life had a startling effect on my perception of how one person's selfish action (mine) can devastate the lives of those around them , who they care about and love.



## **SAYING GOODBYE**

When you've been around as long as I have and you've collected lots of junk you have to learn to say goodbye and empty out your trunk. Cleaning out is hard to do! It's throwing out some parts of you. Be still, my beating heart... It's time to say Adieu. So I put the boxes in my trunk and took them to Goodwill. where someone else will buy my junk and enshrine it on her windowsill.

By Diane Neil



## **MADISON**

By Dwight Norris

In the summer of '67, a beat-up panel van bounced over the uneven streets of Brooklyn, New York, transporting all the earthly belongings of the Baldwin family, the newest residents of the city. Driving all the way from Chugwater, Oklahoma, Daddy was joining the family restaurant business, and Mommy had secured a teaching position. Mommy and Daddy were excited about the new opportunity.

Ten year old Madison had a different viewpoint. She loved country living. Already she missed her two goats, her pot-bellied pig, her mare, and her tomcat that patrolled the yard for mice and other rodents. And she missed her garden. Oh, how she missed her garden!

The van rolled over a wavy portion of asphalt and jerked to a stop in front of a ten-story brick apartment house.

"Are we here?" Madison asked. "Is this our new home?"

"This is it," Daddy said. "Let's go find our apartment."

Mommy took Madison by the hand and they walked into the building.

"Tenth floor," Daddy said, "all the way to the top." The apartment was dark and dingy, not quite the ranch-style home they enjoyed in Oklahoma.

"Daddy, you said I could have a garden here in New York, but there's no yard. Where can I plant my garden?"

"I don't know, sweetheart. We'll have to figure something out."

"Please, please may I have my own garden? I'll dig up the soil, and do all the toil. I'll put in the seeds, and pull out the weeds. I'll take very good care of my garden. And someday my garden will be famous!"

Daddy talked to the owner of the apartment building, and made a very unusual agreement.

"Very well," said Mommy and Daddy. "We'll use the roof as our yard, but you must promise to work very hard!"

"I will, I will!" cried Madison with glee. "And someday my garden will be famous!"

Mommy and Daddy took Madison up to the roof and chose the right spot.

"Over here," said Daddy, "with lots of sun and fresh air. I'll bring in wood framing and stakes, and the soil and the seed and all that it takes."

"Let's make your garden a circle," said Mommy. "That way you can walk round and round and pick up a pound of tomatoes or 'tatos or carrots or celery!"

"But I might get too dizzy!" cried Madison.

"I know," said Daddy. "Let's make your garden a triangle! That way, in all three corners you can grow, whatever plants delight you so!"

"But it's too far to run from corner to corner," said Madison.

"I know," cried Madison. "Let's make four sides, each the same. That will surely lead to my garden's fame!" And so they did.

They marked each side with the very same measure, preparing the soil to sprout its treasure. The top of the soil was raked and bare, as the garden laid out in a perfect square!

About that time, nearby in the city, officials opened a brand new arena, for concerts and sports and all kinds of comings together. The one problem was they didn't know what to call the special place of gatherings. But Madison was right about the fame of her project, because today, there's practically no one who hasn't heard of Madison's Square Garden!

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*(This is a "different" offering, but one of a genre we don't receive too often which I would call a Special Feature Article. And, it has it's place in the world of the written word. Do enjoy – and perhaps when you're on the road, you'll drop by Rick's to see if it is true to it's advance publicity.)*

## **CUSTOMER SERVICE**

By Linda Bowden

This past Sunday I had the pleasure of going to breakfast at a small café on highway 138 named, "Rick's Roadside Café." I had planned to go to a small restaurant that I frequent in Wrightwood but I didn't have chains and it was one of those days. We were a party of five and so hungry. We pulled into a full parking lot for the restaurant. This is always a tell tale sign that there is something special about the place.

The moment I stepped in I could see why. The proprietor, Rick, was behind the counter, welcoming, orchestrating and keeping the flow of things in step with the day. Behind the counter there was a wall of coffee mugs and I would later see their immediate purpose. The restaurant itself is small, with perhaps twenty or twenty-five of a combination of tables and booths. As we stepped through the door threshold it was apparent that every table was filled. We gave our name and were assured the wait would be fifteen minutes or so. As the minutes ticked by I observed something of a Midwest flavor.

Rick knew most every customer by name. He would take their name, chit chat with each and everyone, and ask what car they were driving. He gave them a time frame and then he served up a coffee mug full of hot coffee while they waited in their car for their time to be served. If it was their time they would be summoned by the server to come in and take their seat. Seldom do you see a restaurant owner who takes such a personal interest in his customers and genuinely values their business.

After being seated I noticed immediately that there was not just one server per table. There were several servers and they all flitted around asking you for your order, drink order and refills and whether or not you needed anything else. The food

was absolutely delicious, one of the best breakfasts I've ever eaten. The price was reasonable with a bill of just under \$11.00 a person. I've spent more at well known restaurants.

I don't know Rick, and am not related to anyone who works there but when I see a place in this day and age that goes over and above to make me feel like I'm being served in my own kitchen I feel it's well worth mentioning.

Thank you Rick for the hospitality.

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## **YEARNING IN THE WILDERNESS**

By N.C. WARD

Leaving Yellowstone Park willingly is an oxymoron. It's difficult to turn ones back on the beauty of our first National Park. Driving south on this late summer day, we were headed for the Grand Teton area, slowed by too many outstanding photo ops.

It was after sundown in that pre-dark time of day when we could "feel" the bulk of the Tetons but not really see them. Reaching our RV parking was important, though, so we continued down the valley. Once hooked up and settled in our site, we fixed a quick meal then adjourned to the patio, bemoaning the loss of viewing the mountains. In 1910, an uncle had taught school in the area and wrote a moving letter on the effect of the Tetons at different times of year. I wanted to see them as he saw them.

After discussion we decided to get up early to watch the sunrise on the face of the mountain range. My contention was that it would be terribly early in the morning. His comeback was that it wasn't as early as it would have been in June. I succumbed to his logic.

That's why we were slowly driving back north on a narrow roadway in the before-dawn hours of the day, looking for a spot where we would have a clear shot of the mountain peaks at daybreak. In the dim light we could see several large creatures milling about. One of them broke away from the others, crossed the road, and kept pace with us as we drove. Head up and stepping high, he was a majestic beast. Periodically, he threw back his head and gave voice to a resonant bugle. We realized we were midst a small group of elk. Our personal escort trotted ahead of us between the side of the road and a low, split rail fence paralleling us. With braking care, we stayed a respectful distance behind him. I was watching

the animal closely, when without warning he seemed to levitate, and float, sideways, across the fence, hit the ground without breaking stride and we continued down the road nearly together. Once again he lifted his head and let out a hearty bugle that echoed throughout the area..

The sky was gradually lightening and we were looking for the perfect vantage point to take pictures, when our elk, whom I'd mentally named "Ernie", shot off at an angle. There, waiting not far from the fence was a lovely, lanky, little cow, maybe a svelte 350 pounds, flapping her eye lashes. Ernie took off at a fast trot, stopping just short of running her over. After what appeared to have been some interchange, they moved off together.

We continued along the road. Still, in my imagination, I could hear Ernie saying to her, "Hi, Sweetcakes, Look, let's mosey over to those trees. I don't know what the Wilderness is coming to – it's lousy with two-legged creatures. They climb in and out of their shells and stare and point and I wish they'd go back to where they came from. There's just no privacy, anymore." Side by side they fade into the fringe of trees.

Then, from a clearing by the roadside, we can see a bottom-to-top portion of the Grand Tetons. The granite peaks seem poised to the grab the first rays of the sun to pin a new day on the sky.

The mountain tips were almost immediately bathed in golden light and as we sat, cameras primed, the light spilled down the face of the magnificent range which is called "Grand" so appropriately.

But, even as we watched, again I "heard" Ernie saying to Sweetcakes, "Come on, I wanna show you a great little meadow I found down by Jenny Lake - you'll love it."

And in spite of our desire to follow them, we stayed where we were - and wished them the happy fulfillment of their future.

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## **AN ANIMAL STORY FROM CAROL WARREN:**

I had just returned from a shopping trip to Winco and was still unloading my groceries and as it was raining, I just quickly put each bag of groceries on the floor in the utility room and would go back for a few more bags. When I returned, I saw the one with my fresh deli meats was missing.

I looked outside, and sure enough, our latest rescue dog from the pound, had grabbed the plastic bag and pulled it right out the pet door with her. Fortunately, it was tied shut and she hadn't tried to open it yet; but I'm sure she would have in another minute or two. The groceries were saved, barely, and I won't make that mistake again you can be sure.

