



The INKSLINGER

HIGH DESERT BRANCH CWC
Inspiring a Community of Writers

Sail On
March 2022



March 12 Meeting: Bookstagrammers and Influencers: Find Them, Pitch Them, and Get Them to Review Your Book

If you've ever wondered how to get to Bookstagrammers and bigger influencers, this class is for you! If you're ready to promote a new release or revive an already published title a pitch to online influencers and Bookstagrammers could be a major building block to your success.

But where do you start?

This Saturday meeting of the HDCWC will break down the various types of "influencers," from bloggers to Bookstagrammers and online media. We'll dig into how to find them, how to pitch them, and how to get them to spread the word about your book!

Here's what you'll learn:

- Who are "influencers" and how you can find them and how to pitch them
- Who are Bookstagrammers and how to find them and how to pitch them!
- Creative ways to get your book(s) in front of Bookstagrammers!
- How to find the best bloggers/influencers/Bookstagrammers for your book
- Adding podcasts to the mix—because they're influencers too!
- How to get the most out of your review/feature or mention!
- Long-term relationship building with influencers, yes you can and why it matters!

Penny C. Sansevieri, Founder and CEO Author Marketing Experts, Inc., is a best-selling author and internationally recognized book marketing and media relations expert. She is an adjunct professor teaching self-publishing for NYU. She is the author of eighteen books, including *From Book to Bestseller*, *How to Sell Your Books by the Truckload on Amazon*, *5 Minute Book Marketing for Authors* and *How to Revise and Re-Release Your Book!*



ACT II Meeting March 22 @ 6:00

Pauline Wiles Teaches “Websites that Wow Readers: How to Create or Update Your Online Home”

Your website is the cornerstone of your writer platform, and it needs to work hard for you, 24 hours a day. Learn easy tips and insider tricks so you can spend less time battling technology, and more time writing your next book.

Key takeaways:

- ~ When is the ideal time to create your writer website? ... and why it might be sooner than you think.
- ~ How technology is becoming simpler and more affordable, whether you want to build your first website or switch your existing site to a new platform.
- ~ How to identify the one clear call to action your website must deliver.
- ~ Current trends in website design; how to avoid a site that looks dated.
- ~ How to stretch your website budget.

Speaker Bio:

Pauline Wiles is an indie author turned website designer who builds beautiful, custom websites for writers who mean business.

As a writer herself, she noticed others were often overwhelmed by this task. Now she aims not only to create powerful websites for other writers but also to dispel some of the myths around how difficult a web project should be.

British by birth, Pauline is now a contented resident of California, although she admits to an occasional yearning for afternoon tea and historic homes. Her professional resume includes teaching computing to adults on both sides of the Atlantic, as well as desktop support, entrepreneurship education, and marketing analysis.

Website: <https://www.paulinewiles.com/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/paulinejwiles/>

Email: web@paulinewiles.com



High Desert Branch
of the
California Writers
Club
Board of Directors



*The following officers
and appointed positions are current for
the fiscal year ending July 2022.*

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Quote of the Month

By

Michael Raff

"There is no material
with which human
beings work which has
so much potential
energy as words."

- Earnest Calkins

For what it's worth

Writing is Focusing

Our Address

HDCWC
17645 Fisher Street
Victorville, CA 92395



Dwight Norris
from the
President

Writing For The Ages

When you stop and think about it, writing really is an amazing activity that can be executed by anyone with an active mind and the desire to write. Don't have a computer? Grab an old-fashioned typewriter. Don't have one of those? Find a pencil and a scrap of paper and record your thoughts. You can write about serious world issues or everyday nuances about daily life. Your writing can be serious or funny. Paid or unpaid. Regardless, you can establish a legacy for your family so your grandchildren can discover what you were thinking about the issues of life.

I wrote this little poem after college kids started sprinting naked across the campuses of higher learning. I never tried that, but I sure was curious about it. So here are some of my thoughts on this phenomenon recorded about half a century ago.



Streaking O'er the Campus Madly

'Twas once a word in the book called
streaking,
Came, it did, just after seeking,
Quite a ways was it past peeking,
And meanings had it some.

Once it meant with colors blending,
Rainbow spectrums never ending,
Hues from heaven ever sending,
Streaking was it then.

Still it meant to rush by quickly
Darting there and going swiftly,
Running fast or walking briskly,
Streaking, o'er again.

Now new crazes sweep our nation,
Give the word more connotation,
Find this searching generation,
Streaking o'er the campus madly!

Theirs is not to cram the booth,
Inventive, bold, and basic youth,
Nor let them yet be called uncouth,
Streaking as they do!

Neither theirs to work the phones,
Nor choking more on goldfish bones,
Let them be called the natural ones,
Streaking o'er the campus madly!
One by one they shed their clothes,
Naked all from head to toes,
N'er recalling any woes,
Streaking out the door!

There they go and running fast,
Sights of them not long do last,
Making crowds to stand aghast,
Streaking o'er the campus madly!





Mike Apodaca

**from the
Vice President**

Coming Into Focus

Writing affords us all many choices. One choice involves what to write. Do we write short pieces or books? Do we write fiction or non-fiction? Do we self-publish or strive for a place with a traditional publisher? Do we try to get an agent or do we go it alone?

I've recently made a significant decision regarding my writing and, really, my life. I have heard from several sources lately that we should write what we are passionate about, that our writing should come from a fire in our bellies. When we write otherwise, it comes off inauthentic and shallow and we will eventually give up.

I've been working on four different books. Two are thrillers, one is part of a series, and the other is a non-fiction book.

After some personal re-evaluation, I've put aside all projects except the last one. I'm using the extra time to dive into research. I've been able to read and outline two books a week. I've also put together a 42-card PowerPoint on it for the On-Topic program. Best of all, I feel focused—like I've found a larger agenda where my writing fits.

I'm seeing it like this. I believe I've come to know my life's purpose within a larger cosmic story.



Since this is the context where my life fits, it makes sense that this is also the most appropriate context for my writing.

One thing that's impressed me most about some of the speakers we've had lately is their ability to speak deeply on their topics. Even when asked questions they are able to bring in their profound knowledge. To be able to do this we have to love our topics and be willing to devote our lives to them. They must be part of us and our life's mission.

It is possible to allow our lives to be dominated by the pressures of the immediate. There are always more things to do than time to do them. The needs of money, family, cleaning and maintaining our stuff, etc. can put us into a frantic routine where we're always moving but getting nowhere. We can also pour ourselves into social media, gaming, or binge viewing and spend all our time being entertained. Again, this really gets us nowhere. After we've finished any activity, we should be able to answer the question—so what? Why was this worth it? What did it mean?

I'm not going to tell you what ultimate purpose I think should give meaning to your life and your writing. That's not my place. What I am going to encourage you to do is to find ultimate meaning for yourself, if you haven't already. It ignites that fire in your belly.

Writing is hard. It takes discipline and sacrifice. If we don't have a BIG reason to write, then we will eventually lose our steam and want to quit. Statistically, it is unlikely that all of us will become famous or even be able to make a living from our writing. So why are we doing it? When you can answer that question, when you can see how your writing fits into your life purpose, which fits into the larger meaning, then you'll recapture that fire in your belly, and no one will be able to stop you from expressing yourself in writing.

You will be a herald.

Aristotle: "The unexamined life is not worth living." I would add, it's also not worth writing about.





Jenny Margotta

from an

EDITOR'S DESK

Southernisms

I recently had lunch at the Olive Garden with Bob and Judy Isbill and at one point asked Bob to pass the breadsticks. Now, most of you know—or can tell from my accent, which tends to come out whether I want it to or not—that I grew up in the South. (Yes, despite having been a Union state in the Civil War, West Virginians consider themselves to be Southerners.) At any rate, I said to Bob, “Can you reach me the breadsticks, please.”

Bob, of course, handed them to me and then commented on what was a distinctly Southern phrase.

Since then I have been thinking about other Southern expressions I often use or love to apply to characters in my stories.

One of my favorite examples of “Southern speak” is one I grew up hearing on an almost daily basis. “I’m fixin’ to do” something. It’s most often used to get someone off your back who’s nagging you.

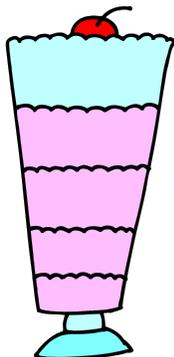
“Honey, you promised to mow the yard.”

“I’m fixin’ to get it done. Don’t nag.”

Notice there’s no definite timeframe, just a commitment that you’ll get around to it eventually.

People in my hometown also shopped at “the tea store,” which was the local grocery store, the A&P. Its official name was the Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company; hence, “the tea store.” I remember how excited my mom was when they came out with “store bought” pies. And many would say they carried things home in “pokes.” A “poke” was a paper bag (or “sack” as it was more commonly called).

Another Southernism is “pop,” what is known on the West Coast as soda. If you order a soda in the town I grew up in, it would consist of fizzy water, ice cream (most often vanilla) and chocolate syrup.



Here are a few other common “Southernisms.”

“Y’all.” This can apply to one or several people, but if you’re speaking to a larger group, it’s “all y’all.”

“Over yonder,” as in “I think I saw it over yonder.” It’s kind of a “Goldilocks” statement, meaning it’s not too far away, but not too close either.

“Feelin’ ornery.” Its meaning is the same across the country—mean or cantankerous—but the pronunciation differs in various regions. Southerners say “AWN-ry” or “ORN-ry,” while the rest of the country says “OR-ner-y.” Hey, why waste time saying three syllables when two will do just fine!

“Reckon,” as in “I don’t reckon she’s gonna be too happy about that.” It is a true Southern staple and essentially means “I think” or “I believe.”

“Bless your heart.” Watch out if you’re in the South and you hear a lady exclaim, “Bless your heart!” It is *not* a blessing, but rather the Southern politeness version of “What the heck are you thinking?” And if you hear “Why bless your sweet little heart,” then she’s really doesn’t like you.

There are many others, like “pride of place,” or “got me an itch to (do something).” And single words like ‘mater (tomato), ramps (any kind of onion), mess (a unit of measurement, as in “a whole mess of green beans), red up (clean, as in “red up your room), spell (a unit of time, as in “sit a spell and talk”).



Whether you use Southernisms, Texas-speak (which is different from Southern), New England expressions or “Valley speak” here in California, such regional terms are a great way to add a layer to your characters. Just don’t overdo it. As with anything, a little bit is generally better than too much.

Word of the Month:

Haecceity (hak-SEE-ə-dee) NOUN. Origin: Latin, mid-17th century.

The property of being a unique and individual thing.

Examples of **Haecceity** in a sentence:

“Each vase she sculpted has a particular haecceity.”

“The teacher knew each child has haecceity and can’t be constrained by categories.”

The Most Famous Authors of All Time

BY
Michael Raff

Fredrick Douglass, continued

During the American Civil War, Douglass fought his own battles: for the equality of his people, voting rights for blacks and women, for the emancipation of slaves, and for blacks to be able to enlist in the Northern Army. When the latter was accomplished, Douglass's oldest son served in the 54th Massachusetts Infantry and fought at Fort Wagner. His son, Fredrick Jr., served as a recruiter. With the adoption of the 13th Amendment, Douglass said, "We were waiting and listening as for a bolt from the sky—we were watching—by the dim light of the stars for the dawn of a new day—we were longing for the answer to the agonizing prayers of centuries."

During Reconstruction, Douglass received several political appointments. When the Ku Klux Klan rose, he fought them by supporting Ulysses S. Grant's presidential campaign, who passed the Civil Rights Act, aka, the Klan Act. This made Grant unpopular with whites but won praise from Douglass.

In 1872, Douglass became the first African American nominated for vice president on the Equal Rights Party ticket. Throughout this era, he continued speaking, battling racism, and fighting for voting rights for blacks and women.

Douglass had five children with his first wife, Anna Murry. She died in 1882. Douglass married Helen Pitts, a white abolitionist. The marriage stirred outrage, and Douglass said that his first marriage had been to someone the color of his mother and his second to someone the color of his father.

Moving to D.C. in his later years, Douglass was named Marshal for the District of Columbia by Rutherford Hayes, the first person of color to be named so. He was also appointed Recorder of Deeds for the District of Columbia. He continued his speaking engagements in the U.S. and also in England, Ireland, France, Italy, Egypt, and Greece. He spoke against the separatist movements, for which he was criticized by other leaders and audiences who booed him. He said in 1894, "I hope and trust all will come out right in the end, but the immediate future looks dark and troubled. I cannot shut my eyes to the ugly facts before me."

President Harrison appointed Douglass as the minister resident and consul-general to the Republic of Haiti, but he resigned because Harrison intended on gaining access to Haitian territories.

On February 20, 1895, Douglass received a standing ovation at the National Council of Women in Washington, D.C. When he returned home, he died of a massive heart attack at the age of 77.

Fun Facts about Fredrick Douglass

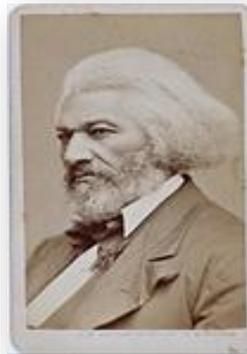
He met with radical abolitionist John Brown a few times in 1859. At the last meeting, Brown urged Douglass to join him on a raid to Harper's Ferry. He declined, saying the mission was suicidal. Brown was later hanged for his part in the raid.

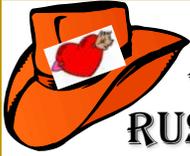
On April 14, 1876, Douglass gave a speech at the unveiling of the Emancipation Memorial in Lincoln Park. He received a standing ovation and Mary Lincoln supposedly gave him her late husband's favorite walking stick.

In 1877, he visited his former slave master, Thomas Auld, on his deathbed. The two men reconciled. Auld's daughter, who had attended one of Douglass's speeches, had set up the meeting, which is said to have given Douglass closure.

In 1899, a statue of Douglass was unveiled in Rochester, N.Y. making him the first African American to be memorialized in this country.

Until next month, keep reading and writing.





A WRITER'S LIFE

RUSTY LAGRANGE



Putting Words Together

Some of the most binding rules in English are things that native speakers know but don't know they know. Many thanks to Cassie Werber at *Quartz.com*, a podcast that looks at everyday ideas, for finding this little gem.

As writers, who tend to describe things in our creativeness, we need to sound out and think logically. So when you come across a sentence that suddenly “bothers” you, it may have to do with an innate understanding of how “things” are put together in structure and sound.

Let's look at that.

If I have a “pretty little antique red wagon flower pot.” I have just followed the correct order of words by not really paying attention to them.

“Adjectives absolutely have to be in this order: **opinion-size-age-shape-color-origin-material-purpose Noun.**” — Mark Forsyth. (I suggest you write this down in case you run into a lengthy description that must be written in the correct structure.)



“Adjectives absolutely have to be in this order: **opinion-size-age-shape-color-origin-material-purpose Noun.**”

So, as Forsyth's book says, “You can have a *lovely little old rectangular green French silver whittling knife*. But if you mess with that order in the slightest you'll sound like a maniac.”

This quote comes from his book called *The Elements of Eloquence: How to Turn the Perfect English Phrase*.

He proves his point by saying, “Mixing up the above phrase does feel inexplicably wrong (a rectangular silver French old little lovely whittling green knife...), though nobody can say why. It's almost like secret knowledge we all share.” And that's why I can't write: “I have a red antique little wagon pretty flower pot.”

It strains the ear and jerks our head then makes us stop and search out the reason it stopped us. That is one thing you do not want to force on your reader. If the reader stops and ponders what's wrong, you have lost his interest, he's lost his pace, and now you are the center of attention instead of your story. You've shattered *the suspension of disbelief*. It gives him the reason to take a break—or worse yet—put the book down forever.

It's the same with extensive dialogue, detailed scene structures, consistency in your sci-fi world, and describing the environment that you created for your reader. If you mess with them, you'll lose them.



Images courtesy of Pixabay.com



Club Meetings

The On-Topic Sampler

Saturday February 12th we had an in-person and Zoom meeting where we showcased four of our On-Topic speakers.

Emmalisa Hill taught us how to interpret our dreams. She said that if we are ever in a quandary, pray that God shows us what He wants us to know in our dreams and then sleep on it. She gave us the example of Tabitha Brown, an actress who came to Los Angeles to get into show business. Ms. Brown did stand-up and didn't get anywhere. She had a health scare and told God that if He saved her, He could have her. She became a vegan and had a dream with a small screen in it. God told her to start making videos (something she did not want to do). She made a video of her eating a sandwich from Whole Foods. It went viral and they offered her a contract. Before she knew it she had a career.



Jim Grayson, our second speaker, gave us a fascinating explanation of what he learned from being a policeman and working security for 24 years.

Jim explained how to deescalate confrontations and how businesses (stores, restaurants, etc.) can make their businesses more theft and vandalism proof.

There is nothing like hearing from someone who is an expert in their field, a person whose experience on the job has given them more than book learning. They have acquired that amazing quantity: wisdom.



Our third speaker was our own videographer, secretary, and entrepreneur Joan Rudder-Ward. Joan has dedicated her life to being a role model to young women and empowering them to do great things with their lives.

Joan's presentation was studded with inspiring pictures of girls she's worked with through the years.

There was one slide that told it all. It had a cat looking into a mirror and seeing a lion. Joan used this picture to represent the importance of identity and self-image. This has been Joan's life work.

Joan ended her talk with a video of a dog barking at a cat who is crouched down a stairwell. The dog really seems to have the upper hand. And then, with a burst of energy, the cat flings itself at the dog, barreling after it, chasing it up onto a bench where it cowers with several other terrified dogs.

Our last speaker was our own president, Dwight Norris. Dwight gave us a presentation titled "Creating a Presentation You Can Be Proud Of." Dwight really showed us all how it's done.

The core of Dwight's presentation was Aristotle's pyramid for speaking. Dwight showed us a plain pyramid that represented a good presentation. It had a regular shape and built to a climax. Other slides showed us a pyramid with spikes on its sides. These represented issues brought up by the speaker. They might be interesting, but they take the presentation off track.

Another slide showed a pyramid with a big block on top of it. The block represented a huge dump of information a speaker gives that seems unrelated to his topic.

What impressed all of us was Dwight's excellent delivery. He explained that he practiced many times, making sure he had everything just right. It really showed.

This meeting certainly showcased some of the talent in our branch.

Mike Apodaca





Your Presentation

As our branch gets ready to launch the On-Topic Speakers for You program, Bob Isbill and I felt our speakers needed a little more coaching and support. So we put aside an ACT II meeting to do just that.

There were four parts to the presentation, which was themed on judging a book.

1. The Book's Cover. We are told not to judge books by their covers, but we do. When we do presentations it is vitally important that we present ourselves as professionals. Dress appropriately for the venue. If you are doing a Zoom meeting, make sure your background is attractive and sets the right tone. You can see the horrible view from our last Zoom meeting in the right top corner—this is how not to do it.

2. The Book's Content. My encouragement was to continue to study your material. When we go out, we are presenting ourselves as experts.

I also showed everyone the basic steps and tricks in producing a PowerPoint presentation and a good Zoom meeting.

3. The Book's Transmission. This part had to do with the delivery of your presentation. I encouraged everyone to relax and to try to connect with their audience. Speakers need to decide ahead of time what to do with their hands (no fish leaves).



Speakers also need to speak into the microphone. What sounds loud to you on the stage is just right for the audience. If you are doing a Zoom, it is helpful to have people write questions in the chat so they don't interrupt you and their questions can be answered one at a time.

4. The Book Business. It is up to every member of the On-Topic Speakers bureau to negotiate their own appearances. I suggested that for in-person meetings they arrange to have a table to sell their books afterwards. But how do you sell your books if your presentation is on Zoom? I showed everyone how to make their own QR code that will take people directly to their Amazon page, all an attendee has to do is point their phone cameras at the screen. Technology can be amazing!

I also encouraged everyone to get a square or a Venmo account so they can get paid electronically.

As we get ready to launch On-Topic Speakers, we are all feeling butterflies. Partly from the excitement of getting speaking engagements and selling our books. The other part, the nerves, can be overcome by preparation and a proper attitude.

Mike Apodaca

On-Topic Speakers for You Gaining Ground



How Can I Get My Books Sold? Join the On-Topic Speakers



With a heavy investment of research and time, you have written your book(s)—a repository of your ideas and original point of view. You put your treasure on Amazon, where you are hoping people find it and buy it. What can you do to boost your sales? You can become a speaker who speaks to various groups (most of which will pay you) and sell your books. Think about how many authors our club has sponsored through the years. That could be you. Speaking is how you and your work become known.



How Can I Get Involved?



Contact Bob Isbill at risbill@aol.com and let him know you are interested. Send the following information to me (Mike Apodaca) at mrdaca.ma@gmail.com.

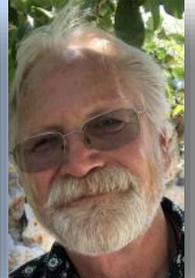
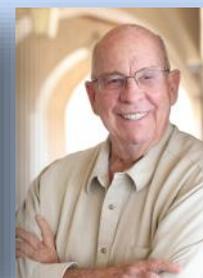
- ◆ A headshot
- ◆ A short biography (one that you would want to be introduced with)
- ◆ A list of presentations you will do with a short logline for each
- ◆ Pictures of your book covers and a short description of each book
- ◆ Any social media or website you want linked to your page



Put together your speech, including your audio visuals (PowerPoint, videos, artifacts, etc.). Practice your speech. Keep studying and become an expert on your topic. Contact Bob Isbill and see if you can practice your presentation for an audience.



We launch our On-Topic Speakers for You website in March (we want to give our speakers a little more time to prepare). On-Topic Speakers should provide new opportunities for you to introduce yourself and your passion and to help you sell your books.



HDCWC Celebrates Black History



My friend Gabe Ige and I showed up at the Hesperia Public Library about 4:30. We set up tables and chairs and the sound system. One by one, people showed up, including Joan Rudder-Ward, our videographer, and Rita Wells with her wonderful treats and her Valentine's Day decorations. Mary Langer Thompson, who spearheaded the event, set up a large display of books written by African American authors. We started the program at about ten after five. Dwight Norris opened the event, followed by our Master of Ceremonies T. Faye Griffin. She gave us all a warm welcome and explained what Black History Month meant to her. Next, Judith Pfeffer read selections from a science fiction book, *The Space Between Worlds*, written by a dear friend of hers who is a High Desert local. Dwight Norris came next and with great emotion shared part of his book, *The Story of Sandy Armistead: A Black Man's Journey in a White Man's World*. Next, Michael Raff gave us a history lesson, sharing with us about the life and writings of Fredrick Douglass—what a deeply impressive man. Ann Miner spoke about the amazing career of Louis Armstrong. I shared a children's book by Douglass Crews called *Big Mamma's*. Mary Langer Thompson shared a poem that she used



to read to her classes when she was a teacher. At this point we took a short break and talked like a big family. We ended with Kimberly Wonder's poetry and Brian and Gloria Roberts sharing their hearts. This was a wonderful celebration where we honored the history and lives of black people here and everywhere.

Mike Apodaca



Writers are Readers

By Mary Langer Thompson

Greta L. Smith's memoir, *Once Upon a Time in Sweden*, was published in 2014 and is told through the eyes of a young child, age four, who traveled from California to Sweden with her mother in 1938.

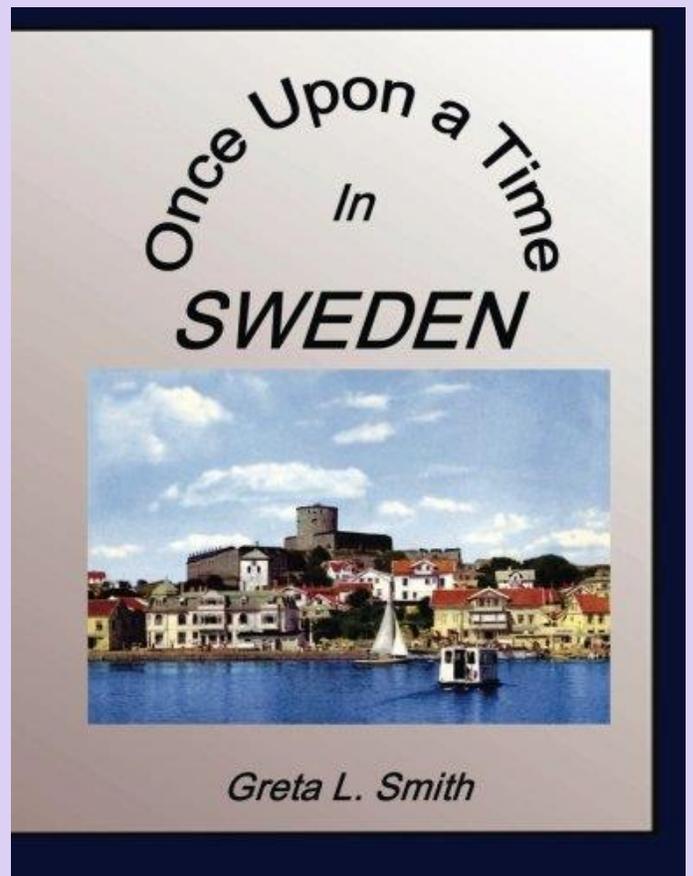
They intended to visit relatives for one month, but the beginnings of WWII kept them in Sweden for over two years.

Greta's journal of those turbulent times in Europe is dedicated to her mother, Gunhild Margit Palm Teter, whose letters helped her complete her book.

Her purpose was to show her children and grandchildren and all future generations, "how our ancestors lived during a different time in history." Current club member Mary Ruth Hughes was her editor.

Greta participated in a panel of memoirists at University Preparatory High School in Victorville for our Dorothy C. Blakely Memoir Project in 2018. Sadly, she passed away earlier this year and will be missed. Her memoir is still available on Amazon.

"A young mother and her four-year-old daughter traveled from California to Sweden to visit family members. They expected to stay a month. Little did they know it would be twenty-seven months before they were able to return to the United States of America. This is a journal about my life in Sweden during those turbulent times in Europe before and at the beginning of World War II. The year was 1938." - Greta Smith



If you have a book review, send it to the editor at mrdaca.ma@gmail.com

Honoring Women's History Month

“Well-behaved women rarely make history,” said Eleanor Roosevelt. That’s why you’ll want to attend the High Desert Branch of the California Writers Club celebration of women writers to read or listen to poems and passages by and about women. The celebration will be held on Monday, March 14, 2022 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Hesperia Library.

If you attended February’s African American Read-In, you will know how inspirational an evening of reading and listening can be. We may even play a game featuring women suffragettes and you may experience a “Blind Date with a Woman Writer.”

Our club has lots of women writers, so sign up to read your published or unpublished work or that of a famous or upcoming woman writer. Men can read too, as long as the subject matter is a woman or women. All genres and even quotations are acceptable. Plan to read for 5-7 minutes.

Sign up no later than Monday, March 7th, with Mary Langer Thompson at

mh_thompson@hotmail.com.

Spaces will fill up quickly, so don’t wait. We want to leave part of the evening open for guest writers, as well.

Refreshments will be served. We hope to see you there!

Mary Langer Thompson



Critique Groups: The Writer's Secret



There's nothing more helpful to a writer than being in a good critique group. Having other writers put their eyes on your work and give you suggestions is invaluable.

When you join a critique group, you commit to reading and critiquing the work of others while they edit your work. It requires two things: 1) That you are writing. The fuel of the group is the writing. 2) That you are growing in your writing ability. Editing others will help you write better. If you take your writing seriously and intend on writing longterm, then either join a critique group or start one. You can meet in person or on Zoom. Both ways have their advantages.

Marilyn Ramirez (King) is starting up the Wordsmith's critique group again. Meetings will be held twice a month on Thursday evenings at 6:00 pm. If you've been wanting to join a critique group that is serious about getting your work published, this group is for you. You can contact Marilyn at: marilynking6318@gmail.com.

Poemsmiths, who meet every other Thursday at 3:30, have one spot open at this time. Contact Mary at: mh_thompson@hotmail.com

Riverside Dickens Festival



My granddaughter became a suffragette



A giant strolled the grounds



A Puppet Show!



My grandkids enjoyed the Peter Rabbit Tea.



There were booths selling all kinds of things. CWC even had a booth!



He was really riding this!

The Dickens Festival of Riverside was Saturday, February 26-27. My wife and I went with my daughter and her husband and the grandkids. There was plenty there for everyone and it was fun to see so many people dressed in the period.

There was plenty of food from the period (we ate meat pies, fish and chips, and English pastries). This will become a yearly event for our family. **Mike Apodaca**

Let's Walk and Talk: Weather Permitting

I can't be the only one who needs to exercise. A great way to get our needed daily steps is to walk the Apple Valley River Walk, a wide two-mile walkway of beautifully laid concrete. The ground is level and easy on the feet. It's one of the great features of the Victor Valley.

On March 15th at 2:00 pm, we will meet at the starting point of the trail, just east of Victor Valley College, up from the Campus Police Station.

Directions: From Bear Valley Road go north on Mojave Fish Hatchery Road then a quick right on the first street (the one next to the Campus Police Station). Take that road to the end and you'll see the covering over the tables where we'll meet at 2:00.

Suggestions:

Wear comfortable shoes

Watch the weather and dress appropriately

Use sunscreen and bring a hat and sunglasses

Bring water

Come ready to make a friend

Put it on your calendar now before you forget

Mike Apodaca



March Holidays

By Mike Apodaca

Preparing this newsletter, I did a search for holidays in March. I had no idea there were so many. Here are just a few:

- March 1: We start the month on National Peanut Butter Lover's Day and National Pig Day.
- March 2: Curl up with a good book for Read Across America Day (it is Dr. Seuss' birthday).
- March 3: It is World Hearing Day. Do I need to say that louder?
- March 4: Look up for World Day of Prayer.
- March 5: Multiple Personality Day. Tell all your internal friends.
- March 6: Smile, it's National Dentists Day
- March 7: National Flapjack Day—I'll have mine with butter and syrup.
- March 8: They put National Proofreading Day and Be Nasty Day on the same day? Huh?
- March 9: National Meatball Day. "On top of spaghetti, all covered with cheese, I lost my . . ."
- March 10: Eat popcorn, play bagpipes, wear a nametag, play Mario, and use paper money.
- March 11: Today is Middle Name Pride Day. Tell someone yours. Mine is Allen.
- March 12: Watch *Psycho* (or one of his other movies) in honor of Alfred Hitchcock Day.
- March 13: National Good Samaritan Day. Shouldn't that be every day?
- March 14: National Pi Day. Think about it . . .
- March 15: Ides of March and Everything You Think Is Wrong Day. Ironic.
- March 16: Everything You Do Is Right Day. Whoever named this day doesn't know me.
- March 17: St. Patrick's Day. The man who saved Western Civilization. Look it up.
- March 18: National Supreme Sacrifice Day. Take a moment of silence for those who gave all.
- March 19: This is Certified Nurses Day. Love these gals so much I married one.
- March 20: World Storytelling Day. Time to knock out a short story for the next *Inkslinger*
- March 21: This is National Poetry Day. If you can't write it (like me), then read some.
- March 22: National Goof Off Day. Really? We needed a day for this?
- March 23: This is National Chip and Dip, Melba Toast, and Tamale Day. Party!
- March 24: Everything's better covered in chocolate. National Chocolate Covered Raisin Day.
- March 25: Tolkien Reading Day. Try reading one of his short stories.
- March 26: It's Make Up Your Own Holiday Day, so go for it!
- March 27: Think about what you will write on National Scribble Day.
- March 28: This is National Something On A Stick Day. Enough said.
- March 29: This is World Piano Day. I'm listening to Elton John and Billy Joel.
- March 30: Today is World Bipolar Day. I'm gonna love it and hate it.
- March 31: Make sure you check your mirrors. It's World Backup Day.

Not in Kansas Anymore . . .

By Freddi Gold

The ranch-style house where we lived was still and quiet that night as I lay in bed, fully dressed—no sheets on the mattress and just a heavy wool blanket over me. Darkness surrounded me as a moth flitted by my ear for a moment. I quickly pawed in the dark to brush it away. How much longer would it be?

My thoughts drifted to school, to my teacher, who refused to call me by my full first name like the others did. Instead, she used my nickname, Fritz. I liked that. My hair had changed from light, sunny blonde to an almost-auburn color that cold winter in New York. An image of Baron appeared behind my closed eyes. Our black Doberman Pincher was somewhere, travelling to where we would end up, but I didn't know how or wonder too long about that.

Mom quietly entered the room, a shaft of light from the hallway sliding in. "Help me get the boys together", she said softly. "It's time for us to go."

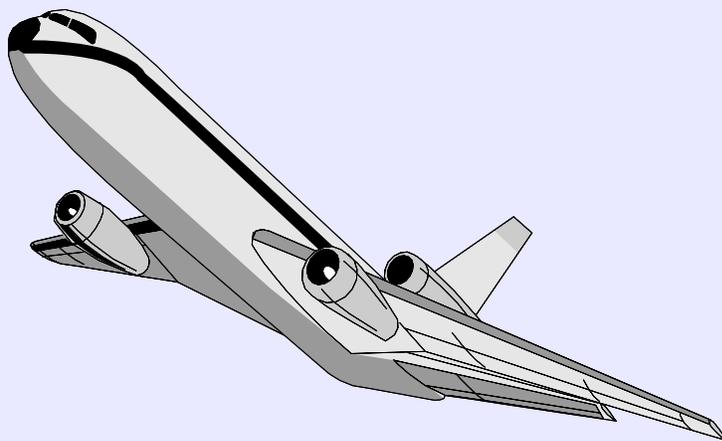
Grandpa was in the living room and the house was so empty and hollow sounding as Mom with her big, eight months pregnant belly, poked and prodded us into winter jackets, caps and hats and gloves and funneled us out to the Ford "Woody" station wagon. The February night was crisp and very cold. Stars dotted the dark cloak that surrounded us as we drifted off to sleep, the adults chatting in the front and the rhythm of the tires on country roads lulling us safely into dreamland.

The bright lights inside the huge airport building and the steady stream of voices made me swivel my head in amazement. I looked up at the high ceilings and back down at the commotion of travelers moving about. Mom was consumed with keeping the boys close and not losing any of us. She was swaddled in extra clothes, making herself look very fat. She'd read that they might not let her travel as pregnant as she was. She thought if she made herself look fat, they wouldn't notice that she was pregnant.

We filed into the fuselage of the large airplane and I pushed past John to get a window seat. He complained loudly about that, but my dad hushed us and told John to sit in the middle. I smiled secretly at that. Struggling to stay awake, to see more, I felt the plane taxi and the propellers hum, and before long, sleep covered me like a warm blanket.

Six hours passed. Light from the small window begged my eyes to open. The sky was so blue and I sat up to look out. The beautiful, dark blue ocean stretched to the horizon. Here and there the white caps of waves lifted and fell, lifted and fell. John leaned over my shoulder, and I let him.

The stewardess interrupted our reverie by asking if we would like some orange juice, then a cinnamon roll which we gleefully enjoyed. I looked outside again as the color of the ocean changed to turquoise. Then, there, something bright green. "John, look!" I exclaimed excitedly. "Look!"



Not in Kansas Anymore . . .

By Freddi Gold (Continued)

The island seemed so small. How would we get down there? The lower the plane flew, the more excited we became. Mountains and fields came into view all in varying shades of green. Then a beach, palm trees and soon we were flying over rooftops and . . . what was that? Was that a castle? No . . . a fort, with turrets and bricks and what looked like a cannon. The green grass outside the fort tumbled down into the rocks and splashing waves from the ocean.

The plane touched the runway and sped past the trees, eventually decreasing speed until we turned and slowly pulled up to a long building. Some men with brown shirts pushed a metal set of stairs up to the side of the plane. The door of the plane opened, and under Dad's watchful eye we walked carefully down the aisle.

As I stood in the doorway looking out, I was in Wonderland. What magical, different place had we come to? Mom said, "Oh, smell the coffee? I can smell coffee everywhere."

I was too preoccupied with sound. "What was that sound?" I asked everyone. They ignored me.

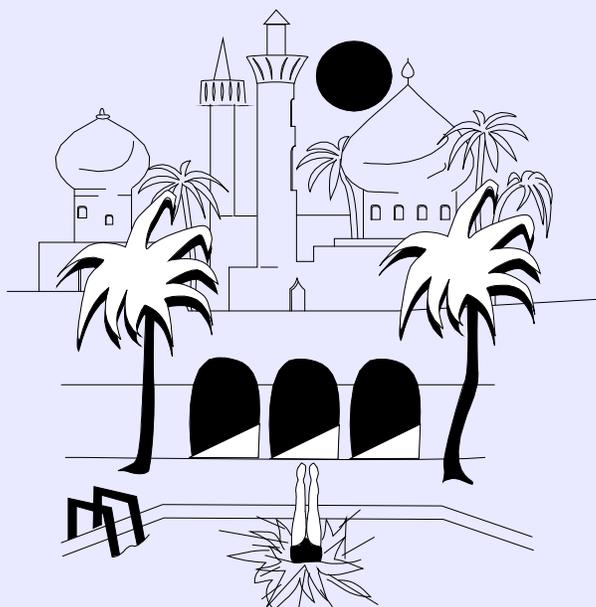
Uncle Freddie, Mom's brother came running to greet us all.

"What's that noise?" I asked again and again. It annoyed me that no one seemed to know what I was talking about. It was like a background sizzling-in-a-frying-pan kind of sound mixed with clicks and chirps and pops and cooing. I had never heard this sound before.

My uncle drove us to a house. It was a bright, chalky orange color and surrounded by flowering hedges all around the yard. I was given a room with a metal headboard on the bed and a metal three-drawer dresser. Mom and Dad said not to unpack my suitcase, we wouldn't be there long. All the windows had wooden shutters. No glass and no screens. I could see birds outside and that night I slept deeply.

I woke to sun pouring in the window, broken by the leaves of bushes outside and red hibiscus flowers. Sitting up in bed, I stretched. It was so beautiful and the omnipresent annoying sound had faded away. I realized that the insects and birds and pink *coquis* made all that racket. I was proud I had figured that mystery out on my own. I felt so grown up and independent. This was a new part of my decade-long life. Happily, I looked around the room and then to the dresser and then my suitcase below it. A foot-long gray iguana was happily perched on top, exercising its red throat by billowing out and back in again and doing push-ups. "DAAAAAAD", I screamed. "DAAAAAAD!"

Welcome to Puerto Rico, 1953.



Keeping On

An Excerpt from Ann Miner's Upcoming Memoir

“The only way I can be true to God and Jesus is to kill you and the children.”

We were having a normal conversation and suddenly this.

I didn't move.

“Talk to me,” he said. And believe me, I talked!

The pastor came at my behest and took Jim home with him to a quiet atmosphere.

Later, in bed, he got inches from my face and bellowed at the top of his voice – I've never remembered what he said. As he yelled, I prayed to have a response that would satisfy him.

He grew quiet.

“Alright,” I said. “I'll try.”

He turned over and went to sleep and was well for six years.

What triggered this? What brought it to a dead stop? This was not his first manic episode, nor would it be his last.

This mysterious illness kept our lives in continual transformation. The sudden shifts kept me vigilant, and our children on edge.

But there were times in between that are worth remembering.



A Snowstorm In The High Desert

By Diane Duncan

As a native Californian, my experience with snow has been very limited. Growing up in the moderate Bay Area, I never saw snow until I was seven years old. One cold winter afternoon we had a brief snowfall, and we children ran outside to build a snowman, but alas, the snow had turned to rain before we could make even a little snowball.

Through the years I have had a few occasions to be in snow—skiing and snowshoeing and having snow fall on our property. A few years ago we had a storm that lasted about four days.

Valentine's Day was windy and cold, but we didn't believe the weather forecast for the following day. Sure enough, we *did* get snow. We had to do some errands on Tuesday and had barely returned home before the snow was pouring out of the sky. It was such a lovely sight that we sat in the living room for hours as a beautiful white glaze covered everything in sight. Dinner was forgotten as we watched and sipped mugs of hot cocoa. Long into the night the storm lasted.

The next morning dawned sunny and bright, and most of the snow was melted by noon. Unlike our friends back East, we had no need for snowplows or experience of black ice or ugly slush that lasts for months.

Aren't we fortunate to have a perfect desert storm?

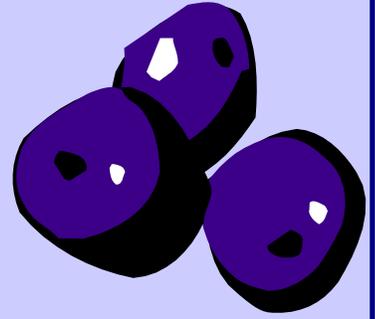
The dusting of show we got in our backyard.

—The Editor



Blueberry Hill, by Gary Layton

In 1956 Fats Domino had a hit song called "Blueberry Hill." Some of the guys found a small hill on the outskirts of Riverside that was very secluded and made a great spot to go and park with some degree of privacy. You had to go up a long dirt road and then drop down into a bowl to get to this spot. This made it virtually impossible to be seen by anyone except an airplane and afforded complete privacy. I have tried to reconstruct the location with a fading memory and Google Earth, and I believe the location to be somewhere near what is now known as the India Hills Golf Course near Limonite Ave and Camino Real near the Pedley area. Our code name for this secret location was "Blueberry Hill" and it became a very popular spot for the teenagers in the area to congregate on Friday and Saturday nights.



All we had to hear was blueberry hill and everyone was off to our secret spot. The guys would bring their girlfriends and park their cars, open the doors and everybody would turn their car radios to the same station and everyone would dance or just stand around and talk and enjoy the music and the camaraderie. Some of the guys who were there without girls would consume beer and get a little stupid while having a good time. Occasionally, a couple of guys would get really stupid and get in a fight, but nothing serious ever came of it. The '50s were different than now. Guys didn't carry guns and knives like they do now. A fight usually continued until the guys got so tired that they would just give up due to exhaustion or their friends would intervene and get them calmed down.

Some of us would stop at Tuxie's in Rubidoux on the way up and pick up some french fries and Cokes to take with us (french fries and Cokes were the only thing on Tuxies' menu). I haven't been able to find out if the old Tuxie's in Rubidoux, or West Riverside as it was known in the '50s, is the same Tuxie's that is now located on Magnolia Ave in Riverside.



The culture of the '50s was different than the culture of today. Drugs didn't come into use until the hippie generation of the mid-'60s. We did have a few individuals using drugs in the 50's, but they were ostracized by the rest of the teenagers of the era and pretty much stayed to themselves. I had one good friend of many years ask me if I wanted to smoke some weed with him. I told him no and he never talked to me again. All of my friends were like me. We were too busy building and racing cars and chasing girls to be bothered with staying high on drugs, although we did consume a lot of beer.

Poetry

THE SKY RESPONDS

By Rusty LaGrange

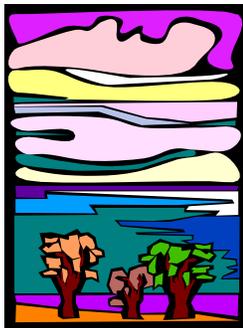
The sky responds to
shades of love, brilliant
blues and opal flames.

Reflections, thoughts and hugs
wrapped all so tenderly.

The sky responds to shades
of fear, blackened, bruised,
roiling thunder-clashing,
dower clouds molded, hunched
on earth's crests like fists.

The sky responds to dread like mine
where danger lurks from shadowed holes,
peering out and up, declines to venture out.
Brackish banks of storm clouds roll, screaming
to the ones below – “Better to tuck your head
inside than chance a bitter blow.”

The sky responds to hues of Spring,
lavender becomes old hat, where
fuchsia compliments the day;
and lime, a sublime welcome mat
against brilliant clouds of elephants,
charm lovers and their universal sighs.



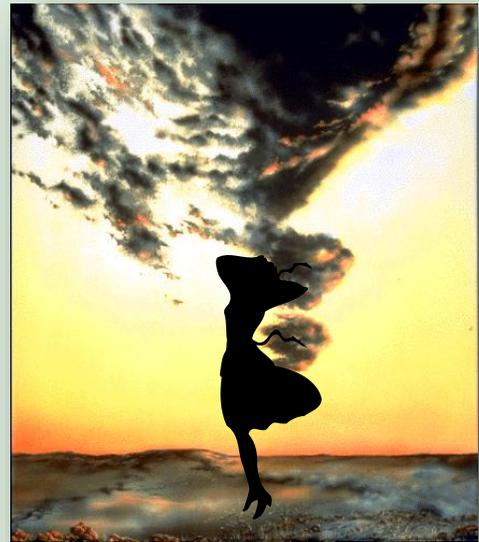
Roses are read and
John's eyes are blue,
but you said they were
hazel on page 52.

Tweet from Professional Editors Network

Time—Sweet Marauder

By Aileen Elizabeth Rochester

When our timeless lulls,
Merge with silent ideas—
We are whisked away
In the calm vacuum
Of our deepest emotions—



Poetry



TIME CAPTURES A Day at Work in the Marianas

By Aylin Belle Amie

August 02, 2021

A walk outside in the melting mid-day sun,
sent shock waves through my timeworn figure.
They scorched my wrinkled skin and
weakened my will to achieve the slimmest move-
shrouded in the heat of time.

I wandered to the kitchen and the aromas
of nutty sesame oil and wild rice reached me. Almond
butter sandwiches added to the scents.
We ate happily and chatted without worries-
enveloped in tasty, tangy time.

In the background, I heard the murmurs of
a blond toddler who sang sweet syllables, "me-me-mo-mo".
He carefully scanned a blue block and
with joy, carefully pieced it into a toy building-
and lulled me into blissful time.

My slow motion view of children
wishes them to stay forever young.
Enveloped in a quilt--- deep, rich, close, wordless,
that bring a halt to my artful sparks and casual actions.
They're intensely encapsulated in my time.

Suddenly our children break free,
from our reaching arms and soar to their own creations.
With movements away from our intimacy,
they yearn for their soulmates and uniqueness.
Swiftly, the years flash by, lost in time.

I gazed lazily out of the window.
In the blinding summer desert sun, I feast my eyes on the
ancient creosote bush's petite white pompoms,
yellow flowers, soft next to jagged agave and Joshua trees.
I imagined a vast wave that draws me-
to the infinite stillness of time.



Poetry

Rose Petal

by
fumi-tome ohta

*Little girl follows little boy
through dirt and twigs
a sandbox or muddy fields
Little girl loves rose petals
yet knows not of thorns
nor ants that bite
Little girl follows
little boy
whose world
he loves of
trucks and toys
and grunting noise
She a rose petal
loves dancing
breezes in the air
singing with the sun
the moon
and every star above*



I Had to Laugh

By Rusty LaGrange

*I had to laugh when I saw you laugh
your laughter invites only more.
So, there we sat, two kids on a mat and
boy, did we laugh some more.*

*And, now that we stop and dry our eyes
and massage our lips to normal,
I look at you and you look at me—
we straighten up, very formal.*

*And I look at you and you look at me.
We cough and fidget and wiggle.
I can't stand it and neither can you—
then we begin to giggle.*

*And I look at you and you look at me.
We hold our breaths and start counting,
but then our eyes meet and we know it's
defeat—
we've just got to let loose and start laughing.*



Poetry

UNDERCURRENT

By Rusty LaGrange

Dark and dank
the under tank
swirled and
moaned in half-light.

Forbidden zone;
I went alone
drawn by my fear
and delight.

It was not a well
or a view of hell,
but a dungeon
born of ancient grime.

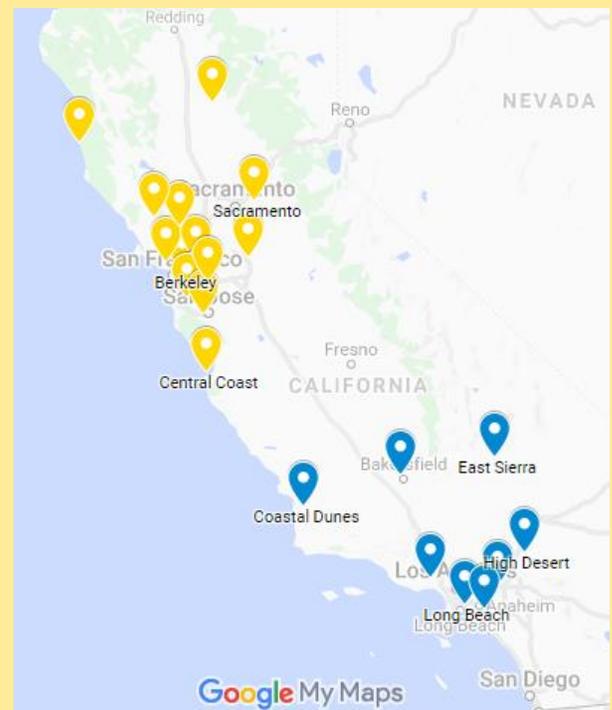
At the edge
of gray stone
I stood alone –
caught in its turbid slime.

Yet, as a child possessed
I must confess
I reside in
the undercurrent.

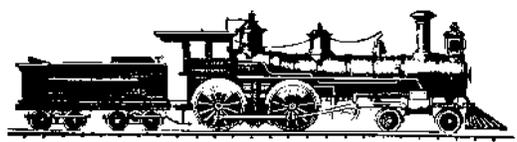
More Choices

Because the HDCWC has been making our meetings available via Zoom throughout the club (thanks to Bob Isbill), the club's state-level leadership has noticed and wants to spread this throughout all CWC branches across California. To encourage this they have set up a special calendar to make us all aware of the meetings being held at different branches. We will be able to tap into speakers presenting at other branches, as well as our own.

The web address for the calendar is <https://calwriters.org/events-month/>



Poetry



PATRICK O'ROURKE'S RED SHIRT

by Frank Irving Atherton, circa 1930

Submitted by Aylin Belle Amie

August 02, 2021

Patrick O'Rourke had only one shirt.
Its color was fiery red.
He wore it when he went to work,
and at night he wore it to bed.

Says Bridget to Patrick one bright sunny morn
"It's time I was washin' yer shirt.
It's filthy as sin as sure as yer born,
and I can't see the red fer the dirt."

So Pat stayed in bed while Bridget she rubbed
'til the bones of her knuckles were bare.
At last the shirt that Bridget had scrubbed
was the color of Patrick's hair.

Then out on the line she hung it to dry
while Patrick continued to snore.
Maloney's old billygoat, heaving a sigh,
jumped over the fence from next door.

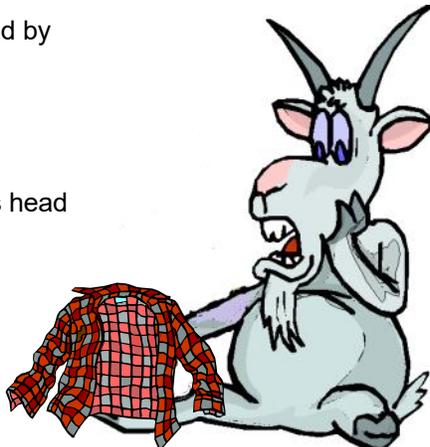
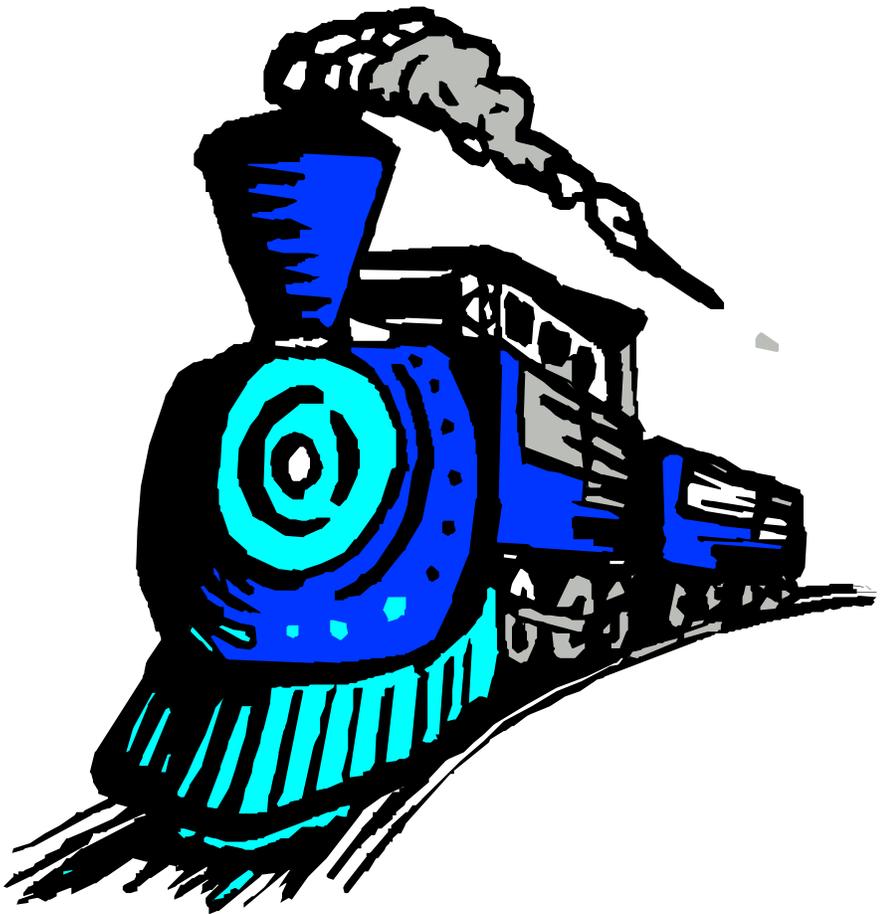
Now Billy was hungry, for rags and tin cans
had left room for a dainty dessert.
He rushed through the piles of old pots and pans
and devoured Pat's clean red shirt.

"Oh, Patrick, come quick!" shouted Bridget to Pat
"The goat has eaten yer shirt!
If I had known he was gonna do that
I would niver have washed out the dirt!"

Now Patrick O'Rourke was terribly mad
as shirtless he ran forth and back.
"I'll fix ye fer that, begorra bedad!"
He tied Bill to the railroad track.

The train was approaching as Patrick stood by
shouting lustily "Hip hip hooray!
Fer eatin' me shirt yer sure gonna die,
so ye'd better begin to pray!"

The billygoat's eyes most popped from his head
as he struggled and struggled in vain.
Then he coughed up the shirt so fiery red
and goatfully flagged the train.



Diane's grandfather, who wrote this clever poem, was born on St. Patrick's Day.

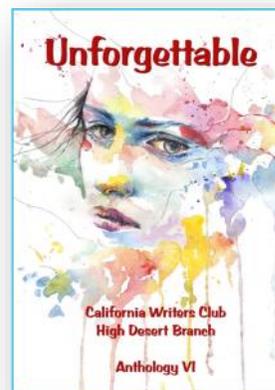
Events Ahead > Book Fairs & more

FEBRUARY — MARCH ACTIVITIES

March 2	8:00 Accountability Meeting
March 3	3:30 Poemsmiths
March 8	9:00 Board Meeting
March 9	8:00 Accountability Meeting
March 12	10:00 HDCWC Meeting
March 13	Daylight Savings Time
March 15	2:00 Mojave River Walk
March 15	Launch On-Topic Website!
March 16	8:00 Accountability Meeting
March 17	3:30 Poemsmiths
March 17	St. Patrick's Day
March 22	6:00 Act II Meeting
March 23	8:00 Accountability Meeting
March 23	<i>Inkslinger</i> deadline
March 31	3:30 Poemsmiths
April 5	9:00 Board Meeting
April 6	8:00 Accountability Meeting
April 7	3:30 Poemsmiths Meeting
April 9	10:00 HDCWC Club Meeting
April 13	8:00 Accountability Meeting
April 14	3:30 Poemsmiths Meeting
April 17	Easter Sunday
April 19	2:00 Mojave River Walk
April 20	8:00 Accountability Meeting
April 23	<i>Inkslinger</i> Deadline
April 26	6:00 ACT II Zoom Meeting
April 27	8:00 Accountability Meeting
April 21	3:30 Poemsmiths Meeting
April 28	3:30 Poemsmiths Meeting

If you have a special group meeting regularly and would like to open it up to the membership, please contact Mike Apodaca to have your group included in the calendar.

mrdaca.ma@gmail.com



Do you
have your
copy yet?



Order copies of our HDCWC anthologies for your bookshelf, gifts, or as a donation.

Titles can be found on Amazon.com in hardback, softback, and ebook editions

Pre-orders can be delivered at our regular meetings.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY HDCWC MEMBERS BORN IN MARCH!

7 Diane Neil, 14 Joan Rudder-Ward, 19 Rebecca Koontz, 24 Linda Cooper

Other Famous March Birthdays:

1 Ralph Ellison, Robert Haas, Robert Lowell, 2 Dr. Seuss, John Irving, John Jay Chapman, Tom Wolfe, 3 Arthur Machen, James Merrill, Patricia MacLachlan, 4 Fiona Mazel, James Ellroy, Kahled Hosseni, 6 Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 7 Brett Easton Ellis, 8 Kenneth Grahame, 9 Mickey Spillane, 10 Henry Watson Fowler, D.J. MacHale, 11 Douglas Adams, 12 Edward Albee, Jack Kerouac, Carl Haasen, Patricia Hampl, Randall Kenan, Virginia Hamilton, 13 L. Ron Hubbard, 14 Horton Foote, 16 Alice Hoffman, 18 George Plimpton, John Updike, Richard Condon, Wilfred Owen, 19 Phillip Roth, 20 Henrik Ibsen, 21 Oyinkan Braithwaite, 22 James Patterson, Louis L'Amour, Billy Collins, 24 Tabitha King, 25 Kate DiCamillo, 26 Erica Jong, Robert Frost, Tennessee Williams, 28 Iris Chang, Lauren Weisberger, Nelson Algren, 29 Judith Guest, 30 Anna Sewell, 31 John Fowles, Judith Rossner, Rene Descartes



"Writers Accountability"

Accountability makes it sound as if people are going to shame you if you don't keep up your writing. This is NOT what happens on Wednesday mornings.

What does happen is writers get to talk and listen to other writers. Everyone gets a chance to share what they're working on and what goals they have for the next week. Sometimes, we talk about other things (gardening, life stuff, etc.). We are more than our writing, after all.

If you are looking for a safe place to get encouragement for your writing and a supportive group of friends who will cheer you on, this is the group for you.

Zoom call each Wednesday morning at 8:00 am

Zoom meeting ID: 985 7081 6164

Password: 216757



MEMBER SERVICES



Dorothy C. Blakely



The DCB Memoir Project is alive and well. The committee met recently to discuss the guidelines being written for the

project and to plan an upcoming project with Barstow College and the Veterans' Home.

Take advantage of your membership benefits

Free advertising and free posting of your book titles, your latest project, your free PR author's webpage and other free and fantastic benefits!

**Because you belong to
CWC High Desert branch.**

Contact a board member, or our webmaster, Roberta Smith.

Or review your Benefits Booklet online at:
www.HDCWC.com

OUR OWN YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Here's the link to the channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC28XLtEK5oBNq5gW2Zy1ssg>

Do you provide a service that could benefit other writers?

**Send a JPEG file of your business card or ad to
mrdaqa.ma@gmail.com**

We'll advertise it free of charge!

From the Temporary Editor



Temporary Editor

As many have heard, my tenure as temporary editor of this fine publication is nearing its end. I want to leave while I still enjoy doing the job (the best time to leave anything). And I will always be here to help.

I've learned so much while doing *The Inkslinger*. It's given me an insider's look at the club and connected me with many excellent writers (whom I now consider as friends). It has improved my writing.

I'm not leaving the club. You'll see me doing other things. I have many irons in the fire for HDCWC and giving this up only allows me time to plant seeds in different fields.

Next month will be my last newsletter as we transition to the new editor. Expect changes—I made them when I took over this job. Every editor will make this publication their own.

Thanks for the laughs and the stories and poems. You are awesome!

Mike Apodaca



Mike Apodaca

Submitting to *The Inkslinger* is easy. Use Microsoft Word, single-spaced, 11-point Arial font, please. The email address for submissions is Mrdaqa.ma@gmail.com. Articles and stories between 200 to 500 words are accepted. Photos, poetry, and drawings are always welcome. Please avoid sending items that are embedded in other media (like Word files). Call me to discuss an article or idea: 760-985-7107.

**Submit March items by February 23rd
Submit April items by March 23rd**