



HIGH DESERT BRANCH CWC

SAIL ON!

# THE INKSLINGER

Vol 23, No. 7, October 2009

## MISSION STATEMENT

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

## ONE HUNDRED YEARS YOUNG

By Bob Isbill

The High Desert Branch of the California Writers Club (HD CWC) will host a panel of distinguished authors at our regularly scheduled October 10, 2009 meeting as one segment of our 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration.

Glen Hirshberg, Robert Reginald and Diana Sholley, all published authors, will speak to us on various topics of interest to all attending. There will be Q&A and time to socialize with our notable panel.

Come join us for an educational and fun birthday event, including a 100 year commemoration cake!

Immediately following the meeting, the panel will be guests of the HD CWC at the Apple Valley Country Club. All members and guests are invited to join us in a "no-host" (Dutch Treat) lunch. Please plan to join the panel and the other members and guests. All are invited.

Throughout the State of California, many of the 17 branches of the oldest professional writers' organizations west of the Mississippi will go all out in October of 2009 to commemorate and promote the CWC's 100 years of literary history.

Our High Desert Branch, in its 23<sup>rd</sup> year, will also have a special California Writers Week event at the Victorville Mall's Barnes & Noble Booksellers. Several of our members will present readings to the public in a forum promoted and publicized by the famous book store. That occasion is scheduled for Saturday, October 24, 2009, between 11 am. and 4 pm. Come out to enjoy the readings and support our members.

In addition, the Town of Apple Valley will honor the California Writers Club, and the High Desert Branch in particular, by presenting a proclamation to President Carol Warren declaring the third week of October as Writer's Week.

It's an exciting month, and an exhilarating time for our branch. Our critique groups are developing into really valuable experiences, and our club is growing in numbers and talent each and every month.

We're excited about our Centennial and all the possibilities ahead of us.

Be a part of it! Celebrate your creativity!

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## 2009 JACK LONDON AWARD

This year's recipient of the Jack London Award for the High Desert is Bob Isbill, Vice President and Publicity Chair for the HD Branch of CWC. Every other year, CWC branch Boards of Directors may nominate one of their members to receive the award for outstanding service to the organization. During the 2008-09 period, Isbill spearheaded a publicity program for the Branch, revamped and maintains an outstanding website, served as contact with the media, public and business organizations and was hugely responsible for a notable gain in membership because of his efforts. The old adage reference about when needing something done, ask a busy man to do it, works!

Congratulations Bob!

100 years and thriving  
**CELEBRATE &  
SAIL ON!**

*outstanding panel of authors from the Inland area at the October 10 meeting. Below are some brief bios for these folks but be sure to go to our website for more information!*



**MICHAEL BURGESS aka ROBERT REGINALD**

Armed with his Masters in Library Science from USC, in 1970 this 22 year old descended upon the California State College in San Bernardino as the youngest faculty member, ever. Thirty-five years later, with both he and the college matured, he retired with more than 13,000 short pieces, 1,000-plus books edited for many publishers among his credits, plus his 93<sup>rd</sup> monograph issued in 2002. Born in Japan, he moved with his military family to many and varied homes and now, still a part of the Inland Empire with his wife, Mary, and his alter ego, Robert Reginald to whom he credits much of his writing, Michael Burgess, has entered retirement ready to pursue his interests in an eclectic variety of subjects. Ask him what “elden artifacts” are – my two dictionaries were lacking in information!



**DIANE SCHOLLEY**

It's the name of her book, but *That's Amore* would appear to be the theme and constant inspiration in her life, as Diane Scholley writes about her loving and lovable Italian family in her career as a newspaper columnist. Inspired, perhaps, by her discovery of the Anne Frank diaries, she has found her somewhat later debut into the world of writing by focusing on her family, and particularly her beloved Gramma. Her carefully chosen columns bring all of the warmth and love she has for family, in the selection offered in *That's Amore*. Writing a column, we've learned, is not an easy task. Her readers must hope that this is just the beginning, both of her column and of her books.

*To honor our 100 years of creative activity, statewide, our Branch will have an*



**GLEN HIRSHBERG**

Mr Hirshberg has the formidable task of teaching teachers to teach writing at Cal State San Bernardino (as well as teaching writing himself!). With numerous awards already garnered, his fiction appears in numerous magazines and anthologies. We couldn't ask for a better guest for the Halloween month of October – his writings definitely tend toward the “don't read while alone” genre. With two partners, he co-founded the Rolling Darkness Review, a traveling ghost story performance troupe that tours the West Coast each October. Not only should this be a fascinating presentation, but, doubtless, the Q & A session will be most interesting given the number of our CWC members who enjoy writing about the “other life”.

**THIS 'N THAT**

Feeling depressed? A tad sad? Cheer up – I have a cure for those blues. Grab a pencil and paper and catch the next TV news (or guest-orientated) program. Any channel will do, they are seemingly all guilty! Now, we come to the story of the lottery winnings that were divided *BETWEEN* five people. Can't be done– “between” denotes two objects, and only two. See, YOU knew it should have been *AMONG*, because you pay attention to your grammar. And just a few weeks ago in an interview, the

scion of one of America's wealthiest, most privileged, families who doubtless has been exposed to the finest education money can buy, stated "and this has had a devastating effect on my family and I"!! WOW! See, you should be feeling a whole lot better - you're a writer and you knew these things! Question is: Why aren't we making the anchor-persons' salaries?



## Carol's Comments

Can it really be two months since I had the privilege to address our members and visitors? Summer is over and school has settled in. Families are developing their routines again. Have you developed a plan for your writing to be worked into your daily routine?

CWC continues to offer great programs and opportunities for camaraderie with other writers. We are excited about our upcoming centennial celebration in October. and and hoping as many members as possible will help us celebrate our wonderful organization.

Sometimes members tend to apologize if they haven't been "officially published". I would encourage everyone to be proud of your efforts and accomplishments at whatever level you are ; and your desire to help others in their pursuits of the joys of writing .

Our critique groups are going great and have recently increased our frequency to every two weeks. You must be a member of CWC to participate. Visitors can attend but will just listen in. Members will inform of their plans to participate in the next meeting at least 10 days in advance. At present that will be to Carol-[califcarol @verizon.net](mailto:califcarol@verizon.net) or call at 242-3367. Then each will be notified and they will e-mail 3-5 pages of their work at least 7 days in advance of the critique. This gives members an opportunity to read in advance and to do a written critique, which they will then bring to the next meeting to discuss. This allows more time to discuss each work, not have to give input "on the fly" and a more in-depth review. Remember, if you don't have anything you are presently wanting critiqued, you are still welcome to attend and experience the evaluation of fellow writers. If you do have something and were not able to send it in advance, you can still participate but the time needed to read your work will use some of your allotted time. This program is still in development as we all learn what is the most efficient and beneficial to all members. This is just one of the

benefits of CWC membership that many are finding very helpful..

We continue to have many areas of our organization that needs your input and skills to add even more to our Branch. Please share your ideas at any Board meeting, talk to any Board member during a break or after the meeting or e-mail or phone any Board member.

We are pleased at the increased response to our *Inkslinger* and the members' desires to share their writing. Remember to send your stories to Naomi by e-mail or "snail mail". I am constantly impressed with the talents of so many and honored to be among them. Don't hide your light under a bushel. Remember to view our web site frequently at [www.hdcwc.org](http://www.hdcwc.org). There is something new added often and you don't want to miss out. Contact Bob if you have other ideas or suggestions for this important aspect of our Branch. We want ours to be the best web site out there, and that needs your contributions.

Our slogan is "Sail On" but I would add, "Keep Writing". See you next month.

### **High Desert Branch Officers**

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**WHY POETRY?**  
 ----by Bob Isbill

Our last guest speaker answered the question, "Why poetry?" by quoting Carl Sandburg, who said, "A poem is an echo asking a shadow to dance". A song is merely a poem set to music. Poetry is sustenance to the soul. Poetry is emotion expressed and experienced.

George Robinson, past president and long-time member of the High Desert California Writers Club, gave the presentation, "Nomenclature of Poetry" at the HDCWC meeting on Saturday, August 8, 2009. He is also active in the Seniors With Inquiring Minds (SWIM) organization.

He explained the meters, and the various classifications, the building blocks of poetry, and the difference between traditional and free verse.

He read from some of his own poetry, including "Carpe Diem" and "Rhyme is Free".

George Robinson also shared some of his favorite poems such as Longfellow's famous lines from "Day is Done"

And the night shall be filled with music  
 And the cares, that infest the day,  
 Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,  
 And as silently steal away.

Mark Twain once said, "The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between the lightning and the lightning bug."

George leads the A V Poets club, which also meets at the Library from 11 am till 1 pm on Saturdays when the CWC does not meet. In addition, he is part of a poetry workshop on the 2nd and 4th Monday each month in Golden Coach Mobile Estates Clubhouse (Not affiliated with CWC) from 2 to 4 pm. The poetry meetings are free, informal gatherings.  
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**IRIS**  
 ----by George Grayck

Her name was Iris. I'd known her casually for a time. We were a friend of a friend sort of thing. I doubt a dozen words had ever passed between us. It was at a funeral parlor of all places. The wake of a mutual friend's mother, I had no idea she'd be there, it was just odd chance for both of us to be there. I sat behind her and a little off to the side during the service. At the reception afterwards, from across the room she caught my eye. Best part of a year or more since I'd even seen her; but those awkward teenage years were past. I was looking at a young woman now, and I liked what I saw. I moseyed over to that side of the room, I knew her well enough to speak to her, or at least well enough to say hello. I'm a sucker for a blond with a pony tail and a red dress.

I stepped up behind her perhaps too quickly just as she was turning about and she bumped into me. She was thrown off balance and splashed a little wine on my jacket. I was quick enough to grab her waist to keep her from falling. To hold her upright, I drew her close and then there was that tingle, all the way down to my toes! Our faces were inches apart.

"Harry," she whispered, "my God I'm so clumsy, thanks so much, sorry about the wine."

A nearby voice, "Iris, are you alright?"

Her eyes fixed on mine she said, "It's OK, we're fine."

She dabbed at my jacket with a napkin when we were out on the patio minutes later.

"Sorry to make a scene," she said, "not really my style."

Then she pressed up very close to me, again our faces almost touching and said,

"When you held me close back then Harry, you could have held me closer and tighter. Much tighter, Harry. I won't break."

Love

###



**HOMELAND**  
By Bob Wilkins

“We find ourselves in possession of the fairest portion of the earth's surface.” And what have we done with it? I'll tell you what we have done. “We” have horribly mismanaged this great land. We have poisoned the lakes, rivers, and streams. We have denuded a majority of the forests and we call this progress? And it is nothing if not a mad march toward our own end. I have been fortunate in my time to have walked the streets of other places with other political climates. As a result I have seen different outcomes as a result of other peoples treatment of their lands. But we have been God blessed in one important way—we have not yet been invaded by a foreign power. But maybe we should have. In that way we would have a fuller appreciation of what we have. A great land of more than three million square miles located in a temperate zone bordered on the east and west by the world's ocean with at least three thousand miles of shore opened to shipping the entire year. And friendly neighbors on both ends of this shore line.

A place containing a significant portion of the mineral wealth known to mankind. This gift begs to be properly utilized. To do this requires a physically, mentally, and sufficiently trained workforce.

And here we are debating with ourselves as to whether we should have available health care for all our citizens. We are in dire need of health care especially mental health20care. Many Americans are descendants from places that have universal health care.

We are told that on July 5, 1948 the British Health Service Act went into effect, providing government-financed medical and dental care. On July 5, 1948 the majority of Americans alive today were not yet born. And we have the temerity to tell ourselves that we are the World's greatest nation. The opinion expressed here was garnered from one half century of laboring as a part of the American workforce.

“Those whom the Gods would destroy they first make mad.”

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*Holly La Pat finished her presentation on “Casa Blanca” but that was just the beginning of the many questions and last minute hints with which her very pleased audience bombarded her – and she generously took the time to respond....*

## We'll Always Have Paris

By Bob Isbill

At our September 12 meeting, Holly LaPat AKA Sierra Donovan, took the CWC members and guests through the writing paces of Casablanca, the forties classic starring Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman.

On a “wide-screen” roll of butcher paper, she illustrated the external action and the internal (emotional) understructure of the plot, and the motivations of each character and how they change. This is the relationship arc, the thing that is so compelling in romance as well as other genres. The audience wants to see how a character, in pursuit of a goal and through interactions with another character, changes and becomes a better person.

Holly La Pat is the author of “Love on the Air” and “Meg’s Confession. La Pat writes romance novels under the name of Sierra Donovan, and has conducted romance writing classes at Victor Valley College. Her first book, "Love on the Air," was a finalist for the Holt Medallion award. The second, "Meg's Confession," received a Reviewers' Choice Award from CataRomance.

Both novels were published by Avalon Books. In response to a Q&A, Holly elaborated on how she became involved with Avalon, and how her publications took place.

La Pat describes her books as traditional romances with very mild sensuality. Still, she says, "A good story is a good story. I have friends who write steamier books, and I read those, too. I'm just more comfortable writing stories my kids can see!"



*(Curt James is a new CWC member. This is his first offering to the **Inkslinger**. Welcome aboard, Curt)*



## **A JUST MATTER OF TIME**

The room stunk. There was a stench of rotting meat, with a hint of bleach and alcohol. It felt cold laying there on the thin white sheet. It had the feel of plastic beneath it. It felt cheap. Whatever was draped over the top could hardly be classified as a blanket, maybe if there were six or seven of them stitched together – but then, what were the odds of that happening?

Sounds...The hum of an industrial motor...I wasn't sure if it was a heater or an air conditioner. There were voices, but too distant to make out. It was like trying to discern the distinct words and syllables of a language that you didn't speak. It just made my head hurt.

The room was brightly lit with those irritating florescent bulbs. They had just enough of a flicker to act subliminally. Was it irritation? Anxiety? I couldn't tell the difference so I just let it go. I didn't care. I wouldn't be here long enough to care. I tried thinking about how long I had been in this place. That required a sense of time, a sense that now, something eluded me. It really didn't matter...I wouldn't be here that much longer.

Beyond the lights, I could make out dots in the ceiling boards. They lent themselves to patterns, like some inadvertent version of a Rorschach test. I couldn't make out anything that looked familiar. I wonder what the good Doctor would say about that. I thought about other things that looked like those tests; clouds, textured walls, stars, freckles... Who did I know that had freckles? I thought about it for a while but nobody came to mind. It didn't matter; it was almost time to go.

I couldn't decide if I was hungry. I was sure that I had eaten recently...Maybe it was that godforsaken smell. I thought about drinking a glass of water, or maybe an ice cold beer. But I wasn't thirsty. Maybe I would drink something later on, as soon as I left this place; it was only a matter of time.

There were noises outside the room. Somebody was screaming. I could hear other voices as well, rising in counterpart to...to...

I would have gone out there. Maybe tell whoever to shut the hell up, or take it somewhere else. But I was on a schedule; it was almost time to leave. I didn't want to be late.

Someone entered the room. Maybe they were here for me. I was ready to go. I had already been here too long. It would be good to get out of here. Get away from that nasty stinking stench. It wasn't right, subjecting someone to that kind of smell. It smelled like...like...

"Damn! This one's ripe!"

"Well, what'd you expect? Lilacs and rose petals?"

"All I know is that I hate these exhumation cases, and this fella looks like he's been in the ground for a while. Why'd they dig him up?"

"Uh...Paperwork says the DA wanted DNA. Seems our buddy here was implicated in a whole string of murders that happened about 15 years ago."

"Fifteen years? You don't think this is the guy who did those serial killings. Remember? There was what? Ten, no 13 college girls that had disappeared and when they found their bodies the cops said that someone had cut out their eyes, hearts and brains and cooked them in some sort of stew?"

"Yeah! Yeah! I remember that. They said the killer was into this black magic Voodoo stuff and by eating this cooked sew he was supposed to get some sort of immortality."

"Well, he may have beaten the long arm of the law, but he sure doesn't look immortal to me, except for those eyes. Must be fake, if they were real they would have already dissolved."

"Doesn't smell very immortal, either. Let's hurry and get this bastard back in his box and back in the ground where he belongs."

It was dark, and there was a stench, like the smell of rotting meat. I couldn't decide if I felt cold or not. The thin sheet that surrounded me had the feel of plastic underneath. It felt cheap. It didn't matter, I would be leaving soon, I was sure of it. It was just a matter of time.



**TREASURER &  
MEMBERSHIP  
CHAIRMAN  
ANNE FOWLER**

by Bob Isbill

Anne Bancroft Fowler, former teacher of Spanish, French and English, is currently the Treasurer and Membership Chairman of the High Desert Branch of the California Writers' Club. She is past-President (1997-1998) of the Alameda Writers Group.

Anne Fowler spent four years on the staff of *Retailer News*, the pioneer trade magazine of the electronics industry and was Associate Editor of *The Fringe*, a literary anthology, for two years.

Anne began writing children's fiction in 1993 and has since published some 20 "scary" short stories for mid-grade readers. The last of these was *Ten Minute Terrors*, which was distributed by Troll along with one of the R.L. Stine Goose Bumps series.

She has since written several mid-grade full length stories:

*The Three Princes, The Terran Chronicles, On The Edge, Applegate U.S.A. and Fright Bites.*

Her animated screenplay, *Omarr the Camel*, won awards in two film contests and is currently under option to Snowfall Films, an independent production company.

Her novel, *The Jesuit Papers*, won an award in the East of Eden Conference in September, 2008 and she is currently seeking a publisher. Jesuit is the first in a trilogy whose heroine is a noted paleo-linguist; the sequel, *The Road From Damascus*, is currently in progress.

One of her screenplays is a semi-finalist in the 2009 Big Bear Film Fest.

### DISCLAIMER

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

## ALWAYS WRITE THE RIGHT WORD

by George Robinson



We frequently quote Mark Twain, who said: "The difference between the right word and the almost right word is as the difference between the lightning and the lightning bug." & "Always use the right word, never it's second cousin." Twain clearly was a master at knowing the right word. One would suspect that he had both an analytic and photographic memory. Of course, we can't know how easy it was for him to always seem to find the right word.

For we mere mortals, lacking such genius, we often have to search our thesauri. When we think of odor, there is a drastic difference between stench and aroma, but not so much between fragrance and bouquet. Think carefully which says exactly what you mean. Do not say chilly if you mean frigid.

Here are the synonyms from one thesaurus for the word "hussy": loose woman, wench, tart, Jezebel, strumpet, slut, whore, trollop, minx. Reflect a moment on each, and see what they suggest to you. There are clearly quite different connotations, and shades of meaning nuances to each. Sometimes you may find even finer, or entirely different meaning by following the words listed. Example, the same thesaurus lists for wench: girl, young woman, young lady, maiden, lass. Strange language, isn't it? We are almost, if not into, opposites. The English Language does not always make it easy to bear or bare; what is right, rite, wright or write. We also must watch to see that we do not go too far to recover. Our lexicon often seems to try us one or two times a paragraph. Should you deign to take out the trash, or refuse to discard the refuse.

These extreme examples we would never be guilty of. It is the subtle ones which slip through the cracks, and tend to take much of the steam out of an otherwise well written phrase. Did your character whimper, whine or snivel? Was he/she resentful, revolting or distasteful? And please wright and tell me what you think of this silly discourse.

**SECRETARY**  
NAOMI WARD  
By Bob Isbill

Your HD CWC Secretary and editor of this newsletter, was born in Idaho. Orphaned early, books became her best friends. Her guardian did not realize Pere and Fil Balzac didn't write fairy tales and in a negotiated deal with an older brother who wanted the technical books, she received, among others, full sets of both Balzac and Mark Twain from their parent's library. Twain has remained a favorite, to whom she's added Dave Berry, Ernie Pyle, and Erma Brombeck.

She graduated from Chaffey College with a journalism/news photography major and worked as a Special Feature writer for the *Progress Bulletin* in Pomona. Other duties as assigned included setting up and managing the dark room and teaching incoming reporters how to use a press camera.

In 1947 she became a bonafide "desert rat", remaining here for 33 years, and raising three children. Doing PR for PTA(s), the USO, and the Future Farmers of America organizations gave opportunity to develop slide and narrative programs to benefit those organizations by encouraging community participation. The FFA project (promoting steer auctions for the youngsters) was presented at the Western State Fairs Assn. Editing her church newsletter for 15 years gave her continuity.

Leaving the desert in 1980, she and her husband spent 23 years as full-time RVers but in 2003 she returned to stay. Her "someday" project is to compile those years of logs and letters into a travel book.

The *Inkslinger* is a challenge made possible only because you, the members, continue to "donate to the Pantry" – thank you!