



INKSLINGER

HIGH DESERT BRANCH CWC

Vol. 23, No. 5

June 2009

Carol's Comments

Greetings for another month to our members and visitors. The Board hopes you have been enjoying our recent guest speakers. We have lots more exciting speakers on the horizon. I know you will want to make as many meetings as possible so you won't miss any of our programs.

By the way, if you have any personal experiences you might like to share like our recent outstanding presentation from Marilyn Ramirez, please contact any Board member. Also, if you know of any one who would be willing to speak to us on some aspect of writing, same instructions.

We feel every meeting is important and has something to offer each of you but June is different but equally important because it is time to elect your Branch officers for the next year. I talked about this briefly at the last meeting so hope you have been thinking about who you would like to see represent you, or if you yourself would like to do this. The positions of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer are all elected offices. Additional positions, volunteered and/or appointed are Membership Chairman, Publicity, and a "Member at Large" and part of the Board. I don't believe any of these jobs are difficult but they do require varying amounts of your time and commitment.

A brief description follows: **PRESIDENT** - presides over the meetings, coordinates with other board members in all matters pertaining to the operation of the chapter, attends Board meetings and occasional extra meetings that might be held from time to time, relays information from the Central Board to the members, and attends quarterly Central Board meetings (or sends a representative whenever possible); and responds to inquiries from potential members about the chapter through publicity notices, web site and word of mouth for.

VICE PRESIDENT - fills in any offices that are vacant on an "as needed" basis such as unexpected vacancies and presides over meetings in the absence of the President.

SECRETARY - records minutes of all Board meetings and any special meetings, and reports back to the membership.

TREASURER - collects membership fees and donations, submits them to the Central Board in a timely manner, pays bills that have been submitted by a receipt and prepares and reports a monthly balance sheet.

MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN - follows up with a phone call and/ or e-mail within two weeks of a visitor's attendance to answer questions or concerns; may assist, upon request, if needed to make special contacts between meetings to members who do not have e-mail. Notifies members at least two weeks before membership renewals are due

PUBLICITY CHAIRMAN- ongoing publicity in as many avenues as possible to provide information about meetings, guest speakers, provide personal bio about upcoming speakers and an article after the presentation for our *INKSLINGER*. This can be assigned to others to assist as needed. Now doesn't this make you excited about your own special contribution to the High Desert Branch? Recent opportunities for service have included **EDITOR** of the *INKSLINGER* and **WEBMASTER** maintaining our web site. Because

these were just recently taken on by Naomi Ward and Bob Isbill, and they have agreed to continue, we will not be taking new volunteers for these two positions. For now, Bob has been our incredible PUBLICITY GURU and redesigned and manages the web site as part of publicity. He welcomes your ideas for any and all. That doesn't mean you can't do things to help him, though - photography or art work or ????

Thinking about our guest speakers- WOW is the best description I had for our most recent guest speaker, Marilyn Ramirez. Those who were present will know what I mean. For those unable to attend, you really missed an outstanding lesson on preparing to write fiction. I was so impressed and so enjoyed this presentation; I hope she will consider doing this again at a future meeting. I can hardly wait to see her first book in print.

I know many are looking forward to the return of one of our popular speakers, Mike Foley for Part II. This will be a lesson on dialogue. If you haven't signed up for his free "Writer's Review" there are many helpful hints that can be applied to most types of writing. If interested to receive this by e-mail contact Mike or Carol for further information.

In closing my thoughts for this issue, I hope you are all working on your writing projects. For those who want to participate in monthly critique sessions, we welcome your writing and your input. Remember, the more effort you put into your writing, the more you benefit but so can the rest of us. How about it? Our motto is "Sail on" but I also say "Write on".

WHY IT'S ESSENTIAL TO GROW & WHY WE SHOULD CARE

In the words of Dara Marks, author of *Inside Story: The Power of The Transformational Arc*, there is nothing in the universe that is in permanent stasis. We are either growing towards something (life) or resisting growth, going towards decay and death.

That is true not only of your protagonist, but also of an organization or a writers club. Sadly, our members, like other friends, drop out, move away, stop meeting with us—it's life's process.

Most of us consider ourselves lucky if we can count on one hand the number of real friends we've cultivated.

We do not need to abandon the familiar and the loyal in order to enlarge our relationships and embrace new ones. We have the obligation to tell other people about our club.

Many people have no idea that every second Saturday of every month, a hundred year old writers club meets in Apple Valley! They need to know that.

Cultivating new members is how we re-create ourselves and develop the quality of our meetings and our structure.

Writers, overall, are pretty great people!

When was the last time you invited one? Tell them about www.hdcwc.org and look at our events, past and future. It's exciting! We're growing.

Growth means reaching out to others like ourselves, those interested in practicing and improving their craft. When we come together each month, it's a learning opportunity for every one who attends.

Again, if we're not learning (no matter what our chronological age) we're not developing as writers; our craft may be in danger of decaying-- even dying.

Quality guest speakers *like* to speak to big meetings. Attendance reflects vitality of the group, and excites those who come to hear about us.

Increased membership also increases networking opportunities to meet and learn from those who can and will help us. It means having more influence over our future in terms of affording the equipment and instruments needed to educate ourselves.

You will probably never be asked to participate in a fund-raising car wash. However, if you can gift wrap, or just greet people, or volunteer to pick up refreshments (and be reimbursed) or give someone else a ride or serve as an officer or chairperson, that's involvement! That's a contribution not only to the club, but to your own personal development.

We have a larger responsibility than just increasing the numbers and populating our gatherings with lots of people; we have a sizable message to send to our fellow writers and the community:

We are here!

.....

Mike Foley's Part I

Mike Foley, popular speaker, editor, writer and teacher was the main presenter at the High Desert Branch of the California Writers Club (CWC) on Saturday, April 11, 2009. Foley, who operates the Big Bear Writers' Retreat with his brother, Tom, teaches creative writing in extension classes at the University of California at Riverside. For the past 20 years, he has also operated the Writer's Review critique service for aspiring writers, assisting writers of both fiction and nonfiction.

Foley spoke to our group about making characters come alive and be realistic by showing us their passions and what "buttons" others push to motivate them. He discussed unique physical characteristics and how those tie into their development in the story you're writing. What do they surround themselves with that shows who and what they are? What does this tell us? He described the various "aches" (internal desires) that cause reader empathy and identity such as an ache to be free of the past, an ache for love, or for power.

Foley discussed weaknesses ("buttons") that characters have that make them more realistic such as fear, a disease, any loss or sense of loss, haunting memory or guilt.

"If you can nail your characters," Foley said, "You'll be a long way toward publication."

Mike Foley is a past president of the High Desert CWC. He can be contacted at mike@writers-review.com or visit www.writers-review.com.

Mike Foley's Part II

Mike Foley, teacher, editor, writing specialist and author of over 750 articles and stories, will return to our CWC for another exciting and inspiring talk on June 13, 2009.

Foley showed us how to create realistic characters at our April meeting and was tremendously well-received. It's a fun learning experience to be in the audience when Mike Foley is instructing.

Foley is editor of Dream Merchant Magazine. He has been a full-time writer since 1980, and since 1995 he and his brother, Tom, have owned and operated the Big Bear Writer's Retreat.

Mike Foley teaches fiction and nonfiction writing classes in the extension program at the University of California, Riverside. His topic for June is "Writing Dialogue".

"I would rather be ashes than dust! I would rather that my spark should burn out in a brilliant blaze than it should be stifled by dry rot. I would rather be a superb meteor, every atom of me in magnificent glow, than a sleepy and permanent planet. The proper function of man is to live, not exist. I shall not waste my days in trying to prolong them, I shall use my time."

- Jack London 1876-1916

We've been waiting to hear from Suzanne following her wedding – both to “catch the details”, and to give us an opportunity to wish her and Willard much happiness – This is a delightful report of the wedding – she has promised “The Reception” as a follow up! - nw)

OUR WEDDING

By

Suzanne Deboard Holbrook-Brumbaugh

It was a case of mass hallucination. It had to have been. They tell me that I... But I'm getting ahead of myself. Perhaps I should start from the beginning. I was sequestered in a small room to the left of the sanctuary. My pastor had been with me just moments before, doing the 'fatherly thing', as my own loving dad was no longer with us. He reminded me that I did not have to go through with this, and that I could turn around and walk out if I so desired. He grinned as I told him “not a chance”.

After all I *was* dressed for the occasion. My floor length embroidered ivory satin gown with champagne embroidered lace full-length jacket swished as I walked. My floral tiara sparkled beneath my fingertip veil, one of three. I felt like royalty. My life was about to change forever and I was ready.

The soft stains of the trio, my nieces, drifted to the hallway where I now waited as patiently as I could. This was a celebration and I was eager to begin my part of that celebration. The music we had chosen reflected our past, revisited in the present; our era, or perhaps before. 'Sincerely' began the service and as my Mom was escorted to her place of honor the trio sang 'I Love You (for sentimental reasons)'. The groomsmen took their places to the sound of 'I Love How You Love Me, and my attendants in their apple red gowns waltzed down the aisle to the tune of 'Goin' to the Chapel (and we're gonna get married)'.

Finally it was my turn. My oldest son, Tom, offered his arm and I accepted it. We slipped around the corner of the partition and stood for just a moment at the beginning of the aisle runner. There he was, standing to the right of the pastor, a smile as broad as the sun, a twinkle of joy in his eyes, and I knew I was coming home. A great love for this wonderful man overwhelmed me as I began to glide down that long aisle. Over two-hundred guests stood and silently applauded this union and I was happy.

The rest of the wedding seemed to go quickly, almost too quickly, as we said our vows, lit the unity candle, and listened to my youngest daughter, Christina, as she sang 'The Lord's Prayer' accompanied by my twin uncles on their violins, my aunt on the piano. This was a family affair, as it should be. I couldn't help but giggle as I couldn't quite get the ring on his finger, but he was obliging and assisted me in my hour of need. It was then that it happened.

Our pastor gave Willard the go-ahead to kiss his bride, that was me, of course, and they *tell* me that as the kiss ended, I threw my arms into the air and whooped. Now can you see me doing that? Well, I suppose it could have happened... or perhaps it *was* just mass hallucination. In any case, as we were pronounced husband and wife, and began that short trek back up the aisle to the strains of 'At Last (my {our} love has come along)', I knew that I had found my soul mate and that this marriage would last a lifetime.

THE 55 WORD CHALLENGE

TODAY

by Bob Isbill

No discomfort in my heart for myself or others. I am mentally, physically and spiritually healthy. I am aware and grateful with all my heart for being alive. This day may not come again soon. Today's good. I will carefully scan it into my brain and save it for the not so good day

Hey! Have you visited our great new web site yet? It's easy, just type in www.hdcwc.org and you're on your way to a great adventure exploring the High Desert CWC! Fresh, new, interesting, and up to date, it's your fastest source for information on what's happening in our own Branch! Spiced up with great photos, full of past, present and future information – sign on and Sail On!!

SUMMER JOY

Evelyn Blocker

I felt so alone. The war was not going too well.

It was July 1944. Cliff, my husband, had left for the service in May. I was trying to make it without him. He had been my childhood sweetheart and we had left the prairie of South Dakota to make our fortune in the land of my dreams, California. The war had come along and interrupted our big plans.

Summer in South Dakota had always been my favorite time of the year. In South Dakota there were nine months of winter and three months of summer.

Now, I was alone in the big city of Los Angeles, with Judy, my two-year-old daughter to raise. I had gotten a job in the Los Angeles child-care centers. This was a blessing as I could take her with me. While I worked, I could not have her under my care but she would be in the same building and I knew she was going to be all right.

I usually had Saturday off but I had to work one Saturday a month. On my free day, in the middle of July, my friend Lydia called. "Can you go with me to Redondo Beach?" she said. "It is a lovely day and I know you will enjoy it." She had a little girl, Linda, who was the same age as Judy. I did not have a car so this was a double joy. I could go to the beach and not have to ride the streetcar.

It was a wonderful day. Usually, there is a lot of haze in July but on this day the water sparkled. The sun shone and I could hear the sound of the surf pounding on the shore. I loved the smell of the salty air. Because it was a weekday there were very few people on the beach. We had the beach almost to ourselves.

Judy had not been to the beach too often and she was afraid of the water. After trying to persuade her to go in, Lydia said, "Why don't you go in and I will watch the girls."

I left Judy on the beach with Lydia and went into the surf. The sand felt so warm under my feet. The blue ocean went on forever and there was a soft breeze. The icy-cold water invigorated me. The waves were sparkling in the bright sunlight, the gulls were calling. Suddenly my troubled mind felt at peace, the cares of the big world seemed to fall away. I felt a joy in living. I was alone with my God and everything was going to be all right. I felt that someday the war would be over, Cliff would get home and life would be normal once again.

Through the years when I feel a need for a pleasant memory and need some revitalization, I think of that joyous day at the beach in 1944. Thank you God for that joyous day.

WRITING HINTS FROM MARILYN

"Helpful Hints for Writers" was the topic of Marilyn Ramirez's talk at the CWC meeting May, 9, 2009, and the program fulfilled the title's promise in every way.

Marilyn began telling stories at an early age. She took pleasure in watching the reaction of friends and family, and - as their eyes grew wider - she loved to embellish her tales. ("I'm telling Mom," her sister often threatened.) It wasn't until she became an adult that Marilyn realized her talent for fabrication could be put to good use.

By her own definition, she was long on imagination but short on the writing skills she would later acquire, and - in the beginning - rejection slips came back ten fold.

Discouraged by the length of time involved in sending stories to a single publisher and waiting months for an answer, Marilyn decided to send identical submissions to three agents. Much to her surprise and pleasure, all three agreed to represent her.

To prepare herself to pursue her career as a writer of historical romances, she took a variety of classes and the following is a brief summary of some of the key points she is kind enough to share.

- 1) Before you begin writing, get a three ring binder, wherein to store the information you will want to collect. You'll need pocket dividers as well as regular dividers to sort your info.
- 2) The dividers are used to provide space for:
 - a) Character Charts – you will want to do a character chart for each person that includes every detail of their physical and emotional being. Put some sheet protectors in this division for the pictures you will cut out of characters.
 - b) Notes – Marilyn suggests that you take a note pad with you wherever you go so that you can put in details of surroundings or people that would work into your story.
 - c) Research – you will want to do a lot of research on many aspects of your story, locale, weather, physical attributes of the house where your action takes place, etc. Marilyn uses magazines to cut out pictures of potential characters and their mansions, landscaped gardens, horses, speed boats – anything you may need to describe in your story.
 - d) Synopsis – Marilyn says that one should write a working synopsis before you begin to write the story. This will make it easier to write, eliminate a lot of problems and help keep the story on track.
 - e) Miscellaneous – this file contains everything that doesn't fit into the other files.

Marilyn suggests that the easiest way to create an ambiance for a character is to make one up. By doing that, an author never has to worry about the physical details of a real town. She says to make a map of the make-believe town and another of the house/mansion/plantation where your protagonists live.

Having done all of the above, you are now ready to plot.

The plot must have highs and lows. Put simply, the main character is either in trouble or out of trouble. If you were to write the plot line on graph paper, it would look like a series of connected “W’s.” (WWWWWWW) The highs are when he/she is out of trouble and the lows are when he/she is in trouble. The character’s troubles keep getting more difficult as the story progresses and the most severe problem comes right before the end. It is the “dark before dawn” and it falls to the main character to work out a solution. He/she can't rely on outside intervention.

Those of you who could attend will recognize that this is just a brief summary of a very detailed program. Many thanks to Marilyn for a truly interesting and instructive talk.

By *Anne Fowler*

On May 2, seven local authors from the High Desert had a book signing at Barnes and Noble. When your President left the building after the event, she had six of the seven authors signed up to speak at future CWC meetings! No. 7 will contact us when he returns from a nationwide booking signing tour! This is just a hint of what is being planned to enrich your participation in our monthly meetings!

Mission Statement

The California Writers 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.

(Father's Day is June 21 - -)

By George Gracyk

SMOKER

My Dad was a smoker. He shunned cigarettes but could always be found favoring a cigar or one of his many pipes. His favorite pipe tobacco brand was Schermehorns purchased in the one-pound can. He would buy a can each of their "regular" and the "rough cut" variety. On a newspaper spread open on the kitchen table, he would dump out both cans and mix them together to concoct his own special blend. When I was a little kid, he set the house on fire not once but twice with sparks from his pipe while varnishing the wooden floors. I used to tease him about smoking a pipe full of old rubber bands. One April Fool's Day when I was nine or ten and should have known better, I played a poor trick on my Dad. I cut up a few rubber bands and mixed them into his tobacco humidior. Trick indeed! Nothing happened, it smelled worse than usual but he never said a word. A few days later, I told my Mom about it, she was appalled, and then amused.

Having tried to become a pipe smoker myself, there proved to be two areas of frustration. One was the continuous burning of small holes in various places of your clothing. The second was the realization that to enjoy the pleasures of the pipe, one should be born with three hands!

I'm not sure exactly when, but in later years, my Dad switched exclusively from the pipe to cigars. Back when he alternated between the pipe and cigars, he smoked cigars that most folks referred to as "El Cheapos". These were popular brands and I guess the popularity was due to them being inexpensive. "Dutch Masters", "Sweet Caporals", "White Owls" and "John Ruskin" brands were sold for a nickel each. On a Sunday, my Dad might spring for a little more quality. He might buy a few "twofers", that being two for a quarter. These might be Cuban "Garcia-y-Garcia" brand panatelas. The last five years that I knew him, he was comfortably retired with a budget that allowed him to enjoy "Corona Larks" exclusively. These were moderately priced cigars. They came in an aromatic wooden box with a little metal latch. When empty, these boxes became wonderful collectables for my kids, his grandchildren. While relatively inexpensive, the "Larks" were indeed an outdoor cigar producing volumes of dank and smelly smoke rather than a pleasant wafting aroma as advertised. My wife, a cigarette smoker herself, would not tolerate these obnoxious "stogies" within the confines of the house. Dad smoked out on the patio.

I was with my Dad in the Albuquerque hospital the evening he died. The Houston Oilers were playing football on the TV above the bed in his room. He drifted in and out of consciousness. Being a life long railroad man, he addressed me as "Conductor" and asked if this train permitted smoking? "Sure, this is the smoking car", I answered. He put his thumb in his mouth and took a few puffs and blew some imaginary smoke rings. With a smile, "That's a good cigar." were his last words.

As I wind down for this issue, I offer a heartfelt "thank you" to those who contributed to the June edition, and a reminder that the *Inkslinger* "Pantry" is always happy to receive your "donations". I'm finally beginning to learn to use "Word", so if you want to submit your items with that program, they will be happily received - however, any way you like, send them in and we'll keep the ball rolling! Thank you.
nw

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.

--

HERE 'N THERE

Ring * Ring* Ring

“Hello”
“Hello, may I speak with Mary?”
“This is her.”
Is that to say “her” is “this”? Oh, no! What we mean is, “she” is “this” as in “This is she”. Better yet, “This is Mary” but that’s another program! How do you answer the phone?

Heard on a Channel 7 newscast., recently - Anchor: “There’s fewer people here in this heat”. I don’t think he really meant to say “There is fewer people here in this heat.” but he did! “There’re fewer people.....” would have been fitting, or instead of the contraction, “There are fewer...” would keep the speaker entirely out of the nit-picker’s grasp!

And on a national news program, “.....had a tremendous impact on my family and I” Ouch! It’s hard to have any kind of action against “I” but “me” can take a lot of punishment.

Kind of ranks up there with “Me and him are going fishing”, which, broken down says, “Me is going fishing” and “him is going fishing” instead of “He and I are going fishing”. It takes but an instant to do the conversion mentally before saying something that convinces the listener that the speaker should have gone alone.

#

IMPORTANCE OF WORDS

Words let us express our wants and our needs.
They let us relate our fables and creeds.
Just imagine the cost
If this art were lost.
How could we tell of honorable deeds?
-- George Robinson

#

A warm welcome is extended to our new members who have joined the High Desert Branch of CWC since our last Inkslinger.

These include: Robert Bonson, Linda Boruff, Freddi Gold, Debbie Lindblom, Carol O’Neal, Kathy Puffer, and Mary Thompson.

Let’s introduce ourselves and make sure they feel comfortable and “at home” in our group. And to our new members, we hope you will enjoy our meetings and will also participate in donating copy to the Inkslinger “Pantry”! All forms of creative writing are welcome and will be published as space allows!

We're happy to announce a brand new feature for HD CWC members and guests! Please visit <http://hdcwc.org/whatsnewwithcwc.aspx> for exciting details on our "What's new?" web page.

And after you've experienced this feature, please rate it. We'd like your feedback!

Bob Isbill -
HD CWC Publicity

