



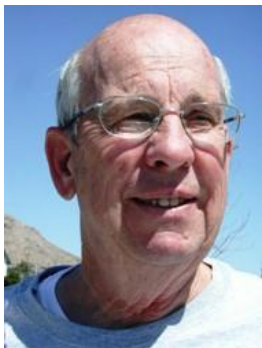
# INKSLINGER

HIGH DESERT BRANCH CWC

SAIL ON

Vol. 25, No. 9 November 2010

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



President

BOB's

POV

What's wrong with "I don't know"?

I was recently at a major store looking for the Splenda packets of sweetener. I prefer that brand; it seems just about right to me.

I asked one of the employees working on the floor where it was located and she said, "Well, I don't think we carry that any longer because all the people I see who are buying Splenda have the bulk bag of granules, so I'm pretty sure we don't have the packets anymore."

I'm certain that clerk was well-intentioned. She was certainly not rude, and I didn't feel I was being brushed off. But it offended my business sensibilities because I had a coupon in my hand for Splenda packets. I thought, correctly, that she just didn't know any better and was somehow reluctant to say those words, "I don't know."

So what?

In the long run, it does more harm than good. The store could have lost a sale. Enough well-meaning but uninformed people like this could hurt the economy.

The Splenda people could begin laying off people. Unemployment could get out of control and taxes might...

To rectify that whole cycle, I just asked another clerk and she promptly pointed out where the Splenda packets were, even to the point of telling me, "They'll be on your left."

It got me to thinking about us, as writers, and how we get to a stage of development where we skim over the craft when someone starts talking about the basics—the fundamentals of writing. We tell ourselves, "I am so beyond that! I don't need to listen to or read any more of that because I already know it." And we allow our minds to wander. It's kind of a mirror image of the Splenda thing. We may not know, but we tell ourselves we do. And we can be very convincing.

We can be brutally and irreversibly disrespected when anyone critiques our work in any way that says to us, "Hah! You don't know everything after all!"

Back off. Listen. Don't get the feathers ruffled. You don't know everything. Even more amazing is the fact that neither do I. We can do more harm than good when we're afraid to admit that we just don't know.

Bob Isbill



## **NOVEMBER 13, 2010 SPEAKERS**

We are doubly fortunate to have as our November 13, 2010 guests Paul S. Levine and his wife, Loren Grossman.

Mr. Levine is an entertainment industry attorney for over 25 years as well as being one of the few California Literary attorneys. He specializes in contract negotiation and drafting and litigation.

Ms. Grossman, also an attorney and also a literary agent, is an educational advocate for the mentally gifted and those with special needs. She has a host of non-fiction literary interests including education, archeology, religion, gardening, memoirs, law and sociology.

Come meet this fascinating couple and ask the legal questions you've been wondering about!

### **NORM GOYER**

By Frances Smith Savage



A man of many accomplishments Norm Goyer shared with the High Desert California Writers Club Saturday, October 9, 2010. He's been around for a real long time, but started very

early. He has many loves, and his resume is full. He always looks for something new, something different to keep his brain active, and at eighty years of age, he is busier than ever.

In college he learned how to learn because, "I had good instructors." He used that knowledge throughout his life. He turned his love of flying, and the history of airplanes into a successful writing career. He studied creative writing with Robert Frost, but he didn't realize how important Frost was until later in his life.

He learned early that no matter your walk in life, you write because readers enjoy reading. He writes for flying magazines, and he writes what he knows both fiction and non-fiction. "Whether writing factual fiction or writing about airplanes those facts can be dry, all numbers, and not interesting to read, but all must be accurate." He continued, "Buyers read magazines because airplanes are expensive, and they can't afford to make mistakes."

He has worked on five movies and rewrote the scripts so they made sense. He helped a woman who wrote about World War II. "She wanted the drama, but knew none of the terminology she called the instrument panel a dashboard." He worked on her novels for two years.

He stressed many times that the history of the subject we write about must be both knowledgeable and accurate.

He said, "I am a hack writer. A hack writer writes for money and that's terrible, but I've been writing for money all my life. The SUV in the parking lot was paid for by my writing. You can make money if you write to keep the attention of the reader. You can't teach people to write. Writers are born that way. They like to make people laugh, and an author needs to know their subject."

He spoke of the changes in photography, how everything is now digital, and far less expensive. "Writing for magazines has led to the writing of the future and will involve the internet. Magazines need writers to fill the space between the advertisements, and the easiest way a writer can make a few bucks. They work on a monthly cycle, so you will have twelve opportunities a year for success. Go to the library and research the magazines to see what they have published in the past year. That will tell you what they will continue to print for the current year."

He continued, "Google your subjects. Get the stories, facts, and photos. Be careful, photos can be copyrighted. If that is the case use Wikipedia for photos that are public domain." He Googles, highlights, copies and pastes, and then changes the content.

The internet is an outstanding way to get published. "Check the internet every day to see what is there. What are people interested in? When you find someone who interests you contact them. Tell them who you are, 'I am so and so, and I have done this, and I would like to **sell** an article.' I contacted one publisher, and when they said they did not pay for their articles, I said goodbye."

Newspapers and magazines will be gone. Everything they print is on Fox News so why spend money on them. Go to their web site and read whatever you are interested in.

He said he has lived a long life, a good life. He lost his wife a year ago, and writing got him through that difficult time. When his brother visited not long ago, he suggested that Goyer should buy himself a Kindle. He said, "No way, I want to hold that book in my hand."

Good news for us.

## ANTHOLOGY REPORT

The galley proofs of our anthology were approved on October 9<sup>th</sup>. Very soon we expect to be approving the final corrected galleys of the Howling at the Moon anthology, and publication will follow when that is done.

How long will that take? We don't have an exact date. The process is out of our hands.

The book has turned out to be 292 pages. I have recommended and the board has determined that the retail price of \$15.95 is justified because of the increased production cost. You, as a branch member, when ordering through the HD CWC, will still get the book for wholesale as promised.

However, this is to notify you that when the books are available, you should also be ready. As soon as they are published, we will have some available for you to look at before ordering. If they are available to order when the final galleys are approved, you will be notified of that also.

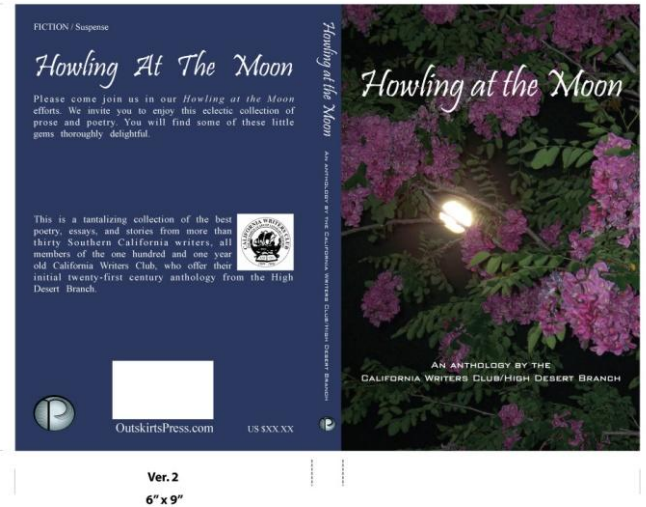
All books ordered are "Print on demand" (POD) and must be paid for when they are ordered. As we have promised, you as a HD CWC Branch member, will be able to order whatever amount you want at the wholesale price (\$9.00 or less) plus shipping.

Therefore, plan ahead for the publication time. There is no obligation to buy any of the books, but if you do choose to order any, **they must be paid for in advance.**

Thank you all for your patience and cooperation during this undertaking. It has been a great learning experience, and I think the personal rewards for each member will be worth the time and effort it took to do it right.

### More Mark Twain:

The difference between the *almost*-right word and the *right* word is really a large matter.- it's the difference between the lightning bug and the lightning.

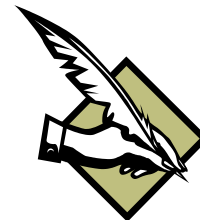


## MEET THE AUTHORS NIGHT

For a fun, enjoyable evening, plan to attend the "Meet The Authors and Book Signing Event" coordinated by Mary D. Scott, HD CWC member and author of "Spirit Driven Events"

Mary Scott has put together an evening consisting of several of our local member authors reading from their works at the Sun City Apple Valley Mariposa Lodge. The address is 19311 Jess Ranch Parkway in Apple Valley.

Attendees are requested to RSVP by telephone to (760)247-9195. The event is scheduled for 6 PM to 8 PM on Wednesday, November 10, 2010. We are grateful to Mary Scott for coordinating this event, and also for her work on the [\\_www.hdcwc.org\\_](http://www.hdcwc.org) (<http://www.hdcwc.org/>) web site, and for constructing the "Our Authors" web page. If you haven't visited lately, take a look!



## EVERYONE ALWAYS LEAVES

By Jenny Margotta

“Please, you can’t... Don’t leave me... Please...”

“Everyone always leaves at some point, darlin’. That’s life. What made you think I could avoid that one absolute, human certainty any more than the next man?” The deep, sorrowful voice seemed to brush her ear, slide into her psyche with each breath she took.

“But... why? Why is it always me? My brother, my father, my son, all taken from me. Why couldn’t the Fates at least leave me one person to fill my life?” The argument seemed eminently sensible to her grief-stricken mind.

“Ah, my love... I am so sorry.” The last echoes of the long-gone voice slipped through the shadows of the room as the woman woke with a start, sweat coating her pale skin, the sheets tangled around her bare legs, the last *please* still trembling on her lips. The air around her was warm, too warm, the heavy, humid air barely challenged by the slow moving blades of the ceiling fan overhead. Sunlight streamed in through the large window on the wall across from the end of the bed. Outside, if she cared enough to look closely, she would have seen the myriad shades of green, young green and old, of the plants along the back garden wall. Shadow and sunlight played games of catch across the branches, peeking first from behind one sturdy limb, then hiding behind a wing of new growth climbing the wall. Birds crowded the bright ceramic feeder hanging from an iron shepherd’s crook. The birds had their young with them this morning; the cheeping of the adolescents adding a somewhat frantic note to the morning air.

The woman did not look, could not look, at the new day full of bright hope outside. Rather, she continued to lay in the tangle of bed clothes, tears streaming silently down her cheeks to dampen the pillow and sheets already limp beneath her. Eyes closed, she heard again the deep, rich, masculine voice in her head.

“Everyone always leaves. No one can escape death. It comes for you when it’s ready, whether

you’re ready for it or not.” She knew that voice. She would never forget that voice, although its owner had been dead for nearly two years. Two interminable years of false cheer and bravado during the day, pain and anguish and innumerable tears at night.

She was no longer young, this grieving woman. The mirror would reflect a grey, tired image. Not very tall but very wide, heavier than had ever been socially acceptable. The silent mirrored companion would exactly duplicate her slow, deliberate movements. Age had added pain to slow her even more. She was old and grey and broken.

But he had made her feel young. For a few, brief years he had made her believe she had recaptured her youth; she was once again lithe and sure-footed and eager to experience all that the world had to offer. Prior to finding him, this one special man, many of the years had been wasted... wasted in unfortunate relationships, in holding long grudges, and in mourning dreams lost. Then he had walked into her life with his energy and joy and a smile that lit up the darkest room on the gloomiest day, a smile that delivered a full-fledged symphony of cheer to anyone lucky enough to be its target.

Those few years with him remained diamond bright in her mind. Years full of love and romance and the fulfillment of wonderful dreams and adventures. The woman had regrets like most people her age, but she would never regret and never forget those few glorious, precious years. But she was not destined to hold onto that glittering light. Chance... or fate... or a vengeful God had decreed she could not keep him at her side. She watched him waste away as she held him in her arms. She watched the last flickering glow fade from his eyes and he was gone. She was alone.

Two years. Two interminable years and still she mourned. She would always mourn. She could do nothing else. Sighing, she settled back into the tear drenched sheets and closed her eyes. Only in her dreams could she find him, once again feel his strong arms around her, hear his steady heartbeat as she pressed herself tight against his hard, strong body. Only in her dreams...

## LOST

By Suzanne C. Deboard Holbrook-Brumbaugh

Madelyn slipped feet first into the cool green water, her mind empty... her eyes devoid of life. She had thought about it for a long time, played with the idea of suicide, but had always dismissed it. After all, people who committed suicide never went to Heaven, always the other place. But even Hell was better than this. No one would miss her. Her family had disowned her and to everyone else she was just a face in the crowd: a broken, bruised face, but still just a face.

She had thought she loved him. He seemed so kind and considerate at first. She knew it was wrong to move in with him, but he was so persuasive. "Just for a little while, until we see if we're really compatible or not." She had been reluctant at first, but she loved him so and he *had* promised to marry her. So she moved her belongings into the tiny apartment and started housekeeping.

Her family's disapproval saddened her, but she assured them everything would eventually work out. It was just a matter of time. Then the beatings started - just a slap across the face...the first time. Why, she had cried? He had apologized, said he had had a bad day at work, asked her forgiveness and promised - never again. He brought her flowers and when they made love his tenderness wiped all the pain away. She didn't tell her family. They wouldn't understand. After all, it was just once.

Months later. Still no ring... Unless you count the one around her eye. She stayed home a lot. She was ashamed. It had become a vicious cycle - beatings, apologies, lovemaking... round and round. She shouldn't complain. After all, it was her fault. She should have known he didn't like stuffed peppers. She could have kept the house a little cleaner, she supposed. But she was so drained. *What has happened to me*, she wondered. *I can hardly make myself get up in the morning*. Then the visit to the doctor. He had insisted. "Get some pills. Anything to get you off your lazy butt," he had demanded. So she went.

Three months, the doctor said. Baby seems fine, but *she* has to take better care of herself. Exhaustion wouldn't do her or the baby any good. That was the day she told her family... the day they disowned her... forever. A child out of wedlock was a stigma they could not bear. She went home, wondering what *his* reaction would be. Would he

be happy being a daddy? Angry? Would it matter at all?

"How could you let this happen," he had demanded? "It's all your fault. You've ruined my life." Then he beat her and threw her out. Pregnant. Homeless. No place to go. No family, no home, no shelter... only the river.

She closed her eyes as she slipped deeper into the murky depths. 'But what about the baby?' a voice deep within her subconscious cried out. She opened her eyes. She felt her abdomen. *The baby, my baby. I have to live for my baby. Please God. Forgive me. Please don't let me die.* She struggled toward the surface, kicking and flailing. *I'm not going to make it*, she thought, her tears joining with the droplets in the river.

Strong hands... under her arms... lifting, pulling... breaking the surface of the water... blue sky... air... life giving air...thank you, God.

"Are you all right, miss? That was quite a fall. Thought you were dead."

She looked into the deep green eyes of the lone fisherman and smiled. "I'm all right," she whispered. And she knew she was.

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## IS SOMEONE FOLLOWING ME?

By Carol Warren

This is one of my Hospice Humor stories which I chose to share "prematurely" as my book is progressing on the very slow side.

I was visiting a patient that lived in a separate house, often referred to as "Mother-In Laws" quarters. I had spent a few minutes talking over any questions or concerns with her son and asked if he wanted to come along while I examined Mom. He declined and I started walking toward the back house. I had walked about 15 feet and had the sensation that someone was following me. I partially turned around thinking that her son must have decided to come with me after all, but no one was there. I continued on another 15 feet or so, as I decided I must have been imagining it. Suddenly I felt something touch the backs of my legs. I let out a little scream and didn't know if I should make a run for it to the patients open door, stop dead in my tracks or try to make it back to the main house. The son came running when he heard me scream but soon stopped as he bent over laughing and reassured me it was only the family's pot bellied pig out for an evening walk. Home Health and Hospice nurses have many war stories to share.

## THIS MORNING

By Ann Heimback

Dozens of little Lesser Goldfinch nibbled on the sweet seeds of Nyjer, as four others danced around the rim of the bird bath, looking for a drink and a dip.

Their cousins - purple finches, house finches, sparrows - feasted on black oil sunflower seeds. Crack, crack, went the shells.

The squeals of baby squirrels, romping and tumbling on the lawn, caught my attention, while five baby bunnies, with white powder-puff tails, leapt in the air and ran around the greasewood playing tag..

I watched a lizard dig a hole. Its little front legs moved almost too fast to see. An occasional switch of the tail seemed to assist.

The local Cooper's hawk, hunting for a tasty breakfast, swooped in and chased a goldfinch across the back wall, and out of sight, thank goodness!

A Scrub Jay couple fought to get to their fledgling, fallen to the ground - but couldn't get past the papa quail, who kept attacking to protect the fuzzy little quail babies. Finally the baby Jay hopped into the bushes, the little quail covey was herded into the brush by the mama quail, and peace returned.

A hummingbird sipped sweet water while I held the feeder in my hand. And it dropped teeny tiny poop on my arm. Wow! What a treat!

All this, and a coyote, too, which loped across the front property after the morning hunt. All in a day. All while I watched, fascinated. And I never left home. It's a good life, here in the high desert.



*An observation from "The Quotable Book Lover":*

Most writers regard the truth as their most valuable possession and therefore are most economical in its use"

Mark Twain

## MY FATHER THE CHIEF

By James R. Elstad

Marjorie took his hand from her knee. "Dennis, Honey, you know I want to spend all the time I can with you. But you promised papa you'd have me home by 11. We only have a few minutes."

"Aw sweetheart, just a few kisses more."

"I'm serious. I bet he's looking out the window now. I know he's upset because the windows are fogged up. If I'm a minute late he'll bring out the shotgun."

"Look, he may be a Master Chief in the Navy but his rank doesn't mean anything to me. It's good enough that I have you at your front door. As far as I'm concerned...."

The front door squeaked, "Marjorie! He can't say I didn't warn him!"

As soon as they heard the first squeak the passenger door of the coupe flew open. Marjorie, half-out and half-in was straightening her blouse and skirt. Before Marjorie could shut the door the coupe had laid rubber half-way down the street and Marjorie was running up the steps.

"Papa, one of these days you're gonna hurt someone with that thing!"

"That's the idea girl. The sailor trash you run around with deserves nothing better. I know I was one once. Now upstairs and get to bed!"

It's that time of year when we love to see the Pantry full and 'tis the season for some special stories. Can you spare a bit of time for a holiday-based story to help fill the shelves for the next issue. How about your most exciting, memorable Christmas – is there a short story there?

**DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME** is over the day after our next meeting – that will give you another hour to work on your *Inkslinger* submission! Cheers and let inspiration prevail (Well, it is worth a try!)

I find it interesting that in spite of several articles requesting specific style/font/spacing, etc., in the *INKSLINGER* submissions, each of us seems to feel that applies to the other writer. I'm not lazy, I can redo your format but this is good training for when you send your priceless prose off to a real publisher and you fail to follow their specifics and it bounces back to you. That can be avoided by learning to write to the publisher's style sheet! Remember Mike Foley's story at HATM about "But my handwriting is clear!"? This is what he's talking about.

### **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.

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### **GENTLE WITCHCRAFT**

By Linda Paine

Winter cometh, kind familiar,  
Ravish my hungry maiden heart.  
Night man, ghost lover, friend.

### **MY BROTHER**

*by John Margotta writing as John Ferrara*

I watch my brother as he sleeps  
His teeth are clenched and his mouth is tight  
Shadowy grimaces drift across his dreams  
My Brother has been to war, you see

His lips move incoherently  
Meanings that wander and are lost within  
Lost it seems in a litany of fire and steel  
My Brother has been to war, you see

In the sun we walk and talk  
We talk of weather and memories  
Of young girls, baseball and rainy days  
My Brother has been to war, you see

His laughter is loud and without form  
At times words spill over his lips in a gush  
Yet, he does not laugh at the three-legged dog  
My Brother has been to war, you see

I am not privy to the private thoughts  
Locked in a dark and private vault  
He holds the key to his own secluded hell  
My Brother has been to war, you see.

*(November 11 is Veterans' Day. Fly your flag)*



### **THREE DAYS FOR BEREAVEMENT**

By Linda Bowden

You have three days,  
To forget,  
To forgive,  
To grieve,  
To laugh,  
To weep.  
You have three days,  
To move forward,  
To step backwards,  
To let go,  
To resolve yourself,  
Just three days,  
To put in order a whole lifetime.