

# Coeur d'Alene Chapter Idaho Writers' League

Celebrating our 60th Anniversary - 1943-2003

## Lakegazette



August 2005

P.O. BOX 1113, Hayden, Idaho 83835

### COEUR d'ALENE IWL MEETINGS:

**August 10 Jewett House**  
**No day meeting in August**  
9 A.M. till noon  
Refreshments:  
Refreshments:  
Program: None

**August 18 Lutheran Church**  
4800 Ramsey Rd  
6:30 to 9:30 P.M.  
Refreshments: Diane Van Etten  
Refreshments: Need Volunteer  
Program: 2003 Surrey  
Conference DVD.

### August Birthdays:

08/02 Marion E. Little  
08/16 Janet See  
08/17 Robin Clayton  
08/20 Barbara Rostad  
08/28 Dotty Maley  
08/28 Larry Godwin  
08/28 Robin Heflin

### Refreshment Volunteers:

Need one volunteer for the September day meeting. Need two volunteers for the night meeting. In October need two for the night meeting. Both meetings in November need volunteers. Contact Barbara Rostad, Hospitality Chair at: (208) 777-1030. Thanks.

## Scribes travels through story telling basics

*by Larry Telles for vacationing Noah Buntain*

Last month some of you participated in our Writer's Sketches Workshop in Coeur d'Alene's city park. At our critique session back at the Jewett House some members appeared to have paid attention to the assignment. That hour exercise allowed you to watch real people, listen to real dialogue in real surroundings. I hope you take your observations one step further before summer is over and create a short story that you can read at our next gathering.

As you remember, this month we only have a night meeting. The program is something a little different. We will watch a DVD about writers. The documentary *SCRIBES* was shot during the 2003 Surrey International Writers' Conference. *Scribes* takes its audience through the basics of story telling to the details and difficulties involved in being a professional writer. Viewers will be given the inside scoop through workshops, keynote speeches, and one-on-one interviews with best-selling authors, powerhouse agents and editors, producers, and publishers to find out what it takes to break into the field. *Scribes* is a humorous, honest, and sometimes painful look at the writing industry. It's like being at the conference without leaving Coeur d'Alene.

*Scribes* features many popular authors, including: Terry Brooks, Diana Gabaldon, Susan Musgrave, Anne Perry, John Saul, Michael Slade, and Jack Whyte.

What people are saying about *Scribes* "If you aim to be a professional writer, this DVD will give you the straight goods from a team of pros. It's edited so that you can simply follow the steps of writing a novel from beginning to end. Good stuff!" MICHAEL SLADE.

Before I conclude this column, I wish to extend my thanks and gratitude to the *Herbert D. McAvoy Fund in the Idaho Community Foundation*. We received your grant check from Cathy R. Silak, President and CEO, for \$900 to be used for our 2006 Children's Writing Contest with Idaho as its theme. I know I speak for all of the members of the Coeur d'Alene chapter when I say thank you for your continuing support.

As Noah said last month, come to the next meeting, tap into the inspiring atmosphere and let your creativity loose on a warm summer night.

# The President's Corner

by Larry Telles

As the last calendar day of July dropped into my round file, I realized that our year only had five months remaining. Outdoor projects have kept me busy in the morning hours before the sun reached its zenith. My creative work had to wait for a cooler place and a later time. As I pushed my way through the overgrown raspberry patch or on the top step of a ladder in the cherry tree, I had time to think. The heat under my large brimmed straw hat cooked those creative thoughts into my gray matter.



If most people are at work or in their gardens, what else could they be doing in this heat? Selling their house! Several members are doing just that, along with interesting situations. Chris Moore sold her house so fast that she and her husband had not picked out a new one. So they are going to live in a 5th wheel and build a house near Wolf Lodge. Two people living together in a house trailer for a year. Is there a story there?

Two hours after Bill Kersting put his house on the market someone came by and bought it. He and his wife had to find a place to live temporarily while a new house can be built. Moving twice can not be fun. Well. Is there a story there?

A third member, Robin Heflin and her husband are moving to the West Coast of Washington. Their house is sold, they are packing, and she wrote her last story for the Spokesman Review Handle Extra three weeks ago. We will miss Robin, a talented writer who has both submitted to the IWL contests over the years and commercial magazines, with great success. Moving across the state with cats who have never been out of their backyard is a story in itself. Good luck, Robin.

Another long time past member, Judith Farrey, moved several months ago to Hayden. Being closer to civilization is great, but fixing up the house was another matter. Another story?

These four people have stories waiting to be written. But what about the rest of us? Noah gave us a program last month in the Coeur d'Alene Park. Gloria Warnick submitted her, now polished story, to this newsletter. I think she is going to join our group at the next meeting.

With five months till New Years, you have time to write about Halloween, Thanksgiving, or Christmas and a short story for the next Snowflake challenge beginning the middle of September. The last time I looked, this was a writing organization, and as editor of this newsletter I'd like to see much, much more in the way of material from our 85 members.

## SYNOPSIS S.O.S.

Interested in receiving some one-on-one help in writing your Dreaded Synopsis? Stymied by your Query Letter? Have questions but don't know where to turn for help? Ready to knock your head against the wall in frustration trying to condense your wonderful manuscript down into a 10 or 5 or 2 page synopsis? Or create a one-page query? Don't give up because there is help.

For a flat fee of \$40 USD, Mary Buckham will provide you templates, explanatory lectures and examples. She will also give you three solid hours of one-on-one critique of your synopsis and/or query letter – what works, what doesn't and why. She will show you, with your own words, where you can strengthen and improve what you've written and answer any and all of those pesky questions that tend to stop us when we sit down to grapple with synopsis and query writing.

Mary has literally worked with hundred of students who've come away from the process with comments such as, "I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. You've broken code, lifted the veil on the mystery of writing the dreaded synopsis!," or "Everything Mary offers in her one-on-one service has been invaluable – the templates, the suggestions, the response time. I can't think of a single thing I'd improve."

For information on how to sign up for one-on-one synopsis/query help visit Mary's website at [www.MaryBuckham.com](http://www.MaryBuckham.com) and click on the Synopsis button. Or email Mary directly at [Mary@MaryBuckham.com](mailto:Mary@MaryBuckham.com) with any questions.

Limit to number of clients per month - able to reserve space in advance.

**THANK YOU  
TO THE  
HERBERT D. McAVOY FUND  
IN THE  
IDAHO COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

## A Member Bio

### Carrie Stuart Parks

The detective carried the skull in a brown paper bag sealed with red evidence tape. He placed it carefully on the counter, then handed over the autopsy report. Female. Sixteen to twenty years old. Caucasian. Single gunshot wound to the head. It would be up to Carrie to put a face on the skull.

One of Idaho Writer Leagues newest members is Carrie Stuart Parks, a full time fine and forensic artist. Her misty watercolors grace the walls throughout Coeur d'Alene including every room of the Coeur d'Alene Resort, Coeur d'Alene Inn, Kootenai Memorial Hospital, and numerous other corporate and private collections. She is a Signature Member of the Idaho Watercolor Society, the first from North Idaho.

Carrie's art work also glares out from wanted posters and the evening news in the form of forensic sketches. She is an award-winning internationally known instructor of forensic art and travels frequently to instruct police officers in this skill.

Although public speaking may terrify many, Carrie is a popular presenter with her topic on recognizing lies and signs of deception and has developed training materials for fraud investigators, law enforcement, and businesses.

She illustrated "Seasons of My Heart," written by Barbara Peretti and published by J. Countryman, then went on to write and illustrate "Secrets to Drawing Realistic Faces" for North Light Publishers. With her artist-husband Rick, she recently completed her third book, "Secrets to Realistic Drawing," again for North Light Publishers.

Carrie is using her forensic background to pen a series of mysteries under the expert tutelage of Frank Peretti, the "Dean of Christian Fiction". She recently returned from presenting forensic art at her first writers conference, Partners in Crime-Murder in the Grove in Boise.

Although time for a hobby is about as rare as a reasonably-priced home in Coeur d'Alene, Carrie is an AKC dog show judge and has raised and shown Great Pyrenees dogs since nineteen sixty-one (which provides some interesting math as she is only twenty-nine...)

## WHAT IS A POEM?

*by Liz Mastin*

### This Month: Poetic Forms

These days it seems like poetry could use some redefining. Webster's New World Dictionary defines a poem as an arrangement of words in verse; especially, a rhythmical composition, sometimes rhymed, expressing facts, ideas or emotions in a style more concentrated, imaginative, and powerful than ordinary speech: some poems are in meter, some in free verse. It can also be prose-having beauty of thought or language or it can be anything beautiful in a way suggesting a poem.

According to Frances Mayes in "The Discovery of Poetry," Emily Dickinson said poetry was "her circumference," meaning her desire to explore experience by drawing it into a circle of her own. D.H. Laurence felt that the essence of good poetry was "stark directness," while William Woodsworth valued poetry for its "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." William Carlos Williams defined a poem as "a machine made of words" and Samuel Taylor Coleridge felt poems were basically "the best words in the best order." Apparently the definition of poetry is flexible and each poet may have his or her idea of what a poem is. What is poetry to you? Perhaps you feel it is the soul expressing itself, or perhaps it is a medium for expressing gratitude. Poetry may be a vehicle for producing laughter or sorrow and it often brings enlightenment.

This leads me into what I wish to explore in this column, the "poetic forms" that have been used for centuries in writing poems. I would like to share the origins of some of these poetic forms, how they are written and what their rules are. It seems an especially good idea to me because today's modern poems, while fascinating and skillfully written, seem less permanent and seem difficult to understand except by other poets who are writing similar work. How many of today's poems are conducive to memorization for example?

I enjoy free verse, which is of course its own poetic form, with the rule being there are no rules, but it is good to understand poetry's beginnings too. It seems wise to know

how to write poetry using forms that have been poetry's mainstay since the late fifteenth century.

According to "Norton's Anthology of Poetic Forms," a variety of forms took off in the sixteenth century in France's harvest fields and in small Italian Courts. Poetry was a highly regarded art, protected by rulers who had definite expectations for the product. "A shadow of power lay across it and poetry became a highly visible part of high civilization." Poets and minstrels entertained appreciative and loving audiences and were highly regarded. They would charm the courts with poetic songs, replete with flattery, cleverness and charm. This tradition of memorizing and singing poems continued for a long time. In this column I hope to present a variety of poetic forms, give a brief history of the forms, the rules for writing them and give examples. I hope you will enjoy them and try writing them yourself. They really aren't difficult, but provide a pleasant framework for your poem writing and you will find they are fun .

We will begin with The Villanelle. The villanelle comes from an Italian harvest field. The word stems from villano, which means "peasant" in Italian. The form we know today began with the work of a French poet, Jean Passerat, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Villanelle circles around and around and suggests reoccurrence of mood, emotion, and memory. It leans toward song and lyric poetry. Often the subject is of loss. Each stanza becomes a series of retrievals.

### Villanelle rules

1. It is a poem of nineteen lines
2. It has five stanzas, each of three lines, with a final one of four lines
3. The first line of the first stanza is repeated as the last line of the second and fourth stanzas.
4. The third line of the first stanza is repeated as the last line of the third and fifth stanzas.
5. These two refrain lines follow each other to become the second to last lines of the poem.
6. The rhyme scheme is aba. The rhymes are repeated according to the refrains.

## Villanelle of His Lady's Treasures

Earnest Dowson

I took her dainty eyes, as well  
As silken tendrils of her hair:  
And so I made a Villanelle!

I took her voice, a silver bell,  
As clear as song, as soft as prayer;  
I took her dainty eyes as well.

It may be, said I, who can tell,  
These things shall be my less despair?  
And so I made a Villanelle!

I took her whiteness virginal  
And from her cheeks two roses rare:  
I took her dainty eyes as well.

I said: "It may be possible  
Her image from my heart to tear!"  
And so I made a Villanelle.

I stole her laugh, most musical:  
I wrought it in with artful care;  
I took her dainty eyes as well;  
And so I made a Villanelle.

# POETRY CORNER

## Dilemma

*By Larry Godwin*

Economics 407  
Monday 10:10 a.m.  
conflicting trains of thought  
consumer theory vs. Janet  
Janet win

# An Interview with Busy Author Brandilyn Collins

by Patti Dickinson

After writing the review of the author's latest book *Dead of Night* for the Lakegazette, it occurred to me that everyone in our chapter might not know who Brandilyn Collins is or just how many books carry her name. I happened to catch her at her Coeur d'Alene home early in the morning near the end of July and proceeded to conduct a phone interview while she and her mother (visiting from Kentucky) were fixing breakfast. I could hear her whisper while I typed her answers to my questions: "The silverware's in that drawer over there, Mom, glasses in the far left cupboard." That's multi-tasking R squared and, the fact she could successfully pull off both things at once, defines this author.

"They say" when an author's name appears at the top of the cover and is printed in a larger font than the title, then he or she has arrived. According to *Dead of Night*, Brandilyn has indeed arrived. Even I (blind in one eye) could be read her name from a good ten feet away!

For those of you who don't know her, Brandilyn is an award-winning, best-selling author of Christian women's fiction, suspense and thrillers. She is also friend of our CdA chapter, having spoken and conducted workshops at two of our Writers Fairs. She did a separate workshop on "bringing your characters to life" from her how-to book, *Getting Into Character*, John Wiley & Sons, New York. She gave this workshop while using a cane and walker to get around during her recovery from lyme disease. Undiagnosed for over a year, this debilitating disease landed her flat on her back and sidelined her writing for three months. It took another six months and medication that helped, but made her feel lousy, to finally feel good again. Brandilyn: "I wrote part of *Brink of Death* while I was sick, but God finished it." (the amazing story of her recovery is on her website [www.brandilyncollins.com](http://www.brandilyncollins.com) )

A writer for Zondervan (the Christian division of Harper Collins Publishers) Brandilyn is a Kentucky native. She became interested in acting in high school and majored in Drama in college. Midway through college she moved to California and enrolled at San Francisco State; there she changed her major to journalism. Her books clearly demonstrate that she brings both passions to her novels, dramatic characters and a polished writing skill.



**Gallery Showing:** IWL member Valerie Mandiloff had a showing of her artistic works Sunday, June 12, from 1-4:00 pm. at the Studio Gallery of Charlene Martin. The Studio Gallery was full of people most of the afternoon.

## NEWSLETTER STAFF

Co-Editor - Shirley Ellis

Larry Telles - Co-Editor (762-2548)

ltelles@icehouse.net

Editor at Large - Position open

Reporters - Positions open

If you have any stories, poems, articles, or just bits of information, send it to the email address above. Deadline: the 25th of each month.

## EVERYTHING IS OKAY NOW!

Several weeks ago the home of Marilyn Wagenius was involved in a garage fire. The blaze destroyed the garage but the house escaped with mostly smoke damage. Both Marilyn and husband are doing fine. Don't know if Marilyn is going to write a poem about it however.

The author put her journalism skills to use by writing business material while living in the Bay area then newspapers and television accounts of a local murder captured her attention. The upcoming trial piqued Brandilyn's interest so much that she attended the court proceedings and acquired exclusive rights to the defendant's story. The experience resulted in her true crime book entitled *A Question of Innocence*, published in 1995 by Avon. Brandilyn's training in drama came into play in promoting the book. After appearing on Bay area radio and TV, the book (and its author) gained national attention on the Phil Donahue and Leeza talks shows. *Question of Innocence* launched Brandilyn's writing career, though the path proved to be neither straight nor without hurdles.

Like many successful authors, hers is a "ten year, overnight success" story. "My publishing journey took ten years of learning the craft, rejections, hard work, and no income," Brandilyn states. "My advice to all writers and especially novelists is to hang in there, don't give up. If your members go to my website and access the *Blog* link, the February entry tells about my experience. I think they will find it helpful."

At some point in this journey, she felt a strong calling to write Christian fiction and in the process came up with a successful formula for her novels: "unpredictable, fast-paced and highly characterized stories interwoven with a message of God's power and grace."

What happened next could be headlined: "Prolific writer meets major publisher= Zowie!" Once Brandilyn connected with Zondervan, her career skyrocketed. The *Bradleyville Series* (Bradleyville is the town central to the stories) is contemporary women's fiction (Christian) which began with *Cast a Road Before Me* in 1999, followed by *Color the Sidewalk for Me* in 2002, and *Capture the Wind for Me* in 2003. Also during this time she wrote her how-to book, *Getting Into Character* (2002.)

Next came the two-book *Chelsea Adams Series*, Brandilyn's first entry into the Christian suspense market with *Eyes of Elisha* and *Dread Champion*. So successful was this series that Zondervan asked for more in the suspense genre. Brandilyn responded with a three-book proposal for a series with forensic artist Annie Kingston as the protagonist.

Zondervan liked the proposal but wanted four books, not three. Titled the *Hidden Faces Series*, three of the novels, *Brink of Death*, *Stain of Guilt*, and *Dead of Night* are in the bookstores and getting glowing reviews by Brandilyn's fans; the fourth, *Web of Lies*, is due out in December of this year.

Q: You obviously enjoy writing series."

A "I do. Series tend to be big in the Christian market because readers like getting involved with a protagonist and the characters. So first of all, it's a good marketing choice. Second, I don't have to create a whole new world for every book, which takes a lot of time. Also, a series has a character arc that flows from one story to the next. Each book needs to stand alone, but what happened in past books can't be ignored. The con of writing a series is that the main character is in the middle of the action all the time and that's hard to pull off in one book, let alone four."

Brandilyn states her final novel in the *Hidden Faces Series*, entitled *Web of Lies* came about partly because so many readers asked her for another Chelsea Adams book. *Web of Lies* combines her two protagonists, Chelsea Adams and Annie Kingston. The author admits combining them into one book was difficult to write. "The *Chelsea Adams Series* was written in 3rd person, *Hidden Faces* in 1st person and, as I got into it, the story made it very clear that I needed to stick to that format. So I switched from 1st to 3rd person and back again and it was a nightmare to write. But using both works because it was driven by the story. Because of that, I believe the reader will accept the change from 1st to 3rd person and back again without any problem."

Q: What's next for Brandilyn Collins?"

A: "I'm writing the first book of a new series. This one is a three-book series called *The Kanner Lake Series* and it is set up here." (Brandilyn and her husband, Mark, have a home in Coeur d'Alene.) "Kanner Lake is a fictional town which I placed a little bit south of Priest Lake but north of Spirit Lake. The town has a population of 1700 and is full of interesting characters. Some of them hang out at a coffee shop called Java Joint. The protagonist is Paige Williams, a twenty-something mysterious girl who is new to Kanner Lake. The reader learns early on that she is running from something in her past, but of course they don't know what it is. The story opens at night when Paige arrives home from work and then gets into her hot tub. She doesn't bother to turn on any lights—until a body surfaces."

Inciting incident? Works for me! Called *Seatbelt Suspense* with the tagline "don't forget to breathe," this series is written in third person. The first book is due out in August 2006.

Q: Does the obvious pace you maintain give you any time for balance in your life?

A: (She chuckles) "Balance—what's that? Seriously, I do make time for my daughter Amberly and my husband Mark. Also for my devotions. All three are important."

Q: I know you used to run. Do you still do that and if so, do you do it for health or sanity?

A: (Another chuckle) “Both. I run five miles every day and have for twenty years.”

Last question: “Any other hobbies or diversions? Or, with imminent deadlines always hanging over your head, is that a ridiculous question?”

A: “Not ridiculous at all. Reading is my hobby. I enjoy it, plus it’s part of the job. If you want to be a novelist, you have to read—in your market. I also do a lot of teaching at conferences.”

On a shopping trip in Coeur d’ Alene, Brandilyn happened to meet Marilyn Cooper, owner of Simple Pleasures and was so enchanted by the shop that she asked Marilyn if she could use the store—real name and real products—in her book. When the owner agreed, Simple Pleasures became the store in which the protagonist Paige Williams clerks. Brandilyn is thinking of continuing the local store aspect in the other two Kanner Lake books, using a real CdA business as part of the setting.

I thanked Brandilyn for the interview and asked if she or her mother burned any toast overcooked the eggs. “Nope, breakfast is ready and it looks really good.”

Brandilyn expressed gratitude for her connection to our chapter. “I am so grateful for being able to participate in your Writers Fairs and teaching the workshops. I enjoyed the experience and made a lot of new friends.” She ended the interview with a short bit of advice for all writers: “Write every day and don’t give up. Don’t even *think* of giving up.”

If writing for the Christian market is of interest to you, here is some information on Zondervan. Located in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan has been in business for seventy years. It is the #1 publisher of the Bible worldwide, plus they produce an array of novels, inspirational books and gifts, ministry resource material, audio books, eBooks, videos, and CD-ROMs.

Their website is [www.zondervan.com](http://www.zondervan.com) Snailmail address is Zondervan, 5300 Patterson SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49530

Zondervan’s submission guidelines advise that since 9/11 they will no longer open any envelope or package that isn’t addressed to a particular individual or from an identified source they recognize. Those envelopes and

packages will be returned to the sender unopened or, if there is no return address, will be discarded.

Zondervan encourages authors to submit book proposals electronically to First Edition. The ECPA Manuscript Service on the ECPA website ( [www.ECPA.org](http://www.ECPA.org)) Book proposals posted on this website are available for review by all member publishers of the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association. Zondervan and Zonderkids have assigned an editor to regularly review all new proposals posted on First Edition.

They do allow proposals to be faxed to them: to their Book Proposal Review Editor (616-698-3454) For specific instructions on what they require, log onto their website and link to Submission Guidelines.

## BOOK REVIEW

*Dead of Night* by Brandilyn Collins  
Trade paper by Zondervan Publishers,  
2005. U.S. \$12.99  
Review by Patti Dickinson

From the back of the book cover: “*A string of murders terrorizes citizens in Redding, California area. The serial killer is cunning, stealthy. Masked by day, unmasked by night. Forensic artist Annie Kingston discovers the sixth body practically in her own back yard. Is the location a taunt aimed at her? One by one, Annie must draw the unknown victims for identification. Dread mounts. Who will be taken next? Under a crushing oppression, Annie and other Christians are driven to pray for God’s intervention as they’ve never prayed before.*”

*Dead of Night*, like the other books in the *Hidden Faces Series* begins with forty-two year old Annie Kingston living her life, going about her business as mother to her trouble-seeking son and her young daughter, as sister to her spunky plane-piloting sibling, and as a forensic artist who works closely with the Shasta County Sheriff’s Department. But before we meet Annie, the prologue puts us in the mind of the demented killer who removes a victim’s earring with a knife—thus the tagline, “don’t forget to breathe.” The prologue also serves

to preview the level and intensity of violence explored in this final book of the series.

Annie's rebellious son Stephen's involvement with sleazy drug people launches the story and touches the universal fear of every mother of a teenager. It gives the story a jolting sense of reality. Annie's ex-husband, ambivalent about the danger their son is in and unwilling to help, creates even greater empathy for Annie. An interesting cast of secondary characters we know from past books seem like old friends by now, their familiarity part of the appeal of the series.

And, again like the other books in this series, what you think you've figured out and who you think committed the murders...well... don't bet any money on it. This author is known for minute-by-minute high drama endings with a twist. *Dead of Night* delivers exactly what the author's fans expect: a string of killings and a wicked murderer pitted against a Christian woman who believes with unbounded faith that a "Christian's authority through prayer is the ultimate unyielding weapon against evil."

*Dead of Night* is a good read if you don't mind (by the end of chapter one) feeling the need to turn on all the lights in the house and double lock every door.

### HAVE YOU READ A GOOD BOOK LATELY?

Why not share a book review with us! It doesn't matter if it is a "how to book" on writing, or a book you just couldn't put down. This is a writing group who likes to be made aware of good writing, no matter what form.

Write one and submitted it to the newsletter staff. We would greatly appreciate it. Thanks in advanced.

## Silver Anniversary Celebration

ByLine magazine, a great source for information, support and contests, is rolling back prices to the 1980's in celebration of 25 years of publication. For a limited time, you can subscribe at bargain prices – only through this newsletter or your Idaho ByLine Rep, Patti Dickinson.

One year (usually \$24) is now just \$18 (in the U.S.)  
Two years (usually \$42) is now just \$33 (in the U.S.)

To subscribe, send your check for \$18 (or \$33) to ByLine, PO Box 5240, Edmond, OK 73083-5240, and provide your name and mailing address. Prices will never be this low again.

Want to know more about ByLine? See our website at [www.bylinemag.com](http://www.bylinemag.com).

# A MOMENT IN THE PARK

by Gloria J. Warnick

*Who thinks of these things? A cobbled archway, grey granite stone in a lighter grey concrete sitting astride a dappled grey sidewalk. Thank goodness for the park's early morning grass green! An older couple, on their morning walk, brush past my bench. They are holding hands. How many years has she curled her fingers inside his hand that way?*

"I'm not going to deal with any of those observations right now. I'm here to decide! To give Sam a reply."

Standing, I walk on the dappled sidewalk to the parking lot. Why had I thought the peace of the park would help me see things clearly? *Maybe it had. Maybe what I want is not to think.* "He's a good man!" I say aloud to chide my doubts. "The best I've ever known."

I slide into the warmth of my sun-drenched car. It envelops me. . .like Sam's arms. Sitting, I look out the windshield. Slowly I become aware that the hard metal of my car key is biting my fingers. It is flipping around and around in my hand. *How long have I been staring this way?*

A disembodied voice from outside my car window asks "Lady? Can you lend me a dollar? Actually, I'd appreciate a five spot. Lady? Lady?" He taps on my slightly opened window. He is tall and tan. I have seen him smiling at me in the park.

I slide a bill out to him.

"Thanks!" He goes away.

The teeth of my key are still biting my fingers. I watch it flip, flip, flip around in my hand. Its constant motion is driving me crazy. I jam it into the ignition. Now there are dents in the pads of my fingers. I rub them. They will go away. . .too.

"Aaaaaa," I say. "I'm having a moment here. This is about Sam! *Maybe he's going to leave. . .also.*" My body blends into the waves of radiating heat that have been surging around me. Still, I only sit and stare.

Friends have advised me before. "Get a commitment. Be engaged first. Marry, have children, cars, a house. They are all steps on the commitment path. These are the important things. They lead to happiness!"

Reaching up, I turn the hot metal of the car key. My engine starts and I back up the car. Shifting, I press on the gas pedal. “No,” I say aloud. “Those are the things I do *when* I am happy!” I move forward, leaving behind the unrelenting grey.

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# What was I doing in Togo West Africa?

*by Joan S. Hust*

1. Taught Medline plus to one of the Pastors of a church in the city of Kara. First I wrote out, and made a chart on paper the screen that you see when you dial in to the database. You had to search for an Internet Café that was up and running. Hourly cost was inexpensive to me, but not for the residents of Togo. MEDLINEplus is a service of the National Library of Medicine at the National Institutes of Health. The main areas that I covered were Health Topics, Encyclopedia, Drug Information, Clinical Trials, and the Latest Health News. I kept stressing that “Good Information is Your Best Medicine”. Every word I said had to be translated in French, Togolese, Ewe, and Kabye. My theme was “Let me help you so you can help your people with their medical needs.”

2. Taught the Bible story of Noah and the Ark at Daily Vacation Bible Schools, and Sunday Schools. Built the ark using palm branches or used a cement garage with a metal roof, and baracaded the entrance as the children had to walk in two by two.

3. Guest speaker on a daily hourly program at the Radio Broadcasting Station of Togo.

4. Visited and spoke to the people in remote villages. I used the EvangeCube to present the life of Jesus.

5. Spoke at two all day Women’s Conferences at Wycliff’s Summer Institute of Linguistics and at two Sunday services.

6. Visited the Leprosy Village, spoke to the residents, and passed out candy.

7. Distributed brochures in all the villages, and along the road. A very active soccer game was being held, but when they saw what was going on both sides stopped, ran out to us, took their brochure, stuffed it in their shirt, ran back to the soccer field, and started playing where they left off.

8. Stopped at all road blocks. The soldiers had guns, and wanted money. Some road blocks were easier than others to persuade them to let us continue to our destination.

9. Police escorted us to the shore of the Gulf of Guinea. I wanted to put my hand in the water. It was too dangerous for us to go alone.

10. Presented the local church with a banner made by the ladies in Post Falls, Idaho.

11. Class of children sitting on rocks along both sides of the path high up the mountain in Lama Boo. There were goats tethered in a kraal on both sides of my friend and I as we spoke to a group of children.

12. Carried a trumpet with a Beginners book, and presented it to a young man named Holala. He could play Amazing Grace before I left for home.

The Togolese people are very nice, and friendly. They have a great sense of humor.

Two examples:

1. I was called out of a Church service to go outside to their cooking area. Everyone was smiling. They were roasting grasshoppers. It is quite a delicacy there. The best way to eat a roasted grasshopper was not to chew it, but swallow it quickly, and drink a cup of hot tea.

2. I wear three small braids. They wear many braids, and many other lovely hair styles. The last day I was there one of the more prominent ladies came to say good-bye with three braids just like mine.

It was a privilege to go on a Mission trip to Togo West Africa. I feel blessed that I am able to help others. I came home with love in my heart for the joy that I experienced with the people in the country of Togo.

**I highly recommend Short Term Missions.  
It is life changing!**

**REMEMBER!!!**

**NO Day Meeting  
in August.  
Only a night meeting.  
See you there!**

**Coeur d'Alene Chapter  
Idaho Writers League  
P.O. Box 1113  
Hayden, Idaho 83835 USA**

## **ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**

Authors like cats because they are such quiet,  
loveable wise creatures, and cats love authors  
for the same reasons.

*Robertson Davies*

## **2005 Officers**

Larry Telles: President  
208 762-2548 (ltelles@icehouse.net)  
Noah Buntain: 1st VP & Co-Program Director  
660-4065 (noahbuntain@yahoo.com)

### **2nd Vice President**

#### **Position Open**

Jenni Hearne: Treasurer  
772-1766 (jennifer.hearne@verizon.net)

Linda Juergensen: Historian  
683-2792 (juerghl@aol.com)

Barbara Rostad: Hospitality Chair  
208 777-1030

David E. Hibberd: Webmaster  
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Liz Mastin: Secretary  
664-2785 (positivelypoetry@msn.com)

### **Newsletter Co-Editor**

#### **Position Open**

Mary L. Smith: Special Projects  
762-4081

Patti Dickinson: Special Projects  
667-8912

### **Publicity**

#### **Position Open**

## ***Who is the Idaho Writers' League?***

### **Purpose of the organization:**

The Idaho Writers' League is organized exclusively for charitable and educational purposes for the promotion of social welfare including:

- A. To promote and maintain a high standard of literary output and to recognize accomplishments of Idaho writers.
- B. To stimulate public respect and support for the art and profession of writing.
- C. To provide a unified organization for writers and those with serious interest in writing and literary skills.
- D. To encourage new writing talent, to exchange ideas through the League publication, and local and state meetings.
- E. To stimulate writing by means of contests and recognition awards.
- F. To encourage regional activity among neighboring chapters.