

Coeur d'Alene Chapter Idaho Writers League

Lakegazette



Celebrating our 65th Anniversary 1943-2008

January 2008

P.O. BOX 1113, Hayden, Idaho 83835

COEUR d'ALENE IWL MEETINGS:

January 9

Jewett House

9:00 A.M. to Noon

Program: Nancy Owens Barnes
Using Creative Nonfiction to
Write Family Stories

January 17

Lutheran Church

Kathleen & Ramsey Road
6:30 to 9:30 P.M.

Program: Michael Kincaid
Using Fact-based Stories to
Write A Novel

January Birthdays:

01/28 YVONNE A DEITZ

01/27 ANN STORY

01/30 JIM TURNER

Contributors

Liz Mastin

Joan Hust

Linda Fifer

Susan Garver

Mary Jane Honegger

Nancy Owens Barnes

Ann Washington

President's Report

This newsletter marks a new year – new beginnings for our officers, new challenges for our organization and new opportunities for each of us as writers. Larry passed the baton with great alacrity at the December meeting, ending the reign of the Larry & Sherry Show – leaving those of us stepping into their shoes with a daunting task – filling the holes these two characters are leaving behind.

Larry's sharp wit and deadpan delivery will be tough to match, but we all know a little Mary Jane can make a season bright, and I promise to follow Larry's format in giving you useful information, solace when you are down and hurrahs when you are up – all while keeping a watchful eye on the clock.

Sherry's enthusiasm and organizing skills will be a challenge for Nancy as well, but any gal who can get to Alaska by going south, has a lot going for her too. She hit the ground running, filling our January programs right away. But, with nearly two dozen programs to find presenters to fill up our 2008 program agenda, she can use all the help she can get. If you know of any subjects you might like covered this year; if you would like to present a program yourself or if you know of someone who could present a program to us, please let her know.

Nancy and I are looking forward to working with our board of officers. We are thankful Jim has agreed to remain on the job as our second vice-president and newsletter editor and that Ann Washington will continue to diligently perform the duties of secretary for another term. Our new treasurer, Anna Goodwin, has gone south for a few weeks, but has already jumped in and done some organizing of our financial records. Larry has offered to help out as past president and we truly appreciate his help.

Our meetings will, of course, remain the same – a brief meeting; an interesting and/or inspiring program and a break for some goodies and a little fellowship – all topped off with a chance to participate in a critique session. Again, if you have ideas on how we can improve, or changes you would like to see made, please let one of your officers know – growing and changing is challenging, but it is how we will continue to mature and interest aspiring young writers in joining our group.



Continued on page 2

Sherry has done a great job of letting us know about the writing opportunities that seem to be all around us. At our meetings we learn that one of us, every once in awhile, is spurred to enter a contest, send in a story, or pitch a proposal after receiving one of these messages. We hope to keep that information coming. So, please take the time pass to on any internet opportunities or local writer events you hear about, so we can include them in the newsletter, or distribute the information to all via e-mail.

I look forward to the coming year and finding new ways for the Coeur d'Alene Chapter of the Idaho Writer's League meet these objectives:

- Promote and maintain a high standard of literary output
- Recognize accomplishments of local writers
- Stimulate public respect and support for the art and profession of writing
- Provide a unified organization for writers and those with serious interest in writing and literary skills
- Encourage new writing talent
- Exchange ideas through the a newsletter and regular meetings
- Stimulate writing by means of contests and recognition awards

I leave you with 3 Irrefutable Facts

- Concrete will harden.
- The Burlington Northern refueling station over the Spokane aquifer will spring a leak.
- At IWL you will meet interesting people, find encouragement and learn about the craft of writing.

A quote to inspire us all through the cold winter months:

“There’s nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and open a vein.”

Walter Wellesley “Red” Smith

Looking forward to seeing you in the New Year,

Mary Jane Honegger

Looking For Input

Jim Turner

What do you look for when you open this newsletter? Sage advice? Something light, humorous? Perhaps you are just wondering what is going on in the chapter.

My vision for this year’s newsletter is to have each issue balanced with timely information about the chapter, along with something humorous, and an article or two on how to improve our craft. I’d like to see more opportunities for contests and celebrations of member successes!

This is your newsletter. You make it happen!

What does that mean? It means that all the articles, stories, poems, anecdotes, and the filler material come from YOU!

We are an organization of writers. We write! We find ourselves facing the same challenges — character, plot, description, voice, point of view. What works for you? How do you get it done? What absolutely turns you on? Off?

Please contribute:

- ◆ Tips, Connections, Inspirations. Pass them along!
- ◆ Essays, Articles...found a way to beat writers block?...Share it!
- ◆ Resources.....Have you discovered that great Thesaurus... A new website that addresses grammar? Submit a couple of lines and let all of us know about it!
- ◆ Book Reviews....Read a great book lately? ...or a stinker... 100 words can tell it all!
- ◆ Things that you like to share about your writing. Do you have a “Special” place to write? Who, What, Where is you muse?
- ◆ Bio’s....When you get something published, the publisher often asks for a short bio. Write one now! Send it here. Let your fellow writers know who you are and what motivates you to write.

What are we looking for? Pieces around 750 words. (or less!)

You are the writer....

**This is your newsletter!
Fill it up!**

Share the Wealth (of Knowledge)!

Nancy Owens Barnes

Hi All...

As you know, the IWL Coeur d'Alene Chapter members are beginning a new year of learning and know-how sharing!

I'm excited about being your new First Vice-President, although it is a bit intimidating. I realize, though, that we learn by consciously pushing past our doubts and taking a risk—a little at a time. So, here I am, and I look forward to getting to know everyone better.



As part of my responsibilities, I have begun to schedule speakers for our 2008 meetings. I have filled a few time slots and will soon be contacting some of you directly regarding various topics. And for those who already know you would like to speak at one of our meetings, let me know as soon as possible so I can get you scheduled. I also plan to line-up speakers from outside the group.

This is also an invitation to those who may have an interest in speaking, but are hesitant to do so for one reason or another. One reason that keeps many of us from public speaking is simply that we have never talked in front of a group. Well, the best way to overcome this is, of course, to speak in front of a group!

I faced a similar situation only months ago after publication of my first book. In a need to market the book, I suddenly found myself putting together a combination slide show/reading/signing which I had to present to groups of complete strangers! Unsure of my ability and of how my presentation would come across to people, three members of our local Friends of the Library participated as a critique group in a dry run with me and gave me comments for improvement. Their input was invaluable. I have now given a number of the presentations and have become more comfortable each time.

If you feel you would like to give a talk but have not taken that first step, let us help you the way the FOL helped me. If you want, we can convert one of our after-meeting critique sessions into a critique of your talk. You can share what you know and hone your speaking skills with a writer-friendly audience. As Nikki Arana mentioned during a recent meeting, authors need to be able to speak in front of a group.

If you're worried that you "don't know enough," join the crowd. Just focus on a particular topic or writing-related process you have experienced and would like to share, do a bit of organizing of your thoughts and ideas, and share. We all have different knowledge, and varying degrees of similar knowledge. Seldom does a speaker give a talk in which every aspect is new to the audience. More likely, some new information will surface and other aspects will simply present a different perspective on things we already know, which reinforces that knowledge.

So don't wait to be asked. Take the first step yourself. Our group exists to learn and to support each other.



Mojave Home

Liz Mastin

It's the beauty that counts
in this desert valley;
This out-post for outlaws
Gamblers, and dreamers.
It's the sun that pools
Like golden liquid:
Like honey spilled out,
With a spirit attached.

It's the beauty at night:
The phenomenon of desert
Rocks glowing white
Under snowing light
I touch the ground
To see if it is real.

It's the red carved hills
And the Colorado River,
It's Lake Mojave,
The carp and the ducks.
It's the beauty that counts
And all is ruled over
By great Spirit mountain
Birthplace of time.

The wind whips and swirls
The sun shines right through it:
This Mojave Land,
The place I call home.



What If We Didn't Pack *Everything* Away Until Next Christmas?

Ann Washington

The Christmas decorations are dismantled,

repacked and stowed away. Garbage men took the crumpled, torn wrapping paper and used bows. All that remain are the Christmas cards sent by caring friends and family which were strung across our living room wall. They had hung over a strong red cord, much like laundry on a clothesline. They now sit on our table in wait for us to send response letters to the friends who sent them.

It seems there was barely enough time to finish our Thanksgiving meal before the start of sales and early bird shopping focused on Christmas festivities came charging in. There were such sudden feelings of urgency, we scarcely chanced to absorb our turkey and dressing. Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Eve parties too have come and gone. Too quickly, a time past blur.

The preparations for *holidays*, the dedicated attention, the kindness to strangers, and the spirit of Christmas are now stowed away like the artificial tree in its big box. All tucked away in hopes of more joy to come some distant day.

I started updating my address book. I need to take down my old calendars and replace them with new, but first I will take time to look at the beautiful photos atop the page of each month yet to come. These are photos I will hardly notice as I get back into my regular routine.

I realize the start of a new year is time of short-lived retrospect. I like others resolve to improve my life and vow a better year ahead. We make promises to ourselves we *really do intend* to keep, but find them often wane as days of the new year tick by and we settle into our old routines.

With old routines come the predictability of expounding how nice it would be if the Christmas spirit of giving and being kind to one another really could last all year long. Yet, kindnesses and giving



What IF we could count our blessings by what we gave instead of what we got?!

spirits yields to human nature. Familiar thoughts come again to the forefront of minds. Many have thoughts of just trying to earn a living or how we will make ends meet. For some, perhaps new but familiar thoughts take over; wondering for example how to pay off new charge cards balances from annual generosity grown to new heights this year. Others may wonder how to get attention and affection they feel they deserve, but don't feel they're getting? Or, how to get even with someone who treated them poorly or didn't give them proper respect? Why must it become that "dog eat dog world again"? We think about what we want to *get* out of life. What could we *get* that would make us really happy?

Some will hurry to stores to *get* what they wanted but didn't *get* for Christmas. Too quickly our human thoughts change from giving to getting.

What IF we could count our blessings by what we gave instead of what we got?! What IF we found being kind all year filled us with more happiness than any new item purchased could give? What IF we donated to a homeless shelter in the middle of the year instead of waiting until Christmastime? What IF we tried to share more compliments and harbored fewer judgments? What IF we worked together instead of trying to compete against one another? What IF it really is better to give than to receive? What IF we could find the "happy" part of the Christmas spirit in ourselves more often? What IF we as a human race *could* pull off creating the Christmas spirit all year long just by making a few changes in our thinking and our actions? (Be still oh my heart at the thought.)

Here I am, one of those people already expounding on how nice it would be, longing for the familiar, even Utopian idea. Yet, it IS what we say we want. Will our Christmas spirit get buried along with our holiday wares when they are stowed away?

Continued on page 5

What IF, this year before I update my address book and put appointment dates on my new calendar, I linger longer enjoying my fanciful dream? What IF I do not pack everything away?

This year I will do something different, I will leave a few things unpacked. I will add to my New Year resolutions.... To keep the Christmas spirit out, not packed deep inside behind the old routine soon to come our way. Along with the appointments and meeting dates to be added to my calendar I will add a reminder to give something of myself each month along the way. What IF we could all do that? Maybe practice more kindness, more tolerance, and develop a more giving of spirit within our own group. What IF we could start Christmas Spirit 2008 right now within our IWL chapter? What IF we help remind one another by example, action and deed... we need not pack everything away this Christmas?



POET'S CORNER

What shall I wish you?*

Joan Hust

What shall I wish you?
Treasures of earth?
Songs in the Springtime?
Pleasures of Mirth?
Flowers on your pathway? Skies ever clear?
Would this ensure you a happy New Year?

What shall I wish you?
What can be found,
Bringing you sunshine all year round?
Where is the treasure, lasting and dear,
That shall ensure you a Happy New Year?

Faith that increases, walking in light;
Hope that's abounding, happy and bright;
Love that is perfect, casting out fear;
These shall ensure you a Happy new Year.

Peace in the Saviour, rest at His feet,
Smile of His countenance, radiant and sweet,
Joy in His presence, Christ ever near.
This will ensure you a Happy New Year.

Happy New Year!



All these books went to Children's Village as Christmas gifts courtesy of the CDA chapter member generosity.

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Deadline:
the 25th of each month.

Being Who You Are

Susan Garver

I do not normally make New Year's resolutions, but for 2007 I made one – Being who I am.

On the surface it might seem like an easy goal – who else would I be if I wasn't who I am? However, life throws challenges our way, which coat our souls like dirt and grime coats our automobiles. While some of us wash our cars on a regular basis, others let the filth accumulate until we no longer can decipher the surface color. My car was not only covered with muck, it had been repainted several times during the muck accumulation. It needed to be washed and sandblasted to find its original beauty.

As a youngster, I read voraciously and I aspired to be an author so I could bring joy to the lives of others through books. In my young mind, all famous authors had pen names that were only one name. I created Zannamarie for the day I would write my famous book. Then I entered high school and left behind any interests in writing.

During my work career, technical writing assignment sideswiped my sedan revealing a glint of surface metal beneath the grime and paint. Perhaps my true self was not what I had been doing. In 2007, I shed Niagara Falls writing a personal essay for the Coeur d' Alene library contest. I shed more tears writing a micro-length story for another. I didn't realize it, but the tears were wearing away the surface accumulation.

In late spring my sister requested I write a letter and send it to her son's teacher as part of my nephew's class assignment to learn about cities across the world. I expanded the assignment to write a short story with pictures of bald eagles visiting Coeur d' Alene.

Synchronicity now helped me in my quest to find my car's original beauty. Not satisfied with my own story editing, I followed up on a calendar item in the Coeur d' Alene Press. An IWL meeting was being held that evening in a church less than two miles from my home. I knew nothing about the IWL, but I hoped I could convince at least one person to read the story and give feedback. I now know the critique session does not normally involve one newbie reading aloud to the entire group. I did receive feedback, and encouragement to join the group.

A little over a month later, a blast of sand cleared paint from my Cadillac's surface as I was told my first attempt at a short story, which I planned to use as an IWL contest submission, was better suited as a first chapter of a novel. A novel!?!?

That meant I had to come up with a substitute for the IWL contest to meet my personal goal of submitting three entries. The substitution became the next blast of sand when it garnered \$25 for second place.

Further vehicle cleaning came upon critique feedback at the next several IWL meetings. It was becoming evident to me Zannamarie came from the core of my soul and not the fanciful thinking of a child.

I belong to an online forum and within the past six weeks, I had two members privately respond to advice I had written in their posts. One woman wrote, "Thank you for being you." Another wrote, "Thank you that you exist."

As the year closes, my Cadillac is gleaming; I be who I am. What goal will you set for yourself this year?

**...life throws
challenges our way,
which coat our souls
like dirt and grime
coats our
automobiles.**



SIMPLE GIFTS

Linda Fifer

Twenty-three years is a long time to work in one place, only to be fired. While the hospital where I worked had bestowed upon me pins and longevity bonuses, even letters from the CEO telling me what a valued employee I was, I fell victim to downsizing disguised as “poor performance” evaluations. Within 3 weeks of my turning 50 years of age, I was fired for being “incompetent.”

Bitterness and anger swallowed me for months while I applied for work for dozens of jobs that paid minimum wage. The reply, if there was one, was that I was overqualified with my Masters’ Degree. I couldn’t qualify for unemployment because I was fired, so I became well aware that my family’s savings account was dwindling. I cashed in life insurance policies, was able to negotiate a settlement with the hospital through legal means and squeezed every cent from a dollar by shopping at thrift and outlet stores. For several months we got by on borrowed breath with the loss of 80% of our income.

To save money additionally, my husband and I used one vehicle, which required me to drop him off at work—the same hospital, the same unit where I’d worked days and weeks before. Whatever pride I may have had was swept into the gutter when my former “friends” didn’t give me eye contact or talked only to my husband, not me.

That is, except for Sharon.

Sharon was an office manager, one of those faithful people who work hard every day, who put in long uncompensated hours, who get lost because her job doesn’t “appear” to be important. Sharon would always say hello and give me a hug and a smile, despite her eyes misting over a bit when we spoke. She truly mourned my being gone from our unit and was not afraid to show it. She spoke to me often about how unfairly I’d been treated. She made a point, on her meager salary, to make sure my husband and I had an extra loaf of bread that she baked—sometimes the only bread we had that week—or that she added a few extra zucchinis from her garden. She knew from her own budget limitations and thankless responsibilities of caring for sick family members how precious a few extra groceries could be.

Sharon was one of the few who kept in touch with me, often a little note in the mail to cheer me. She even made sure I had a gift from one of her rare vacations. She always sent home a

little extra something for our Christmas each year: a handmade item she crocheted or a sampling of her jams from her summer harvest.

Every time I received a Sharon surprise, I made certain I sent her a thank you with a little update on how we were doing. One day, while finishing a note to her, I clipped a picture inside with a red paper clip. I included a little challenge: “Every time you see a red paper clip, please think of me”—as if a paper clip could prompt her thoughts any further than she already demonstrated. I even made it a game that allowed my trips to the hospital to be more bearable. I wrote a little “hello” on her desk, attached with a red paper clip. I looked forward to surprising her this way.

Within 8 months of being fired, I found work as a VISTA volunteer, one that paid a tenth of what I was making at the hospital. I was helping to develop a community volunteer program and I was creating a new circle of friends. The deep wounds of being fired were healing, but the adjustment of losing our income was taking a toll on me physically and on my husband and I financially. We were having difficulty making ends meet.

Occasionally, I’d get a card from Sharon, but her notes were less frequent as memory passed. The demands were also greater from her family and job; she could no longer be as generous. We had no choice, a year and a half after my being fired, of putting our house up for sale to avoid foreclosure.

The very day we advertised our home, we found jobs in another state, both at the same hospital. Within 7 weeks, we had sold our home, got accepted at our new positions and settled into a different routine in a new city. Because everything happened relatively quickly, our goodbyes to our friends were abbreviated. Some people, like Sharon, never got a formal goodbye at all.

So it was much to my surprise, two weeks after moving, amid boxes and packing paper, that a small box the size of a rolled-up newspaper arrived at our new address from our former place of employment. The flourishes in the handwriting on the return address were familiar, but I couldn’t place where I’d seen them before. Curious, I shook the package. Because it sounded broken, I decided to open it before my husband came home from work.

It was from Sharon. “Thinking of you,” the card said. Inside the box were thousands of.....red paper clips.



Notes, News, Announcements and other unpaid political incursions

Donald Maass Agency is looking for manuscripts. Here is a chance to get a high profile agent if your ms has been professionally edited.

<http://www.maassagency.com/thismonth.html>

Chicken Soup for the Twenty-Something Soul

Hello!

I am co-authoring Chicken Soup for the Twenty-Something Soul with Jack Canfield and Mark Hansen which is due out in June 2008; and this is an URGENT call out for moving, touching, funny, heart-warming or inspiring stories about twenty-something life to heat it up this serving of Chicken Soup for the Soul. I am accepting stories from people of any age, you do NOT have to be in your twenties to contribute AND you get \$200 if your story is published (more details below).

Deadline is January 7th.

Go to my website <http://www.christinehassler.com/books.php#chickensoup> and www.chickensoup.com to read the "Story Guidelines" which outlines the recipe for a winning Chicken Soup Story.

Christine

Author.Coach.Speaker

www.christinehassler.com

Celebrations

I just learned that my agent, Natasha Kern, was the number 2 agent in the country for the past 6 months. Ranked by deals made.

Nikki Arana

I've had 2 columns and 3 articles published in different Spokesman publications since last month. I also didn't get laid off with the seasonal help on December 24 like I was supposed to. They're going to keep me on at Costco—Yippee! And while I'm bragging I've lost almost 50 pounds since August!—Double Yippee and a Wahooo!

Sherry

Nancy Owens Barnes will travel to the Seattle area at the end of January where she will be one of many presenters at the Seattle Boat Show. She will give her slide presentation/reading which outlines her book, South to Alaska. After the presentation, she will sign books at Armchair Sailor Books, a vendor at the event. The Seattle Boat Show, held at Qwest Field, runs the entire week from January 25 – February 2, but Nancy's time slot will be on January 29, 2:00 pm. While in the area, Nancy will also hold a reading/signing at Village Books in Bellingham at 4:00 pm, January 27.



Toot Your Own Horn

Looking for Success Stories

It's a brand new year! As you can see, I have added a new sub heading for our **Toot Your Own Horn** section. I'm calling it "**Celebrations**". We all have stacks of rejections. We breathe a heavy sigh and quietly stash them somewhere. Then we come to an IWL meeting and get support from our comrades in arms...at least your putting something out there... Your writing... Keep submitting....

What do we do with our acceptances? **WE DO THE HAPPY DANCE!!** Right?? Alone in the parlor? Like Tom Cruise...sliding across the floor in your underwear?

Let's share the wealth!

I think we need to give a little back to those folks who told us to keep our chins up and forge ahead. Every success we have is an inspiration to others. Doesn't Sherry's prolific success's motivate you? How about Nikki Arana's?

Don't be shy. Email me all the info, from your tiniest success - to the largest (getting that movie deal from the query you submitted!)

Send your **CELEBRATIONS** to jimturner1@juno.com

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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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.