
TOWN CRIER

MARCH 2009 NEWSLETTER
IDAHO WRITERS' LEAGUE, CALDWELL CHAPTER

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March's Meeting Agenda

March 19, 2008 at Caldwell Public Library's
Community Room

- Call to order at 7:00 p.m.
- Reading of last meeting's minutes
- Reading of treasurer's report

OLD BUSINESS

- Full rules of Conference Writing contests

NEW BUSINESS

- Introduction of Guests
- The Short Story by Deanna Davidson
- Critique of member's work
- Adjourn at 8:50 p.m.

February Meeting in Review

Our February meeting was held at the Library because of ongoing lack of Occupancy Permit at the office on Everett Street. (The whole thing has become a nightmare and I suspect I will have ulcers by the time we get back into business there. The boss swears it *will* happen. Someday.) There were no guests and seven hardy members braved the winter weather to attend.

Old business included the "goodie bags" we are to make up for the conference this year. Suggestions for filling them include the standard single subject notebook from the back to school sales (10 cents each) and personalized pens with the IWL and/or "Paint with Words" logos on them. It will depend on how expensive that gets to be. Halloween candy goes well and a card or bookmark from each member with a book to market would be a good idea. Coupons from

statewide stores would be good too. If anyone else has ideas for this, we want to hear them. There will be a bag construction day for anyone who can sew, cut fabric or even trim seams and use an iron. The library has tables and outlets so if you have a portable sewing machine and would like to participate, let an officer know and we'll start a list. The sewing day will most likely be in May or June or maybe once a month until we get 100 done. Donations of old jeans or pant weight fabric will be greatly appreciated.

Shelley presented one of her entries for the IWL contest for critique by the group. Now the rest of us need to get busy and write so "from Caldwell" can be called out after the winner's names this year!

Note from the Treasurer

By Deanna Davidson

March 10

Hello to all you writers out there in the cold winter 'wonder' land. I actually wrote this last month, but nothing much has changed. The wind is **still** blowing the tree outside my window and even the dog doesn't want to go out and I think we're all wondering if it will ever be warm again! Hang in there where it's warm and WRITE, there are tiny buds on my roses and the daffodils are coming up on the sunny side of the house! I'm sure we'll all want to get our yards in shape soon now.

We now have sixteen paid members for the new year, including two young writers, Katie Abderhalden and Kevin Allison. Welcome to all.

The bank account is in pretty good shape right now, but we have expenses coming up for our part in the fall conference. We have sold enough books to cover the cost of production, but as the weather gets warm we need ideas for where to sell them and help from everyone to get it done! That's where the profit is!

Remember we always welcome new members. Feel free to call me or any of the board members when you have ideas or questions for the

good of the group. See you at the meeting Thursday. I'll be presenting a brief overview of what it takes to write a short story. Bring paper and writing instrument, I may have an exercise, and let's make it a discussion! Also bring something to critique as I don't plan to talk very long. Anybody finished a contest story yet?

Critique Groups

by Angela Abderhalden

Are you starting a critique group? Or in one that is struggling? Here are some rules or suggestions that I've found from my experience both good and bad.

First a critique group is crucial to a writer. It allows you to socialize and connect with your fellow writer. But more importantly it helps you to grow as a writer. But reviewing and helping your group, you will actually be improving yourself. So with that in mind here are a few pointers.

THESE ARE ONLY OPINIONS. I put this first and in caps because I've found that people forget these four simple words. You do not have to change your work just because someone said so. Take the suggestions, think about them. Really think about them critically. If you agree, make the changes. If you don't, don't. The manuscript or story is still yours and yours alone.

Be honest. This is also extremely critical. If you want an honest critique, you must give one. And the only way to improve is to have flaws pointed out. No matter how painful. However, it is better to hear from a friend and be able to change it (if you agree) then to waste your one shot at an agent or editor.

Be gentle. This is a critique of the work, not the person. Don't be mean. Express your honest opinion but do it in a constructive way. Always find good things to say too. Critiques are not only about what didn't work in a story but also about what did.

Be prompt. Whoever is on the 'hot seat' (having their work critiqued) is waiting with baited breath, usually, to hear back from their partners. If you can't make a face to face critique meeting, make sure you send it via email. If your group is on-line, make sure that you hit the deadline. If you

can't make it, let the person know. Everyone understands that life happens.

Do only what is expected of you. If your partner only wants a general edit, as in are there any plot holes or does the story flow kind of critique, only do that. If they want a hard edit, then do that. Also, when you give out your work to be looked at, let your partners know what you expect. For if you only want a general edit and they do a line by line edit, you're wasting their valuable time.

Respect each other. I've seen this blow groups apart. Respect each other's opinions and comments. Keep things civil, even if you don't agree. No spitting, knives, ball bats or guns allowed.

If you try to keep these things in mind, your group should get along fine. And remember that critique groups should be flexible. People come and go as need. But once you find that special group that works, I mean really works, hang on to them because they are more than worth their weight in gold!

Time Running Out

By Nancy Whitewater

Reaching almost up to my elbow I felt something. My fingers touched cloth or a soft slimy material. I eased it out revealing a wrapped package, very old looking, with flakes of old leather crumbling into the palm of my hand. Looking at it a chill ran down my spine, could this be the amulet Grammy told me to find?

The light I carried only shone about three feet in any direction, not enough to really view my way. I scanned the walls as far as I could, seeing more brick lining the left side of the wall and solid rock on the right. Ahead was a black void. I placed the brick back into the hole leaving it protruding slightly. Somehow I knew I needed to find this exact place again.

Placing the leather bag securely in the inside pocket of my jacket I turned and slowly felt my way back the way I'd come. With care I edged back down the corridor. My light flickered; the battery wouldn't hold out much longer and I didn't want to be caught here in total darkness. Hurrying my steps I almost stumbled on some loose stones

but caught myself and, holding the bricks for support, ventured on as my light flickered and went out. Now in total darkness I had to depend totally on the feel of the bricks to guide me. I remembered taking a turn somewhere close to the entrance of the corridor. Which way did I take? Stopping to catch my breath and get my bearings in the inky darkness I felt a presence. My skin was clammy and my breath caught in my throat. Was it my imagination or did I hear a slight wisp of breathing? I couldn't tell but I knew I had to keep going. I wasn't really afraid of the dark, just the unknown.

Stepping forward I felt the edge of a brick turning right. I stopped and thought. Yes, I was fairly sure that I had turned to the left when I entered the corridor. I took the turn to the right and saw light ahead. I was right. Exiting into the light I sighed with relief. Trees surrounded me and the big wolf shaped rock stood majestically in front of me. I turned and looked back into the black maw of the corridor opening. My hand felt wet on the light I held. I saw nothing there but I had the feeling of being watched. Hurrying around the wolf rock I sped up the path to the old cabin in the woods where Grammy waited for me. We would open the leather pouch together and I would have her tell me the legend once again. Then we would know what to do.

To be continued.....

Member Updates

Angie Abderhalden has the rights to her book back and is pursuing other publishers to publish it. So there will be nothing for awhile.

Colleen Skaggs entered a contest in the Idaho Magazine published by Kitty Fleishman and won a fourth in the adult fiction category for her story, A NIGHT OUT AT THE LONESOME COWBOY SALOON. More details to follow.

Marie Lindsley Rinard has already submitted two short stories for this year's IWL contests, one for the adult genre and one for short humor. She has a poem and an article ready to

go. "Then last night, while working on taxes, I had to drop everything and go to the computer, for two paragraphs for the Personal Essay played themselves out in my brain. I had to type that much before I forgot it."

Contests and Events

Popular Fiction Association of Idaho, Inc.
Presents

Writers' Master Class Weekend

June 5-6, 2009
Owyhee Plaza Hotel
1109 Main St.
Boise Idaho

Featuring:

Bob Mayer
NOVEL WRITERS' TOOLS
and
Margie Lawson
DEEP EDITING POWER
From the people who brought you



\$135 Both Days, Non-member
\$125 Both Days, PinC/CBC Member