



NEWS RELEASE

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Another (Literary) Smackdown at the Library Councilmember Janet Barnes Challenges Author Brigid McGrath Massie

November 18, 2009 — Salinas, the City of Letters. In yet another demonstration of the competitive spirit sweeping the City of Letters, Salinas City Councilmember Janet Barnes challenges author and business consultant Brigid McGrath Massie to a Literary Smackdown at the John Steinbeck Library, 350 Lincoln Ave., on Thursday, November 19th from 5-6 pm. Each claims to be able to write more words during a half-hour period for NaNo Team Salinas, and the contenders will face off in “The Cube” (Salinas’s novel incubator) at the John Steinbeck Library. Fans are welcome. Free.

Prior to the Smackdown, Salinas NaNo novelists are welcome to have cookies and a write-in in The Cube from 4-5 p., and share their word count and their triumph with other Salinas novelists.

All words written by the challengers will count toward the Salinas Public Library’s challenge to the Mother of All Libraries, the Library of Alexandria, Egypt, during the month of November. This Literary Smackdown follows on last week’s much-discussed 1500-1100-word literary triumph of Senior Deputy City Attorney Christopher Callihan over Salinas Police Chief Louis Fetherolf.

November is National Novel Writing Month (www.nanowrimo.org), and acts of brazen literary bravado are breaking out all over the city. Contenders from across the City of Letters are joining the Salinas Public Library team to write an entire novel during the month of November. The ranks of the Salinas novelist team has reached 14 people (ages 15 to 87) and will continue to grow. All are busily writing

away on the next Great American Novel to come out of Salinas. The joint Team Salinas output broke a staggering 170,000 words on Wednesday.

Salinas Incites NaNoWriMo

In an act of irrational abandon, the Salinas Public Library calls the city to action for a November of remarkable literary ambition: It's not too late to join the cadre of daring Salinas folk writing a 50,000-word novel during the month of November as part of *National Novel Writing Month*, lovingly called "NaNoWriMo."

Visit **The Cube, (Salinas's novel incubator)** at John Steinbeck Library, where everyone is invited to write their novel and post notes of encouragement to other Salinas writers. Librarians will sustain participating novel-writers in The Cube with cookies and other treats.

Over 100,000 people from the far corners of the earth are participating. The Salinas Public Library will present events and activities to cheer on our Salinas novel writer participants—and to encourage the rest of us to dust off our favorite novels and get in the spirit of daring and unlikely exploits. Expect brazen challenges, outsized claims, and international incidents.

This is not so crazy! John Steinbeck wrote his 454-page opus *The Grapes of Wrath* in five short months—at the rate of about 31,000 words per month (never mind he then collapsed in exhaustion—he didn't have the Library staff feeding him cookies.)

Join us! If you would like to embark on the most daring literary adventure of your life, email Lori Wood, Program Manager of the Salinas Public Library, at woodlori@sbcglobal.net, or call her at 831-818-5033, then sign up at www.NaNoWriMo.org and make your home town Salinas.

This program launches "Salinas: City of Letters," the second year of the collaborative programming presented by the Salinas Public Library and the National Steinbeck Center.

This program is funded by a National Leadership Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and includes the Centennial year of the Salinas Public Library, founded in 1909, and celebrating its 100th birthday in fall 2009.

IMLS is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 122,500 libraries and 17,500 museums. The Institute's mission is to create strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas. For more information, visit www.ims.gov.