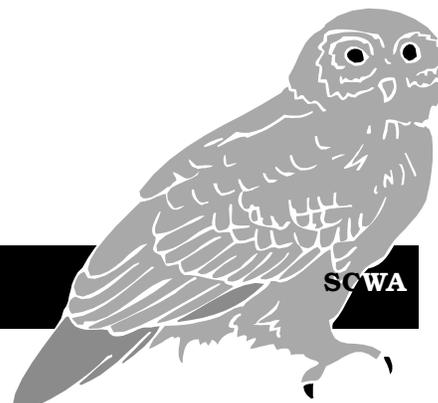


Southern California Writers Association Writers News

Volume 4, Number 9

September 2005



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September 17
Julie Ann Shapiro
writer and novelist

*How to Write and
Sell Short Stories*



September 22, 2005

President's Message

In case any of you have forgotten, elections are coming up soon!

Okay, so I started this column exactly the same as last month's. But those of you who have heard the First Movement and Finale of Anton Bruckner's *Symphony No. 5* know what an effective technique this can be! (Ah, if only I had the genius of Anton Bruckner!)

Though our officers are honored to serve, and some are willing to return, we need the benefits of fresh, new Board members with the fresh, new ideas so essential to any club.

I'll repeat myself a little more: serving on the Board allows you to formulate and execute club policy directly, rather than simply giving someone your suggestion and hoping they pay attention. Serving on the board allows you to interact socially with your fellow officers, and any other members of the club (all of you are always invited!) who come to the Board meeting.

Please get your names to our nominating committee, which Bill Thomas has always graciously headed, by the September meeting. According to the Constitution and Bylaws, we are supposed to elect officers at the October meeting, and according to a vote of the membership, not yet incorporated into the bylaws, we are supposed to elect officers at the *September* meeting—yes, *this* one!

Continued on page 2, column 1

September Speaker

Julie Ann Shapiro is a freelance short story writer, business writer and novelist.

With stories and essays published in the **San Diego Union Tribune**; **North County Times**; **Sacred Waters: Stories of Healing, Cleansing, and Renewal**; **Story South**; **Word Riot**; **Mega Era Magazine**; **Alternate Species**; **Science Fiction and Fantasy World**, and many more, it is no wonder that her works have won awards like **Million Writers Award Notable Stories of 2004**, **Bio Clock and Nutty Photos**, **Second Place Winner**, and **Writer**

Online—My First Crush Contest, April 2004.

In addition, Shapiro's business-related articles have appeared in: **Enewsletter Journal**; **Professional Service Journal**; **Higher Education Digest**; **Software Business Journal**; **Just-Food.com**; **Strategic Agribusiness Review**; **Benefit Broker Journal**; **Bull Dog**; **Face to Face**, and **The Write Line**.

So, join the SCWA in September to learn the how-to's of writing a fascinating short story and where to get it published!

Lynnette Baum, V.P. Programming

President's Message, cont. from page 1

So far, we have the following: President—whatever his name is, unless removed from office for crimes of moral turpitude, etc.

Vice President of Programming: Lynnette!!! (That's *fabulous* news!!!!)

Vice President of Publicity: Linda Coyne has expressed interest if Kat Tewksbury is unable to continue in the position. And if Kat does continue, we can also use Linda's knowledge and expertise!

Newsletter Editor/Webmaster: we're hoping to recruit Sue Spates, who has expressed some interest, and whom I just have a feeling will do a superb job!

Vice President of Membership: our recently published novelist, Lorina Curtis, has agreed to take this over from Pauline Bent (I can almost see the relief on Pauline's lovely face, but we're surely going to miss her)!

Secretary/Treasurer: An experienced SCWA member has expressed interest if Joan Cordova is unable to continue in the position. And if Joan does continue, we can use their knowledge and expertise as Co-Secretary and Treasurer!

Membership Information

Pauline Bent V.P. Membership
pchavezbent@hotmail.com

Meeting Reservations

Roy King H (760) 955-5027
3kings@urs2.net

2005 Executive Committee

President	Roy King
V.P. Programming	Lynnette Baum
V.P. Membership	Pauline Bent
Secretary/Treasurer	Joan Cordova
Publicity Director	Kat Tewksbury
Webmaster	Pamela Rocke
Newsletter Editor	Pamela Rocke
Associate Editor	Nancy Darnall
Tape Librarian	Sharon Walters

www.ocwriter.com

Meeting and Banquet

Coordinator: Our lovely and talented former president Barbara Coulson will again be working behind the scenes to arrange banquet details for the year 2006.

To all of you who have served on the Board, I say "Thank You!"

To all of you who have indicated a desire to serve on the 2006 Board, I say "Really, *really* thank you!"

To all of you who would consider serving, I say "Pretty Please?"

After all, we still need to keep a constant source of "fresh blood" on the Board!

Good luck and good campaigning—and good writing!

Roy King, *President*



September 22, 2005

Would you like to contribute to the *Writers News*? Comments? Contact the editor at webmaster@ocwriter.com.

The Writer's Life: Foreign Correspondent at 10

by Bill Thomas

Maybe I've always wanted to be a newspaper man.

When I was ten years old, (in 1933) my bedtime was around 8 o'clock.

One night, in bed, I waited until the house was quiet. About 10 p.m., I got up and dressed to ride my bike to the Detroit Free Press Building. I wanted to talk to some of the news reporters and to see how newspapers were printed.

Fortunately, it was a quiet, warm night in May with a semi-bright, half-moon looking down to earth.

I parked my bike and tried the front doors of the building. They were all locked. No one seemed to be anywhere except I could see lights were on through the upstairs windows.

I rode around to the back of the building, to the alley, and saw a large, open door, and heard the loud sounds of the work being done inside. I walked in.

The night supervisor, Mr. Knight, greeted me warmly but suspiciously and asked, "What's a young fella like

SCWA Critique Committee

Open to members of SCWA

Nonfiction & Fiction **Roy King** 3kings@urs2.net

Roy will take any amount of writing for critique. He prefers to see the entire ms at one time. *Mail* your ms to Roy at 15772 Heatherdale Rd., Victorville, CA 92394.

Poetry **Dr. Joyce Wheeler**

Joyce will critique up to five poems. Please *mail* your work to Joyce at 3801 Chestnut Avenue, Long Beach, CA 90807.

you doing in a newspaper plant at this hour of the night?”

“Well, I saw a movie a few days ago, with Lee Tracy as a newspaper reporter and I want to be a newspaper man just like him.”

“Oh, you want to be a news-hawk like him, hmmm? Well, kid, oh, by the way, what’s your name?”

I blurted, “William.”

“Does anyone call you Bill? Some of the time?”

“Yes, sometimes...”

“Well, I’ll call you Bill. We do and say things pretty fast around here. Y’know, Bill, you caught me just as I am going to have my lunch. Why don’t you join me for awhile and then I’ll take you in and introduce you to the real news-hawks upstairs, okay?”

“Yes, sir, Mr. Knight. Oh, that’ll be great! Thank you.”

“Okay, now, I have two sandwiches and this slice of cherry pie. Which would you like?”

“Oh, sir, I couldn’t take your lunch from you...”

“That’s okay, kid, I mean Bill, you take the pie and I’ll finish off the sandwiches. You like coffee?”

“Thank you, sir. I’ll just take the pie. Thank you.”

“You sure are courteous. Do your parents know where you are?”

“I don’t think so. They were sound asleep when I left.”

“Won’t they worry about you?”

“Not if they’re asleep”

“Yeah, you gotta point there!”

Mr. Knight and I sat, ate and talked. He sure liked his coffee. I enjoyed the pie even though I felt a bit guilty at first for eating part of a man’s lunch. He told a few newspaper jokes and one that I remember is when he asked, “What’s black and white and red all over?”

He waited only a moment, saw I didn’t know the answer, and he said, “A newspaper!”

I didn’t get it at first until Mr. Knight explained the word “red” was “read.”

After lunch, we toured around all the monstrous printing presses as he explained the flow of the long rolls of paper through their long winding path to the final folded papers at the end of the process.

I was bewildered at what I saw and heard. There were many workmen busy at their special tasks. I saw a large area where huge bottles of ink were stored.

Mr. Knight and I rode a freight elevator to the second floor. It was a huge elevator, an experience I never had before.

We walked to the offices where the real reporters were pounding out their stories on typewriters and / or reading some things off a long strip of white paper.

“Bill, that’s a teletype machine; up here the guys call that “the wire.” They get the news from all over the world all day and night. Here, let me get you a piece.”

“Wow, thanks, this is great”

Then, I saw eight male reporters sitting at their desks (but no Lois Lane or Superman). All had upright telephones on their desks, most holding the phone with one hand and writing or typing with the other. Two men wore hats with a card that read “PRESS” stuck in the shiny band.

Each of the reporters looked up from their work and showed their amazement to see a little ten-year old kid on their premises so close to midnight on a school night. Each man was cordial as I was introduced to them. I believe I blushed when the supervisor told the group, “This young man wants to become a reporter, just like you gentlemen.”

Each man took time to tell me something about the story he was working on.

Continued on page 5, column 1

August Contest Winner

A Brief Encounter

by Dr. Joyce Wheeler

The first choice Cash had, was to inhabit a jackrabbit in Arizona. That gig had incredible perquisites but he opted to be a skunk in Nevada. He wanted to keep tabs on her after his untimely death. He inhabited the skunk then slipped into the same motel room where they had initiated their brief and volatile marriage—brief because one of her goons buried him to his neck in the desert then placed a bucket over his head! He felt that was really shabby spirited of her since she was aware of his claustrophobia.

Earlier, however, she had been sentimental enough to have “Cash” tattooed on her right breast. He mused that she ought to have “Cold” tattooed on her other boob.

He recognized the loaded .45 on the floor near her four-inch heels tossed by the narrow bed and knew he had scored another satisfying glimpse of her. Then, he heard her seductive tones interspersed with the deep tones of yet another man through the bath area wall. Their low chatter was that of Las Vegas newlyweds and he felt combined longing and loathing. He wondered if they had driven through the chapel in his Porsche.

Cash heard her request that the groom should do his Elvis impersonation so he scurried beneath the covers to await them with his aroma ammunition. He was fearless! After all, once the horrified newlyweds blew him away with her .45, he figured he could still inhabit a jackrabbit in Arizona.

Honorable Mention

Carol Gandolfo - *Seymour’s Dilemma*
Barbara Schnell - *Skunk Story*
www.ocwriter.com/willwrite.html

August Highlights

Rejection setup for a query letter: "I am writing to you today because I am looking for a literary agent." "That's obvious," says Paul S. Levine, literary agent and entertainment law attorney. He also confirmed a California suspicion: Yes, New York publishers are biased against books about Hollywood. "Anything on the other side of the Hudson is foreign territory."

Levine gave SCWA members an insider's glimpse into the business world of the 1250 editors he currently has in his database, which he spends hours each week updating because "editors change positions rapidly." His job and "the key to an agent's success is to know enough editors at publishing houses so he can sell an author's work." To keep up with who is where and buying what, Levine avidly follows **Publishers Weekly** and www.PublishersLunch.com, a daily e-newsletter. Between these two, all formats are covered: printed, A/V, and electronic.

The U.S. has 46,000 publishers, but only five account for 98% of the NY Times Best Seller List....

The U.S. has 46,000 publishers, but only five account for 98% of the **NY Times Best Seller List: Random House, Warner, Simon-Schuster, Harper-Collins, and Putnam Group USA**. These acquire worldwide rights whereas smaller publishers only add Canada or a few other countries.

Besides books, Levine is able to negotiate ancillary products, 'a la Harry Potter', although NY agents probably "would refer you to licensing agents." All literary agents

work on commission, usually 15%, but some NY agents receive 20%. If one charges a fee, he should be reported to the Association of Author's Representatives.

Copyright protection for Internet articles is a hot issue today. Because copyright "protects anything in tangible form," lawyers debate whether "a file somewhere on a server is tangible enough." Attorney Levine concludes that material on a Word file or PDF *is* protected.

For the dilemma of print-on-demand versus self-publishing, Levine does not recommend POD. Regular book retail is a consignment system with the unsold shipped back to publishers. Because PODs are not returnable, bookstores usually do not order them "unless specifically for a customer." Also, he and publishers consider PODs to be unpublished manuscripts. Another danger is that "some small houses take all rights forever" although others will give them back if you specifically request. Self-publishing is better; hire a printer and then sell your own books. The author of *The Celestine Prophecy* sold 100,000 himself before it went to the big house.

A screenwriter who wants to make money is better off writing a book first because he will have not only the book profits but "Hollywood sits up when you say your book will be out in '06 or '07." Because 65-80% of current movies are based on books or graphic novels, you then sell the movie rights for a good fee. The screenplay on this book "will get read" and brings in \$100,000 if sold. Finally, "you are hired as a producer for your own book."

For the book, the successful agent must negotiate between advances or royalties for his client. "Advances are not refundable nor recoupable," says Levine. On the other hand, a royalty brings 10% of the hardcover

suggested retail list price for the first 5000-10,000 copies but rises to 12.5% for more. Also, libraries buy about 20,000 copies.

If one publisher offered Levine \$10,000 in advances and committed to underwrite a ten-city publicity tour for his client and a second offered \$20,000 but no publicity, Levine will favor the first. Other factors may be if the book is a trade paperback or will be a mass market paperback—such as the romances sold on grocery store racks, which comprise "65% of today's fiction sold—in numbers and dollars."

Romance publishers pay small advances, Levine says, "unless you're a Nora Roberts," the most successful romance author.

Romance publishers pay small advances, Levine says, "unless you're a Nora Roberts," the most successful romance author. A first-time romance author receives an advance around \$3-4,000 and a royalty of \$.40 a book later. Unless more than 10,000 copies are sold, the author cannot gain more.

Nonfiction accounts for 70% of his clients' work and 60-80% of all books sold today, mainly in the self-help and how-to categories. However, nonfiction and fiction may be tangled in one aspect of Levine's work as an agent. Of the 100 query letters that daily hit his mailbox, 10-15 are from prisoners! "The stories are all the same: they're innocent," Levine smiled.

by Glenda Rynn

Members: You may buy taped copies of lectures from SCWA Tape Librarian Sharon Walters: swwaltz@surfside.net.

*Note: This lecture not available on tape.

Foreign Correspondent at 10, cont. from page 3

They asked me questions about my schoolwork, and what particular interests I had.

One reporter, George, told me, "Yuh wanta learn to write, write lots of short stories."

A man introduced himself, "I'm Wally Whitlock, the editor. When you're ready to be a reporter, come and see me. Now, here's a copy of the new edition. You'd better go home now. It's past midnight."

What an adventure that was.

I rode my bike back home, entered the house so quietly I didn't even hear myself, and crawled into bed... and stayed awake for over an hour, thinking about becoming an international correspondent.

Now, seventy-two years later, as a columnist for the Metro Evening News, I'll travel extensively, get wonderful interviews, and report on great events. I'd have to drive four miles to the Naval Weapons Station in Seal Beach, and two miles to the Joint Forces Training Base in Los Alamitos...hmmm, these local trips may not quite qualify me as a "foreign correspondent?"

Bill Thomas, author and freelance writer, SCWA member, has written various sales materials, short stories, and humorous booklets. Thomas's novel, Telly's Torch (Trafford Publishing, 2004) is available at www.trafford.com and amazon.com. Contact him at billthomas@iopener.net



September 5, 2005

Writers News, September 2005

SCWA News & Announcements

Member Publications

Pauline Bent has been hard at work writing nonfiction articles this summer. **Pauline** wrote seven articles, all of which have been accepted for publication within the next 16 months. Two articles will appear in **La Herencia** (Santa Fe, NM) and the remaining five will appear in **Tradicion Revista** (Albuquerque, NM).

The **Familia Research Association** asked **Pauline** to open their writing workshop with a presentation and samples of her work. The workshop was held at **Golden West College** on August 20, 2005.

The September 2005 "Will Write 4 Food" Contest!

The contest is open to members of SCWA. Look carefully at the photo above and write a short-short story (maximum 250 words) about what is happening. To facilitate fair judging, put the story title on the top of the page with your name and daytime phone number underneath. Only the winning author will be contacted.

Write: A short-short story (maximum 250 words)

Submit: One entry per member per month, via e-mail: Lynnette Baum, therightwriter@cox.net.

Via snail mail, L. Baum, 17595 Harvard, Ste. C-144, Irvine, CA 92614.

Subject Line: *September 2005 "Will Write 4 Food Contest"* (Warning: without this subject line, the e-mail or snail mail may be deleted or tossed) with your daytime number underneath. Remember, no author name, please.

Deadline: Stories must be received on or before September 14, 2005.

Winner: Attends their next SCWA meeting for free. He or she will also be



PRINCESS ORLOVA (1911)
BY VALENTIN SEROV
©1999, GEORGE MITREVSKI

presented with a winner's certificate. The winning story will be featured in the club's newsletter, *The Writers News*, and on the organization's Website.

Criteria: Contestants must be members of SCWA. The story must be 250 words or less. No evaluation or comments will be offered on stories submitted for the contest. Only one winning entry per member per year.

Lynnette Baum, V.P. Programming

October 15, 2005

Brian Alan Lane
screenwriter

Brian Alan Lane returns to SCWA in October to talk about

**Prose that's
the Talk of
the Town**

Lane has written several screenplays as well as episodes for some of television's most popular series, including **Remington Steele**; **Star Trek: The Next Generation**, and **Hollywood Detective**.

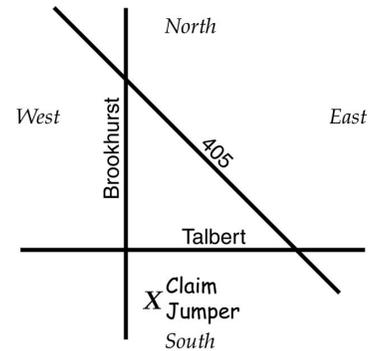


September 5, 2005

September Meeting

Saturday, September 17, 2005

Claim Jumper Restaurant
Banquet Room Entrance, rear of building
18050 Brookhurst St., Fountain Valley, CA
Restaurant tel.: (714) 963-6711.



Julie Ann Shapiro

writer and novelist

How to Write and Sell Short Stories

Registration & Networking: 9:30 a.m.
Meeting & Program: 10:00 a.m.
Lunch: 11:30 a.m.
Afternoon Program: 12:15 p.m.
Members & Non-Members: \$20.00

**Walk-ins & Guests
always welcome**

RSVP before September 12: Roy King, 15772 Heatherdale Rd., Victorville, CA 92394. Check must accompany reservations. Make checks payable to SCWA. After **September 12:** Roy King *home* (760) 955-5027; *e-mail* 3kings@urs2.net — bring check to door. For more information, go to www.ocwriter.com. ***Be sure to RSVP whenever possible!***

Or register online at www.ocwriter.com/meetings.html

Southern California Writers Association

Writers News

Pamela Rocke, Editor

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