



**May 20, 2006, Speaker**

**Paul S. LeVine,**  
Entertainment Lawyer and Literary Agent

***How to Make an Agent's  
Mouth Water, Part II***



One day, Paul S. LeVine, specialist in entertainment law and litigation, answered a “blind” advertisement in the *Hollywood Reporter*, and landed a job for the Business and Legal Affairs Departments of **Warner Bros. Television**, where he spent almost five (5) years. He then moved to **Hearst Entertainment**, where he spent two (2) years as Resident Counsel. In October 1992, he established his own law practice in Santa Monica and in December 1995, he moved his office to Venice. There he specialized in the representation of writers, producers, actors, directors,

the “subjects” of docudramas, composers, musicians, artists, authors, photographers, galleries, publishers, developers, production and distribution companies and theatre companies in the fields of motion pictures, television, interactive multimedia, live stage, recorded music, concerts, the visual arts, publishing, and advertising.

In 1996, Mr. Levine opened the **Paul S. Levine Literary Agency**, specializing in the representation of book authors and the sale of motion picture and television rights in and to books. Since starting his literary agency, Mr. Levine has sold more than

one hundred (100) fiction and non-fiction books to more than thirty (30) different publishers and has had several books developed as movies-for-television.

As he very much enjoys public speaking, Mr. Levine speaks extensively to writers’ groups and at entertainment-related classes and seminars. Mr. Levine is married and lives in Venice with his wife, Loren Grossman (also a lawyer), his two sons Max (age 15) and Jacob (age 13), their dog, Xena (age indeterminate) and their (outdoor) cat Grigio (age unknown).

*Lynnette Baum, V.P. Programming*



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# President's Message

Boy, what a day that was!

You know, I thought I knew a fair amount about this club, and what it takes to run it and keep it going, and keep people coming through the door. I've served under some terrific presidents, and with some fabulous officers.

But this new Board has me excited.

For the first time, I feel not so much as if I'm working with talented, hard working individuals who will throw their full energy into the club, but true experienced professionals who have been here before, and know exactly what needs to be done before the first clues even arrive.

That is exciting, and I feel the group is on the threshold of a giant step up.

Now I have always felt that the President of a writing organization should be a full-time professional writer who makes his/her living with the pen, or, in these days, the computer. The President should be a person who has industry connections, who is thoroughly familiar with the market, and who can answer any member's question at will.

I've enjoyed being President, and enjoyed working with all the different Board members on all the different Executive Boards on which I've served.

Am I leading up to a notice of resignation?

I don't know.

I feel I've done a good job for the organization we've had, and that I can continue to do so.

But when I observe the way the present Board members do the job they've been doing for years, and which they were previously getting paid to do by their other organizations, I can't help but notice the similarities between SCWA and various national organizations I've joined—Toastmasters International and the American Society of Civil Engineers, to name just two.

This is the direction I'd like our organization to go.

I like to think I can lead SCWA in precisely that direction. But I also recognize the reality that there are others who can do it better.

Sometime I *will* have to have a successor, whether in 2007 or further down the road. I would like this person to be an accomplished and talented writer and writing educator (Bill Blake, are you listening?), a gifted and delightful writer with a terrific personality (Nanette Heiser, are you listening?), a tireless and energetic individual who will see the organization through every obstacle (Nancy Darnall and Ron Lavin, are you listening?), and, most important, someone who can get terrific, strong-willed, brimming-with-confidence Board members with dynamic personalities to sit down and work out disagreements—

I was thinking maybe David Stern, Commissioner of the National Basketball Association.

(Well, you can see the esteem in which I hold my fellow Board members!)

On a more serious note, be thinking about running for office in 2007. Come talk to me privately and tell me your secret desires! I promise I won't conscript you into immediate service!

Good luck and good writing!

*Roy King, President*

## 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.

Please mail your manuscript to Roy at:

15772 Heatherdale Road, 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

## Executive Committee

President.....Roy King  
V.P. Programming .....Lynnette Baum  
V.P. Membership .....Victory Crayne  
Secretary/Treasurer .....Joyce Wheeler  
Publicity Director.....Larry Porricelli  
Webmasters.....Tony Stoklosa/Victory Crayne  
Newsletter Editor ..... Laura Sheridan-Long  
Associate Editor ..... Nancy Darnall  
Tape Librarian.....Sharon Walters

### Membership Information

Victory Crayne, V.P. Membership

[paypal@ocwriter.com](mailto:paypal@ocwriter.com) or [membership@ocwriter.com](mailto:membership@ocwriter.com)

### Meeting Reservations

Roy King, President ..... [president@ocwriter.com](mailto:president@ocwriter.com)

.....H (760) 955-5027

## April Highlights:

### Antoinette Kuritz: *SECRET TIPS*

Deeming herself a “writer groupie,” Antoinette Kuritz declares her job as a literary publicist an “absolute joy.” She represents Strategies, a company which comprehensively guides writers through the literary development, management, and public relations of the writing profession. Ms. Kuritz blended “Secret Tips from Famous Writers” with “How to Write for Success.”

Strategies operates under the aegis of The Kuritz Group, Inc., which sponsors the Annual La Jolla Writers Conference. The next one is October 20-23, 2006. Kuritz says the *Writer’s Digest Ultimate Resource Guide* called it “one of the 84 writer’s conferences [of 1500] worth your money.” Unlike many, this conference focuses on the business end as well as the creative.

Ms. Kuritz hosts the Writer’s Roundtable radio show at [www.worldtalkradio.com](http://www.worldtalkradio.com), 9-11 AM Wednesdays, Pacific Time.

The Jenkins Group, full-service book publishers, found in a recent survey that “81% of Americans believe they have a book in them.” So what galvanizes the wannabees? The first obstacle is giving themselves permission to write. After that, “most have a catalyst that sits them down at the keyboard”: an unusual experience, the need to decompress from stress, pressure for income, or loneliness. Internally, each writer has his own variation of “because I have to.”

“Real writers have discipline,” Kuritz says. Writer Greg Hurwitz is blunt: “It’s all about the ass-in-chair time.” No television is the answer for Barry Eisler. Writers find some daily

time, whether it’s on a commuter train or in a “second shift” such as at 4 a.m. when the house is quiet.

Because “good ideas don’t come in order,” John H. Ritter says writers just need to get the ideas down. Dorothea Benton Frank says, “... your first draft will be an odiferous compilation of goobers, repetitions, awkward transitions, and holes.”

“Nothing causes a writer’s brain to freeze up more than wanting to be too perfect too soon,” says Ritter. “Being stuck is part of the writing process.” John Lescroart adds that the writer “follows the rules of construction where he must, breaks them when he can.”

“Let your first draft rest for a few weeks; then go back over it,” Ms. Frank offers. “It is better to write seventeen drafts of one manuscript than seventeen different manuscripts,” comes from Hurwitz. Patti Callahan Henry says, “...there is an ‘Art’ and there is a ‘Craft.’ Every writer has a stronger gift for one than the other.” Writers need to be aware of and work on their weaknesses. The best truth is Victor Villasenor’s: “There are no great writers, only great rewriters.”

In writing for success, Kuritz suggests first researching commercial viability for subject matter, as Nicholas Sparks did before writing the romantic *Message in a Bottle*. The book and film successes of *The Notebook* came after he deliberately incorporated romance, a range of ages, and Alzheimer’s into the plot of his small, hardcover novel, a popular size at that time. The hot topics now are Chick Lit, Mom Lit, Hen Lit [menopausal], and Lab Lit. New Age is old.

Young Adult literature, like the Harry Potter series, is especially viable these days. However, it’s “the pickiest” because it needs multi-layers, not graphic, to provoke discussion for classroom curriculum. Kuritz says to ask librarians and teachers for critiques.

You can call yourself a writer when showing your work to family and friends. But, like it or not, you become a businessperson when you wish to sell. Dale Brown sums it up: “Writers write: authors finish, polish their work, and then market.” In 2004 alone “more than 196,000 new ISBN’s were registered in the U.S.,” Kuritz says. Your book must compete for shelf space in bookstores and for media attention.

Rule #1: “Never do just a signing. Always do an event. Inform, educate, entertain. Do a workshop, host a seminar, put on a slide show. Give people a reason to listen to you.”

Because bookstores will not stock print-on-demand books, you must take all with you after your signing event. Kuritz says beforehand to “have your media machine in place” and then self-publish, using offset publishing.

For a writer to master the challenges, the best attitude may be what Kuritz’s mother passed on to her: “The problem with a fallback position is that you tend to fall back.” Ms. Kuritz says that idea has been the key to her success. “No Plan B.”

*Glenda Rynn, Member*  
[grynn@cox.net](mailto:grynn@cox.net)

*MEMBERS may purchase taped copies of lectures from SCWA Tape Librarian Sharon Walters: [swwaltz@surfside.net](mailto:swwaltz@surfside.net)*

## Writer's Corner

### Creating Strong Human Scenes

by Bill Thomas

In writing the fictitious life story of "Telly's Torch," I used the background of many true, wonderful incidents and some horrible lessons in history that were prevalent during Telly's lifetime, in the early 1900's.

As two examples, I created scenes where Telly lived through the historical incidents as though they were his own true experiences such as the fictitious war scenes within the actual World War I.

I included Telly's experience in Antwerp, Belgium for the 1920 Olympic Games and created his various love scenes with Kris as though it was a true love story.

The scenes really serve a strong purpose; they put my characters right in the thick of actual history with the human element that audiences can really relate to.

Telly lives his life through these historical episodes with each character such as how he helped a young lady fighting for the rights of female athletes in the Olympic Games.

To get started, I used the seed of a beginning or an ending, whichever hit me best. I figured out the middle of who and how the other characters are involved, how they become part of Telly's life, and why they are important in the scene.

For other historical background, imagine the horrible background of the Civil War in "Gone With the Wind," and the wonderful scenes in "Forest Gump," or the combined horrible activities and love scenes in "Titanic." They give you the type of background that strengthens a story, and keeps readers reading.

## SCWA News & Announcements

June 17, 2006, Speaker

### Barbara DeMarco-Barrett

Host of Writers on Writing, a weekly radio show that airs on KUCI-FM (88.9) and author of *Pen On Fire: A Busy Woman's Guide to Igniting the Writer Within*

**Big Bear Writer's Retreat**  
Writers Write Weekend, 2006  
With Mike Foley  
May 19-21, 2006

Call (909) 585-0059 to check availability

Welcome  
to our new Co-Webmasters  
Tony Stoklosa and Victory Crayne

**Looking for feature articles,  
500-700 words in length**



**Are there any writers out there?**

Do you have any news to share? Comments?  
Feature articles for Writer's Corner?  
Please e-mail news about your writing career  
successes, failures, and in-between to  
Laura Sheridan-Long at  
[Laura@ScribbleMoon.com](mailto:Laura@ScribbleMoon.com)

## The May 2006 “Will Write 4 Food” Contest!

**Write:** Look carefully at the photo (right) and write a short-short story (maximum 250 words) about what is happening.

**Submit:** One entry per member per month.

**Via e-mail:** Lynnette Baum, [therightwriter@cox.net](mailto:therightwriter@cox.net)

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

**Deadline:** Stories must be received on or before May 19, 2006.

**Revised Requirements:** To facilitate fair judging, put the story title on the top of the page with your **name** and **day-time phone number** underneath. Only the winning author will be contacted.



**Subject Line:** *May 2006 “Will Write 4 Food Contest”* with your daytime number or e-mail address.

(For snail-mail put this information on the outside of the envelope.) **Warning: without the subject line, submission may not be read in time.**

**Winner:** Attends their next SCWA meeting for free. He or she will also be 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 contest submissions. Only one **winning** entry per member per year.

*Lynnette Baum, V.P. Programming*

### April Contest Winner:



#### **The Door** By Mike Dunn

The dragon slayer’s pulse raced as he reached his hand out towards the door. Years of hard work and dedicated training were sure to be rewarded if he could defeat the legendary beast sitting on the other side of the wooded entryway. With heart in throat, aspirations set high, and lit torch clenched tightly in fist, he pressed open the door and ventured forth into the bowels of the dungeon.

It took only moments for him to stumble upon the skeletons and half-munched left-overs of those who were brave enough to precede him. The overpowering stench of death forced the slayer to cover his face. Glancing up from the safety of his hands, he found a pair of bright crimson eyes glaring back at him from a shadowed corner. With a snort, the beast blew out the slayer’s torch. Darkness blanketed the dungeon.

“Are you ready to meet your maker?” a thunderous voice bellowed out.

“I will not go down without a fight.” The slayer defiantly remarked.

“Really?”

“Really.”

“You humans are a stubborn sort, I must say.”

“If we are to get on with this, at least have the decency to show yourself.”

A single fireball shot across the room to ignite the slayer’s torch. He looked up and discovered that the fearsome monster was nothing more than a cute little baby dragon. The slayer walked over to the adorable creature and patted it on the head. It was then when the dragon ate him.

#### HONORABLE MENTIONS

***Only An Eye Opener – Polly Dunn***

***The Rock Tryst – Janet De Marco***

[www.ocwriter.com/willwrite.html](http://www.ocwriter.com/willwrite.html)



**May Meeting:  
Saturday  
May 20, 2006**

**PAUL S. LEVINE**  
**How to Make an Agent's Mouth Water, Part II**  
*(See inside to learn more about Paul S. Levine.)*

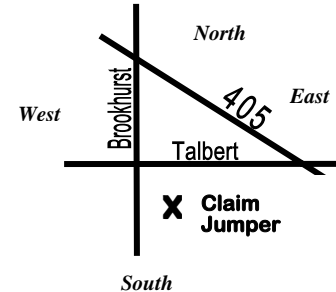
*Happy  
Mother's Day!*



**LOCATION: Claim Jumper Restaurant**

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

Registration & Networking:	9:30 a.m.
Meeting & Program:	10:00 a.m.
Lunch:	11:30 a.m.
Afternoon Program:	12:15 p.m.



**WALK-INS & GUESTS ALWAYS WELCOME — \$25.00 AT DOOR**

**MEMBERS WHO DO NOT RSVP PAY \$25.00 AT DOOR**

**MEMBERS WHO DO RSVP PAY \$20.00**

**RSVP before May 15:** Joyce Wheeler, Treasurer, 3801 Chestnut Avenue, Long Beach, CA 90807  
 Check must accompany reservations. Make checks payable to **SCWA**.

**After May 15:** Joyce Wheeler, Treasurer, (562) 490-3935

**BE SURE TO RSVP WHENEVER POSSIBLE! . . . Or register online at [www.ocwriter.com/meetings.html](http://www.ocwriter.com/meetings.html)**

**Southern California Writers Association**

# Writers News

**Laura Sheridan-Long**, Editor  
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