



# Writers News

Volume 6, Number 4.....April 2007

April 21 Speaker



## Sara Lewis

*Fiction and Non-Fiction Author*

### *The Power of Intuitive Writing*

Sara Lewis, well-known writer and instructor, has pioneered the art of

intuitive writing—writing that is authentic, spontaneous, and engaging. In other words, writing that speaks with your authentic voice and catches an editor’s eye!

The author of five novels and a book of short stories published by Harcourt and Simon & Schuster, Lewis is a master of novels, short fiction, and nonfiction essays and articles.

Her fiction has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Redbook*, *Mademoiselle*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Seventeen*, *The Mississippi Review*, and other magazines.

Her nonfiction has been published in *Ladies’ Home Journal*, *Child*, *FamilyFun*, *McCall’s*, and many other publications, and has been showcased on National Public Radio.

With titles like *The Best of Good*, *Second Draft of My Life*, *The Answer Is Yes*, *But I Love You Anyway*, *Heart Conditions* and *Trying to Smile*, Lewis has attracted a strong fan base for her popular works.

If you love the smell of eraser dust and new crayons, the sound of blunt-tipped scissors cutting construction paper, or the dreamy view from a classroom window, then you’re ready to learn intuitive writing at the April meeting of the SCWA. Intuitive writing

teaches you how to go where your talent wants you to go, even if it is unexpected.

“Discovering Sara Lewis and intuitive writing was like being given a map of my soul and finding a virtual all-access superhighway to that place between the earth and the sky where imagination lives!”

—Kathryn Cocquyt

Author, *Little Freddie at the Kentucky Derby*, *Little Freddie’s Legacy*, and *The Celtic Heart*.

Join us on April 21 to learn the secrets and skills that make intuitive writing one of the most popular writing styles of published authors across the country.

*Lynnette Baum*

Vice President, Programming  
[therightwriter@cox.net](mailto:therightwriter@cox.net)

#### IN THIS ISSUE:

<i>April Speaker</i> .....	1
<i>President’s Message</i> .....	2
<i>March Meeting Highlights</i> .....	3
<i>Critique Committee</i> .....	4
<i>SCWA News &amp; Announcements</i> .....	4
<i>Writer’s Corner</i> .....	5, 6, & 7

# *President's Message*

## **Special Event – Ray Bradbury**

In a recent poll taken by *Writer's Digest*, more than 300 votes were collected via e-mail, mail, and on the *Writer's Digest* online forum on the subject of who is the "Greatest Living American Author." Stephen King came in first with 13.5 percent of the votes and Ray Bradbury came in second with 8.2 percent.

*We had the No. 2 greatest living American author before us on March 17!* The banquet room was packed with 87 people, the second highest turnout in SCWA's 20 years of existence, according to former president Roy King. You could feel the excitement in the air!



SCWA President Victory Crayne with Ray Bradbury.

Bradbury, who has been writing for many decades and has touched the lives of millions of readers all over the world, spoke from his heart. "Write what you love and love what you write," he urged and received a standing ovation when he had finished.

This was a meeting we'll all remember.

## **Policy changed on billing no-shows**

In the previous month, your board instituted a new policy to bill people who make a reservation but do not show up at the meeting to pay for their meals. Some of our members thought that indicated that we were becoming an unfriendly organization. Whoa! That just won't do at all! So we went back to the old, unwritten policy of not billing the no-shows.

Most of the time, we have enough people "walk in" without a reservation to cover the cost of the few people who do not show up to pay for their meals. However, if you make a reservation and realize you won't be able to make the meeting, will you at least do us the courtesy of letting our treasurer know, so we can make your meal available to someone else? If we tell the restaurant that we expect a certain number of people, and we don't get enough walk-in guests to cover them, we have to pay for those meals. That reduces the money available for member services. Ouch!

*Victory Crayne*  
President  
[victory@crayne.com](mailto:victory@crayne.com)

## MARCH HIGHLIGHTS:

### Ray Bradbury: *If You Want to Write...*

Excitement mounted as we waited for our speaker—none other than Ray Bradbury, the writer who brought science fiction into the mainstream. Victory Crayne had come prepared for his possible late arrival. She channeled the crowd's energy into undertaking The Six-Word Story Challenge. (See examples on page 5.) Members read their creations aloud. One of the best was "Billy, from infatuation to restraining order."

Bradbury arrived soon after. Years ago, he had inscribed "Love what you write; write what you love" in a book for Lynnette Baum, SCWA V.P. of Programming. Though 87 now and in a wheelchair, Bradbury still exudes enthusiasm for his craft and other writers: "If you're not doing what you love, you're in the wrong business!" Calling himself a hybrid writer because half of his work has been for film, he described the path of love he himself has taken.

Bradbury says his wife took a vow of poverty to marry a struggling writer. Before their marriage, her affluent family had given her a \$100 a week allowance. But since her husband wrote for pulp magazines, she had to learn to live on only \$40 a week for the two of them. Because they couldn't afford a telephone for

two years, they used the one in the restroom of the gas station in the alley by their apartment. After twenty years, they could afford a car.

Three weeks of marriage brought pregnancy, and his wife had to quit work in the fifth month. This pressure forced Bradbury to visit New York editors. At Doubleday, Walter Bradbury (no relation) looked at Bradbury's stories and concluded, "I think you've written a novel. These are tapestries. Go back to the YMCA tonight and write an outline. If it's good, I'll give you \$700."

Bradbury returned the next day with the outline, which became *The Martian Chronicles*. He asked the editor, "Do I have other books I've written you know about?" Yes, he did—*The Illustrated Man*. Bradbury made both sales. Later, when Christopher Isherwood reviewed *The Martian Chronicles*, he said Bradbury had written a masterpiece. "That review made all the difference in my life," Bradbury claims.

This science fiction writer with a fresh style was building a reputation. Aldous Huxley asked to meet him and said, "Know what you are? You're a poet!" Director John Huston asked Bradbury to come to Ireland to write the screenplay for *Moby Dick*, which neither

had read. After intense study, says Bradbury, "Herman Melville inhabited my soul." He notes "some authors are easier to get inside their psyche for adaptation." Through the years he did screenplays for *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* with Lon Chaney, *Phantom of the Opera*, and *Lost World*, among others.

When his own work is being adapted for film, however, Bradbury is not as happy. "Stay away from studios. They're all idiots." Currently, he is frustrated by the fact that Mel Gibson has sponsored 18 scripts for a new version of *Fahrenheit 451*. Bradbury says, "Shoot the book!" He makes a comparison to Sam Peckinpaw, who made the screen version of *Something Wicked This Way Comes*. "Peckinpaw said he'd 'tear out the pages and stuff them in the camera.'"

Bradbury feels that "so many writers today don't like being alive" and is unhappy with the last Academy Awards for director Martin Scorsese [*The Departed*]. "Hatred, melancholy—stay away from these," he warns. He does not read what the critics say about his work because "they hate you for the wrong reason." But he does support other writers and for twenty years met every

See *Bradbury*, page 7

# SCWA News & Announcements

## What's on the Menu?

Lunch in April will be rotisserie chicken, mashed potatoes, vegetables, gravy, house salad, cheese bread, and dessert (either chocolate chip cookies or brownies—we never know which it will be).



## NEXT MONTH'S SPEAKER:

*May 19—Lisa Yee*

Award-winning children's book author

***Miracles and Magic in Children's Literature***

## SCWA Welcomes New Members

**Lois Evezich's** interests include feature articles, Op-Eds, nonfiction travel, copy writing and biographies;

**Tom Strelow** is interested in social issues, nonfiction and technical areas and POETRY;

**Linda and William Shortell**, both have a variety of nonfiction interests;

**Karin Klein** from the *LA Times* who also likes short stories, mysteries and thrillers in addition to nonfiction books and essays and Op-Eds;

**Anne Cominsky**, and

**Kimberli Balfour**.

*Shelia Cassidy*

V.P. Membership

*riveme@pacbell.net*

### 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 manuscript at one time. Please mail 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 ..... Victory Crayne  
VP Programming ..... Lynnette Baum  
VP Membership ..... Shelia Cassidy  
Secretary ..... Janet de Marco  
Treasurer ..... Carolyn Smith  
Publicity Director ..... Larry Porricelli  
Webmaster ..... Tony Stoklosa  
Newsletter Editor ..... Mary Michel Green  
Associate Editor ..... Belinda Falk  
Tape Librarian ..... Sharon Walters

#### Membership Information

Shelia Cassidy, VP Membership  
*membership@ocwriter.com*

#### Meeting Reservations

Carolyn Smith, Treasurer ..... (949) 675-4244

Contact Writers News Editor Mary Michel Green at (949) 361-6581 or *green.mary@cox.net*.

## Writer's Corner

### Six-Word Story Challenge

Ernest Hemingway once wrote a story in just six words and is said to have called it his best work. He wrote: "For sale: baby shoes, never worn." It's amazing how such a short line can evoke a strong image in our minds of a whole story, isn't it? Here are some other examples from <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/14.11/sixwords.html>

Failed SAT. Lost scholarship. Invented rocket.  
— William Shatner

Computer, did we bring batteries? Computer?  
— Eileen Gunn

Vacuum collision. Orbits diverge. Farewell, love.  
— David Brin

Gown removed carelessly. Head, less so.  
— Joss Whedon

Machine. Unexpectedly, I'd invented a time  
— Alan Moore

With bloody hands, I say good-bye.  
— Frank Miller

Wasted day. Wasted life. Dessert, please.  
— Steven Meretzky

It cost too much, staying human.  
— Bruce Sterling

We kissed. She melted. Mop, please!  
— James Patrick Kelly

It's behind you! Hurry before it  
— Rockne S. O'Bannon

I'm your future, child. Don't cry.  
— Stephen Baxter

Lie detector eyeglasses perfected: Civilization collapses.  
— Richard Powers

TIME MACHINE REACHES FUTURE!!! ...  
nobody there ...  
— Harry Harrison

The baby's blood type? Human, mostly.  
— Orson Scott Card

Epitaph: He shouldn't have fed it.  
— Brian Herbert

Kirby had never eaten toes before.  
— Kevin Smith

I wonder what this button does...  
— Mark Moloney

*Victory Crayne*  
President  
[victory@crayne.com](mailto:victory@crayne.com)

### Speaker Advises Members to Follow Their Loves

**Bradbury**, continued from page 3:

two weeks with others. Bradbury says, "Make a list of your loves. Find your own exhilaration."

Afterwards, Ray Bradbury graciously signed books for members and guests. Find out more at [www.raybradbury.com](http://www.raybradbury.com).

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

# The Missing Links to Successful Authorship

## Part II

By Patricia Fry

Continued from last month's issue in which we learned that the first missing link to successful authorship was 1: **Determine your motivation for writing this book.**

**2: Study the publishing industry.** You wouldn't start any other business without knowing something about the field. Well, publishing is a business and your book is a product. It's imperative that you know something about the industry, your publishing options and the ramifications or consequences of your choices. When you take the time to learn about publishing, you'll also begin to understand that you—the author—are responsible for selling your book. This fact comes as a shock to many hopeful authors, especially those who learn the truth *after* they've entered into the extremely competitive publishing field.

Learn about the publishing industry by joining publishing organizations such as SPAWN (Small Publishers, Artists and Writers Network) [www.spawn.org](http://www.spawn.org), SPAN and PMA. Read magazines and newsletters related to the industry: *SPAWN News*, *PMA Independent*, *SPAN Connection*, *Book Promotion Newsletter*, *RJ Communications Publishing Basics* and many others.

Read books such as *The Right Way to Write, Publish and Sell Your Book*, *The Successful Writer's Handbook*, (by Patricia Fry), *The Self-Publishing Manual*, (by Dan Poynter) and *The Fine Print of Self-Publishing*, (by Mark Levine).

**3: Write a book proposal.** A book proposal is a business plan for your book. It's something that you need in order to make the best decisions for your book and you might even land a traditional royalty publisher with a well-written book proposal. A proposal for a nonfiction book might include a synopsis, a marketing plan, a comparative study of similar books and a chapter outline. It will also identify your target audience and, if you plan to approach a publisher with your proposal, you would include an "About the Author" section.

**4: Identify your competition.** Why is this important? You (and a prospective publisher) need to know if yours is a viable book. Is the market saturated in this area, or is there room for another book on this topic? How is your book different from what else is out there? If there are no or few books on the topic or in this genre, perhaps there is a reason. Maybe there is no market for this book.

How do you conduct a comparative study of similar books? Visit a major bookstore in your area and go to the shelf where your book might be. Look at all of the books shelved there. Read many of them. Determine what's different about yours—what makes it better? Maybe you'll discover that your book idea is quite similar to several published books. Can you come up with an angle or a slant that is different—one that makes your book more useful, interesting, entertaining, or informative, for example? If your nonfiction book is just like all the others, why bother producing it?

How healthy is the fiction market? Your comparative study will most likely reveal what sort of

See *Fry*, page 7

# Planning in advance is key to a winning writing strategy

*Fry*, continued from page 6:

fiction is popular today. Young adult novels are selling well, for example. There also seems to be a big desire for fantasy and thrillers.

Maybe you plan to write a memoir. If you are not a high-profile person, you may want to rethink your desire to write a memoir for national distribution. Many authors write memoirs in hopes of using their own tragic stories to educate or inform others. You may well discover that a memoir isn't the best way to do that. Ask the hard questions and use the comparative study of similar books to get the answers you need in order to make all of the right decisions.

**5: Identify your target audience.** Even before you write that book, you need to know who you are addressing. If it is a historical novel, presumably, those who typically read historical novels will be interested in yours. It's a little tricky, though. Most novel readers are loyal to certain authors and aren't easily lured into reading something by an unknown.

If yours is a nonfiction book, you must identify the audience that wants the information you are providing or is interested in the topic. This does not include those who you believe *should* read the book, but those who will *want* to read the book. If you are honest in the evaluation of your target audience, you may discover that it isn't a very large segment of people. This knowledge may even prompt you to change the focus of your book or abandon the project altogether. I can't even begin to tell you how many authors I meet who have written the wrong book for the wrong audience and now regret the money spent, the time involved, and the emotions invested.

**6: Locate your target audience.** So now that you know who they are, you need to know where they are. And if you say, "Bookstores," you're probably wrong. Bookstores aren't always the best place to sell books, especially nonfiction books. Just look at the competition in the mega-bookstores. Your book on gnarly ski slopes throughout the United States might sell better through winter sports stores and catalogs, appropriate Web sites, magazines and newsletters and at ski resorts. A book on dog grooming would sell best in pet stores, grooming shops and through reviews and articles in pet magazines, for example.

If you discover that you don't have a solid target audience, take another look at your book idea. Maybe you need to refocus. Now doesn't it make sense to discover the truth about your book before you publish it?

Next month, Part III will conclude this article with the last three elements of successful authorship.

Patricia Fry is the author of 25 books, including *The Right Way to Write, Publish and Sell Your Book*. [www.matilijapress.com/rightway.html](http://www.matilijapress.com/rightway.html). Visit her blog often: [www.matilijapress.com/publishingblog](http://www.matilijapress.com/publishingblog).





**April Meeting:  
Saturday  
April 21, 2007**

## SARA LEWIS

### *The Power of Intuitive Writing*

*(See inside for more on Sara Lewis)*

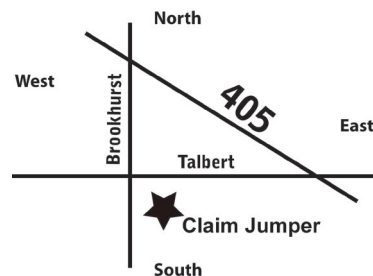


*Spring is Here!*

#### **LOCATION: Claim Jumper Restaurant**

Banquet Room Entrance, rear of building  
1805 Brookhurst St., Fountain Valley, CA  
Restaurant telephone: (714) 963-6711

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



*NON-MEMBERS & GUESTS ALWAYS WELCOME — \$30 AT DOOR; \$25 WITH RSVP*

*MEMBERS WHO DO NOT RSVP PAY \$25 AT DOOR*

*MEMBERS WHO DO RSVP PAY \$20*

**RSVP before April 14:**

**Carolyn Kimme Smith, Treasurer, 630 Harbor Island Drive, Newport Beach, CA 92660**  
Check must accompany reservations. Make checks payable to SCWA.

**After April 14:**

**Carolyn Kimme Smith, Treasurer, ckimmesmith@ucla.edu**

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



## Writers News

**Mary Michel Green, Editor**

204 Avenida Barcelona  
San Clemente, CA 92672

*editor@ocwriter.com*