



# Writers News

Volume 7, Number 4.....April 2008

April 19 Speaker

## Lynn Wiese Sneyd

Literary Agent

Director of Literary Publicity—Russell Public Communications

### The Art and Science of Book Promotion!



Lynn Wiese Sneyd directs the literary publicity division of Russell Public Communications, coordinating national, regional, and local publicity campaigns for authors of nonfiction and fiction works. Formerly, a community relations manager for Barnes & Noble Booksellers, she scheduled and hosted author events, sponsored book groups and workshops, and initiated partnerships with community organizations to promote literacy and support the arts. Her in-depth experience as an agent qualifies Lynn to share the ins-and-outs of *How to Get Published*, the goal of most aspiring authors!

An accomplished writer herself, Ms. Sneyd is the author of *Holistic Parenting: Raising Children to a New Physical, Emotional and Spiritual Well-Being* (Keats Publishing, a division of McGraw-Hill, 2000), co-author of *How Happy Families Happen* (Hazelden Publishing, 2006) and *Healthy Solutions: A Guide to Simple Healing and Healthy Wisdom* (Basic Health Publications, 2006), which received the 2007 Arizona Book Award for best health/nutrition/wellness book. Ms. Sneyd’s articles, essays, and poetry have appeared in various publications around the country.

The following quote is a sample of feedback from authors that have attended her seminars.

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“As a new, self-published author lacking knowledge about publicity and frozen with fear, I followed Lynn Wiese Sneyd’s advice and obtained a two-part book review and recommendation in *The Washington Post*. Using methods gleaned from her workshop, I have gone on to obtain local, national and international media coverage resulting in

See *Sneyd*, page 7

# President's Message

## If You Want to Write...

Ours is an exceptionally creative age. With phones that take photographs and cameras that make movies, it's no wonder everyone wants to be a writer. From screenplays to murder mysteries, writing fever has swept the nation, and many dream of hitting the *New York Times Best Sellers List*. Yet, somehow, the first critical steps elude us, like a mirage that appears close enough to touch, only to fade into the distance. We were going to have our novel drafted by the end of the month or a screenplay polished before Christmas. But, days, weeks and months roll past and our manuscripts sit safely on the shelf, collecting dust instead of awards.



Are we somehow, like Hamlet, fatally flawed? Is there a secret that great writers know, of which we are ignorant?

No! There is no secret garden of knowledge or inner flaw that prevents us from achieving our dreams. And, we're not talent-less geeks, either. There are more great writers trapped inside accountants, lawyers, and homemakers than we could count on hundreds of fingers and toes. The talent is there. The desire is there. So, what's the problem?

Brenda Ueland, a personal friend of Irving Stone and a lifelong writing teacher, said in her marvelous book, *If You Want to Write*, "...creative power is in all of you if you give it just a little time; if you believe in it a little bit and watch it come quietly into you; if you do not keep it out by always hurrying and feeling guilty in those times when you should feel lazy and happy."



When was the last time you sharpened a pencil and took a moment to smell the tang of freshly ground lead; or, bought a 99-cent bottle of bubbles and blew a stream of them over your patio railing just for fun; or, sat beneath a tree in the park sharing a box of animal crackers with a friend? Life, lived guilt-free instead of guilt-ridden, is the stuff of dreams, the warp and woof of our fondest aspirations.

After a refreshing moment of such gilded relaxation, we have something precious that we didn't have before...a renewed sense of hope. Armed with this wonder of wonders, along with that newly sharpened pencil, we can return to the dusty manuscript and see it not as a failed aspiration, but a success in progress.

Give yourself such nourishing moments, laugh when life gets in the way of your goals, and, suddenly, you will find a moment to take notes here and a minute to jot ideas there—and, best of all, renewed passion to write!

Lynnette Baum  
President  
[lynnette@the-right-writer.com](mailto:lynnette@the-right-writer.com)

## MARCH HIGHLIGHTS:

### STEPHEN J. CANNELL: *How to Hit the New York Times Best Sellers List!*

“You get nothing back from pessimism,” says Stephen J. Cannell, a *New York Times* best-selling author of twelve novels. He ought to know. His severe dyslexia was disabling. But a positive attitude modeled by his father, a “kick-ass DNA,” and a fierce work ethic convinced him “I won’t be defeated.” Never letting his foot off the gas, Cannell won Emmys as a writer/producer, created, and ran Cannell Studios, Hollywood’s third largest TV studio, for 18 years before turning to novels.

Because of his dyslexia, Cannell flunked the first, fourth, and tenth grades. Popularity came, he laughs, with being the only sixth grader with a driver’s license. His prowess as a running back got him into college. However, he entered on academic probation because he flunked all five placement tests. Each semester he signed up for 20 units, which he trimmed to 12 after asking each professor, “What’s your policy on misspelling?”

Cannell’s creative break came when he posed his spelling policy question to his first creative writing teacher. “Use all the words you know—not just all the words you can spell” was the answer.

Cannell’s ferocious drive made him an all-state running back. “I didn’t believe there was one guy who could pull me down.” He applied that belief in self to creative writing. His professor told

him to never stop writing. “You’re one or two of the best I’ve had.”

After college, to find characters and ideas for TV, Cannell scanned old *Time* magazines and newspapers. He researched enough to plot within specific contexts. Missing facts could be filled in later. Every day, after a regular job, he wrote for five hours.

Before a pitch, Cannell went into his over-prepare, over-perform mode. With no reputation, he had to sell based on his originality, profundity, and flexibility. He always had 4-5 fully detailed, new concepts in three acts for one-hour TV shows. In addition, he had 12-15 variables on each concept, to fulfill the *what-if* factor.

For the pitch, Cannell spent 9-10 days rehearsing to any family or friend he could get to listen. If he had access to the pitch room beforehand, he planned where to sit to be at best advantage. Aware of the ticking clock and boredom factor, he practiced how to keep this “performance art” tight, rapid, cohesive, and smooth. He always sold.

After becoming a studio director himself, he heard the pitches of others. He realized he had sold because he outworked the competition.

A *New York Times* best seller is based on having an excellent high-concept idea that can be

stated in one sentence. Because of many commitments, Cannell first prepares outlines of 40-70 pages for his novels. Everyone laughed when he quoted another writer: “If one of my characters tries to run away with the story, I shoot the son of a bitch.”

Cannell delineated the three-act structure he uses for screenplays and novels:

**Act I** defines the problem and introduces all associated characters. Their first appearance includes all the possibilities in the nature of each. In this “sorting act,” the author must not convey false signals about any.

**Top of Act II** [think in sports terms] brings complications, which the protagonist tries to solve, but “a piece of the back story remains hidden.” Meanwhile, to defeat the hero, the antagonist (like a backfield) “must be in motion.”

**Bottom of Act II** is wipeout. The hero’s plan is destroyed, and in all aspects he sinks as low as possible.

**Act III** brings the solution.

Just as strong as his drive is Cannell’s principle of not poisoning his life or that of others with negativity. Kindness, whether to a secretary or anyone else, is a basic in his character. His father’s axiom guides him: “See

See *Cannell*, page 7

# SCWA News & Announcements

## Members Accomplish!



### Achievements

#### Toni V. Sweeney:

1. Her poem, *Epitaf*, was published in the February issue of *Sounds of the Night* magazine.

Her short story was also featured in the same magazine last August.

2. Toni has a new science fiction novel: *Sinbad's Last Voyage*.

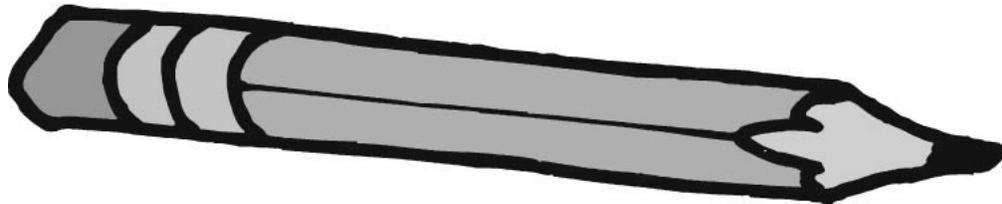
3. Toni's next novel is due out in May: *Sinbad's Wife*.

Her books can be ordered at her website: [www.tonisweeney.com](http://www.tonisweeney.com); or at [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com).

Janet de Marco

Member

[jdemar39@msn.com](mailto:jdemar39@msn.com)



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

## SCWA Critique Committee Open to Members of SCWA

### Nonfiction & Fiction

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This position is open.

### Poetry

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#### 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 .....Lynnette Baum  
Co-VP, Programming.....Lynnette Baum  
Co-VP, Programming.....Kathy Porter  
VP, Membership .....Linda Coyne  
Secretary..... Linda Shortell  
Treasurer .....Darlene Quinn  
Publicity Director .....Larry Porricelli  
Webmaster ..... Tony Stoklosa  
Meeting Coordinator.....Brennan Harvey  
Newsletter Editor ..... Mary Michel Green  
Tape Librarian.....Sharon Walters

## Membership Information

Linda Coyne, VP, Membership  
[membership@ocwriter.com](mailto:membership@ocwriter.com)

## Meeting Reservations

Brennan Harvey, [meeting@ocwriter.com](mailto:meeting@ocwriter.com)  
or message (714) 375-5275

## ***New Meeting Reservation Address***

We have a new P.O. box to send checks for RSVP's.

P.O. Box 1585  
Huntington Beach, CA 92647-9998



Please make checks payable to SCWA.

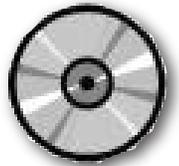
Thanks,

*Brennan Harvey*  
Meeting Coordinator  
[meeting@ocwriter.com](mailto:meeting@ocwriter.com)



## **Don't Forget to Shop!**

You can buy recordings of previous speakers on both cassette tape and audio CD for the member price of only \$5 each! This is such a valuable resource if you miss a meeting. Our Southern California Writers Association pens are also available for only \$7.50. Just go to [ocwriter.com](http://ocwriter.com) and click on "Make a Purchase."



## **NEXT MONTH'S SPEAKER:**

*May 17*

### ***Antoinette Kuritz***

Literary Publicist/Radio Host/Founder of La Jolla Writers Conference

### ***"Successful PR - From Book to Best Seller 3!"***

Antoinette Kuritz, nationally published writer, founder of the *La Jolla Writers Conference* and host of the *Writers Roundtable Radio Show*, has mentored scores of writers onto the *New York Times Best Sellers List*—authors like John Edward and Kaza Kingsley, to name a few.

A successful author in her own right, Kuritz has received the *International Reading Association Award*, has written articles for the *Ladies Home Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *The Boston Globe* and the *New York Times*, and has been featured on *CNN*, *Dateline*, *Larry King*, *Fox and Friends* and *MSNBC*.

"This is a business and I know the secrets you need to know to succeed," Kuritz said. "You will learn how to plot your book, how to find an agent, how to handle publishers and how to avoid the five most common marketing mistakes made by new authors. These facts are 'musts' for the up-and-coming author and apply to nonfiction and fiction works, alike."

Want to know how to write so that others won't be able to put down your manuscript? Interested in how to make sure your book is a commercial success? Join us on May 17 at the Southern California Writers Association meeting, and glean a wealth of knowledge from celebrity/writer Antoinette Kuritz.

*Lynnette Baum*  
President  
[lynnette@the-right-writer.com](mailto:lynnette@the-right-writer.com)

# Writer's Corner

## ***Get Published Now!***

By Patricia Fry

Okay, it's resolution time. You've been a hopeful author or an aspiring freelance writer long enough. Now it's time to fish or cut bait. (Excuse the cliché.) Is this the year that you will shift from would-be/wannabe published to happily, successfully published? What is your plan?

Here's a concept: how about writing something that will sell and then actually submitting it? Can you handle the pressure? Can you overcome the fear of failure? Can you commit to an agenda that will facilitate your publishing dream? Let me help you get started on your path to publishing success.

### **Make the Time**

1: Set a schedule and stick to it. Even if you can only eke out an extra hour each day, use that hour to develop your writing project.

2: Sacrifice something. Everyone is busy. But, if you'll notice, you're never too busy to do the things you really want to do. If you are serious about writing, make some sacrifices. If not, stop whining about lacking time to write. For example, give up clubbing on Friday nights, *Desperate Housewives* on TV and/or sleeping in until 7 or 8 every morning.

### **Get Started**

3: Research the publishing avenue of your choice. If you want to break into magazines, study appropriate books, articles and blogs related to writing for magazines. Read the magazines you want to write for, study their Submission Guidelines and follow them.

If you want to write a book, study the publishing industry and the type of books you want to write. Seek expert advice through books, writers/publishing conferences, consultations and articles.

4: Study your particular topic/genre. Whether you're writing articles, short stories or a book, you must have some sense of the market. Who publishes material on your topic/genre? What is already out there? What can you add that is new, different and needed? Before choosing a slant or focus for your piece, become familiar with your market. Rather than pushing ahead with your brilliant idea, make sure that there is a market. Many many authors and freelance writers can't get a foot-in-the-door because they are too attached to how they want to present the material without giving a thought to what will actually sell.

5: Write a proposal. For an article, you need only write a query letter, but you want it to include the purpose, scope, slant and style for your proposed article, names of any experts you'll interview or quote, number of words, something about you and your expertise in the topic/genre and your expected date of delivery.

For a book, write a book proposal, first and then approach the publisher with a well-written, succinct query letter. Learn how to write a book proposal or a query letter by reading books on the topic, taking classes and consulting with an expert.

### **Write It**

6: Now start writing your book or article. Freelance writers, wait until you receive an acceptance letter and then write the article. Too often, the editor will request a little different slant or word count or style than you have suggested.

Authors, you can start writing your book as soon as you complete your book proposal. In fact, you'll be surprised how easily your book will go together after having written a book proposal.

7: Work with an appropriate editor. If you're new to the world of magazine writing, it's wise to hire someone who knows the business to look at your finished piece. Authors, please, PLEASE hire an editor

See ***Publish***, page 7

# Meet Your Publishing Goals

*Publish*, from page 6

who is familiar with book editing (not your child's high school English teacher or the retired college professor down the street). Also make sure your editor knows something about your genre and/or subject matter.

If you dream of being published, make this the year it actually happens. It's entirely up to you. Follow the seven steps I've outlined here which involve—scheduling time, making sacrifices, studying the industry, researching your market, writing a proposal (authors)/query letter (freelance writers), sitting down and writing the piece and working with an editor. Do you want it? You can have it. It's entirely up to you.

Patricia Fry is the president of SPAWN (Small Publishers, Artists and Writers Network). She is the author of 27 books, including *The Right Way to Write, Publish and Sell Your Book*, *The Author's Workbook* and *A Writer's Guide to Magazine Articles*. She also teaches online courses on Book Proposal Writing, Article-Writing, Self-Publishing and Book Promotion. Learn more about Patricia's books, classes and editorial work at [www.matilijapress.com](http://www.matilijapress.com). Visit her informative publishing blog often [www.matilijapress.com/publishingblog](http://www.matilijapress.com/publishingblog).

## Program on Book Promotion

*Sneyd*, from page 1

*soaring book sales. I highly recommend Lynn Wiese Sneyd as a publicist, consultant, speaker and seminar leader!*"  
—Marilyn Haight, Author of *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Boss*.

A frequent presenter at writers' conferences, Sneyd has held seats on the boards of *Tucson Arizona Boys Chorus* and the *National Association of Life Underwriters*. She is past president of *FOCUS*, an organization for professional women.

So, learn how to take your book from notes to a shelf at Barnes and Noble, by attending our April meeting.

*Lynnette Baum*

President

[lynnette@the-right-writer.com](mailto:lynnette@the-right-writer.com)

## Speaker Spills Secrets of Best Sellers

*Cannell*, from page 3

if you can catch someone doing something good." Besides dyslexia and the usual vicissitudes of life, he's endured the death of his 15 1/2 year-old son.

Steve Cannell began his SCWA presentation referring to himself as the "least likely person to be standing here." But his life and career prove that "the

variable is how hard you're willing to work." A star in his name is on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

*Glenda Brown Rynn*

Member

[grynn@cox.net](mailto:grynn@cox.net)



**April Meeting:  
Saturday  
April 19, 2008**

## LYNN WIESE SNEYD

### *The Art and Science of Book Promotion!*

*(See inside for more on Lynn Wiese Sneyd.)*

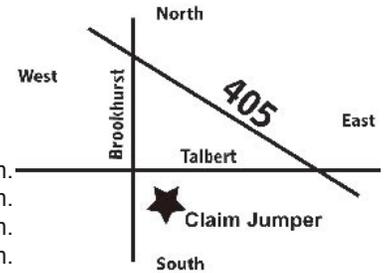


**HAPPY EARTH DAY!**

#### **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:	10:00 a.m.
Lunch:	11:30 a.m.
Afternoon Program:	12:30 p.m.



GUESTS ALWAYS WELCOME—\$30 AT DOOR; \$25 WITH RSVP  
MEMBERS WHO DO NOT RSVP PAY \$25 AT DOOR  
MEMBERS WHO DO RSVP PAY \$20



BE SURE TO RSVP WHENEVER POSSIBLE!

RSVP before April 12:

Brennan Harvey, Meeting Coordinator, P.O. Box 1585, Huntington Beach, CA 92647-9998 Check payable to SCWA must accompany reservation. Our PayPal online account is temporarily out of commission.

After April 12: E-mail Brennan at [meeting@ocwriter.com](mailto:meeting@ocwriter.com) or message (714) 375-5275



## Writers News

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