



# Writers News

Volume 7, Number 12.....December 2008

December 20 Speaker

## Darlene Quinn

### *Behind the Magic Table of a Successful Book Launch and Author Promotion!*



Darlene Quinn is a local author and journalist taking time out from a national book tour. Her most recent novel, *Webs of Power*, was released in September 2008.

Quinn is a true SCWA success story. She has worked hard and honed her craft with us – and now it's give back time.

Since *Webs of Power's* release Quinn has been on TV, radio, and Web interviews.

She will talk about her wonderful insights and provide information about a real life look behind the magic curtain of author self-promotion.

Her first novel was completing Buddy Ebsen's manuscript for a Barnaby Jones novel; she titled it *Sizzling Cold Case*, released in January 2007.

She has published articles in both "Inskeeping World" and "Savvy Magazine," highlighting the business knowledge she gained during her time

at Bullocks Wilshire Department Store. Quinn has the insider's perspective on the rise and fall of major department stores.

Quinn became interested in storytelling at an early age but did not begin writing until her adult life. Prior to being an author, she was a teacher, a self-improvement and modeling instructor, and a private

contractor for various department stores and hospitals, transitioning her career to the world of department store management.

She has two children, John and Jodie, five grandchildren, and lives with her husband Jack, a valuable art restorer in Long Beach, CA.

Darlene is currently working on a sequel to *Webs of Power*, titled *Twisted Webs*.

As many of you know, Darlene is a long-standing member of Southern California Writers

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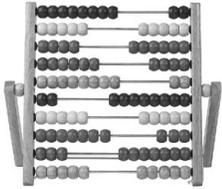
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# President's Message

## MAKE EVERY WORD COUNT

The greatest advantage of writing for a well-educated society is competition. There are more fine American writers submitting their work to publishers and magazines today than ever before in our history. Why is this a good thing? Because competition raises the bar.

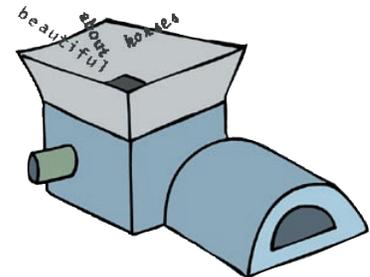


Competition forces potential authors to use words with purpose and power. No longer can writers afford to cram as many ideas as possible into their manuscripts. Ponderous, monolithic tales are passé. Readers want tight plots, sparkling dialogue and sharp endings with a twist. In other words, successful writers make every word count.

To ensure that you make every word count in your next manuscript, apply the following tips:

1. **Define your core idea.** Write it out in one sentence, as if you were crafting a log line for a screenplay. To see examples, turn on your TV and display the cable menu. For every movie or sitcom, there is a one-line description of the plot. This one-liner defines the core plotlines in miniature; an essential prerequisite for those who want to write tight, focused prose.
2. **Don't write like you talk.** Go to a coffee house and listen to how people talk. Normal chitchat is boring. But, every now and then a real gem catches your ear. However wordy your first draft dialogues may be, distill them until your gemlike prose sparkles.
3. **Use active verbs.** Active verbs shorten sentences and bring real power to writing. They also catch the imagination of each reader, an essential element if you want to excel in the craft.
4. **Think like a reader.** When strolling through a bookstore, the first thing to catch a reader's eye is the title. A well-crafted title is a story in itself. If it intrigues the reader, the book will be taken off the shelf and opened to the first page of Chapter One. Remember, readers want you to succeed in taking them to new worlds. They want your writing to entrance and enthrall.
5. **Put your words through the winepress.** The Lord's Prayer has 50 words. The Ten Commandments has 279. Yet, these distillations of thought have captured the minds of men over the ages. After writing in a creative frenzy, condense your work. If you wrote a sentence in twenty words, rephrase it in ten.

Finally, craft your work with the same economy used in these famous phrases: "If you build it, he will come," "Show me the money," and "You can't handle the truth!" As you do, your writing will fascinate your readers, and they'll come back, again and again, for more of the same!



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

## NOVEMBER HIGHLIGHTS:

# MARALYS WILLS: *How to Make Your Own Luck*

“You can succeed against the odds” has resonated in Maralys Wills all her life. That consistent message, brought by *Reader’s Digest*, molded her where she grew up on an isolated ranch by Mt. Shasta. Inspired by it, she has authored twelve books and raised one daughter and five sons.

The interest of Wills’s sons in hang gliding led the family into business as a manufacturer of hang gliders. One of her first publications was an article on hang gliding for *Mainliner*, an in-flight magazine for United Airlines. It made her “a published author rather than a mother with a typewriter.”

Two of Wills’s sons became US hang gliding champions, but the sport took their lives. As Kathy Porter said in her introduction, Wills “found solace through writing.” The story of the Wills family lives in *Higher Than Eagles*, a book that took fourteen years to be published but picked up five movie options.

When writing *Scatterpath*, “the lay of the plane after it crashes,” Wills learned that, although her details of the cockpit and aeronautical computer viruses were accurate, publishers wouldn’t buy the book because its voice was too feminine. She realized “women say every word from the beginning; men cut to the chase.” If the plane is

mysteriously losing altitude, the male response is simply “Oh, sh\_\_!” Her new mantra became “Think strong, think brief, think tough.” Since men usually decline “women’s books” whereas women read everything, she submitted *Scatterpath* under the name of M.T. Wills.

“Perfectly good isn’t good enough.” Driving to “succeed against the odds” (2,000 rejection slips, her website, [www.maralys.com](http://www.maralys.com), states), Wills works hard on craft. Chapter 6 in *Damn the Rejections, Full Speed Ahead*, released October 2008, stresses that the hook must raise “an emotional bias for or against something, an element of surprise.” She read several examples to demonstrate “immediacy that drops someone right into a situation.” SCWA members burst into laughter at “From the waist down, he looked promising.”

Wills’s handout, *Ten Ways to Upgrade Your Manuscript*, illustrates how to craft sentences for maximum effect. Among other points, Wills advises ending sentences with the strongest word of the sentence; putting the setup (times, settings, distances, moods) first into a sentence and “what happens” last; isolating key words or ideas in their own sentences or fragments; avoiding uniform lengths; and tying some dialogue to the character’s action

to eliminate the *said* tag. She notes that all truly dramatic scenes are lengthy, ten printed pages or more that include “reaction time for characters between the emotional clouts.”

Wills eschews print on demand because stores such as Barnes & Noble will not stock PODs—even if they hosted your book signing. Plus, your book will not garner a review. Will thinks Publish America, a POD, has inconsistent quality. “You don’t pay anything but lose your rights for seven years.” The money is tricky: PA “overprices your book by \$7-12, but you yourself get 40% off the purchase of each.”

To use the big publishing houses, you must have an agent. Agents prefer the big houses because your advance will range from \$10-50,000 as opposed to \$1-3,000 from small presses.

Wills prefers small house publishers, such as Stephens Press LLC, a literary press in Las Vegas, because they want good writing but “don’t want to bother with agents.” They are not as strict about an author’s platform (a known expert with credentials in the field) for a nonfiction book. You can be known by other routes, such as winning a contest. Also, they are ideal for regional material. Besides good service, a small publisher disseminates 2,500 notices about your work, their books “look as

See *Wills*, page 6

# SCWA News & Announcements

## If You Can't Make the Meeting:

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 rosewood 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: *January 16 – W.C. Jameson* *Western Author/Musician*

A very popular speaker in November 2007, this time around WC will be sharing with us some of the publishing horror stories and how an author overcomes and avoids the predators in the publishing industry.

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  
VP, Programming ..... Kathy Porter  
VP, Membership .....Linda Coyne  
Secretary..... Linda Shortell  
Treasurer .....Larry Porricelli  
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

# IMPORTANT INFORMATION!

**ALERT!** Due to an error with Claim Jumper scheduling, the February meeting of the SCWA will be held at 2:30 pm instead of 10:00 am. Please mark your calendars! If you show up at our normal time in February, it is probable that a very large Door Warden will direct you away from the Banquet Room and back to the parking lot. Again, the SCWA meeting scheduled for February 21, 2009 will be held at 2:30 pm instead of 10:00 am. Thanks for adjusting your schedules! We'll see you there...



## Member Good News



**Charla Spence** has released the first printing of the Personal Healthcare Record, a healthcare information organizer for maintaining all aspects of your healthcare records in one confidential place.

Introductory Special \$33.95 (regularly \$39.95) if ordered by December 15. Perfect Christmas or baby gift. More information can be found at [www.personalhealthrecord.com](http://www.personalhealthrecord.com).

**Joyce Wheeler** is president-elect of the Orpheus/Apollo Chapter of the California of Chaparral Poets. All poets and lovers of poetry are welcome.

**Larry Poricelli** has received interest from a publisher, who asked for the first four chapters of his novel *'Neath Hollywood Blvd.*

Janet De Marco  
Member  
[jdemar08@msn.com](mailto:jdemar08@msn.com)

# Membership Renewal Time is Coming

It's never too soon to make sure you continue your membership in our fantastic organization. Dues will be due by January 1, so get ahead of the crowd and buy yourself an early Christmas present in the form of another 12 months of networking, enjoyment and writing education by taking care of your 2009 membership now.



Annual membership dues: \$30

Students: \$15

Bring your check to the meeting or mail it to:

SCWA Membership

Post Office Box 1585

Huntington Beach, CA 92647-9998

VP, Program Kathy Porter has lined up some awesome talent to entertain and educate us this coming year, including:

**January** – W.C. Jameson: Western musician/writer/storyteller whose appearance last year was a big hit with all the members who heard him. This time around W.C. will be sharing with us some of the publishing horror stories and how an author overcomes and avoids the predators in the publishing industry.

**February** – Dodie Cross: author of several books in a humorous classic Erma Bombeck style.

**March** – (not yet confirmed) Suzanne Enoch: award-winning romance novelist.

You don't want to miss out on these fantastic speakers!

## Making Your Own Luck Explained

*Wills*, from page 3

good as or better” than those of the big houses, they'll stock your books for a year, and their distributors will market to B&N, etc. Regardless of whether the publisher is small or large, “marketing efforts are the same.”

For self-publishing, Will is enthusiastic about Ivy House from Raleigh, North Carolina, and even handed out its flyers. She had to pay \$5 a book “but has gotten it back plus more.” Ivy House also makes a print run.

Maralys Wills teaches many writing courses around Orange County. “Making Your Own Luck” means “You never stop making a book better; you never stop sending it out.”

*Glenda Brown Rynn*

Member

*grynn@cox.net*



Don't forget: during the second half of this month's meeting, we will have a raffle for some cool prizes!

# Speaker to Describe Magic of Book Launch

*Quinn*, from page 1

Association, and as my dear friend she was the first person to encourage me to write. Darlene became a wonderful mentor to me.

Join me for this unique opportunity to hear from a fellow member of SCWA. Darlene will share her in the trenches 'first-rate and learning' experiences – she will reveal secret tips of successful book and author promotions.

I personally look forward to seeing you. In the meantime visit Darlene's website at [www.darlenequinn.net](http://www.darlenequinn.net).

*Kathy Porter*  
VP, Program  
[kathy@grayguardians.com](mailto:kathy@grayguardians.com)

## Writer's Corner

Evelyn Marshall forwarded this information:

Amazon.com, Penguin Group (USA), and CreateSpace are partnering again to present the Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award in 2009.

This unique contest brings together talented writers, reviewers and publishing experts to find and develop new voices in fiction. The Grand Prize is a \$25K publishing contract with Penguin USA.

We invite you to visit the Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award website at [www.amazon.com/abna](http://www.amazon.com/abna) where you can read the latest news on this year's contest. Find out more about bestselling authors Sue Monk Kidd and Sue Grafton who will be leading our expert reviewer panel upcoming contest.

You can also read about some of last year's finalists who have since received publishing contracts. Plus, don't miss Bill Loehfelm's 2008 winning novel "Fresh Kills," hailed by the Associated Press as "the finest crime fiction debut since Dennis Lehane burst on the scene," now available in hardcover from Penguin Group (USA).

The submission period begins on February 2, 2009 and ends on February 8, 2009 or when we receive 10,000 entries, whichever comes first. If you're an author with an unpublished novel, you can sign up for important contest updates and information on how to get your entry prepared for submission. Please note that previously published titles, including self-published titles, are not eligible for entry.

I've read as much of the rules as I can stand to and they don't appear to charge an entry fee. Three of the top 10 finalists, as well as the winner, got their novels accepted for publication, so it could be a breakthrough for an SCWA member, too!

*Mary Michel Green*  
Newsletter Editor  
[green.mary@cox.net](mailto:green.mary@cox.net)



**December Meeting:  
Saturday  
December 20**

## **DARLENE QUINN**

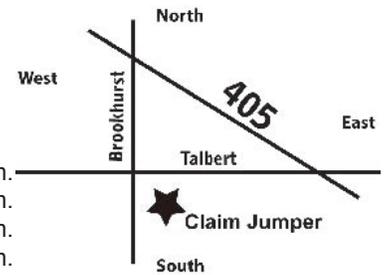
### *Behind The Magic Table Of A Successful Book Launch And Author Promotion!*



#### **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 December 15:

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 December 15: E-mail Brennan at [meeting@ocwriter.com](mailto:meeting@ocwriter.com) or message (714) 375-5275



# Writers News

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