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# Writers News

Volume 8, Number 3.....March 2009

## March 21 Speakers

### *Antoinette Kuritz*

*President of Strategies Literary P.R.*

### *Jared Kuritz*

*Director of Strategies Literary P.R.*



## *Publishing with a Purpose: The How's and Why's of Getting the Most Out of Your Book*



From writing for marketability to publishing options, every choice you make will help determine whether your book will die on the vine or be a catalyst for an ongoing and ever-expanding career. Jared and Antoinette Kuritz will team-teach the secrets of expanding your writing career at our March meeting. Bring your 25-word book synopsis, along with three personal and three professional goals for that book, for an assessment and brainstorming session that will open your eyes to possibilities you may never have considered!

Are you writing just for writing's sake, or are you writing to create a career? What is the market for your book and how do you define it. Is your book the sum total of your goal for your publishing career, or is it the hub of a larger endeavor? How large can that endeavor grow – and, with that growth in mind, what is the best method of publication?

Book project managers and publicists Antoinette Kuritz and Jared Kuritz will answer these questions

and many more in this interactive presentation. The publishing industry is changing rapidly, and you need to be ready to anticipate and take advantage of those changes. This class will prepare you for success!

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

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# President's Message

## Seven Secrets to Writing a Best Seller

No one has a formula for writing a best selling book. However, there are certain rules of thumb that make it more likely that your manuscript will translate into top sales.



- 1) **Write from research.** Every author should research what is selling and what is not selling. Not that this should determine which genre is selected. (Whichever genre you love to read most is probably the genre you should write). Nor should statistics about what is selling today determine what you write. In a year, the publishing world could be topsy-turvy. But, a solid understanding of the highs and lows that naturally occur in publishing will give you an edge when it comes to developing and marketing your book.
- 2) **Know your competition.** Develop familiarity with the top selling books in your chosen field. This knowledge prepares you for success by educating you in what readers buy and in what ideas/concepts are stale or fresh. Since editors usually want a new angle on the tried and true, this information prepares you to find a fresh hook to use in your book.
- 3) **Create a catchy title.** Regardless of rumor, this is much more important than cover art. A catchy title stops the potential reader in his or her tracks and motivates them to pull your book off the shelf and open to the first chapter. The good news is that there are more literate buyers on the book market today than ever before. The bad news is that they are much more sophisticated and demanding when it comes to what they read. This applies to editors, as well.
- 4) **Tell a fascinating tale.** Evaluate your favorite books to determine what this includes, or review the basics in *"Stealing Fire From the Gods."* Make sure your story is better than the episode of the latest sitcom. Today, even commercials tell a tale, and most of them are polished and motivating. Your story must be better than a Geico ad to get consideration by an editor at a publishing house.
- 5) **Just do it.** Start writing. Spend the time you would normally spend doing laundry, fixing dinner or watching TV at the computer. So what if you walk around in a sweaty T-shirt, yank your dinner out of the microwave or miss that episode of *Boston Legal*? We can't do everything and our time is limited. Make sure that you write for at least 5-minutes today and every day!
- 6) **Make the first chapter "pop!"** If your writing is "hot" in the first chapter, it's more likely to continue at this high level throughout the manuscript. This applies to both fiction and non-fiction writing. First chapters act like magnets, pulling readers into the story. The day is long gone when either fact or fiction can be slapped down on a page without style or panache.
- 7) **Finish the book.** Your talent may rival that of Dean Koontz, but no one will know or care if they can't read your work. Too many of us fail because we don't finish. Trust me...you are far more likely to get a contract offer for an unpolished manuscript than for an unwritten idea.

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

## FEBRUARY HIGHLIGHTS:

# W.C. JAMESON: *Let's Get Published!* *Insider Secrets That Jump-start Your Manuscript onto Bookstore Shelves*

How many authors besides W.C. Jamison can say their book sales are up—not in spite of—but *because* the economy is “tanking”? Books from his “buried treasures” series, such as *Lost Mines and Buried Treasures in Texas*, are responsible for the discovery last year of three treasures! Jamison’s *Lost Treasures in American History* was featured in a recent court case when a described cache of Spanish gold was found on private property. Royalties from books written up to 35 years ago still roll in for this adventurer, author, musician, professor, film consultant, and speaker.

“Yeah, sure” has been Jamison’s response to opportunities provoked by following his passions. Where does he get book ideas? “I don’t understand how you *don’t* get ideas. If you’re living life to the full, you get ideas.” When Harper Collins asked for his memoirs as a treasure hunter, “yeah, sure” was his reply. He recommends and also credits success to having a reputation for “being dependable, meeting deadlines, and getting along with people.”

After 60 books, Jamison began a memoir, *Beating the Devil*, which became a novel. In spite of Antonio Banderas’s interest in playing the guerrilla leader, Jamison doesn’t count on Hollywood, although he himself is the prototype for the Indiana Jones series. His intense forty-year research of Billy the Kid culminated in *Billy the Kid Beyond the Grave*, “a \$10,000 reward if someone could refute” any of its information, and current consideration by actor Eric Stoltz for a film. Meanwhile, his phone rings with solicitations to lead expeditions.

“Write about what you want to know; then go find out about it” is the first step to success. In-depth research will unearth material for a thousand stories, Jamison claims. After completing your manuscript and being professionally edited, ask yourself, “Do I *need* an agent?” not “How do I find an agent?” If you don’t, your next job as a writer is finding a publisher who likes your field of interest. He has personally sold 57 of his 60 books to small, regional, or university presses. In addition, he recommends multiple submissions to nine publishers at once. Keep your query letters to one page.

Writers’ conferences are Jamison’s first stop if he does need an agent and/or wants to select an appropriate academic press. “If you sit down with them, you’re a face. If you write, you’re a letter.” University presses have low distribution and bureaucracy; however, “their royalties last a long time.” In addition, they’ll contact you with new book suggestions.

How to deal with agents:

- Take the tone of “we’re in this together.”
- Don’t say, “My husband loves it” or “I took it to the high school English teacher.”
- Don’t send gifts, cards, presents, or colored stationery.
- Name-dropping, letters from authors, or quotations from people in the business are fine.
- Let the agent call the editor, not you.
- Include only pertinent information on your business card. No clutter.

Jamison asked the SCWA audience, “Do you pay for your lunch with an editor?” Answer: “No, talent never pays.”

Jamison does not care for self-publishing, unless for poetry, because it bypasses the professional

See *Jameson*, page 7

# SCWA News & Announcements

## Member Good News

**Victory Crane:** on March 13, she will speak at the Laguna Woods Writers Club in Laguna Woods on “Ingredients for a Novel to Sell Well.” If anyone wants to attend her talk, see her webpage at [www.crayne.com](http://www.crayne.com) under “Speaking Events.”

**Marge Crandall:** Her book proposal, *Overcoming Yeast Infections* was accepted by Paul S. Levine, a literary agent who spoke at SCWA a few years ago.

**Mariana Williams:** Her book, *Happy New Year. Darling* was reviewed in the January 2009 issue of *Long Beach Magazine*.

**Toni V. Sweeney:** In 2008, *Demon in Blue Jeans* (e-book) and *Three Moon Station* (e-book & print) were released by the Wild Rose Press; *Sinbad's Wife: Book 2 of the Adventures of Sinbad* (e-book & print) by Double Dragon Publications; a short story, *Well-Met by Moonlight* in the anthology, *Wolfsongs 1* (previously published in the premier issue ('07) of *Sounds of the Night* magazine. (All of these were written under her own name.)

In 2009, she has scheduled *Jericho Road*, *Earthman's Bride*, and *When the Condor Returned*, by Lyrical Press (written under her pseudonym, Icy Snow Blackstone); *Blood Sin*, Book 1 of the “*kan Ingan Archives*” by Leucrota Press, *Blood Curse*, Book 2 of the *Chronicles of Riven the Heretic* by Double Dragon Press; and a short story, *Sometimes Love Returns* in the February issue of *Sounds of the Night* magazine, (written under her pseudonym, Tony-Paul de Vissage).

She also has trailers for her new releases available for viewing on [YouTube.com](http://YouTube.com); also see [www.tonivsweeney.com](http://www.tonivsweeney.com).

### 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..... Charla Spence  
Treasurer .....Larry Porricelli  
Publicity Director .....Larry Porricelli  
Webmaster ..... Tony Stoklosa  
Meeting Coordinator..... Charla Spence  
Newsletter Editor ..... Mary Michel Green  
Tape Librarian.....Sharon Walters

### Membership Information

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

### Meeting Reservations

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

# April “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.

E-mail to: [contest@ocwriter.com](mailto:contest@ocwriter.com) with subject line: March 2009 “Will Write 4 Food Contest.” Put your daytime phone number or e-mail address in the message, along with the title of your story. Please attach the story without your identifying information, so the judging will be impartial.

Deadline: Stories must be received on or before 11:59 p.m. on April 6, 2009.

Winner: Attends their next SCWA meeting for free, a \$24.95 value! 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 Web site. Runners-up will also receive certificates and their stories will be on the Web site.

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, but you may receive as many honorable mentions you can win. At the end of the year, we will try to publish all winning stories in an SCWA chapbook.



## March First Place Winner:

### Thinking Positive

*By Polly Dunn*

I promised myself that I would start the year 2009 off with a positive attitude. My first mistake was to announce it to the entire office staff. They seemed to find this humorous. True, I have been known to be less than optimistic in the past and perhaps even negative on occasion, but never again.

When new desk calendars were handed out, I retreated quietly into my office, filling in the calendar with plans for the next month and trying to show a little creativity. I used different colored pens to signify the importance of various meetings I had to attend. Little pastel stickies containing affirmative quotes decorated some of the days. The calendar was cute and it was symbolic of my new disposition.

I loved my new attitude. I boasted to my co-workers that it was the way that we look at things that influences our lives. It is the difference in seeing the glass as being half full versus seeing the glass as half empty. One day I was explaining this to Jeremy, the IT tech, in my office. In my exuberance, I swung my left arm a little too close to a glass of water that had been setting on my desk and, as it spilled, I yelled out an expletive. It was a bad one.

“Well,” Jeremy chuckled, “Your glass is no longer half full, but your calendar is and it looks *positively* soaked.”

Apparently neither my glass nor my attitude held water.

#### Honorable Mentions:

*Alibi*, by Victory Crayne

*Another Boring Day*, by Joyce Wheeler

*Last of a Dying Breed*, by Mike Dunn

# Longer-Form Short Story Contest — Entries Due March 31

## 2nd Annual Short Story Contest, 2009 Southern California Writers Association

### GENERAL CONTEST RULES

1. This year's theme is "Dilemma."

Like the commercials where someone wants to go to the airport and downtown at the same time, a dilemma occurs when the character wants two things almost equally as much, but they are mutually exclusive. The key to the story is how the character resolves his/her dilemma or learns to live with it. Note: A dilemma is not the same as having a problem. Readers read on to find out the protagonist's choice.

2. The judge of his year's contest is Victory Crayne. She will be the sole judge and will rank stories on each of the following dimensions:

Adherence to theme – Degree to which the story fit the theme.

Language - Basic literacy, poetic sense in the use of English (as long as the style is not distracting)

Story development - Subjective score, but includes presence of a story arc, character development, beginning, end, etc.

Gut appeal - Is the story immersive? Does it connect with the reader on an emotional level?

Originality / creativity - Subjective score

3. Entrants must be members of SCWA. Send

your stories to the agent, not the judge, at [contest2@ocwriter.com](mailto:contest2@ocwriter.com). The agent will record who wrote which story, will remove all evidence of the author's identity from the story, and forward all stories to the judge at the end of the contest period, so early submissions will have no advantage over later submissions.

4. Stories may be submitted via e-mail only at [contest2@ocwriter.com](mailto:contest2@ocwriter.com).

1. E-mailed submissions must use a 12-point or larger font (any reasonably legible font style), black color, single or double spaced, with the story title and your name on the first page only.

Please put "SCWA Spring Long-form Story Contest Submission" in the subject line of your e-mail.

5. Stories are limited to 2,000 words.

This does not include the title, author name, or any copyright lines, which will be stripped from the story before the judge receives it. It also does not include the use of "The End." Stories that are too long will be automatically disqualified.

6. You may submit more than one story for this contest.

7. The contest starts on March 10 and ends on March 31 at midnight. The winners will be announced at the April meeting.

8. Caution: You should not submit your stories or anything about your story to our general discussion e-mail list ([discuss@ocwriter.com](mailto:discuss@ocwriter.com)), since the judge's e-mail is on that list and will know who wrote it.

See *Contest*, page 7

## Quotes on The Reader

Your stuff starts out being just for you... but then it goes out. Once you know what the story is and get it right - as right as you can, anyway - it belongs to anyone who wants to read it. Or criticize it.

—Stephen King

Many modern novels have a beginning, a muddle and an end.  
—Philip Larkin

Readers, after all, are making the world with you. You give them the materials, but it's the readers who build that world in their own minds.

—Ursula Le Guin

I want story, wit, music, wryness, color, and a sense of reality in what I read, and I try to get it in what I write.

—John D. MacDonald

Write what you want to read.

The person you know best in this world is you. Listen to yourself. If you are excited by what you are writing, you have a much better chance of putting that excitement over to a reader.

—Robin McKinley

There are some people who read too much: The bibliobibuli. I know some who are constantly drunk on books, as others are drunk on whiskey or religion. They wander through this most diverting and stimulating of worlds in a haze, seeing nothing and hearing nothing.

—H. L. Mencken



Anything you have to acquire a taste for was not meant to be eaten.

—Eddie Murphy

The reader has certain rights. He bought your story. Think of this as an implicit contract. He's entitled to be entertained, instructed, amused; maybe all three. If he quits in the middle, or puts the book down feeling his time has been wasted, you're in violation.

—Larry Niven

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

### Getting Published

*Jameson*, from page 3

process and says “amateur.” Besides editing, your books need professional designing, with ISBN numbers. However, he says writers can find seminars such as those hosted by the Colorado Independent Publishers Association that teach how to form your own publishing company [[www.cipabooks.com](http://www.cipabooks.com)].

Supporting your passions with hard work will create opportunities to which you can answer “yeah, sure,” as W.C. Jamison continually does—and some free lunches.

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

### 2,000-Word Short Story Contest Ends This Month

*Contest*, from page 6

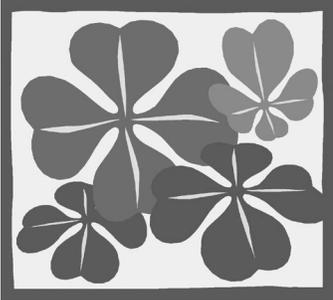
9. When the contest end date has passed, the agent will forward all stories (without author names) to the judge. At the April meeting, the judge will announce the winning stories. The winning top three stories and their author's names will also be posted on our website.
10. First place is a copy of the 2009 *Writers Market*



**March Meeting:  
Saturday  
March 21**

## **ANTOINETTE KURITZ AND JARED KURITZ**

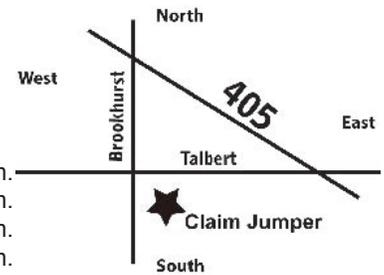
### ***Publishing with a Purpose*** (See inside for more on the Kuritz duo.)



**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—\$34.95 AT DOOR; \$29.95 WITH RSVP**  
**MEMBERS WHO DO NOT RSVP PAY \$29.95 AT DOOR**  
**MEMBERS WHO DO RSVP PAY \$24.95**



**BE SURE TO RSVP WHENEVER POSSIBLE!**

RSVP before March 17:

Charla Spence, 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 March 17: E-mail Charla at [meeting@ocwriter.com](mailto:meeting@ocwriter.com) or message (714) 375-5275



# Writers News

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