



Writers News

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SCWA Newsletter Contribution Opportunities

Do you have a book or conference review? An article of interest to the SCWA? An event SCWA members should know about? Your SCWA Newsletter accepts contributions (typically 250 words or less) for the "Writer's Corner", "Events and Announcements", and "Reviews" sections of the newsletter. To be considered for the following month's edition, please submit by the 27th of each month. The editor will evaluate all input and determine when, and if, it will be published in the newsletter. Send any contributions to editor@ocwriter.com.

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SCWA President's Message

Larry Porricelli, SCWA President

A new year is upon us and as newly elected president, I want to extend an invitation to join us for the great meetings we have been having.

Victory Crayne has gotten some fantastic speakers booked, and we have been bursting at the seams with writers hearing the great news.

If you look on the web, Brennan Harvey has redesigned our website and it is a place for writers to find information, send a picture and talk about your work, and just a place for writers to hang out!

Dava White is the meeting officer and has made each meeting very special, with fun special moments always happening.

Steven Jackson has been sending a totally new and wonderful newsletter to you.

And Charla Spence has taken over our finances and we are RICH! (In blessings!)

I have been a member for almost 20 years, and have never attended a meeting where I didn't learn something, or be inspired to reach harder and do more to be a better writer.

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SCWA Planned Speaker Schedule

DATE	SPEAKER	SUBJECT / SPECIALTY
April 21, 2012	M. Louisa Locke	Self-publishing
May 19, 2012	Dara Marks	Character transformation / Screenwriting
June 16, 2012	Mike Sirota	Outlining
July 21, 2012	Mariana Williams	How to Use Storytelling & Memoir in Fiction
August 18, 2012	Penny Sansevieri	Internet marketing
September 15, 2012	Dennis Palumbo	TBD
October 20, 2012	Paul Williams	Songs
November 17, 2012	TBD	TBD
December 15, 2012	TBD	TBD
January 19, 2013	TBD	TBD
February 16, 2013	TBD	TBD
March 16, 2013	TBD	TBD

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SCWA Monthly Meeting - April 21st Speaker

"Secrets to Success in Self-Publishing: My Story Can Be Your Story"

M. Louisa Locke



Locke will discuss what she did to turn her self-published historical mysteries into best-selling ebooks, focusing particularly on strategies for marketing books in e-retail stores like Amazon and the use of social media.

Locke, at the end of a long successful career as a history professor, published *Maids of Misfortune*, the first book in a series of cozy mysteries set in Victorian San Francisco, in December 2009. This book sold so successfully that Locke was able to retire at the end of 2010 and become a full-time writer. She published the sequel, *Uneasy Spirits*, in the fall of 2011, and both books are consistent bestsellers in the historical mystery category on Amazon. Locke is a featured contributor to one of the main indie author websites, *Publetariat.com*, and she is on the Board of Directors of the Historical Fiction Authors Cooperative, which markets quality historical fiction ebooks. You can learn more about her work at <http://mlouisalocke.com>.

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SCWA Monthly Meeting - May Speaker Preview

"Character Transformation"

Dara Marks



Dara Marks is a leading international script consultant who has specialized in the analysis of the modern screenplay for the past two decades. *Creative Screenwriting Magazine* has consistently rated her one of the top script consultants in the film industry. Her advice has been sought on a wide variety of films and television programs, and her clients range from beginning and apprentice screenwriters to top studio writers and executives.

Dara is the author of an exciting new book on screenwriting – *INSIDE STORY: The Power of the Transformational Arc*. In it she reveals her innovative process that helps writers maintain the artistic integrity of their vision throughout the development of their story. Her unique workshops and seminars are drawing national and international praise.

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SCWA Monthly Meeting - March Meeting Highlights

“The Craft of Writing for Multiple Media”

Deborah Pratt

by Glenda Brown Rynn, SCWA Reporter



Proof that your mother can be drastically wrong: When Deborah M. Pratt first auditioned for a Broadway show, her mother said, “You’re very pretty, but I don’t think you have talent.” All these years later, her accomplishments include being a singer, dancer, actor, screenwriter, director, producer, and fiction/nonfiction book author. Among her creations are *The Vision Quest* trilogy, *Quantum Leap*, *Cora Unashamed*, and WEB Series *Warrior One*. The announced topic was “The Craft of Writing for Multiple Media.”

Ms. Pratt brought us on her journey from one media to another while following her personal theme of “We can do anything we can imagine.” The issue is not What Do You Do? but Who Are You? In addition, we have a natural desire to share what’s inside us.

With four sisters (and some dyslexia), Ms. Pratt grew up entertaining younger kids. Any dream of hers from the night before had been embellished by noon into a full-length story. In the entertainment world, she managed to stay her own person. New horizons opened when a Broadway producer said, “I’m gonna bring you to Hollywood and that f___ attitude you have.”

Ms. Pratt sang with Frank Sinatra’s crowd and also began acting. However, because she “didn’t like the roles for women--especially those of color or those of “non-quite color,” she wrote a spec script. It was well received because she “could get into characters’ heads,” the producer said. That experience led to an invitation to produce. When sitting in the editing room, she could “see all the possibilities.” The mix of that editing sense and her previous experiences propelled her into notable success. During her ascent, she never stopped being who she is. The theme of several of her books is “How do you empower yourself?”

Because writing in the home atmosphere is difficult, Ms. Pratt suggests “writers’ rooms,” that can be rented. But a special place at the same time every day—even if you’re only “vomit-writing” for 15 minutes—is necessary for building your writerly “muscles,” parallel to a physical routine. Later each day that story continues in your head and even flows into dreams. She says, “Make me see the movie in your head.”

If in a screenplay, your version must be “so succinct.” If characters sound similar, they haven’t been individualized. For this problem, Ms. Pratt found psychology classes helpful not only for characterization but also for production design. What does the setting feel like? What subliminal images work? Lots of yellows, for example, may indicate innocence and kindness.

Today’s desire for big profits often compromises artistic vision. “Afraid to take chances,” producers want a story based on a successful book. Even so, she says, they can miss opportunities. With its film *John Carter*, Disney didn’t re-offer the Edgar Rice Burroughs book. [This film is a combo of two books in the common domain (free). See Project Gutenberg Australia.]

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SCWA Writer's Corner

Should You Attend A Writer's Conference This Year?

By Patricia Fry

Have you thought about attending a writers' conference but you're not sure it's the right move for you? Some of them can be a bit pricey. Not all of them seem to respond to your writing or publishing interests. Some are held in remote destinations. But if you are a writer working to improve; a freelancer seeking work or an author in search of inspiration, an agent, a publisher or book promotion advice, there's bound to be a writers' conference for you. What can a writers' conference do for you, anyway?

Depending on the agenda of the particular conference,

- You can meet agents and editors and discuss your project with them.
- You'll learn techniques that can enhance your writing.
- You'll gain insights into the world of freelance article/story-writing.
- You'll learn volumes about the publishing industry and how to navigate it on behalf of your book project.
- You'll come to understand more about book promotion and how to apply the principles to your fiction or nonfiction book.
- You'll have the opportunity to network with other writers and writing/publishing professionals
- You'll most likely walk away feeling more knowledgeable and inspired.

I've met writers who just blossomed after a writers' conference experience. They found the information, support, direction and inspiration they were seeking. Some discovered the help they required in the form of an editor, mentor or coach. But some go home harboring the same lack of confidence and direction as when they arrived at the conference. How can this happen? What went wrong for these attendees?

- Most likely they showed up hoping to have their beliefs validated rather than being open to new information.
- They didn't fully participate—instead using this as an opportunity to sleep in and see the sights rather than buckle down and learn.
- They stayed to themselves and rarely spoke to anyone else.
- They didn't participate in discussions during sessions.
- They neglected to take notes or pick up all of the handouts.
- They didn't follow through after the event and request resources or follow leads to discover additional information.

If you plan to attend a writers' conference this year—and I recommend that you do—please consider the following:

- Choose an appropriate conference. Study the line-up of workshops leaders, topics and special offerings (such as agent meetings or manuscript evaluations) to make sure this is a good fit for you.
- Participate fully with an open mind. This means attend every relevant session. Listen and learn. Ask questions.

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Events and Announcements

[The SCWA Information Disclaimer.](#)

Book Signing

Evelyn Marshall will have a booth at the Festival of Books, held at USC on April 21-22.

Rita Lee Lloyd has a book signing on April 28th at Barnes & Nobel in Manhattan Beach at the Manhattan Gateway Shopping Center (1800 Rosecrans Ave, Bldg B, 310-725-7025). The signing is from 1 to 5 PM.

Screenwriting Classes

Screenwriting classes are taught by Mark Sevi, a professional screenwriter. New classes start Tuesday, April 3rd, and Thursday, April 5th; both Intro and Intermediate/Advanced classes available.

See <http://ocweekly.backpage.com/Classes/scriptwriting-screenwriting-classes/19944406> or go to Irvine Valley College Continuing Education Website (123getsmart.com) or call 949-451-5555 for more information.

SCWA Outreach

Suspense Magazine allows paid SCWA members to sign up for a lifetime membership.

The La Jolla Writer's Conference allows paid SCWA members to receive a registration discount year-round.

SPAWN allows paid SCWA members to sign up for a \$10 discount.

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SCWA Monthly Meeting - March Meeting Highlights (cont.)

Ms. Pratt says *The Help* originated as a script, but the backers produced the book first. George Lucas made extra millions, as a minimum, from *Star Wars* because the studio failed to take its merchandizing rights. In a reverse, one teen clothing company hired writers to create a story to fit its merchandise line.

Having a book out, of course, is no guarantee that other media will want its story arc. For one thing, "If your book hasn't popped in three months, publishers will lose interest in you." To get your book recommended to a studio, tie in with a Costco or a philanthropic organization. You're a viable commodity, a hit, if you have 30,000 followers.

Have your condensed "elevator pitch" ready. Embrace chutzpah. Go to awards shows such the SAG and Academy Awards and pitch. If that person declines, ask, "Do you know of anyone who might be interested in this?" Telephoning before 10 AM increases your chances of reaching a director/producer himself. "Don't take any [no's] personally" because this is the "town of illusion."

Asked at the conclusion if she'd ever reminded her mother of saying she had no talent, Ms. Pratt said, "Yes. Her response was 'I didn't say that.'" Even though she hasn't forgotten her mother's remark, her career is proof Ms. Pratt never took it personally. [Return to Meeting Highlights](#)

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SCWA Writer's Corner (cont.)

- Network at every opportunity. In other words, communicate with other attendees as well as session leaders. Again, ask, listen and learn. Share with others, but you'll benefit more by listening than you will talking.
- Exchange business cards with everyone you connect with.
- Take good notes and pick up all of the handouts.
- Follow through and follow-up after the event.
- Consider purchasing products by the presenters whose messages or material resonated most with you.

A writers' conference is as good as each attendee makes it. Do your part by participating fully with an open mind.

Locate writers conferences locally by doing an Internet search. Or use these directories:

<http://www.writing.shawguides.com>

<http://writersconf.org>

<http://www.allconferences.com>

<http://www.newpages.com/writing-conferences>

Patricia Fry is the author of 35 books. www.matilijapress.com. Visit her daily blog: www.matilijapress.com/publishingblog. Check out her author services at www.patriciafry.com. [Return to SCWA Writer's Corner](#)

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The SCWA Bookshelf

Books on the Craft of Writing, Recommended by Our Speakers

Our wonderful speakers often recommend books on the craft or business of writing. Here is a sampling of recent suggestions.

From **Deborah Pratt**:

<i>Worlds of Wonder - How to Write Science Fiction and Fantasy</i>	(David Gerrold)
<i>Stein on Writing</i>	(Sol Stein)
<i>The Writer's Journey (2nd Edition)</i>	(Christopher Vogler)
<i>Getting the words Right</i>	(Theodore A Rees Cheney)
<i>The Art of Fiction</i>	(John Gardner)
<i>The Comics Tool Box</i>	(John Vothaurus)
<i>The 8 Characters of Comedy</i>	(Scott Sedita)
<i>Creating Unforgettable Characters</i>	(Linda Seger)
<i>Making a Good Script Great</i>	(Linda Seger)
<i>From Script to Screen – the Collaborative Art of Film Making</i>	(Linda Seger w/ Edward Jay Whetmore)
<i>Save the Cat (1 & 2)</i>	(Blake Snyder)
<i>The Playwright's Handbook</i>	(Frank Pike & Thomas Dunn)
<i>Adventure in the Screen Trade</i>	(William Goldman)
<i>An Empire of Their Own</i>	(Neal Gabler)
<i>The Big Picture</i>	(Edward Joy Epstein)

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SCWA Book Exchange

The SCWA is offering its members the opportunity to bring and drop off books (any subject) at meetings. Any attendee may take any number of books home for free. Leftover books will be donated.

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SCWA Members Directory

The SCWA now offers a complementary listing with all paid memberships. This is entirely voluntary. If you would like your contact information listed in the newsletter, please forward this information to the editor at editor@ocwriter.com.

Name	email	web	phone
Baum, Lynnette	therightwriter@cox.net	www.the-right-writer.com	949-654-3891
Crayne, Victory	victory@crayne.com	www.crayne.com	949-206-0922
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SCWA Board of Directors

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VP, Programming Victory Crayne
VP, Meetings Dava White
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Membership Information

membership@ocwriter.com

Meeting Reservations

Dava White, meeting@ocwriter.com

714-204-6500

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If you would like to list services in the SCWA Newsletter you may apply for a paid listing by sending an email request to editor@ocwriter.com. You may purchase either business card or web page size.

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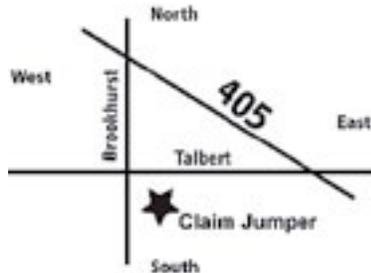
SCWA Monthly Meeting Information and Map

Meeting 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.



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SCWA Information Disclaimer

The SCWA receives information on various services, writing contests and events. As a courtesy, we will forward the information to our members. Unless otherwise indicated, the SCWA does not discourage, encourage or recommend any of the services, contests or events. Many of these services, contests and events cost money; therefore, we recommend that you evaluate the opportunities based on your individual situation and interest. Because of our membership email protection policy, please do not forward information to the general membership directly. We request that all members forward any information to the SCWA President for approval and forwarding to the membership.

SCWA Members wishing to share appropriate writing related information and resources are welcome to do so via the SCWA Facebook page or the SCWA discuss@ocwriter.com discussion board. The SCWA Newsletter Editor will determine the information to be contained in the SCWA on-line newsletter which is primarily used for official SCWA information.

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