



# Writers News

Volume 11, Number 5.....May 2012

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## SCWA President's Message

Larry Porricelli, SCWA President

To all of our SCWA Moms - Happy Mother's Day!!!! We hope to see you all at this month's meeting, where we continue our momentum as a thriving and growing writer's group with dynamic speakers and a friendly, nurturing environment.

We have a board meeting scheduled on May 5th - if you have ideas for us to consider please forward them to me asap. Thanks.

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## SCWA Planned Speaker Schedule

| DATE               | SPEAKER          | SUBJECT or SPECIALTY                        |
|--------------------|------------------|---|
| May 19, 2012       | Dara Marks       | Character transformation                    |
| June 16, 2012      | Claudia Suzanne  | Ghostwriting / Editing                      |
| July 21, 2012      | Mariana Williams | How to Use Storytelling & Memoir in Fiction |
| August 18, 2012    | Penny Sansevieri | Internet marketing                          |
| September 15, 2012 | Dennis Palumbo   | Mysteries and the psychology of writers     |
| October 20, 2012   | Paul Williams    | Songs                                       |
| November 17, 2012  | Brett Battles    | Mystery writing                             |
| December 15, 2012  | TBD              | TBD   |
| January 19, 2013   | TBD              | TBD   |
| February 16, 2013  | Jeri Westeron    | Medieval historical mysteries               |
| March 16, 2013     | TBD              | TBD   |
| April 21, 2013     | TBD              | TBD   |
| May 18, 2013       | Peggy Lane       | Editing/ Memoirs                            |

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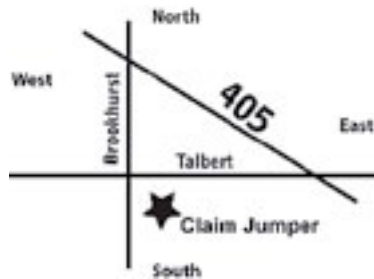
## SCWA Monthly Meeting Information and Map

### 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 Monthly Meeting - May 19th Speaker

### “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 - June Speaker Preview

### “Ghostwriting”

**Claudia Suzanne**



Ghostwriting expert, Claudia Suzanne, is one of SoCal’s leading book industry authorities, with close to ten dozen invisible credits in myriad nonfiction topics, fiction genres, and academic fields.

Ms. Suzanne is the only ghostwriter to ever deconstruct exactly how ghostwriters do what they do. Her latest title, *Secrets of a Ghostwriter*, is the seminal text on the subject – it is, in fact, the only known ghostwriting textbook in existence.

Claudia helped found Professional Writers of Orange County (PWOC) and served two terms as President of Independent Writers of Southern California (IWOSC), OC Chapter. She currently sits on the board of directors of PEN USA, OC Chapter, and the advisory boards of CSUF Extension Education, Mothers Against Sexual Abuse (MASA), and BASTIS Foundation. She is a member of Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA, formerly Publishers Marketing Association) and Small Press, Artists and Writers Network (SPAWN).

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## SCWA Monthly Meeting - April Meeting Highlights

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

M. Louisa Locke



The publishing world is upside down. After history professor and author, M. Louisa Locke, allowed one of her books to be downloaded **free** for two days, she then sold 7,500 copies! Ms. Locke presented the opportunities **at this moment in time** in e-publishing. Her topic was "Secrets to Success in Self-Publishing: My Story Can Be Your Story."

An academic close to retirement and impatient with the traditional book publishing process, Ms. Locke took advantage of the current "wild west" situation in publishing. Results? So far she has published two books of her cozy mystery series set in Victorian San Francisco: *Maids of Misfortune* (12/2009) can be purchased as an e-book (\$2.99) at Amazon, Kindle, or as a paperback. *Uneasy Spirits* (Fall 2011) can be an e-book (\$3.99) at Kindle and in print at eStore, Amazon. In less than two years, she's sold 38,000 books at \$2 profit each. She also has good sales on Amazon of two short stories at \$.99 each. The 15-20 pages of each are easy to read on smartphones. Overall, 90% of her sales are Amazon e-books.

Ms. Locke described (1) the downside of traditional publishing, (2) the benefits of e-publishing, and (3) how to navigate the professional e-world.

(1) Traditional publishing may take from 18 months to three years. Your publisher might die while your book is stuck in the birth canal or announce that your topic is not popular now. You will receive no advance or only \$3,000-\$5,000, paid in three parts, which you may have to pay back. If your book sells, you will be paid quarterly, twice a year, or two to three years later. Unless your book is highly priced, you may not earn much. For a hardcover \$14.95 book, Ms. Locke received \$2.00 a book, not quite 7 1/2%.

Beware of a non-compete clause publishers are now enforcing. It means you cannot sell this book by any other means or sell **anything else** you've written! They can reject your second book, not on its quality but because they've decided "to go in a different direction." Since publishers pay for store placement, will your books be in the front or somewhere obscure? If you legally challenge the publisher for an audit, you may discover the company was benefitting from foreign royalties you never knew about. Lastly, your books are not decaying in a warehouse.

(2) Kindle was "the turning point" for e-books. Today's prediction is that 80% of all fiction sales will be e-books. ("Literary fiction is harder to sell than genre fiction.") Ms. Locke says nonfiction sales will be less robust because "color and illustration are harder to do well on e-books." But a nonfiction book can be successful if it has a clear niche/classification. Professor Locke predicts that monographs and college textbooks will enter the e-world.

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## SCWA Board of Directors

President..... Larry Porricelli  
VP, Programming ..... Victory Crayne  
VP, Meetings ..... Dava White  
Treasurer ..... Charla Spence  
Publicity Director ..... Larry Porricelli  
Webmaster..... Brennan Harvey  
Newsletter Editor ..... Steven Jackson



### Membership Information

[membership@ocwriter.com](mailto:membership@ocwriter.com)

### Meeting Reservations

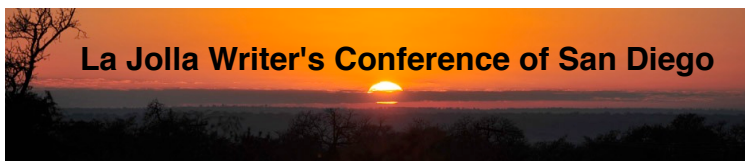
Dava White, [meeting@ocwriter.com](mailto:meeting@ocwriter.com)

714-204-6500

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## SCWA Members Directory

The SCWA offers a complimentary listing with all paid memberships. If you would like your contact information listed in the newsletter, please forward this information to the editor at [editor@ocwriter.com](mailto:editor@ocwriter.com).

| Name               | email  | web  | phone        |
|--------------------|--|--|--------------|
| Baum, Lynnette     | <a href="mailto:therightwriter@cox.net">therightwriter@cox.net</a>               | <a href="http://www.the-right-writer.com">www.the-right-writer.com</a>                   | 949-654-3891 |
| Crayne, Victory    | <a href="mailto:victory@crayne.com">victory@crayne.com</a>                       | <a href="http://www.crayne.com">www.crayne.com</a>                                       | 949-206-0922 |
| Dunn, Polly        | <a href="mailto:pollydunn@sbcglobal.net">pollydunn@sbcglobal.net</a>             |  | 714-306-8934 |
| Farmer, Patty      | <a href="mailto:Pmtfarmer@gmail.com">Pmtfarmer@gmail.com</a>                     |  | 714-335-0040 |
| Golddinger, Sharon | <a href="mailto:pplspeak@att.net">pplspeak@att.net</a>                           | <a href="http://www.detailsplease.com/peoplespeak">www.detailsplease.com/peoplespeak</a> | 949-581-6190 |
| Harvey, Brennan    | SCWA: <a href="mailto:webmaster@ocwriter.com">webmaster@ocwriter.com</a>         |  |              |
| Hofmann, Lois Joy  | <a href="mailto:loisjoyhofmann@yahoo.com">loisjoyhofmann@yahoo.com</a>           | <a href="http://sailorstales.wordpress.com">sailorstales.wordpress.com</a>               | 858-483-3942 |
| Jackson, Steven    | SCWA: <a href="mailto:editor@ocwriter.com">editor@ocwriter.com</a>               | <a href="http://web.me.com/stevejackson4/Writer">web.me.com/stevejackson4/Writer</a>     |              |
| King, Roy          | <a href="mailto:rsking3@verizon.net">rsking3@verizon.net</a>                     | <a href="http://www.authorrhking.com">www.authorrhking.com</a>                           | 760-987-7870 |
| Lloyd, Rita Lee    | <a href="mailto:rl_loyd@yahoo.com">rl_loyd@yahoo.com</a>                         | <a href="http://www.ritaleelloyd.com">www.ritaleelloyd.com</a>                           | 949-493-1625 |
| Marsh, Sonia       | <a href="mailto:sonia@soniamarsh.com">sonia@soniamarsh.com</a>                   | <a href="http://soniamarsh.com">soniamarsh.com</a>                                       | 949-309-0030 |
| Marshall, Evelyn   | <a href="mailto:Evelyn@EvelynMarshall.com">Evelyn@EvelynMarshall.com</a>         | <a href="http://www.EvelynMarshall.com">www.EvelynMarshall.com</a>                       | 714-220-1882 |
| Porricelli, Larry  | SCWA: <a href="mailto:president@ocwriter.com">president@ocwriter.com</a>         |  |              |
| Porter, Kathy      | <a href="mailto:Kathy@grayguardians.com">Kathy@grayguardians.com</a>             | <a href="http://www.grayguardians.com">www.grayguardians.com</a>                         | 562-431-0366 |
| Quinn, Darlene     | <a href="mailto:Darlene@darlenequinn.net">Darlene@darlenequinn.net</a>           | <a href="http://www.darlenequinn.net">www.darlenequinn.net</a>                           | 562-432-1280 |
| Rynn, Glenda       | <a href="mailto:grynn@cox.net">grynn@cox.net</a>                                 |  |              |
| Spence, Charla     | SCWA: <a href="mailto:treasurer@ocwriter.com">treasurer@ocwriter.com</a>         | <a href="http://www.CharlaSpence.com">www.CharlaSpence.com</a>                           |              |
| Stoklosa, Tony     | <a href="mailto:tonystoklosa@hotmail.com">tonystoklosa@hotmail.com</a>           |  |              |
| Young, Neil        | <a href="mailto:celtic1100@yahoo.com">celtic1100@yahoo.com</a>                   |  |              |
| Westenhaver, Don   | <a href="mailto:donwestenhaver@roadrunner.com">donwestenhaver@roadrunner.com</a> | <a href="http://www.donwestenhaver.com">www.donwestenhaver.com</a>                       | 714-994-1943 |
| White, Dava        | SCWA: <a href="mailto:meeting@ocwriter.com">meeting@ocwriter.com</a>             |  | 714-204-6500 |

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## Events and Announcements

[The SCWA Information Disclaimer.](#)

### Book Signing

Patty Farmer has a book signing of her new book, *The Persian Room Presents*, on May 9th at Barnes and Noble at The Grove in Los Angeles.

### Conferences

The 10th Annual Southern California Writers' Conference: Los Angeles is September 21 - 23 in Newport Beach. SCWA members get a \$75 discount until June 1st. Go to <http://www.writersconference.com/la/registration> to register.

### 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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## 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 Comic's 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 &amp; 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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# “Snoopy: Beagle, Author, Rejection Role Model”

By Steven Jackson

Each of us in the SCWA derives inspiration from other members of the writing community. Our monthly speakers provide inspiration to us at each meeting, and attending is a benefit I truly value, even as my schedule constrains me some months. Attending helps me improve my craft, understand the business of writing, and gain creative inspiration. My fellow members provide inspiration via personal and on-line discussions. I feel fortunate to be part of this group.

A friend recently asked me to pick one writer as the most helpful role model for me.

I answered, without hesitation, “Snoopy.”

You know. White beagle. Black nose, black ears, and a black spot on his back. Sometimes wears sunglasses to look cool. Battles the Red Baron from his doghouse cockpit. Yeah, that guy.

Why is he a role model for me?

He likes root beer shakes. Like me.

He understands a little French. Like me.

He spends much of his time in close proximity to a doghouse. Like me.

He’s also an aspiring novelist. Like me.

As a novelist, he taught me two valuable lessons.

First, he taught me that nothing good happens if I don’t put in the work. Snoopy spends a great deal of time seated on top of his doghouse in front of his typewriter. He understands that unless he’s committed to working at the craft every day, for hours at a time, whether he feels like it or not, success will be impossible. He understands it is hard work to create a good sentence (let alone a good novel). Rain or shine, he’s up there, doing the work.

Second, he helps put rejection in perspective for me. If you’re like I am, you know all about rejection, a necessary part of a writer’s life. Agents, editors, and publishers aren’t out there trying to hurt my feelings, but it’s a profession, and they have a job to do, which is to look for material that will make them money, which means writers are going to get rejected, and often. Their job has always been challenging, and never more so than in these complex times for the writing profession.

Much of the time these rejections are uninformative: form letters, terse emails, an occasional criticism, which stings even when accurate and well-intentioned.

If you’re like I am, you’ve had a few which were more noteworthy than others. Rejections received almost instantaneously with submission. Negative comments about my writing skill. That’s where Snoopy’s experience helps me. Because no matter how biting any of my rejections have been, my worst don’t compare with the ones Snoopy received.

Here’s a sample I have in my archives.

“Dear Contributor: Thank you for not sending us anything lately. It suits our present needs.”

“Dear Contributor: Thank you for submitting your story to our magazine. To save time we are enclosing two rejection slips. One for this story and one for the next one you send us.”

“Dear Contributor. We are returning your dumb story. Note that we have not included our return address. We have moved to a new office, and don’t want you to know where we are.”

Seriously, it can’t get any worse than those, can it?

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## SCWA Monthly Meeting - March Meeting Highlights (cont.)

The e-market will continue to grow not only because customers have the “instant gratification of a quick download” but also because e-books are “easier on older eyes and arthritic hands.” E-books are print-on-demand through the Espresso Book Machine in libraries and other places. Locke says they “print a well-bound one on demand.” (See <http://ondemandbooks.com>.)

An author gains many advantages by e-publishing. Your books cannot die by going out of print, much less be jerked off the shelf. You can improve your book by rewriting parts or changing the cover. Being an older author (40-80) doesn't work against you. You can put one genre in stores and e-publish the other. Currently, over one-half of all fiction sales are made online.

Royalties are higher. Prices for e-books usually range from \$2.99-\$9.99, with the latter representing a celebrity's first book. Your return will be 70%, or in some countries, 35%. At \$.99 you get 35%. You'll net 25% of prices \$2.99 or \$3.99. Your first money comes in two months, then monthly. Ms. Locke sold 150 books right away when she turned to e-publishing. Each night you can check online to see how many you sold in what country.

You can get books to the online markets with little expense outside of paying for copy-editing and cover design. At most, producing an e-book costs Ms. Locke \$1,000. Amazon ranks books for buyers by popularity, best selling, rating of stars, and price. Many companies are springing up to meet e-needs.

(3) How do you make this happen? “First,” Ms. Locke says, “write the best book you can, rewrite, and edit.” Use beta readers to check your historical aspects, your romance approach, and other perspectives. Your book's cover and interior should be formatted well, look professional, and “be designed, not for the shelf but for the online view.” Do not underestimate these factors.

Next, “make sure your product page on Amazon is ready for prime-time.” Is your excerpt enough? Try connecting your title to your genre. Locke's subtitles say, “A Victorian San Francisco Mystery.” You can make your author's page on Amazon equivalent to a blurb—and refer to your other books, especially if a series. Include not only your bio and blog link but also your photo because “today's readers want to feel they know you.” If you have nonfiction, indicate why readers should trust your expertise.

“If Amazon publishes you, they will market you.” You have to help capture the browser by listing all categories/genres your book may fit into. These categories are tied to best-seller lists on which you may earn a spot. You get to pinpoint seven keywords/terms. Some of Locke's are: “Victorian mysteries,” “San Francisco mysteries,” “cozy [or hard-boiled] mysteries.” Create tags which are “a combo of your key words and a character's name. One of hers is *Clairvoyant*. Of course, you need to drive people to your books through social media, etc.

Your book can/may be reviewed by <http://Goodreads.com>, <http://Librarything.com>, and others. These reviews can be sent to newspapers and more. You may also include their links on your own website or author's page.

M. Louisa Locke's next goal is to turn her first book into an audio book through Amazon's audio program: ACX.com. SCWA hopes she'll return to instruct us how to catch that e-train too. See <http://mlouisalocke.com> and <http://Publetariat.com>.

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## Additional Comments On the Talk by Mary Louisa Locke

by Victory Crayne

When Mary Lou told us the sales results of her self-published books, I was surprised. And when she said her books are not the best books in that they didn't win a Pulitzer Prize or were the best-sellers in her genre, I was stunned.

Yes, we can do it too. She's making a comfortable living with her fiction already, after only two years on the market.

She warned us that right after Christmas, book sales rankings may not be as high because the big names in the field may dominate. But in the months following, your sales rank may go back right back up.

The next day, I returned to my writing of *Reluctant Spy* with renewed vigor.

Some of you may remember when I wrote about using the bestselling authors in your genres as mentors. I buy and study the writing of bestsellers and ask myself, "What is this writer doing that I'm not doing?" I edit manuscripts professionally which helps me become familiar with what works and what doesn't work. So the answer for this author usually comes to me right away.

Those thoughts came to my mind as I wrote, so I immediately made some changes and I think the manuscript is a better read because of them.

Thank you, Mary Lou, for inspiring us!

Victory Crayne, writer of science fiction, mystery, and espionage thrillers (all combined in the same book)

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## “Snoopy: Beagle, Author, Rejection Role Model” (cont.)

Snoopy's responses to the rejections also remind me to keep my sense of humor as they pile up.

“Gentlemen. Regarding the recent rejection slip you sent me. I think there might have been a misunderstanding. What I really wanted was for you to publish my story and send me fifty thousand dollars. Didn't you realize that?”

“Dear Editor. Why do you keep sending my stories back? You're supposed to print them and make me famous. What is it with you?”

It's nice to know I'm not the only one to think that.

No matter who your writing role models are, I wish you great joy and success in your writing endeavors. It can be a tough gig, but what else can match the feeling of creating a great sentence, a great paragraph, a great story? Or, a great rejection response.

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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). 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](mailto:editor@ocwriter.com).

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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](mailto: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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