

# Southern California Writers Association



## Newsletter

Volume 13, Number 2 -- February 2014

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## President's Message

Larry Porricelli, SCWA President



Dear Fellow Writers,

We had a wonderful opening to 2014. Our January meeting packed the house with forty attendees, and we had eight new members join. I'm so excited about what we have planned this year. If there is anything I can do to support you in your writing, don't hesitate to ask. We are here to serve.

Your Board of Directors has decided to make two changes, which we hope will add value to SCWA Membership.

First, the meeting fee for nonmembers will go up to \$35 in March, 2014. The fee for people paying the \$30 annual fee will remain the same at \$25. This means you need attend only three meetings a year to break even if you pay the annual fee. It remains the best deal I know of.

Second, our monthly writing contest will now be on any subject you, as the author, chooses. There will no longer be a writing prompt. Just send me your 500 words or less on any subject by the deadline (one week before the next meeting), and you're included in the contest. Also, we have a sponsor for the contest, and there will be a \$25 cash prize for any winner, along with publication in our Newsletter and on the website. Members who win will also receive a free admission to an SCWA meeting, and two movie tickets to a Regency theatre. We will also have a special contest with a larger prize later in the year. Finally, a noted agent will be reading all winning entries.

I hope to see you at our February meeting, where we'll hear all about the opportunities in the dynamic environment we writers find ourselves in, from Dr. Ken Atchity. Ken is a dynamic speaker, movie producer, and author. His talk at the 2013 ThrillerFest in New York was rated the best of the conference. You won't want to miss it.

Happy writing.

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## Mission

The mission of the SCWA is to provide a forum for promoting the welfare, fellowship, spirit, education, information, and encouragement among published and unpublished writers in the Southern California area.

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## Board of Directors

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**Mailing Address: PO Box 47, Huntington Beach, CA 92648**

**Membership:** Steven G. Jackson, [membership@ocwriter.com](mailto:membership@ocwriter.com)

### Meeting Reservations

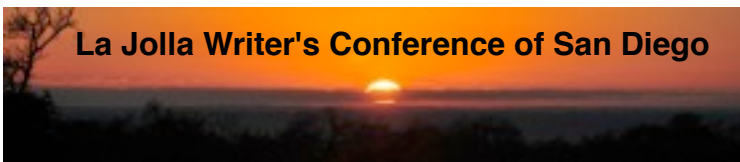
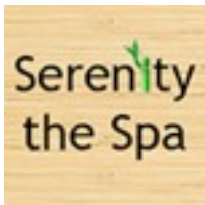
Larry Porricelli, [meeting@ocwriter.com](mailto:meeting@ocwriter.com)  
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## Sponsors and Partners

The SCWA gratefully acknowledges our sponsors, friends, and partners:



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February 2014

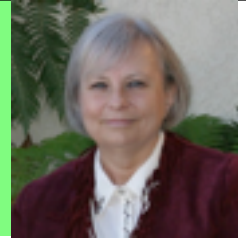
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## January Meeting Highlights

### “From Story Map to Finished Draft in 7 Stages”

Nancy Dodd



Nancy Dodd shared her exciting method of telling the story you want to tell to a full house at our January brunch meeting, and called it, “The Writer’s Compass – From Story Map to Finished Draft in 7 Stages.” (That is also the name of her book.)

Dodd, a writer, editor, and university instructor with two master’s degrees who currently teaches at Pepperdine University, has worked with many writers, and her method was as she said, an additional tool for us to get the story we want.

Dodd’s premise is that regardless of genre or format, to get to your story and to share your story effectively you have to first sort through all the ideas you have been toying with, and how to organize them, whip them into shape, and turn them into great writing.

Her premise is a tool that:

- Helps develop a finished story by working through your writing in 7 stages.
- Improve and evaluate your work by mapping story progress and structure
- Assess you story strengths and weaknesses so you can write the story you want to tell.

Her method allows you to focus on one aspect of your story at a time, including forming and developing story ideas, building strong structures, creating vibrant characters, and structuring scenes and transitions.

The Writer’s Compass maps out a story across a line of structure and even uses pictures to visualize what you want. Dodd began with two simple points: first, there is the traditional three acts of a story – or the beginning, middle, and end; and second, there is also a pyramid within a story, that starts on level ground, or a flat line, with an exposition or explanation, then has rising action, the left side of the pyramid, which reaches a point atop the pyramid called the climax, and then the story heads downward, the right side of the pyramid, as the action falls toward the ending, which brings us again to a flat line, the denouement.

She said that these techniques have been part of the writer’s tool box for a long time, and that she knew many writing instructors teaching much the same thing, using different terminology, and one day she realized that if she could develop a tool for use on the three-act structure that included all the elements of good writing, it would be easier for writers to see a structure as well as anything needed to develop. So she took the above techniques and blended them together in a unique way to get her idea of a story map.

A map, Dodd said, guides us to an end, and she hoped her idea of a map for a story would do the same for writers. Once a story is fully in place, with all things set, we can write more clearly seeing what we need and where we need to go.

This brought her back to good old Aristotle, yes, Aristotle the old Greek philosopher and playwright, who gave us perhaps the first written stories and from who we still follow the same format in storytelling, and she expands the idea of beginning our storytelling by knowing what the heck we want to write and how we are going to get it.

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## Speaker Schedule

DATE	SPEAKER	SUBJECT or SPECIALTY
<a href="#">February 15, 2014</a>	Dr. Ken Atchity	Opportunities in a Dynamic Environment
<a href="#">March 15, 2014</a>	D.P. Lyle, MD	The Psychology of Character Motivation
<a href="#">April 19, 2014</a>	Elana Arnold	Young Adult Fiction
<a href="#">May 17, 2014</a>	Le Ly Hayslip	Fighting for My Life: A True Story
<a href="#">June 21, 2014</a>	Sheri Fink	Marketing Secrets from a Best-Selling Author
<a href="#">July 19, 2014</a>	Ina Hillebrandt	Got a Story to Tell?
<a href="#">August 16, 2014</a>	Antoinette Kuritz	How and Why to Build a Platform Before Publication
<a href="#">September 20, 2014</a>	Jared Kuritz	Publishing with a Purpose: The 7 Methods
<a href="#">October 18, 2014</a>	Anne Cleeland	TBD
November 15, 2014	Jeff Lyons	Rapid Story Development
December 20, 2014	SCWA Member Panel	TBD

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## 2014 SCWA Membership Drive

Enjoy all the benefits of SCWA membership through 2014 by joining now, and help our organization grow and advance the craft of writing, and help you meet your writing goals. Contact any board member, sign up on the web or at the February meeting, or email Steven G. Jackson at [membership@ocwriter.com](mailto:membership@ocwriter.com).

You may send your checks to our new mailing address: PO Box 47, Huntington Beach, CA 92648.

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## “Will Write for Food” Contest

The “Will Write For Food“ contest is a monthly blind competition to determine the best story based on the monthly writing prompt. First prize is a \$25 cash prize and publication on the SCWA website. SCWA Members who win will also receive free admission to an SCWA meeting and two movie tickets to a Regency theater.

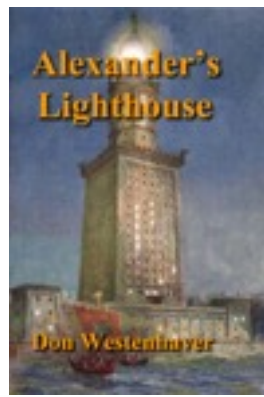
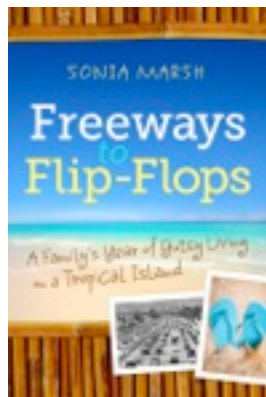
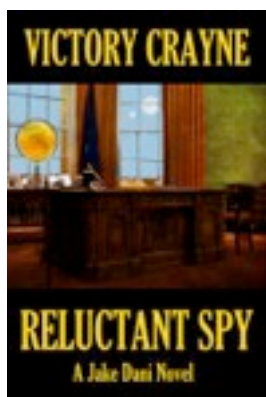
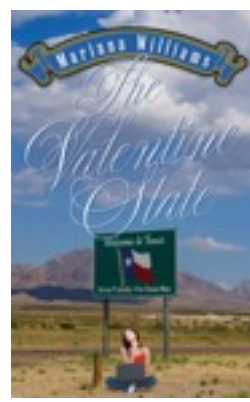
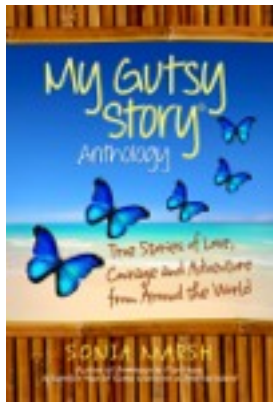
There are no limits to the number of times you can win. Join the fun and earn some rewards.

Email your story before the deadline to [meeting@ocwriter.com](mailto:meeting@ocwriter.com).

You may write on any subject. You have a maximum of 500 words. The winner will be announced at the February SCWA meeting. The deadline is February 8th, 2014.

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## Recent Book Publications by SCWA Members



Your Next Book Here

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## February 15th Speaker

### “Opportunities in a Dynamic Environment”

**Dr. Ken Atchity**



Story Merchant Dr. Ken Atchity believes in the power of stories to change the world. A storyteller himself (his recent thriller, *The Messiah Matrix*, can be visited on [www.messiahmatrix.com](http://www.messiahmatrix.com)) Ken has been privileged to spend a lifetime helping stories reach their ideal audiences in both publishing and entertainment. As a literary manager he has sold over 200 books (fiction and nonfiction), and overseen over twenty New York Times bestsellers, including *Mrs. Kennedy and Me*, *The Kennedy Detail*, *Dracula: The Un-Dead*, and *The Last Valentine*. As a producer working with both major studios and indie financiers, he's produced thirty-something films, most recently *Hysteria*, *Erased*, *The Lost Valentine*, and the Emmy-nominated *The Kennedy Detail*. His own books include several for storytellers, including *How to Publish Your Novel*, *Writing Treatments that Sell*, and *A Writer's Time: A Guide to the Creative Process from Vision through Revision*.

Former professor of comparative literature at Occidental College and Distinguished Instructor at UCLA Writers Program, Ken has also served as Fulbright Professor to the University of Bologna and as regular book review for *The Los Angeles Times Book Review* for twenty years.

With what he calls “the new Gutenberg Revolution” in full sway with the technologies of communication, Ken says, “I’ve not been this excited about helping storytellers for years. Today there is truly a level playing field, where the old gatekeepers are giving way to new methods of reaching the audience.” At the recent Thrillerfest in New York, his talk on “Direct vs Legacy Publishing” was the most highly-attended workshop in Craftfest. His analysis of the situation can be found on his website [www.storymerchant.com](http://www.storymerchant.com).

For all his background as manager, producer, writing coach, and author, Ken is proudest of being known for “thinking outside the box.” “If I find someone stuck in old ways of thinking,” he says, “I’m not sure I can help him. We’re living in a world of accelerating change, and your mind must be open to seizing the opportunities such a dynamic environment presents. Storytellers haven’t been this fortunate in over a hundred years.” That’s what Ken will talk to us about when he speaks in February. He can be reached at [Atchity@storymerchant.com](mailto:Atchity@storymerchant.com).

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## March 15th Speaker

### “The Psychology of Character Motivation”

D.P. Lyle, MD



D. P. Lyle, MD is the Macavity and Benjamin Franklin Silver Award winning and Edgar, Agatha, Anthony, Scribe, and USA Best Book Award nominated author of many non-fiction books as well as numerous works of fiction, including the Samantha Cody and Dub Walker thriller series and the Royal Pains media tie-in novels. His essay on Jules Verne’s *The Mysterious Island* appears in *Thrillers: 100 Must Reads* and his short story “Even Steven” in ITW’s anthology *Thriller 3: Love Is Murder*.

He has worked with many novelists and with the writers of popular television shows such as Law & Order, CSI: Miami, Diagnosis Murder, Monk, Judging Amy, Peacemakers, Cold Case, House, Medium, Women’s Murder Club, 1-800-Missing, The Glades, and Pretty Little Liars.

He was born and raised in Huntsville, Alabama where his childhood interests revolved around football, baseball, and building rockets in his backyard. The latter pursuit was common in Huntsville during the 1950’s and 60’s due to the nearby NASA/Marshall Space Flight Center.

After leaving Huntsville, he attended college, medical school, and served an internship at the University of Alabama; followed by a residency in Internal Medicine at the University of Texas at Houston; then a Fellowship in Cardiology at The Texas Heart Institute, also in Houston. For the past 35 years, he has practiced Cardiology in Orange County, California.

He is the co-host, along with Jan Burke, of [CRIME AND SCIENCE RADIO](#), a twice-monthly program on [SUSPENSE RADIO](#).

He will speak first on The Psychology of Character Motivation: Understanding the Whys of Character Thought, Action, and Dialog, and also allow time for a lively forensic Q&A session.

The strength of every story, regardless of genre, lies in the characters that populate the fictional landscape. Developing full, realistic, and believable characters requires an understanding of the psychological drives that push them to act and react.

Why do people love, hate, envy, loath, and need one another?

Why do they steal, cheat, batter, and kill?

Why do they argue, lie, deceive, threaten, and comfort?

The session will begin with a discussion of the basic psychology that drives character behavior and move to the forces behind conflict and conflict resolution---the driving force behind thought, action, and dialog. We will look at the conflict-driven character arc of famous protagonists and antagonists.

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## April 19th Speaker

### “Young Adult Fiction”

**Elana Arnold**



Elana K. Arnold's debut young adult novel *Sacred* “will appeal to many teens, especially fans of the Twilight series,” proclaimed Booklist. School Library Journal effused it, “Filled with tension and angst... Readers will be looking for the next installment.” Telling the tale of a small-town boy and a Gypsy girl that unfolds as the Burning Man festival is in full swing, *Burning*, her second YA effort, is just out from Delacorte. Kirkus hails it, “Lyrical and inspirational.” Author Andrew Smith (*Winger*, *The Marbury Lens*), hails it as, “seductive and uplifting... An absolutely perfect summer read.” *Splendid*, the sequel to *Sacred*, is out November, 2013.

Come hear about the YA genre, and how to succeed at it.

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## May 17th Speaker

### “Fighting for My Life: A True Story”

**Le Ly Hayslip**



Le Ly Hayslip is the author of the bestselling books *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places* and *Child of War, Woman of Peace*. As a writer who advocates reconciliation and peace, Hayslip has helped to heal the wounds of war between the American and Vietnamese people through her books and humanitarian work. Her story offers a poignant picture of Vietnam then and now, and of a courageous woman who experienced the true horror of the Vietnam War - and survived to tell this unforgettable story. Her books were adapted into the film *Heaven and Earth* by the award-winning director Oliver Stone. Hayslip worked as a technical advisor and consultant on the film to bring her intensely personal and spiritual story to the screen.

Her two books and the movie have promoted a better relationship between the two countries, and in recent years, America and Vietnam have not only fully established normal diplomatic ties but the U.S. also signed the trade agreement with Vietnam last July. In November 2000, Hayslip, on delegation with former President Bill Clinton, visited Vietnam as part of the major "achievement" of her humanity works and healing purpose.

Today Hayslip lectures at groups and universities across the globe and leads international groups/delegations in cultural and anthropological studies at her Ky La village in Vietnam to help rebuild her birthplace. She continues to travel frequently to Vietnam to collect the world-renowned hand carved sculpting, arts and crafts from her home village, famous Marble Mountain, and ship it to the U.S.

Hayslip is currently working on her third book. She continues to travel frequently to Vietnam from her hometown of San Diego to do humanitarian work.

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## June 21st Speaker

### “Marketing Secrets from a Best-Selling Independent Author”

**Sheri Fink**



Sheri Fink is a #1 best-selling, award-winning children’s author, creator of “The Whimsical World of Sheri Fink” children’s brand, and an international speaker. Sheri writes books that inspire and delight children while planting seeds of self-esteem. Her first children’s book, *The Little Rose*, was a #1 best-seller on Amazon for over 60 weeks, became the #1 top-rated e-book on Amazon, and received a gold medal in the 2012 Readers Favorite International Book Awards. Her subsequent books (*The Little Gnome*, *The Little Firefly*, and *Exploring the Garden with the Little Rose*) have all been #1 best-sellers. Her children’s book series received the Gold Mom’s Choice Award for excellence in family friendly entertainment. In 2013, Sheri was selected by CBS Los Angeles as one of the top three authors in her local area, a distinction she shares with Dean Koontz.

Sheri will share her inspirational journey to becoming an independent author as well as her marketing and social media strategies for maximum success. Learn how to cultivate and grow your fan base, how to leverage word-of-mouth marketing to spread the word about your book, and how to use social media for fun and profit. Whether you’re independently published, traditionally published, or hoping to one day be published, you’ll receive valuable insights from this session.

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## July 19th Speaker

### “Got a Story to Tell?”

**Ina Hillebrandt**



A recovering Fortune 500 Consultant, Ina Hillebrandt turned to writing a decade ago. Ina moved to California with her daughter in the mid-eighties. She has written and edited articles for the New York Times and LA Times and a range of radio, TV and video programs. Ina turned her focus to specializing in helping people create vivid, compelling memoirs and morphing them into performance on stage, screen, TV and Internet.

Have you been thinking you’d like to write your Life Stories? Have you starting with notes in a shoebox? Need help organizing your notes? First time writer? Ina Hillebrandt has worked with folks of all ages some who’ve never written before as well as published authors. She has a wealth of proven techniques to help writers open up to new ways of thinking and writing. Her tools will help ignite your creativity, improve your writing form and structure, and help shape your life history. Learn how to write the book of your life.

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## August 16th Speaker

### “How and Why to Build a Platform Before Publication”

**Antoinette Kuritz**

Antoinette, always a crowd favorite, will return to SCWA for the first time since 2009. She will be instructing us on how and why you should start working on your platform before you publish.

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## September 20th Speaker

### “Publishing with a Purpose: the 7 Methods of Publishing”

**Jared Kuritz**

Jared will follow Antoinette’s talk with a description of the seven methods of publishing, and their pros and cons.

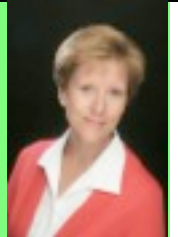
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## October 18th Speaker

“TBD”

**Anne Cleeland**



Anne Cleeland holds a degree in English from UCLA as well as a degree in law from Pepperdine University, and is a member of the California State Bar.

She writes a historical fiction series set in the Regency period as well as a contemporary mystery series set in New Scotland Yard. A member of the Historical Novel Society and Mystery Writers of America, she lives in California and has four children.

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## Events and Announcements

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### Recent Publications

Sonia Marsh has published *My Gutsy Story Anthology*.

Kathy Porter has published *Escape From Nuur*, the second in the Gray Guardians Series.

Darlene Quinn's *Unpredictable Webs* is a Reader's Favorite Gold Medal Winner.

Evelyn Marshall has published her second book: *The Way They See*.

Marianna Williams has published her third book: *The Valentine State*. After achieving prominence and success for a book she's stolen and taken credit for, feisty 38-year old Veronica finds herself faced with the pressures of expectation and a looming deadline. A tongue-in-cheek metafictional book-about-a-book-within-a-book, *The Valentine State*, is a comedic tale of dysfunction and misadventure. Williams pens a year in the life of a writer as she lives in a beat-up house in Seal Beach, California, with a couple of misfit roommates. Billy Anderson is an ex-classmate turned handyman and small time drug dealer, and Liz Alden, is a gorgeous, young aspiring model. Secrets abound as the housemates get mixed up in blackmail and Veronica is hiding a love triangle. Everything is on the line as Veronica's deadline steadily approaches, threatening to reveal her for the plagiarist she is and leave the three charming, yet roguish characters high and dry.

### Conferences and Events

West Coast Writers Conference - Genre-LA (<http://www.wcwriters.com>), is February 8 and 9 at Los Angeles Valley College. SCWA Members Sonia Marsh and Peggy Glenn will be speaking, along with SCWA Speakers Nancy Dodd, Brian Felsen, Jeri Westerson, and Sheila Finch.

The 28th Annual Southern California Writers Conference in San Diego (<http://writersconference.com/sd>) is February 14-17. Speakers with SCWA ties include Marla Miller, Janis Thomas, Mark Clements, Laura Taylor, and Linda Thomas-Sundstrom.

### Active Member Benefits

Active members receive a 16% discount at every SCWA meeting.

BookBaby offers a 15% discount on all services in 2013 to SCWA members. Enter SCWA2013 as a promo or discount code.

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

The Southern California Writers' Conference, held thrice annually in San Diego, Palm Springs, and Orange County, offers discounts to SCWA members who register early.

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

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

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## Active Member 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 [editor@ocwriter.com](mailto:editor@ocwriter.com).

Name	Primary Genre	Email	Web	Phone
Anderson, Barbara Bradbury, Mary Buers, Anita Chalagonian, George Cotta, Sandra		<a href="mailto:MDBradb@aol.com">MDBradb@aol.com</a>		714-960-9179
Crayne, Victory Dunn, Polly Gabe', Adrina	Espionage/SciFi	<a href="mailto:victory@crayne.com">victory@crayne.com</a> <a href="mailto:pollydunn@sbcglobal.net">pollydunn@sbcglobal.net</a>	<a href="http://crayne.com">crayne.com</a>	949-206-0922 714-306-8934
Garcia, Jose Andres Gilmore, Susan Kay Goldinger, Sharon Harvey, Brennan Izzo, Dan	NF/Fiction	<a href="mailto:skgilmore1@msn.com">skgilmore1@msn.com</a> <a href="mailto:pplspeak@att.net">pplspeak@att.net</a> SCWA: <a href="mailto:webmaster@ocwriter.com">webmaster@ocwriter.com</a>	<a href="http://detailsplease.com/peoplespeak">detailsplease.com/peoplespeak</a>	714-381-2006 949-581-6190
Jackson, Steven G Jackson-Colando Jacob, Caleb Jimenez, Teri Keller, Kari Kimbrough, Andrew	Thrillers	SCWA: <a href="mailto:editor@ocwriter.com">editor@ocwriter.com</a>	<a href="http://stevengjackson.com">stevengjackson.com</a> <a href="http://pjcolando.com">pjcolando.com</a>	
King, Roy Kluger, Cindy Lloyd, Rita Lee Long, Laura Long-Coyne, Linda	Mainstream Fic	<a href="mailto:rsking3@verizon.net">rsking3@verizon.net</a> <a href="mailto:rl_loyd@yahoo.com">rl_loyd@yahoo.com</a> <a href="mailto:laura.a.long@cox.net">laura.a.long@cox.net</a>	<a href="http://authorrhking.com">authorrhking.com</a> <a href="http://ritaleelloyd.com">ritaleelloyd.com</a> <a href="http://wordswortheditorial.com">wordswortheditorial.com</a>	760-987-7870 949-493-1625 949-246-3211
Marsh, Sonia Marshall, Evelyn Meier, Alison Parker, Lucy Porricelli, Larry Porter, Kathy Quinn, Darlene Radice, Mike Rapoza, Robert Rynn, Glenda Sheppard, Pamela Silverstein, Mark Spence, Charla Stoller, Karen Thomas, Shirl	Literary Fic	<a href="mailto:sonia@soniamarsh.com">sonia@soniamarsh.com</a> <a href="mailto:Evelyn@EvelynMarshall.com">Evelyn@EvelynMarshall.com</a>	<a href="http://soniamarsh.com">soniamarsh.com</a> <a href="http://EvelynMarshall.com">EvelynMarshall.com</a>	949-309-0030 714-220-1882
Westenhaver, Don White, Dava Williams, Mariana	Mainstream Fic	SCWA: <a href="mailto:president@ocwriter.com">president@ocwriter.com</a> <a href="mailto:Kathy@grayguardians.com">Kathy@grayguardians.com</a> <a href="mailto:Darlene@darlenequinn.net">Darlene@darlenequinn.net</a>	<a href="http://grayguardians.com">grayguardians.com</a> <a href="http://darlenequinn.net">darlenequinn.net</a>	714-580-5072 562-431-0366 562-432-1280
		<a href="mailto:grynn@cox.net">grynn@cox.net</a>		
	Non-Fiction	SCWA: <a href="mailto:treasurer@ocwriter.com">treasurer@ocwriter.com</a>	<a href="http://CharlaSpence.com">CharlaSpence.com</a>	
	Hist Fic / Thrillers	<a href="mailto:shirlth@verizon.net">shirlth@verizon.net</a> <a href="mailto:donwestenhaver@roadrunner.com">donwestenhaver@roadrunner.com</a> <a href="mailto:dwhite@keltianrealm.com">dwhite@keltianrealm.com</a> <a href="mailto:mariana@marianawilliams.net">mariana@marianawilliams.net</a>	<a href="http://shirlthomas.com">shirlthomas.com</a> <a href="http://donwestenhaver.com">donwestenhaver.com</a>	714-994-1943 714-204-6500

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## Member Marketplace

SCWA Members sell stuff. Check with the author for details on how to purchase your copy.

<u>Author</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Year</u>
Bennett, Veronica	<i>Happy New Year, Darling</i>	2003
Crayne, Victory	<i>Reluctant Spy</i>	2013
King, Roy	<i>Symfonie Fantastique</i>	2011
Lloyd, Rita Lee	<i>How to Survive in the 21st Century as a SSOFF</i>	2011
Marsh, Sonia	<i>Freeways to Flip-Flops</i>	2012
Marsh, Sonia	<i>My Gutsy Living Anthology</i>	2013
Marshall, Evelyn	<i>The Provider</i>	2012
Marshall, Evelyn	<i>The Way They See</i>	2013
Porter, Kathy	<i>Gray/Guardians</i>	2006
Porter, Kathy	<i>Earth's Ultimate Conflict</i>	2010
Porter, Kathy	<i>Escape from Nuur</i>	2013
Quinn, Darlene	<i>Webs of Power</i>	2008
Quinn, Darlene	<i>Twisted Webs</i>	2010
Quinn, Darlene	<i>Webs of Fate</i>	2011
Quinn, Darlene	<i>Unpredictable Webs</i>	2013
Spence, Charla	<i>Personal Healthcare Record (Adult)</i>	2011
Spence, Charla	<i>Personal Healthcare Record (Child)</i>	2011
Westenhaver, Don	<i>The Whiplash Hypothesis</i>	2008
Westenhaver, Don	<i>The Red Turtle Project</i>	2008
Westenhaver, Don	<i>Nero's Concert</i>	2008
Westenhaver, Don	<i>Alexander's Lighthouse</i>	2012
Williams, Marianna	<i>Stars or Stripes Fourth of July</i>	2011
Williams, Marianna	<i>The Valentine State</i>	2013

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## Member Projects

SCWA Members write stuff. Here's what some of us are up to.

Victory Crayne writes novels in two genres: espionage thriller and science fiction. Usually in both at the same novel. She recently published *Reluctant Spy*. She is writing her next novel, tentatively titled *Nuclear Blackmail*.

Steven G. Jackson has written five thriller novels, three in the last four years, which are in various stages of development: *The Megalomania Gambit* (marketing to literary agents), *The Zeus Payload* (marketing to literary agents), and *Lamia* (in rewriting stage).

Darlene Quinn recently released *Unpredictable Webs*, and is working on a fifth book in the series.

Don Westenhaver specializes in historical fiction novels which commingle actual historical figures and events with fictional characters. He just completed his fourth novel, *Alexander's Lighthouse*, which takes place in Alexandria Egypt during the first century AD, and an agent is reading it.

Mariana Williams is Producer of Long Beach Searches for the Greatest Storyteller. In its second season, this event is held at the Long Beach Playhouse. Facebook Fan Page: LB Searches, [www.marianawilliams.net/wince-worthy-tales](http://www.marianawilliams.net/wince-worthy-tales).

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## January Meeting Highlights (Cont)

The first stage was developing your ideas. In other words, what is your story about, what are its ideals. And she says the writer needs to figure: what is the story you want to tell, where is it coming from inside you, and after you figure those two questions, move on to ask what do you now know or believe that your story is about, and who are the protagonist and antagonist (P&A) you are going to give voice to. Dodd said many writers make their P&A overdone or weak, and usually haven't given a good definition of them because they haven't decided on one, or perhaps personally like one or the other too much.

In the first stage, we set the launching pad, and a test she asked is if we could pick one word that is a concept that could be developed into a theme for your story, and then to write a short phrase that represents the theme. There are, Dodd said, universal and/or spiritual values that define our view of life in the story, our philosophy so to speak, and we should know this about our story because it helps us to focus our story, but also gives a deeper level to our story. And we can ask ourselves what do we want to say about life through the story? Or what is the larger concept we want to convey? She gave as an example – *Jeff must learn to overcome his racial bias and love his neighbor to change his community*. Dodd said our stories have a point as well as entertainment.

In twenty-five words or fewer write an active sentence in a dynamic way that tells the overarching story. A few examples are:

- A racist, Jeff, fuels his neighbor Assad's hatred until a powerful drug cartel arrives, forcing Jeff and Assad to band together to save their neighborhood.
- *Beauty and the Beast*: The Beast holds a beautiful woman hostage, hoping she will fall in love with him to break the spell that him a beast.

These loglines can change as you develop your story, but it's a good place to begin.

Once you have decided your issues, you can go to the story map.

Picture a horizontal line. Now intersect it with two lines, so you have the first intersection about a third of the way, and the second intersection about three-quarters of the way. This is a basic story map that can be used for each act, or even used for scenes, as each scene pretty much has the same structure.

Vertically at the beginning of the line, give the catalyst – Dodd uses "Linda drives into her flood ravaged neighborhood." Now, before the first intersection are several points in the story. Some will be vertical written, as is the beginning one, but these will be up above the line so you have space between them and the line. Those vertical statements she uses are: 1. Needs a fresh start. 2. Developer offers to buy out neighborhood. 3. Memories make it hard to leave.

In the space above the line and below the vertical story lines she wrote: She will rebuild.

In the space beneath the line she wrote: She sees rosebush her husband planted.

So in that portion she shows us the main questions of the first act, with the theme (rebuild) and the inciting thought (rosebush, which is emotional and touching to all of us).

In the second section of the map, she only puts the words across the blank middle – "Linda decides to fight the developer."

The story doesn't have to go further at this point, as each process is similar for each act.

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## January Meeting Highlights (Cont)

We can also add art, as in a storyboard, to give us a clearer picture and stir our minds on creativity. We can do the same thing as we did above with the words but instead use art to tell our story, no words, can we see it? Where do we get art? The net, use the same method but with pictures and you are telling a visual story – you can also see some things that may be missing.

Beginning with that format, we moved on to: building a strong structure through knowing who our audience is, are we character-driven or plot-driven, what Voice is telling the story, what is the best POV to use for the Voice to tell the story. A principal point was for us to show the story not tell the story, and Dodd also spoke of hooks, second plots, making strong characters. That is too much to define here, but most are familiar, as she said, with some aspect of those necessities.

Her main point to us was that we can use the mapping technique for the entire story, and first see what is there and what is not, and see the directions we are taking for our story. Then of course, in our writing, we want strong characters, hooks, etc.

This summary really is inadequate, because she conveyed so much more value than I can place here. The mapping, Dodd said, is only a tool for the writer to see structure and story in front of them, but we still have to write the story, but it is a very interesting tool that she has taught to many best-selling authors who stand by it.

Of course, as writers, we have our own methods, but as my Jewish grandmother used to say, “It couldn’t hoit.”

For in depth work, you can purchase her book: *The Writer’s Compass*, which is a Writers Digest Book, available from usual sources from \$9 - \$15 depending on source.

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## Subsidy Press Clarification

SCWA Reporter Glenda Rynn wants members to know that The Independent Publishing Magazine ([www.theindependentpublishingmagazine.com](http://www.theindependentpublishingmagazine.com)) was the source of the top ten subsidy presses that Sharon Goldinger referred to during the discussion at the November meeting. Ms. Goldinger did not originate the list.

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## 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.



### Meeting Fees (cash, check or credit/debit)

Reservation Type	SCWA Member	Student	Others
RSVP by Early Bird Date	\$25	\$15	\$30
RSVP after Early Bird Date or Walk-In	\$30	\$15	\$35

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