

Southern California Writers Association

The Perennial Writers Conference



Newsletter

Volume 17, Number 8 -- August 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

(click on the page number to navigate to that article)

<i>President's Message</i>	2
<i>SCWA Board of Directors</i>	2
<i>Southern California Writers Association Anthology</i>	3
<i>Speaker Schedule</i>	3
<i>August 18th Speaker - Antionette Kuritz</i>	4
<i>September 15th Speaker - Caitlin Rother</i>	4
<i>July Meeting Highlights - Baron Birtcher</i>	5
<i>Recent SCWA Publications and Productions</i>	6
<i>Recent SCWA Publications and Productions (cont)</i>	7
<i>Active Member Directory (A-F)</i>	8
<i>Active Member Directory (G-N)</i>	9
<i>Active Member Directory (O-Z)</i>	10
<i>SCWA Member Publications and Productions (A-K)</i>	11
<i>SCWA Member Publications and Productions (L-M)</i>	12
<i>SCWA Member Publications and Productions (N-Z)</i>	13
<i>Members-Only Offer From Sharon Goldinger</i>	15
<i>Newsletter Editor Opportunity</i>	15
<i>Conferences, Events, and Announcements</i>	16
<i>August "Will Write for Food" Contest</i>	16
<i>Publishers and Publications</i>	16
<i>SCWA Mission</i>	17
<i>SCWA Active Member Benefits</i>	17
<i>SCWA Critique Program</i>	17
<i>Monthly Meeting Information and Map</i>	18
<i>Terms of Use and Content Information Disclaimer</i>	18

President's Message

Larry Porricelli, SCWA President



At our July meeting Baron Birtcher spoke to a capacity house on creating suspense and delivering the unexpected.

Our August meeting features long-time SCWA supporter Antionette Kuritz, who runs the La Jolla Writers Conference and an author PR firm. Make your reservations for this exciting event.

I'd like to thank Yann Jackson for her dedicated service on our Board of Directors. Diana Pardee is joining the board, and will focus on our social media presence.

Thank you for making the SCWA the phenomenal organization it is today, and for even better things to come. If your annual fees are due, please sign up to extend for your next twelve months. Happy writing.

[Return to ToC](#)

SCWA Board of Directors

President Larry Porricelli
Vice President of Membership Steven G. Jackson
Vice President of Finances and Communication Don Westenhaver
Vice President of Programming Madeline Margarita
Director of Social Media Diana Pardee

Webmaster Brennan Harvey
Newsletter Editor Steven G. Jackson
Newsletter Speaker Reporter Glenda Rynn

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

Membership: Yann Jackson, ykj3678@gmail.com

Meeting Reservations

Larry Porricelli, meeting@ocwriter.com

714-580-5072



[Return to ToC](#)

Southern California Writers Association Anthology

IT'S ALL IN THE STORY

The SCWA Anthology, *It's All About the Story*, went to a second printing to meet the demand of our wholesalers and bookstores. We have books for direct sales (\$15 for one, \$12.50 each for two, \$10 for three or more). Those interested in purchasing additional copies (summer reading, birthdays, the holidays, team spirit) let us know asap. You may contact Don Westenhaver to arrange for payment, and we will have the copies available for you at the next SCWA meeting. Don can be reached at donwestenhaver@roadrunner.com.

Additional sales could open the door to a second SCWA Anthology. Positive reviews make a huge difference in sales. Anyone can post on Amazon (even if you didn't buy your copy on Amazon) as long as you have spent \$50 on Amazon, and are not identifiable as a family member or friend of one of the authors. Reviews should be honest and provided in the spirit of informing the general reading public what to expect. It doesn't take much of your valuable time, and provides a potential benefit to all of us.

We thank you for your continued support of SCWA, our perennial writer's conference.

For more information visit the SCWA Anthology website at: www.SCWAanthology.com.

[Return to ToC](#)

Speaker Schedule

DATE	SPEAKER	SUBJECT or SPECIALTY
August 18th, 2018	Antionette Kuritz	Building a Public Presence and PR for Your Book
September 15th, 2018	Caitlin Rother	Investigative Journalism

[Return to ToC](#)

August 18th Speaker - Antionette Kuritz

“Building a Public Presence and PR for Your Book”



Antoinette is The founder of The La Jolla Writers Conference – one of the first writers conferences to cover the art, craft, and business of writing and which is now in it’s seventeenth year – Antoinette Kuritz is also the founder of Strategies Book Development & PR, a company devoted to helping both aspiring and successful authors define and reach their goals. She has taught at BEA, at Publishing University, and in countless other venues. For more than eight years she hosted her own radio show, Writers’ Roundtable, and for more than fifteen years she has been the book person on San Diego’s KUSI-TV Good Morning San Diego.

[Return to Speaker Schedule](#)

[Return to ToC](#)

September 15th Speaker - Caitlin Rother

“Investigative Journalism”



New York Times bestselling author Caitlin Rother has written or co-authored 12 books and several Kindle ebooks. As a Pulitzer-nominated investigative journalist, Rother worked nearly 20 years for daily newspapers. She writes books full-time, appearing regularly on TV and radio as a crime expert. Rother draws from decades of experience reporting on a wide range of topics -- from addiction, suicide, mental illness and murder to politics and corruption at City Hall and in Congress. A popular speaker, she also helps aspiring authors as a writing/research coach and consultant, and teaches narrative non-fiction and other classes at San Diego Writers, Ink.

[Return to Speaker](#)

[Schedule](#)

[Return to ToC](#)

July Meeting Highlights - Baron Birtcher

“Creating Suspense and Delivering the Unexpected”



Someone once said that music is emotion made evident. Baron R. Birtcher, the award-winning author of seven mystery and suspense thrillers, started his professional life in music, first as a songwriter and performer, later as a record producer and artist manager. Since he began writing, his purpose has been to make his readers “FEEL something” and be transported into a “360 degree universe” he’s created. (“Not everyone’s intent,” he clarified.) Birtcher’s titles are *Fistful of Rain*, *South California Purples*, *Hard Latitudes*, *Rain Dogs*, *Angels Fall*, *Ruby Tuesday*, and *Roadhouse Blues*. Four are in his Mike Travis series. He presented “Creating Suspense and Delivering the Unexpected.”

Birtcher says, “Suspense is the management of emotional impact.” The more he writes, the more similarities he finds between writing and the music industry. He feels they both contain “through narratives. If segues aren’t good or don’t match, “ then what you’re creating doesn’t work. “If they [the segues] do, you hum them for the rest of your life.”

(As an aside, he said that types of genres are becoming so categorized and split up into sub-genres that they’re all becoming “goofy and overthought.”)

Birtcher tried to pin down a clear definition of *suspense versus mystery*. In a mystery the crime is at the beginning of the story and pursued--whereas in suspense and thrillers, the crime is going to happen and must be stopped.

As writers we create suspense through these components:

- (1) Empathy—portraying characters’ anticipation of the action.
- (2) Concern—is the *feelings* we create in the quiet spots between action sequences.
- (3) Impending Danger—is the “promise” to the reader of what might happen.
- (4) Escalating Tension—having the characters learn how bad the consequences can be.

In other words, “Suspense is the lack of certainty we build into the story.” We’re “illustrating that the control we [humans] believe we have in life is illusory and that the line between chaos and oblivion is very, very thin.”

How do we put those components across? Birtcher says through characters and setting—because they are all we know and all we’ve got. “Whether you’re anthropomorphizing cats or exploring the paranormal, our stories are about people—characters with human traits.”

“Our characters define the narrative, and the setting defines the nature of the characters.” Have your setting “define your characters’ frame of reference, culturally and socially.” The setting also “defines the way they speak, their principles, their boundaries and norms.” Do they attend church, eat out, see tourists or outsiders here? Do they trust each other? “Taken together, those items *define the behavior* that *falls outside the norms*, and generates the *friction* in your fictional setting, and *sets the conflict* inherent in your narrative *in motion*.”

Make sure to use a locale that serves your story and your plot without over-explaining, which “is death to suspense.” “You are creating a movie in people’s minds. There can be 100,000 interpretations by 100,00 persons.” It is imperative to leave room for the readers to insert their own interpretations, so that they can run your words through the filter of their perceptions.” Birtcher says that’s why “the movie is never as good as the book—because every reader reads it slightly differently.”

[Continued on p. 14](#)

[Return to ToC](#)

Recent SCWA Publications and Productions

Firestorm - Solange Ritchie



Best Case Scenario - Dirk B. Sayers



"The Optimism of Youth" - Steven G. Jackson



The Innocents - David Putnam



A-List - DP Lyle



13 Minutes - Jeff Lyons



What Remains True - Janis Thomas



It's All in the Story - SCWA



Recent SCWA Publications and Productions (cont)

Counting Sea Life with the Little Seahorse - Sheri Fink and Derek Taylor Kent



Worlds in Transition - Peter Dingus



Arkansas Summer - Anne Moose



"Life Dies, and Then You Suck" - Steven G. Jackson



The Age of Change: A Challenging Path to the Future - Jeff Michaels



Chameleons - Marcus A. Nannini



Missing Star - Don Westenhaver



Affairs of the Heart, Vol. 2 - Harlen and Sharron Lambert



[Return to ToC](#)

Active Member Directory (A-F)

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 steven@stevengjackson.com.

Name	Genre	Email	Web	Phone
Adams, Tonya				
Adkins, Judy				
Adkins, Robert				
Ash, Elaine				
Baker, Harold				
Barnham, Deborah				
Barry, Frank				
Beer, Raphael				
Beirne, Jim				
Belmont, Julie				
Bensworth, Kurt				
Black, Terry				
Blake, Phyllis				
Blaney, Ryan				
Bradbury, Mary		MDBradb@aol.com		714-960-9179
Braun, Chrysteen		designingwhims@gmail.com		562-676-7119
Broniec, Rick				
Caffrey, Dot	Fantasy	dot.caffrey@gmail.com	dotcaffrey.com	
Casas, Ann				
Casella, Lynn	Thriller	lcasella@mac.com	lynncasella.com	626-818-2571
Chalagonian, George				
Chen, Esther				
Chung, John				
Clitheroe, Leighanne				
Cohen, Charlotte				
Colando, PJ	Humor & Satire	talklady@sbcglobal.net	picolando.com	
Cook, Alan				
Cotter, Alison				
Crane, Robert	Crime & Romance	R.N.Crane@icloud.com	RNCbooks.com	
Crayne, Victory	Spy/SciFi	victory@crayne.com	crayne.com	949-206-0922
Daisomont, Bruce				
Dashti, Vali				
de Guzman, Rosie				
De Ladurantey, Joseph		jc.del@cox.net		
Dolan, Martin		mdolan3md@gmail.com		714-315-5845
Dolle, Stephen				
Donenfeld-Vernoux, Alice				
Drucke, Carl				
Dun, Sulan				
Dunlap, Larry		larry@larrydunlap.com	LarryJDunlap.com	
Escobedo, Maria				
Eudey, Angela				
Fenenga, Susan				
Fliedner, Colleen				
Fink, Sheri				
Forbes, Lani				

[Return to ToC](#)

Active Member Directory (G-N)

Name	Genre	Email	Web	Phone
Gammer, Victoria				
Goldinger, Sharon		pplspeak@att.net	detailsplease.com/peoplespeak	949-581-6190
Green, Jude-Marie				
Green, Wanda				
Haines, Greg				
Hammer, Dana				
Hamo, Phyllis				
Harvey, Brennan		webmaster@ocwriter.com		
Heiser, Nanette				
Hollingsworth, Amy				
Howard, Charla				
Hull, Cathy				
Jackson, Steven G	Thrillers	steven@stevengjackson.com	stevengjackson.com	
Jackson, Yann				
Jarvis, Michael				
Jordan-Dardashiti, Irene				
Juniper, Jamie				
Kai, Suzanne				
Kammerzelt, Michael				
Katch, Coralie				
Katritch, Kate				
Kim, Cacilia				
Kimino, Rinko				
Klann, Nancy				
Klein, Fred				
Knippers, Christopher				
Ko, Jaina				
Krishnan, Rathi				
Lambert, Harlen "Lamb"	Free verse poetry, memoir	lambtheauthor@gmail.com	lamblambertauthor.com	
Lambert, Sharron	Free verse poetry, memoir	lambz1309@gmail.com	lamblambertauthor.com	
Lyle, DP (Doug)				
Lyons, Jeff		jeff@storygeeks.com		
Margarita, Maddie				
McCollum, Phillip				
McGraw, Sharmyn				
Michaels, Jeff			jeffreyjmicroels.com	
Miles, Marjorie				
Milton, Lee				
Moose, Anne				
Morgan, Richard				
Morrow, Linda				
Nabor, Tina				
Nader, Lillian	Author, Freelance copyeditor	Lnader@lilliannader.com		714-747-4926
Nannini, Marcus				
Nakamura, Linda				
Nelson, Wanda				
Nixon, Andrew		nixonar3@gmail.com	andynixonwordsmith.com	702-240-8000

[Return to ToC](#)

Active Member Directory (O-Z)

Name	Genre	Email	Web	Phone
Owedi, Sheila				
Pardee, Diana				
Perrin, Steve				
Perry, Jo				
Pham, Kristen	Non-fiction / Screenplays	maiscreenwriting@gmail.com		
Phinney, Dennis				
Pike, Elaine				
Pitzer, Jo Ellen				
Pope, Casey				
Porricelli, Larry		president@ocwriter.com		714-316-9155
Porter, Kathy	SciFi Thrillers	Kathy@grayguardians.com	grayguardians.com	562-431-0366
Pratt, Sheri				
Putnam, Dave				
Quinn, Darlene	Mainstr. Fic	Darlene@darlenequinn.net	darlenequinn.net	562-432-1280
Rakower, Steve				
Redemann, Vickie		vickarrion@aol.com		
Ridenour, Ananya				
Ridenour, Brett				
Ritchie, Solange				
Roberts, Donna				
Rynn, Glenda		grynn@cox.net		
Sanborn, Jake				
Sayers, Dirk				
Sena, Theresa				
Shaikh, Tami				
Sharp, Michael				
Sheppard, Pamela				
Sikes, Sara				
Silverstein, Mark				
Simcic, Janet				
Singerton, Ronald				
Strbich, Michelle				
Strelow, Tom				
Suveiu, Virginia				
Szymczak, Leonard				
Takos, Jim				
Tate, George				
Thomas, Janis				
Thomas, Shirl		shirlth@verizon.net	shirlthomas.com	
Thompson, Russ				
Torphy, Elizabeth				
Van Camp, Wendy	SciFi, HistFic	wwancamp@earthlink.com	nowatsedink.com	
Wade, Vince				
Wallace, Albert				
Walters, Sharon				
Wasserman, AE				
Weiss, Jill Q.		jillqw@gmail.com	quintessencecrystals.com	
Wells, Craig				
Wells, Julie				
Westenhaver, Don	Hist Fic/Thrlrs	donwestenhaver@roadrunner.com	donwestenhaver.com	714-994-1943
Welsh, Rebecca				
Woodcock, Don				
Zasio, Belinda				

[Return to ToC](#)

SCWA Member Publications and Productions (A-K)

SCWA Members are published. Check with the author for details on how to purchase your copy.

Author	Title	Year
Belmont, Julie	<i>Creativity Business Plan for Artists at Heart</i>	2014
Belmont, Julie	<i>The Path to Personal Success and Freedom; Turning Hurdles into Stepping Stones</i>	2005
Caffrey, Dot	<i>Cursed Power</i>	2015
Caffrey, Dot	<i>Awakening Powers</i>	2014
Colando, PJ	<i>Hashes & Bashes</i>	2016
Colando, PJ	<i>Stashes</i>	2014
Crayne, Victory	<i>Rebuilt</i>	2016
Crayne, Victory	<i>Humans Only</i>	2016
Crayne, Victory	<i>Freedom</i>	2015
De Ladurantey, Joseph	<i>Making Your Memories with Rock & Roll and Doo Wop</i>	2016
De Ladurantey, Joseph	<i>Cowards, Crooks, and Warriors</i>	2015
Dingus, Peter	<i>Worlds in Transition</i>	2017
Donenfeld-Vernoux, AR	<i>Pudel & Cie: Case #1 Moroney Boloney</i>	2015
Donenfeld-Vernoux, AR	<i>Cave Dreams</i>	2014
Donenfeld-Vernoux, AR	<i>Out of the Chute</i>	2014
Donenfeld-Vernoux, A	<i>How To Get And Keep The Best Jobs:Secrets HR Won't Tell You</i>	
Dunlap, Larry J	<i>Night People</i>	2015
Fink, Sheri	<i>Counting Sea Life with the Little Seahorse</i>	2017
Fink, Sheri	<i>Cake in Bed</i>	2016
Fink, Sheri	<i>My Bliss Book</i>	2015
Fink, Sheri	<i>The Little Seahorse</i>	2014
Fink, Sheri	<i>The Little Firefly</i>	2013
Fink, Sheri	<i>The Little Gnome</i>	2012
Fink, Sheri	<i>Exploring the Garden with the Little Rose</i>	2012
Fink, Sheri	<i>The Little Rose</i>	2011
Gilmore, Susan Kay	<i>Possessed by Baseball</i>	2013
Giussani, Sara	<i>Malibu</i>	2015
Giussani, Sara	<i>Come fare... La valutazione di un processo aziendale</i>	2014
Giussani, Sara	<i>Management dei processi aziendali</i>	2012
Jackson, Steven G	"The Optimism of Youth"	2018
Jackson, Steven G	"Full Service"	2017
Jackson, Steven G	"Life Dies, and Then You Suck"	2017
Jackson, Steven G	"The Master Playwright"	2016
Jackson, Steven G	"The Asylum for Rejected Characters"	2016
Jackson, Steven G	<i>The Zeus Payload</i>	2015
Jackson, Steven G	"Fade to Crazy"	2015
Jackson, Steven G	"The Loan Officer"	2014
King, Roy	<i>Symfonie Fantastique</i>	2011
Klann, Nancy	<i>The Clock of Life</i>	2012
Klann, Nancy	<i>Like The Flies On The Patio</i>	2012



[Return to ToC](#)

SCWA Member Publications and Productions (L-M)

SCWA Members are published. Check with the author for details on how to purchase your copy.

<u>Author</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Year</u>
Lambert, Harlen, Sharron	<i>Affairs of the Heart, Vol. 2</i>	2017
Lambert, Harlen, Sharron	<i>Affairs of the Heart, Vol. 1</i>	2016
Levine, Jennifer	<i>Summer Secrets</i>	2016
Lloyd, Rita Lee	<i>How to Survive in the 21st Century as a SSOFF</i>	2011
Lyle, DP (Doug)	<i>A-List</i>	2018
Lyle, DP (Doug)	<i>Deep Six</i>	2016
Lyle, DP (Doug)	<i>Forensics for Dummies, 2nd edition</i>	2016
Lyle, DP (Doug)	<i>Original Sin</i>	2015
Lyle, DP (Doug)	<i>Devil's Playground</i>	2015
Lyle, DP (Doug)	<i>Double Blind</i>	2015
Lyle, DP (Doug)	<i>Murder and Mayhem</i>	2013
Lyle, DP (Doug)	<i>Royal Pains: Sick Rich</i>	2012
Lyle, DP (Doug)	<i>Run To Ground</i>	2012
Lyle, DP (Doug)	<i>Thriller3: Love Is Murder (Short Story)</i>	2012
Lyle, DP (Doug)	<i>ABA Fundamentals: Understanding Forensic Science</i>	2012
Lyle, DP (Doug)	<i>Royal Pains: First, Do No Harm</i>	2011
Lyle, DP (Doug)	<i>Hot Lights, Cold Steel</i>	2011
Lyle, DP (Doug)	<i>Thrillers: 100 Must Reads (Essay)</i>	2010
Lyle, DP (Doug)	<i>Stress Fracture</i>	2010
Lyle, DP (Doug)	<i>Howdunnit: Forensics: A Guide For Writers</i>	2008
Lyle, DP (Doug)	<i>Forensics and Fiction</i>	2007
Lyons, Jeff	<i>13 Minutes</i>	2018
Lyons, Jeff	<i>Anatomy of a Premise Line</i>	2016
Lyons, Jeff	<i>Jack Be Dead</i>	2016
Marsh, Sonia	<i>My Gutsy Story Anthology</i>	2013
Marsh, Sonia	<i>Freeways to Flip-Flops</i>	2012
Marshall, Evelyn	<i>Concerning Georgia Stekker</i>	2014
Marshall, Evelyn	<i>The Way They See</i>	2013
Marshall, Evelyn	<i>The Provider</i>	2012
Martinez, Maria	<i>The Apple Tree Wish</i>	2012
Michaels, Jeffrey J.	<i>The Age of Change: A Challenging Path to the Future</i>	2017
Michaels, Jeffrey J.	<i>Becomes Us All</i>	2016
Michaels, Jeffrey J.	<i>A Day at the Beach</i>	2015
Michaels, Jeffrey J.	<i>Tasa's Path</i>	2015
Michaels, Jeffrey J.	<i>How to Become The True You</i>	2015
Michaels, Jeffrey J.	<i>Light: The Reason for Existence</i>	2012
Michaels, Jeffrey J.	<i>Beings: A Journey to Joy</i>	2010
Michaels, Jeffrey J.	<i>Touch the Earth: A Path to Ascension</i>	2009
Michaels, Jeffrey J.	<i>Crystal Experience: Manifest an Extraordinary Life</i>	2007
Michaels, Jeffrey J.	<i>Harmonic Coalescence, the Future of Humanity</i>	2007
Moose, Anne	<i>Arkansas Summer</i>	2017
Muhle, Charles	<i>One Way to Write</i>	2011
Muhle, Charles	<i>The Sky Tree</i>	2011



[Return to ToC](#)

SCWA Member Publications and Productions (N-Z)

SCWA Members are published. Check with the author for details on how to purchase your copy.

Nader, Lillian	<i>Theep and Thorp: Adventures in Space</i>	2016
Nannini, Marcus A.	<i>Chameleons</i>	2017
Nixon, Andy	<i>Three Lives of Peter Novak</i>	2016
Nixon, Andy	<i>50 Shades of Grades, My Journey Through Wacademia</i>	2013
Pope, Casey	<i>A Love Life Like Karmic Disaster</i>	2016
Porter, Kathy	<i>Escape from Nuur</i>	2013
Porter, Kathy	<i>Earth's Ultimate Conflict</i>	2010
Porter, Kathy	<i>Gray/Guardians</i>	2006
Putnam, David	<i>The Innocents</i>	2018
Quinn, Darlene	<i>Conflicting Webs</i>	2015
Quinn, Darlene	<i>Unpredictable Webs</i>	2013
Quinn, Darlene	<i>Webs of Fate</i>	2011
Quinn, Darlene	<i>Twisted Webs</i>	2010
Quinn, Darlene	<i>Webs of Power</i>	2008
Ritchie, Solange	<i>Firestorm</i>	2018
Ritchie, Solange	<i>The Burning Man</i>	2015
Sayer, Dirk B.	<i>Best Case Scenario</i>	2018
Spence, Charla	<i>Personal Healthcare Record (Adult)</i>	2011
Spence, Charla	<i>Personal Healthcare Record (Child)</i>	2011
Szymczak, Leonard	<i>Kookaburra's Last Laugh</i>	2016
Szymczak, Leonard	<i>Fighting for Love</i>	2016
Szymczak, Leonard	<i>Cuckoo Forevermore</i>	2015
Szymczak, Leonard	<i>The Roadmap Home: Your GPS to Inner Peace</i>	2009
Thomas, Janis	<i>What Remains True</i>	2017
Thomas, Janis	<i>Murder in A-Minor</i>	2016
Thomas, Janis	<i>Say Never</i>	2014
Thomas, Janis	<i>Sweet Nothings</i>	2013
Thomas, Janis	<i>Something New</i>	2012
Van Camp, Wendy	<i>The Curate's Brother</i>	2014
Weiss, Jill Q.	<i>Crystal Experience: Manifest an Extraordinary Life</i>	2007
Westenhaver, Don	<i>Missing Star</i>	2017
Westenhaver, Don	<i>Alexander's Lighthouse</i>	2012
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
Williams, Marianna	<i>Love, Regret and Accidental Nudity</i>	2014
Williams, Marianna	<i>The Valentine State</i>	2013
Williams, Marianna	<i>Stars or Stripes Fourth of July</i>	2011
Williams, Marianna	<i>Happy New Year, Darling</i>	2005
Woodcock, Don	<i>A Lily Named Lillian</i>	2015



[Return to ToC](#)

July Meeting Highlights (cont)

Throughout your writing, Birtcher says to “*Find new ways to say ordinary things.*” He quoted John D. MacDonald, who once said, “ ‘Everyone’s seen a motel. Describe what’s different about this motel.’ ” Burnt out light, whistling of water in the plumbing, squeaky hinges... You get the idea.”

Compared to other art forms, however, writers have the most limited tools—only words. You/we must use them in a new and unique way, creating our own color palate. He suggested that we read the short fiction of Sam Shepard. “It’s very poetic.” Then Birtcher quipped, “Today’s readers are drinking from a fire hose.”

In suspense “some aspect of our narrative must be revelatory or else what’s the point? The nature of the art, though, is to figure out how much of the revelatory line [anonymous details that are actually clues] to pay out, and when to do it.” “The *other factor* is to keep track of *which revelatory thread* you’re going to pull upon again for *dramatic effect*.”

At this point in the presentation, member Annie Moose complemented Birtcher on his descriptions. Birtcher said he does employ the use of senses but only in terms of three at the most at any one time. If we describe two sensory experiences, the reader winds up comparing them. If we describe four, the description passage simply “doesn’t work.” But if we the readers are experiencing three of them, we “love and accept the contents.” Right then, Birtcher handed out copies of the lyrics of the song “Coyote,” made famous by singer Joni Mitchell (<http://jonimitchell.com/music/song.cfm?id=100>). Birtcher discussed how the wording throughout described ordinary things and human interactions in new ways that not only made us resonate to them but also built up tension.

Baron Birtcher grew up in Dana Point, California, then lived in Hawaii for fifteen years and grew coffee, and now lives outside Portland, Oregon. He loves spending time on his tractor. It gives him time to be by himself, and he mostly listen to the noises. In fact, the title he gives to many of his notes is “Some Observations from My Tractor.” In a book, we writers have three distinct voices, each with a different role:

- A. The dialogue must have the voice/personality of the characters—not that of the author. “Be so distinct, you don’t even need “said Joe” or “said John.”
- B. The cultural/societal commentary belongs to the narrator/protagonist. Those little asides are from the narrator.
- C. The descriptive background “set decoration” is the author’s voice.

Miscellaneous: “ Make sure your pace is respectful of what you intended.” People say you have to “drop a body in the first paragraph: no, you don’t.” Just show the tension with your voice. If you have an abundance of adverbs, “you’re doing it all wrong. It might take two extra sentences to demonstrate your action without an adverb, but your writing will be better.” If you want to time your arrival [critical points and climax], you need to know where you’re heading. In other words, know beforehand where you want your plot to go. Stylistically, there are little tricks to indicate action. Shorten your sentences. Write like you’re out of breath, running down the hallway. The reader will feel the action.

“A well-told story is like flowing down a river. In the distance is a rumble, which is becoming louder. When you get there, you’re at the rapids. Out the other end, the river is smooth again. Your choice of words and syntax should mimic these rhythms. If your story has a “murky middle,” it’s the writer’s fault.” [But before you panic}, realize the problem might simply be “the architecture” of your story.

[Continued on p. 15](#)

July Meeting Highlights (cont)

Birtcher says when writing, you “need a tool to keep yourself on track.” First of all, he formulates a possible title for a book—and then chooses music that resonates for him with that title. He’ll use a soundtrack of 12-15 appropriate songs he’s chosen—that either remind him of a character or of a time period, etc. He’ll play these again and again while writing. They “keep him in his land, lane, and color palette.” Perhaps your reference might be visual—different pieces of art—to keep you grounded in your story and its emotions. Use whatever works for you and your pacing. He often asks himself, “Where am I on the soundtrack of my story?”

Check out [Facebook.com/BaronRBirtcher](https://www.facebook.com/BaronRBirtcher).

[Return to July Meeting Highlights](#)

[Return to ToC](#)

Members-Only Offer From Sharon Goldinger

Contracts involving publishing matters can be confusing if you're not familiar with all the language. What does something mean? What questions should I be asking? Do I have any other choices? If you're not sure what you're reading, what a term or section means, or if you should be signing the contract at all, SCWA is offering a new benefit. SCWA member, publishing consultant, and book shepherd Sharon Goldinger is offering a free review and thirty-minute consultation for any publishing contract. You can reach her directly at pplspeak@att.net.

[Return to ToC](#)

Newsletter Editor Opportunity

SCWA is looking for a new and improved Newsletter Editor. Interested candidates can contact Steve Jackson at steven@stevengjackson.com. Steve has been the editor for nine years, and some fresh ideas would be beneficial to the group. The role takes an hour a month, and looks good on resume's in the writing world. Very little writing is involved; mostly collecting, editing, and formatting. A graceful transition with plenty of help will be available.

[Return to ToC](#)

Conferences, Events, and Announcements

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Lit Up! Orange County is August 21st at Kean Coffee in Tustin at 7PM. Scheduled readers are authors from *It's All in the Story*. The event is free.

Long Beach Searches for the Greatest Storyteller concludes its 2018 run on August 27th at Malarkey's Grill on Alamitos Bay. The cost is only \$6 for a night of entertaining true tales, and the audience votes for the winner.

[Return to ToC](#)

August "Will Write for Food" Contest

The "Will Write For Food" contest is a monthly blind competition. Winners are selected by a Literary Agent. First prize includes publication in the SCWA Newsletter, a certificate, and a \$25 cash prize.

You may write on any subject. Stories have a maximum of 1000 words. The winner will be announced at the August SCWA meeting. To enter, email your story by August 8th, 2018, to meeting@ocwriter.com.

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

[Return to ToC](#)

Publishers and Publications

Commandeer Press is looking for short-story submissions: <https://www.commondeerpress.com/short-tales>.

This site is a great one for leads to agents and has 25 writing contests in July 2018 with no entry fees. <https://publishedtodeath.blogspot.com/>

This publication had good stuff for writers: lithub.com.

[Return to ToC](#)

SCWA 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.

[Return to ToC](#)

SCWA Active Member Benefits

Active members receive a 30% discount at every SCWA meeting.

SCWA provides scholarships to members who attend writer's conferences.

SCWA offers members 50% off professional critiques.

SCWA members receive a free review and 30 minute consultation for any publishing contract.

SCWA members receive discounts to Jeff Lyon's online courses.

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

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

[Return to ToC](#)

SCWA Critique Program

We have some exciting news on the critique front. One of our members received a critique, and he credits that critique with getting him a two-day response from an agent, who wants to see the entire manuscript. We love it when that happens.

Critique requests should also be sent to Steve Jackson at steven@stevengjackson.com. If you have not received a response to a previous critique request, please resubmit (without any fee if you've already paid) to Steve. Steve will direct your sample (up to 15 double-spaced pages) to one of the Board members once we receive your payment. Payments (\$20.00 for members and \$30.00 for non-members) should be directed to Don Westenhaver.

- Check payable to SCWA: mail to Don at 5391 Fox Hills Ave., Buena Park, CA 90621

- Credit Card: advise Steve that you will pay by credit card. He will have Don send you an invoice with instructions on how to pay through the SCWA Square account.

[Return to ToC](#)

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	\$25	\$15	\$35

[Return to ToC](#)

Terms of Use and Content Information Disclaimer

The SCWA encourages open, respectful communication between individuals interested in the craft of writing through a variety of social and traditional media, such as Facebook, SCWA website and emails. Any individual using inappropriate language, discussing inappropriate topics, or commenting in a disrespectful way will be removed from access to any future SCWA communication methods.

The SCWA communication sites should only be used for dialogues related to the craft of writing. Non-writing related topics should be done via other forms of personal communication. Please review the content disclaimer located in the newsletter via the SCWA website www.ocwriter.com or on the About page of the Facebook. The SCWA does not endorse individual opinions placed on any of its sites.

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. 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.

[Return to Agents and Publishers](#)

[Return to Conferences, Events and Announcements](#)

[Return to ToC](#)