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# Southern California Writers Association

## The Perennial Writers Conference

### February 2019 Newsletter

Volume 18, Number 2 -- February 2019

#### President's Message Larry Porricelli, SCWA President

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. There are some surprises ahead so stay tuned. Happy writing!

A note from our Social Media and Communications Maven, Diana Pardee:  
Check out our SCWA Facebook link and join us for excerpts,  
discussions and encouragements.

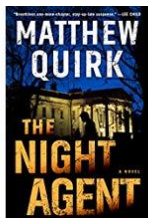
Follow us, we'd love to see you there!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/160332824032519>



#### Upcoming February 16, 2019: Speaker: Matthew Quirk Writing Thrillers: Is Truth Really Stranger than Fiction?

Matthew Quirk might be the most underrated political thriller novelist working today. Known for his Mike Ford and, more recently, his John Hayes books. A *New York Times* bestselling author, Quirk's first book in a year, *The Night Agent*, released January 2019.

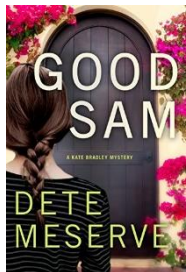


***"The Night Agent is bigger and riskier than anything I've ever done, and I can't wait to get it into readers' hands."***

It's unclear whether Quirk, who studied history and literature at Harvard before reporting on crime, private military contractors, terrorism prosecutions, and international gangs for *The Atlantic*, intends for *The Night Agent* to be the first book in a new series or a standalone thriller, but the book will star a young FBI agent named Peter Sutherland who goes on the hunt to uncover a Russian mole inside the White House.



**Upcoming March 16, 2019**  
**DETE MESERVE**  
**The Joys & Challenges of Adapting a Book to Screen**



Dete Meserve is one of SCWA's favorite guests, and the award-winning, bestselling author of *Good Sam*, *Perfectly Good Crime*, and *The Space Between*. Her first novel, **Good Sam**, is in post-production as a feature film for Netflix and will be released in Spring 2019.

Dete will be talking to us about the challenges of adapting a book to screen.

Like her heroine Kate Bradley, award-winning author Dete Meserve keeps looking for people who are doing extraordinary good for others, sometimes at great personal sacrifice. Instead of tracking a killer or kidnapper, Dete's mysteries seek to uncover the helpers, the rescuers, and the people who inspire us with selfless acts of kindness. *Good Sam* is the first in her Kate Bradley Mysteries series, followed by *A Perfectly Good Crime*.

Dete is an accomplished creator and producer of independent movies and award-winning television shows as well as a bestselling novelist. As a key member of the executive team at Wind Dancer Films, Meserve has been a major player, overseeing its successful properties including films *What Women Want* (Mel Gibson), *Where the Heart Is* (Natalie Portman), *Bernie* (Jack Black), *What Men Want* (Taraji P. Henson) and *Good Sam* (Netflix).

When she's not writing, she is a film and television producer in Los Angeles and a partner and CEO of Wind Dancer Films. Meserve lives in Los Angeles with her husband and three children--and a very good cat that rules them all.

**January Highlights – David Putnam**  
**Dave on Writing**



Dave's early years as a rookie cop were often spent on surveillance, where he spent hours and hours of empty time reading. In fact, he wrote his first four novels in a cop car. In 1989 he started going to writer's conferences to learn the craft of writing, and started writing four pages a day, often in the a.m.

When he felt he was ready, he went after literary agents the way he went after crooks, laying in wait for them. He got four agents that way, two good, two terrible. Dave went on to accumulate 150 rejections before he started to get two-page replies (also rejections, but encouraging). He got to the acquisitions phase two times, and though he fought for the slot, he lost.

He started stalking authors at conferences, starting the conversations and taking pictures together, hoping the connection would help.

Dave tried every genre, and eventually shifted from mysteries to thrillers, which suited his dyslexia – more action than detail. He had discovered that mysteries worked best in odd numbers, with three, five, or seven scenes in each chapter, and an odd number of chapters for the book.

Thrillers worked best for Dave with one scene per chapter, which forces economy, and forces cadence, making the story a page turner. He feels that cadence is everything. The story runs better, and faster.

Dave's Four C's of Writing:

- Conflict – set it up quickly and make it short
- Complication – adding motivation to the conflict starts the complications
- Crisis – keep it short
- Conclusion – make the reader happy

His #1 Rule: You cannot confuse the reader!

Drop the reader into you FICTIVE DREAM. The story is not story – it's *character*, and how he demonstrates the story. The character carries the story. The story is a maze, but it doesn't become intriguing until the character enters into the maze.

A note on agents: They make their decisions on the first fifteen pages. The VOICE is the big cahuna. The voice is everything. Dave has found three important components of VOICE:

- POV – Point of View. Become a master of POV. 3rd person close is tight, keyed to action...the main character DID something. In contrast, 3rd person distant is slower...the main character thought, he saw. Don't do that! Make the main character DO SOMETHING. Put it down on the page.
- Language and Syntax. Make sure your characters are immediately recognizable by their dialog. Avoid dialog that blurs the main character with others. Dave's favorite is *LONESOME DOVE*, Larry McMurtry's brilliant novel. There are POV shifts on every page, but you never lose track of the characters. His transitions are good because of the language and syntax he uses.
- Attitude of the Character: Your reader will look for the emotion in the conflict – don't skip this. There is the motivation and the action, and also the reaction, where the emotion often lies. Include as many micro-conflicts as possible which can build those emotional connections.

Next, Dave gave us his Five Things that Make a Scene:

- Display character
- Advance the story
- Foreshadow upcoming events - often in those micro-conflicts, which Dave uses to come back to later, picking up a thread to pull the story along.
- Set up transitions
- Milk all the emotion you can out of each scene.

Dave's next book has THREE plotlines. With one plotline, the reader might get bored, especially if they read a lot in the genre. Dave put all three plotlines in conflict, sequencing them in three scenes each, interlocked.

Dave's Four Ways to Open a Scene: (two are better than the other two).

- Description – Dialog or action. Put the reader into the scene immediately.
- Movement – with narrative voice and exposition, make sure the character is doing something.
- Crossroads / Options – create three or four ways for the character to go. Then choose the one with the most conflict.
- Secondary Characters - This is a good time to bring another character forward to facilitate the story. Use one already introduced. Give them flaws or they will turn into caricatures and bore your readers

After writing thirty-eight novels, Dave has developed a process that works well for him. On the first page of every novel, he endears the character to his readers, bringing them out organically by the way they think or act. Later, Dave will insert vignettes about the character's backstory.

*How does he keep all those micro-conflicts straight?* Dave's daily warmup is to start twenty pages back, where he edits the previous work. This gets him back into the mood. He tries NOT to bring that day's mood into the work. His manuscript is a living document, where he keeps Dialog, Action, and Narrative marked in different colors. Any imbalance shows immediately, and can be corrected.

*How does he do all this?* Dave Knows where he is at all times, but keeps a 'Hobby Book' going on the side for when his brain gets mushy.

*Recommendations?* Get Dwight Swain's *Techniques of a Selling Writer*

Also, KNOW YOUR CHARACTER – Don't learn about your character as you go. Dave knows Bruno inside and out, backwards and forwards. He knows everything about him. In fact, he liked Bruno's backstory so much, Dave started writing prequels.

Write your book. Put it away. Write it again. Write it better. Improve it!

Read Raymond Chandler again. When things slow down, Chandler kills somebody. When you stall out, go back to the Five Things and find what is the weak link. Work on that.

Remember: Set your conflict up immediately on the first page. Your contract with your reader is, "This is what I'm going to tell you."

More recommendations: Stephen King, *On Writing*. Lawrence Block, *Telling Lies for Fun and Profit*. David Maas, *The Breakout Novel*.

## 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,

## 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 members receive a free review and 30-minute consultation from Sharon Goldinger for any publishing contract.

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

SCWA Critique Program – see below.

Discounts are available for active SCWA members for registration for the La Jolla Writer's Conference, and for early registration for the Southern California Writers' Conference, which is held twice annually in San Diego and Orange County.

## 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 be sent to Steve Jackson at [steven@stevengjackson.com](mailto: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 nonmembers) 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.

## Have a Question about a Publishing Contract?

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 to any SCWA member. You can reach her directly at [pplspeak@att.net](mailto:pplspeak@att.net).

## Conferences, Events, and Announcements

**Lit Up! Orange County** is 7pm Tuesday, February 19th at our NEW LOCATION Bardot & Bars in Tustin. Come and meet Matt Coyle, David Putnam, and Patricia Smiley.

Lit Up! In March will be March 19th for Brett Battles, Darlene Quinn, and Dot Caffrey!

Janis Thomas has partnered with Sonia Marsh to offer an exclusive writer's retreat in South Africa May 25-June 2, 2019. This includes an exclusive safari for 10. Contact Janis or Sonia via email for details.

## “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 SCWA meeting. To enter, email your story by February 8th, 2019, to [meeting@ocwriter.com](mailto:meeting@ocwriter.com).

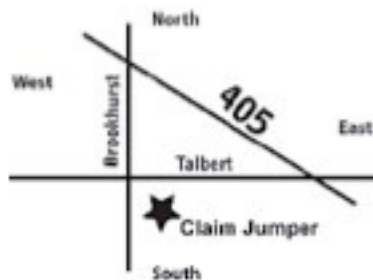
There are no limits to the number of times you can win. Join the fun and earn some rewards.

## 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

**SCWA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

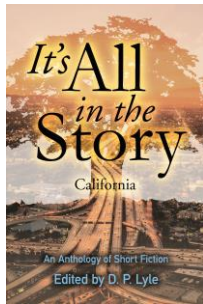
President .....Larry Porricelli  
Vice President of Membership ..... Steven G. Jackson  
Vice President of Finances and Communication ..... Don Westenhaver  
Vice President of Programming ..... Madeline Margarita  
Director of Social Media ..... Diana Pardee  
Webmaster ..... Brennan Harvey  
Newsletter Editor ..... Pam Sheppard  
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



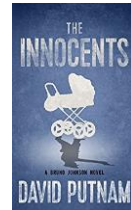
The SCWA Anthology, *It's All in the Story*, went to a second printing to meet the demand of wholesalers and bookstores. We have books for direct sales (\$15 for one, \$12.50 each for two, \$10 each for three or more). You may contact Don Westenhaver to arrange for payment, and we will have the copies available for you at the next SCWA meeting. Don can be reached at [donwestenhaver@roadrunner.com](mailto:donwestenhaver@roadrunner.com).

For more information visit the SCWA Anthology website at:  
[www.SCWAanthology.com](http://www.SCWAanthology.com)

## Recent SCWA Members Publications

**David Putnam:** <https://dwputnam.wordpress.com>

*The Innocents: A Bruno Johnson Novel*  
*The Early Years, Book 1* 12/18



**Janis Thomas:** [janisthomas.com](http://janisthomas.com)

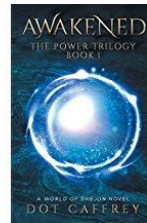
*All That's Left of Me*

*What Remains True*



**Dot Caffrey:** [www.dotcaffrey.com](http://www.dotcaffrey.com)

*AWAKENED* 8/18



**PJ Colando:** [www.pjcolando.com](http://www.pjcolando.com)

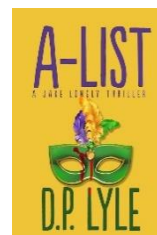
*The Winner's Circle: Launching February, 2019*



**Steven Jackson:** <https://stevengjackson.com>  
*"The Optimism of Youth"*

**D.P. Lyle:** [www.dplylemd.com](http://www.dplylemd.com)

*A-List: Coming in Paperback 2/19*





**Jeff Lyons: [www.jefflyonsbooks.com](http://www.jefflyonsbooks.com)**

*Rapid Story Development: #4: Teams and Ensembles—  
How to Develop Stories with Large Casts - 10/18*

*Rapid Story Development: #5: The Moral Premise –  
How to Build a Bulletproof Narrative Engine for Any Story - 11/18*

*Rapid Story Development: #6: Seven Steps to Busting Writer's Block - 12/18*



**#4**



**#5**



**#6**

**Darlene Quinn: <https://darlenequinn.net>**



**WEBS OF PERCEPTION – the final novel in Darlene Quinn's  
Webs Series. 11/18**

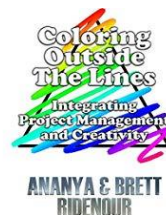
**Solange Richie: [www.solangerichie.com](http://www.solangerichie.com)**

**FIRESTORM: 5/18**



**Ananya and Brett Ridenour:**

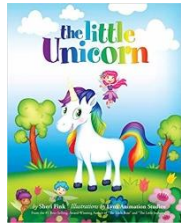
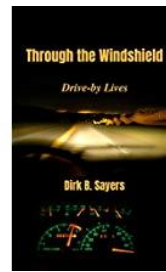
**COLORING OUTSIDE THE LINES: Integrating Project  
Management and Creativity 10/18**



**Dirk Sayers:** [dirksayers.com/dirks-writings](http://dirksayers.com/dirks-writings)

**Through the Windshield: 12/18**

**Best Case Scenario: 8/18**



**Sheri Fink:** [www.sherifink.net](http://www.sherifink.net)

**The Little Unicorn 9/18**

## SCWA Member Publications and Productions

<u>Author</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Year</u>
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
	<i>Awakening Powers</i>	2014
Colando, PJ	<i>The Winner's Circle</i>	2019
	<i>Hashes &amp; Bashes</i>	2016
	<i>Stashes</i>	2014
Crayne, Victory	<i>Rebuilt</i>	2016
	<i>Humans Only</i>	2016
	<i>Freedom</i>	2015
De Ladurantey, Joseph	<i>Making Your Memories with Rock &amp; Roll and Doo Wop</i>	2016
	<i>Cowards, Crooks, and Warriors</i>	2015
Dingus, Peter	<i>Worlds in Transition</i>	2017
Donenfled-Vernoux, AR	<i>Pudel &amp; Cie: Case #1 Moroney Boloney</i>	2015
	<i>Cave Dreams</i>	2014
	<i>Out of the Chute</i>	2014
	<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>The Little Unicorn</i>	2018
	<i>Counting Sea Life with the Little Seahorse</i>	2017
	<i>Cake in Bed</i>	2016
	<i>My Bliss Book</i>	2015
	<i>The Little Seahorse</i>	2014
	<i>The Little Firefly</i>	2013
	<i>The Little Gnome</i>	2012
	<i>Exploring the Garden with the Little Rose</i>	2012
	<i>The Little Rose</i>	2011
Gilmore, Susan Kay	<i>Possessed by Baseball</i>	2013
Giussani, Sara	<i>Malibu</i>	2015
	<i>Come fare... La valutazione di un processo aziendale</i>	2014

	<i>Management dei processi aziendali</i>	2012	
Jackson, Steven G	"The Optimism of Youth"	2018	
	"Full Service"	2017	
	"Life Dies, and Then You Suck"	2017	
	"The Master Playwright"	2016	
	"The Asylum for Rejected Characters"	2016	
	<i>The Zeus Payload</i>	2015	
	"Fade to Crazy"	2015	
	"The Loan Officer"	2014	
	King, Roy	<i>Symfonie Fantastique</i>	2011
	Klann, Nancy	<i>The Clock of Life</i>	2012
<i>Like The Flies On The Patio</i>		2012	

Lambert, Harlen, Sharron

*Affairs of the Heart, Vol. 2* 2017  
*Affairs of the Heart, Vol. 1* 2016

Levine, Jennifer

*Summer Secrets* 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
	<i>Deep Six</i>	2016
	<i>Forensics for Dummies, 2nd edition</i>	2016
	<i>Original Sin</i>	2015
	<i>Devil's Playground</i>	2015
	<i>Double Blind</i>	2015
	<i>Murder and Mayhem</i>	2013
	<i>Royal Pains: Sick Rich</i>	2012
	<i>Run To Ground</i>	2012
	<i>Thriller3: Love Is Murder (Short Story)</i>	2012
	<i>ABA Fundamentals: Understanding Forensic Science</i>	2012
	<i>Royal Pains: First, Do No Harm</i>	2011
	<i>Hot Lights, Cold Steel</i>	2011
	<i>Thrillers: 100 Must Reads (Essay)</i>	2010
	<i>Stress Fracture</i>	2010
	<i>Howdunnit: Forensics: A Guide For Writers</i>	2008
	<i>Forensics and Fiction</i>	2007
Lyons, Jeff	<i>Rapid Story Development: Bust the Top Ten Creative Writing Myths to Become a Better Writer</i>	2018
	<i>Rapid Story Development: Commerical Pace in Fiction &amp; Creative Nonfiction</i>	2018
Lyons, Jeff	<i>Rapid Story Development: Ten Questions Every Writer Needs to Ask Before They Hire a Consultant</i>	2018
	<i>13 Minutes</i>	2018
	<i>Anatomy of a Premise Line</i>	2016
	<i>Jack Be Dead</i>	2016
Marsh, Sonia	<i>My Gutsy Story Anthology</i>	2013
	<i>Freeways to Flip-Flops</i>	2012
Marshall, Evelyn	<i>Concerning Georgia Stekker</i>	2014
	<i>The Way They See</i>	2013
	<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
	<i>Becomes Us All</i>	2016
	<i>A Day at the Beach</i>	2015
	<i>Tasa's Path</i>	2015
	<i>How to Become The True You</i>	2015
	<i>Light: The Reason for Existence</i>	2012
	<i>Beings: A Journey to Joy</i>	2010
	<i>Touch the Earth: A Path to Ascension</i>	2009
	<i>Crystal Experience: Manifest an Extraordinary Life</i>	2007

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	<i>Writing Myths to Become a Better Writer</i>	2018
Lyons, Jeff	<i>Rapid Story Development: Commerical Pace in</i>	
	<i>Fiction &amp; Creative Nonfiction</i>	2018
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	<i>to Ask Before They Hire a Consultant</i>	2018
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	<i>Touch the Earth: A Path to Ascension</i>	2009
	<i>Crystal Experience: Manifest an Extraordinary Life</i>	2007
	<i>Harmonic Coalescence, the Future of Humanity</i>	2007

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Moose, Anne	<i>Arkansas Summer</i>	2017
Muhle, Charles	<i>One Way to Write</i>	2011
	<i>The Sky Tree</i>	2011
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
	<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
	<i>Earth's Ultimate Conflict</i>	2010

	<i>Gray/Guardians</i>	2006
Putnam, David	<i>The Innocents</i>	2018
Quinn, Darlene	<i>Web of Perception</i>	2018
	<i>Conflicting Webs</i>	2015
	<i>Unpredictable Webs</i>	2013
	<i>Webs of Fate</i>	2011
	<i>Twisted Webs</i>	
	<i>Webs of Power</i>	2008
Ritchie, Solange	<i>Firestorm</i>	2018
	<i>The Burning Man</i>	2015
Sayer, Dirk B.	<i>Best Case Scenario</i>	2018
Spence, Charla	<i>Personal Healthcare Record (Adult)</i>	2011
	<i>Personal Healthcare Record (Child)</i>	2011
Szymczak, Leonard	<i>Kookaburra's Last Laugh</i>	2016
	<i>Fighting for Love</i>	2016
	<i>Cuckoo Forevermore</i>	2015
	<i>The Roadmap Home: Your GPS to Inner Peace</i>	2009
Thomas, Janis	<i>What Remains True</i>	2017
	<i>Murder in A-Minor</i>	2016
	<i>Say Never</i>	2014
	<i>Sweet Nothings</i>	2013
	<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
	<i>Alexander's Lighthouse</i>	2012
	<i>The Whiplash Hypothesis</i>	2008
	<i>The Red Turtle Project</i>	2008
	<i>Nero's Concert</i>	2008
Williams, Marianna	<i>Love, Regret and Accidental Nudity</i>	2014
	<i>The Valentine State</i>	2013
	<i>Stars or Stripes Fourth of July</i>	2011
	<i>Happy New Year, Darling</i>	2005
Woodcock, Don	<i>A Lily Named Lillian</i>	2015

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