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Southern California Writer's Association February 2022

- **President Larry Porricelli's Message**
- **February's Featured Event: Elaine Ash "Novel Writing 911"**
- **NEW! Publishing News**
- **Hump Day: Every Wednesday 10 a.m. on SCWA Facebook page:**
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/southernwriters>
- **Debby's Room: Wednesdays 10:20 a.m. following Hump Day (on the SCWA Facebook page ROOMS tab)**
- **Highlights: James Ziskin "The Art of Revision"**



Have you subscribed?

Check out our new YouTube channel at:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLrqSfwTMaCi139ISRV50KO>

President's Message for February 2022 from Larry Porricelli

LIVE! LIVE! LIVE! LIVE! LIVE! LIVE! LIVE! LIVE! LIVE! LIVE!

Hooray! Good News! The most often asked question we receive at SCWA is,
“When we will have a live meeting again?”

On March 19 SCWA will have its first live monthly meeting since the pandemic began.

SCWA will be holding the March Monthly Meeting at the Joint Forces Training Base in Los Alamitos, just off the 405 or the 605 Freeway. And what a perfect site! The base is an active training facility with the US Army Airfield and Naval Training. It houses a beautiful banquet hall where we will be having a brunch, and it has the only active military pub in Orange County, Fiddler's Green!

And Green it shall be, as SCWA historically pays tribute to our Irish literary heritage with a celebration of St. Patrick's Day, albeit two days later will be no problem.

The base is cleaned and sanitized daily. Prevention is a government standard, so we will be in the cleanest environment we can secure.

And of course, SCWA will feature a great speaker, whom we will announce at our February Monthly Meeting on February 19. Maddie Margarita, SCWA Vice President who engages our speakers by traveling the country listening for great voices, will make that announcement of the speaker perfect for the moment.

We have come through the past year-and-a-half, and it will be so good to be together in a secure place enjoying our love for writing, and more so, the fellowship of each other's company.

We put fear behind us and step into the future. We have an exciting year planned, and you, our members, are the reason for our effort.

We would especially like to thank longtime member, Kathy Porter, who helped us secure the facility and the menu.

We shall have a grand time!

Larry Porricelli



Your February To-Do List

- **RENEW your SCWA Membership—consider all the benefits! Meetings, friends, speakers, writing tips, friends, publishing insider information, support, Member's Showcase, workshops, and all the friends.**
- **Check the SCWA Facebook page for inspiration and encouragement.**
- **Participate in the SCWA Bookstore.**
- **SUBSCRIBE to the SCWA WRITERS ONLINE YouTube channel and enjoy 63 Hump Day interviews, 18 featured speakers, and 8 workshops**



SCWA Events This Month: February 2022

- SCWA Featured Monthly Guest, Elaine Ash speaks on “Novel Writing 911” February 19, 2022 at 10 a.m. PT on Zoom. Register at: <https://www.southernwriters.org/>
- SCWA VIRTUAL HAPPY HOUR: Every Friday at 4:30 p.m. PT Join us with your funny stories and libations for good news and good cheer. Sign up on our website and we’ll email you a link and password. <https://www.southernwriters.org/>
- SCWA HUMP DAY BOOK TOUR: Join **Maddie Margarita** and fascinating authors for lively conversation on their books. Livestream it every Wednesday at 10 a.m. PT on our Facebook page. You can also access previous interviews on SCWA’s YouTube channel. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/southernwriters>
- Debby’s Room: Every Wednesday at 10:20 a.m. PT. Join **Debby Putman** and **Dot Caffrey** for casual conversation about the writing craft and anything that you wish to bring for discussion. Click on the Rooms tab for Debby’s Room on the SCWA Facebook page.

Have you missed an SCWA event? We will upload replays as they are edited and ready on SCWA’s YouTube channel at:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLrqSfwTMaCi139ISRV50KQ>

NEW! Publishing News:



Book sales update

According to NPD BookScan, while overall print book sales year to date have declined versus the stellar performance of 2021, fiction categories are outperforming. Adult fiction, driven by manga, romance, and fantasy, is up 11 percent over 2021, and YA fiction is up 6 percent. Adult nonfiction declined the most and is down 13 percent versus 2021 driven by shortfalls in Christian life, historical biography, and cooking methods. Regardless, 2022 sales levels are still well above pre-pandemic levels.

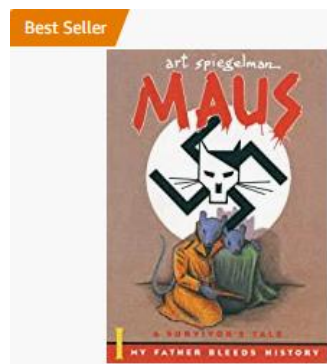


News about Banned Books:

<https://try.scribd.com/>

Based in San Francisco, the international subscription service Scribd has on Friday (February 4) announced that it's making banned books available to read without charge—and without a credit card or other commitment required. The access is set for 30 days and has been launched with a message from Scribd's co-founding CEO Trip Adler, who notes “an alarming uptick in books being banned in school and public libraries.

And at this writing, *Maus*, in its complete series edition, stands at No. 3 in Most Sold books on [the US Amazon Charts](#). The first volume of the series is at No. 4, as these attempts to stop such books from being read gets them more widely read by more people. Displays of banned books have become a yearly event in bookstores, where they see a solid uptick in sales with media attention.



Best Book Promotion Sites 2022

Updated by [David Gaughran](#) January 26, 2022.

These are the best book promo sites in 2022 for boosting your sales, launches, free promotions, series promotions, and mailing list too. Something for all budgets and experience levels with self-publishing—including a few completely free options.

This list of book promotion sites is curated by David Gaughran. All sites in the list have been vetted, tested extensively, and are here because of the results they generate. No filler!

Find David's list by visiting:

<https://davidgaughran.com/best-promo-sites-books/>



Are you doing research for your novel?

Check some of these research websites collected by Diana Pardee from the “I Love Reading” page on Facebook. Bookmark or keep a list of sites you never heard of:

www.refseek.com —Academic Resource Search. More than a billion sources: encyclopedia, monographies, magazines.

www.worldcat.org —a search for the contents of 20 thousand worldwide libraries. Find out where lies the nearest rare book you need.

<https://link.springer.com> — access to more than 10 million scientific documents: books, articles, research protocols.

www.bioline.org.br is a library of scientific bioscience journals published in developing countries.

<http://repec.org> —volunteers from 102 countries have collected almost 4 million publications on economics and related science.

www.science.gov is an American state search engine on 2200+ scientific sites. More than 200 million articles are indexed.

www.pdfdrive.com is the largest website for free download of books in PDF format. Claiming over 225 million names.

www.base-search.net is one of the most powerful research sources of academic studies texts. More than 100 million scientific documents, 70% of them are free.



SCWA Featured Monthly Speaker: February 19, 2022 Elaine Ash Novel Writing 911

Title: Novel Writing 911
Who: Elaine Ash
When: February 19, 2022
Time: 10:00 am PDT

Cost: \$10.00 Members
\$15.00 Nonmembers

Register: at www.southernwriters.org



Are you in the midst of a novel writing emergency? Don't know how to fix your writing or manuscript? Book doctor/ developmental editor/ author/ cheerleader Elaine Ash barnstorms her way through an hour of literary band aids, transfusions, and more. Elaine explores the common and uncommon challenges of new and long-time writers and details real life cases studies of a YA sci-fi writer successfully signed by an agent and how editing the first five pages set an espionage writer on her way to a *Publishers Weekly* rave review. You won't hear this inside scoop anywhere else.

Elaine Ash has shepherded clients such as Susan Ouellette, Jonathan Brown, M. Todd Henderson, and Neil V. Young to agents and publishing deals. She essentially considers herself a developmental editor but will wear any hat and perform any service the client needs to make a manuscript commercially viable. Cheerleader, coach, story editor, butt-kicker and writing-skills fine-tuner are all in her wheelhouse.

For information about SCWA and membership please go to <https://www.southernwriters.org/>



We've been posting deeper content to help members succeed among the posts in our SCWA Members Only Facebook group. Make sure your dues are up-to-date and join us there. Some recent topics include self-publishing lingo, landing pages, building your tribe, tips for author headshots, and book launch success. Diana Pardee is curating the best quality content she can find and welcomes your suggestions. DM her on Facebook at Diana Pardee.

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

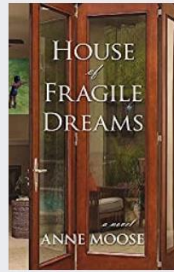
ADD YOUR BOOKS TO THE SCWA BOOKSTORE

At last we have created an [SCWA Bookstore](#) to feature books by our talented members in the Member Bookstore tab on the website. We'd love for you to be a part of it.

We hope you will take advantage of this new SCWA benefit—which is open only to SCWA members who have a profile page on our website ([Member Profiles— Southern California Writers Association](#)). If you don't have a member profile page yet, you can create one [here](#).

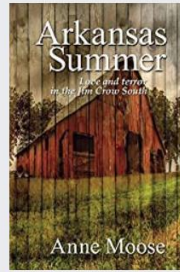
Below is a sample of what the [SCWA Bookstore](#) looks like, as well as some sample book covers and loglines. Clicking on the cover image takes you directly to Amazon for an easy purchase option. SCWA earns benefits as an affiliate.

If you'd like to participate, please use the CONTACT SCWA tab on the website where you can upload cover images and other information (20-30 words. We'll do the rest.



House of Fragile Dreams by Anne Moose

House of Fragile Dreams tells the story of a woman whose attempt to find love is threatened by her brother. He is disturbed, gun obsessed, and, as she discovers, involved with people who threaten much more than her dream of a happy home.



Arkansas Summer by Anne Moose

Arkansas Summer is both a touching love story and gripping immersion into the twisted ethos and violence of the Jim Crow South.

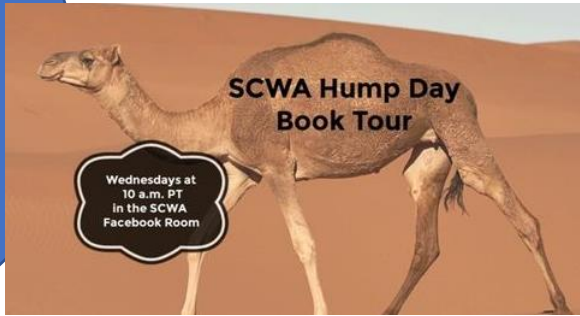


Crown Hunt by R. M. Morgan

Two detectives—a brainy, eccentric woman and her rowdy right-hand man—chase a priceless crown heisted in the Korean War and a psychopathic killer.

Hump Day
Book Tour

LIVESTREAMED
Every
Wednesday
10:00 a.m.



Look for our SCWA group on Facebook. Click on the Events tab to join us!

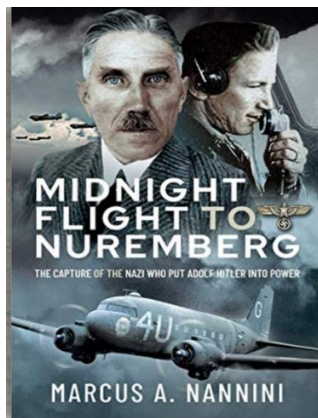
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/southerncalwriters/events>

If you can't join us, look for replays on the SCWA Facebook group page and on SCWA's YouTube channel.

Subscribe anytime at <https://bit.ly/2I890Db>

CELEBRATE ALL THE GOOD NEWS!

Marcus Nannini's *Publisher's Weekly's* *BOOK LIFE* has reviewed *Midnight Flight to Nuremberg*:



“Nannini proves adept at war-time storytelling, with an emphasis on bravery and camaraderie; his accounts of Watson’s missions take an engaging novelistic approach, with memorable detail.”

For more information, visit

<https://chameleonsthebook.com/midnight-flight-reviews/>

CALLING ALL NEWSLETTERS!

Many of SCWA’s members offer regular newsletters or blogs for their readers. We’d love to post connections for any and all of our members. Your blog, website, and newsletter can also be included in your SCWA website profile.

Send us your links for your blogs, podcasts, and newsletters so we can feature them and let all our members discover the wealth of information within reach.

Use the CONTACT SCWA tab in the website to add yours to share with other members.

Members' Showcase: OPEN for your Submissions

Did you know SCWA will publish excerpts of your work in the Members' Showcase on the SCWA website? Yes, we will.

We want to show your works-in-progress, excerpts from your published book, first lines, favorite paragraphs, and anything you would like to share in any genre, even a page of rants from your journal. The range of creativity among our members is impressive. Take a look at some of the fine work our members have already shared and then share some of your own.

<https://www.southerncafwriters.org/members-showcase-2/>

Here are the details for the SCWA Showcase:

- Send the work you'd like to showcase, for instance, first lines, an excerpt, an essay or a poem or something else (up to 1500 words). Include your byline (your name, the name of the book it is from, if applicable, and your website).
- All current SCWA members are eligible.
- You retain your copyright.
- Submit for free!
- Send to scwashowcase@gmail.com

Take a look at the Showcase entries by many of our members. It's a terrific way to get acquainted, share your work, and learn about SCWA members.

Sample excerpts or works-in-process of fellow members. Books are available through the SCWA Bookstore where a click on the book cover links directly to Amazon for your purchase.

SCWA receives a small portion of the sale as an affiliate.

HIGHLIGHTS: January, 2022

JAMES ZISKIN

The Art of Revision



The Art of Revision with James W. Ziskin

“It’s okay to write an awful first draft,” says James W. Ziskin, the author of the seven Ellie Stone mysteries. “Revision isn’t the most important thing because you need something to revise.” Those seven mysteries came out in 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020. They are *Styx & Stone*, *No Stone Unturned*, *Stone Cold Dead*, *Heart of Stone*, *Cast the First Stone*, *A Stone’s Throw*, and *Turn to Stone*. His newest book (not in the series), *Bombay Monsoon*, will hit the public on 12-6-22. Those novels (and their revisions) have earned him several Anthony, Barry, and Macavity awards. He has also been among the finalists for the Edgar, Agatha, and Lefty awards.

Ziskin says revision is like changing “a sketch into a photo” as you “polish, hone, beef up, and trim down.” After his first draft, Ziskin winds up re-reading his novels eight or nine times. With *Bombay Moonsoon*, he needed 20 re-reads. He uses a spread sheet to keep track of important facts.

BEST REASONS FOR REVISION

- A. **To tighten/cut (limit description).** “Relentless trimming of fat throughout.” In making 20 revisions to *Bombay Monsoon*, Ziskin cut 115,000 words down to 92,000. That’s 20%. In another book, he cut 2,000 words about “a cool police station,” and somewhere else he had to “murder his darlings” in an “awesome restaurant scene” because while those helped the atmosphere and setting, they didn’t move the story forward.
- B. **To fix errors.** These can be spelling errors, incorrect chapter numberings, missing words such as *a*, *an*, and *the*, and anachronisms. When fixing dates, “be careful of changing your story.” In one book, Ziskin discovered that 29 words were missing. Beta readers in writers’ clubs are very useful.

- C. **To fill plot holes.** A plot hole is something that keeps your story from continuing. Ziskin is often a pantsler [no outline], so he has to fix false starts or where he gone “off the path.” He also says to give **why** the main character does such and such.
- D. **To fine tune characters.** Since Ziskin hadn't written *Bombay Monsoon* from a detailed outline, he found that the characteristics of the 27-year-old American male didn't fit the character's role in the story.
- E. **To remove repetitions.** In the *Turn to Stone* draft, he kept repeating the word *question*. He changed at least one to *request*. Ziskin's urges a check for overuse of *just*. In another novel he discovered he had used *just* as an adverb in 195 instances, which he reduced to 87. He says to try *nearly*, *exactly*, and *only* (but to be careful about *only*). To use *just* as an adjective as in “a just man” is fine. He declares that *just so* and *just right* are okay.
- F. **To improve your writing.** Ziskin says he “challenges each word and sentence and its place in the story.” He asks himself if he has the right word and effective nuances. Are there logic issues? In *Turn to Stone*, the first paragraph had started with mosquitoes. He changed it to hearing a familiar voice singing in a foreign language—with some screeching. The “best tool,” Ziskin says is to “**read aloud**.” Then you can evaluate the voices and see if they are exciting or dull. That's also when you find some of the words are missing. You can also have your computer read your book aloud.

Ziskin and his wife live in in the Hollywood Hills. A linguist by training, he studied Romance languages and literature at the University of Pennsylvania. His international experience includes two years working and studying in France, extensive time in Italy, and nearly four years in India. He is fluent in Italian and French.

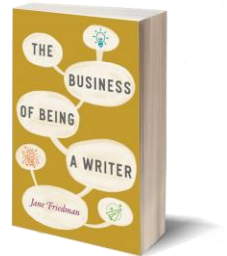
Ziskin's interesting blogs can be found at <https://jameswziskin.com/blogs>.

Glenda Brown Rynn, Reporter
grynn@cox.net

RESOURCES FOR WRITERS

How do you find your way through the ocean of resources available online for writers like us? Check out this sampling of what we have found to be of interest. Links are included so you will be able to investigate further.

MOST RELIABLE: www.janefriedman.com Jane has a long history in all areas of book publishing and has a solid reputation for being the best go-to for writers of all levels.



- **WRITERS HELPING WRITERS:**
www.writershelpingwriters.net has many one-of-a-kind tools and resources for writers. Newsletter available.
- ***Authors Publish, A Magazine for Writers.***
<https://www.authorspublish.com/>, assembles monthly lists of themed submission calls by magazines and journals, often paying for your work. Even a modest payment is at least encouragement and can add to your portfolio.



- ***Publishing ... and Other Forms of Insanity***, the newsletter for the website Published to Death, sends a monthly list of writers' conferences, fee free contests, and agents for all genres who are looking for submissions.

- For emerging writers, establishing a publications resume can be quite a challenge, especially if you have never published any of your work. But there always has to be a first—your very first short story, poem or personal essay published by a literary magazine.

Take heart, new writers! There are magazines that want your work and will even pay you for it.

Also see: [Mega-List of Science Fiction and Fantasy Magazines-Paying markets](#)—Many speculative fiction magazines are happy to publish emerging writers.

See these lists and much more at:

<https://publishedtodeath.blogspot.com/>

Details of what agents are looking for and how to reach them will give you a head start for your submission process. Check the website every month for up-to-date information and resources.

Note: Always check the agency website and agent bio before submitting. Agents can switch agencies or close their lists, and submission requirements can change.

**“Craft” is:
whatever it takes
to get you writing stories you love.**

George Saunders

Benefits of SCWA Membership



WELCOME, WELCOME, WELCOME!

- ❖ **Active members receive up to 60% off admission to SCWA meetings.**
- ❖ **Members are eligible for a free 30-minute consultation from book shepherd Sharon Goldinger on any publishing contract.**
- ❖ **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.**
- ❖ **Access to professional network of publishing, business consultants and editors.**
- ❖ **Participation in SCWA marketing platforms on southerncalwriters.org and SCWA social media platforms.**
- ❖ **SCWA Member's Only group on Facebook where we rewind and replay recent featured guests and their presentations.**

SCWA Board of Directors

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www.southernwriters.org

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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.southernwriters.org or on the About page of the SCWA Facebook page. The SCWA does not endorse individual opinions placed of 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 Board members and Newsletter Editor will determine the information to be contained in the SCWA on-line newsletter, which is primarily used for official SCWA information.