

DECEMBER 2020

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Southern California Writer's Association

December 2020

- SCWA Writers Online! (https://bit.ly/21890Db)
- President's Message
- December's Featured Monthly Speaker Ellen Byron, and a Party! <u>https://www.southerncalwriters.org/meetings</u>
- January Craft Shop
- Book Camp for NaNoWriMo and you
- Lit Up review
- Hump Day
- Such Good News!
- Highlights: Joe Ide
- SCWA New Cookbook



Have you subscribed?

Check out our new YouTube channel at https://bit.ly/2l890Db

Through this year of challenges SCWA has risen to new heights with a wide range of talented presenters who will inspire, educate, and motivate writers and readers alike through our online programs.

Our best and brightest authors and guest speakers' presentations have now been uploaded to our own YouTube channel. Our content includes the Hump Day Book Tours, Pub Shops with insights into book publishing and marketing, and our monthly author spotlights and workshops.

President's Message for December 2020 from Larry Porricelli

Dear Readers and Writers,

The year 2020 began with lively meetings that packed the Claim Jumper Restaurant and were SRO for magnificent speakers. The buffets were always delicious and the authors who spoke filled our minds with possibilities and inspired ideas. We all wanted to reach for the stars.

It was ironic that the Claim Jumper closed the same time as COVID-19 arrived. And though we had a place at a golf course in Fountain Valley, it was not to be. I would like to use the word alas—Alas at our fate.

We had also just launched a new website—professional in detail and offering online payment for events and providing a marvelous location for authors and members to spotlight their work. Our website also became the launching spot for new events, a place to make reservations, a place to be connected. We are grateful for Sharon Goldinger, a noted professional in the publishing world who manages the website for SCWA.

Additionally, our Facebook page, so wonderfully managed by Diana Pardee, became a source of information and an active, living place for all of us to connect. Authors announced new books, shared writerly information and resources, and announced the meetings for happy hours and events on Zoom.

The vision for SCWA enlarged. Maddie Margarita booked and interviewed authors with new books on Hump Day, a Wednesday short treat. And Maddie booked seminars with noted authors that were over the top in value. We grew a large audience, and seeing Maddie handle the speakers has been just so wonderful in this time when the world seems bleak. We suddenly had a lot of action going on. And Zoom became the new Claim Jumper, a place that Diana Pardee has made so comfortable for all of us to relax and enjoy the wisdom coming through. Diana has spent many hours on our behalf to ensure the show must go on!

We recorded all the Hump Day chats, as well as seminars, and of course, our main event, the monthly special speakers meeting, which has Maddie interviewing speakers after their presentation and leading questions from the field-a field that has included viewers from Europe, Africa, and Australia! We are international!

Diana enlisted Robert Rollins to edit our ever-growing number of recorded events, and you can see them on the SCWA YouTube Channel!

Our Vice President of Membership, Steve Jackson, and Treasurer Don Westenhaver oversaw an end of year membership drive that was fantastic! (And if you haven't renewed, please do so online. We value you, and use our funds for all events.)

And if you notice, SCWA has the most professional newsletter I have read, so informative and loaded with ideas and suggestions and wit and wisdom, all thanks to Pam Sheppard!

Whew! We have prospered in a rich bounty of wisdom from wonderful authors who are eager to be before the SCWA.

We have a new book project we are producing with Nancy Klann as editor, and if you have a 250-word story, please send it to Nancy for review. You can be included. Details are on the website and in the newsletter.

Lastly, we are grateful to every one of you for the support you have given and the ideas you have shared for all that we have undertaken. So much more is coming in the new year; we hope you will be excited to see us evolve.

The Claim Jumper was demolished and is a pile of rubble, but the SCWA is strong, with excitement, encouragement, and inspiration as its banner. So many of you have published books this year, and what a statement to the world! SCWA has helped make the world a better place!

Thank you!

Larry Porricelli

SCWA EVENTS THIS MONTH: DECEMBER 2020

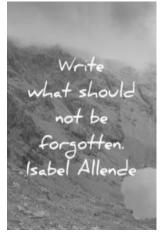
- SCWA Featured Monthly Speaker: December 19, 10 a.m. PST. This month, Ellen Byron joins us to talk about "It's a Funny Thing: Easy Ways to Add Humor to Your Writing." Sign up on our website and we'll email you a link and password. <u>https://www.southerncalwriters.org/</u>
- SCWA VIRTUAL HAPPY HOUR: Every Friday at 4:30 p.m. Join us with your funny hats and Holiday Coronatinis for good news and good cheer. Sign up on our website and we'll email you a link and password. https://www.southerncalwriters.org/
- SCWA CRAFT SHOP: A Deep Dive into Self-Editing with Pam Sheppard: JANUARY 7, 2021, 4 - 5:30 p.m. Register for Zoom link at <u>https://www.southerncalwriters.org/</u>
- SCWA HUMP DAY BOOK TOUR: You can access previous interviews on SCWA's YouTube channel or see it LIVE streaming on at 10:00 a.m. PST every Wednesday in December.

Missed one? Find the replay on SCWA's YouTube channel and on the FB page anytime. <u>https://bit.ly/2l890Db</u> where we will upload replays as they are edited and ready.

• SCWA Book Camp: December 16 at 10:30 a.m. Everyone can join us in the Facebook public group—look for the ROOM tab—to celebrate your success in November's NaNoWriMo, review what you've written, and share your plans going forward. We'll have some fun!

https://www.facebook.com/groups/southerncalwriters

If you're interested in these and all SCWA events, please check out our website for membership details at: https://www.southerncalwriters.org/



SCWA Featured Monthly Speaker, December 19, 2020 Ellen Byron Adding Humor to Your Mysteries

Ellen Byron is the Agatha Award-winning author of the Cajun Country

Mysteries. The USA Today bestselling series has also won multiple Best Humorous Mystery Lefty awards from the Left Coast Crime conference. She also writes The Catering Hall Mysteries (under the pen name Maria DiRico), which launched with Here Comes the Body.



Ellen's TV credits include *Wings*, *Just Shoot Me*, and *Fairly OddParents*. She's written over 200 national magazine articles, and her published plays include the award-winning *Graceland*. She also worked as a caterer waiter for the legendary Martha Stewart, a credit she never tires of sharing. A native New Yorker who attended Tulane University, Ellen lives in Los Angeles with her husband, daughter, and rescue chi mix, Pogo. She still misses her hometown—and still drives like a New York.



When: Saturday, December 16, 2020 Time: 10:00 a.m. PST Where: Zoom, RSVP for your link at:

https://www.southerncalwriters.org/meetings

Cost: Members \$10.00 Nonmembers \$15.00

Stay for SCWA's Holiday Party after Ellen's Presentation!

Fun! Contests! Prizes! Ugly Sweaters?

Prizes for:

- BEST Virtual Background
- BEST Holiday Movie
- BEST First line for a Holiday Story Write one!
- BEST 500-word Your Personal Family Holiday Story

Enter your submissions on the website at

https://www.southerncalwriters.org/contact-scwa/



SCWA CRAFT SHOP JANUARY 2021 Pam Sheppard, Deep Dive into SELF-EDITING

SCWA's January Craft Shop is ready for members and nonmembers to take a Deep Dive into SELF-EDITING, a perfect way to follow NaNoWriMo, and to refresh all of us wrestling chapters of our works-in-process.

We sometimes think of self-editing as a pass through the manuscript to fix grammar and wording. It is much more. A self-edit can also examine the bones of your project, challenge the premise, and check to see that you have delivered the message you promised.



What better way to start 2021 than with a hands-on workshop with Pam Sheppard, a familiar face at all SCWA meetings, and a regular contributor to the antics on SCWA's Facebook group. Pam will take you through the four kinds of edits, demonstrate examples of each, and show you how they will take your work to the next level. She will also talk about working with critique groups, beta readers, and professional editors.

We'll record the session and leave lots of time for Q&A.

Date: January 7, 2021 Time: 4:00 -5:30 pm PST Title: A Deep Dive into Self-Editing Cost: Members 15.00 Nonmembers – 20.00

Register for Zoom link at www.socalwriters.org

Pam spent over 25 years in Sales and Marketing with Big 5 publishers (Simon & Schuster, Crown Publishers, and Random House). Her career as a publisher's representative overlapped with seventeen years as a publishing consultant, developmental editor, and coach for new and experienced writers for their independent and traditional publishing projects.

Contact Pam at sheppardedits@gmail.com



Janis Thomas' Storyteller's Toolbox is now available as a replay in the SCWA Members Only Facebook group page. Free to members, posted to give you a chance to refresh this excellent Craft Shop event.



Tuesday, December 15, 2020 at 6:30 PST

The Real Lit Up! OC Smart Book Chat celebrates the end of 2020 with a little horror, some thrills and chills and a few laughs! Put on your favorite holiday PJs, grab a hot toddy and start the New Year right with talented authors **Lance Charnes, Steve Jackson,** and **Sharmyn McGraw**!

To participate in this event please RSVP on the Facebook page below to receive a Zoom link.

Can't make it on December 15th? Or want to share the fun with your friends? To see all the replays, click: https://www.facebook.com/litupoc



Lance Charnes has had training in architectural rendering, terrorist incident response, and maritime archeology, though not all at the same time.

He is the author of the DeWitt Agency Files series of international art-crime novels (*The Collection, Stealing*

Ghosts, and Chasing Clay), the action/adventure novel Zrada, the international thriller Doha 12, and the near-future thriller South. All are available in trade paperback and digital editions.

Steven G. Jackson is a professional storyteller who writes thrillers, horror, and comedy, and has a long list of published and produced novels, short stories, and stage plays. He often combines these genres in his stories. His workshops on the craft of writing are always popular. An avid horror fan, he has a world-class collection of vampire first editions. His Yellow Lab, Bear,



is a mainstay in his novels, and acts as both muse and inspiration.



Sharmyn McGraw is an internationally recognized patient advocate for those affected by pituitary tumors. After her own brain surgery for Cushing's disease, she found her passion for writing. Growing up with dyslexia, she feared writing so much as a Post-it note. But after her surgery, her passion to

help others was greater than any fear. Sharmyn contributed to television and health journals to shed light on an often misunderstood ailment. After twenty years in remission, she's having a blast writing about her other passion: fun, sassy mysteries featuring strong passionate characters.

For more information about these events, please email Maddie Margarita at maddie@maddiemargarita.com.

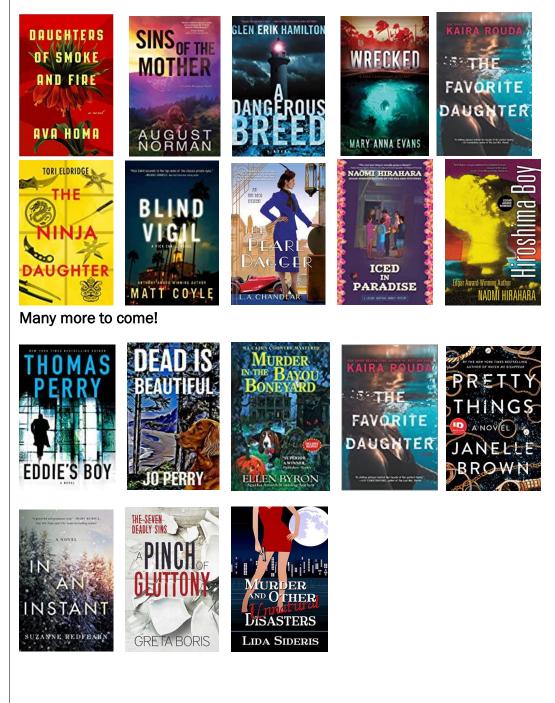


SCWA Hump Days resumed in December. Look for replays on SCWA's YouTube channel.

Subscribe anytime at https://bit.ly/2l890Db

Recent Guests include:

Janelle Brown Mary Anna Evans Kaira Rouda Laurie Stevens Matt Coyle Glen Erik Hamilton August Norman Tori Eldridge Ava Homa Naomi Hirahara LA Chandlar Greta Boris Joe Perry Thomas Perry Suzanne Redfearn Chris Reich



CELEBRATE ALL THE GOOD NEWS!



Steve Jackson, author of *Zeus Payload, The Lamia, and The Night Hag* has just posted his 2020 edition of his Top 25 World's Most Thrilling Restaurants on his website at: <u>https://bit.ly/3lfAQMr</u>.

The Lamia has been released! Print and ebook are now available on Amazon.

The results**: SCWA** members participating in the 2020 National Novel Writer's Month, better known as

NaNoWriMo are all worth celebrating.

Sheri Fink's new book, *InstaGrateful; Finding Your Bliss in a Social Media World* releases December 15, 2020. Sheri's energy and irresistible style comes through in this inspirational book of discovery and transformation.

Shari will give a webinar for the Author Learning Center on writing, publishing, and marketing your self-help book to make a positive difference.



NaNoWriMo Winners! Wait. What? Aren't you *all* winners? Of course you are! Debby Putman exceeded her goal, and wrote more words in November than she ever had before, over 40,000. Dot Caffrey hammered it with over 66,000 words. Jungle Jim exploded with over 90,000 words. Larry Porricelli hit almost 30,000 words. In the middle of kitchen renovation, Janis Thomas wrote almost 25,000. Maddie wrote while multi-tasking for Hump Day and Lit Up OC. Diana Pardee wrote between editing videos and herding all the SCWA cats on Zoom. Katherine West was proud of her twenty words, and so are we. Other members participated, too. Hats off to all who embark on this month of fearlessly spilling words onto the page!

SCWA Writers' Cookbook Call for Submissions

Please submit your recipes and related short fiction for our upcoming Southern California Writers Association story inspired cookbook. Submissions will be selected based on story quality, recipe quality, and the story's relation to the recipe.

> Working titles include Blame It on the Osso Bucco Eat Your Words You Have the Write to Eat

Needless to say, title suggestions are welcome.

We're looking forward to producing a flavorful collection, with a healthy dash of your writing dexterity. What self-respecting writers' organization would build a cookbook without an assortment of clever stories included?

Each entry must contain both the recipe and a story, which can be in these categories: mystery, horror, sci-fi, cozy, humor, poetry, crime, mythology, or fable. Remember, this is a writers' cookbook so think of your recipe as your muse. We encourage your story to have a sense of connection with the recipe.

Due to limited space the story/poem should be 250 words or less.

The cookbook will be professionally published by SCWA and promoted with all the marketing might at our disposal. Proceeds will further help fund our events, speakers, scholarships, and publication of books, including this one.

We encourage all who want to join in to submit up to two recipes in a Word file along with their stories to Nancy Klann at <u>klanncy@aol.com</u>. (Please put Recipe in the subject line.)

Members' Showcase: OPEN for your Submissions

Did you know SCWA will publish excerpts of your work in our 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.southerncalwriters.org/members-showcase-2/

Here are the details:

- 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 <u>scwashowcase@gmail.com</u>

Take a look at the Showcase entries by many of our members. It's a terrific way to get acquainted!

Highlights, November 21, 2020 Joe Ide Writing the Killer Crime Novel

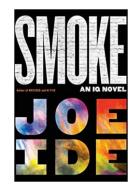
JOE IDE is of Japanese American descent and grew up in South Central Los Angeles. Joe's favorite books were the Conan Doyle Sherlock Holmes stories. The idea that a person could face the world and vanquish his enemies with just his intelligence fascinated him. Joe went on to earn a graduate degree and had several



careers before writing his debut novel, *IQ*, inspired by his early experiences and love of Sherlock. Joe lives in Santa Monica, California.

Writing the Killer Crime Novel or w to Increase Your Odds of Getting Publish

How to Increase Your Odds of Getting Published



"Book publishing is the most competitive business there is," says Joe Ide, author of the five-book *IQ* series. It's the story of Isaiah Quintabe, a brilliant but unlicensed private detective in East Long Beach, CA, who takes cases mainly from members in the community that the police ignore. He is paid with whatever they can afford, even chickens. Ide says, "Some [writers] think they can do a novel because they can do other things." But publishers are primarily interested in only those whose professional skills and

ideas "can sustain a career." Otherwise, "forget it."

If you get a book published at all, it's an accomplishment. Agents have read everything, and potential publications "are not selected arbitrarily." To make a living this way, up your skill set, write a terrific novel, and get published by one of the big five publishers.

Your book idea may be a high concept, but the writing must be excellent as well as have a fresh voice. "How do you know if you're at that level?" Ide posits. He says to read the first five pages of a good novel out loud, followed by those of your own. After his own auditory comparison, Ide said it took him "a year to write at that level." "You'll get only one chance to put your book in front of a gatekeeper." Write the great book first and pitch that one.

Your advance payments may be anywhere from \$25,000 to \$100,000, with \$35,000 to \$45,000 being the average. Ide made \$70,000 over a year for his first book *IQ*. "You have to sell a <u>lot</u> of books. If you get a movie option, don't sell your copyright." The rights for a TV adaptation sold a year before Ide's novel was published in 2016, and *IQ* is still in film development.

Before collecting all the nuts and bolts for your great novel, clarify your objectives: A. What do you want to say? B. How do you want your readers to react?

To develop characters, you need to relate with empathy to see and understand their world but not judge their motivations. Listen to others around you—not as a participant but "as a spy." Collect these anecdotes. Be sensitive to details. Ide passed on the insight that you can tell a woman's wealth not by her clothes but by her handbag. The essence of a character will be in what he thinks and feels, not because of his lifestyle or expertise, but because of his actions before, during, and after an episode. If you have an archetype, bring something fresh to him or her— "a lone wolf different from other lone wolves." "A bad character can be a good character in his own life." Think of what your character would do in a situation, not just "What's next?" The worst feedback from your publishing gatekeeper is "I read this before."

For characterization, give only relevant clues as to what a person is like. Ide suggests describing a person you know in a paragraph. "It's harder than you think." Also, don't use cliches such as "back in the day." All cliches not only flatten your work but "make you generic." Make up your own. Ide says he uses a thesaurus ten times a day.

Each character's dialogue has a distinct sound that makes him/her memorable. Create those personal attitudes and opinions with specificity.

Start your action with the stakes the character wants, those aspects or factors in his life which ground him/her. "Emotional stakes don't have to be serious but personal." They provide heft and meaning to his life.

Don't allow the book's pacing to be slow. "Something new or diverting needs to happen every other page." These diversions can definitely increase the pacing.

Rewriting is not just re-reading or the time for self-congratulations. "What's wrong, Clunky?" "If you don't find three wrong things per page, you're not working hard enough." Repairing or refining the flow, nuance, and depth takes months. Ide rewrote the two-page prologue to *IQ* twenty-six times.

Rewriting and voice are related. Of course, each character has his own voice but so do you. The variations you tailor into your lines cumulatively are *your voice*. Just as your personality makes you unique, your voice affects your book the same way. Ide said, "If you don't have a drive to finish your book, you probably don't have a voice."

Learn what's involved in a writing career. "There's nothing romantic about it." Is writing in the chair and alone the life you want to lead? Ide says the money and glory will not sustain you if you don't love writing. He stresses "COMMIT OR DON'T COMMIT."

Vice President of Programming, Maddie Margarita, asked Joe Ide what satisfaction he gets from writing, He replied, "The more I write the better I get." When you master your craft, it becomes more exciting. Ide said IQ's life is more exciting than his own. But he adds that a writer's focus has to be obsessive. "It's assumed. Some errant chromosome, I guess." "Make your work so individual that nobody else could write it." He claims there's no such thing as writer's block. "You got up from your desk. Sit down."

Ms. Margarita then asked why he switched from screenwriting to being a novelist. Answer: "Nothing was getting made. Projects were kicked out. I was frustrated and burned out. So, I quit and moped around, but I had to make a living. Took out a second [mortgage] on the house and went to novels."

Next question: "What do you do when stuck?"

Answer: "I don't give up. Stay in my f_____ chair. Maybe take a nap—and then return to the desk. I make lists, draw diagrams, keep trying things. Maybe throw out 2000 pages."

Ms. Margarita asked, "How is a bad guy good from his own view?"

Ide replied, "Bad guys don't see themselves as bad guys. You have to know his stakes. That's just realism."

When does Joe Ide edit? After a few pages, he re-reads, edits, and continues. When done, he re-edits the whole book.

At the end, Ms. Margarita asked Ide what's happening now in his career.

Answer: The estate of Raymond Chandler, the famous detective fiction writer, has asked our speaker to write a contemporary novel using Chandler's famous private detective, Philip Marlowe. Wow! What a career compliment!

See <u>www.joeide.com</u>.

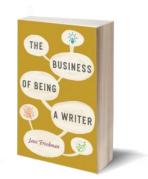
Glenda Brown Rynn, Reporter

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: <u>www.janefriedman.com</u> 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: <u>www.writershelpingwriters.net</u> has many oneof-a-kind tools and resources for writers. Newsletter available.

Here are some active links for December 2020:

Best Books to Buy a Writer for Christmas (or for yourself) Use K.M. Weiland's terrific list of books for your favorite writer.

https://www.helpingwritersbecomeauthors.com/best-books-to-buy-a-writer-for-christmas

Authors Publish: Here's a list of major trade publishers who are always open for submissions, among them Workman, Gibbs Smith, Harlequin, Andrews McMeel, and others. It will be best if you go to their websites and look at their current catalogs to assess the suitability of your submission to the kind of books they publish.

https://www.authorspublish.com/18-major-book-publishers-always-open-tosubmissions/ **Publishing ... and Other Forms of Insanity** publishes a monthly list of writers' conferences, fee free contests, and agents looking for submissions and much more. Check the website every month for up-to-date information and resources.

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

4 New Agents Seeking Fantasy, YA, Horror, Memoir. Fiction, Nonfiction, Kidlit and more

- Ms. Haley Casey of Creative Media Agency
- Ms. Jolene Haley of <u>Marsal Lyon Literary Agency</u>
- Ms. Jen Nadol of <u>The Unter Agency</u>
- Ms. Elle Thompson of Triada US Literary Agency

Find more information on these agents at: https://publishedtodeath.blogspot.com/2020/12/4-new-agentsseeking-fantasy-ya

5 Agents Seeking Fantasy, YA, Kidlit, Nonfiction, Romance, Memoir, Mysteries, Thrillers and more

- Ms. Barb Roose of Books & Such Literary Agency
- Ameerah Holliday of <u>Serendipity Literary Agency</u>
- Mr. Jonathan Agin of O'Connor Literary Agency
- Ms. Amy Collins of <u>Talcott Notch Literary Services</u>
- Ms. Beth Marshea of Ladderbird Literary Agency

Find more information on these agents at:

https://publishedtodeath.blogspot.com/2020/12/5-agentsseeking-fantasy-ya-kidlit.html

4 agents seeking Nonfiction

- Ms. Georgia Frances King of <u>Aevitas Creative Management</u>
- Ms. Anna Petkovich of Park & Fine Literary and Media
- Ms. Shannon O'Neill of Ross Yoon Literary Agency
- Mr. Doug Young of <u>PEW Literary</u> (UK)



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 Board of Directors

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Vice President of Finances	Don Westenhaver
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Newsletter Speaker Reporter	. Glenda Rynn
At-Large	Sharon Goldinger

Mailing Address: PO Box 47, Huntington Beach, CA 92648 Membership: Yann Jackson, <u>ykj3678@gmail.com</u>

Southern California Writer's Association Southerncalwriters.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.southerncalwriters.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.