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Southern California Writer's Association

August 2023

- **President Larry Porricelli's Message**
- **August Meeting Featuring LitUp OC with Maddie Margarita: 10 a.m. at the Regency Theater San Juan Capistrano, 26762 Verdugo Street, San Juan Capistrano 92675**
- **Hump Day: LIVE Every Wednesday 10 a.m. on the SCWA Facebook page**
- **Debby's Room: Continuing in August on Wednesdays 10:20 a.m. on the SCWA Facebook Group page, on the Rooms tab**



Have you subscribed?

Check out our fancy new URL for the YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/SCWAWritersOnline>

President's Message for August 2023 from Larry Porricelli

SOME CRAZILY DARING
SOME COURAGEOUSLY NEW
SOME BOLD AND INSIGHTFUL
AN OUTRAGEOUS, ASSEMBLED CREW!

Greetings to SCWA Writers and Authors,

It is a delight to share the news of our August Meeting with you.

This month, SCWA will feature the fabulous LITUP! ORANGE COUNTY with the creator of the hugely successful writers' format, Maddie Margarita, hosting several SCWA members and their work.

Many of us have visited a LIT UP OC! either live with Muzeo, or at the local meeting spot, and we have seen and heard writers from the mainstream to the newly published, each reading pages from their work and sharing their methods as well as issues—all followed by insightful daring questions about the writing from the Grand Inquisitor Maddie Margarita. That makes an event truly worthy as well as extremely enjoyable for everyone.

At LITUP OC! audiences are encouraged also to ask questions about techniques, problems, triumphs, and problems, and with such an intelligent group as SCWA, the writers appearing should be prepared for a tough interview! I have seen a few authors run from the spotlight, some in tears, cursing loudly, smashing chairs and tossing coffee—it is a wild event and yet so rewarding to learn the reasons for success over failure.

We hope you will look up the event on our website, www.southerncafwriters.org, and register for the event, support your fellow writers, and pick up some tips that helped them and may assuredly help you—whether in the writing technique itself, or perhaps in successful marketing and getting eyes on our books.

We at SCWA have sent out a request for writers willing to volunteer for the mayhem, and we have received an enormous number of volunteers! Who knew such heroes and courageous people are among us!

I may be a bit facetious in some statements within, but I assure you, "You ain't seen nothin' like it!"

Do sign up, do make sure to attend, and hear some ADDITIONAL GREAT NEWS!

On behalf of the SCWA Board,

Larry Porricelli
SCWA President

"Substitute 'damn' every time you're inclined to write 'very.' Your editor will delete it and the writing will be just as it should be."

--Mark Twain

Have you explored the SCWA website lately?

- **Sample the books written and published by SCWA members in the SCWA website bookstore:**
[www.https://www.southernwriters.org/member-bookstore/](https://www.southernwriters.org/member-bookstore/)
- **Get to know our members: explore member profiles**
- **Dig into our newsletter archive for highlights of our monthly speakers and events**

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



Discover SCWA YouTube videos!

- **We love sharing our content!**
- **SCWA Writers Online is FREE to all with over 100 Hump Day interviews with bestselling authors led by Maddie Margarita**
- **See SCWA's workshops and videos of our featured speakers from our monthly meetings**

<https://www.youtube.com/SCWAWritersOnline>



SCWA Events This Month: August 2023

- SCWA's August Meeting Features LitUp OC's Maddie Margarita, Saturday, August 19, Regency Theater San Juan Capistrano.
- 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. New members showing up weekly.
<https://www.southernwriters.org/>
- **SCWA HUMP DAY BOOK TOUR** Join us every Wednesday on SCWA's Facebook page. And check out the ones you have missed on SCWA's YouTube channel:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/southernwriters>
- Debby's Room: Continuing through August. 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/c/SCWAWritersOnline>



Featured August 2023 Speaker: Maddie Margarita, LitUp OC Interviews with SCWA Members



Enjoy a veritable smorgasbord of genres and stories as told by your fellow members! Readings, discussion, prizes, and of course surprises!

We are seeking member-writers who have a book published or may want to participate as an interviewee. You could read a few pages of your work and be interviewed by Maddie and the audience.

Many of us have appeared at Maddie's live OC LITUP!, and it is a fun and fantastic experience.

We have a limited number of spots available! Send an email to Maddie (maddiemargarita@gmail.com) or Larry (lorenzo212@gmail.com) ASAP if you're interested!

When: Saturday, August 19th

Time: Continental Breakfast 9:30 am
Meeting w/ Speaker 10:00 am

Where: Regency Theater San Juan Capistrano [26762 Verdugo St, San Juan Capistrano](#)

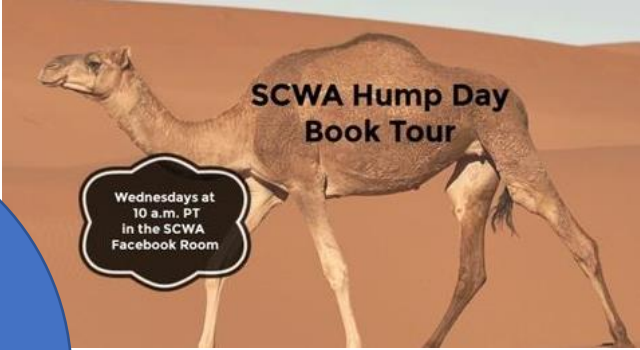
Admission
Members **\$25.00**
Nonmembers **\$35.00**

Enjoy coffee at 9:30 am; SCWA Meeting with Speaker at 10:00 am, followed by book signing, lunch and networking. Tickets includes coffee, speaker, lunch, networking.

Your safety and health are important to us. ***We welcome vaccinated members and guests.***

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

You must register by Friday, August 18, 2023, at 12:00 pm.



Hump Day Book Tour

LIVESTREAMED Every Wednesday 10:00 a.m.

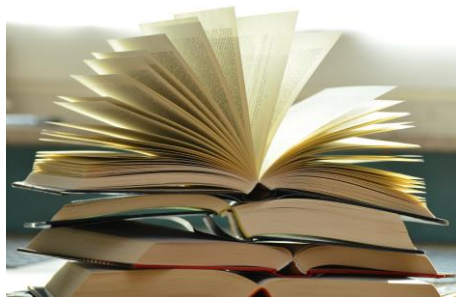
Hump Day episodes stream on SCWA's Facebook page.

Look for our SCWA group on Facebook. Scroll through the posts for the most recent guests. When we are LIVE, click on the Events tab to join us!

Tune in for interviews with bestselling authors and with our own SCWA members talking about their successes.

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

Debby's Room follows Hump Day at 10:20 a.m. for casual conversation about books, writing, and life as an author. Find it on the SCWA Facebook page.



HIGHLIGHTS July 2023 Speaker Baron Birtcher and Steve Wood Poetry in Motion

SCWA Highlights 7-15-23. Baron Birtcher and Steve Wood

Poetry in Motion and Putting Emotion on the Page



“This is my favorite group to talk to. You guys are serious, dedicated writers,” declared Baron Birtcher, award winner and master of “creating razor-sharp literary genre fiction.” Next to him was his colleague Steve Wood, song composer and the winner of nine Best Score Awards for film music. Birtcher then asked the SCWA audience, “How many of you have published?” When the majority of hands went up, Birtcher and Wood cheered with the audience.

Birtcher began. Writing is “putting authentic emotion on the page.” Its “cornerstone is authenticity.” When Ernest Hemingway was once asked how he became “a wonderful writer,” his answer was “First, I lived.” Birtcher also emphasized how important tone is. It takes a lot of self-examination to portray the emotion properly and the tone authentic and match the story and yet be consistent to itself.

Birtcher's latest novel, *Reckoning*, comes out this September (2023). He likes to "set a book's tone and guardrails" for the story and for himself. He quoted, "No child in this world is born with a knowledge of evil—until the day evil catches up with all of us and comes down like a God-damn hammer."

In addition, Birtcher said, "I have a title before I start, so each chapter, etc., has the same tone, moods, ups and downs." "I create a soundtrack—a playlist for myself, so I can stay with themes and tones." When writing a novel set in the 1970s, he played music from that period. (However, he doesn't listen to music while he's actually writing.) Birtcher was formerly a musician.

Steve Wood is one of the founders and members of the legendary band **Honk** and also toured with the Beach Boys and with Paul McCartney. He's extensively composed music for IMAX films. He and Birtcher discussed craft. Wood says, "Music is in a lizard part of your brain—more so than tempo. There's something primitive about it." He says that it's hard (for him) to create with just words; you need the music [sounds, melody]. Birtcher interjected that Wood is from the "School of the Pure Music." Wood responded, "Creating the music is easy for me. Music tells you something emotional." But this veteran music maker admits that it can take weeks or months for the lyrics to be clear for him.

Wood explained that "as you age, you become more emotionally connected with things because you go through all this stuff. However, testosterone makes you care less of other people's feelings. If it were not natural, testosterone wouldn't be legal."

In Wood's profession of creating music for others, he's had to go along with the singer's goal—even if it's a narrow window. But for the writer, "You have to break free of what you think you should be doing [with the music]." "Your soul has something in it, and it will tell you. Be quiet in your mind when composing; be ready for the quiet voice." "Then forming the plot and getting out of the way are part of the work." Birtcher says that word choices can set up a tone in a minor key. Wood sets his tone with lyrics. He also stresses that many things can get in your way—unless someone can help you get out of the way. Birtcher enthusiastically agreed.

Wood also wrote music for himself while working for others. Without development time, “my own stuff got stuffed in a junk drawer.” But since retirement, he’s been able pursue his own voice. Wood’s creation of “Bird Song” was played in the auditorium for SCWA. He called it the “coolest little blues rip,” a remarkable recording of hundreds, if not thousands of miscellaneous birds in a lake and forest area chirping and calling amongst each other—lightly overlaid with a melody by Wood. He said it’s “an example of letting something else come into you—and then making something else out of it.” Wood now has an album out entitled *Junk Drawer*.

When a scene opens in a novel, “something looks happy, but something bad is going to happen.” Birtcher says he doesn’t “hear” anything about his plot but works with word choice because, although he’s a former musician, he’s not at the level of music that Wood is. “I wish I knew the ‘language of music.’” Although if it’s an action scene, Birtcher says he makes it staccato—“brief and quick—to get the heart rate going.”

Then Maddie Margarita asked if Birtcher uses “an emotional map? Bridge, hook, chorus?” I absolutely do,” he said. “I’m an inveterate plotter, rather than a pantsner, and with emotion. Only three emotional scenes in a row. Too hard to slog through.” Wood added, “Sometimes the sounds come first to you and sometimes the lyrics.”

Regarding marketing, Wood said the songs that creatively come all at once are probably the most marketable. That’s because they don’t get “all that twisty” with the creator’s complexities.

Besides writing for the 1970s Southern California rock band Honk, film-score writer Steve Wood was a critical ingredient in Honk’s first album, the soundtrack to the surfing movie *Five Summer Stories*. He’s also been the bandleader for Kenny Loggins—among others, when not busy with IMAX. Baron Birtcher has won numerous awards, including 2019’s Best Book of the Year for *Fistful of Rain*. His hardboiled Mike Travis series includes *Roadhouse Blues*, *Ruby Tuesday*, *Angels Fall*, and *Hard Latitudes*. His award-winning Ty Dawson series includes *South California Purples*, *A Fistful of Rain*, and his latest, *Reckoning*. A critically lauded stand-alone is *Rain Dogs*.

At the end of the session, the SCWA crowd applauded as President Porricelli gave both speakers a big bottle of wine named “Dramatic.”

Glenda Brown Rynn, Reporter

grynn@cox.net



RESOURCES FOR WRITERS

ARE YOU A LOCAL SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA PUBLISHED AUTHOR?

CONSIDER DONATING YOUR BOOK TO THE ANAHEIM CENTRAL LIBRARY

Your book should have been published within the past five years. All genre are accepted. Traditionally published or indie published equally accepted.

Your donation will put you in the pool for a free author table and reading at **Indie Author Day on Sunday, November 5th**. Your book may also be placed in the library shelves or in the local indie author display at Anaheim Central Library. Deadline to submit: October 1, 2023.

Please mail your book donation and email contact information to the Library, to the attention of:

Indie Author Day
Anaheim Central Library
500 W. Broadway Ave
Anaheim, CA 92805

Or drop off your book at the Anaheim Central Library with your contact name and email inside the book. Tell the clerk this book is for Indie Author Day.



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- **Scroll down to the Customer Reviews section and click on "Write a Customer Review"**
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- **Write your review and "submit"**

You'll see: "Thanks for your review"

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<https://authorspublish.com/free-lecture-write-like-a-wild-thing-6-lessons-on-crafting-an-unforgettable-story/>

Are you afraid of scams and rip-offs when you consider publishing your book? Writers need never go it alone with a watchdog like Writer Beware to have your back.

Writer Beware's mission is to track, expose, and raise awareness of scams and other questionable activities in and around the publishing industry.



After many years on the Blogger platform, we have finally transitioned to WordPress, which offers much greater flexibility in terms of design, control, and ease of use.

We also have a new, easy to remember web address: www.writerbeware.blog.

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 www.southerncafwriters.org and SCWA social media platforms.**
- ❖ **Opportunities to showcase your book on the SCWA website in our bookshop, Members showcase, and on your profile.**
- ❖ **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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Southern California Writer's Association
www.southernwriters.org

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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.