



## February 18, 2006, Speaker

### Dorothy Foltz-Gray, Writer, Poet

## How to Turn Hot Articles into Cool Cash!



A former editor of books (business and medical) and magazines (fiction, lifestyle) at Whittle Communications in Knoxville, Tennessee, Dorothy Foltz-Gray has been a freelance writer specializing in health and personal essays for more than 11 years. She is the author of *Alternative Treatments for Arthritis: An A to Z Guide* (Arthritis Foundation, 2005) and a contributing editor for *Health* and *Arthritis Today* magazines. She has also written for *Bon Appetit*; *Cooking Light*; *Family Fun*;

*Fitness*; *Good Housekeeping*; *Ladies Home Journal*; *More*; *Natural Health*; *Parenting*; *Prevention*; *O*; *The Oprah Magazine*; *Organic Style*; *Outside*; *Reader's Digest*; *Redbook*; *Real Simple*; *Self*; *Woman's Day*; *Yoga Journal*; and many others.

Dorothy Foltz-Gray's poetry has appeared in numerous publications, including *Mississippi Review*, *Chicago Review*, and *Homewords: A Book of Tennessee Writers*. She is a past recipient of the Tennessee Arts Commission's Individual

Artist's Fellowship and the Poetry Society of America's Award for Narrative Poetry. Currently a freelance writer, she lives in Knoxville, Tennessee, with her husband and two sons (Tickle and Swanson).

She is currently writing a memoir about being and losing a twin, *With and Without Her*. Winner of the 2002 Mature Media Gold Award and past winner of the Tennessee Arts Commission Fellowship for Poetry, Dorothy will speak to the SCWA about successful article writing and publishing.

Lynnette Baum, V.P. Programming

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# President's Message

Boy, what a day that was!

The greatest news is that our guests who came from a long distance away—Doug from Pennsylvania, and Jeremiah, who hitchhiked from Phoenix, did in fact get to visit with Ray Bradbury! We owe an extra thank-you to Sam Weller for going the extra mile—or, in this case, the extra seventy-five miles to Santa Monica—to arrange a personal visit for our world travelers. I think it was pretty obvious to all of us that Sam Weller is not just an exceptional writer, but also an exceptional human being. And a good portion of that is almost certainly to the credit of Ray Bradbury.

News that is almost as good—the club did not lose nearly as much money as a result of a “small turnout” (when was the last time we thought of 60+ as a small turnout!), thanks to the Anthology sales, the Barnes and Nobel royalties, and some very kind member donations. Nevertheless, we need to institute some new policies on payments and reservations so that we don't end up paying for a large number of meals that don't get eaten at some future meeting. Your Executive Board will be working on a possible solution. Any suggestions that have worked for other groups of which any of you have been members are always appreciated.

In defending the Board's decision to “guarantee” a sellout, we made the most educated guess we could, based upon past experience. We had 107 for Robert McKee, 85 for Sol Stein. The fact that only 60 showed up for Ray Bradbury is certainly *not* because of our publicity people. This is by far the most well-advertised meeting we've ever had—we never had radio and television coverage before! We owe a special thanks to the Board, especially Lynnette and Larry, for all the work they did.

To be honest, I had visions of arriving at the meeting at a quarter to nine, and finding hundreds of people lined up around the parking lot waiting to get a spot in line.

In any case, it was a terrific meeting, and I think we all feel very honored and privileged to have the author of a Top Best-Seller address us!

Now—let's all follow up on that inspiration.

Good luck and good writing!

*Roy King, President*

## SCWA Critique Committee

Open to members of SCWA

### Nonfiction & Fiction

**Roy King** ..... 3kings@urs2.net

Roy will take any amount of writing for critique.

He prefers to see the entire ms at one time.

Please mail your manuscript to Roy at:

15772 Heatherdale Road, Victorville, CA 92394

### Poetry

**Dr. Joyce Wheeler**

Joyce will critique up to five poems.

Please mail your work to Joyce at:

3801 Chestnut Avenue, Long Beach, CA 90807

## 2006 Executive Committee

President ..... Roy King  
V.P. Programming ..... Lynnette Baum  
V.P. Membership ..... Gerri Seaton  
Secretary/Treasurer ..... Dorrie Lloyd  
Publicity Director..... Larry Porricelli  
Webmaster ..... Pamela Rocke  
Newsletter Editor ..... Laura Sheridan-Long  
Associate Editor ..... Nancy Darnall  
Tape Librarian ..... Sharon Walters

### Membership Information

Gerri Seaton, V.P. Membership... gersea@verizon.net

### Meeting Reservations

Roy King, President.....3kings@urs2.net  
..... H (760) 955-5027

# January Highlights:

## Sam Weller: author of *THE BRADBURY CHRONICLES The Life of Ray Bradbury*

Although Ray Bradbury fretted that “his bibliographer would have him stuffed and mounted when he dies,” he had refused all offers to write his biography—even from renowned writers and Harvard professors. When he developed a friendship with writer and teacher Sam Weller, whom he recognized not only as “a fellow enthusiast” but also as one who loved and knew his work well, he relented. Thus, Weller’s *The Bradbury Chronicles* does not portray this American icon as “stuffed and mounted” but as an idea factory who learned how to nurture imagination to copious fruition.

Weller’s collaboration with the writer who “brought mainstream respectability to the fields of science fiction and fantasy” began in 1999 when Weller interviewed RB for magazine articles. A discovery of intense mutual interests sparked a lively bonding. Scholarly treatises aside, Weller asked why no biography existed. “A biography means ‘You’re dead,’” RB replied.

But the resonance between them and Weller’s “chutpah” of saying “I’d like to write your life story” convinced RB that Weller was the right person. The 80-year-old writer made only one stipulation: “You need to call me every day because I get lonely.”

Upon returning to Chicago from Los Angeles, Weller felt his jubilation morph into a panic attack. “What if people hate what I say?” However, he awoke the next morning with the conviction of no turning back. Weller had taken up RB’s guiding principle of “Jump off the cliff and build your wings on the way down.”

The next five years found him flying to L.A. every two to three weeks to tackle the “incredibly disorganized stacks of paper” that RB, also a prolific essayist, poet, and screenwriter, had accumulated. In addition to the novels were 700 published short stories, 400 unpublished ones, personal papers, and tax records.

Reconstructing RB’s chronology was Weller’s most difficult challenge. A serendipity worthy of “The Twilight Zone,” all 65 scripts of which Bradbury had written, occurred when, from behind a drawer, Weller fished out RB’s annotated pocket calendar of 1953, “his golden year.” That year RB had published in *The New Yorker*, written the screenplay in Ireland for John Huston’s *Moby Dick*, and published *Fahrenheit 451*. Best of all, it contained the notes from his calls to a chemistry lab, a physics lab, and finally a Fire Department to get the temperature at which paper burns. *Fahrenheit 451* trumped its equivalent of Centigrade 233 for the title of RB’s masterpiece and sci-fi classic.

A near-second panic attack seized Weller when RB, hospitalized for two weeks, requested the manuscript. Weller nervously brought all 623 typed pages. “Be gone,” the 84-year-old commanded. “I’m going to read your book.” The next day, almost swooning, Weller received RB’s judgment: “You, my son, are a beautiful writer.” He asked only that two separate words be changed.

Since the demand for *The Bradbury Chronicles* would be international, Weller chose one of the big house publishers, William Morrow, an Imprint of HarperCollins, because

the big publishers “have the lock on distribution.” In addition, he needed funding for his air travel, which the small presses cannot underwrite. One frustration he is left with, however, is that the book length was determined by “focus groups in the Bradbury readership.” He could have filled another 100 pages. “Maybe there’ll be a Volume II.”

What has been the effect of these five years on Weller as a writer? He can now channel Bradbury for any audience. If they are together, RB quips, “Stand offstage and mouth my speech.” The most awkward moments occurred whenever Weller missed a daily call; RB would be badly upset. The emotional, widowed Bradbury is “an incredibly needy man.” However, these small gaffes made Weller realize he “needed to step back and get objectivity. I needed a break.”

When member Bill Blake asked, “Has your complete absorption in Bradbury stultified your own writing?” “good question!” Weller responded. “Yes, I was copying.” Several times when reading Weller’s work, the famed author remarked, “Too much Bradbury.” Weller added that he had a conscious one-year struggle to “get Bradbury off my shoulder” and find his own voice once more. “However,” Weller concedes, “he has influenced my style since childhood.”

Even bigger has been the impact of RB’s spirit. “I’ve never met anyone who wants to live so badly,” Weller claims. Ray Bradbury is “not afraid of dying but of not creating.”

This biography is a blueprint, Weller says, of how to nurture imagination. Driven by “a vision for

Sam Weller Highlights (Continued on Page 4)

# Sam Weller Highlights

(Continued from Page 3)

the future and a reverence for the past,” RB, as a fledgling thought “to hell with a fear of failure.” He would write for a bit and then allow his subconscious to pilot the rest. “He took a child’s memory and embellished it.” Tucking in some mythology is RB’s trademark as well as embedding a theme for each story, often the search for immortality.

This icon never believed in writer’s block but did believe that quality emerges from quantity. Thus, early on, he wrote a story a week. Finding his own voice took a year, during which he published three of his 52 stories. In the second, he published six. Years later his phrasing became more poetic after his wife insisted he read poetry. All these years and two strokes have not diminished his work ethic of writing daily.

RB himself does not care for collaboration—Hollywood style—because it “intellectualizes” the material. But he does strongly believe in writing communities. With writer’s groups and mentors, there is “that ghostly look in our eyes we have when we’re creating, this DNA.”

## Writing Advice from Ray Bradbury

- ☞ Don’t over-think your stories or think of the point before you write. Just let it come.
- ☞ Free your mind and relax as you did as a child. We question ourselves too much.
- ☞ Do not abandon your loves.
- ☞ Make a list of 10 things you love and celebrate them in writing.
- ☞ Make a list of 10 things you hate and attack them.
- ☞ Find two unhindered hours a day to write.

The ailing Bradbury had planned to attend the SCWA meeting. However, when Weller drove to his Los Angeles home to get him, RB did not feel well enough to attend that morning. Weller wanted to get RB during the lunch hour until the group convinced the Chicago resident a roundtrip in that time was impossible. Whenever this younger “enthusiast” apologized for RB’s absence, he was drowned out by instant cries of “No, no, you’re great!”

A generous speaker, Sam Weller also embodies graciousness. Upon learning SCWA had over-subscribed lunches from the restaurant, he immediately donated the honorarium he had received for car and hotel expenses.

At the end, we all felt enthused, inspired, and gratified, ready to take Bradbury’s admonition of “Go home and celebrate your keyboard and your pen.”

*Glenda Rynn, Member*

*MEMBERS may purchase taped copies of lectures from SCWA Tape Librarian Sharon Walters: [swwaltz@surfside.net](mailto:swwaltz@surfside.net)*

## SCWA News & Announcements

REMEMBER AT THE NEXT GENERAL MEETING WE WILL BE VOTING ON THE

### THE SCWA BYLAWS

PLEASE READ THEM AND BE READY TO APPROVE THEM  
ON FEBRUARY 18, 2006

**Looking for feature articles  
500-700 words in length.**



**Are there any writers out there?**

**Do you have any news to share? Comments?  
Please e-mail news about your writing career  
successes, failures, and in-between to**

**Laura Sheridan-Long at  
[Laura@ScribbleMoon.com](mailto:Laura@ScribbleMoon.com)**

## The February 2006 “Will Write 4 Food” Contest!



**Write:** Look carefully at the photo (right) and write a short-short story (maximum 250 words) about what is happening.

**Submit:** One entry per member per month.

**Via e-mail:** Lynnette Baum, [therightwriter@cox.net](mailto:therightwriter@cox.net)

**Via snail mail:** L. Baum, 17595 Harvard, Ste. C-144, Irvine, CA 92614.

**Deadline:** Stories must be received on or before February 13, 2006.

**Revised Requirements:** To facilitate fair judging, put the story title on the top of the page with your **name** and **day-time phone number** underneath. Only the winning author will be contacted.

**Subject Line:** *February 2006 “Will Write 4 Food Contest”* with your daytime number or e-mail address.

(For snail-mail put this information on the outside of the envelope.) **Warning: without the subject line, submission may not be read in time.**



**Winner:** Attends their next SCWA meeting for free. He or she will also be presented with a winner’s certificate.

The winning story will be featured in the club’s newsletter, *The Writers News*, and on the organization’s Website.

**Criteria:** *Contestants must be members of SCWA.* The story must be 250 words or less. No evaluation or comments will be offered on contest submissions. Only one **winning** entry per member per year.

Lynnette Baum, V.P. Programming

### January Contest Winner:

#### THE ARGUMENT by Tony Stoklosa

Flowers were still green buds when the first bloody carcass was found. It was only a chicken and the hunters the old man called told him this was the work of a wolf. He scowled and extolled the rotten-egg odor he encountered but the odors had quickly blown away and this recluse was known for story telling. When the chickens were all eaten, it was a torn-up horse with a half-eaten head that brought his excited warning again. A bear the hunters concluded this time. He contorted and wheezed in imitation of the raspy breathing he had heard but the actual sound had fled like a breeze.

Now the white hand of winter gripped the land and isolated the old man’s shack. Awake after midnight, he could only press his blanket around his ears to shield them from the hungry groaning in the woods and later a slathering and creaking of planks at his flimsy door.

The shock of freezing air provided a hint of the pain that was to come as he was dragged outside. But Winter would also provide the means for victory. As the monster carried him back across a bridge into the woods with red iridescent scales flashing in the moonlight, the old man knew the hunters would recognize the danger, follow it and put an end to the slaughter. For his tormentor left an irrefutable argument—a trail in the snow only a young dragon could make.

#### Honorable Mentions

Carol Gandolfo - *Topaz Morning*

Mike Dunn - *A Shining Mistake*

[www.ocwriter.com/willwrite.html](http://www.ocwriter.com/willwrite.html)



February Meeting:  
Saturday  
February 18, 2005

## Dorothy Foltz-Gray, Writer, Poet *How to Turn Hot Articles into Cool Cash!*

(See inside to learn more about Dorothy Foltz-Gray.)

### NOTICE:

We will be voting on

**THE SCWA**

**REVISED**

**BYLAWS**

**PLEASE ATTEND!**



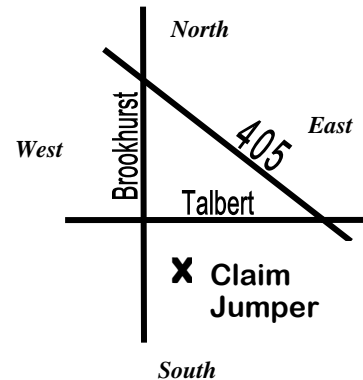
### LOCATION:

#### **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 & Program:	10:00 a.m.
Lunch:	11:30 a.m.
Afternoon Program:	12:15 p.m.

**Members & Non-Members \$20.00**



**WALK-INS & GUESTS ALWAYS WELCOME**



**RSVP before February 13:** Roy King, 15772 Heatherdale Rd., Victorville, CA 92394  
Check must accompany reservations. Make checks payable to **SCWA**.

**After February 13:** Roy King, *home:* (760) 955-5027; *e-mail:* 3kings@urs2.net—bring check to door.  
For more information, go to **www.ocwriter.com**.

**BE SURE TO RSVP WHENEVER POSSIBLE! . . . Or register online at [www.ocwriter.com/meetings.html](http://www.ocwriter.com/meetings.html)**

Southern California Writers Association

# Writers News

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