



Writers News

Volume 8, Number 2.....February 2009

www.ocwriter.com

Remember!

This month's meeting is at 2:30 p.m.!!!!

February 21 Speaker

W. C. Jameson

Stirrup Award Winner & author of 50 books

Let's Get Published!

Insider secrets that jump-start your manuscript onto bookstore shelves

Winner of awards from national and regional associations and a three-time winner of the coveted Stirrup Award for Best Magazine Article, W.C. Jameson is a nationally recognized and honored author, often serving as a literary judge for organizations such as the *Western Heritage Association*, *Ozark Creative Writers, Inc.*, and *Women Writing the West*.

This award-winning author of 50 books and over 1,500 published articles and essays, boasts a recent novel, *Beating the Devil* (University of New Mexico Press), that has racked up stunning reviews and impressive sales, while generating calls from movie producers. In addition to writing fiction, Jameson is the creator of the series, *W.C. Jameson's Lost Treasures of America*. Renowned as the best-selling treasure author in the world, his fame as a professional treasure hunter has led to appearances on *Unsolved Mysteries*, *the History Channel*, *The Discovery Channel*, *the Travel Channel*, *Nightline*, and *National Public Radio*, as well as consultant work on films like *National Treasure* and the *Indiana Jones* series.



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Jameson will talk to the SCWA about, 1) How to take your book from inception to completion; 2) Advantages and disadvantages of university presses vs. commercial presses; 3) Where to find and how to keep an agent; 4) How to mine personal treasures for writing projects; and, 5) How to get your first publishing gig.

See *Jameson*, page 7

President's Message

WRITE NOW...

with *Bird by Bird*

Anne Lamott's New York Times bestseller, *Bird by Bird*, is an insightful, motivating gift to all writers. Open and intimate, this honest portrayal of a writer's life de-mystifies the writing process, while re-enthroning the act of writing and the use of personal experience to inspire imagination.



"Ever since I was a little kid," Anne says, "I've thought that there was something noble and mysterious about writing, about the people who could do it well, who could create a world as if they were little gods or sorcerers. All my life I've felt that there was something magical about people who could get into other people's minds and skin, who could take us back to ourselves. And, you know what? I still do."



In the competitive world of creativity, crucifixion is commonplace and nurturing a rare prize. Yet, without honest nurturing, creative souls may never taste the sweetness that comes with a manuscript well written or a check from a publisher. Anne Lamott, the daughter of a well-known writer, nurtures the artist within by sharing tales of sorrow and serenity in the voice of one who knows. In simple, crisp prose, she talks about plot, how to get started, first draft blues, dialogue, character, publication, false starts and great endings. *Bird by Bird* is a helpful, hilarious book that is brilliantly written.

"So much of writing is about sitting down and doing it every day, and so much of it is about getting into the custom of taking in everything that comes along, seeing it all as grist for the mill," Anne continues. "This can be a very comforting habit, like biting your nails... Maybe you never quite get to the point where you say, 'Ah - so that's what a gun looks like from this end.' But, you take in all you can, as a child would, without the atmospheric smog of most grown-up vision."

When sitting at your desk or kitchen table, feeling like the reluctant compass for the dull point of every pencil, fenced in by blank writing tablets and the troubles of the day, *Bird by Bird* can free your writing. Creative work, like birth, demands blood, sweat and tears. To coax something hidden in the heart or mind onto the page where God and your neighbor can read it, calls for a special kind of courage. During times when gloom overshadows your brightest aspirations, a book like *Bird by Bird* clears the air.

Lynnette Baum
President
lynnette@the-right-writer.com

JANUARY HIGHLIGHTS:

DODIE CROSS: *Secrets of Writing Successful Memoirs*



Memoirist Dodie Cross has turned her year's adventure in Thailand into *A Broad Abroad in Thailand: An Expat's Misadventures in the Land of Smiles*. The year and a half she spent in Iran during its revolution will be encapsulated in her second book, *A Broad Abroad in Iran: One Strappy Sandaled Foot Ahead of the Mullahs*.

Cross began writing at nine years old. Sometime later her career kick-started when an essay of hers won \$300 for first place in a contest she read about in *South Florida* magazine. Her entry fee was only \$5.

She highly recommends contests that take a chapter of a memoir. "The more you submit, the

easier it gets." A biography, of course, covers a whole life, but a memoir is "a certain time" in a life and utilizes a fiction style.

For extra guidance, Cross recommends Stephen King's *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft* and Judith Barrington's *Writing the Memoir: From Truth to Art*. From Barrington, Cross related these four elements of memoirs:

- A. Voice: Must be engaging, conversational, talks directly to the reader. "Put in your personal stuff—quirks, wit, style."
- B. Story arc: A beginning that grabs, suspense, conflict but comes back down with resolve. Must be change in the character.
- C. Place and sense of time: Show, don't tell. The reader must *feel*, see, and smell.
- D. Character development: A real person with real problems who provokes empathy in the reader.

Cross had SCWA attendees try this memoir exercise. Recall and list examples in each of these ten areas:

1. Childhood memories
2. Dreams and nightmares
3. Five gifts I give myself with magic
4. If I could spend a million dollars, what would I buy?
5. What do I want most in the world?
6. Things I want to avoid
7. Things that are creepy
8. Things that are sexy
9. Best foods
10. Best times

Now, write one story and try to incorporate items from each category. The quick results read by those present were impressive.

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See *Cross*, page 7

SCWA News & Announcements

NEXT MONTH'S SPEAKERS:



Jared Kuritz and Antoinette Kuritz

Director and President of Literary Strategies P.R.



March 21

Publishing with a Purpose:

The How's and Why's of Getting the Most Out of Your Book

From writing for marketability to publishing options, every choice you make will help determine whether your book will die on the vine or be a catalyst for an ongoing and ever-expanding career. Jared and Antoinette Kuritz will team-teach the secrets of expanding your writing career at our March meeting.

Bring your 25-word book synopsis, along with three personal and three professional goals for that book, for an assessment and brainstorming session that will open your eyes to possibilities you may never have considered!

Contact Writers News Editor Mary Michel Green at (949) 361-6581 or green.mary@cox.net.

SCWA Critique Committee Open to Members of SCWA

Nonfiction & Fiction

This position is open.

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

Executive Committee

PresidentLynnette Baum
VP, Programming Kathy Porter
VP, MembershipLinda Coyne
Secretary..... Charla Spence
TreasurerLarry Porricelli
Publicity DirectorLarry Porricelli
Webmaster Tony Stoklosa
Meeting Coordinator..... Charla Spence
Newsletter Editor Mary Michel Green
Tape Librarian.....Sharon Walters

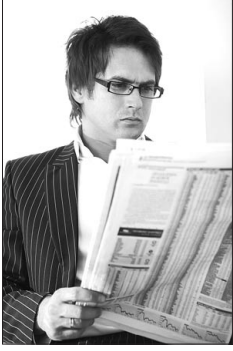
Membership Information

Linda Coyne, VP, Membership
membership@ocwriter.com

Meeting Reservations

Charla Spence, meeting@ocwriter.com
or message (714) 375-5275

Member Good News



Pauline Chavez Bent was interviewed by Michele Marr of the *Huntington Beach Independent* newspaper regarding her book, *Atarque*, and specifically the part of the book about her family's tradition of celebrating *Los Reyes Magos* — *the Three Wisemen*. Michele included the information from the interview in the *Independent* that appeared New Year's day.

Janet de Marco
Reporter
goodnews@ocwrter.com



Remember!

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February “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.

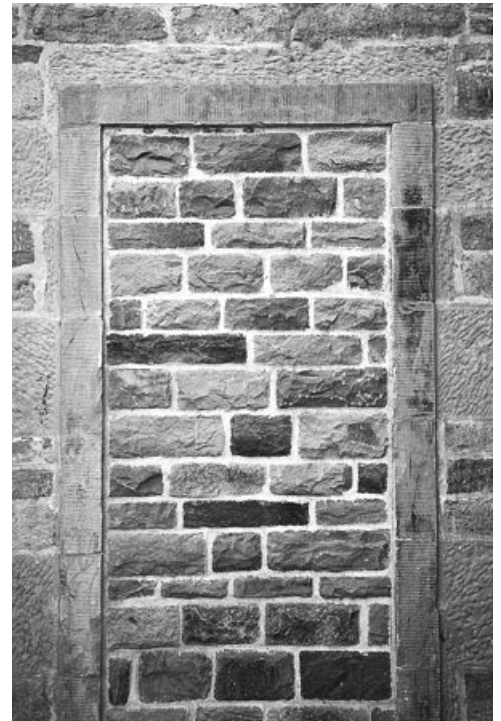
Submit: One entry per member per month.

E-mail to: contest@ocwrter.com with subject line: February 2009 “Will Write 4 Food Contest.” Put your daytime phone number or e-mail address in the message, along with the title of your story. Please attach the story without your identifying information, so the judging will be impartial.

Deadline: Stories must be received on or before 11:59 p.m. on February 6, 2009.

Winner: Attends their next SCWA meeting for free, a \$24.95 value! 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 Web site. Runners-up will also receive certificates and their stories will be on the Web site.

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, but you may receive as many honorable mentions you can win. At the end of the year, we will try to publish all winning stories in an SCWA chapbook.



Longer-Form Short Story Contest Begins — Entries Due 3/31/09

2nd Annual Short Story Contest, 2009 Southern California Writers Association

GENERAL CONTEST RULES

1. This year's theme is "Dilemma."

Like the commercials where someone wants to go to the airport and downtown at the same time, a dilemma occurs when the character wants two things almost equally as much, but they are mutually exclusive. The key to the story is how the character resolves his/her dilemma or learns to live with it. Note: A dilemma is not the same as having a problem. Readers read on to find out the protagonist's choice.

2. The judge of his year's contest is Victory Crayne. She will be the sole judge and will rank stories on each of the following dimensions:

Adherence to theme – Degree to which the story fit the theme.

Language - Basic literacy, poetic sense in the use of English (as long as the style is not distracting)

Story development - Subjective score, but includes presence of a story arc, character development, beginning, end, etc.

Gut appeal - Is the story immersive? Does it connect with the reader on an emotional level?

Originality / creativity - Subjective score

3. Entrants must be members of SCWA. Send

your stories to the agent, not the judge, at contest2@ocwriter.com. The agent will record who wrote which story, will remove all evidence of the author's identity from the story, and forward all stories to the judge at the end of the contest period, so early submissions will have no advantage over later submissions.

4. Stories may be submitted via e-mail only at contest2@ocwriter.com.

1. E-mailed submissions must use a 12-point or larger font (any reasonably legible font style), black color, single or double spaced, with the story title and your name on the first page only.

Please put "SCWA Spring Long-form Story Contest Submission" in the subject line of your e-mail.

5. Stories are limited to 2,000 words.

This does not include the title, author name, or any copyright lines, which will be stripped from the story before the judge receives it. It also does not include the use of "The End." Stories that are too long will be automatically disqualified.

6. You may submit more than one story for this contest.

7. The contest starts on February 10 and ends on March 31 at midnight. The winners will be announced at the April meeting.

8. Caution: You should not submit your stories or anything about your story to our general discussion e-mail list (discuss@ocwriter.com), since the judge's e-mail is on that list and will know who wrote it.

See *Contest*, page 7

Getting Published Described

Jameson, from page 1

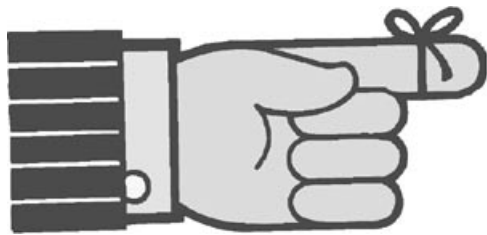
“Patience is one of several keys to success!” Jameson says. “Unfortunately, young writers want instant success, but you have to cut your chops on writing and become an expert at publication before you can succeed. And, that doesn’t happen over night!”

Join us on February 21 to learn from this wonderful author how to write well and how to get your books into bookstores!

Lynnette Baum

President

lynnette@the-right-writer.com



Don't Forget!

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Writing Memoirs Explained

Cross, from page 3

Cross also disseminated a handout about using the five senses in memoirs or autobiographies. Do not edit as you write; that brings “paralysis by analysis.”

Since she's older, Ms. Cross did not use an agent because “it takes an agent two years to shop for a publisher. Then the publisher has the manuscript for a year.” She used a small press publisher and is doing all the marketing herself. For more information, see www.dodiecross.com.

Glenda Brown Rynn

Reporter

grynn@cox.net

2,000-Word Short Story Contest Commences

Contest, from page 6

9. When the contest end date has passed, the agent will forward all stories (without author names) to the judge. At the April meeting, the judge will announce the winning stories. The winning top three stories and their author's names will also be posted on our website.
10. There will be three great prizes awarded. Watch the March issue for details!

Mary Michel Green

Newsletter Editor

green.mary@cox.net

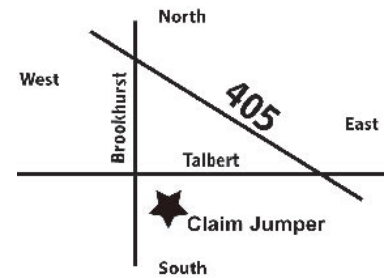


**February Meeting:
Saturday
February 21**

W.C. JAMESON
Let's Get Published!
(See inside for more on W.C. Jameson.)



LOCATION: Claim Jumper Restaurant
Banquet Room entrance, rear of building
18050 Brookhurst St., Fountain Valley, CA
Restaurant telephone: (714) 963-6711



THIS MONTH ONLY:
Meeting starts at 2:30 p.m.

GUESTS ALWAYS WELCOME--\$34.95 AT DOOR; \$29.95 WITH RSVP
MEMBERS WHO DO NOT RSVP PAY \$29.95 AT DOOR
MEMBERS WHO DO RSVP PAY \$24.95



BE SURE TO RSVP WHENEVER POSSIBLE!

RSVP before February 17:

Charla Spence, Meeting Coordinator, P.O. Box 1585, Huntington Beach, CA 92647-9998. Check payable to SCWA must accompany reservation. Our PayPal online account is temporarily out of commission.

After February 17: E-mail Charla at meeting@ocwriter.com or message (714) 375-5275



Writers News

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