



# Writers News

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www.ocwriter.com

January 17 Speaker

## Dodie Cross

### Secrets of Writing Successful Memoirs



Dodie Cross is a freelance writer and author of the memoir *A Broad Abroad In Thailand: An Expat's Misadventures in the Land of Smiles*, which took first place in the National Indie Excellence 2008 Book Awards for autobiography/memoir; a finalist in humor; and silver in *ForeWord Magazine's* Book of the year award for humor.

Her writing and poetry have received numerous awards. Among them are the prestigious Southern California Writer's Conference first place award for best nonfiction for *Abroad*, as well as first place in their inaugural poetry award. This prize-winning author has accrued first and second place awards in her published articles. Schooled in creative writing and journalism, she attended both Cerritos College and College of the Desert for magazine and newspaper writing.

You can read her online articles by Googling "Dodie Cross."

Her articles have appeared in *The Desert Sun*, the *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, and as a guest columnist for the *Lake Chelan Mirror* in Washington state. Her essays have been published in the *Monterey Bay Parents Magazine*, the University of Texas literary magazine, *RiverSedge*, and in expat e-zines *Talesmag.com* and *Escapeartists.com*. Many of her articles have been syndicated on writing Web sites on the internet. She is

a member of the American Pen Women, and currently a columnist for the Palm Springs Writers Guild.

The world is brought a little closer to us through her writing about life in foreign countries such as Iran, Thailand, as well as not-so-foreign places like New Orleans, Orange County, California, and Lake Chelan, Washington.

Cross is married, has four children and

See **Cross**, page 7

#### IN THIS ISSUE:

<i>January Speaker</i> .....	1
<i>President's Message</i> .....	2
<i>December Meeting Highlights</i> .....	3
<i>Critique Committee</i> .....	4
<i>SCWA News &amp; Announcements</i> .....	4-7

# President's Message

## JUST DO IT!



The phrase "Just Do It" was made famous by Nike ads touting sportswear by using successful athletes to attract hero-worshipping yuppies. But, this simple idea sparked a firestorm of protest. "Just Do It" frustrated people who didn't know how to accomplish their goals. Don't order me to do it when I don't know how! they said.

They had a point. The phrase was vague. Yet, its very vagueness may have supported a saving grace, especially for writers.

The fact is writers are quirky. Each one approaches writing in a different way. Some feel quiet retreats are ideal for writing. Others find the hustling atmosphere of a coffee shop or restaurant more inspiring. Many feel that the rarified atmosphere of a library gets their creative juices flowing. The point is that each writer has a preference for a type of atmosphere and energy that opens the floodgates and gets words on the page. Do you know your preferences? Or, are they vague and undefined?

Perhaps, the phrase "Just Do It" intimidates because it challenges our self-knowledge. It implies that all anyone needs is grit and determination, when every writer knows the trials inherent in inspiring The Muse.

If you want to "Just Do It," write down three things that most inspire your writing. Perhaps, you write better with music. Maybe you respond to the sounds of nature. It could be that a certain time of day works better for you. Get clear on what fuels your creative consciousness and line these things up. Once you've established a creative ambiance, everything else falls into place.

"Just Do It" becomes easy to embrace when you know what you need to do! The saving grace in this vague phrase is that it can be cut to fit according to each writer's needs. Find out what fires your creativity, provide it for yourself and start writing. Think like a marketer involved in supply and demand. If your inner self needs atmosphere or color-coded pens, line those things up. Then, simple as it sounds, "Just Doing It" becomes a lot easier!



Lynnette Baum  
President  
[lynnette@the-right-writer.com](mailto:lynnette@the-right-writer.com)



## DECEMBER HIGHLIGHTS:

# DARLENE QUINN: *Behind the Magic Table of a Successful Book Launch and Author Promotion!*

SCWA's own Darlene Quinn, recently back from a book tour for *Webs of Power*, talked to members about what she's learned during the whole publishing process. What she already knew well was how the corporate retail industry works at its highest levels. *Webs of Power* is described on her site as "a raw, unsentimental portrayal of greed, manipulation, and relationships set in the excessive, insatiable retail industry of the 1980s."

Quinn's experience includes being director of personnel/organization at Bullock's Wilshire; corporate director of training at Bullock's; and director of self-improvement, modeling and charm courses, as a private contractor for Bullock's and Robinson's Department Stores. Her novel is based on "real events that continue to rock Wall Street." Bullock's and Robinson's were part of Federated Department Stores, renamed "Consolidated" in her novel.



—Quinn had to cut much of her business detail since readers of novels "want to be in the emotional world, as opposed to nonfiction." However, the media want to interview authors for their knowledge, their platform. By studying corporate leveraged buyouts, Quinn upped her appeal as an expert. Her book is selling well in Minnesota where she did three radio shows.

—A publicist can be helpful with a press kit and questions for media hosts to ask but must understand the demographics of your target audience.

—You need a Web site ([www.DarleneQuinn.net](http://www.DarleneQuinn.net)) and a blog ([Darlenequinn.wordpress.com](http://Darlenequinn.wordpress.com)). Quinn's Web site offers both long and short podcast interviews, a trailer for the book, two media contacts, her publicity schedule and more.

To develop a relationship with a particular bookstore, see the customer relations manager.

Her agent wouldn't let her books be stocked in airport convenience stores because their unsold books are not returned in saleable condition.

—Borders will soon go into 37 airports. Quinn will have books at Border's in the Jet Blue terminal at JFK and in the Phoenix airport.

—Use a professional editor who can work within the world you create and the rhythm you use.

—Publicity at libraries is not effective unless they have a "Friends of the Library" group. Then you can put up posters and flyers.

—A good group to join (for \$15) is the Chicago Writers Group ([windycitywriters.com](http://windycitywriters.com)) who published a 12-page interview by telephone with Quinn.

—Quinn has 3x5 ads in major newspapers but found that her hometown press did "a bigger, cheaper one" because she was a resident.

—Schedule out-of-town events no earlier than three weeks past your publication date so bookstores can have your books in stock.

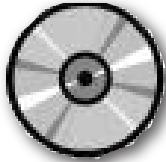
—Definitions: A "stock signing" means you order books ahead of time, walk in, sign them

See *Quinn*, page 6

# SCWA News & Announcements

## If You Can't Make the Meeting:

You can buy recordings of previous speakers on both cassette tape and audio CD for the member price of only \$5 each! This is such a valuable resource if you miss a meeting. Our Southern California Writers Association rosewood pens are also available for only \$7.50. Just go to [ocwriter.com](http://ocwriter.com) and click on "Make a Purchase."



## NEXT MONTH'S SPEAKER: *February 21\* – W.C. Jameson* *Western Author/Musician*

A very popular speaker in December 2007, this time around WC will be sharing with us some of the publishing horror stories and how an author overcomes and avoids the predators in the publishing industry.

*\* For this day only: meeting time has been changed to 2:30 p.m.*

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

President .....Lynnette Baum  
VP, Programming .....Kathy Porter  
VP, Membership .....Linda Coyne  
Secretary..... Charla Spence  
Treasurer .....Larry Porricelli  
Publicity Director .....Larry 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](mailto:membership@ocwriter.com)

### Meeting Reservations

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

# Meeting Fees Must Increase

Happy New Year! Hope your holidays were fulfilling and joyful...and that 2009 looks bright. We have scheduled a wonderful series of top speakers, as well as delicious meals, for the coming year.

However, for the past six (6) years, the operating costs for the Southern California Writers Association have risen, steadily. To entice celebrity speakers like Ray Bradbury, Stephen J. Cannell, Elizabeth Yost and Paul Williams, we have had to raise our speaker fees. In addition, the Claim Jumper Restaurant has consistently increased their banquet meal prices to keep

pace with inflation. Despite such financial challenges, the SCWA has not passed on rising costs to members or non-members for almost ten years.

Unfortunately, if we are to maintain our superior speakers, as well as continue to use the Claim Jumper as our banquet facility, the SCWA must increase meeting costs during 2009. With that in mind, The Board has approved a \$4.95 raise to our meeting rates, starting this month (January 2009). This rate increase is already reflected online.

We want all attendees to know that the SCWA is committed to providing the best

speakers possible for the least amount of money. We are not a profit-making enterprise. Indeed, our focus of concern is to provide a forum in which both established and aspiring writers may develop and excel for the lowest possible cost.

Thank you for your continuing attendance and support. We look forward to celebrating the gift of writing with you, during 2009!

Lynnette Baum  
President

[Lynnette@the-right-writer.com](mailto:Lynnette@the-right-writer.com)

## “Will Write 4 Food” Contest Returns!

**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@ocwriter.com](mailto:contest@ocwriter.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

See *Will Write 4 Food*, page 6



# Membership Renewal Time is Here!

It's never too soon to make sure you continue your membership in our fantastic organization. Dues will be due by January 1, so get ahead of the crowd and buy yourself an early Christmas present in the form of another 12 months of networking, enjoyment and writing education by taking care of your 2009 membership now.



Annual membership dues: \$30

Students: \$15

Bring your check to the meeting or mail it to:

SCWA Membership  
Post Office Box 1585  
Huntington Beach, CA 92647-9998

## “Will Write 4 Food” Contest Resuming

*Will Write 4 Food*, from page 5

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.

Mary Michel Green  
Newsletter Editor  
[green.mary@cox.net](mailto:green.mary@cox.net)

## Launching a Book Tour Explained

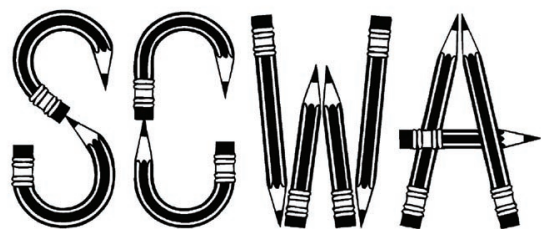
*Quinn*, from page 3

with a sticker on the front to that effect, and leave. No presentation. (Signed books are harder for the store to return.) A “book signing” means at an advertised time, you make a presentation and then sign books for customers. For a “meet and greet,” you are stationed in a prominent spot for variable hours to engage customers and promote interest in your book. Have something with a personal touch to hand out—bookmarks, etc.

—Use a critique group “like a salad bar”; pick what works for you. If five persons comment about the same problem, fix it. Be careful of those who want “to rewrite your book in their direction.” Be leery of repeating earlier details in later chapters just so your group can remember.

Darlene Quinn is working on a sequel, tentatively titled *Twisted Webs*.

Glenda Brown Rynn  
Member  
[grynn@cox.net](mailto:grynn@cox.net)



# Successful Memoirs Described

*Cross*, from page 1

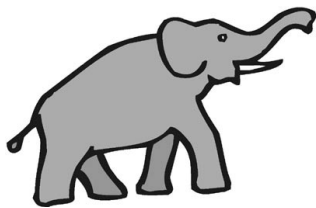
nine grandchildren. She spends her time between the beautiful shores of Lake Chelan, Washington and Southern California's balmy Palm Springs.

Don't miss this engaging author share her secrets of writing successful memoirs. You will be thrilled, humored, and touched by her experiences and discover how to put those fond memories into a work of art!

Look for her next book: *A Broad Abroad in Iran: One Strappy-Sandaed Foot Ahead of the*

*Mullahs (During the Revolution)*. Also: Follow Dodie's blog entries about this book as she writes at [www.dodiecross.com](http://www.dodiecross.com).

*Kathy Porter*  
VP, Program  
[kathy@grayguardians.com](mailto:kathy@grayguardians.com)



## Don't Forget!

**ALERT!** Due to an error with Claim Jumper scheduling, the February meeting of the SCWA will be held at 2:30 p.m. instead of 10:00 a.m. Please mark your calendars! If you show up at our normal time in February, it is probable that a very large Door Warden will direct you away from the Banquet Room and back to the parking lot. Again, the SCWA meeting scheduled for February 21, 2009 will be held at 2:30 p.m. instead of 10:00 a.m. Thanks for adjusting your schedules! We'll see you there...

## Member Good News

**Melissa Adams** announced that *VaughanTown.com* is offering a language immersion program in Spain including a free vacation in a four-star venue near Madrid, Spain to just talk with Spaniards who wish to practice speaking English.

Travel writers are given priority. The program includes lodging, meals, transfers, entertainment. Air fare is not included. See *VaughanTown.com* for details.

**Pauline Chavez Bent**, Honorary board member of the New Mexico Hispanic Cultural Preservation League, was a featured speaker at St. Wilfred's Episcopal Church community outreach program in Huntington Beach In November. The title of her talk was "*The Faith, Courage and Spirit of New Mexico's Hispanic Pioneering Women: A Profile of Rural Catholicism.*" She had also presented this paper at the Catholic Curato Centennial Conference on the

History of the Catholic Church in New Mexico, held in Santa Fe.

Her presentation is included in the book: *Seeds of Struggle, Harvest of Faith*.

**Victory Crane** will be the front page interview on *MyShelf.com* in January. Their Web site gets 200,000 visitors a month.

**Anita Hermeach** just finished writing her first book, *Think & Grow Peace* - How each of us can contribute our "piece" to peace in our portion of our world. Her next book, *After Me, You're First*, will be published in January 2009.

*Janet De Marco*  
Member  
[jdemar08@msn.com](mailto:jdemar08@msn.com)



**January Meeting:**  
**Saturday**  
**January 17**

**DODIE CROSS**

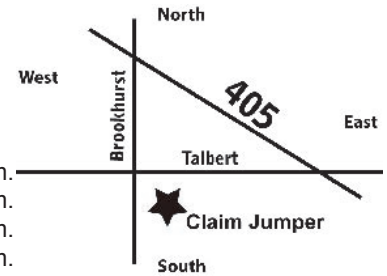
*Secrets of Writing Successful Memoirs*



**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:	10:00 a.m.
Lunch:	11:30 a.m.
Afternoon Program:	12:30 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 January 12:

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 January 12: E-mail Charla at [meeting@ocwriter.com](mailto:meeting@ocwriter.com) or message (714) 375-5275



**Writers News**

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