



Writers News

Volume 10, Number 11.....November 2011

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SCWA Newsletter Contribution Opportunities

Do you have a book or conference review? An article of interest to the SCWA? An event SCWA members should know about? Your SCWA Newsletter accepts contributions (typically 250 words or less) for the "Writer's Corner", "Events and Announcements", and "Reviews" sections of the newsletter. To be considered for the following month's edition, please submit by the 27th of each month. The editor will evaluate all input and determine when, and if, it will be published in the newsletter. Send any contributions to editor@ocwriter.com.

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SCWA President's Message

Charla Spence, SCWA President

Your Business Plan in Review

Over the year, I have tried to give you a very high level overview of the importance of a business plan and a project plan for your book project. While each of these areas are worthy of a book in themselves (and there are many out there), my intent was to not reinvent the wheel but rather try to raise awareness for the importance of focusing part of your energy on the process side of book development. As I mentioned in the beginning, "Since many of these topics are not scientific", you will likely find differing opinions and solutions in addition to common trends. My suggestion for dealing with this dilemma is to review several approaches and pick the one(s) that make the most sense or pick and choose ideas to create your own approach. The main thing is to "plan, plan, plan! Even though a plan does not insure success, most businesses that succeed have a plan." For those of you interested in other perspectives or more detail, there are many good books written on developing business plans and project plans. You can adapt their principles to your writing project. Warning: most of these books are pretty deep and may be more that you want to deal with which is why I tried to summarize key components.

As a quick summary, a business plan should contain:

- **Market Analysis** – Who will buy your book? Be very honest here.
- **Marketing & Sales Strategy** - How will you market and sell your book?
- **Management** – Who will be on your team?
- **Financial Projections** – How much will it cost? Be realistic.
- **Exit Strategy** – How will you know when you should end your efforts and how will you do it?
- **Executive Summary** – Brief summary (1 or 2 pages) of the key components of your business plan

A project plan should contain the following phases:

- **Research (Analysis)** – Develop the components of the business plan.
- **Design (Goals and Steps)** - How will you get the work done?
- **Development (Creating Content)** – Writing your book. Don't forget to use other references for steps in the creative process, not covered here.
- **Delivery (Review and Edit)** – Getting input on your book.
- **Evaluation (Revision)** – Evaluating the input on your book for the final revision.
- **Maintenance (Keeping it alive)** – Continuing marketing and possible next edition research.

If you aren't interest in more detailed information and you only roughed out the plans based on my brief thoughts, you will have more insight and direction than you had before and a greater chance of knowing what to realistically expect from your book. Either way, I wish you success with your writing.

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SCWA Monthly Meeting - November 19th Speaker

“What’s The Story? *What Is Story Structure and Why Does it Matter?*”

Dale Griffiths Stamos



Story structure is at the heart of all forms of writing from novels to memoirs, from plays to video games. If story elements are not strong, the work will fall apart, no matter how beautifully worded. Story is the invisible scaffolding that holds up any well crafted piece of writing. So what *is* story structure, and how does one discover and strengthen story elements in one’s writing? Dale Griffiths Stamos, working playwright, story structure instructor, and manuscript consultant will discuss these elements in depth.

During Q & A, Dale will answer general questions about story, along with any specific story challenges writers are dealing with in their own work.

Dale Griffiths Stamos is an award-winning playwright whose one-act and full-length plays have been produced and published in the United States and abroad. She was recently named a top ten winner for her two full length plays, *One White Crow* and *Blue Jay Singing in the Dead of Night* in the 2010 Writer’s Digest Stage Play Competition. She won the Jewel Box Theatre’s Original Playwriting Competition for her full length drama ***Dialectics of the Heart*, which was produced at Edgemar Center for the Arts in Santa Monica, and starred three time Emmy-nominated actress, Sharon Lawrence.** She received the Heideman Award from Actors Theatre of Louisville for her ten-minute play ***The Unintended Video*, which was subsequently published by Samuel French and which has been produced worldwide.** She was also Emmy nominated for shared story credit on the CBS special: *Words Up!*. Her full length *One White Crow* received its world premiere at Arena Players Repertory Theatre, Long Island, New York in 2011, and will be opening at Edgemar Center in 2012; and an evening of her one acts, *Thicker Than Water*, was produced recently at the Promenade in Santa Monica and starred the iconic Barbara Bain.

Dale learned a number of years ago that story structure, so essential in playwriting, applies as well to all forms of writing. She teaches structure for all genres at the Santa Barbara Writers Conference, has taught “Finding Your Story” at Cal Arts, and is a private manuscript consultant for all genres. She is also the playwriting columnist on authorlink.com. For more information, go to www.manuscriptconsultant.com, and/or www.dalegriffithsstamos.com.

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SCWA Monthly Meeting - October Meeting Highlights

“Marketing the Muse”

Marla Miller

by Glenda Brown Rynn, SCWA Reporter



“Say you’re an indie publisher, not self-published,” advises Marla Miller from her experiences as an author, talk-show cohost, and writing teacher. Her presentation covered how to build a platform through social media and how to write a compelling query letter.

Miller’s background as a psychiatric nurse and a nurse practitioner launched her into writing magazine health care articles for twenty years. Then she penned three columns for the *Orange County Register* for eighteen years and co-hosted an NPR affiliate radio talk show for eight years. (Surely, these overlap.) Somehow she segued to her first book, *All American Girls: The U.S. Women’s National Soccer Team*, by Simon and Schuster, of which she sold 100,000 copies through four editions. Presently, she also professionally critiques query letters but considers her “first” position to be a writer.

In earlier decades only nonfiction writers needed a platform: a Ph.D. or extensive experience and exposure in their fields. Today, getting into traditional marketing is much tougher unless you’re a celebrity or sports figure. The instability of the publishing business has also led to a need for a platform **even for fiction writers**. The definition of *platform* here means “a large fan base,” which will get publishers’ attention.

Like other writers with a resistance to new media, Miller finally investigated social media. In effectiveness, she ranks Twitter as number one, with Facebook close behind. She says to watch Google Plus: “It’s more efficient than Facebook and gaining lots of its customers.” LinkedIn is important but more of a business site. You need to be seen by would-be publishers on YouTube. Do you freeze or come alive? If you need to make visual media rounds, your physical impact is important.

When Larry Porricelli suggested getting a “book trailer” (possible at the So. Calif. Writers Conference in San Diego, run by Steven Gregory), Miller added that it should be under three minutes. Movie trailers are kept under 2 1/2 minutes. “Five minutes is bad.” Make sure the trailer is representative of your voice, etc. The expense is about \$200.

Now, how do you make a platform out of all the above? You develop reciprocal relationships with authors of blogs you respect and have something in common with—**who have loyal followers**. In short, you support the others by signing up for their blogs and receiving their newsletters. When you think you finally have some information or ideas appropriate for and beneficial to the bloggers, ask if you may post on their blogs. You are doing well if 60% of your followers open your blog regularly.

Miller spends an hour daily on social media, thirty minutes of which is tweeting. On Saturdays she spends more time, including creating videos on YouTube. “If you’re someone with time issues, I’d clock it.” When listeners squirm about the electronic time, Miller reminds us that it replaces the previous practices of meeting others, having lunches, and getting out there to shake hands and make connections.

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SCWA Monthly Meeting - December Speaker Preview

"The Writing Books That Made Me an Award-winning Author."

Brennan Harvey



Learning a new craft is daunting and writing is no different. Whether you are searching for a synonym, developing a character's motivation, formatting a short story manuscript, or building a plot, having a library of good reference books is important.

Brennan will discuss the books that helped him progress from unpublished to award-winning author. Brennan has spent over a decade collecting books on writing. His current library contains over 150 books and covers everything writing related:

- General reference books
- Books on the craft of writing
- Books on formatting manuscripts
- Books on writing short fiction and novels
- Genres books, from science fiction through children's writing to romance writing
- Books that cover the business of writing
- Market listings

Brennan is an award-winning author, capturing first place in the International Writers of the Future Contest for the first quarter, 2010. His novelette, "The Truth, From a Lie of Convenience," is available in L. Ron Hubbard Presents Writers of the Future, Vol. 27.

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SCWA November “Will Write 4 Food Contest”

I know what you're thinking. “How can I have a little fun with my writing? Maybe entertain myself and my peers? Maybe even win a contest and get a free lunch and have my story published in this Newsletter and on our website? And all for a few minutes of my time?”

I have good news for you. The answer is to enter the monthly SCWA “Will Write 4 Food Contest.”

That's right, spend a few hours a month entertaining yourself, and the membership, by contributing to the SCWA monthly writing contest. **The SCWA Monthly writing contest has two new incentives** that we hope will increase the number of writers who choose to participate. There is no longer a limit on the number of winning entries you can have in a year. In addition, the author of the top story for the year will be entitled to a year of free membership. Let's all have some fun.

Write: Look carefully at the photo below 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 with subject line: November 2011 “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 November 13, 2011.

Winner(s): Attends their next SCWA meeting for free, a \$25.00 value! He or she will also be presented with a winner's certificate. The winning story will be featured in the club newsletter and on the organization's Web site. Runners-up will also receive certificates and their stories will be on the Web site. At the end of the year all winning stories will be judged, and the author of the top story for the year will be entitled to a year of free membership in the SCWA.

Criteria: Contestants must be dues-paying members of SCWA with accounts current, or members of the SCWA Facebook Group. The story must be 250 words or less. No evaluation or comments will be offered on contest submissions. At the end of the year, we will try to publish all winning stories in an SCWA chapbook.



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SCWA October “Will Write 4 Food Contest”

Unfortunately, we did not receive any entries for the October contest. If the contest is to stay viable, we'll need more participation in the coming months. Check out the November contest. We hope to hear from you!



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SCWA Election Results

Here are the officers that were elected at the Oct 15, 2011 meeting of the Southern California Writers Association:

President -- Larry Porricelli
Vice President of Programming -- Victory Crayne
Vice President of Membership -- (open)
Treasurer -- Charla Spence
PR Director/ Ambassador -- (open)
Meeting Coordinator -- (open)
Newsletter Editor -- Steve Jackson

- Reported by Victory Crayne, who counted the ballots

If you are interested in serving in any of the open positions, please contact us. Our intention is to be a fun bunch that serves the SCWA with passion and efficiency. Help mold and evolve the SCWA in this exciting and dynamic time for writers in Southern California.

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SCWA Writer's Corner

"Why a Book Proposal? Why Now?"

By Patricia Fry

Are you working on a nonfiction book? Perhaps you have a dream and a vision. You have an audience in mind—in fact, you can visualize members of this audience purchasing your book. And you plan to move forward rapidly with your project so you can make it available to the people you believe need and want it.

There's just one problem. You haven't asked anyone from your proposed audience if they want a book like this. You haven't done the necessary research to discover if this book is actually needed/wanted and by what percentage of people. You just assume that, since this is a topic you know, others are interested in it and want to read about it. Perhaps you've actually talked to a few people about the book and they are encouraging you to publish it. But are they a large enough representation of your target audience? Probably not.

Before you go off in some crazy direction eager to publish your book on how to properly wear your orthodontic retainer, hair ribbons for the fashion-conscious teen, the joy of keeping your trash barrel clean, how to wash a kitten's face or tips for cleaning your DVDs published, stop, look and listen to the experts. And the experts are saying, "Write a book proposal."

The research you will do in order to devise a meaningful nonfiction book proposal will show you whether you actually have a viable product or not. You'll learn if you have an audience for your book, who they are and how extensive your audience is. Through the book proposal process, many an author has discovered that the book he is writing either doesn't have much of an audience or it's not who they thought it was. Some authors learn, through the book proposal process, that they are writing a book that has been duplicated time and time again. It doesn't offer anything new—the material is stale. And some find out that their plan for approaching their audience isn't going to work well—the door to bookstores, for example, is closed to most authors today.

A book proposal, for the first time author, can be a bit daunting. It can take time, tax the brain and generate unpopular results. But it can be one of the most cost-effective decisions you will make with regard to your book.

When I say "unpopular results," I mean, what author wants to backtrack and start over with their book concept? And a genuine book proposal may indicate that you should. For example, perhaps you have written a book on a popular topic and there have been a rash of new books out on that topic in recent years. If you just barrel through with your book without checking the competition, you won't know that the market is inundated. Once you find this out, you may decide to add an aspect to your book that none of the others include, thus you're still writing on a popular topic, but with a new twist.

During the process of writing your book proposal, you might discover some avenues of promoting your book that you hadn't thought of before.

Write a book proposal even before you start writing your nonfiction book and you could save yourself a lot of time, trouble and expense.

For assistance writing a book proposal use *Write the Perfect Book Proposal* by Jeff and Deborah Herman or *How to Write a Successful Book Proposal in 8 Days or Less* by Patricia Fry or sign up for Patricia Fry's online book proposal course. www.matilijapress.com/course_bookproposal.htm

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Events and Announcements

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More SCWA Connections!

Our SCWA Ambassador, Lynnette Baum, has arranged for two new potential connections for SCWA Members.

Suspense Magazine has offered free lifetime access for our members to their online publication. Authors with books on the NYTimes Best Sellers List are featured there, monthly. It's a relatively new publication, with elite connections.

The Western Writers of America, an association with a great reputation, responded to our outreach by inviting qualified SCWA members to submit an application to join. This is a really awesome group if you are already published. They support members with information on publishing trends, marketing, research, feature articles, book and movie reviews, how-to articles, profiles of accomplished authors past and present, historical articles and much more. Belonging to this group really raises an author's reputation.

We will add links to these groups on our website soon.

SCWA Publications

The Braille Institute has chosen *Webs of Power* to go into audio book production with an award winning narrator. Soon a digital audio book will be available to the vision impaired, with a Braille version to follow.

“My Gutsy Story” Contest

SCWA's Sonia Marsh plans to feature someone's "My Gutsy Story" on her blog each Monday. Stories up to 1000 words, videos of 3 minutes or less, and audio files may be sent to Sonia at Sonia@soniamarsh.com. Contributors will have the opportunity for a link back to their website or blog, plus the opportunity to share their bio and work with new readers. For more information, check out <http://soniamarsh.com/2011/10/join-the-weekly-my-gutsy-story-contest.html>.

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Reviews

No reviews were submitted this month. What's up with that?

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SCWA Planned Speaker Schedule

November, 2011: Dale Griffiths Stamos
December, 2011: Brennan Harvey
January, 2012: Marie Fiala

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SCWA Monthly Meeting - October Meeting Highlights (con't)

After lunch Miller and the group critiqued three members' query letters. Writing these is a specialty of hers because every magazine article Miller wrote (or wanted to write) had to be queried first. We listened at the start for "speed bumps," little details that "knock off your attention" or "take you out of the story."

Other advice: "Hook as quickly as you can." Beware of sliding into a summary mode. State the trajectory of the story, the essential conflict, its story arc. "Pull the meat out of synopsis." For a memoir, start with "an inciting incident around which you can tell your whole life."

State the genre soon and be sure of it. (If not, look at where the bookstores shelve books you think are similar to yours.) If your genre is Young Adult (YA), have the voice of that first paragraph be of the protagonist, his view, what he wants to do. If your book has cross-over appeal to another genre, don't announce it: "Let the agent make that connection." If your query letter refers to a real person as a character equivalent, beware of "dated" ones such as Bette Midler, unless that's your target audience.

Those in attendance were automatically subscribed to receive one free copy of Ms. Miller's newsletter. See www.MarlaMiller.com, www.MarketingtheMuse.com, and www.WomenOver45Speak.com.

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SCWA Board of Directors

President.....Charla Spence
 VP, Programming Sonia Marsh
 VP, Membership..... Polly Dunn
 Secretary Polly Dunn
 Ambassador.....Lynnette Baum
 TreasurerLarry Porricelli
 Publicity DirectorLarry Porricelli
 Webmaster..... Brennan Harvey
 Meeting Coordinator.....Sonia Marsh
 Newsletter Editor.....Steve Jackson



Membership Information

membership@ocwriter.com

Meeting Reservations

Sonia Marsh, meeting@ocwriter.com

or message (949) 309-0030

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SCWA Members Directory

The SCWA now offers a complementary listing with all paid memberships. This is entirely voluntary. If you would like your contact information listed in the newsletter, please forward this information to the editor at editor@ocwriter.com.

Name	email	web	phone
Baum, Lynnette	therightwriter@cox.net	www.the-right-writer.com	949-654-3891
Crayne, Victory	victory@crayne.com	www.crayne.com	949-206-0922
Dunn, Polly	pollydunn@sbcglobal.net		714-396-8934
Goldfinger, Sharon	pplspeak@att.net	www.detailsplease.com/peoplespeak	949-581-6190
Hofmann, Lois Joy	loisjoyhofmann@yahoo.com	sailorstales.wordpress.com	858-483-3942
Jackson, Steve	SCWA: editor@ocwriter.com	web.me.com/stevejackson4/Writer	
Lloyd, Rita Lee	rl_loyd@yahoo.com	www.ritaleelloyd.com	949-493-1625
Marsh, Sonia	SCWA: meeting@ocwriter.com	soniamarsh.com	949-309-0030
Marshall, Evelyn	Evelyn@EvelynMarshall.com	www.EvelynMarshall.com	714-220-1882
Porricelli, Larry	SCWA: publicity@ocwriter.com		
Porter, Kathy	Kathy@grayguardians.com	www.grayguardians.com	562-431-0366
Quinn, Darlene	Darlene@darlenequinn.net	www.darlenequinn.net	562-432-1280
Rynn, Glenda	grynn@cox.net		
Spence, Charla	SCWA: president@ocwriter.com	www.CharlaSpence.com	
Stoklosa, Tony	tonystoklosa@hotmail.com		
Young, Neil	celtic1100@yahoo.com		

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SCWA Newsletter Advertising

If you would like to list services in the SCWA Newsletter you may apply for a paid listing by sending an email request to editor@ocwriter.com. You may purchase either business card or web page size.

Size	Monthly	Quarterly	Half-Year	Year	(SCWA Members will receive a 10% discount)
2 x 3.5" :	\$15.00	\$40.00	\$75.00	\$125.00	
Full page:	\$100.00	\$250.00	\$400.00	\$700.00	

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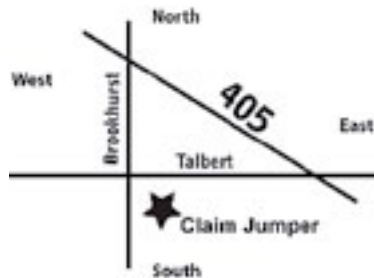
SCWA Monthly Meeting Information and Map

Meeting 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--\$35 AT DOOR; \$30 WITH RSVP
MEMBERS WHO DO NOT RSVP PAY \$30 AT DOOR
MEMBERS WHO DO RSVP PAY \$25

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SCWA Information Disclaimer

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 or the SCWA discuss@ocwriter.com discussion board. The SCWA Newsletter Editor will determine the information to be contained in the SCWA on-line newsletter which is primarily used for official SCWA information.

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