

# Southern California Writers Association

## The Perennial Writers Conference

### January 2020 Newsletter



Volume 19, Number 1 – January 2020

## President's Message

### Larry Porricelli, SCWA President

#### Fellow Writers at Southern California Writer's Association:

[Excerpted from Larry's 2019 End of the Year Letter – worth repeating.]

“...We like to believe that all our efforts together have created a family at SCWA. A family where we help one another, we cheer for one another, and we enjoy the fellowship around a table to bind our missions and share the ideas and energy offered for our minds...not to mention the food and drink!

SCWA is expanding its footprint - this past year SCWA created and set up workshops at various libraries and locations in the counties. Many of our members have spoken throughout the county as well, from New York to Florida to Hawaii!

I am honored to be a member of SCWA with all of you. I am honored to serve with Maddie Margarita, who continually expands our vision beyond, as writers do; with Don Westenhaver; for providing the sense and sensibility as well as the jovial example of service; Steve Jackson, who through his just being there provides a blanket of strength as a group to us all; to Dianna Pardee who has brought the work of SCWA to many other people through her savvy of the internet and social postings; and Sharon Goldinger, a professional in writing business who so selflessly gives of her knowledge to help us all improve as writers; and Pam Sheppard, who besides also sharing her professional talents with many members, always donates a huge smile that lights up a room; Bruce Daisomont, our loyal Sam Gangee, always there, always supporting, never seeking for himself; and Glenda Rynn, the scribe for the age of SCWA, who somehow gets all the information and shares the exact essence of every speaker with us; Sharmyn McGraw I thank as the ultimate volunteer - who will fill in for anyone to help make our meetings a success.”

## SCWA Mission

The mission of the SCWA is to provide a forum for promoting the welfare, fellowship, spirit, education, information, and encouragement among published and unpublished writers in the Southern California area,

A note from our Social Media and Communications Maven, Diana Pardee:  
Check out our SCWA Facebook link and join us for excerpts, discussions and encouragements.

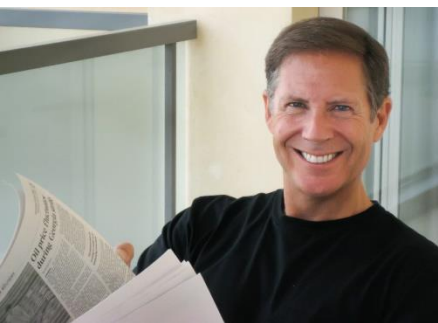
Follow us, we'd love to see you there!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/160332824032519>

The SCWA monthly meeting is the third Saturday of the month and includes our speaker and a buffet lunch. We meet at Claim Jumper Restaurant on Brookhurst in Fountain Valley in the banquet room at 9:30am for registration. Map and complete details are detailed on page 9 below.

Be sure to reserve your place in advance!

## Our Speaker for January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Christopher Reich

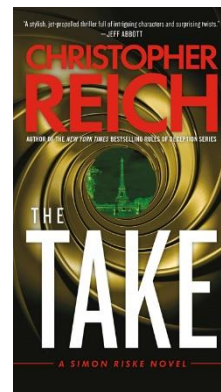


**Christopher Reich** is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Take*, *Numbered Account*, *Rules of Deception*, *Rules of Vengeance*, *Rules of Betrayal*, and many other thrillers. His novel *The Patriots Club* won the International Thriller Writers award for Best Novel in 2006. He lives in Encinitas, California.

NOW in paperback!

*An international spy thriller featuring Simon Riske: one part James Bond, one part Jack Reacher*

Riske is a freelance industrial spy who, despite his job title, lives a mostly quiet life above his auto garage in central London. He is hired to perform the odd job for a bank, an insurance company, or the British Secret Service, when he isn't expertly stealing a million-dollar watch off the wrist of a crooked Russian oligarch.





**Our Speaker for February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
Raymond Obstfeld**

**Raymond Obstfeld** is an associate professor of English at Orange Coast College, a screenwriter, and the author of more than forty books of fiction, poetry, and nonfiction, including studies of the Italian Renaissance, Napoleon Bonaparte, and *Moby Dick*. More than twenty-five of these are in the mystery, suspense, and western genres.

Ross MacDonald said of Raymond’s Harry Gould thrillers, “A talent worth investigating. There’s a satiric bite to his work.” Obstfeld has also worked with Kareem Abdul-Jabbar on three books and the award winning documentary, *On the Shoulders of Giants, the Story of the Greatest Team You Never Heard Of*.

**Don’t miss this!**

**Highlights - December 21<sup>st</sup> 2019:  
Travis Cluff & Chris Lofting  
Producers, Screenwriters of GALLOWS I and II**



SCWA Highlights from Dec. 21, 2019

**Believe in Yourself and Your Story**

The lives of Travis Cluff and Chris Lofing exploding from the ordinary to becoming successful movie producers and creating a company named Tremendum Pictures make real the American dream of working for success. Their dead-on theme was “Believe in Yourself and Your Story.”

Chris Lofing grew up in Nebraska farmlands but spent his extra time in high school (twelve years ago) making movies for fun—and taught himself all aspects of the process. He even produced two feature movies. Afterward, he moved to New York and attended a film academy where he worked on “thesis film,” meaning you receive no budget but do get a camera to use. He was advised to go to Fresno, California, to film because it had “lots of free locations and excused costs.” There he met a local citizen, Travis Cluff, who had recently auditioned for a part in a film as a stuntman.

Previously, Mr. Cluff had supported himself and his family by flipping property. However, this had been during the Bernie Madoff time when Madoff’s monstrous ponzi scheme with investment securities made financial markets tank. Meanwhile, Cluff’s imagination was seized by an ABC program called *Wipeout*. He

thought that performing stunts like the ones it had “would be fun.” Thus, he auditioned in a costume for an episode filmed in Santa Clarita, got hired, and, to his excitement, was even named in the film credits. Plus, he “won”/earned \$50,000. That event and his deep awareness of “how much fun the whole crew and staff” had changed his life. Upon returning to Fresno, Cluff “called himself a professional stuntman.” He soon met Chris Lofting, who did directing. For these two men, becoming friends and business partners was inevitable.

Cluff and Lofing merged their imaginations and drive and in six months completed a “spec” trailer for what became *The Gallows*. Unbelievably, the project cost them only \$250 and that included “food and a mask for the bad guy.” They “utilized free resources,” noting that “horror can easily cross boundaries with no languages,” and that “local collections attorneys loaned them the money.” They “weren’t afraid to ask people for money but had trouble sleeping if a project wouldn’t make enough to pay their investors.” “**The trailer paid \$10,000.**” They and their friends experienced “a feeling of awe associated with an overwhelming experience.” The unexpected secret seems to be in a remark Lofing made near the end that people today haven’t yet acknowledged as valid: “Making stuff is very inexpensive today. You can even make something on an iPhone.” “Television is an option; not traditional anymore.”

Their “trailer passed around on movie blogs.” Then Cluff and Lofing did test screening and re-shoots. One of the original actresses meanwhile had lost forty pounds. All her scenes had to be re-shot. In recasting, they used Kathy Lee Gifford’s daughter. This second version also cost only \$100,000 and, of course, they “had to pull all kinds of favors.” Online, the movie site IMDb.com says *The Gallows* is “known for having the least expensive movie in history to go straight to a worldwide theatrical release.” When released in theaters, *The Gallows* made \$43 million at the box-office, starting with its release in July 2015. The sequel, *The Gallows Act II*, was released by LIONSGATE on October 25, 2019.

Cluff and Lofing “find it easier to deal with people not already in the business. Customary investors for this field can be jaded about all the things that can go wrong.” They got connected with “good people” who helped with different phases. For music they recommend the University of Southern California as a good resource—especially its school for composers. They also met “amazing sound designers.”

These two “do not feature themselves as screenwriters” but more like those who outline their story. This horror genre, however, “let the actors do a lot of the creating.” Cluff and Lofing’s “expertise is bringing that scene to life.” They never used a casting director; it was a “non-union film.” Their approach was “Do we like this person, and will we have fun with them? (No A-holes.)” This team does like all kinds of genres.

Their advice is to make contacts and friends everywhere. You never know what kind of skills and resources others have and how much they’d like to experience this kind of fun. “Keep fresh on your skills—physical fitness. Stay sharp in your downtime to help in your craft.”

Travis Cluff described his and Lofing’s dynamics this way: “*The world finds a way to support drive and vision.*” Their combined motto is “**Go big or go home.**”

Go to <https://tremendum.com/about-us>.

Glenda Brown Rynn, Reporter  
grynn@cox.net

## **BIG NEWS!**

Our own **Maddie Margarita** has launched her marvelous podcast **CHARACTER FLOSS**. Her next guest S A Lechuk talks with Maddie about his debut thriller, **SAVE ME FROM DANGEROUS MEN**. Parts one and two are available on SoundCloud – Part of Authors on the Air Global Radio.

**Steve Jackson** has been asked to write a play overnight as part of the 2020 24 Hour Creative at the Camino Real Playhouse in San Juan Capistrano for a show on Saturday February 1<sup>st</sup>. Steve's play will be one of six 10-minute plays. Last years' play was a hit – we heard applause all the way to Fountain Valley.

Tickets at <https://caminorealplayhouse.tix.com> – event code = 1167697 They sell out quickly!

## **Lit Up for Tuesday, January 21, 2020 at 7pm**

**Lit Up! Orange County** is 7pm **Tuesday, January 21st**

Bardot & Bars in Tustin at 662 El Camino Real

in the Camino Real Shopping Center in Old Town Tustin.

Easy location off Newport Avenue just north of the 5 freeway in the Camino Real Shopping Center in Old Town Tustin. You'll find Bardot & Bars tucked in the far left corner near the Encore Theater.

**-- Smart People and Caffeinated Conversation! --**

Join us **Tuesday night JANUARY 21<sup>ST</sup>**

for an entertaining night of readings and smart conversation with

**Nancy Klann, Casey Dorman, and Dennis Copelan**

What a lineup! Thrills, chills, and surprises!

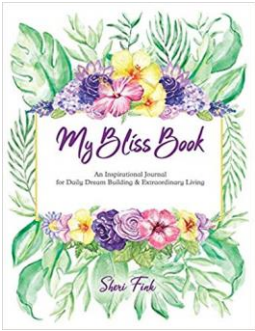
Bring your friends and meet other readers and writers. Enjoy the casual vibe along with delicious coffee, ice cream and a light food menu.

Note: The SCWA Newsletter will be happy to announce members' newly released books published within three months of newsletter pub date. Send a thumbnail of the cover and a tagline to Pam at [sheppardedits@gmail.com](mailto:sheppardedits@gmail.com).

## SCWA Members' New Releases and Works-In-Progress

\*\*\*Members can send their NEW RELEASE and Works-In-Progress information – with a thumbnail of the cover – to Pam at [sheppardedits@gmail.com](mailto:sheppardedits@gmail.com) to be included in the next newsletter.

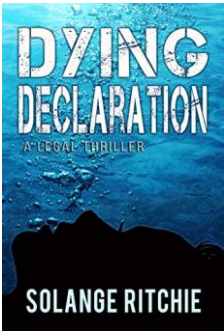
Even BETTER – Post your WIP on the SCWA Facebook page where Pam checks for news for this newsletter. You'll get a double hit on your book. After all, it's never too early to start the marketing machine for your project!



### New Releases from SHARI FINK

The Little Dragon September 2019

My Bliss Book – November 2019



**Dying Declaration: A Legal Thriller**  
By Solange Ritchie

Released November 30, 2019

ASIN: 8082733F4W

\$7.99 Kindle

This is Solange's third book featuring Dr. Catherine "Cat" Powers, a FBI Forensic pathologist and special agent with an uncanny sixth sense for bringing murderers to justice. Solange's first psychological thriller, "The Burning Man" featuring Dr. Catherine Powers was published in 2015 and her second in the series, "Firestorm" was released in 2018. Both are available on Amazon

## WEBSITES, LINKS, EVENTS for WRITERS

It's an ocean of information online for writers. **SHARE YOUR FAVORITE WEBSITES** and we'll all benefit! **Send links** to Diana Pardee or Pam Sheppard and we'll post on the SCWA Facebook group and in the SCWA Newsletters.

- **Where to submit Short Stories: 23 Magazines and Websites that Want Your Work**

<https://thewritelife.com/where-to-submit-short-stories/>

- **Helping Writers Become Authors:** Recent post – HOW TO WRITE YOUR MEMOIR LIKE A NOVEL [www.helpingwritersbecomeauthors.com](http://www.helpingwritersbecomeauthors.com)

- **Publishing...and other forms of Insanity** <https://publishedtodeath.blogspot.com/>

This blog assembles lists of agents open for submissions of various genres, lists of paying markets for your writing, Writing Contests, Writer's Conferences, and more. Highly recommended for its range of information. You'd have to chase dozens of websites to get what the Published to Death blog collects in one place. Definitely worth subscribing and following.

### SCWA Active Member Benefits

Active members receive a 30% discount at every SCWA meeting.

SCWA provides scholarships to members who attend writer's conferences.

SCWA members receive a free review and 30-minute consultation from Sharon Goldinger for any publishing contract.

**SCWA Critique Program** – see below.

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, which is held twice annually in San Diego and Orange County.

## SCWA Critique Program

We have some exciting news on the critique front. One of our members received a critique, and he credits that critique with getting him a two-day response from an agent, who wants to see the entire manuscript. We love it when that happens.

Critique requests should be sent to Steve Jackson at [steven@stevengjackson.com](mailto:steven@stevengjackson.com). If you have not received a response to a previous critique request, please resubmit (without any fee if you've already paid) to Steve. Steve will direct your sample (up to 15 double-spaced pages) to one of the Board members once we receive your payment. Payments (\$20.00 for members and \$30.00 for nonmembers) should be directed to Don Westenhaver.

- Check payable to SCWA: mail to Don at 5391 Fox Hills Ave., Buena Park, CA 90621
- Credit Card: advise Steve that you will pay by credit card. He will have Don send you an invoice with instructions on how to pay through the SCWA Square account.

## Have a Question about a Publishing Contract?

Contracts involving publishing matters can be confusing if you're not familiar with all the language. What does something mean? What questions should I be asking? Do I have any other choices? If you're not sure what you're reading, what a term or section means, or if you should be signing the contract at all, SCWA is offering a new benefit. SCWA member, publishing consultant, and book shepherd Sharon Goldinger is offering a free review and thirty-minute consultation for any publishing contract to any SCWA member. You can reach her directly at [pplspeak@att.net](mailto:pplspeak@att.net).

## “Will Write for Food” Contest

The “Will Write for Food” contest is a monthly blind competition. Winners are selected by a literary agent. First prize includes publication in the SCWA Newsletter, a certificate, and a \$25 cash prize.

You may write on any subject. Stories have a maximum of 1000 words. The winner will be announced at the next SCWA meeting.

To enter, email your story [meeting@ocwriter.com](mailto:meeting@ocwriter.com) or to [lorenzo212@gmail.com](mailto:lorenzo212@gmail.com).

There are no limits to the number of times you can win. Join the fun and earn some rewards.

\*\*\*See Larry's President's message for more excellent information!





# 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.



Short story -  
 Mastering the Scene F

**Meeting Fees (cash, check or credit/debit)**

Reservation Type	SCWA Member	Student	Others
RSVP	\$25	\$15	\$35

## SCWA Board of Directors

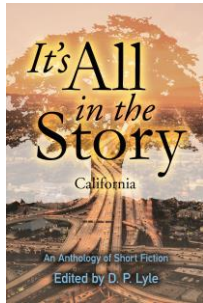
- President .....Larry Porricelli
- Vice President of Membership ..... Steven G. Jackson
- Vice President of Finances and Communication ..... Don Westenhaver
- Vice President of Programming ..... Madeline Margarita
- Director of Social Media ..... Diana Pardee
- Webmaster ..... Brennan Harvey
- Newsletter Editor ..... Pam Sheppard
- Newsletter Speaker Reporter .....Glenda Rynn

**Mailing Address: PO Box 47, Huntington Beach, CA 92648**

**Membership:** Yann Jackson, [ykj3678@gmail.com](mailto:ykj3678@gmail.com)

**Meeting Reservations**

Larry Porricelli, [meeting@ocwriter.com](mailto:meeting@ocwriter.com)  
 714-580-5072



The SCWA Anthology, *It's All in the Story*, went to a second printing to meet the demand of wholesalers and bookstores. We have books for direct sales. You may contact Don Westenhaver to arrange for payment, and we will have the copies available for you at the next SCWA meeting. Don can be reached at [donwestenhaver@roadrunner.com](mailto:donwestenhaver@roadrunner.com).

For more information – visit the SCWA Anthology site at [www.SCWAanthology.com](http://www.SCWAanthology.com)

## Terms of Use and Content Information Disclaimer

The SCWA encourages open, respectful communication between individuals interested in the craft of writing through a variety of social and traditional media, such as Facebook, SCWA website and emails. Any individual using inappropriate language, discussing inappropriate topics, or commenting in a disrespectful way will be removed from access to any future SCWA communication methods.

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.ocwriter.com](http://www.ocwriter.com) 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.