



Southern California Writer's Association

February 2020 Newsletter
Volume 19, Number 2

Welcome! Welcome! Welcome!

As we start a new year, we extend the reach of SCWA deeper into Southern California's writing community with new members, new programs, and an outstanding schedule of speakers for our monthly meetings.

Stay tuned for more information on **Pub Shop**, our quarterly program for the opportunity to talk to industry professionals on publishing topics, issues, and concerns. Pub Shop's first meeting anchored by Sharon Goldinger was a great success, with topics ranging from traditional publishing to independent, and the difference between offset, short run digital, and POD. The group of about 20 shared insights from their own publishing experiences.

Sharon's advice to writers was clear: "Your ultimate writing goal will determine the route you take."

Craft Chat offers get togethers led by SCWA members on writing topics of interest. The next Craft Chat will be hosted by Karen Sue Walker, where she will talk about writing and marketing the modern cozy mystery. Join us March 3rd, 2020 at Bardot Bars and Coffee. Scroll down for more information

Southern California Writer's Association Mission Statement

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a forum for promoting the welfare, fellowship, spirit, education, information, and encouragement among published and unpublished writers in the Southern California area.

Our Speaker for February 15th, 2020 RAYMOND OBSTFELD



"All Fiction Plots Fall into These Six Templates"

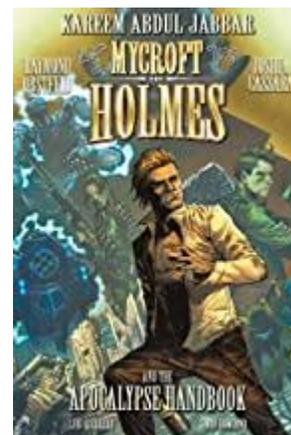
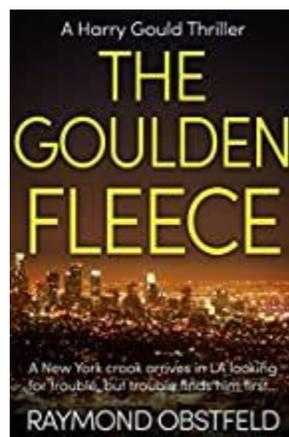
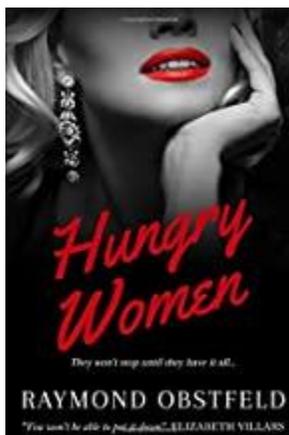
Raymond Obstfeld, the modern-day JD Salinger, will be our guest speaker at our SCWA February meeting!

Raymond Obstfeld is a multi-time NY Times Bestselling author of fiction, non-fiction, and graphic novels. His works cross genres from crime fiction, to YA fiction, black history, essays and thought, television, film, and much more. Raymond has probably helped, taught, and inspired countless writers become writers with his week-long seminars, ongoing classes, and summer-long literary sojourns to Cambridge University in England.

Raymond is a recognized expert on theme, plot, setting, and character, and is a regular writer in the green room for the tv show Veronica Mars.

Raymond Obstfeld has taught literature and creative writing at Orange Coast College since 1976. He's written over 50 published books of poetry, fiction, and non-fiction. He's written a dozen optioned screenplays and recently sold a television show to Warner Bros. He's co-authored several non-fiction and fiction projects with basketball legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. He co-authored a graphic novel about Mycroft Holmes and was a writer on the reboot of Veronica Mars. Currently, he is writing two history documentaries for A&E.

Plotting is one of the most difficult aspects of writing. Understanding these six theme-based plot templates will help an author ask the right questions when plotting their story. It's not just about what they do, but about why they do it.

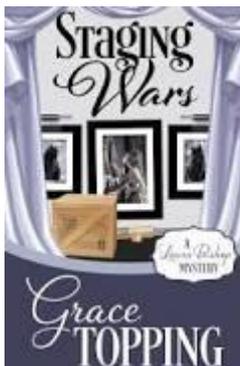


**Our Speaker for March 21st, 2020
NANCY COLE SILVERMAN**

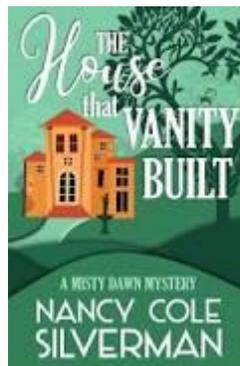


**“How to Plan a Mystery Series
& the Expanding World of Cozies”**

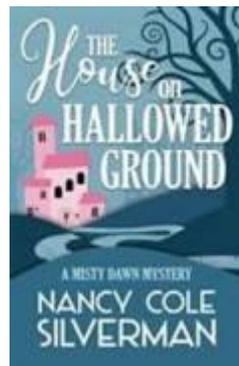
Nancy Cole Silverman spent nearly twenty-five in Los Angeles Talk Radio, beginning her career on the talent side as one for the first female voices on the air, and later on the business side, where she retired as one of two female general managers in the nation’s second-largest radio market. After a successful career in the radio industry, Silverman turned to writing fiction. Her crime-focused novels and short stories have attracted readers throughout America. Her Carol Childs Mysteries series (Henry Press) feature a single-mom whose "day job" as a reporter at a busy Los Angeles radio station often leads to long nights as a crime-solver. Her most recent series with Misty Dawn is centered on an aging Hollywood Psychic to the Stars, who supplements her day to day activities as a consultant to LAPD and the FBI. Silverman lives in Los Angeles with her husband and a thoroughly pampered standard poodle.



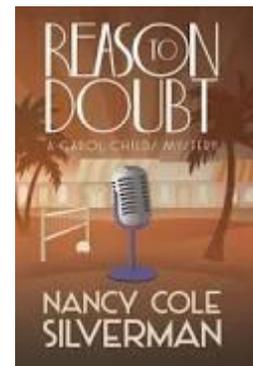
Releases May 12, 2020



Releases May 12, 2020



available now



available now

Highlights – January 2020 Christopher Reich

SCWA Highlights 1-18-20 Christopher Reich



Christopher Reich has published thirteen novels, the latest of which is *Crown Jewels*. When young, his eager reading of the Hardy Boys' stories induced his love of the thriller genre, where the hero has to stop a big crime or disaster from occurring. Reich presented "The Thrills and Chills of Thrillers."

Reich's early years provided him with knowledge of the cultural life of the upper class and the handling of money. He was born in Tokyo, Japan, where his father ran a travel agency that sent Japanese tourists to America. In 1965 after his family moved to Los Angeles, he graduated from the private Harvard School for Boys, now named Harvard-Westlake. In high school he spent one whole summer at a camp in Kenya, on the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro. Next, he attended and graduated from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in D.C. and even worked on Ted Kennedy's presidential campaign.

Next, Reich wanted to work as a stockbroker but was advised in no uncertain terms that he'd better go first to business school. So he did and graduated from the business school at the University of Texas at Austin. But afterward he couldn't make it into Wall Street because the financial world was cutting back its hiring; his interview was only a week after the financial crash of 1987. However, this abrupt turndown didn't make this ambitious man despondent: he had a back-up offer from the Union Bank of Switzerland that he could take advantage of.

That Swiss bank launched Reich into the world of high (and sometimes dark) finance. He referred to his second day there as a "day of joy." For one, he was assigned to tracking the money that the Marcos family stole in the Philippines. Secondly, that same day generated inspiration for his first novel, *Numbered Account*. Big lesson: "Look out for people depositing huge amounts of money and wiring it in and out on the same day."

Later Reich ran a Swiss watch company for six years. But at another bank position, he fell in love with a female co-worker. The rules came down on him that you can't have a personal relationship like that with another employee. Their decision was to marry and quit the bank. Not long after that, he decided he wanted to be a writer. His wife's response was "I know you can do it."

They moved back to Texas to be near his parents. Within eighteen months, by 1996, Reich had finished his first book, whose plot was set [guess where] --in a Swiss bank. The novel "was shown to James Patterson, also a full-time business man." Although it was "too long (660 pages)," Patterson called to say he'd ask his own agent to represent Reich!

Reich spent June to January that year rewriting those 660 pages. Then, when he and his wife were expecting their first child, Reich's agents said seven publishers wanted his book! This novel, *Numbered Account*, was given an advance of \$750,000 and went on to sell out on the NYT best-sellers list.

If you want to be a writer who can sell books, you must read the best sellers. Reich says to "write for the eighth grade level and be interesting for them."

“These days people want the story faster and faster. The paperback business is bad right now: just for those fifty and older. The younger ones read electronically.”

Most of the critical work you’ll do comes after choosing your subject but before writing about it, Reich suggested that you “develop your expertise in your subject” but “know your destination before you set out.”

“Psychological thrillers are the most popular type of thrillers now.” Reich recommends reading *Woman in the Window* by A. J. Finn. A movie version of this 2018 hit murder mystery of a child psychologist with agoraphobia will come out on Oct. 4, 2020, starring Amy Adams and Gary Oldman. “Before the Internet, more devastating accidents happened that no one ever found out about before today.”

Reich suggests basing your thriller on “a real figure that you can identify with.” The hero has to be “an underdog” whose problems become increasingly insurmountable. He says Lee Child’s novels gave us the memorable character Jack Reacher (played by Tom Cruise) although the reader “doesn’t know too much about him—like in a Western.” Reich also noted that Lee Child’s first six books were “complete duds.” Conclusion: “A thriller is only as good as the villain.”

The structure of the story must start with an exciting incident, Act 1, in which “the clock starts ticking faster.” Then you keep upping the pressure. Act 2 is where the problems begin. “Send your hero along to gather information and make a plan.” You can interrupt these scenes “with the bad guy’s view.” Reich calls this Act 2 “the Big Gloom” because the hero’s investigation gets “screwed.” Act 3 holds the climax in which the external and internal problems are solved. He quoted author Elmore Leonard as saying “Easy reading means hard writing.”

In answering questions, Reich said his chapters are five to seven pages long. Also he’s had “almost every one of my books optioned for movies.” However, he adds that lots of your scripts can be purchased/optioned for eighteen months potentially to be made into a film. “And then you hear nothing.”

Maddie Margarita asked Reich if in this era of the Me Too movement he had changed the way he portrays his women characters. Christopher Reich’s answer: “I tend to use strong women anyway. You do have to reflect the real world.”

See <https://christopherreich.com/bio/>.

Glenda Brown Rynn, Reporter

grynn@com.net

Lit Up for Tuesday February 11th, 2020 at 7pm

Lit Up! Orange County is 7pm February 11th
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.
 You'll find Bardot & Bars tucked in the far left corner near the Encore Theater.

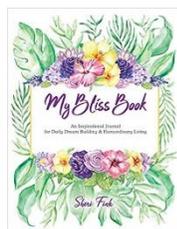
We have a special slate of authors curated especially for us
 by our own cupid CHRIS LENZ
 Bestselling authors **Caitlyn O'Leary**, **Louisa Bacio**, and **Sabrina Sol**
 Join us for a night of fun, romance, and suspense.

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.

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 to be included in the next newsletter.

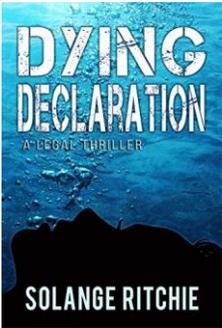
Even **BETTER** – Post your WIP on the SCWA Facebook page where Pam checks for news for this newsletter.
 You'll get a double hit on your book. After all, it's never too early to start the marketing machine for your project!



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

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. 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.

"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 or to lorenzo212@gmail.com.

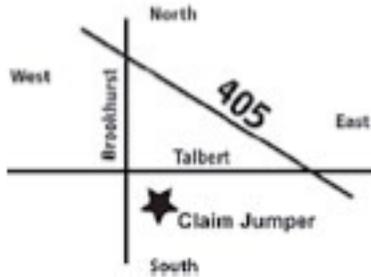
There are no limits to the number of times you can win. Join the fun and earn some rewards.

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

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- 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

Meeting Reservations

Larry Porricelli, meeting@ocwriter.com

714-580-5072

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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.southernwriters.org 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.