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Southern California Writer's Association

The Perennial Writer's Conference

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President's Message for July, 2020 from Larry Porricelli

Words and Freedom

I consider the 4th of July a celebration to give great honor to writers throughout American history. In the days before the American Revolution, writers inspired the colonists with small, one-sheet flyers making a simple statement to all to stand together against the tyranny of a king or hang separately.

Those small epistles were earthshaking as few stood against a British king and lived. But writers, from their small attics and simple presses were able to duplicate missives to the soon-to-be nation through a revolutionary method called stereotyping, where a mold was made that could be rerun from anywhere.

American founders wrote Freedom of the Press into the U.S. Constitution, and that freedom is specifically given to the printing press. The Courts have continuously adjudicated, giving writers the freedom to speak their minds and thoughts and publish them.

As soon as there was a country, writers' words were the first to stand against slavery, and the movement became first in thought and mind of everyone, whether for or against. The dialogue of words was fierce, and in the Civil War, two million died for the words "all men are created equal."

Abraham Lincoln, in his final address before his assassination said there had been two forces, both proclaiming to follow God, but one force preached slavery as well as God. Words, he said, that could not be true for both.

Writers throughout the world have stood for what is right, what is noble, what is valuable, what is real treasure. Through essays and novels, writers have made the quest to seek freedom and happiness a continual part of our lives.

Today, perhaps more than any time in history, people are seeking writers' words—our stories, our insights, our thoughts. Writers are trusted as we have stood the test of time, writers have proven themselves on the front lines of human history.

This time of pandemic and uproar against hate is a phenomenal time for writers to live. The historical issues we face, the stories we create with characters and themes can transport readers to a place of peace and also to a place of questions. Writing inspires us to look within.

A principle in the bestselling book in history espouses a simple thought—love your neighbor as yourself. We have the freedom to choose to love or to hate, and love is our standard within the SCWA.

Writers have written characters as grim as Simon Legree or Lord Voldemort, Nurse Ratched or Professor Moriarty, Sauron or Lady Macbeth, Hannibal Lecter or Uriah Heep—any of those characters, ad infinitum who sought and thrived on human failure and slavery.

But writers have also created the great heroes of literature, inspiring us to overcome obstacles in our lives, from love to finance to failure. These heroes inspire our own writing, and we overcome our own obstacles. Like the protagonists of our writing, we learn to stand through the bleak times and rise to shine a light. That is the pen within us all, and SCWA's mission is to inspire you, the writer.

You are all lights. Your words are so important, from thriller to love story to adventures in another time or space, your words shine a light for someone who is standing alone somewhere in the darkness, thinking they are solitary, facing a dim world. But your words, your stories, your characters, give a new joy, a new outlook, a revitalization. We do have this great mission beyond our stories, and it is an honor for us all to encourage and enrich each other in one of the noblest of human efforts.

Writers, hold your head high, not in pride, but with courage, for you are the forefront of truth.

The SCWA Board is working to present so many wonderful events to broaden our talents and our outlooks, so we may be better writers and successful in sharing our work with others.

I thank the Board for their time spent investing in you! Maddie Margarita and Diana have developed a great series of events online, with inspiration from Steve

Jackson and Don Westenhaver, and observations from Pam Sheppard and Sharon Goldinger.

Every word is a tool, and a weapon. Unsheathe your words, and prosper! I urge you to join us on Friday nights at the SCWA Virtual Happy Hour to share your work and your life. We all need to continue the freedom we have to be the inspirations for others.

Thank you!

“Language does not always have to wear a tie and lace-up shoes.”

-Stephen King

SCWA EVENTS THIS MONTH: JULY 2020

- ❖ **SCWA VIRTUAL HAPPY HOUR Every Friday at 4:30 p.m.** Join us with your funny hats and Coronatinis for good news and good cheer. Sign up on our website and we'll email you a link and password.
- ❖ **SCWA ZOOM Monthly Meeting:** Every third Saturday of the month. Speaker details are included below. Sign up on our website and we'll email you a link and password.
- ❖ **SCWA HUMP DAY BOOK TOUR:** See it LIVE streaming on our SCWA Facebook page at 10:00 a.m. every Wednesday. Missed it? It's ready for replay on the FB page anytime.

New PUB SHOP July 14, 2:30 p.m. PST

Our Pub Shop on June 10th with **Barbara Howe** on book reviews and book reviewers was outstanding. Don't miss our next Pub Shop coming up in July. RSVP on our website www.southernwriters.org.

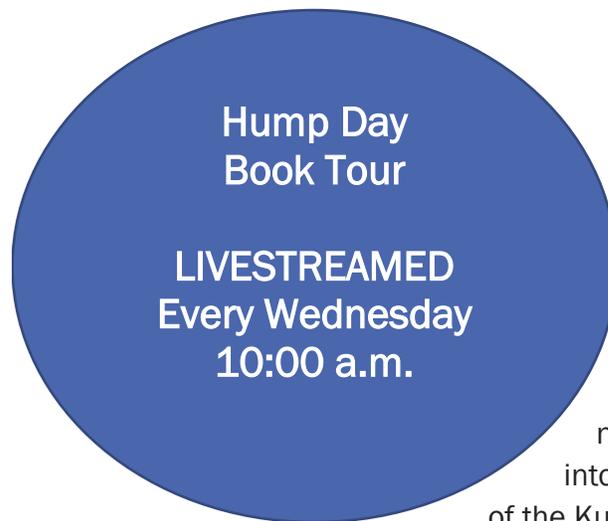
FREE Online event. LIVESTREAM on Facebook: July 14, 2020 at 2:30pm - 3:30pm Pub Shop welcomes **Damon Freeman of Damonza Book Designs**.

Our topic will be JUDGING A BOOK BY ITS COVER with @Damon Freeman of Damonza.com Book Designs. Register for this Pub Shop on <https://www.southernwriters.org/>



Damon Freeman of Damonza, an international award-winning full-service book design company based in New Zealand, talks about what authors should know about book covers, what's hot now, trends, how to choose a cover artist, and how to avoid costly mistakes.

For more information, visit www.damonza.com



**Wednesdays 10:00am
Livestreamed
on SCWA Facebook page**

Wednesday July 8th, 10 a.m.

AVA HOMA, author of

Daughters of Smoke and Fire

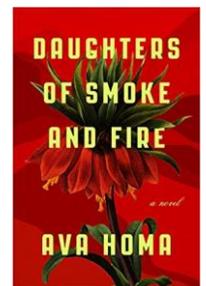
Set in Iran, this extraordinary debut

novel takes readers

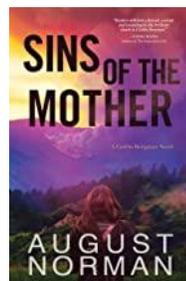
into the everyday lives

of the Kurds, and a young

woman's perilous fight for freedom and justice for her brother.



Hump Day Book Tour July 15, 10:00 a.m. **August Norman**



August Norman's second Caitlin Bergman novel coming in September, 2020. Perfect for fans of Tess Gerritsen, Julia Keller, and Michael Koryta. Ready for pre-order.

"Caitlin went in search of her mother, but what she found may set the world on fire."

Previous Hump Day Book Tour guests:

Naomi Hirahara

Matt Coyle

Tori Eldridge

L.A. Chandler

Replay on the SCWA Facebook page

If you're interested in this event, and all SCWA events, please check out our website for membership details at <https://www.southernwriters.org/>

SCWA Meeting: Saturday, July 18, 10 a.m. Tori Eldridge Writing the Four-Act Structure

Dreaming of writing for TV, looking to master the art of pace, or hoping to write a kick-ass thriller?

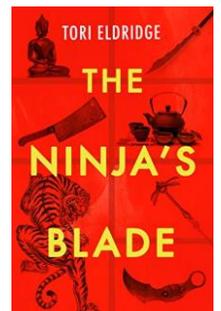
Join us Saturday July, 18th when Broadway singer, dancer, and actor, Fifth degree blackbelt, and award winning author, **Tori Eldridge** talks Writing a Four-act structure for novels and tv, writing fight scenes, and more.

We had a brief taste of Tori's book on Hump Day's Book Tour on July 1st. Replay is on Maddie's Facebook page. It will leave you wanting MORE!



Tori Eldridge is the Anthony and Lefty Awards-nominated author of "The NinjaDaughter," which was named one of the "Best Mystery Books of the Year" by The South Florida Sun Sentinel and awarded 2019 Thriller Book of the Year by Authors on the Air Global Radio Network. Her short stories appear in several anthologies, and her screenplay The Gift earned a semifinalist spot in the prestigious Academy Nicholl Fellowship.

Before writing, Tori performed as an actress, singer, dancer on Broadway, television, and film. She is of Hawaiian, Chinese, Norwegian descent and was born and raised in Honolulu, where she graduated from Punahou School with classmate Barack Obama. Tori holds a fifth-degree black belt in To-Shin Do ninjutsu and has traveled the USA teaching seminars on the ninja arts, weapons, and women's self-protection. Her second book in the Lily Wong series, *The Ninja's Blade*, releases September 1, 2020.



Find her online at ToriEldridge.com
Facebook @ToriEldridgeAuthor
Instagram @writer.tori
Twitter @ToriEldridge

Tori Eldridge on Writing the Four-Act Structure

When: Saturday, July 18th

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Where: Zoom

How: Register on the SCWA Website

Register before July 11th: \$5.00

After July 11th: \$10.00



Highlights: June 2020

Lisa Steinke and Liz Fenton

On Saturday, June 20, bestselling co-authors **Liz Fenton and Lisa Steinke** talked about writing together, navigating the pitfalls of collaboration, and shared tips for writing with a partner.

It Takes Two

You can never predict what a friendship may involve. Meeting each other in high school, Liz Fenton and Lisa Steinke would not have guessed this was the beginning of a super-strong bonding that would produce seven novels by its thirtieth year. Their last book, *How to Save a Life*, called “a dark heart-pounding love story with a Groundhog Day Twist,” will be available on July 14th.

Early on, Fenton and Steinke shared a love of reading and writing—and in high school even mentioned writing together. In college, where they joined the same sorority, they once discussed a specific idea for a novel. But the next ten years brought marriages, families, careers, and rescue dogs. Fenton worked in the pharmaceutical industry, and Steinke was a talk-show producer. But Steinke became restless and still wanted the two to write a novel.

Fenton was not ready. But Steinke admitted being crafty and persistent in her approach to convince Fenton, who sometime during this period had a baby. Their first book was *The Girl Named Kate*. They would sit together and read it aloud as they edited it. For a year they sent out queries. No takers. Then they wrote a second novel.

Again, no takers. Steinke didn't feel her career as a talk-show producer working with TV personality Dr. Phil was her passion. Fenton decided to take one more chance on writing with her friend.

First, however, they asked themselves, "What are we doing wrong?" Their different life experiences gave them a reluctance to recognize their novel-writing problems. They couldn't get an agent. They did conclude though that they were writing to the market and not the books they wanted to create. Also, they were **telling** their characters' stories, not **showing**. Finally, they hired an agent to evaluate their work and advise them—a game changer.

Besides showing and not telling, Steinke and Fenton learned to be careful not to have two different voices but to blend them. They feel they have that down now. Fenton starts a chapter then sends it to Steinke for editing. In addition, they've learned how to structure the story where each can use her own voice.

When you work with a partner, both say you have "to sit down and talk about what personality types you are. How will those blend themselves to the work?" Fenton said, "We're both control freaks. We both wanted to manage the other. Take your ego out of it."

When asked how they critique each other, Fenton said they get edits from each other and change the work. She knows Steinke "won't change anything unless she feels it necessary." Steinke says they've done criticism well, "but it's not always easy. You have to trust your partner." Fenton added, "Don't get too emotionally attached to what you've written." Fenton declares both have absolutely "evolved." They know when to stop to regain patience. Fenton added that partnering would be harder "if you've already been a successful writer" before partnering.

In their last book, *How to Save a Life*, they received a seventeen-page edit letter that said they were writing two different books. (From Tiffany Yates Martin, Intuitive Editing, a freelance editor whom they call "the best editor ever, with fresh eyes.") If a writer is emotional about editorial feedback, they advise taking a break and "calm down." "Make sure you have Beta readers you trust. You need to be selective and choose those readers you highly respect. "We probably do 95% of what our editor says." Steinke says, "Sometimes you're too close to your work. You have to trust your editors."

How far ahead do they plan a book? They may know their plot—or part of the arc—and can plan four or five chapters ahead. But they might not have a beginning or an ending. The partner might introduce an important secondary character. When Hawaii was the setting for one of their books and almost a character itself, Fenton and Steinke had to fly there and drive the area they were writing about. Fenton said, "We get letters when we have real details wrong."

If a publisher sends them a letter about a business issue, the partners negotiate with other and send an answer back with both their names on it. Fenton and Steinke have separate contracts from their publisher, but do not have contracts between them. Regarding marketing strategy, they both have their own marketing plan and enjoy that method because they come from business backgrounds. They split all income—and all expenses, even the lunch bills.

SCWA's Maddie Margarita asked both on Zoom, "Are you tempted to write your own books?"

Fenton and Steinke said, “No.” They like their collaboration. They know what types of passages the other is better at. They also do not wish to do more than one book a year. They’ve left their other jobs. Writing is now their “full-time gig.”

Ms. Margarita asked, “What’s the most surprising thing you’ve learned about each other?”

Answer: It’s easy to get focused on what’s wrong [or how the other is a poor driver for Hawaii’s roads] because they have to edit each other. The two do host the popular podcast “*We Fight So You Don’t Have To.*” These dear friends of thirty years, however, have learned to think more of the positive things their partner does. They want to be able to tell the other, “Oh, that’s perfect how you did that!”

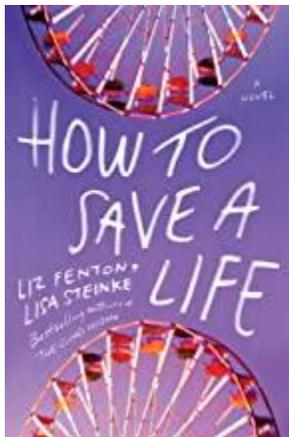
Here are all of Fenton and Steinke’s published novels: *The Two Lila Bennetts*, *Girls’ Night Out*, *The Good Widow*, *The Year We Turned Forty*, *The Status of All Things*, *Your Perfect Life*, and *How to Save a Life*

Glenda Brown Rynn, Reporter

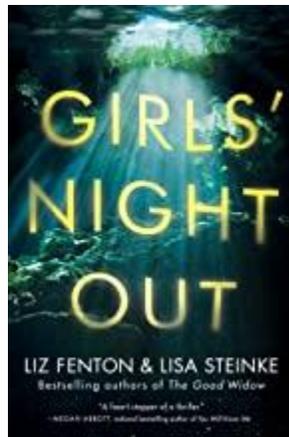
grynn@cox.net

Liz and Lisa host the popular podcast *We Fight So You Don’t Have To*, and are monthly on-air contributors on their local news with *Liz & Lisa’s Book Club*.

Connect with Liz and Lisa at www.lizandlisa.com. to read more about them and their novels: *The Two Lila Bennetts*, *Girls’ Night Out*, *The Good Widow*, *The Year We Turned Forty*, *The Status of All Things* and *Your Perfect Life*.



July 2020



July 2018



July 2017

Lit Up Orange County - Tuesday, July 21, 6:30 p.m.

Liz Fenton and **Lisa Steinke** will join us for July's Lit Up Orange County: Tuesday July 21, 6:30 p.m.

Register on the Lit Up! Facebook page to receive the Zoom link.

Liz Fenton and **Lisa Steinke** have been best friends for over 30 years and survived high school and college together. They've co-authored seven novels, including *The Good Widow*, an Amazon charts bestseller. Their forthcoming book, *How to Save a Life*, a dark heart-pounding love story, will be released on July 14th. In their former lives, Liz worked in the pharmaceutical industry and Lisa was a talk-show producer. They now both reside with their families and several rescue dogs in Southern California.

New SCWA Members Only Private Facebook Group

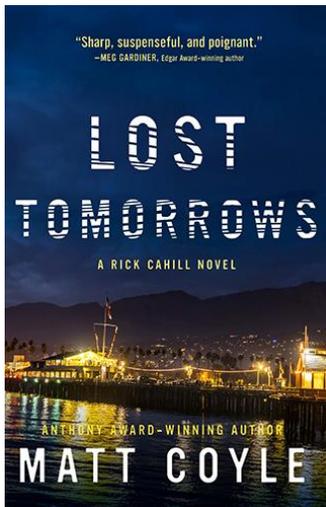
****SCWA Members Only**—while we're working on a Members Only section for our website, we've decided to create a private Facebook group for our official members. Here's what you need to know:

1. Anyone interested in writing can join our public group for SCWA. You are all welcome to post and engage, as long as you follow the revised guidelines posted as an announcement on the page.
2. **SCWA Members Only is a private group for active members who have paid their dues. (Not a member? Join after July 1 and receive a pro-rated \$20 rate for the remainder of 2020.)**
3. Content for our Members Only group will be provided by SCWA board members, so if you want to see what's coming up, watch video archives of our past paid and free meetings, or participate in other special content, this is your place. There will be no promotions or other content from members, but we plan to keep it lively and provide another benefit to SCWA membership.
4. Both of our Facebook groups are always evolving and we welcome your feedback, ideas, and participation. We also encourage you to share our public content with the rest of the Facebook world so we can build our presence as a meaningful, creative writers' community. You are why we're here, working every day to make this a great organization that supports writers in and beyond SoCal!

Questions or comments? Please use the Contact Us tab on our website, and your question will be delivered to the appropriate board member. Facebook questions? You may also private message Diana @ [Diana Pardee](#)

SO MUCH GOOD NEWS!

Matt Coyle has won the **2020 Shamus Award** for Best PI Hardcover for *Lost Tomorrows*, his sixth Rick Cahill novel. More about Matt and all his books at www.mattcoylebooks.com



Leonard Szymczak and **Rick Broniec** have expanded their book, *Power Tools for Men: Build a Life* into a series of ten webinars to be available in August. For more information, visit www.powertoolsformen.org or <https://wakeup-growup-showup.pubsitopro.com/>

Wendy Van Camp's poem will be published in *The Starlight Emporium Magazine* Vol 1, Summer 2020

Colleen Fliedner will make her second "History Talks!" Zoom presentation at the Santa Clarita Library on July 14 at 6 p.m. Pam Sheppard will moderate the discussion with Colleen and Anne Bannon on California History Galore.

Register for this event at:

<https://santaclarita.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJwpf-Guqz0oHdGTJgzykRwMlInVJ-S7USuD>

LitUp Orange County at MUZEO Open Book Series

On Sunday, June 28th Maddie Margarita moderated a panel of smart, literary chat with **Ivy Pochoda**, author of *These Women*, **Rufi Thorpe**, author of *The Knockout Queen*, and **Ava Homa**, author of *Daughters of Smoke and Fire*. This virtual event was a rare opportunity to meet and hear three award winning authors talk about their experiences and writing on the edge. Please check <https://muzeo.org/> for the replay. This event was free and open to the public.

You can find a replay of this excellent discussion on Facebook on the Muzeo page, on the Lit Up Orange County page, and on Maddie Tighe Margarita's Facebook page. Look for OPEN BOOK SERIES on each of these pages for the YouTube replay.

Submit your work for Fame or Fortune

Sharpen your pencils, dust off your keyboard, dig around in your deep files!



The Writer Magazine Contest

Deadline: August 12, 2020

Grand Prize: \$1000 and publication in *The Writer*.
Second Place: \$500 and publication in *The Writer*.
Third Place: \$250 and publication in *The Writer*.

For more information and contest guidelines, visit

<https://writermag.submittable.com/submit/169654/2020-summer-flash-contest>

One of our favorite sources of excellent information is *Publishing ... and Other Forms of Insanity*, also known as Published to Death. It's a rabbit hole of up-to-date collections of detailed information on Agents Seeking Clients, Free Contests, Paying Markets, and Calls for Submissions (linked below), and more.

<https://publishedtodeath.blogspot.com/p/calls-for-submissions.html>

Paying Markets for Personal Essays

It seems personal essays are all the rage lately. Even otherwise stodgy publications are turning to them as a means of drumming up clientele. (I blame blogs.)

In case you are wondering what a personal essay is, it's any nonfiction story written in first person. Personal essays always involve a true experience, especially one that evokes emotions that speak to a broader audience.

Like a short story, personal essays are structured, have a theme, and usually involve a moral or message of some kind. Some literary journals and niche magazines are willing to pay substantially for these essays, so devoting a few hours to writing one is worth your consideration.

For more information, visit:

<https://publishedtodeath.blogspot.com/2016/03/13-paying-markets-for-personal-essays.html>

These are excellent sources for submission opportunities for your work.

Check back regularly, and good luck!

Benefits of SCWA Membership



WELCOME, WELCOME, WELCOME!

- ❖ Active members receive a 30% off admission to SCWA meetings including all-you-can-eat lunch and a speaker.
- ❖ Members are eligible for a Free 30-minute consultation from book shepherd Sharon Goldinger on any publishing contract.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ Critiques of your first 20 pages by an SCWA Board member for \$50.00.
- ❖ Access to professional network of publishing, business consultants and editors.
- ❖ Monthly networking with other published, unpublished authors, and writers in all stages of the writing journey.
- ❖ Participation in SCWA marketing platforms on southernwriters.org and SCWA social media platforms.
- ❖ Access to up-to-date and cutting-edge articles on craft and the business of publishing.

Attend a mini-writer's conference every month, improve your craft, and learn from bestselling authors and highly sought-after instructors.

SCWA Board of Directors

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Vice President of Membership	Steven G. Jackson
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Vice President of Programming	Madeline Margarita
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Newsletter Editor	Pam Sheppard
Newsletter Speaker Reporter	Glenda Rynn
At-Large.....	Sharon Goldinger

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

Membership: Yann Jackson, ykj3678@gmail.com

Southern California Writer's Association
Southerncalwriters.org

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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.southerncalwriters.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.