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Southern California Writer's Association

- ☐ pg. 2: President's Message
- ☐ pg. 3: Events for October
- ☐ pg. 4: Writer's Showcase
- ☐ pg. 5: Janis Thomas' Workshop
- ☐ pg. 6: Lit Up
- ☐ pg. 7: Hump Day
- ☐ pg. 8: Good News!
- ☐ pg. 10: Cookbook and Showcase
- ☐ pg. 12: Highlights
- ☐ pg. 14: Resources for writers
- ☐ pg. 15: Member Benefits
- ☐ pg. 21: Board & Terms of Use

October 6, 2020

- SCWA Writers Online! (<https://bit.ly/2I890Db>)
- President's Message
- October's Guest Speaker Karen Dionne (<https://bit.ly/30GnuOY>)
- Janis Thomas' Storytellers Tool Box for Craft Chat
- Lit Up at Muzeo
- Hump Day
- Such Good News!
- Highlights: Hank Phillippi Ryan
- SCWA New Cookbook



Have you subscribed?

Check out our new YouTube channel at <https://bit.ly/2I890Db>

Through this year of challenges SCWA has risen to new heights with a wide range of talented presenters who will inspire, educate, and motivate writers and readers alike through our online programs.

Our best and brightest authors and guest speakers' presentations have now been uploaded to our own YouTube channel. Our content includes the Hump Day Book Tours, Pub Shops with insights into book publishing and marketing, and our monthly author spotlights and workshops.

We appreciate your support so please visit, comment, and SUBSCRIBE so you're the first to know when a new video is posted. There's always more great content to come from SCWA, the Perennial Writers' Conference!

President's Message for October 2020 from Larry Porricelli

"A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives."

Jackie Robinson

Dear Members of SCWA,

Thank you for your great support and the fellowship you have created in person and online. We have received requests from writers across the globe to be a part of our group because of the great value they have found from so many SCWA projects. The weekly, monthly, and special events available not only support us as writers, but also enrich us with a community that is especially important now.

I have heard from people that they have felt a part of a family they had never known existed, a family of writers so friendly and so helpful to each other. People have heard wisdom, but also have shared your hearts.

Thank you for your kindness and generosity, it is our trademark.

Larry Porricelli

SCWA EVENTS THIS MONTH: OCTOBER 2020

Books may well
be the only
true magic.

-Alice Hoffman

- ❖ **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. <https://www.southernwriters.org/>

- ❖ **SCWA ZOOM October Monthly Spotlight: October 17, 10 a.m. PDT.** Every third Saturday of the month. This month, **Karen Dionne**. Sign up on our website and we'll email you a link and password. <https://www.southernwriters.org/>

- ❖ **Craft Chat - October 19 & 21, 2 to 3:30 p.m. PDT. Janis Thomas.** Storyteller's Tool Box. Sign up on the SCWA website and we'll email you a link and password. <https://www.southernwriters.org/>

- ❖ **SCWA HUMP DAY BOOK TOUR:** See it LIVE streaming on SCWA's Facebook page at 10:00 a.m. PDT every **Wednesday**. Missed it? It's ready for replay on SCWA's YouTube channel and on the FB page anytime. <https://bit.ly/2l890Db>

If you're interested in these and all SCWA events, please check out our website for membership details at:

<https://www.southernwriters.org/>

SCWA Writers' Showcase, October 17, 2020

Karen Dionne

6 Things I Learned from Writing My Breakout Book

When: October 17, 2020

Time: 10:00 am PDT

Where: Zoom, RSVP for your link

at: <https://www.southernwriters.org/meetings/>



Cost: Members \$5.00

Nonmembers \$10.00

When **Karen Dionne** wrote *The Marsh King's Daughter*, a dark psychological suspense set in Michigan's Upper Peninsula wilderness, she never imagined the wild journey she was about to embark upon. Praised in *The New York Times* as "Subtle, brilliant and mature . . . as good as a thriller can be," *The Marsh King's Daughter* was translated into 25 languages and became a #1 international bestseller, took home several prestigious awards, was named to numerous best books of the year lists, and is in development as a major motion picture with an Oscar-winning cast.

The Marsh King's Daughter was Karen's 4th published novel. What made this book different from the other three? How can writers use the lessons she learned to get their work noticed? In this presentation, Karen will identify the six key elements that she believes made all the difference.



Special October Craft Chat
Monday, October 19 and Wednesday, October 21
Janis Thomas, Storyteller's Toolbox

STORYTELLER'S TOOL BOX

Whether you're writing sci fi, paranormal, coming of age, romance, or memoir, all stories have key elements that make them engaging reads. In this two-part workshop, best-selling author Janis Thomas will take you step by step through these key elements, starting with that spark of an idea and helping you to hone that idea into a workable concept.

If you are planning to do NaNoWriMo, Storyteller's Tool Box will give you a leg up, to ensure that you don't waste a single moment or a single word during your novel-writing journey.

Janis' workshops have been featured at the Southern California Writers Conference, the Santa Barbara Writers Conference, Writers' Digest Novel Writing Conference, RWA, CWC, and more. Janis and fellow workshop leader and writer **Ara Grigorian** also run the highly regarded one-day seminar Novel Intensive, on which Storyteller's Tool Box is based.

BONUS: The first 10 SCWA members who sign up for Janis Thomas' Storyteller Toolbox will receive a 15-minute private story coaching session, FREE.

Janis Thomas' two-part STORYTELLER'S TOOLBOX:

When: Monday, October 19 and Wednesday, October 21

Where: Zoom. Register and RSVP at www.southerncafwriters.org

Members price:..... \$40

Non members:..... \$50

SCWA Book Camp Special: For participants of this Storyteller's Toolbox, private coaching from Janis Thomas is available for a significantly reduced fee:

SCWA Members: \$30 per hour

Non members: \$50 per hour



Janis Thomas is the author of *What Remains True* (Lake Union, 2017) and *All That's Left of Me* (June 2018). She has written three critically acclaimed humorous women's fiction novels, *Something New*, *Sweet Nothings*, and *Say Never*, which was chosen by Chick Lit Central as one of the best books of the year.

Lit Up Orange County TWO Incredible Events!



LIT UP Orange County and the Muzeo Museum & Cultural Center in Anaheim, CA. present authors **Ona Russell**, **Tanya Hutchison**, and **Quan Huynh** in conversation with Madeline Tighe Margarita.

When: Sunday October 18th

Time: 1:00 PM PDT

Where: Zoom and Facebook livestream

How to Register: Look for the registration link at <https://muzeo.org/>

Can't make it then? Go to the Muzeo Facebook page, click on the Livestream video or watch it on Lit Up! Orange County Facebook page at your convenience!



When: Tuesday, October 27, 2020 at 6:30pm PDT - 8pm PDT

Where: Click on LIT UP Orange County Livestream on Facebook

New York Times bestselling author **Jonathan Maberry**, named one of Today's Top Ten Horror Writers, and award-winning mystery writer **Joe Ide** read excerpts and talk books with Maddie.

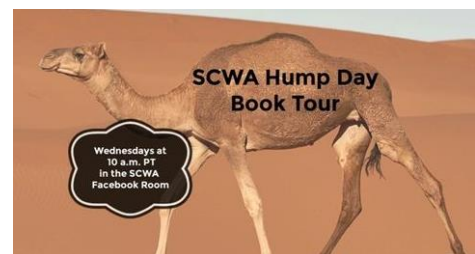
Click on LIT UP Orange County and go to the Livestream video to view and ask questions in the comment section— or watch later at your convenience!

For more information about these events and others like it please email Maddie Margarita at maddie@maddiemargarita.com.



Hump Day
Book Tour

LIVESTREAMED
Every
Wednesday
10:00 a.m.



Livestreamed on SCWA's Facebook page with replays on SCWA's YouTube channel. Subscribe anytime at <https://bit.ly/2I890Db>

Recent Guests include:

Janelle Brown Mary Anna Evans Kaira Rouda Laurie Stevens Matt Coyle
 Glen Erik Hamilton August Norman Tori Eldridge Ava Homa Naomi
 Hirahara LA Chandlar Greta Boris Joe Perry Thomas Perry Suzanne
 Redfearn Chris Reich

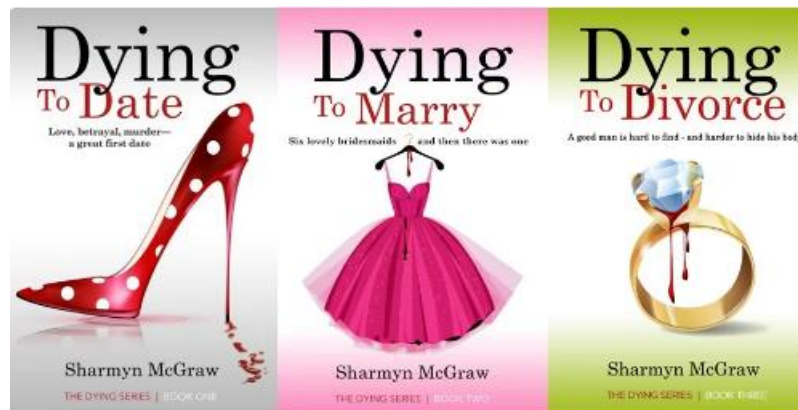


Many more to come!



CELEBRATE ALL the GOOD NEWS!

Sharmyn McGraw's Book One: *Dying to Date* of her new series is nearing launch. Get a sneak peek with Chapter One by signing up on Sharmyn's website: www.sharmynmcgraw.com



PJ Colando will read an excerpt from her new book *The Jailbird's Jackpot* and compare its protagonist and plot with her previous book *The Winner's Circle* in a virtual event with Book Carnival on Wednesday, October 21, 2020 at 6:00 pm PDT. Check it out at www.annesbookcarnival.com and for more information on all PJ's books at www.pjcolando.com.



SCWA Writers' Cookbook Call for Submissions

*****CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS*****

DEADLINE: October 30, 2020

**Open to all SCWA Members
We Want Your Recipes. AND YOUR WORDS!**

Please submit your recipes and related short fiction for our upcoming Southern California Writers Association story inspired cookbook. Submissions will be selected based on story quality, recipe quality, and the story's relation to the recipe.

Working titles include
Blame It on the Osso Bucco
Eat Your Words
You Have the Write to Eat

Needless to say, title suggestions are welcome.

We're looking forward to producing a flavorful collection, with a healthy dash of your writing dexterity. What self-respecting writers' organization would build a cookbook without an assortment of clever stories included?

Each entry must contain both the recipe and a story, which can be in these categories: mystery, horror, sci-fi, cozy, humor, poetic, crime, mythology, or fable. Remember, this is a writers' cookbook so think of your recipe as your muse. We encourage your story to have a sense of connection with the recipe.

Due to limited space the **story/poem should be 250 words or less.**

The cookbook will be professionally published by SCWA and promoted with all the marketing might at our disposal. Proceeds will further help fund our events, speakers, scholarships, and publication of books, including this one.

We encourage all who want to join-in to submit up to two recipes in a Word file along with their stories to Nancy Klann at klanncy@aol.com. (Please put Recipe in the subject line.)

Members' Showcase: OPEN for your Submissions

Did you know SCWA will publish excerpts of your work in our MEMBERS' SHOWCASE on the SCWA website? Yes, we will.

We want to show your works-in-progress, excerpts from your published book, first lines, favorite paragraphs, and anything you would like to share in any genre, even a page of rants from your journal.

The range of creativity among our members is impressive. Take a look at some of the fine work our members have already shared and then share some of your own.

<https://www.southernwriters.org/members-showcase-2/>

Here are the details:

- Send the work you'd like to showcase, for instance, first lines, an excerpt, an essay or a poem or something else (up to 1500 words). Include your byline (your name, the name of the book it is from, if applicable, and your website).
- All current SCWA members are eligible.
- You retain your copyright.
- Submit for free!
- Send to scwashowcase@gmail.com

Highlights: September 2020

Hank Phillippi Ryan

GREAT BEGINNINGS



“Great Beginnings” or “Crafting a Killer First Page”

“You live or die by that first line,” says author Hank Phillippi Ryan, a *USA Today* bestselling author of twelve mysteries and winner of thirty-seven Emmys (more specifics later). “Genre doesn’t matter,” she says on this topic. “You see the cover, look at the words, finally open the front cover, and look at the first line. *This is going to be good*; you think.” Then **boom, blink, quick**. “No, I don’t think so.” Whether fair or not, reader’s resistance has set in.”

Your reader brain asks “Can this person write? Does he have a voice?” Ms. Ryan mentioned one particular agent who received 20,000 submissions for the year but made contracts with only six. Our speaker’s mantra, however, is “Anything can work.” There are things we can use to make lines irresistible. Then, one by one, she posted the first line of seven novels and dissected each to show how and why it grabs readers.

“I have often recalled the morning when the first of the anonymous letters came.” From *The Moving Finger* by Agatha Christie. This line indicates suspense and mystery. It tells us the narrator is still alive [not a note left by a victim], there were many letters, and this is the first of a bad process [not a victim’s last note]. “There is elegance of the tone in the sensibility of the story.”

“The last camel collapsed at noon.” From *The Key to Rebecca* by Ken Follett. This line gives us immediacy and action in the middle of a bigger movement. “What happened to the other camels?” Must be lots of people in instant mortal danger. Why are they there? We get these elements: time, action, setting, conflict, and tone.

“It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen.” From *1984* by George Orwell. The month of April is familiar to readers, but the cold day is unusual. Also, not just one but *clocks* are striking thirteen.

Those details make readers feel something is off, and their mental soundtracks expect to hear what is next. That line promises a bigger story.

“In my younger and more vulnerable years, my father gave me some advice that I’ve been turning over in my mind ever since.” From *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. The protagonist is older and wiser but still thinking about that advice. It’s one of the most important things in his life. You *have* to know what the advice is. “*The rich are different from you and me.*” “You get the essence and theme of *The Great Gatsby* without its beating you over the head.”

“It’s never a good thing when the flight attendant is crying.” From *Air Time* by Hank Phillippi Ryan. The setting is an airplane, and the voice is wry and sardonic and indicates this is not the first time of flying. “It’s portentous and relatable.” Sounds like literary fiction.

“They threw me off the hay truck about noon.” From *The Postman Always Rings Twice* by James M. Cain. The character is a big loser and instantly conflicted. He’s somewhere he shouldn’t be. He’s needy. “What’s he gonna do now?” “This is noir. He’s going to be lured by a femme fatal, and it’s not going to end well.” The genre is expressed.

“The day before yesterday I killed someone, and the fact weighs heavily on my mind.” From “*A*” *Is for Alibi* by Sue Grafton. “The narrator is not worried about getting caught. We like her. It’s a difficult experience without panic—but with remorse.”

Next our speaker asked everyone what his/her pet peeve is about first pages. Responses: “Flowery language that doesn’t say anything.” “Doesn’t give a clue about genre.” “Too many characters on page one.” “Talking about the weather.” Addressing some of these, Ms. Ryan said to let your readers take in characters one at a time, or they won’t know whom to care about. Also, indicate the setting. She commented that Elmore Leonard said never to start with the weather. However, she stated that the issue is not the weather but the character in the weather. “Or is the weather part of the conflict?”

Often writers are advised not to open with a dream. Even so, Ms. Ryan says the exception is if it’s critical to a character’s state of mind. “A dream cannot be a false indication of action.” She’s also not keen on prologues and asks, “You couldn’t think of a better way?”

After that, Ms. Ryan presented on screen the first page of *Those Who Wish Me Dead* by Michael Korya. She analyzed it in detail and determined that the first page had established all of these elements: “hook, name, age, sex, family, tone/word choice, action/conflict, setting, the stakes and

consequences, socioeconomic, personal attributes, emotion, suspense, and instant backstory.” (Whew!)

SCWA's program chair, Maddie Margarita, asked the last question: “How hard is it for you, Hank, to write your first line and first page.?” Evidently, before this accomplished author gets started, her mind formulates the first line. Her newest novel starts with “Lies have a complicated half-life.” The book title is *The First to Lie*. At the end of each book, Ms. Ryan returns to the beginning to see if the theme is hinted at.

Hank Phillipi Ryan has won the most prestigious awards in the thriller genre: five Agathas in the categories of Best First, Best Novel, Best Short Story, and Best Non-Fiction; three Anthonys; the Daphne; and the Mary Higgins Clark Award. She's also an on-air investigative reporter for Boston's WHDH-TV with dozens of journalism honors. In addition, she's a founder of MWA (Mystery Writers of America) University and past president of National Sisters in Crime.

You can follow her at www.HankPhillippiRyan.com, www.CareerAuthors.com, www.facebook.com/HankPhillippiRyanAuthor, on Instagram @HankPRyan, and on Twitter @HankPRyan.

Glenda Brown Rynn, Reporter

grynn@cox.net

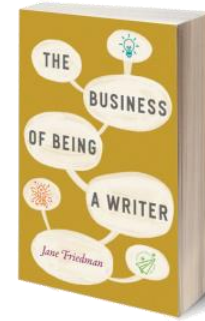
RESOURCES FOR WRITERS

How do you find your way through the ocean of resources available online for writers like us? Check here for a sampling of what we have found to be of interest.

LINKS will be included so you will be able to investigate further.

For information on where to submit your work: Check Publishing ... and Other Forms of Insanity at www.publishedtodeath.blogspot.com. An excellent, up-to-date list of publishers accepting unagented manuscripts, agents seeking clients, literary journals calling for submissions.

MOST RELIABLE: www.janefriedman.com Jane has a long history in all areas of book publishing and has a solid reputation for being the best go-to for writers of all levels.



WRITERS HELPING WRITERS: www.writershelpingwriters.net has many one-of-a-kind tools and resources for writers. Newsletter available.

Share your sources! We will include them here.

Benefits of SCWA Membership



WELCOME, WELCOME, WELCOME!

- ❖ Active members receive up to 60% off admission to SCWA meetings.
- ❖ 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.

- ❖ Access to professional network of publishing, business consultants and editors.
- ❖ Participation in SCWA marketing platforms on **southernwriters.org** and SCWA social media platforms.

SCWA Board of Directors

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At-Large.....	Sharon Goldinger

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

Membership: Yann Jackson, ykj3678@gmail.com

Southern California Writer's Association
Southernwriters.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.