



JANUARY 2021

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Southern California Writer's Association

January 2021

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<https://www.southernwriters.org/meetings>
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Have you subscribed?

Check out our new YouTube channel at
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLrqSfwTMaci139ISRv50KQ>

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.

President's Message for January 2021 from Larry Porricelli

Dear Readers and Writers,

One of the most influential people in my life was Hattie Pearl DeGrant. Hattie P, as she was known throughout New York City, was a jazz promoter, club owner, noted gambler, and a hell of a cook who prepared rib dinners on occasions for President John Kennedy. She had words of wisdom that covered just about everything we could face in life: "You can never have enough pepper, honey."

Ms. DeGrant loved herself some spice, whether it was in her cooking or her life.

She had grown up poor and laughed aloud in amazement and joy that a woman from 145th Street in Harlem, who sang in the choir of the Ebenezer Baptist Church as a child, would not only fix the president of the United States a meal, but also break the bank in an NYC "uptown" casino and use her winnings to fund books and clothes for local children, and be known as the "Spirit of Harlem."

For us, as writers, we employ a touch of pepper for every character we create. For us, as individuals, we most likely looked forward to 2021 as a year with zero spice.

But the SCWA is also a purveyor of pepper, and lots of it. And through the raging epidemic the SCWA expanded its footprint. SCWA became a noted presence in the literary world with our seminars, Craft and Pub Shops, Hump Day speakers, our Friday Night Writers Happy Hour, and of course our featured monthly speakers—all now available to members to view at any time. SCWA has a YouTube Channel to view past speakers, a dynamic

website and an active Facebook page where our Hump Day offerings appear live.

The SCWA is now a garden for writers, with a rich wealth of offerings that have reached writers from Europe to Africa to Asia!

Each month, SCWA writers are publishing, and it is such a joy to see story come to life as a book—our dreams being realized. As the New Year began, Steve Jackson, Sharmyn McGraw, and James Takos all offered new work to the world!

On behalf of SCWA, we ask you to join us at any or every meeting, be inspired by well-known authors, enjoy Maddie Margarita's phenomenal interview style as she humorously grills authors to speak of their writing core and share it with us.

I thank Maddie for being a wonderful onscreen presence and inspiration; Diana Pardee for engineering and producing our shows on Zoom and developing our Facebook presence; Sharon Goldinger for making our website professional and quickly responsive; Steve Jackson for always overseeing and inspiring our efforts; Don Westenhaver for keeping us up with the Joneses; Pam Sheppard for a dynamic newsletter where you are reading this message; Robert Rollins for editing all our visual work to make it professional and so full of pepper, and Glenda Rynn gets every detail exactly right for the highlights of our speakers' presentations.

Join us, please pay your dues, be a volunteer, we welcome you, we appreciate you! This year, 2021, will be a great one not only for SCWA but for you, the writer. I promise.

Thank you!

Larry Porricelli

SCWA EVENTS THIS MONTH: JANUARY 2021

- **SCWA Featured Monthly Speaker: January 16, 10 a.m. PST.** This month, **Tanya Hutchinson** joins us to talk about "Writing a Memoir Your Readers Can't Put Down." Sign up on our website and we'll email you a link and password.
<https://www.southernwriters.org/>
- **SCWA VIRTUAL HAPPY HOUR: Every Friday at 4:30 p.m.** Join us with your funny hats and Holiday 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 HUMP DAY BOOK TOUR:** You can access previous interviews on SCWA's YouTube channel or see it LIVE streaming at 10:00 a.m. PST every Wednesday in January.

Missed one? Find the replay on SCWA's YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLrqSfwTMaci139ISRv50KQ> channel and on our FB page anytime where we will upload replays as they are edited and ready.

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

Featured Monthly Speaker: January 16, 2021
Tanya Hutchinson
Writing a Memoir Your Readers Can't Put Down

When: Saturday, January 16, 2021

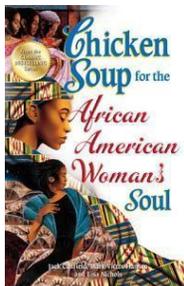
Time: 10:00 a.m. PST

Where: Zoom, RSVP for your link at:

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

Cost: Members \$10.00

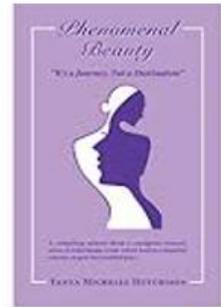
Nonmembers \$15.00



Tanya Hutchinson is a wife (of 30 years), mother to 5 adult children, sister, friend and role model to many. Her writing career officially began when she was asked to write etiquette articles for a national magazine publication. Her philosophy is simple: "If you give a woman a fish, she will eat for one day, but teach a woman to fish and she will eat for a lifetime." During her reign as Mrs. California International, she wrote her first memoir. She later gained notoriety when she became a contributing author for the popular *Chicken Soup for the Soul* book series.



Her memoir, ***Phenomenal Beauty, It's a Journey Not a Destination***, is one of her best-selling books. She speaks with candor and conviction as she shares with her readers intimate details of how she overcame many challenges to become the beautiful woman she is today. Her heartfelt inspirational truth will help others to live life on purpose, persevere and discover their beauty too.



Tanya is the **Founder of Phenomenal Women, Incorporated** (a non-profit organization for the empowerment of women). She hosts monthly educational events to Unite, *Empower* and Inspire men, women and children to become their personal best.

As a graduate of Western Michigan University, Tanya has received many accolades and titles over the years, including former "Star Search Champion Television Spokes Model," former Los Angeles Raider's cheerleader, and winner of *She's Got the Look* reality TV Series. The greatest title she proudly wears now is grandmother.



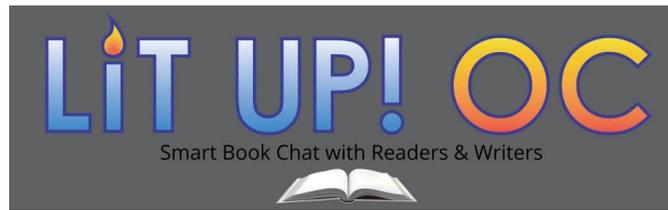
Our January Craft Shop with Pam Sheppard was a rich 90-minute presentation through the steps of self-editing your book.

We sometimes think of self-editing as a pass through the manuscript to fix grammar and wording. It is much more. A self-edit can also examine the bones of your project, challenge the premise, and check to see that you have delivered the message you promised.

Watch for the replay coming soon. Slides are available for participants. Contact Pam at sheppardedits@gmail.com

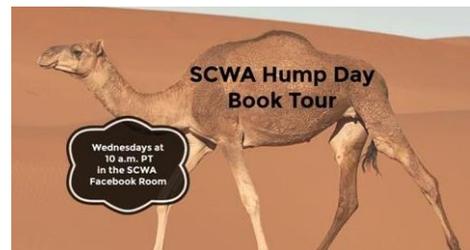
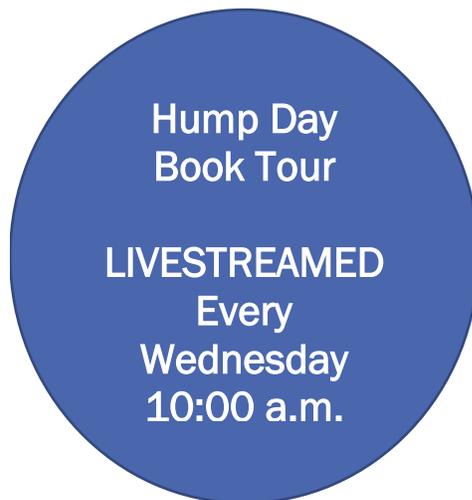


Janis Thomas' Storyteller's Toolbox is now available as a replay in the SCWA Members Only Facebook group page. It is free to members to give you a chance to revisit this excellent Craft Shop event.



To see all the replays, click: <https://www.facebook.com/litupoc>

For more information about these events, please email Maddie Margarita at maddie@maddiemargarita.com.



SCWA Hump Days are scheduled for January 13 for **Baron Birtcher** and January 20 with **Dete Meserve**. If you can't join us look for replays on the SCWA Facebook group page and on SCWA's YouTube channel.

Subscribe anytime at <https://bit.ly/2I890Db>

Recent Guests include:

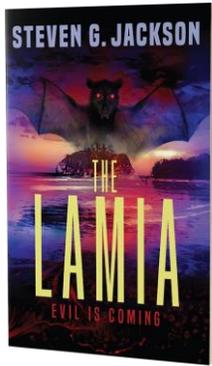
Janelle Brown Mary Anna Evans Kaira Rouda Laurie Stevens Matt Coyle
 Glen Erik Hamilton August Norman Tori Eldridge Ava Homa Naomi
 Hirahara LA Chandlar Greta Boris Joe Perry Thomas Perry Suzanne
 Redfearn Chris Reich



Many more to come!



CELEBRATE ALL THE GOOD NEWS!



Steve Jackson, author of *Zeus Payload*, *The Lamia*, and *The Night Hag* has just posted his 2020 edition of his Top 25 World's Most Thrilling Restaurants on his website at: <https://bit.ly/3IfAOMr>.

The Lamia has been released! Print and ebook are now available on Amazon.

NPD, a company compiling statistics for 85% of the book industry through **Book Scan**, reports that 2020 was the US' bestselling year for print books in a decade. One-third of the growth in print in the United States was driven by juvenile fiction last year, as overall numbers comprised 751 million units. Print sales rose 8.2% for the year across major categories including adult nonfiction, juvenile, and teen categories.

SCWA Writers' Cookbook Call for Submissions

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

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, poetry, 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 klannancy@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

Take a look at the Showcase entries by many of our members. It's a terrific way to get acquainted!

HIGHLIGHTS: December 19, 2020 Ellen Byron Adding Humor to Your Mysteries

Ellen Byron is the Agatha Award-winning author of the Cajun Country Mysteries. The *USA Today* bestselling series has also won multiple Best Humorous Mystery Lefty awards from the Left Coast Crime conference. She also writes The Catering Hall Mysteries (under the pen name Maria DiRico), which launched with *Here Comes the Body*.



Ellen's TV credits include *Wings*, *Just Shoot Me*, and *Fairly OddParents*. She's written over 200 national magazine articles, and her published plays include the award-winning *Graceland*. She also worked as a caterer waiter for the legendary Martha Stewart, a credit she never tires of sharing. A native New Yorker who attended Tulane University, Ellen lives in Los Angeles with her husband, daughter, and rescue chi mix, Pogo. She still misses her hometown—and still drives like a New York.

"It's a Funny Thing: Easy Ways to Add Humor to Your Writing"

Ellen Byron is an accomplished author of published plays such as the award-winning *Graceland*; the television shows *Wings*, *Just Shoot Me*, and *Fairly Odd Parents*; and humorous mystery novels like the Cajun Country Mysteries for which she won an Agatha Award. In addition, she gained Best Humorous Mystery Lefty awards from the Left Coast Crime Conference. Having been a staff member of innumerable writer teams, Ms. Byron was well prepared to advise SCWA members on how to create good humor.

A bit of cautionary advice to those new to this challenge: “Keep your humor current.” In other words, “humor evolves.” Byron suggests checking out comedies from every decade—the 30s, the 50s, the 70s—and note how humor changes and can get dated. “Some may be politically incorrect now.” Also avoid “reference jokes.” For example, no one later will get a Bob Dole joke [older politics]. For practice, she says to write a “non-reference version” of this joke: “I haven’t seen that much plastic surgery since the Kardashian Christmas card.”

Learn more precisely how people talk: Listen carefully to people’s conversations; write some of it out for yourself. Especially try to catch the *conscious* choices of words a person makes in a particular situation. As an exercise, write down the specific word choices a manuscript character of yours makes. Don’t yet try to be funny. The funny effect will rise when you place this character and his vocabulary choices in different interactions or situations. Next exercise: “Put two characters together and write a scene between them, exploring each’s unique language AND behavior.”

Next, pick an acquaintance/friend you find funny and “articulate exactly how they’re funny.” Then select another friend who’s funny in a different way and “analyze their humor style.” If no one in your personal life will work for this, use an actor or comedian you find humorous.

Now we focus on one of the characters who is to be funny in your story, novel, play or TV show. Commit to his/her type of humor by writing a few sentences that *describe* how he or she is funny. Is this person clever or clueless? Then have “two characters play off each other” maybe with sarcasm: “You don’t think it looks good on me?”

Give your *protagonist* his/her own voice (style of speaking)—just as Jerry Seinfeld has his own voice. You can have the person be funny but not really *joke* funny.

Be aware of the difference between *humor* [behavior?] and *jokes*. (As an aside, Byron said it’s hard to have good-looking persons being funny because humor is usually a defense system.) She described a humorous scene in a VEEP program where Jonah is running to catch up with others, but his pants zipper keeps getting caught on his personal anatomy. Another humorous spike can be when a character yells at an inanimate thing. With jokes, infuse the language with similes and metaphors.

Humorous behavior can be written into all kinds of living or work situations, and it’s funny because it’s *real* [and could happen to us]. Byron described a scene where a cook or a chef cooks with fine, cast iron pots. Then, eek, one of the assistants finds that a dog has been eating out of and licking one of the pots. The kitchen staff holds a funeral for the pot, which

now becomes a comic set piece. Big uproar. But later the pot shows up again—and, well, you get it.

Another example of using a comic set piece is the famous scene (episode 36) from Lucille Ball's *I Love Lucy* show where she and friend Ethel are working on the assembly line in Kramer's Kandy Kitchen, wrapping every piece of chocolate with paper and replacing it on the line. If they don't get all pieces done, they'll be fired. When the conveyor belt speeds up and they can't wrap each chocolate, they eat them. The speed increases. Besides their mouths, they stuff extra pieces in their blouses and bakery hats when a supervisor comes in to check that they're getting all done. Later when they go home, their husbands, to make up for some chore deficiencies of their own, have a present for the ladies: a big box of chocolates. See <https://www.wideopeneats.com/i-love-lucy-chocolate-factory/>.

Sometimes comic observations and actions are funny because they are so contrary to the expected behavior. Byron discussed a *Seinfeld* and *Kramer* scene where a funeral was being held for a business assistant, a heavy, sad scene. But the funeral contrasted with the big fancy meal afterwards and subsequent high spirits of the crowd.

When Program Director Maddie Margarita asked Ms. Byron about the relationship between comedy and tragedy, our speaker gave this example: In the food layout for a memorial, someone who cooked had forgotten to put any sugar in the brownies. The protagonist or others watch everyone's face change as they eat the odd-tasting brownies, but the watchers cannot laugh. In another example, the shoes for a previously dead person were put into a coffin for the next corpse.

Another area for humor uses the differences of cultural status between people. Byron mentioned the movie *Arthur* that has a butler with a high-status attitude. He's oblivious that his manner is often humorous. However, "the reverse, low status, is not necessarily funny unless the low and the high-status characters bump into each other: for example, the housemaid who is more confident than the wealthy owner." For practice in status, Byron suggests listing "the status of your main characters from 1 to 4, with 1 being the highest status and 4 being the lowest. Write a brief exchange between two characters of different status."

The best placement for the kicker, funny word is at the end of the sentence. In an ongoing situation, use the comedy "Rule of Threes." This rule means repeating a significant fact or line three times, but in the last instance you've changed a critical word. "Comedy depends on the element of surprise." For "foot-in-the-mouth" humor, the character has to back track until he thinks he's gotten his blooper straightened out.

Here's more of Ellen Byron's biography: She's written over 200 national magazine articles. She also worked at a caterer-waiter for the legendary Martha Stewart, a credit she never tires of sharing. A native New Yorker who attended Tulane University, Ellen lives in Los Angeles with her husband daughter, and rescue chi mix, Pogo. She still misses her hometown—and still drives like a New York Cabbie.

Ms. Byron offered a link to "The TV Snob's Dictionary," a dictionary of slang terms that staff writers use to pin problems in sitcom humor. <https://www.vanityfair.com/culture/2012/05/tv-snob-dictionary-humor>.

Ms. Byron says to amuse yourself while writing. "If you're enjoying yourself, so will others."

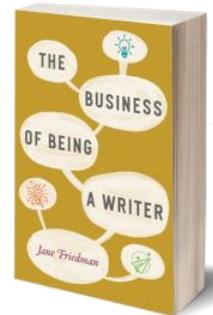
Glenda Brown Rynn, Reporter

grynn@cox.net

RESOURCES FOR WRITERS

How do you find your way through the ocean of resources available online for writers like us? Check out this sampling of what we have found to be of interest. Links are included so you will be able to investigate further.

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.

Authors Publish: Here's a list of major trade publishers who are always open for submissions, among them Workman, Gibbs Smith, Harlequin, Andrews McMeel, and others. It will be best if you go to their websites and look at their current catalogs to assess the suitability of your submission to the kind of books they publish.

<https://www.authorspublish.com/18-major-book-publishers-always-open-to-submissions/>

Publishing ... and Other Forms of Insanity publishes a monthly list of writers' conferences, fee free contests, and agents looking for submissions and much more. Check the website every month for up-to-date information and resources.

Published to Death, www.publishedtodeath.blogspot.com lists agents for all genres who are looking for submissions. Details of what they are looking for and how to reach them will give you a head start for your submission process.

Always check the agency website and agent bio before submitting. Agents can switch agencies or close their lists, and submission requirements can change.

4 New Agents Seeking Fantasy, YA, Horror, Memoir. Fiction, Nonfiction, Kidlit and more

- **Ms. Elle Thompson** of [Triada US Literary Agency](#)
- **Ms. Jolene Haley** of [Marsal Lyon Literary Agency](#)
- **Ms. Jen Nadol** of [The Unter Agency](#)
- **Ms. Elle Thompson** of [Triada US Literary Agency](#)
- **Ms. Haley Casey** of [Creative Media Agency](#)

Find more information on these agents at:

<https://publishedtodeath.blogspot.com/2020/12/4-new-agents-seeking-fantasy-ya-horror.html>

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 **southerncalwriters.org** and SCWA social media platforms.

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

Membership: Yann Jackson, ykj3678@gmail.com

**Southern California Writer's Association
 Southerncalwriters.org**

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.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.