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Southern California Writer's Association October 2022

- **President Larry Porricelli's Message**
- **October's Featured Event: Dana Hammer on October 15, 10 a.m. Regency Theatre, South Coast Plaza**
- **Craft Shop: October 22, 10 a.m. Essential Story Solutions, a Masterclass with Mark Sevi**
- **Hump Day: Every Wednesday 10 a.m. on SCWA's Facebook Group page**
- **Debby's Room: Continuing in October on Wednesdays 10:20 a.m. on the SCWA Facebook Group page, on the Rooms tab**
- **Highlights: Brian Fitzpatrick**



Have you subscribed?

Check out our fancy new URL for the YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/SCWAWritersOnline>

President's Message for October 2022 from Larry Porricelli



FIND YOUR STRONG SPOT by Larry Porricelli, SCWA President

I realized a week or so ago that as a writer I was writing to please others. I no longer had a strong spot. I would receive suggestions and ideas from fellow writers I respect and follow them through in my stories. But not for good reason. I gave others a license to drive and motivate my work. My mind was always trying to please others rather than just write the damn story.

It became so bad that a philosophy of doing nothing of my own value seeped into my actions. Instead of being the stalwart of rebellion and rascality, I became a pleaser of anyone.

My head got tired. It was spinning in multiple directions. Up. Down. Right. Left. Over. Under. Yeesh! Neither a handful of quaaludes nor a bottle of Bombay gin (the gin with Queen Victoria on the bottle) could have rescued me.

Ah, but solutions do come. Always at a cost.

In my desire to please others, lies, no other way to state it, became a part of my repertoire. I would not share the truth because I was filled with the false apprehension that others couldn't handle truth unless it was shaded in golden paint, just like temptress Jill Masterton, as played by actress Shirley Eaton in *Goldfinger*. But her ending wasn't a good one.

Fortunately, a close friend, a person with whom I shared many laughs and adventures and foibles and successes, called me out on my actions and behaviors.

I thought this person was so wrong and so mean, but as the words seeped in, the absolute truth was a waterboarding.

As writers, we long for acceptance and approval. We write with hopes and dreams.

I enjoy life again on the inside.

Truth is the only answer to anything. There is your strong spot.

I feel as if I was Atlas and shrugged.

A friend's a friend forever for speaking the truth to me.

My heart is a new book, with clean, empty pages that I will fill.

Enjoy this month with SCWA. We have two spectacular events for you:

On October 15th, our monthly meeting features Dana Hammer, a well-known SCWA member, speaking on humor and horror together. Dana has won so many awards and written novels, plays, and screenplays. All of her work is being produced!

Our meeting on the 15th is at the Regency South Coast Village Theatre, across from South Coast Plaza. Plenty of free parking and Halloween fun! Wear a costume and win a prize!

On October 22th we offer a fantastic Craft Shop and workshop, Essential Story Solutions, with author and screenwriter, Mark Sevi, who will give you hands-on information on what makes a real story exceptional. Attendees will receive a copy of Mark's latest book, *Quantum Scriptwriting*, an acclaimed work for novelists and screenwriters. It is simply the most amazing writing on the subject, and it is being reviewed and used everywhere.

Be quick, register for both if you can. The meeting on the 15th is live only. The seminar on the 22nd is Zoom only. Check them out at our website, southernwriters.org. You will be amazed.

Thank you for your fellowship. Find your strong spot!

Larry Porricelli

October 2022



**Visit the Southern California Writer's Association
Website Today**

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

- **Join SCWA or renew your membership**
- **Sample the books written and published by SCWA members**
- **Get to know our members: explore member profiles**
- **Dig into our newsletter archive for highlights of our speakers and events**



Have you binged on SCWA's YouTube videos?

- We love sharing our content!
- SCWA Writers Online is FREE to all with over 100 Hump Day interviews with bestselling authors led by Maddie Margarita
- See SCWA's workshops and videos of our featured speakers from our monthly meetings

<https://www.youtube.com/SCWAWritersOnline>



SCWA Events This Month: October 2022

- SCWA Featured Monthly Guest: Dana Hammer October 15, 2022, at 10 a.m. PT in person at the Regency Theatre, South Coast Plaza, Costa Mesa.
- SCWA Craft Shop: October 22, 2022, at 10 a.m. Essential Story Solutions, A Masterclass and Online Workshop with Mark Sevi Register at: <https://www.southernalwriters.org/>
- SCWA VIRTUAL HAPPY HOUR: Every Friday at 4:30 p.m. PT. Join us with your funny stories and libations for good news and good cheer. New members showing up weekly. Sign up on our website and we'll email you a link and password.
<https://www.southernalwriters.org/>
- SCWA HUMP DAY BOOK TOUR: Hump Day has returned! Join us every Wednesday on SCWA's Facebook page. And check out the ones you have missed on SCWA's YouTube channel:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/southernalwriters>
- Debby's Room: Continuing through October. Every Wednesday at 10:20 a.m. PT. Join Debby Putman and Dot Caffrey for casual conversation about the writing craft and anything that you wish to bring for discussion. Click on the Rooms tab for Debby's Room on the SCWA Facebook page.

Have you missed an SCWA event? We will upload replays as they are edited and ready on SCWA's YouTube channel at:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/SCWAWritersOnline>

Featured Monthly Speaker: October 15, 2022
Dana Hammer
Writing Humor and Horror



Dana Hammer is the author of *The Cannibal's Guide to Fasting* and many short stories and novellas, which have been published in various anthologies, magazines, and journals. Her middle grade fantasy novel, *My Best Friend Athena*, will be released from Cinnabar Moth in February 2023. She has never eaten human meat.

When: Saturday, October 15, 2022

Time: 10:00 am PDT

Where: Regency Theatre, South Coast Plaza, 1561 Sunflower Ave, Santa Ana

Cost: VIP In-Person Admission: Members \$25.00

VIP In-Person Admission: Nonmembers \$35.00

Seating is limited. No walk-ins.

Your safety and health are important to us.

We welcome vaccinated members and guests.

You must Pre-Register by 12:00 p.m. Friday, October 14 at

[https:// www.southerncalwriters.org](https://www.southerncalwriters.org)

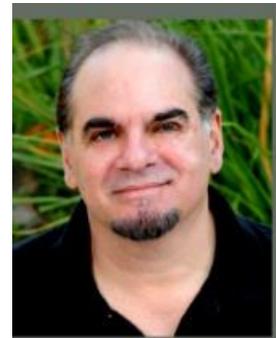
VIP Admission includes: Continental breakfast, networking, speaker, and light lunch, plus a private link to a recording of the meeting.

Doors open at 9:30 a.m. for light breakfast and networking. Meeting starts promptly at 10 a.m.

For information about SCWA and membership please go to <https://www.southernwriters.org/>



Essential Story Solutions, A Masterclass and Online Workshop with Mark Sevi



Prepping for NaNoWriMo, struggling with an unwieldy novel or manuscript, or just eager to make your story the best it can be?

Sign up today for **Essential Story Solutions**, an online masterclass with screenwriter and author Mark Sevi on Saturday, October 22, 2022. Bring your ideas and manuscript woes to workshop with Mark following the seminar. All paid attendees will receive a copy of Mark's *Quantum Scriptwriting*—essential reading for all writers. Whether it is a novel, a script, a short story, or an epic series. This book is revolutionary in its approach and the information within is easily absorbed.

Who: Mark Sevi

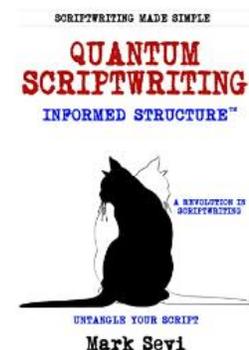
When: Saturday, October 22, 2022

Time: Lecture 10 am – 12 pm,
Workshop 12:00 – 1:30 pm

Members: \$20.00

Nonmembers: \$30.00

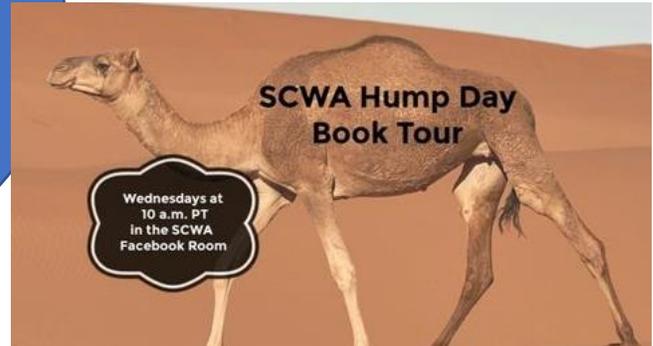
*Please note: this online workshop will not be recorded.



**Hump Day
Book Tour**

**LIVESTREAMED
Every
Wednesday
10:00 a.m.**

Join us every Wednesday at 10 a.m.



Hump Day episodes stream on SCWA's Facebook page.

Look for our SCWA group on Facebook. Scroll through the posts for the most recent guests. When we are LIVE, click on the Events tab to join us!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/southerncalwriters/events>



LIT UP!

A Conversation with Orange County Readers and Writers; a monthly salon with authors reading and discussing their book hosted by Maddie Tighe Margarita

New authors—new works—new worlds. Find your next favorite author or become a new fan. LIT UP Orange County is currently accepting submissions from authors interested in sharing their work with Orange County readers and writers. Submissions should be fiction or memoir, 6-8 double-spaced pages, and engage our audience. Interested writers please contact @MadelineTigheMargarita for more details!

HIGHLIGHTS: September 2022 Brian Fitzpatrick Guts, Grit, and Genre—Writing in 2022

“Guts, Grit, and Genre—Writing in 2022”

“When SCWA opened, no one was published. Now almost everyone is published,” announced President Larry Porricelli at the beginning of our September meeting. Our speaker, Brian Fitzpatrick, an award-winning author, screenwriter, and producer, confirmed our inner similarity: “You know writers; you can’t stop yourself.”

Fitzpatrick’s guts and grit were triggered when he was only seven years old and accidentally watched the classic zombie horror movie, *Night of the Living Dead*. Afterward, he couldn’t sleep for a week. In addition, he was fascinated by the contradiction of being totally scared yet “perfectly safe.” Weird. His mother suggested he write his own stories. So he did.

As life went on, “I knew I wanted to be a writer and earn an income.” After reading about screenplays, Fitzpatrick wrote one called *Vampire in LA*. Not happy with it, he still wanted to learn how to connect with Yahoo groups for discussion and the movie industry. His motto became “Never give up, never give up.” Finally, the movie industry became interested in his screenplay. But then the action gothic horror film *Van Helsing* with Hugh Jackson came out, and “Afterwards all interest in my screenplay was gone.” Fitzpatrick questioned himself if this writing was really what he wanted to do.

Next, in 2016 Fitzpatrick finished another screenplay, *Mechcraft*. He entered it into screenwriting competition contests: Final Draft Big Break Screenplay Competition, PAGE International Screenwriting Contest, the Screencraft Sci-Fi/Fantasy Screenplay Competition, and The Script Lab 2019 Screenplay Competition. It placed in eight quarterfinals and one semifinal but faded after those.

A friend told him “Convert the script into a novel” because Fitzpatrick could build his fan base and get to “the movie people.” Thus, Fitzpatrick had to learn how to write a novel, so different from a screenplay where everything must be visual. Lots of frustration and even crying. He commented, “In screenwriting you don’t want any fancy description about how [an actor] to do something. Just say what to do.” Converting to the novel process became “such a job” but one he finally *loved*. “In novels you can be yourself.” His son, a digital artist, designed the book cover.

Fitzpatrick submitted *Mechcraft*, now a novel, to the traditional Big Five publishers. “No one responded.” He then looked into self-publishing, but his day career kept him too busy for that path. He finally found a small, independent publisher for which he had to do the marketing himself. Facebook was good for ads, but in-person events were the best to connect with people. He also had audio books made in 2018 with an award-winning audio narrator.

When the Covid pandemic hit and forced so many to work from home, it was “great” for Fitzpatrick because he could finish his *Mechcraft* sequel, *Mechcraft: Disruption*. He submitted to eight publishers and agents he found through the database of QueryTracker.com. It has “hundreds and hundreds of managers, and you can submit to several.”



Then this second novel was accepted by Black Rose Writer, an Indy publisher, who wanted to publish *Mechcraft: Disruption* in May 2021 as well as Fitzpatrick's first *Mechcraft* from August 2020, both books!! About that time, he was contacted by a band, CHMCL STR&JCKET [Chemical Straitjacket] who loved Fitzpatrick's material and wanted to write a song about his villain Sasha. The song became “Tendril and Blade,” released on the band's new release in February 2021. “It captures the essence of my story.” The song helped in Fitzpatrick's marketing, but he had also put himself out on social media, even TikTok. He recommends getting an account in its group, “TikTok for Authors.”

“None of this is easy,” he states, “but can be fun.”

Suddenly in January 2021, Black Rose Writing said it could also publish another book, a third from him at the same time—if he could turn in number three **in two months** to keep their printing schedule. Its name, *Mechcraft: Cataclysm*, turned out to describe his situation. Now this writer had a personal, sudden violent upheaval in his daily life. Fitzpatrick took a vacation leave from his “soul-crushing corporate job” to finish this third novel. Afterward, he had to take days to sleep off his exhaustion. He told the audience that this third book was “10,000 pages longer than my others”—an amusing mistake when he meant “10,000 words.” That forced writing frenzy surely did feel like 10,000 pages. His son then designed *Cataclysm*'s cover.

Fitzpatrick's latest screenplay, *The Simian Trials*, is coming out in 2023.

Fitzpatrick's Advice: Be ready to pivot from one focus to another.

Pivot: "Be open to any opportunity." Fitzpatrick says 100% for him has come from social media. Don't be afraid to network. You're building your own brand."

Pivot to World Building: "This process includes geography, inhabitants, animals, and societal structures. Where are we in government and more? Where in religion? What are the struggles this world has? What are my characters?" [For Sci-fi, besides internal changes in a character, Fitzpatrick likes an external change in a character.]

Pivot: Once your script is finished, "publishers aren't going to help you much." First, become known in one genre; then branch out. Fitzpatrick plans to write a rom-com.

Pivot: Enter a few well-known contests. For screenplays, try The Academy Nicholl Fellowships, PAGE International, Final Draft, and the Austin Film Festival. "If you place higher in those, agents will want you." "Twitter also has a screenwriting section."

Pivot: For novels, enter Script Pipeline and Screen Craft Cinematic Book Competition. CoverFly.com "will tell you all the valid contests out there." Send them a PDF version, not the .doc type.

Pivot: If you place well in a contest, then go to its general or pitch meeting. The people there might ask whom you see in some of the roles. They also might ask what else you have. For yourself, evaluate them also. Can you and they get along? Could you "hang out" with them for eight hours at a time? If so, "then they'll be like your team."

At the end of this meeting, we attendees found out that Brian Fitzpatrick had enjoyed being with us so much that he joined SCWA that day. Hurray!

Glenda Brown Rynn, Reporter

grynn@cox.net

RESOURCES FOR WRITERS

ARTICLES WORTH READING

Authorspublish.com will keep you up-to-date on opportunities to submit your work to a wide array of publishers. Their articles always contribute to the conversations about writing that we enjoy:

<https://authorspublish.com/why-writers-need-to-read-to-be-readers/>

<https://authorspublish.com/how-to-create-realistic-writing-goals/>

<https://authorspublish.com/41-themed-submission-calls-for-October-2022/>

How to Leave a Review for Your Friends' Books

- Log in to your Amazon account
- Go to the products page, then select the book
- Scroll down to the Customer Reviews section and click on "Write a Customer Review"
- Rate the book
- Write your review and "submit"
- You'll see: "Thanks for your review"

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.

Are you afraid of scams and rip-offs when you consider publishing your book? Writers need never go it alone with a watchdog like Writer Beware to have your back.

Writer Beware's mission is to track, expose, and raise awareness of scams and other questionable activities in and around the publishing industry.



After many years on the Blogger platform, we have finally transitioned to WordPress, which offers much greater flexibility in terms of design, control, and ease of use.

We also have a new, easy to remember web address: www.writerbeware.blog.

5 Freakishly Helpful Amazon Tricks Every Author Should Use (2022)
From Shayla Raquel:

<https://www.shaylaraquel.com/blog/amazontricks?fbclid>



LitNuts was created to share the "Best of the Indies" with booklovers.

- Subscribers get a free newsletter featuring only indie books.
- Authors and publishers get an affordable way to share their work with engaged readers.

<https://litnuts.com>/LitNuts promotes *only* books from independent presses and authors. Details on its website:

<https://litnuts.com/pages/authors-and-publishers>

“One of the best ways we can compel our reader to keep reading us is to do whatever the story is calling for well, with panache, with specificity and a surprising and gratifying fidelity to things as they are in the world (or, as in *Star Wars*, as they might be, in some other world).”

George Saunders



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.**
- ❖ **Opportunities to showcase your book on the SCWA website in our bookshop, Members showcase, and on your profile.**
- ❖ **SCWA Member's Only group on Facebook where we rewind and replay recent featured guests and their presentations.**



SCWA Board of Directors

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 Vice President of Finances Don Westenhaver
 Vice President of Programming Madeline Margarita
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 Newsletter Editor..... Pam Sheppard
 Scribe and Speaker Reporter..... Glenda Rynn
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Mailing Address for inquiries by mail: PO Box 47, Huntington Beach, CA 92648

Southern California Writer's Association

www.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.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.