

The Writer's Life

www.sdwritersguild.org

June, 2015



“Good writing requires courage – first to give voice at the heart of every story, and then to share it with a world of readers.” Grant Faulkner

Donna Eckstein – Telling Your Story

Donna Eckstein, PhD, graduated from United States International University (now Alliant University) and has over 25 years of clinical, teaching, writing, and research experience in psychology. She has published articles and self-assessment instruments with themes related to geriatric, health, and sport psychology. She was a contributing author to a text, *Gerontology: An Interactive Text*, (2010) which examined research in gerontology from physical, sociological, and psychological aspects of aging. Her writing included two chapters on *Psychological Experiences and Psychological Expressions of Aging*.



Dr. Eckstein currently teaches doctoral courses in psychology at Capella University and serves as a mentor and committee member for dissertations utilizing graduate level writing and research skills in the field of psychology. In addition, she is an Associate Professor in the Emeritus/Older Adult Program with San Diego Continuing Education. She teaches a course, *Our Stories/Our Lives*, for adults 55+ in a classroom and online. In this course, students explore psychological concepts related to human growth and development as they reflect on their experiences and expressions of life influences and events. Effective communication skills are incorporated into presentations and publications utilizing creative writing and/or eliciting expressive life stories.

New Marketing Opportunity

Members may now submit announcements of events for inclusion as a post on the SDW/EG website. If you would like to announce a book signing, a class, a read-and -critique group meeting, a public presentation, or other event, email the information to Sandra Yeaman, Social Media Manager for the guild:

sandrayeaman@gmail.com.

Remember to check the website for events you may be interested in.

www.sdwritersguild.org.

Read and Critique Group Seeking Members

Well-established read and critique group is seeking one or two additional writers of short fiction. Call Yvonne Nelson Perry at 619-479-7960 or contact Will Greenway at wgrnway@gmail.com.

SDW/EG Youth Mission

Coordinator of the Student Writing Project Simone Arias reported at a subcommittee meeting at the University City Library on May 30 on five groups who have expressed possible interest in collaborating with SDW/EG on playwriting, journalism, short story, biography, memoir, or poetry opportunities for youth. Members interested in becoming involved may contact Simone (see p. 4) with information on topics in which they have expertise, what kind of writing they are interested in, and their ideas regarding what they would like to offer. Members may also volunteer to be interviewed as a source of live history for students to write.

Volunteer Needed

A volunteer is needed at regular meetings to assist at the sign-in table along with Marcia Buompensiero. Please call Harry Huntsman if you can assist for one evening or several. (858)571- 0201.

A Tip of the Hat To . . .

Dave Feldman for volunteering his skill and time as copy editor for the newsletter and for final editing of submissions for the anthology.

Yvonne Nelson Perry for her 21st year of teaching at the Santa Barbara Writers Conference, with this year being the first time in 42 years there will be a short-story workshop.

Share your good news! Send to RthLys@cox.net

What You Missed

Stories being her favorite thing to write, Bonnie ZoBell shared ideas for finding story materials and the development of characters for stories. She gave examples from her new book "What Happened Here." Using the crash of PSA Flight 182 in North Park in 1978, she described a pattern of using an historically factual background event and weaving in fictional characters. She used a technique of linking the characters from different stories.

Sources of story and character materials include headlines in the tabloid newspapers, local history and culture; she may start with a person she knows, someone she observes or overhears in public, or story prompts from online sources. Unlike some authors, Bonnie said, she doesn't write a profile of characters but thinks about each one deeply, defining what is important to them as individuals, why they would do what they do. Using her imagination, she often creates characters very different from the kind of person she naturally is, asking herself "What if" . . . "What would make me do "X" if I was that character/person?" She uses the internet to research even fiction stories to get perspective.

Bonnie said she tends to "overwrite," getting every tiny detail down on paper, then sculpting and trimming for the final manuscript. Reviewing stories or books written ten to thirty years ago is sometimes made easier by the insight and increased understanding of human nature gained by time.

Even though stories of literary fiction don't sell as well as novels, she advised that they can be marketed in collections or individually, possibly linked to a current event.

MeetUps for Writers

"MeetUps" are groups started because people wanted to get together with others who have a common interest. There are MeetUps of different sizes in every part of the county: some write, some read, some critique, some are newly formed, some well-established.

There are MeetUps for poets, songwriters, academics and other specialties. Take a look at the MeetUps on the WWW.

For a list of MeetUps go to :

<http://writers.meetup.com/cities/us/ca/san-diego/>

Some examples are:

<http://www.meetup.com/shutupandwriteSanDiego/>

<http://www.meetup.com/The-Sandy-Ego-Writers-Group>

<http://www.meetup.com/WriteNowSanDiego>
<http://www.meetup.com/The-Roundtable/>

Intellectual Property

The business of writing, editing and publishing has potential legal ramifications which may require an attorney who specializes in intellectual property. Legal services may include issues involving copyrights and trademarks or contract matters which include author-publisher and artist-publisher transactions, agency representation, printing and distribution, foreign rights, life story rights, rights and permissions and other clearance matters, releases, motion picture and television options, non-disclosure and non-competition documents, and purchase-and-sale transactions. It pays to know when you need legal advice.

Mark Your Calendar

June 22nd – 4th Monday – **Donna**

Eckstein will speak on "Telling Your Story."

July 27th – **Open Mic** night. Sign up and share a 3-minute tidbit of your writing.

August 27th - **Alan Russell** will be presenting on "Surviving as a Writer."

September 28th – **T. Jefferson Parker** will be the featured speaker.

Quick Tips on Editing by Dave Feldman

1. Word trim. Delete every word that doesn't move your story along. Be ruthless.
2. Do the math. If there was flooding in eight states, count the states. (Sometimes there are seven, or nine.) Same with percentages: Add 'em up, and get 100.
3. Periods and commas go *inside* the quotation marks.
4. In general, titles after the name are lowercase.
5. Strive for smoothness.
6. With a series of three, use a comma before the "and": Red, white, and blue.
7. Say: his wife, Susan, who ran off. Set off Susan with commas so we'll know he didn't have other wives, such as his wife Joan or wife Gloria.
8. Use the spellcheck, but don't trust it too due awl. It can't spell; it can't think; it can't read your mind.
9. Try to edit on printouts, rather than the screen. You'll catch more errors.
10. Put the piece away for an hour, or a day, then edit it again.
11. Trust the light bulb going on over your head. It's common sense telling you that that sentence doesn't make sense.
12. Read it aloud. If you run out of breath, well, use use more periods and shorter sentences.

Keeping You Up-To-Date

Open Mic Night in July – Fifteen members have signed up; three more spaces are available. An alternates list often used fill in for last minute cancellations.

The Guilded Pen – 2015 edition Those clever members are at it again! Poets, novelists and storytellers, journalists, biographers, memoirists, historians and those writers of fables have stepped up to the plate and hit those balls right out of the park. This year's submissions are clever, pensive, scary, witty, mind bending, sobering (running out of adjectives)—and they just keep coming.

Website Tip for June

from Sandra Yeaman, Social Media Manager
www.sdwritersguild.org

We welcome your thoughts about the website. Just scroll to the bottom of any page and look for "Leave a Reply." Type your message in the box below and select "Post Comment" when done.

Comments are not added automatically to the website as they are moderated by the webmaster. Whether your comment is posted or not, you can be sure your message will be read and your thoughts considered.

Writing Classes at Your Fingertips

Would you like to polish your writing skills from the comfort of your easy chair? The Great Courses series are taught by professors and experts in many fields, included writing. A course often consists of 20 or more classes and comes with a student booklet.

DVD or CD audio classes are easy to use, can be paused or rewound if you want to re-think something, and will fit your personal schedule.

For more information look through the online catalog. "Discover the Secrets to Improving Your Writing" DVD is \$69.95 until July 12 (down from @\$254.98). Go to: www.TheGreatCourses.com

Writers Digest Competitions Early-bird Deadlines

Poetry: October 1, 2015; \$1000 prize
Short Story: (1500 words) : November 16, 2015; \$3000 prize.
Go to: WritersDigest.com/competitions

Upcoming Writing Conferences

Greater Los Angeles Writers Conference –June 26-28, 2015 in Van Nuys.
Memoir Writers Conference –October 23-25, 2015 in Los Angeles.

"To be creative doesn't mean coming up with something no one has ever thought of before: It means coming up with something *you* have never thought or imagined or made before." Barbara Baig

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<p>The Writer's Life is published by The San Diego Writers/Editors Guild P. O. Box 881931 San Diego, CA 92168</p> <p>Telephone: (858) 571-0201</p> <p>Meetings: The Fourth Monday of each month</p> <p>General Meeting: 6:30-9:00 PM Marketing Support Group: 5:30-6:30 PM</p> <p>Location: San Diego County Health Services Complex 3851 Rosecrans, SD, CA 92110</p> <p>Visit our website for a map www.SDWritersGuild.org</p> <p>Membership: \$36.00 per year Guests: \$5.00 per meeting</p>	Board of Directors		2-Year Term Expires 12/31
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<u>Mission Statement</u>			
The San Diego Writers/Editors Guild shall promote, support, and encourage the writing arts for adults and youth.			
Benefits of membership: SDW/EG supports members and promotes the writing arts through the following: educational meetings with speakers on timely topics for writers; networking with writing/editing professionals; manuscript review services and the opportunity to submit your work for publication in the annual anthology; information about community-wide writing/editing classes, conferences, and other events; links to writing/editing resources on the website; publicity for your published creative work on the "Members' Works" web page; and the opportunity to be included in the Speakers Bureau.			