

November 2017



# Suburban Scribe

**Newsletter of the Sacramento Suburban Writers' Club**

## Setting Your Book up for Self-Publication



Mary Lou Anderson has taught all ages, from elementary to community college. In addition, she has spent nearly twenty years talking to, listening to, and teaching convicted felons inside California prisons. That experience gives voice to her evil characters and becomes part of her storylines woven with tension and suspense.

When finally finished with her first book, *The Six Rivers Killer*, she became frustrated with the years-long process of finding an agent and a publisher. She decided, instead, to go with self-publishing, and chose to use the pseudonym M. L. Edson.

However, frustration again hit her while she was trying to figure out how to set up her books for CreateSpace and Kindle. She stuck with it and, being a teacher, she documented the process (instead of throwing her computer across the room).

She will share that process and demonstrate how to save time, effort, and frustration in setting up your book from the first keystroke through completion, then preparing and refining the format so it will be ready for publication.

Mary Lou offers editing, proofing, and consulting services to help you make your book ready for publication. Her books, *The Six Rivers Killer*, *Not Even a Shadow*, and *Poems*, are available on Amazon.

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Sheri McGuinn will be reading at a Women's National Book Association (WNBA) authors' event at the Book Passage in Corte Madera 1 PM Sunday November 5.

This celebration of the WNBA Centennial will showcase a few of their talented members. Several writers reading from their own works will toast the 100 years of women in the world of words.

Sheri will be reading from her book, *Alice*, and says, "*Alice* is not 'new,' but I only have a few minutes to read, and it's my cheeriest work - didn't want anything dark for the holiday."

[Women's National Book Association panel \(Corte Madera\)](#)

1 PM Sunday Nov. 5, 51 Tamal Vista Blvd - Corte Madera, CA 94925

## Preparing for a Writers' Conference and the Must-Haves

By Michael Brandt

Writers should attend a writers' conference every three years to update their skill sets, current trends, emerging markets and to meet new writers. It's the "nuts and bolts" that keep you current in an already overcrowded industry. It gives you the opportunity to meet a wide range of people, thus making new contacts, and networking with likeminded people.

With that said, how do you optimize the experience?

**Have a Game Plan:** Conferences can be overwhelming. Review the conference agenda and highlight the most relevant sessions that impact your writing career.

**Set Goals:** Stretch yourself with topics that you are unfamiliar with to expand your knowledge base. My goals for each day are to learn three new writing skills/techniques, meet three new writers, and thank three speakers or conference organizers.

**Research:** Knowing something about the speakers and their recent book releases, and talking with them after their sessions will help you in your writing career. Always thank them.

**Dress and conduct yourself professionally:** Business casual is acceptable and makes a good impression. When you attend receptions, welcoming events, and after-hours parties, remember you are not off-duty. Writers, agents, publishers, and editors are watching you. Bad behavior could cost you a contract.

**Network:** Conferences are opportunities for meeting other writers. You most likely will find yourself in breakout groups before, during or after the conference. Sit with new people at lunch, dinner, and at events. Always wear your conference name tag so others can identify you; don't take it off until you are driving home or on the plane.

**Have a thirty-second pitch:** no matter where you are in writing your book, have a pitch ready and memorize it. A pitch should include the main character, conflict and what's at stake. Practice on friends or at writers' meetings with members for an honest opinion.

**One-sheet:** This single sheet should contain the title of your project, genre, word count, your photo, a short bio, and your contact information. Hand these out to interested editors, agents, or publishers.

**Conversation starters:** "What do you write?" "Where are you from?" "Are you excited about the keynote speaker?" This is about social interchanges with fellow attendees and keeping yourself engaged in conversations; do not monopolize conversations.

**A notebook:** If you are not taking notes, you are not learning anything. Space is often limited at conferences. large electronic devices may be impractical. You can only spread out so far at a tightly packed conference.

**Business cards:** Take plenty and don't be afraid to tactfully pass them out. If you have a recently published book, you may want to bring free promotional items highlighting that book such as bookmarks, postcards, or ball point pens.

**Audio recordings:** If these will be available, you may want to attend sessions that do not record. You can listen to the recorded sessions later, thus giving you more opportunity to expanding your learning tracks.

**Avoid time travel** by focusing on each and every presenter. Don't zone-out or text people while in sessions. Become an active participant by asking questions and making comments. Be an extrovert, you paid for it!

**Thank the planning committee** for the hard work they did to prepare for this conference. It'll be greatly appreciated and you can make new friends at the same time. Buy at least one author's book while at the conference and ask them to sign it.

### Seeking solutions to your key questions:

1. Can I articulate my writing project clearly?
2. How does the conference bring me closer to my writing goals?
3. What do I need to learn to improve my skill set?
4. Who are the people I want to connect with that can take me to the next level?

**What apps should you have:** *Linkedin* so you can connect immediately with other writers you meet. You may want a *Facebook* fan page for writers rather than using your personal *Facebook* page. *Twitter*, *Instagram*, a dedicated website, *Goodreads*, *Pinterest* and a *blog* site are good starters. You will need these when you publish your book.

**Things to consider taking:** Notebook, pens, pencils, a tote-bag or small backpack to carry things, some cash for unexpected expenses, mints, iPhone charged w/cord, and a laptop to document each days' notes and promotional items.

**Portable battery chargers:** Going back and forth to your room to recharge devices can prevent you from hearing a great speaker, so purchase an inexpensive charger, or arrive early and find wall or floor electrical outlets for you to recharge your devices.

**Take a camera:** or use your iPhone camera to take conference pictures—especially with new friends.

**Always follow up:** a thank you email to new writers you meet, speakers can help your further your career.

**You are paying \$300 to \$500 to attend**, so get the most out of it and take advantage of every opportunity offered. Good luck at your conference and be the best writer you can!



November 2017

## Last Month

At the October meeting our speaker, Cathy McGreevy, discussed Deep Point of View

She first reviewed the different types of point of view (POV):

- **First Person:** narrator tells his own story. “I opened the door to find a monster lurking on the doorstep. I screamed.”
- **Second Person:** often used in children’s novelty book; the reader makes choices about advancing the story. “You hear a strange scratching sound on the door. Do you (1) open the door, or (2) run and hide under the bed? (If you choose 1, go to page 35. If you choose 2, go to page 79.)”
- **Third Person:** narrator uses names or “he” or “she” when referring to characters. “Peter opened the door to find a monster lurking on the doorstep. He screamed.”
  - **Third Person Omniscient:** the narrator knows every character’s innermost thoughts, what happened in the past, and even what is going to happen in the future—and shares this information with the reader.
  - **Third Person Limited:** the reader knows only what the POV character knows. It is very similar to first-person point of view, except the author refers to characters in the third person.

So, what is **Deep Point of View**? Here the author tells the story *entirely* through the eyes of the POV character, with no narrator or author intrusion. The reader “becomes” the character. This means the reader cannot know, see, or hear anything that the character doesn’t know, see, or hear. The reader learns and experiences everything right along with him. Whether you’re writing in first person or in third person limited, the same rules apply. Deep Point of View helps eliminate distance between the reader and the POV character.

Cathy gave us some rules that can help us be successful in using Deep Point of View:

1. No “head hopping” in a scene. Everything must be experienced through only *one* person, the POV character. To let us know what someone else is thinking, the author must hint at it via that character’s body language or through the POV character’s perceptiveness.
2. The reader must not know anything the POV character doesn’t know. If there is a burglar hiding behind the door, the reader can’t know it unless the POV character catches a glimpse of the intruder in a mirror over the fireplace.
3. Thoughts will go directly through the character’s mind, without need to italicize (except for a direct thought quotation, which is when the author writes the *exact* words the character says to himself. That type of quote should be rare and brief.)
4. Avoid dialogue and other tags for the POV character (“he said, asked, thought, wished, knew, saw, heard, felt, could tell, wondered, noticed, observed, realized, believed, understood, sensed...”). Those tags create distance and are not needed, because the reader *knows* that the thoughts, etc., are the POV character’s.
5. To choose whose POV to use, select the character with the most at stake, or with the most emotional investment in that scene, chapter, or story.
6. If you use multiple points of view in a story, switch POV only at the end of a scene or chapter. Don’t have more than two or three POV characters in a story—it would make it difficult for the reader to connect with them.

Compare the following pairs of sentences. The first is written in standard third person limited point of view, while the second is written in Deep Point of View. Notice the differences between them.

You will find the second sentences seem more immediate, as if you are the character.

1. *He had to think hard about what to do next.*

2. *What should he do next?*

1. *He thought a good bath wouldn’t hurt the dog.*

2. *Phew! A good bath would do this dog a world of good.*

1. *She wondered how she would get through the next day.*

2. *How could she possibly survive the next day?*

Deep Point of View, always anchored in the NOW, is an excellent choice for both high action AND contemplative moments.

**Action:** *She darted behind the trunk of the tree and her foot kicked something hard. The Beretta. Forget looking for the clip. Salvador’s men were wrapping up the last of the massacre, and soon the gunmen would converge on Tony ... if he wasn’t already dead. She ran toward the hut. Blood pounded in her ears. Please, God, let me be in time.*

**Contemplative:** *Anxiety twisted her guts as she glanced at the clock. The hands seemed to creep like ants across a kitchen floor. One second. Two. When would he arrive? He’d said he’d be here by now. What could possibly be detaining him? An accident? Had his boss found the stolen file? Or was it his mother, interfering as always? As if that awful old woman could possibly understand true love!*

It may be difficult for the author to tell the readers everything they need to know because Deep POV can’t show the reader anything the main POV character doesn’t know

Here are some suggestions to show what someone other than the main POV character is thinking, or to inform the reader of important actions that the main POV character does not witness,

- Have a chapter or scene in one person’s head, then have the next in another person’s head.
- Have the main POV character notice body language about other characters that reveal their state of mind. *Her mother’s shoulders slumped, and the corners of her mouth turned down. Or, it appeared that Humphrey was tired. Or Austin seemed interested in her.*
- Characters should not describe themselves (a woman probably wouldn’t think of herself as being “an elderly woman who suffered from arthritis.”) Instead, write: *Mrs. Smith rubbed her aching knees and grabbed her cane before slowly rising to greet her grandchildren.*

Another way to give insight into a character’s thoughts and backgrounds in Deep Point of View is to describe settings, etc., with similes that reveal something about the character’s age, background, and attitudes.

- *The cushions were as red as the priest’s vestments at Palm Sunday mass.*
- *The general spoke slowly, using his strength as carefully as an out-of-work showgirl uses her last pair of good stockings.* (Raymond Chandler)

When using Deep Point of View, be careful not to slip in a piece of information your character wouldn’t realistically have, or observe something he can’t see, or make assertions about what another character is feeling. Also, be sure his thoughts and speech fit his background, education, and personality.

Writing in Deep Point of View can be tricky, but there is no better way to help your reader immerse himself in the story. It’s worth trying!

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# E G Y P T

The Way It Is

Al Gilding

*Egyptland! Egyptland!  
We must all live in Egyptland.  
Tell me, brother, do you understand?*

*We're all working for Pharaoh!*

*Pharaoh, he sits in his tower of stone,  
The dogs called priests, behind his throne.  
The magicians cry "Forsooth"—then groan.*

*We're all just working for Pharaoh!*

*A thousand loaves, a thousand years,  
He feeds us all, but he feeds our fears.  
Don't dare sleep tonight, my dears.*

*Because we all have to work for Pharaoh!*

*Egyptland! Egyptland!*

*We all live together in Egyptland.  
Now tell me brother, do you understand?*

*We're all here working for Pharaoh!*

*Pharaoh casts his glare askance.  
His treasures move through the eye of chance,  
But we're all stuck in the same old trance.*

*'Cause we're all just working for Pharaoh.*

*The idols rise, tall in the sky.  
Pyramids all speak the same lie,  
For we'll all work until we die.*

*'Cause we're all here working for Pharaoh.*

*Egyptland! Egyptland!  
We'll all have to stay in Egyptland  
Tell me, brother, do you now understand?*

*We'll always be working for Pharaoh!*



# T i p s   b y   M o r t

For those of you who use social media to get everyone upset or amused, check out this program. It will add a strikethrough effect to your Tweets or Facebook messages:

<https://saijogeorge.com/strikethrough-text-generator/>

Here's a free tool to convert a picture file of lines into a vector drawing. This prevents images from becoming "pixelated" when you change the size. I know, I know, what's a *vector drawing* and what's *pixilated* mean? You'll get the idea here:

<https://www.rapidresizer.com/home/2017/10/4/free-online-raster-to-vector>

I can't vouch for the effectiveness of this site, but it may be worth investigating. It's a free video course that teaches you how to become a full-time author. You do have to provide your email address.

<https://www.tckpublishing.com/full-time-author>

# T h a n k s

One of our members, who wishes to remain anonymous, has donated to the SSWC Library a book entitled *The Complete Guide to Writing & Selling Magazine Articles*.

This book includes some great advice, some of which will really catch your attention. In the chapter AMATEURS FIDDLE...WRITERS WRITE in a discussion of use of time, we read "Errands. We're eaten up with this one. And we're always able to justify the time spent...had to go to Office Depot, the post office, the library...One answer I've found is DON'T DRESS. If you're in your underwear or your nightgown you can't make so many trips..."

~~ See Librarian Ron to check it out. ~~

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Please keep the submission relatively short and  
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3) Participation in critique groups

2) Participation in club author events

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