

# The Writer's Life

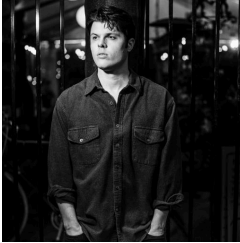
[www.sdwritersguild.org](http://www.sdwritersguild.org)

October, 2016



“There are books of which the backs and covers are by far the best parts.”

– Charles Dickens (1812-1870)



## DEVELOPING SCREENPLAYS: JONATHAN LAPOMA TO SPEAK

Jonathan LaPoma is an award-winning novelist, screenwriter, songwriter, and poet from Buffalo, NY. In 2005, he received a BA in history and a secondary education credential from the State University of New York at Geneseo, and he traveled extensively throughout the United States and Mexico after graduating. These experiences have become the inspiration for much of his writing, which often explores themes of alienation and misery as human constructions that can be overcome through self-understanding and the acceptance of suffering.

His eight screenplays have won over 80 awards/honors at various international screenwriting competitions, and his novel *Developing Minds: An American Ghost Story* won the 2015 Stargazer Literary Prize for best Visionary and Metaphysical Fiction. He lives in San Diego and teaches at a public secondary school.

Join us Monday, October 24, for his presentation. Keep in mind that October has five Mondays and we meet on the fourth, not the last, Monday of each month.

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Hello, fellow writers and editors! Having taken up the keyboard from outgoing newsletter editor Ruth Leyse-Wallace, I'd like to briefly introduce myself.

My name is Laura Roberts, and I'm an author, freelance editor, and publisher of books at Buttontapper Press. I also produce an online literary magazine, *Black Heart*. Since I wear a variety of different hats, I'm always learning more about the publishing industry—both traditional and self-publishing—and it struck me that writing the newsletter would be a great way to share some of the things I've learned over the years, as well as a great avenue for learning more from our experienced members. I look forward to bringing you news about fellow Guild members' activities, along with lots of ideas for writing, editing, publishing, and marketing your work.

If you have any tips you'd like to share with me, or news to feature in upcoming installments of the "Tip of the Hat" section, feel free to email me at [lrcreativeservices@gmail.com](mailto:lrcreativeservices@gmail.com).

Looking forward to hearing from you,  
*Laura Roberts*

## NATIONAL NOVEL WRITING MONTH

National Novel Writing Month (also known as "NaNoWriMo") takes place each November 1<sup>st</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>. Participation is free, and those who manage to complete the first draft of an entire novel (defined by the organizers as 50,000 words) are eligible for writing-related prizes from contest sponsors. Past prizes have included discounts on Scrivener and other software that helps with the novel-writing process, publishing discounts from CreateSpace and Fast Pencil, and more.

Participants receive regular pep talks from published authors, badges to place on their websites and social media pages, and access to a word counter to make sure they stay on track with their writing throughout the month. Indeed, the contest's rallying cry is "1,667 words or bust!" as this is the minimum amount you must write per day in order to hit 50K by November 30.

Perhaps the best reason to join the contest, however, is the community. Local Meetups and write-ins are regularly scheduled by organizers, and some San Diego writers even take a day-long train trip to LA and back for additional inspiration.

Will you be participating in NaNoWriMo this year? Let us know what your username is, so we can follow each other's progress, and tell us what you plan to write!

To register, go to [nanowrimo.org](http://nanowrimo.org).

## TIP OF THE HAT TO...

- ❖ SDWE/G member **Frank Newton**, who won first prize in the category of Best Youth Historical Fiction at the 2016 International Latino Book Awards. Frank's novel, *The Trials of Tizoc*, is about an Aztec boy who struggles to save his parents from a gruesome death. The aim is to teach middle school and high school students about Aztec culture prior to the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors.

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## TOP 5 TIPS: DAVID WOGAHN ON METADATA

September's guest speaker was David Wogahn, author of *Register Your Book: The Essential Guide to ISBNs, Barcodes, Copyright, and LCCNs*. He spoke about metadata, which is information about information, and focused specifically on its relationship to publishing and marketing books. Here are five helpful tips to take away from his speech:

### Metadata is important

While we might chalk up metadata as being optional, it's really not. In fact, metadata is what helps readers find your book online. So if over half of all print books are purchased online (and they are!), then you want to be sure your metadata is helping steer readers to your book instead of driving them away.

### Metadata can help you research the competition

Why would you want to research your competition? Two reasons: 1) To learn how to market your book, and 2) To understand the audience for your book.

Wogahn noted that successful self-publishers look for audiences first, instead of writing books willy-nilly. So how can you make use of metadata here? Find out what categories you can put your book into on Amazon, check out the keywords your competition is using in their titles and subtitles, learn more about how series books are described, figure out how to best price your book, and even find potential reviewers and blurb writers.

### Write the back cover copy first

It may sound counterintuitive, but Wogahn recommends writing the back cover copy first. It will help you summarize your book, figure out how to best approach your audience and sell them on the benefits of your book, get your point across quickly, and be crystal clear about what you're really writing about.

Another bonus? You can use the back cover copy as your Amazon description of the book, too!

### Personal metadata should be consistent

When it comes to personal metadata, Wogahn mentioned content topics (what you talk about in your book and on social media), bios and "about" pages, imagery, and a branded email address. Accurate and consistent metadata is the key to success, so he recommended starting a file for author bios and another for metadata, so you can be

sure every piece of information will be the same across all platforms, including social media, publishers, distribution channels, and aggregators. Remember to stay on topic when blogging and using social media, and continue to develop your brand with an email address that reflects your website's name.

### Metadata is forever

Metadata is forever, so be sure these pieces of information are absolutely decided upon before you upload any information about your book: Book Title, Subtitle, Publisher Name, and Assigned ISBN.

You should also be sure you own and control each of the following: Domain Names, ISBNs, LCCNs, and Copyrights.

If you've got each of those pieces of the puzzle put together, you'll live happily ever after.

**BONUS:** Check out David's Self-Publishing Flowchart at <http://www.authorimprints.com/publishing/> for a timeline of all the different steps you'll need to take, whether you're planning to create an ebook or printed volume.

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## LOCAL WRITERS' CONFERENCES

- The San Diego Writers, Ink: **Fall For Writing Conference** will be Oct. 15-16 at the Ink Spot. Attendees can choose from two-day passes or purchase individual sessions at member or nonmember prices. For more information, see <http://sandiegowriters.org>.
- The **Writer's Digest Novel Writing Conference** will be held Oct. 28-30 at the Westin Bonaventure in Los Angeles with multiple educational tracks offered. Go to <http://novel.writersdigestconference.com> and use code **SDW16** for \$25 off the Basic Novel Writing Contest.
- The 2016 **La Jolla Writer's Conference** will be Nov. 11-13 at the Hyatt Regency in La Jolla. Registration is limited to 200 attendees. For more information, see <http://lajollawritersconference.com/registration>.
- The 33<sup>rd</sup> annual SDSU Writers' Conference is scheduled for Jan. 20-22, 2017 at the San Diego

Marriott in Mission Valley. For more information, see <http://www.ces.sdsu.edu/wc>.

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## WRITING CLASSES AND EVENTS

- **San Diego Continuing Education – Writers Workshop** Course covers writing newspaper articles, outlining and writing autobiographies, fiction techniques for writing short stories and novels, and an introduction to poetry writing. Ages 18+ welcome. Meets T/W 9 a.m. to noon from 9/6 through 1/25 at Point Loma Assembly, or M/W 6-8 p.m. from 9/7 through 1/25 at Mesa College. Additional info: <http://www.sdce.edu/class-details/1680B> or <http://www.sdce.edu/class-details/2264C>
- **San Diego Continuing Education – Blogging for Search Engine Optimization (SEO)** Nowadays, every business and website needs a blog. Why? Because search engines, like Google and Bing, want you to create compelling and timely content, if you want to rank high on their results pages. Blogging is an excellent way to create and generate traffic for your website. In this course you will learn how to write blogs effectively and optimize for search engines. Will focus on the WordPress, Tumblr blog platforms. Meets twice, Friday 11/4 and 11/18, 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at North City Campus, Room 110. Additional info: <http://www.sdce.edu/class-details/1992C>
- **SD/PEN will host a Branding and Marketing Essentials & WordPress Bootcamp** at Elijah's Deli on October 22, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Additional info: <http://sdpen.com/events-schedule/>

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## TWITTER PITCH PARTIES

For those who are wondering what on earth to do with Twitter, here's a novel approach: pitch your book!

Pitch parties like #PitMad and #PitchMAS make use of Twitter's hashtags to call attention to your 140-character hook, and alert editors and agents to your manuscript's availability. Those who are interested in what you have to say will favorite your tweet to indicate that you should contact them (via email) with a partial manuscript or query for further reading.

Think of the whole process like speed dating for books: You can hook up with agents and editors online, quickly gauging their interest in your book, and moving on from rejections more swiftly. Better yet, authors who successfully pitch during these online parties get to skip the slush pile altogether!

Some important things to keep in mind when pitching on Twitter:

1. Make sure you pitch a completed novel that you'd be querying about anyway. Agents and editors only want to read about and vote on pitches for complete manuscripts.
2. Be sure to use the hashtag for the pitch party you're attending, or else agents and editors won't see it.
3. Vary your pitch's wording up to three times throughout the day, to hook more readers.
4. Literary Agent Carly Watters also urges writers to "include your book's motivation, crisis and secret."

So what does a good pitch look like? Here's Carly Watters' example, using Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*:

***Girl abducted by rabbit from family picnic to fight war in magical dimension. When put on trial for her life, will she wake up? #PitMad #YA***

For more information on how to pitch your books on Twitter, check out <http://bit.ly/1KGhYg4>. For information specifically related to the #PitMad event (which is open to all genres and takes place on December 1), go to <http://www.brenda-drake.com/pitmad/>. Interested in #PitchMAS? Head to <http://pitchmas.blogspot.com> for more info.

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## DID YOU KNOW? MANUSCRIPT REVIEW

The Guild now has a Twitter account! Follow us online @SDWritersGuild (<https://twitter.com/SDWritersGuild>) for updates from the blog and more content in 140 characters or less.

A membership benefit, you can submit up to 30 pages of your novel, short fiction or memoir to our Recommendation Committee for just \$20. All submissions receive a critique and rating (Highest Recommendation, Highly Recommended, Recommended or No Recommendation), useful when contacting editors, agents and publishers.

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## UPCOMING GUILD EVENTS

**November 28, 2016:** Anthology launch

**December 12, 2016:** Holiday Party (note this is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday, not the 4<sup>th</sup>!)

**IN THE NEW YEAR...**

**January 23, 2017:** Recording audiobooks, speakers TBA.

**March 27, 2017:** Mark Reichenthal, attorney for literary matters, to discuss contracts between authors and agents, publishers and others.

**San Diego Writers/Editors Guild**  
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<p><b>The Writer's Life</b> is published by  The San Diego Writers/Editors Guild  P. O. Box 881931  San Diego, CA 92168  Telephone: 858-342-2891  email:  sandiegowriterseditorsguild@gmail.com</p> <p>Meetings: The Fourth Monday each month  Marketing Support Group:  5:30-6:30 PM  General Meeting:  6:30 PM - Sign-in/Network  6:45 PM - Business Meeting  7:00 PM - Speaker/Program</p> <p>Location: San Diego County  Health Services Complex  3851 Rosecrans, SD, CA 92110  For a map see: <a href="http://www.SDWritersGuild.org">www.SDWritersGuild.org</a>  Membership: \$36.00 per year  Guests: \$5.00 per meeting</p> <p><u>Mission Statement</u>  The San Diego Writers/Editors Guild shall promote, support, and encourage the writing arts for adults and youth.</p>	Board of Directors		2-Year Term Expires 12/31
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