

On August 24, SDWEG is thrilled to present, **James “Doc” Mason**.

Doc’s first job is that of being a father to three sons and one daughter. He works full-time as an advertising executive—for the regular paycheck and the health insurance. His other full-time job is that of a dedicated **screenwriter** and **script doctor**.

His passion, however, is helping people learn to write clearly.

The nickname ‘Doc’ came from his college days, where he gained a reputation for quickly rewriting his fellow student’s scripts. One night, at a particularly profitable game of poker, a fellow student suggested that they should call him Doc. After Doc Holiday in the movie *Tombstone*? That would be cool if it were true, but no. It was Nelson Algren's book, *A Walk on the Wild Side*, and the movie of the same name, which gave us the three rules of life: "Never play cards with a man called Doc. Never eat at a place called Mom's. Never sleep with a woman whose troubles are worse than your own."

Later, in Los Angeles, James was a PA with a couple of people who shared his first name. The AD asked if he had a nickname. And “Doc” stuck.

Doc has invested at least 10,000 hours into countless shorts and 15 feature and TV scripts. Several of the features have been optioned and made. From his vocation to his avocation, he

knows the value of a well-defined, step-by-step process. He is the cowriter of the feature thriller, *Caged* (Dir: Aaron Fjellman, starring Edi Gathegi, Melora Hardin, Angela Sarafyan), to be released in 2020, depending on when theaters open up! *Caged* was one of several projects developed using the **One-Line Method** for feature filmmaking.



James ‘Doc’ Mason
Screenwriter & Script Doctor

As a script doctor, Doc is committed to his clientele's ultimate privacy. Publicly, Doc runs a screenwriting group in Santa Monica dedicated to losing its members to the professional ranks. Through this group he has mentored and supported dozens of members who can now be found writing for the MCU, indie features, and TV shows. If that weren’t enough, he has also been an administrator of the Loglines Facebook group for several years, offering members free individual training and feedback.

Join us via Zoom on the 24th—it will be a stellar program!



Note from the Editor:

Submission deadline for *The Writer's Life* is the 28th of each month.

Please e-mail copy and image preferably .jpg file) to: editor@sdwritersguild.org

Thank You!

A warm welcome to new members...

- ◆ Michael Cawley
 - ◆ Lisa Hagerman
 - ◆ Gary Nanson
 - ◆ R.H. Riffenburgh
 - ◆ Jean Shields
 - ◆ TabathaTovar
- We are thrilled to have you with us!**



Now Available Online: Membership Directory and list of Member Services

These two new features are linked from the SDWEG **Members Only page**, which means you must login to access them. Not to worry though, our webmaster is standing by to assist you with username or password issues.

What you will find:

1. A complete Directory of all Guild members who have given permission for their information to be listed.
2. A compilation of Guild members who, in addition to writing for themselves, offer services to fellow authors.

Check out these new additions to the Guild website **HERE**.

Feel free to email webmaster@sdwritersguild.org with corrections or to have your author services included. Looking forward to hearing from you!

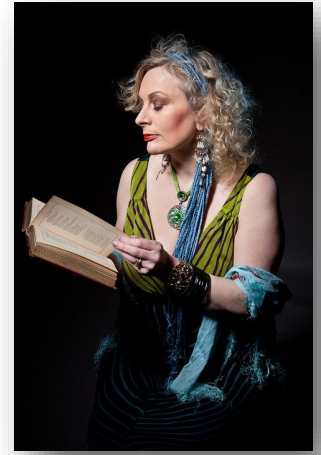


What you Missed, by Mardie Schroeder

Open Mic Night is always a looked forward to event and this year did not disappoint.

- ♣ A bloody nose, emergency room, cardiac arrest, lifesaving efforts;
- ♣ A 2-inch-long black razor made the unkindest cut;
- ♣ Co-piloting a Cessna 1400 miles to Tulsa, Oklahoma;
- ♣ Lawyers can't do simple: how often do you feed the dog;
- ♣ Radiation from two A-bombs creates DNA damage. Watch out for your cell phone;
- ♣ Uphill battle as a teen—no Hit Parades! Get ready for lunch;
- ♣ Beautiful day today, yesterday too—full of armies of misguided lives;
- ♣ Do you want to be my friend? Sand, water, buckets, shovels—nice hair day too;

- ♣ We're totally superior to you—only our religion gets you to heaven;
- ♣ Goodbye was born a hemophiliac—was told not to tell her story;
- ♣ No jumping rope in the house—riding in a hearse was ok;
- ♣ Escaping a dangerous cult—Tio ruled but was in prison;
- ♣ Nurse Kathy doesn't look good—she gives good shots though;
- ♣ Flowers and butterflies are the voyagers guided to the joy of life.



Hooked

...by this month's delightful **opening scene**.

I hope you'll enjoy it as much as I did, and if you'd like to play along next month, please share your novel's (or work in progress) opening scene via email to: editor@sdwritersguild.org for publication in upcoming issues of *The Writer's Life*!

*"They spring up in the woods
As if they have no care.
The squirrels they do love them,
And their acorns they do share.
The children liked to climb them,
As did grey foxes too.
The turtles couldn't do it,
And sighed, "oh, boo hoo hoo."*

"When I first sprung up as a tiny sapling, Blue Creek was just starting out as a very small village—no more than a speck on the map. Over the years, two hundred, in fact, I got bigger—much, much bigger—until I stood sixty feet high and my branches stretched up to the sky and provided shelter to birds and squirrels and all manner of wondrous woodland creatures. I was taller than any of the buildings in town." —**Laurie Asher, Rex and Molly's Magic Oak**

A Blustering Blurb, an Elegant Elevator Pitch, and a Tantalizing Tagline slide into an Algorithm..., by Patricia Bossano

Putting together these devilish pieces is no joke, in fact, it's downright grueling. I own that I am nowhere near developing a knack for it, but what *I have* done is uncover the saving grace of these necessary evils!

Developing the content of these three marketing tools while writing a new manuscript prompts structural improvement of the novel, streamlines conflict and its climactic resolution, and better defines the emotion you want to incite in the reader.

A blurb's word count should be between 100-200. An effective Tagline is 1-10 words, while an Elevator Pitch can include 50-75.

The most difficult one to write, according to me, is the Tagline—condensing is a struggle for me. A trick I use though, is googling movie taglines. I think of a film that resembles my storyline and go from there.

Tightening up a synopsis is also a good approach to writing them, in sequence, from longest to shortest.

Faery Sight, was my first exercise in writing a manuscript while simultaneously preparing the back-cover copy. I'm happy to report, the effort was worth it. I continue to feature the fol-

lowing on websites, bookmarks, posters, banners, and social media campaigns:

"Follow Your Heart"

"Once upon a time, a girl was born on the magical side of a waterfall, and she was given the gift of FAERY SIGHT."

"More than a gift, FAERY SIGHT, is a way of life to a human girl raised in the faerie realm. She learns the truth of her origins and finds a way to reclaim her royal identity, while staying true to her faery upbringing."



Helpful Related Reading:

["How to Write a Book Blurb: A Guide for Novelists"](#)

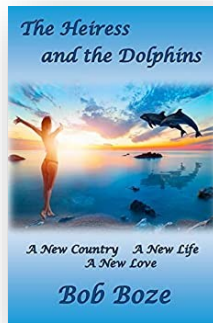
["5 Steps to Writing a Killer Elevator Pitch for Your Book"](#)

["How \(and Why\) to Write a Logline and a Tagline for Your Book"](#)

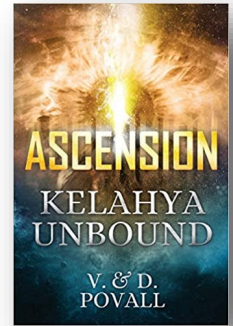
Hats Off to SDWEG Members Flexing their Prowess!

SDWEG is proud to note when its members are engaged in creative activities with other organizations around San Diego and beyond.

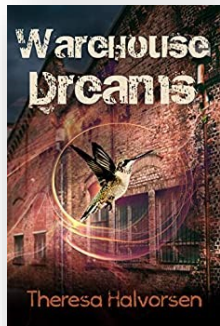
Congratulations to **Bob Boze** on the release of his latest novel, *The Heiress and the Dolphins*. Pick up your copy today and relearn how to love, trust, and laugh at the littlest things. Available at [Amazon](#).



Way to go, **Victoria and David Povall**! Explore their recently released space opera, *Ascension: Kelahya Unbound*. “A forgotten past and an uncertain future, where danger is reflected in every face and reality is never what it seems.” Available at [Amazon](#).

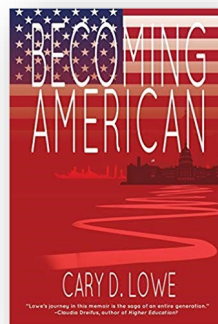


Hats Off to all **fiction writers** out there; remember that our works not only fulfill a collective need to, at times, escape reality, we also launch alternate perspectives into the universe. Keep up the great work!



Up for a SciFi romp? Well, you won't want to miss this one! A round of applause to **Theresa Halvorsen** for her recently launched novel, *Warehouse Dreams*. Check it out [HERE](#).

Kudos to SDWEG member, **Cary D. Lowe**, author of *Becoming American*. The *San Diego Union-Tribune* recently published his column about the challenges of writing and publishing during COVID-19 lockdown. We can all relate, right? Click [HERE](#) to read the **full commentary: How COVID-19 upended the literary world**.



As always, a wholehearted *Thank You* to all contributors to *The Writer's Life* for allowing me to be the bearer of your stellar news every month!

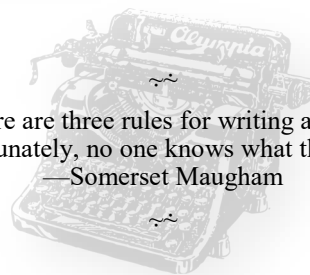


Words to Write by.

A sentiment that resonates with you, an encouraging word, a point of view that takes you by surprise....

I hope this monthly nugget from a pro becomes any, or all, of the above and that it heartens your writer's journey.

“There are three rules for writing a novel. Unfortunately, no one knows what they are.”
—Somerset Maugham



Note from the Editor:

If you receive a paper copy of *The Writer's Life* and would like full links to webpages, please request them via email from editor@sdwritersguild.org.

Thank You!

Coming up in 2020

Members are invited to submit details of upcoming events including date, time, address, title of event, related image, and brief description, to webmaster@sdwritersguild.org for inclusion in the Guild's [Calendar](#).

Aug-09: Happy **Book Lovers Day!**

Aug 11-13: Get out your wish list! Annual **Perseid Meteor Shower** coming up! Peak date varies slightly.

Aug-12: Sorry about this one, it happens to apply to me, so... **Happy Middle Child Day 2020!**

Aug-18: San Diego Public Library presents: Centennial Celebration of Women's Suffrage, 6:00 P.M., SDPL Virtual Branch. Click [HERE](#) for event registration.

Aug-22: SDWEG presents a **Zoom Workshop on "Dialog" featuring David S. Larson**, Screenwriter, Editor, Ghostwriter. 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Aug-24: SDWEG monthly meeting: **James "Doc" Mason**, on turning a book into a screenplay.



Benefits of Membership:

SDWEG supports members and promotes the writing arts through: educational meetings with guest 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 and editing resources on the website; publicity for members' creative works on the "Members' Works" web page.

Board of Directors

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- ◆ Leon Lazarus, 2021 (leon@sdwritersguild.org)
- ◆ Rivkah Sleeth, 2021 (Rivkah@sdwritersguild.org)
- ◆ Penn Wallace, 2021 (penn@sdwritersguild.org)
- ◆ Sandra Yeaman, 2020 (sandra@sdwritersguild.org)

General meeting: 4th Monday of each month via Zoom while we continue to shelter-in-place.
5:30-6:30 PM Marketing Support Group for Guild Members
6:30 PM Sign-in & Networking
6:40 PM Business Meeting
7:00 PM Guest Speaker & Program
Membership dues: \$36 per year **Guests:** \$5 per meeting

Standing Committee Chairs:

- ◆ Anthology Committee: *Rivkah Sleeth*
- ◆ Communication Committee: *Leon Lazarus*
- ◆ Manuscript Review Committee: *Bob Doublebower*
- ◆ Marketing Support Committee: *Leon Lazarus*
- ◆ Workshop Committee: *Penn Wallace*



The Writer's Life by

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Write, Edit, Read... Repeat