



July 15, 2006 Speaker

Jerry Simmons

former Vice President, Director of Field Sales for Time Warner Books

Publishing Secrets that Publishers Don't Want Writers to Know



Jerry Simmons shares secrets like:

- How industry change impacts the writer
- Why writers must know their genre and the marketplace
- The secrets of successful self-publishing
- The importance of understanding numbers and distribution
- How to become a participant in the publishing process

This is a rare chance to learn from the voice of experience. RSVP today to reserve your seat at this extraordinary SCWA event.

After speaking to such prestigious groups as the *Write Now! 2005 Writers Conference*; *Romance Writers of America*; *Arizona Book Publishers Association*; *Sisters in Crime*; *National Association of Women Writers*; *ICE Escape 2006 Writers Conference*, and the *National Speakers Association Forum* (to name a few), Jerry D. Simmons, retired vice-president director for *Time Warner Books*, will address the *Southern California Writers Association* on July 15. He began his career in publishing in the fall of 1977, as a paperback sales representative for *Random House*. In 1979, he joined the book division at *Warner Communications*, where he spent more than 20 years in sales and management. During

that time the company expanded to become *The Time Warner Book Group*. Simmons' sales team distributed more than 1,000 titles a year from a number of large publishing houses including *Little, Brown and Company*; *Hyperion*, and *Disney*. Simmons sold books to some of the largest independent booksellers and mass merchants in the country, and managed a premier nationwide sales force. He retired as Vice-President Director Field Sales in 2003, now lives with his wife in Tempe, AZ, and will fly in to speak to us at his own expense.

“Major trade publishing houses in this country do not want writers to know what goes on

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President's Message

Covering controversial subjects is a challenging task for writers, and most editorialists fall painfully short. Here are a few tips on how we, as writers, should approach this dilemma.

First of all, remember that the reason a subject is controversial is that there are valid arguments on both sides. If there were no reason to support or oppose an argument, there would be no controversy. Like most of you, I get a number of e-mails from well-meaning friends hoping to gain my support for various causes. And all too often, the writers of these e-mails resort to name-calling, catchy slogans, and inflammatory rhetoric to make their point.

Maybe the senders have a right to vent. We all have hot-button issues that make us want to strike out at everyone who forces their unwanted opinions onto us.

As writers, however, we must keep in mind that our job is to cover issues thoroughly. It may be fine for others to ignore facts and statistics that don't support their arguments, but for us, it is no less than a breach of journalistic responsibility. It is our job to present all the facts to the readers, allowing them to draw their own conclusions. If we are skillful enough, we can present evidence they will have to acknowledge which undermines their position, and we will win them over.

Still, we must not forget that in the end, it often comes down to a matter of personal values; e.g. is the state justified or not justified in taking the life of a convicted murderer? There is no "right" or "wrong" answer; only our personal opinions. It may feel good, as an individual, to call someone a "bleeding heart murderer sympathizer" or a "barbaric Neanderthal," but it is counterproductive to what we as writers are trying to accomplish. We want to convert readers to our point of view, not offend them to where they put the article down — this will only serve to entrench them further into the opposing viewpoint.

Keep these things in mind when covering touchy subjects, and you will be more successful than your counterparts.

Good luck and good writing!
Roy King, President

JUNE HIGHLIGHTS:

Barbara DeMarco-Barrett: *How to Finish Your Writing Projects*

"Not yet" is the answer to give when asked if you have published, author Barbara DeMarco-Barrett says, because "your attitude influences what you get down on the page" and your "writing health" in general. DeMarco-Barrett hosts *Writers on Writing* on KUCI-FM (88.9) each Thursday at 5 p.m., teaches creative writing at UC Irvine Extension, and also edits the monthly newsletter of the American Society of Journalists and Authors. For SCWA, she presented "*How to Finish Your Writing Projects*."

Before you have anything on the page, however, DeMarco-Barrett cautions against telling others much about your ideas because "you let all the air out" and can "jinx" yourself. Once under way, do not read your manuscript to others until far along. "If feedback is a little too early, it can send you off in the wrong direction." Try kick-starting your work by writing down some potential first lines and free writing with a timer. "A character can often come from that line." In addition, you need a feel for great writing by having read quality work, although DeMarco-Barrett notes that bad books can demonstrate what not to do.

Conflicted attitudes may keep writers from finishing their work. DeMarco-Barrett lists the fear of exposure, the "fear of not being loved" when/if your family recognizes themselves in your work, and fear of "stinking." In reality, family and friends often do not recognize themselves. All of these fears may be eliminated by the rewriting.

Recognize and skewer any

lurking negativity. That inner voice, seduced by marketplace thinking, may whisper "It won't sell anyway so why bother?" Counter with "If I don't have something down on the page, nothing happens." The whisper may next inveigh with "The lines you're on are not good." Even when the writing flows, that insidious judge may conclude it "is not good because it was too easy." Allow yourself no disclaimers, no negativity from neither yourself nor others. Have faith in the rewrite.

DeMarco-Barrett says how you handle time can be a factor. Do you have unrealistic notions of how long you can write at any one sitting? Also, when the work isn't coming smoothly, we tend to get up and down. Set shorter time limits—even just fifteen minutes with a timer and stay in that chair! Those minutes everyday can yield 365 pages in a year. On the other hand, we do need breaks. Writing "is work but don't make it a chore."

Minimize interruptions from your family. Have a visual signal that indicates you are working—even a special hat. Even if you are working "in the parlor," the understood principle is that the family may bother you **only** in an emergency.

Becoming stalled may be the result of thinking "it's not the right project." DeMarco-Barrett suggests you've hit a little slick patch of boredom. Remedy this by working on another project for a while or change the atmosphere by setting up in another room or a café. Switch to longhand from the computer. Even buying a new pen gives a small lift. Confront

boredom by doing creative exercises, working with a writer-friend, or free writing on your subject or story. Perhaps you're bored because you've been keeping your own life out of your work.

"Maybe your goal is too grand," DeMarco-Barrett says, for the amount of planning you've done. You're stalled because you are mired in the back story, or you lost track of the threads of plot you had set up earlier. To keep elements coherent and timely, DeMarco-Barrett benefits by using rolls of butcher paper on which she notates major points in each chapter. She acknowledges some writers do not like knowing their endings ahead of time or how to get there, but generally with fiction, they should. "Some mystery writers start with the ending and work backwards."

A reliable method DeMarco-Barrett uses to make deadlines is by having "writing buddies." "Not exactly critique groups," these are two friends whose judgment she respects. Since they do not live nearby, the three "meet" every two weeks via a conference call and intensively discuss their works in progress. This deadline propels her because she "cannot come to the phone empty-handed."

Barbara DeMarco-Barrett's best-selling *Pen on Fire: a Busy Woman's Guide to Igniting the Writer Within* was published by Harcourt, Inc., in 2004. Go to www.pennonfire.blogspot.com.

Glenda Rynn, Member
grynn@cox.net

SCWA Critique Committee Open to Members of SCWA

Nonfiction & Fiction

Roy King 3kings@urs2.net
Roy will take any amount of writing for critique. He prefers to see the entire ms at one time. Please mail your manuscript to Roy at:

15772 Heatherdale Road, Victorville, CA 92394

Poetry

Dr. Joyce Wheeler

Joyce will critique up to five poems. Please mail your work to Joyce at:

3801 Chestnut Avenue, Long Beach, CA 90807

Executive Committee

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Carolyn Smith, Treasurer treasurer@ocwriter.com
..... voice (949) 675-4244

Simmons
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behind the scenes with the publication of their book," Simmons said. "I reveal the secrets of these

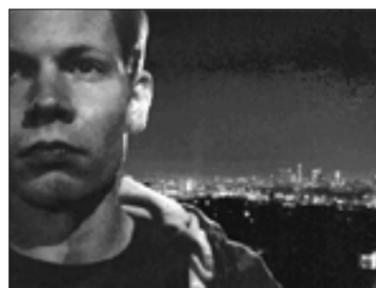
publishers; explain why decisions are made, and how they can negatively or positively impact the career of an unsuspecting writer. In this intensely

competitive publishing environment, it is absolutely critical that writers understand what goes on behind closed doors, from acquisition

to the day a book goes on sale. In order to improve their chances of success, writers must be knowledgeable about publication."

SCWA News & Announcements

AUGUST 19 SPEAKER CHRISTOPHER RICE



Christopher Rice, the son of renowned "vampire" authoress Anne Rice, is a master of provocative suspense thrillers. His works include best-selling novels like, *A Density of Souls*, *Light Before Day*, and *The Snow Garden*.

With writing that is compared to that of Steven King, it is no surprise that Rice has garnered the

Lambda Literary Award with his *New York Times* best-selling novels. A native of California but a Southerner by blood, Rice returned to the West Coast four years ago and now lives in West Hollywood.

Mark your calendar for August 19, and get ready for goose bumps during Christopher Rice's presentation to the SCWA.

Southern California Writers Association Membership List as of June 18, 2006

This list is provided by the Vice President, Membership, Victory Crayne.

Dr. Judy Andrade
James N. Bardin
Lucia Barker
Lynnette Baum
Julie Belmont
Pauline Chavez Bent
William K Berg
Edmond P. Bergeron

Bill Blake
Victor Bonacci
Jack Bosworth
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Shirl Thomas
Mary Tranckino
Richard Vaughn
Sharon Walters
Lynette Warburton
Sue Welfringer
Joyce E. Wheeler
Betty Ruth Whitney
Mariana Williams
Violet Williamson
Shonika Wright

The July 2006 "Will Write 4 Food" Contest

Write: Look carefully at the photo (right) and write a short-short story (maximum 250 words) about what is happening.

Submit: One entry per member per month.

Via e-mail: Lynette Baum, therightwriter@cox.net.

Via snail mail: L. Baum, 17595 Harvard., Ste. C-144, Irvine, CA 92614.

Deadline: Stories must be received on or before July 14, 2006.

Revised requirements: To facilitate fair judging, put the story name on the top of the page with your **name** and **daytime** phone number underneath. Only the winning author will be contacted.

Subject Line: July 2006 "Will Write 4 Food Contest" with your daytime number or e-mail address.

(For snail mail put this information on the outside of the envelope.) **Warning: without the subject line, submission may not be read in time.**

Winner: Attends their next SCWA meeting for free. He or she will also be presented with a winner's certificate. The winning story will be featured in the club's newsletter, The Writers News, and on the organization's Web site.

Criteria: Contestants must be members of SCWA. The story must be 250 words or less. No evaluation or comments will be offered on contest submissions. Only one **winning** entry per member per year.



Lynette Baum, V.P. Programming

JUNE CONTEST WINNER:



Illumination By Barbara Schnell

The sun had set and the moon was rising when the elderly woman shepherded the last earnest tourist and yawning schoolchild out of the lighthouse and locked the door. She wearily climbed to the top of the lighthouse to join her husband who was polishing the giant elliptical lens with a rag.

"They're all gone," the woman sighed.

"Make any money off 'em?" the husband asked.

"Enough to convince them they're saving history,"

returned the woman.

"It's a good excuse for the lighthouse but I miss the old days when people thought we were protecting ships from rocks," said the old man meditatively. "I loved those sailing ships. The tankers just aren't the same."

"No, they're not," agreed the woman. "Time to turn on the light?"

"Yup, might as well get comfortable."

The couple pulled off their latex masks to reveal bald, gray heads with enormous eyes. The man flipped the switch of the massive lantern and the couple shielded their faces as it turned.

"The ship was parked behind Jupiter," the old man finally said. "Shouldn't take more than half an hour to land. We can leave after we brief the new team."

"After two hundred years I thought I'd be glad to leave," the woman said. "But I think I'm going to miss these specimens."

"That's why they transfer us to new labs," her partner said. "We get attached."

The woman nodded and sadly watched as the light guided the starship to Earth.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Moving On — Mike Dunn

Gray Lady — Carol L. Gandolfo

www.ocwriter.com/willwrite.html



**July Meeting: Saturday
July 15, 2006**

JERRY SIMMONS

Secrets Publishers Don't Want Writers to Know

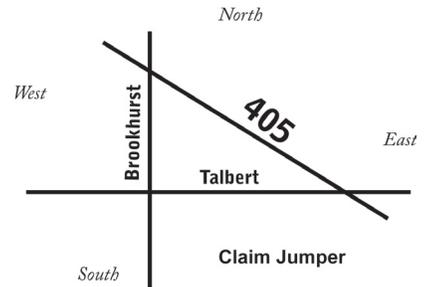
(See inside to learn more about Jerry Simmons.)



LOCATION: Claim Jumper Restaurant

Banquet Room Entrance, rear of building
18050 Brookhurst St., Fountain Valley, CA
Restaurant telephone: (714) 963-6711

Registration & Networking:	9:30 a.m.
Meeting & Program:	10:00 a.m.
Lunch:	11:30 a.m.
Afternoon Program:	12:15 p.m.



WALK-INS & GUESTS ALWAYS WELCOME — \$25 AT DOOR
MEMBERS WHO DO NOT RSVP PAY \$25 AT DOOR
MEMBERS WHO DO RSVP PAY \$20



RSVP before July 10:

Carolyn Kimme Smith, Treasurer, 630 Harbor Island Drive, Newport Beach, CA 92660
 Check must accompany reservations. Make checks payable to SCWA.

After July 10:

Carolyn Kimme Smith, Treasurer, (949) 675-4284

BE SURE TO RSVP WHENEVER POSSIBLE! . . . Or register online at www.ocwriter.com/meetings.html

Southern California Writers Association

Writers News

Mary Michel Green, Editor
 204 Avenida Barcelona
 San Clemente, CA 92672