



Writers News

Volume 6, Number 8.....August 2007

August 18 Speaker

Jerry Simmons

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

Publishing Secrets that Publishers Don't Want Writers to Know - Part II



Jerry D. Simmons, retired vice president, director for *Time Warner Books*, addressed the *Southern California Writers Association* on July 15, 2006. He was only able to cover half of his popular presentation in the time allotted, so we are lucky to have him back for part two!

Simmons 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 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."

Lynette Baum
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Editor's Message

Short Summer Issue

Your *Writers News* is very skimpy this month, between vacations and the fact that many of our regular contributors who are freelancers are lucky enough to be swamped with paying work. I'm proud to have increased the the issues from six pages to eight for the last 11 months. In September we'll be back to our usual jam-packed issue.

The winner of the nonfiction contest will be announced at this month's meeting and the winning story will be in the next newsletter.

Mary Michel Green
Editor
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JULY HIGHLIGHTS:

Terry Whalen: *Secrets Editors DO Want You to Know*

A background that includes authorship of more than 60 nonfiction books, years as an acquisitions editor, being an ECPA Gold Medallion judge for fiction, and reviewing and editing fiction for publication has armed Terry Whalen with concise advice about how to get published.

Six Often Unexplained Reasons Book Ideas Are Rejected

1. Sounds more appropriate for a magazine article
2. Already been done (by another book in process)
3. Topic never been done: target market may be too small or costly to reach
4. Topic doesn't sell: Ex. Stories of missionaries
5. Too much competition for this topic
6. Too expensive to produce: too big, odd size, photos, etc.

Six Ways to Guarantee Rejection

1. Use incorrect agent/editor's name or misspell it
2. Push for a quick response
3. Send book to unlikely publishers for its topic
4. Too long or too short
5. Mention to an editor you want representation: get an agent
6. Call the editor or drop in unannounced

Six Secrets to Gain an Editor's Attention

If fiction, story is all important; if nonfiction, concept and author's platform count.

1. You've created a realistic marketing plan you can enact.
2. Use principles of *PyroMarketing* by Greg Stielstra, Harper's.

See *Highlights*, page 3

Editor Outlines Secrets of Success

Highlights, from page 2

3. Gather high profile endorsements: Send the book, ask, and perhaps draft a “quote” or forward that experts or celebrities may revise. For addresses, see the *Celebrity Black Book* by Jordan Mcauley.
4. Bring “special sales” to the project, which involves non-returnable books. See www.bookmarketingworks.com.
5. Gather specific sales outside the bookstores: More than half of all books are sold outside normal channels. Refer to *Beyond the Bookstore* by Bryan Jud. If self-published first and have sold 3-4,000 copies, bring these records to publisher.
6. Create a “must-have” title.

At writer’s conferences, you may establish relationships with editors but do NOT make a pitch at book expos or booksellers’ meetings.

Since a new author usually makes 10-12 percent of net sales, on contracts Whalen suggests inserting an “escalator” clause whereby after so many sales (20,000?) your percent of income goes up. This tactic is win-win because “the second 5,000 books are cheaper [to produce]” because the initial design costs, etc., are over.

Once published, you have only one month to six weeks to sell your creation. Two types of book warehouses exist: a Happy Warehouse, with books moving out; and a Sad Warehouse, with books coming back. Hit the road.

See also www.right-writing.com, www.thewritinglife.ws, www.bookproposals.ws, and www.iuniverse.com/get-published.

Glenda Brown Rynn

Member

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NEXT MONTH’S SPEAKERS:

September 15 – Robert Gregory Browne & Brett Battles
How to Write Killer Thrillers

Robert Gregory Browne began his writing career by selling a two-part mystery story, *Nothing But the Cold Wind*, to *EasyRiders* magazine. Shortly thereafter, he won the prestigious Nicholl Fellowship in Screenwriting, sponsored by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, and found himself in the Hollywood fast lane.

His first screenplay, *Low*

Tide, was picked up for production by Showtime. After several years of swimming with Hollywood sharks, Bob returned to his first love – fiction.

Our co-speaker Brett Battles has authored a compelling international thriller called *The Cleaner*, scheduled to debut in 2007. Expert in crafting a fascinating plot peopled with intriguing characters,

he is now working on the third novel in this series. At the SCWA meeting in September, Robert Gregory Browne and his compatriot, Brett Battles, will teach SCWA writers how to build a suspenseful plot. Be there!

Lynette Baum

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**August Meeting:
Saturday
August 18, 2007**

JERRY SIMMONS

Publishing Secrets that Publishers Don't Want Writers to Know - Part II

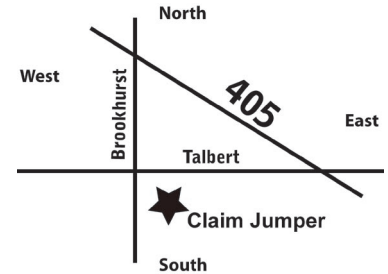
(See inside for more on Jerry Simmons.)



LOCATION: Claim Jumper Restaurant

Banquet Room Entrance, rear of building
1805 Brookhurst St., Fountain Valley, CA
Restaurant telephone: (714) 963-6711

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



*GUESTS ALWAYS WELCOME—\$30 AT DOOR; \$25 WITH RSVP
MEMBERS WHO DO NOT RSVP PAY \$25 AT DOOR
MEMBERS WHO DO RSVP PAY \$20*

RSVP before August 11: Carolyn Kimme Smith, Treasurer, 630 Harbor Island Drive, Newport Beach, CA 92660
Check must accompany reservation. Make checks payable to SCWA.

After August 11: Carolyn Kimme Smith, Treasurer, ckimmesmith@ucla.edu

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



Writers News

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