

WRITERS NEWS SCWA



Volume 6, Number 1.....January, 2007

January 20, 2007 Speaker

Lew Hunter

screenwriter, author, teacher

Screenwriting that Sells!



To be a successful, working writer in Hollywood, it's not enough to be a good writer with a good script. You need to be a great writer, capable of writing a knockout script. Whether you're an aspiring or experienced screenwriter, don't miss the incredible SCWA January meeting featuring internationally renowned Lew Hunter, the film industry's premier teacher, who has launched a generation of the most frequently produced (and well-paid!) writers. Lew will be talking not only about screenwriting, but about how to make any writing venture a publishing success.

Naked Screenwriting is the title of Lew's much talked-about but as yet unseen collection of 22 interviews with Academy Award-winning screenwriters, scheduled to be published in 2007. The collection includes interviews with: Francis Coppola, Bruce Joel Rubin, William Goldman, Julius Epstein, Alfred Uhrey, Oliver Stone, Irving Ravitch/Harriet Frank, Jr.,

Tom Schulman, Ted Talley, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Ernest Lehman, Eric Roth, Jean Claude Carrière, Frank Pierson, David Ward, Horton Foote, Jr., Ron Bass, Alan Ball, Callie Khouri, Robert Benton, Alexander Payne, Jim Taylor, and saving the best for last, Billy Wilder.

For more information, check out the new teaser trailer of "[Once in a Lew Moon](http://www.lewhunter.com)," the documentary on Lew Hunter available for viewing on his website at www.lewhunter.com. He truly is the man who has had "his fingerprint all over pop culture for the past five decades!"

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



Come and run your ideas by a professional!

Our January 20 speaker will be Lew Hunter, renowned TV & movie screenwriter/producer, author, and teacher.

He has agreed to critique up to three "log lines" per person at the end of the meeting. They *must* be typed. No handwritten submissions are allowed. Use 12 point Times New Roman or Arial fonts.

A "log line" is a sentence of no more than one or two lines summing up your screenplay. Imagine how your movie would be described in a format like *TV Guide*.

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President's Message

"New Year, New President, New Goals"

As of January 1, I am your new President. I have over 30 years of experience managing volunteer groups, most of which I founded. Along the way, I've learned a lot about what works to help a group grow.

Goals for 2007:

We are considering the following ambitious goals for this year. **Perhaps you can help us make these come true.** I mention these to give you an idea of the value of being a member of our growing organization.

- (1) Create a new logo to be used everywhere--on our newsletter, website, fliers, letterhead stationery, banner to hang over our podium, and press releases.
- (2) Create an annual budget, so we can determine what funds we have available to finance new programs.
- (3) Consider increasing our speaker honorarium to help us better attract quality speakers.
- (4) Apply for a ruling from the IRS that SCWA is a non-profit organization. This means your dues and part of your luncheon payments will be tax deductible.
- (5) Plan a joint meeting with another writers group in Orange County, Sisters in Crime, Orange County Chapter. The date of that joint meeting has not been determined yet and will depend on our having a speaker of mutual interest. Lynnette Baum, our VP Programming, is working with her counterpart in SINCOG to decide a date.
- (6) Consider putting a list of members on our website, viewable by the public.
- (7) Consider creating a membership card.
- (8) Consider creating name badges with our logo and SCWA name.
- (9) Consider creating a members-only area of our website, which would require a password to access. This area may become a staging place for submissions and critiques.
- (10) Solicit advertising for our newsletter and for our website, to augment our finances and expand the range of products and services available to members.
- (11) Document the history of our organization. I have asked Roy King to put together a history of our club, including photos of some past speakers and a list of notable events in the life of our group. We plan to put this history on our website. It would be nice if we had a display board made of our history, which we could show at our monthly meetings. Maybe you can help out here. We have a great past and should show it!
- (12) Continue having short story contests. Roy King has graciously volunteered to be our Short Story Contest Manager, so that Lynnette Baum can take a requested and well-deserved break. We will be holding contests once every three months, perhaps with a different format and perhaps even with cash prizes!

Growth in our membership:

We ended 2006 with 102 members and I'd like to see us re-enroll 90 percent or more of them by March 1, as well as get us up to 155 members by May 1 and up to 200 members by Dec 31, 2007. We have already re-enrolled 37 nice folks.

There are several thousand writers living in Orange County alone and thousands more living within a comfortable driving distance. I believe that SCWA can grow to 200 members if we do it right.

Sound tough? You bet! But we've got some good people on the Board and I feel **SCWA has a lot of untapped potential**. We are going to have fun as we explore some of that potential. SCWA is in the midst of reinventing itself.

All this means that your membership in the Southern California Writers Association will be more valuable than ever before. If you have not done so already, make sure that you send in your dues payment right away!

If you have not paid your dues by March 1, you will no longer receive our newsletter. Don't miss out on a great year!

Victory Crayne
President

DECEMBER HIGHLIGHTS:

Victory Crayne: *Ingredients for a Novel to Sell Well*

Here is a list of ingredients that get an agent or publisher's attention.

1. The opening should introduce the protagonist soon.

Many people who browse books to buy in a store want to see very quickly if they like the protagonist and the writing. If not, the book goes right back on the shelf!

2. The protagonist must face the credible risk of losing something--and losing big.

Ask: what can make it more difficult for the protagonist? What is the worst thing that could happen to him? Don't be afraid to explore deep crevasses in your character's personality.

3. The antagonist must appear to be as strong, preferably stronger, than the protagonist.

Make the hero's enemy a very difficult person or force to defeat, and make it seem that the protagonist has very little chance to win. Also, the antagonist must be human, with weaknesses or problems of his own, not all-evil.

4. The protagonist should have a dilemma in which he wants two things that are exclusive of each other.

He can't have both. By the end of the story, he either chooses one or finds a unique way to have both.

5. The protagonist should learn something about himself or about human nature as the story goes along, something that is critical to solving his main problem.

It is what I call a "High Moment" and should be written to evoke strong emotions. If you write this well, it will have a major impact on readers

6. A good story will have several crises, each one bigger than the one before, till at the end, everything is at stake.

This is called "raising the stakes." You don't have to have the hero save the world in every story--that can be cliché. But the more the hero risks with each crisis, the more you'll have a page turner.

7. There must be a good reason to believe the protagonist will lose big time at the end. And he just barely pulls off a win.

If your hero always wins every struggle up to the last one, then the reader will expect him to win again. That's too predictable. The villain must have a lot to lose, too.

8. The ending must be a very satisfying experience for the reader.

It is perfectly okay to have the reader cry at the end. The stronger the emotional reaction of the reader, the better.

9. There should be tension of some sort on every page, even if it is tension between two characters in a scene.

A "page-turner" must have tension on every page. This doesn't have to be major action, but at least some strong emotions or some conflict between characters, or within the same character.

10. Overall, the story must provide a well-developed protagonist. After all, we remember characters more than plots.

By well developed, I mean show multiple sides to his personality. Otherwise you run the risk of writing a "cardboard" character. Those seldom sell.

11. The writing should provide enough sensory clues in its settings to give readers a strong sense of being there.

Don't be afraid of boring your reader. Most beginning writers do not use enough description of their settings. Perhaps it's because they see the movie in their head and believe that they have given enough clues with dialogue, action, and thoughts.

12. The writing must have enough of a "poetic" quality to it that it sings, not just tells the facts of the story.

This usually takes writing a few books before the writer knows how to design and write a good story--and can now focus on writing the sentences very, very well. This is when the writer starts to show what is called an "author's voice". Agents and publishers look for this. It will give you an edge.

Does all that sound tough to do? You bet it is. Just remember, if it were easy, everyone would write a best seller. A lot of folks have computers these days, and a lot of them are writing novels. As a result, agents and publishers are being flooded with stories like never before. They look for the above ingredients and when they don't find enough of them, they get out their rejection form letter.

Victory Crayne

President

victory@crayne.com

January 2007

SCWA News & Announcements

Members' Books Donated at the December Meeting

Thank you, **Jane Meier**, for donating a copy of your book *Summer Friends*. Unhappily twelve-year-old Cassie Foster was sent from her California home to a little town in Nebraska to spend the summer. Her loneliness is short lived when she meets Joey, confined to a wheelchair. With abundant energy and positive thinking, Cassie immediately begins plans to help Joey walk again.

Thank you, **Barbara Schnell**, for donating *First Year*, ISBN 0-595-28826-X. Stevie O'Neill, a young Los Angeles actress, recklessly marries Robert Anderson and follows him to South Dakota where she discovers that her Hispanic/Irish ancestry doesn't bother her blonde in-laws but her lack of domestic skills does. In the first year of an impulsive, hormone-driven marriage, Stevie learns to deal with blizzards, local mores, and an extended family circle. **Reviews:** "...engaging and believable. Stevie is an appealing heroine"—Kirkus Discoveries. "Fantastic! Sidesplitting comedy... guaranteed to generate smiles."—Romantic Times. "...epic" of the ordinary...very American, very universal, and very entertaining."—James Koenig, Director/Founder of *Scandinavia/LA Film Festival*. Visit www.bagmlit.com for more information about this book.

Thank you, **Gerri Seaton**, for donating *A Humorous Look at the Holidays*. This is a self-

published chapbook of poems about the holidays (New Years Day, Valentine's Day, Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas). Gerri hopes her humorous poetry will help you get through the holidays.

Thank you, **Lynn Price**, for donating *Donovan's Paradigm*, ISBN 978-1-933016-33-7. *Donovan's Paradigm* lends an air of distinction to medical fiction with Kim Donovan, who squares off with St. Vincent's lead surgeon, thereby risking her career and reputation in order to initiate a controversial healing program on the surgical floor. **Reviews:** "Having journeyed through the transformation from a conventional physician to an integrative, holistic healer, I see my personal pains and challenges come alive in this engaging story."—John Pan, M.D., Director of George Washington University Center for Integrative Medicine. "FABULOUS! As good as any book you will find on the New York Times best-seller list. You will finish wanting more!"—Jerry D. Simmons, retired executive for Time-Warner Book Group. "Lynn Price understands the human heart and the world of surgeons. She's right that folks are flocking to complementary medicine because we're not paying attention."—David W. Page, M.D., FACS, Prof. of Surgery, Tufts University School of Medicine. Visit www.behlerpublications.com/titles-price.shtml for more information about this book.

Thank you, **Darlene Quinn**, for donating *Sizzling Cold Case*, ISBN 1-4259-4049-

8 (Softcover), 1-4259-4050-1 (Hardcover). Beautiful starlet Lori London died suddenly some 18 years ago. Though her death was ruled a suicide, neither Los Angeles sleuth Barnaby Jones nor Hollywood believe that is the end of the story, and Barnaby will not let the cold case stay closed. When another rising star (a dead ringer for Lori) is cast in the movie version of London's demise with a "surprise" ending, on-set accidents, death threats and burned film canisters make it clear someone doesn't want the truth to be told. In his search for clues, Barnaby discovers a connection between the murderer of Lori London and the man who murdered his own son in cold-blood. He must confront his son's killer once more.

Thank you, **Bill Thomas**, for donating *Telly's Torch*, ISBN 1-4120-1149-3. Subtitled "The Memoirs of a 'Near-Champion' Olympic Runner", this is a "slices of life" coming of age, fictional autobiography. Live with Telly as he grows through his childhood, youth and manhood, World War I, and the 1916 and 1920 Olympic. Read and feel this budding young athlete's effort, anguish, tribulations, determinations, victories and defeats in his numerous interesting incidents, predicaments and romances. Visit www.trafford.com/robots/03-1527.html for more information about this book.

Victory Crayne
President
victory@crayne.com

Logo Design Contest Ends February 1!

If you would like to win (1) a free luncheon, (2) a one-year membership in SCWA, and (3) a check for \$25, here is your chance! The due date for submitting your designs is February 1.

Designs that do not meet the criteria described below will not be considered. The SCWA board will make the final design approval decision in February. Whether you are a member or not, you can submit as many designs as you wish. **Criteria for your design:**

1. The logo must relate to our group as writers.
2. It should not be too complicated, so someone can easily understand it at a quick glance.

3. It should not have too many colors. A version printed in grayscale should be easy to understand (so don't use a lot of dark colors or a lot of light colors).

4. (Optional) It would be nice if the graphic were scalable, that is, we can change its size easily and it will still look sharp and crisp, without jagged lines and edges. But even if you can't make such a computer image, we may be able to have someone convert your design into a scalable one, so don't feel restricted by that. (Being scalable is important because we will need at least two, maybe three, sizes. The smaller business card size will be about 0.75 by 0.75 inch and a newsletter/website size will be about 2 by 2 inch.)

Some ideas: You might want to use our letters "SCWA" or something that suggests some of the

following: books, writing, reading, something that inspires creativity, or bright ideas. The main requirement is that it should relate in some way to our group, what we do, or writing.

Whichever design is chosen will be used on our newsletter, website, flyers, letterhead, award certificates, etc. So you may see your creative design in many places. Since we will 'pay' the winner for his/her design, SCWA will own the copyright to it, but you will be given recognition and the prizes.

So put on your creative thinking cap! Come up with some ideas. Sketch them and give a copy, or scan them into a computer image file and email them to Victory. Don't worry if you're not a perfect artist. It is the design concept that counts the most.

Contact Writers News Editor Mary Michel Green at (949) 361-6581 or green.mary@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

President Victory Crayne
V.P. Programming Lynnette Baum
V.P. Membership Polly Dunn
Secretary Janet de Marco
Treasurer Carolyn Smith
Publicity Director Larry Porricelli
Webmaster Tony Stoklosa
Newsletter Editor Mary Michel Green
Associate Editor Nancy Darnall
Tape Librarian Sharon Walters

Membership Information

Polly Dunn, V.P. Membership
membership@ocwriter.com

Meeting Reservations

Carolyn Smith, Treasurer (949) 675-4244



Renew Your Dues—Now!

Unless you have renewed or joined since October 1, your membership in SCWA expired on January 1, 2007.

So, folks, please get your checkbooks out and make a check payable to “SCWA” for \$25 and mail it to *SCWA Membership*, c/o Polly Dunn, 621 N. Rose Drive, apt G-308, Placentia, CA 92870.

You can pay by PayPal via visiting the “Membership” link on our website at www.ocwriter.com. Remember, you can put money into your PayPal account from either your checkbook or a credit card.

Students at an accredited college or university who send a copy of their student ID card are eligible for a 50% discount, that is, only \$12.50 dues for a year!

We had a little over 100 members at the end of 2006 and expect to grow to 150 over the next year. Don’t miss receiving our newsletter in your mailbox! We have many exciting speakers and many new services planned for 2007—you will want to be part of it!

Writer’s Corner

Article-Writing: Do You Have What it Takes?

By Patricia Fry

Why do some writers fail as freelance article writers and others soar to unimaginable heights? How does one become at least modestly successful in the article-writing business? Most would-be freelancers don’t seem to understand until they take the plunge that there’s more to being a writer than just writing. More reasonable motivations for getting involved in article writing might be:

- I’m an excellent (or at least good) writer.
- I have something to say and I want to share my expertise and ideas with others.
- I’d like to spend my days writing and one way to do this is to create a freelance article-writing business.
- The world of freelance writing has always intrigued me. I love writing articles and short stories and I’d like to justify the time I spend writing by submitting them for publication and maybe supplementing my income.
- I want to promote my book through magazine articles.

1: If you hope to earn a living through freelance article-writing, first ask yourself: “Why do I want to enter into this competitive field?” Fame and fortune are not reasonable motivations—neither is the desire to work at home. There has to be an underlying passion for writing in there somewhere, not to mention a level of skill and a willingness to step outside your comfort zone.

2: What are you willing to give up in order to enter the business of writing? Most of us live full lives. We have families, jobs, hobbies and habits. In order to take on something as all-consuming as a writing career, something must give. What trade-offs are you willing to make? Will you give up a few hours of sleep each day, TV-watching, socializing, overtime at work? How will you reorganize your routine to accommodate your desire to write? Inflexibility is a common cause of failure in this field. Someone who remains rigid and refuses to make any changes will ultimately fail.

See *Fry*, page 7

3: Do you have the necessary qualifications for establishing and maintaining a freelance article-writing business? Of course, you'll need a good measure of writing skills. But what are some of the other requirements for success in this field? It has been my experience that you must also have:

- Time management skills to help you stay focused and meet deadlines
- The ability to discipline yourself to write even amidst distractions.
- A knack for coming up with good article ideas. I'm convinced that this is a natural talent that can also be learned.
- A skill for slanting an article appropriately for a particular magazine.
- Enough assertiveness to keep swimming even in a sea of rejections.
- A sense of follow-through. An unreliable writer won't get very far in this business.
- Research and interview skills or a willingness to develop these.
- Patience. Editors are not the most organized, dependable people in the world.
- Persistence. Failure comes quite swiftly to those who give up.

4: Can you follow protocol? Every industry has its etiquette—its rules and modus operandi. The magazine business is no different. There is basic submission protocol and requirements and then there is individual protocol practiced from within each editorial office. You must take responsibility for understanding and following each magazine's submission process. A writer who ignores editorial guidelines and disregards editors' requests won't get very far in this business.

5: Do you have a business sense? You will notice that I haven't referred to writing as a hobby even once in this article. That's because we are talking about the business of writing and, as with any business, there are certain tasks that will need your attention. It is imperative that you log each and every transaction related to your business—articles sent, articles rejected, invoices sent, payment collected and editor comments, for example. You'll also save receipts related to your business. If you earn enough to file income tax, you can use certain expenses as deductions.

The field of freelance article-writing is competitive, but there is definitely room for excellent, qualified, business-minded writers. Do you fit the profile of a potentially successful candidate? If not, work to strengthen those skills and qualities you lack. If so, go for it. I earned my living as a freelance article-writer for over twenty years. If you have what it takes, you can, too.

Patricia Fry is the author of 25 books, including "*The Right Way to Write, Publish and Sell Your Book*" and "*A Writer's Guide to Magazine Articles*." Order both at www.matilijapress.com or at amazon.com. For more informative and entertaining articles, visit Patricia's blog: www.matilijapress.com/publishingblog.

How Serious Are You About Your Writing?

By Jerry D. Simmons from Writers-Readers.com

Becoming a writer is more than just calling yourself one, and much more than simply attending writer meetings and an occasional workshop. Writing takes discipline and hard work. Authors have told me that the best way to improve writing is to write, and to do it every day. Regardless of the amount of time you spend, the fact is that you need to write something every day as part of your daily routine, and something that you make a priority.

Over the past few months as I have had the wonderful opportunity of speaking to many writing groups, workshops, college classes, and library patrons about the subject of publishing. When I consider my conversations with many attendees I am convinced that less than 10% are serious about their writing. The definition of serious would be someone hard at work writing on a daily basis.

Everyone wants to get his or her manuscript published, and that is certainly understandable. However, writing and completing a book should be the goal, not getting it published. Have you ever stopped and asked yourself: Why am I writing? Is it because I enjoy the work, the challenge? Or am I only interested in getting published? Not everything you write, and even complete, may be worthy of ending up in print, is that reason enough to stop?

If your concentration is improving your writing, and you focus on finishing a task that you started, then perhaps you will get to the point where your work warrants publication. Every completed manuscript does not deserve to be published. And being published should not be your primary motivation. Being a good writer takes talent; unfortunately everyone is not blessed with such ability. I'm a perfect example! That doesn't stop me from trying, and I don't have hopes of ending up on anyone's bestseller list.

My writing is done to convey information that I think is important to writers. It is crude and often times grammatically challenged, however I am hopeful it sends the right message. Ask yourself the question: Why am I writing? Your answer may surprise you.



**January Meeting:
Saturday
January 20, 2006**

LEW HUNTER
Screenwriting that Sells!
(See inside to learn more about Lew Hunter)

Happy

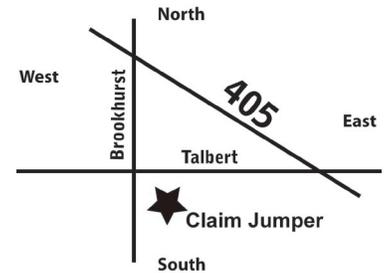


New Year!

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 & 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 Dec. 10: Carolyn Kimme Smith, Treasurer, 630 Harbor Island Drive, Newport Beach, CA 92660
Check must accompany reservations. Make checks payable to SCWA.

After Dec. 10: Carolyn Kimme Smith, Treasurer, (949) 675-4244

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

Southern California Writers Association

Writers News

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