



Writers News

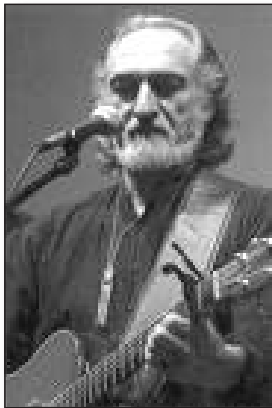
Volume 6, Number 11.....November 2007

November 17 Speaker

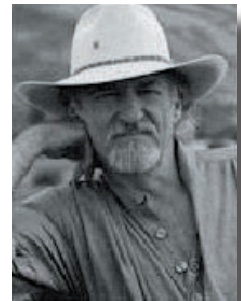
W.C. Jameson

Author/Environmentalist/Musician

“Ten Keys to Becoming a Successful Writer”



ALERT! Attention all SCWA members! W.C. Jameson, our November speaker, has just had his **50th book** shipped to local and national bookstores. A prolific and well-known writer who tours the country almost continuously, this fabulous author has made a special effort to speak to us by “bending the rules” with his agent. (*This is a one time opportunity to hear from him!*) His topic is “Ten Keys to Becoming a Successful Writer!” —the ways of the writing world that every aspiring author should know.



A former **consultant on the film *National Treasure***, he has twice earned the prestigious *Stirrup Award*. His latest non-fiction historical book, *Billy the Kid: Beyond the Grave*, is a bestseller.

A popular newspaper columnist with **more than 1,500 magazine articles** to his credit, W.C. has served as past president of *Western Writers of America*. When not writing, he travels throughout the country performing his music and conducting writing and poetry seminars and speaking at conferences. In fact, although we agreed that he would address the SCWA over a year ago, I’ve only spoken to him once because his touring schedule is so tight that he is never home...

An environmentalist, geographer, folklorist, and musician, he grew up in west Texas and has lived in Oklahoma, Arkansas, and now Colorado.

So, mark your calendars for November 17. Don’t miss this once in a lifetime chance to learn how to write successfully from one of the best authors around!

Lynette Baum
VP, Programming
therightwriter@cox.net



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President's Message

Elections

We had our annual elections at the October meeting and every candidate won. It looks like the good ship SCWA will continue to sail into next year with a full crew and a healthy treasury. Our passenger roster includes 109 members.

We have four new volunteers who have been elected to the board: Brennan Harvey, Kathy Porter, Darlene Quinn, and Linda Shortell.

Brennan Harvey has already been "at his post" on the registration desk. He's the eager-eye clever fellow who's growing a red beard and working diligently to learn the ropes of handling your reservations and sign-ins at the luncheon meetings. Thank you very much, Brennan, for taking care of this vital role. As it turns out, Brennan and I are members of the same three writers' groups, so we are getting used to seeing each other's names a lot.

Kathy Porter will be helping Lynnette Baum schedule speakers for 2008 and may well introduce her when Lynnette speaks to us in December.

Darlene Quinn will be learning the ropes of how we track revenues and expenses from our beloved Carolyn Smith.

Linda Shortell raised her hand during the last meeting when I asked for someone to be our Secretary to the board. Linda told us she has previous experience in that role. Thank you, Linda, for stepping up to the plate and helping out. Linda will learn her new job from Janet DeMarco.

The Orange County Writers Meetup Group

This growing organization of currently 230 members has two services you might be interested in. One is their growing list of in-person critique groups throughout Orange County. That is their main function since they don't have monthly meetings with speakers or a newsletter like we do. If you've been looking for a critique group to join, I heartily recommend you visit their website and join up! It's free, too!

Their second service is their active e-mail discussion list where they discuss a variety of issues of importance to writers. You can visit their Web site at <http://writers.meetup.com/10/> to learn more. Russell Traughber, an SCWA member, is the head organizer of that group. You can write to Russell at russell@russelltraughber.com. He's a very friendly and helpful fella.

Contests

There were no entries for the September fiction contest.

See *President*, page 5

OCTOMBER HIGHLIGHTS:

Lynn Price: *I've Written "The End," Now What?*

Having published 53 titles thus far, Lynn Price, editorial director of Behler Publications in Lake Forest, California, knows how the best factors of a book should be distilled to convince an editor of its quality. In only four whirlwind years, 11 titles from independent publisher Behler have won awards. Editor, author, and SCWA member Price presented "I've Written 'The End'—Now What?"

While agents add credibility, of course, Price's instructions are tailored for authors who submit directly to small publishers. How do you select these publishers? Price suggests examining the quality of books being given out free at Book Expos. Research the publishers of other books that draw your attention. An excellent source is Publishers Marketing Association (PMA), made up of 4,000 independent book, audio, and video publishers in the U.S. and the world.

An investigation of agents and publishers is necessary because in a year they may not be in business. Talk to the authors. Does a publisher print runs—or only on demand? Do they send out review copies to the major magazines? Scam publishers do exist—as do agents who charge up front. "You never pay an agent. They get paid out of your advance—15%." Go to Publishers Marketplace "to find

agents and where they've sold." To check ethics and more of agents and publishers, go to the Absolute Write Water Cooler, at absolutewrite.com, a board of high-powered writers and editors with forums and postings. Click on "Beware."

A submission package to an editor must match the publisher's guidelines. Because Behler Pub. specializes in "personal journeys with social implications," Price demonstrated parts of a nonfiction proposal.

She broke the critical, one-page cover/query letter into four parts. The bait of the first paragraph includes a succinct statement of the topic, the title, a rounded word count (50,000-80,000 is standard), genre, and viewpoint. The pitch in the second paragraph hooks the editor by introducing the main characters, clarifying the dilemma, and teasing or implying the resolution. The lure of the third paragraph explains why you wrote the book (save your platform for the biography), which audiences will relate, its social or historical relevance, and timelessness. Do not pretentiously compare yourself to famous writers. (However, when your book is to be published, comparisons to other books may be helpful for the back cover or interviews.) The

fourth paragraph offers to send the completed manuscript and lists the enclosures that follow the submission guidelines.

The next sheet, a one-page synopsis, is not just a teaser. In precise wording, it vividly covers the whole plot: the protagonist, his goal and personal journey, the dilemma or antagonist he faces and their goals, the clash between these forces, the resolution, and, yes, the ending. Some publishers may prefer a five-page synopsis.

Then come sample chapters or the first 30 pages. Be prepared if a publisher requests a chapter-by-chapter outline. After these, include your curriculum vitae/biography because "we're a media-driven people these days." Publishers want to be assured you're not a one-book writer. You may also be required to compare your book to others but to show where yours is different or breaks new ground.

Last is a plan for promotion, often requested these days. Itemize where you have spoken or appeared so far or other publicity, not "I'm gonna do this." Suggest venues for book signings that would reflect your material and potential readers. List which groups or associations would be interested. In general, show your initiative and versatility. Complete all with a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

See *Highlights*, page 5

SCWA News & Announcements

New Meeting Reservation Line Set Up

Hello,

I have finally gotten an answering machine set up to make SCWA meeting reservations. Any feedback on the message would be greatly appreciated.

THIS IS ONLY A MESSAGE LINE. There is no actual phone set up here.

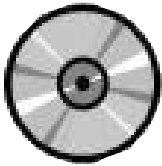
The phone number is: (714) 375-5275.

Brennan Harvey
Meeting Coordinator
meeting@ocwriter.com



Don't Forget to Shop!

You can buy recordings of previous speakers on both cassette tape and audio CD for the member price of only \$5 each! This is such a valuable resource if you miss a meeting. Our Southern California Writers Association pens are also available for only \$7.50. Just go to ocwriter.com and click on "Make a Purchase."



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

This position is open.

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
VP, Programming Lynnette Baum
VP, Membership Shelia Cassidy
Secretary Janet de Marco
Treasurer Carolyn Smith
Publicity Director Larry Porricelli
Webmaster Tony Stoklosa
Meeting Coordinator Brennan Harvey
Newsletter Editor Mary Michel Green
Tape Librarian Sharon Walters

Membership Information

Shelia Cassidy, VP, Membership
membership@ocwriter.com

Meeting Reservations

Brennan Harvey, meeting@ocwriters.com
(714) 375-5275



NEXT MONTH'S SPEAKER: *December 15—Lynnette Baum* *Writer/Speaker/Marketing Consultant* *The Glories of Ghostwriting*

An award-winning writer invited to join *Who's Who of Women in America*, Lynnette Baum brings more than 15 years of experience as a writer to the table. Now specializing in ghostwriting for books, as well as marketing writing for articles, press releases and infomercials, Lynnette brings special insights to the art of ghostwriting.

How to fingerprint your employers' writing voice, the power of combining intuition with facts and where to find your first "ghosting" gig are just a few of the topics she will cover in the December meeting of the SCWA. Scheduled to complete her third "ghosted book project" in December, and with nine additional books in the offing, Lynnette will share the top ten facts a good ghostwriter needs to know!

Lynnette Baum
VP, Programming
therightwriter@cox.net

Price Describes Life After "The End"

President, from page 2

October Speaker

If you didn't attend the meeting, you missed a great content-heavy presentation! Lynn Price is one of the principals of Behler Publications, a commercial press publisher (the kind that pays advances) in Orange County. She spilled the beans on what impresses Behler in a submission package, including valuable information how to prepare a cover letter and the infamous synopsis.

Victory Crayne
President
victory@crayne.com

Highlights, from page 3

Lynn Price says writers are like fishermen standing around a pond stocked with "a finite number of fish." Her advice should enable a good catch.

Glenda Brown Rynn
Member
grynn@cox.net



Writer's Corner

Copy Editing Versus Content Editing

By Victory Crayne

Question: What's the difference between copy editing and content editing?

Answer:

Copy Editing

Copy editing is what anyone with an excellent sense of good English can do. For example, correct spelling errors, fix punctuation mistakes, point out inconsistent tense of verbs, correct grammar errors, whether you've used the word "lay" or "laid" properly, etc.

A good copy editor will see if you have dropped some words in your typing, if your sentence structures are overly complicated, or if your paragraphs are too long. Since most readers prefer reading at the fourth to seventh grade reading level, the copy editor can advise you on how to make your writing easier to read for those readers. In other words, a good copy editor can help you with the "English" of the work.

Your story may have technically correct English, but still fail to sell.

Content Editing

A good content editor can tell you if your writing has

- point of view errors
- weak characters
- too many characters
- the male characters read like female characters with male names, and vice versa
- the characters talk alike
- too many words to have a decent chance of selling the novel
- a plot that is not credible or exciting

- not enough emotion in the scenes
- melodrama
- not enough description to the settings to satisfy those readers who are very sensorial

A good content editor can also tell you if your writing has

- an opening that does not grab your reader
- established your protagonist as a sympathetic character early enough in the story
- the hero always winning every conflict, making it easy for the reader to get bored because she expects the hero to win in the end, too
- an antagonist that is too weak or too evil to be believable
- not enough rising tension in the story
- insufficient tension on every page
- an ending that does not depend on something the protagonist did that was very hard to do
- and much, much more.

After all, you can write a story in perfect English that is very boring to most readers. That happens all too often!

So you need both kinds of editing: copy and content.

The most important is content editing because that can help you make your story—and how you wrote it—much stronger. Perhaps even strong enough that a publisher will consider it, even with a few English errors. (And I stress the word "few.")

In this business, English is important, but content is King!

Most writers write their first novel because they enjoyed the writing. What they fail to consider is that the reader may get a very different feeling about the novel. I tell my clients that the first draft is often for you, the writer. Now go back and

See *Editing*, page 7

What Kind of Editor?

Editing, from page 6

rewrite it for your readers. And I show them how to do that. A good content editor can also give examples to make her points clearer.

Writing to entertain is much harder than writing perfect English. Writing to entertain so well that hundreds of thousands of readers can't wait until your next book comes out requires a whole lot more. It requires two critical ingredients: (1) a great storyline and (2) excellence in storytelling. Just writing perfect English won't get you there. And, of course, even a good content editor can't guarantee your story will become a bestseller, either.

The most common weaknesses I've seen are:

- (1) the opening does not grab the reader soon enough or strong enough,
- (2) the protagonist does not appear soon enough or does not have a problem that readers gain a strong sympathy for,
- (3) there are point of view errors, and
- (4) there is not enough tension on every page.

Ninety-eight percent of the manuscripts I've seen are simply not ready to be sold to a publisher. Don't let yours fall into that category.

If you plan to self-publish your book, it is critical that you use a good editor BEFORE you spend a lot of money on publishing. After all, you want your product to be as good as it can get before you pay for 5,000 copies. Once you publish your novel, you can't go back and change it.

Do yourself a favor and hire a good editor.

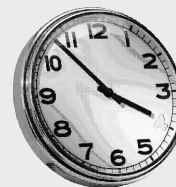
Victory Crayne

Independent Fiction Editor, Writing Coach/
Mentor.

"Feedback from Victory will improve not just one novel, but EVERY novel you write."

www.crayne.com

As Time Goes By



For inspiration for this column I hauled out some of the many writing magazines I've been meaning to get around to reading. The first headline I saw was "Get Published in 2005!" Aha! There's a topic!

My fatal flaw. It's a problem that's been around a long time and in every culture: Edward Young (1683-1765) said "Procrastination is the thief of time;" an old Italian proverb states "Between saying and doing many a pair of shoes is worn out;" an old English saying is "One of these days is none of these days;" and Cervantes said "By the streets of 'By and By' one arrives at the house of 'Never.'"

Psychologists list the causes of procrastination as anxiety, low self-esteem, coping with pressures, frustration, irrational optimism about how long a task will take, overwork, stubbornness, fear of failure and/or success, self-sabotage, response to an authoritarian parenting style, difficulty making decisions, rebellion, for the adrenaline rush that comes from getting away with pulling an all-nighter and finishing at the wire, creating chaos to keep other people away, and last but not least, because it works!

I felt so depressed writing that last paragraph that I stopped writing to blow half an hour adding \$3,999,276.00 to my \$750,315,766.00 stash in my computer casino. I was even more dismayed when I remembered that I started the game with \$3,000, right around the time I was ignoring my magazines.

There is no cure, but I am improving. I've learned not to expect so much from myself. I didn't write for years because I unconsciously expected myself to finish a piece entirely in my head before I started putting it down on paper. Then I read Anne Lamott's *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*. Her third chapter is titled *S****y First Drafts*, (a good thing), the fourth *Perfectionism* (a bad thing). Perfectionism leads to procrastination, which leads to paralysis. Now I just jump in and write anything that comes to me, then revise, revise, revise until it's good. Not perfect, just good.

Now, back for just a few hands of blackjack; then one of those magazines.

Mary Michel Green
Newsletter Editor
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**November Meeting:
Saturday
November 17, 2007**

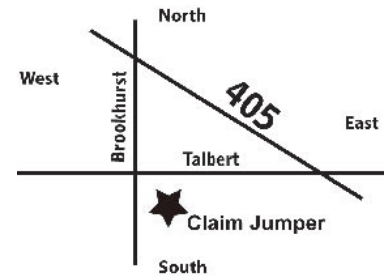
W.C. JAMESON
Ten Keys to Becoming a Successful Writer
(See inside for more on W.C. Jameson.)



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

After November 10: Brennan Harvey, Meeting Coordinator meeting@ocwriter.com or message (714) 395-5275

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



Writers News

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