



Writers News

Volume 7, Number 9.....September 2008

September 20 Speaker

Steve Dexter

Author and Nationally Renowned Speaker

Taking the Mystery Out of Getting What's in Your Head Onto the Bookshelves



Steve Dexter's first book *Real Estate Debt Can Make You Rich* is published by McGraw Hill and was rated one of the top 5 real estate books of the year by Bob Bruss, a nationally syndicated columnist of the Washington Post Media Group. With his simple straightforward advice Steve has established himself as an expert in the real estate industry.

He is a member and speaker for NAREE (National Association of Real Estate Editors) and has been a distinguished speaker at the Harvard Business School, Harvard Law School and their graduate school of design.

Dexter also publishes a free bi-monthly e-newsletter, "Economic News You Can Use", and teaches real estate and finance at colleges across Southern California

Steve is an invited expert commentator for CNN/Money, CBS Radio, Fox TV and other newspaper and media outlets. He has an upcoming segment on a new CNBC primetime show *On the Money*. His new book *Beat the Banks - Prospering in The Rising Wave of Bank Foreclosures* is due out next month.

We are excited that he will be sharing with us how he took a self-help book from thought to print with a major publishing company. Some of the wisdom Dexter will contribute includes insightful marketing techniques for self-help books, how to promote yourself as an expert in your field, and how to make use of relationships you already have to promote your book.

This could be the inspiration you need to finally get your self-help books dusted off and into the marketplace with renewed energy, while fiction and literary writers will learn how to parley relationships into sales. Expect to learn crucial information for our future marketing needs.

Kathy Porter
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President's Message

WELCOME YOUR GENIUS!



Genius is too often defined as an exceptional ability, a supreme talent or unusual inventiveness. Indeed, many gifted minds shine throughout history with genius, inspiring us with their outstanding accomplishments. But, always looking up at their brilliant firmament can keep us from recognizing our own unique genius, and, even more important, it can keep us from using this native genius in our writing.

What if we all possessed genius? Is that idea frightening or exciting? The truth is that everyone walking the planet has a special gift or ability that qualifies as genius. Do you own your genius? Do you know what you possess that is special and uniquely you? Does it tingle in your fingertips as you put pencil to paper or tap out the latest installment of your newest story on your computer keyboard? Too many elitists claim that very few artists in any genre possess genius. I declare that anyone who feels a passionate desire to write or paint or sing or dance or solve math problems or speak loving words to a friend at the ideal moment possesses genius in spades!

An unknown author once said, "A genius is one who shoots at something that no one else can see – and hits it!" No one else sees the world through your eyes. No one else roams the creative territory with which you are familiar. At one and the same time, you are precious and irreplaceable. And, a genius!

Impossible! I'm too human, too ordinary, too flawed, you might reply. But, E. B. White said, "Genius is more often found in a cracked pot than in a whole one." Our humanness, our frailties and ordinariness, these facet and refine the heart of our genius, polishing the gifts within us – the gifts with which we entered the world, kicking and screaming.

Perhaps, genius is more common than we guess. Perhaps, it surrounds us and infuses us, like air or water. Stephen King said, "Writing isn't about making money, getting famous...or making friends...Writing is magic, as much the water of life as any other creative art. The water is free. So drink. Drink and be filled up."



Genius isn't about superiority, acclaim or financial success. It is a quickening of the heart that drives you toward the notepad or computer; a bright idea that masters your mind and claims your time and energy; it is the essence of your self...and no one else can bring that essence forth.

Your genius is free. So, use it. Use it effortlessly. Use it...and watch it fill your life, as well as the lives of others!

Lynnette Baum
President
lynnette@the-right-writer.com

AUGUST HIGHLIGHTS:

MICHAEL STEVEN GREGORY: *From Books to Movies to MySpace: Writing for Today's Transmedia Marketplace*

As a teenager, Michael Steven Gregory set himself up for a successful screenwriting career in mainstream drama, animated action-adventure, and video games. He credits his subscriptions to both *Starlog Magazine* and *Entrepreneur* as shaping the foundation of his creative success. He is president of Random Cove, "alternative entertainment for the active intellect."

With a strong voice and expressive manner, Gregory switches his writer's, producer's, and director's hats rapidly while running through concepts, books, films and back again.

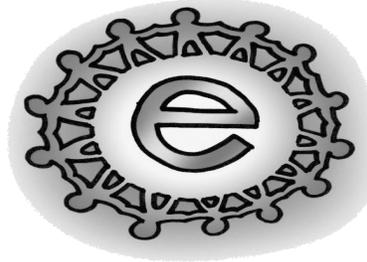
"There are no new ideas—but only a new spin with a fresh voice," Gregory said, an idea perhaps new to writers but obvious to those in the entertainment media, especially the "Hollywood-Los Angeles cult bubble."

Because "you may not find the one passionate person—agent, editor, etc., to take you up," you are responsible for selling your work, not a publisher. Thus, you must be marketing savvy. "Never send an agent a manuscript before it's ready" because it shapes the agent's opinion of your work."

Use your Web site to gain exposure. Use "active content (text on page) such as blogs and cross-linking in threes" to optimize your chances of web crawlers Google, Yahoo, and MSN picking you up. However, if you blog more often than every two-three days,

"you overload people." Many books have originated from blogs.

At the big publishing houses, "the decision makers are the marketing departments." Your book is dropped after three to four weeks of being in the bookstores. Gregory prefers independent publishers because they are "more selective" and will keep your book alive for six months, definitely a longer shelf life. To advertise yourself as a media guest, Gregory suggests becoming booked through the Radio-TV Interview



Report (www.rtirmag.net). The site said "Each issue lists 100-150 authors and other spokespeople available for live and in-studio interviews."

Selling a screenplay is all by personal contact, telephone or e-mail. Find a production company who's used material similar to yours. ("Nobody wants to be held accountable for wasting money.") Gregory writes a "kick-ass" query letter with a second page of five or six dialogue excerpts that capture the storyline's essence.

Each year 60,000 creative properties are registered with the Writers Guild: plays, treatments, ideas. But, as Gregory said, "There's

so much crap out there."

Riffing through an elimination process, he illustrated why only one or two of those registered properties will be produced. He quickly dismissed 20,000 as "so ineptly presented, you can't tell what they're about," and the next 20,000 have "cursory knowledge but are not professional." Then the last 20,000 are whittled down for various reasons: "the end is not satisfying," the format is incorrect, the story is commonplace, too expensive to make, "we don't make that genre," "excellent but don't like the stories enough," the middle isn't good, or "we don't like the writer." "This is a 'get-along' business," he stressed.

It's the "worst and best of times now for writers." Not only journalists but many accomplished writers are switching genres. They come to writing conferences to learn other techniques.

Gregory is the executive director of the Southern California Writers' Conference. Because the "big writers" are too far removed from what attendees need, he books keynote speakers whose first book came out in the last five to ten years. The next conference will be Sept. 26-28, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Irvine.

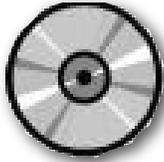
For more information, see www.WritersConference.com.

Glenda Brown Rynn
Member
grynn@cox.net

SCWA News & Announcements

If You Can't Make the Meeting:

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."



Quotes

Invent your own mythology or be slave to another man's.
—William Blake

Everething that doesn't kill you, makes you stronger. And later on you can use it in some story.
—Tapani Bagge

Everybody walks past a thousand story ideas every day. The good writers are the ones who see five or six of them. Most people don't see any.
—Orson Scott Card

Most of the basic material a writer works with is acquired before the age of fifteen.
—Willa Cather

If you haven't got an idea, start a story anyway. You can always throw it away, and maybe by the time you get to the fourth page you **will** have an idea, and you'll only have to throw away the first three pages.
—William Campbell Gault



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

PresidentLynnette Baum
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Meeting Reservations

Brennan Harvey, meeting@ocwriter.com
 or message (714) 375-5275

In Memory of Henry Minick

Henry H. Minick has been a long time member of SCWA. In May of 2006, his story "Horrors" won first place in our monthly short story contest. Henry was a gentleman in the true sense of the word. With his short gray moustache and quiet voice, he sat often at the table closest to the door to the main restaurant. If my memory serves me correctly, and it has not been as reliable in recent years as I had hoped, Henry was working on a mystery novel. He talked of sending some chapters to me when it was ready.

A quiet man, Henry came to me in 2007 when he no longer received our monthly newsletter. It seemed his address had been entered incorrectly.

He exhibited great patience as he and I worked on that for three months until he received his newsletter again.

When I attended my first meeting of the Laguna Woods Writers Club in April of this year, I knew no one there. That is, until my gaze came upon Henry sitting in the second row. The look of pleasant surprise and his wide grin told me that I was no longer alone in the room.

Henry's health had been failing him for the past year and he recently passed away. I picture him on a cloud somewhere with a pad of paper and a pen busy writing scenes of his next book.

Victory Crayne
Member
victory@crayne.com

Members Achieve!

Dixon Hearne has published the new book: *Touchstones and Threads of Change*.

It's a collection of short stories and poetry. The characters choose to shape their own destinies. Copies are available through PayPal at: <http://gcwriters.org/hearne.htm>, or by USPS, using the order form posted at the website.

Darlene Quinn has published her book, *Webs of Power*. She encourages members to attend her talks and book signings:

1st Location:

Barnes and Noble at Marina Pacifica (PCH near 2nd st.)
6326 E. Pacific Coast Hwy, Long Beach, CA 90803
Time & date: Saturday, Sept. 6 at 4 p.m.

2nd Location:

Bay Book Talk: 1029 Orange Ave, Coronado CA 92118
Time and date: Wednesday, Sept 10, at 7 p.m.

Reviews can be found at:

www.Amazon.com:DarleneQuinn:books

www.Barnes&Noble.com:Books:Webs of Power.by DarleneQuinn.Hardcover

Darlene is also completing a trailer for her book.

Victory Crayne will speak on *What Writers Want to Know About Using an Independent Editor for Their Novel or Memoir* on Friday, September 26 at 1:30 p.m. at the Seal Beach Leisure World Clubhouse 3. For details, see her website at www.crayne.com under "Speaking Events."



Writer's Corner

A Writer's Guide to Online Social Networking

In July 2008, I presented on a panel at the 2008 CanWrite! Conference in Edmonton, Alberta. The topic of the panel was *Hot Trends, Hot Markets*. As an author, I was looking at this topic from the perspective of aspiring and published authors.

As someone who's been nicknamed "Shameless Promoter" because I promote my books with everything I've got, utilizing everything I can think of or learn about, I want to share what I've learned. This information will help writers and authors connect with readers and fans, which can lead to sales once a book has been published.

The question I asked myself was: "Which hot trend or market is really on fire today, one that actually benefits writers and authors?"

The answer I came up with?

SOCIAL NETWORKING!

Let me give you the outline. Social networks are prevalent on the Internet, and if you learn how to use them correctly, you will benefit greatly. This is a way to meet thousands of people and an acceptable way to promote yourself.

There are three main categories of social networks:

1. Book collection or catalog networks - ex. LibraryThing GoodReads, Shelfari
2. Book seller networks - ex. AmazonConnect, Chapters Community
3. True social networks - ex. MySpace, FaceBook, Ning (multiple networks here)

There are many more networks than just the examples shown above, but these are the most important ones, and I highly recommend that every writer and author utilize each of them. Please note: to set up an Amazon profile/blog on AmazonConnect, you must be a published author with books available on Amazon.com. The other networks are all open to writers and readers, as well as authors.

Social networking ethics:

In general, these sites are set up to bring people together. However, most people don't want a hard sales pitch, especially one by an over-exuberant author. So be careful when you approach others on these networks. Find a common interest and get to know your friends here first. Chat about where they live, their family, their own book recommendations and reviews. But be real!

I genuinely love meeting people, and I also love to promote my books. It's tough for an author to hold back sometimes, but it is worth it to do so when you first start checking into the social network market. There is a fine line that I don't want to cross, and what I've learned is this: if you're patient and take the time to get to know people, they'll start asking questions. And the great thing is, you'll know their interest is genuine too.

The benefits for authors:

It may seem obvious that the benefits are more exposure, but I've met a lot of authors who just don't get this. Think of that old shampoo commercial—"and they tell two friends, and so on, and so on, and..." This is a form of "viral marketing"—a way of promoting to one person or group that will create a chain reaction of word-of-mouth referrals.

When most people hear the words "MySpace" and "Facebook", they're most likely to think of these in terms of their teenage kids. But times have changed, and these 'just ain't for kids anymore'. MySpace has revolutionized the social world of marketing. Gone are the days when MySpace was just for kids, a place to talk about music and share photos. Remember those days—back when you were afraid to let little Johnny post his profile and picture? Well, YOU are little Johnny now, and MySpace holds far more opportunity than danger to you.

These social network sites become a "vehicle" for you, a vehicle that will take you from point A to B. Yes, you CAN waste a lot of time and energy with

See *Social Networking*, page 7

MySpace and FaceBook Can Be Marketing Tools

Social Networking, from page 5

these sites if you aren't sure of how to do things and why you are doing them. So I urge authors to set a timer, if you must. Allow yourself 1/2 an hour to promote on each site. And do this once a week, more if you have the time.

Authors, here is the how and why for MySpace, Facebook & Ning:

Set up your profile. Sign up, add your photo, or better yet the book cover of your latest book. Add your bio info and make sure you add links to your sites and blogs. Add photos, book trailers, etc. This lets people know who you are and what you do.

Add friends. Plan to add 10-50 friends a week, especially in the beginning. When you have 500 or so, add 10/week. Friends are the backbone of any social network and you need them.

Write every week in your MySpace or Ning blog or import a blog into Facebook. I import my Blogger blog into my Facebook page. Write about anything. Blogging regularly attracts more visitors to your page. Search engines love blogs because they are always being updated.

Comment on your friends' pages. Visit their page and leave a comment, including your signature, which should include your name, book title or 'Canadian suspense author' and your website URL. This brings you more traffic. Not only will the friend visit, but so will people who are checking out their page and reading their comments. It's free advertising. But be genuine; comment on something they've said/done, something you like about them etc.

Post a bulletin on MySpace. This is great when you have a lot of friends. They will all automatically receive your bulletin. Use this for breaking news, events or to announce a blog post. Make sure you add your signature line and URL.

Ask some of your friends to read and review your book. You have access to book reviewers...and people who love to read. Plus big name authors have pages on MySpace and Facebook. You can message

them and politely ask if they'll consider reading your book and writing a review blurb (for the cover) or a review for Amazon.com or Chapters.ca, etc

Connect with other writers/authors and get involved in multi-author events—like online book fairs. Ask to guest blog on their blogs and send them an article about your book or an interview or an article on writing.

Invite friends to events, real life or virtual.

Ask your friends to spread the word about an event or piece of news. Offer to blog about them in exchange.

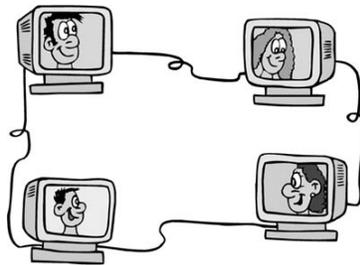
Social networking is a two-way street. Don't be the kind of person who always asks and takes; learn to give in return. There are often unexpected rewards in being genuine, in taking an interest in someone else's life and gifts. When you focus on 'what can I also do for someone else?' you'll find that great connections will 'happen', and success is one step closer.

MySpace, Facebook and Ning can help you achieve success by connecting you to people who are willing to help you. There are wonderful, awesome people out there.

I know; I've met them. So now it's your turn. Be bold, step out of that box and into the world of online social networking.

So...get social! Start networking! If you're an aspiring author, use these sites to start gaining fans now! Why wait? If they like your writing now, they're going to buy your book when it's finally published. Plus being a part of an online social network allows you to do the one thing you love most—WRITE! :)

—Cheryl Kaye Tardif, a.k.a. "Shameless Promoter", is a freelance journalist and bestselling suspense author of *Whale Song*, *The River* and *Divine Intervention*. Cheryl has spoken at numerous writers conferences on the topics of book marketing, especially online marketing. She currently resides in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Her Web site is <http://www.cherylktardif.com/>.





**September Meeting:
Saturday
September 20**

STEVE DEXTER

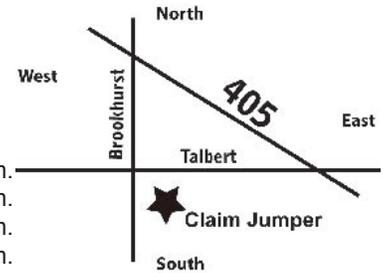
Taking the Mystery Out of Getting What's in Your Head Onto the Bookshelves

(See inside for more on Steve Dexter.)

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:	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



BE SURE TO RSVP WHENEVER POSSIBLE!

RSVP before September 15:

Brennan Harvey, Meeting Coordinator, P.O. Box 1585, Huntington Beach, CA 92647-9998. Check payable to SCWA must accompany reservation. Our PayPal online account is temporarily out of commission.

After September 15: E-mail Brennan at meeting@ocwriter.com or message (714) 375-5275



Writers News

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