



Southern California Writers Association

# Writers News

www.ocwriter.com

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## February 20 Speaker

# Michael Cassutt

Former CBS Executive, Screenwriter, Novelist

## “Why We Write (Especially When We Don’t Get Rich)”

Whether you write a screenplay or novel, the cards are stacked against you succeeding. With the current trends in today’s film and publishing industries, the odds of seeing one’s work in print or on the screen have never been slimmer. So the logical question is, why do we do it? What motivates us to spend so much time writing? Michael Cassutt has written for film, television and print, and offers a unique perspective on what drives us as writers, and what we can do to succeed.



Cassutt has been a television executive at CBS a novelist, executive producer, and contributing writer for many well-known television shows. He is a writer of both fiction and nonfiction for print and broadcast. Cassutt also teaches at the University of Southern California’s School of Cinematic Arts.

Cassutt was co-executive producer of the Showtime revival of *The Outer Limits*, which won the CableACE award for best drama series in 1995.

Among his other credits are staff writer for *The Twilight Zone* (CBS, 1986), story editor for the acclaimed *Max Headroom* series (ABC, 1987), and writer-producer for the CBS series *TV 101* (1988-89). Cassutt won the Nancy Susan Reynolds Award of the Center for Population Options for a *TV 101* three-part episode called *First Love*.

Cassutt was also writer-producer for *WIOU*, an ensemble drama starring John Shea and Helen Shaver (CBS, 1990-91), and then for *Eerie Indiana* (NBC 1991-92).

In 1992-93 Cassutt served as producer and writer for the ABC police drama *Sirens*, and also wrote the two-part premier of its syndicated version (1994) with series creator Ann Lewis Hamilton. Following

his tour on *The Outer Limits*, Cassutt worked as co-executive producer for the FBC drama *Strange Luck* (1995-96) and consulting producer on *Beverly Hills, 90210* (1997-98) and the science fiction series *Seven Days* (1998-99). More recently, he was executive consultant for USA Network’s *The Dead Zone* (2003-2004).

He has contributed freelance scripts to *Seaquest DSV*, *Stargate SG-1*, *Farscape*, and *Gene Roddenberry’s Andromeda*.

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# President's Message



## Muscle-Up your Reputation as an Author

Since childhood, I've dreamed of publishing a book. A wonderful book. A touching book. A book that would move hearts and change the world! My primary goal was to get the book on the shelf. Once the book was written and published, I assumed that everything would be hunky-dory, pie-in-the-sky, perfectly scrumptious, with a scoop of French vanilla on the side.

Oops! Another common misconception. Publishers don't give a shucky-darn about your professional success, so you won't get help there. As seasoned authors know, your future as a writer depends upon your reputation. The hard cold truth is that no one will get the word out about your book but you, and possibly some sympathetic friends and relatives. Here are a few tips to help both published and unpublished writers succeed!

1. Get yourself some PR – You don't have to be featured in an article, just mentioned. If you've won an award, donated your books to a charity, or done anything (including walking the back fence holding a book in each hand) call the editor of your local paper. This is hard to do, especially since most of us feel more comfortable hoarding our kind deeds and achievements in the shadows. But, you must act as your own PR specialist. So, get creative and get your name out there!
2. Build name recognition – My sister, Roxy Haney, has written four unpublished novels. (Good for her!) Today, she is building name recognition by writing a weekly article for a small local paper. There is no money involved, but lots of people know her name. This is really smart thinking! When a writer brings a positive reputation to the table, publishers pay attention.
3. Make public speaking part of your platform – You may not know much more than the next guy about any particular topic, but when you speak in public it's assumed that you are an expert. Find local groups that need speakers and volunteer. Then, you can Google your chosen topic and become an expert before you step behind the podium. Just think how many more people will know about your book once you've given a knowledgeable, crackerjack talk.
4. Submit your work to contests – Roxy Haney (am I proud of her or not?) submitted the first chapter of one of her novels to a contest and won first place! This looks really good on your resume. If the chicken and the egg problem of achievement vs. anonymity has stumped you in the past, go to the local library and write down some upcoming contests. You have a better chance of winning than you realize, and just might be surprised by your success!
5. Take an active role in a local writing organization – The SCWA would be a great place to start. Once you start giving to an organization that supports your writing dreams, good energy (as well as extraordinary contacts) flow your way. Nothing prepares you for success better than serving others. It's like a bright candle on a hilltop, one that not only guides you toward achievement but inspires others, as well. Remember, if you give it away for a year, it will feed you for life!



*Lynnette Baum*

President

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## DEAN DEVLIN

### *Writing for the Movies*



Film writer, director, and producer Dean Devlin was born into and for the movie business. Although he grew up on the sets of his father's films such as *The Witches of Eastwick* and *The Fortune*, it wasn't until his mother brought home a toy laser from her guest spot on *Star Trek* that his soul was

hooked. He matured to make feature films such as *Stargate*, *Godzilla*, *Independence Day*, *The Patriot*, and the documentary *Who Killed the Electric Car?* Also to his credit are TV features and series like *Leverage*, *The Librarian*, *the Triangle*, and *The Visitor*. After joking that he's a "recovering actor," Devlin educated the packed SCWA audience on the film industry today and its digital future.

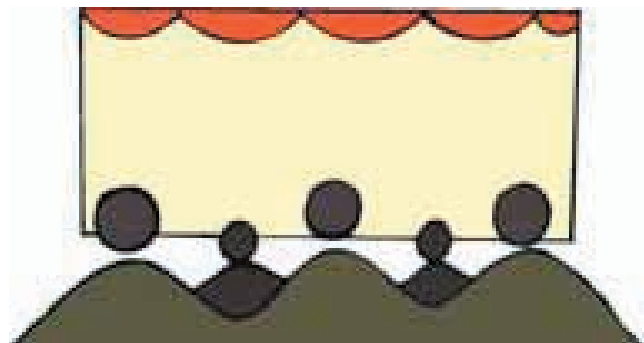
Understanding that "each medium is unique unto itself" is basic. Content and techniques that work for prose will not work for feature films and must be altered yet again for TV films. What's important in stories and novels is how they are **written**, especially descriptions [voice/style]. Only in these can internal monologue be used. In theater movies, the critical aspect is images and their juxtapositions. "The characters use words to mask what they're feeling." Ironically, what is exciting on the big screen will not be so on TV because of "sandwich guy" who is on and off the couch. The small screen needs a pronounced emotional element. "The characters have to **tell you** what they're feeling"—so it can be heard

from the kitchen. But viewers are in sync with the three-act structure of TV films, that Devlin relayed. [See the June 2009 newsletter, page 2, for Mark Sevi's breakdown of that structure.]

Regardless of the medium, the creator must ask, "Who are my characters, their desires, their obstacles, and how to get those desires satisfied?" Devlin said that on *Godzilla* he spent \$60 million on the "sizzle" (digital effects), but no one liked the character. His other mistake was "throwing characters in and explaining them later." You must care about the characters, establish them first, and "the rest is window-dressing."

To start a script, Devlin sets up in a hotel room so he can write "as fast as humanly possible" without interruption. Although he blueprints his plots, he expects them to evolve as the process of writing, filming, and editing continues. He makes up facts that research will later replace; however, he has found his instincts to be oddly close to the truth. Working quickly has benefits: A. "Sometimes your stream of consciousness is better than when you over think it." B. Rewriting is easier. Your resistance is directly proportional to the length of time spent on the first script. He advises not completing the current scene at the end of a workday because the next day "you're already in the gestalt of it."

Devlin's strength is structure and development. After creating a condition or situation that the audience "really want to happen, [you] then convince



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# SCWA News & Announcements

## Why Write if You Don't Get Rich?

*Cassutt*, from page 1

He has developed scripts based on classic science fiction by writers such as Arthur C. Clarke, Robert A. Heinlein, Clifford Simak and Philip Jose Farmer.

Cassutt has been a full-time writer since 1985. He has published the science fiction and fantasy novels *The Star Country* (Doubleday 1986) and *Dragon Season* (Tor 1991). With Andrew M. Greeley, he co-edited an anthology of SF-fantasy stories with Catholic themes, *Sacred Visions* (Tor 1991). He is also the author of over two dozen published short stories.

His work includes the space thriller, *Tango Midnight*, which deals with an accident aboard the International Space Station. His historical thriller, *Red Moon*, is the "true story" of the dark side of the space race between America and the Soviet Union. Cassutt's first NASA novel, *Missing Man*, was published in September 1998. It received universal praise from such diverse sources as *Publisher's Weekly*, *Analog Science Fiction*, and the muckracking *NASA Watch*.

Born in Minnesota and raised in Hudson, Wisconsin, Cassutt attended the University of Arizona in Tucson, graduating with a B.A. in radio-television. He has worked as a disc jockey and radio program director and as a network television executive for CBS.. He lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Cindy, and two children, Ryan and Alexandra.

Neil Young  
VP, Programming  
[programmer@ocwriter.com](mailto:programmer@ocwriter.com)

Contact Writers News Editor Mary Michel Green at (949) 361-6581 or [green.mary@cox.net](mailto:green.mary@cox.net).

### SCWA Critique Committee Open to Members of SCWA

#### Nonfiction & Fiction

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This position is open.

#### Poetry

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##### 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 .....Lynnette Baum  
VP, Programming ..... Neil Young  
VP, Membership ..... Charla Spence  
Secretary..... Charla Spence  
Treasurer .....Larry Porricelli  
Publicity Director .....Larry Porricelli  
Webmaster ..... Tony Stoklosa  
Meeting Coordinator..... Sonia Marsh  
Newsletter Editor ..... Mary Michel Green  
Tape Librarian.....Sharon Walters

### Membership Information

[membership@ocwriter.com](mailto:membership@ocwriter.com)

### Meeting Reservations

Sonia Marsh, [meeting@ocwriter.com](mailto:meeting@ocwriter.com)  
or message (949) 309-0030

## NEXT MONTH'S SPEAKER:

March 20, 2010

### *W. Terry Whalin*

Former Book Acquisitions Editor and Author

## Jumpstart Your Publishing Dreams



W. Terry Whalin understands both sides of the editorial desk--as an editor and a writer. He worked as a magazine editor and his magazine work has appeared in more than 50 publications. A former book acquisitions editor for several publishers and a former literary agent, Terry is a Vice President and Publisher at Intermedia Publishing Group. Whether you have a book manuscript that needs to get published or a published book that needs marketing, Terry will offer his knowledge and skills to help make it happen.

*Neil Young*  
VP, Programming  
[programmer@ocwriter.com](mailto:programmer@ocwriter.com)

## Member News



**Marta Hiatt** published her third book - "Inspirational Quotations From the Concept-Theory Philosophy."

**Brennan Harvey** received his sixth consecutive Honorable Mention in the L. Ron Hubbard presents the Writers of the Future contest. This story was returned with a short, handwritten note from the coordinating judge that read, "Very nicely written! Keep entering!"

## New Mailing Address!

The SCWA Post Office box has changed to:

SCWA  
P.O. Box 861  
Lake Forest, CA 92609



# In Memory

By Larry Porcelli

I attended the funeral of Michael Spence today (February 10) along with about 500 other people who crowded a huge assembly hall in Chino Hills, and every seat was taken and they had to put out more. Michael was the husband of Charla Spence. I would never call what I experienced today a funeral. I have attended many funerals but this one was one that was beyond uplifting. Let me assure you, Mike was alive, it was a joyful celebration of a life of a man, whose life, and the way he lived, touched the hearts, not always tenderly either, of each person he had ever met, and Charla's love for her husband let us see every detail, to see the joy that was Michael Spence.

Michael Spence was, is, and ever shall be, no other way to say it, a great character.

He loved surfing since a youth, and had a great passion for the sport, also serving as judge at contests many times, and helped so many kids learn surfing. It is funny, that I had seen Mike so many times on the beach but didn't know him personally, but had seen him for many years in the water and also involved in Surf Museum events (he was on the board).

But what was so wonderful was the sharing of the passions he had and how he fulfilled them, and passion was the only word, for Mike would jump into something and go full speed until he mastered it. He became intrigued with tandem surfing, where two people ride the same board and perform great acts of daring. Mike even wrote a book on it that is the definitive word on the sport.

He loved surfing so much he had several longboards stacked on the wall in his and Charla's bedroom! And that's not counting the many all over the garage and house. When Michael took up golf, he had hundreds of clubs, and could hit the ball all over the acres of property he and Charla live on.

Everyone who spoke shared great stories that Michael was fun, loving, and at times annoying and obnoxious, but they loved him for that. When he discovered cell phones he would call his sons and family and friends so many times in one day, over and over and over. And those same people shared how now they miss those calls.

His younger cousin told of how when Michael was in the Navy, and the ship was in port, he would sneak his cousin on the ship, dress him as a sailor, and let him hang around on the ship for a day and no one would ever be the wiser, and then sneak him off the ship.

He was known at the beach, and when I say at the beach, I mean almost every beach in the Southland; there wasn't a beach where he was not greeted with a hug. In fact, he surfed so many times with the Blackie's Longboard Crew in Newport Beach, he also became the Surfing Santa, and there is a great story and picture of him on the back of the sports page in the Register today. Many of the Blackie's surfers wore surfer shirts to the funeral because Mike wore them all the time.

But even though he was a character, he was active in church and family, and worked with young people, even taking groups river rafting. When the river rafting idea came up to him he went and asked an official at his church, who said it was a good idea, but they can only take kids no more than two hours away, and Michael responded to him, "Is that with you or me driving?" They took the trip.

He loved the Beach Boys, and often sang "Surfer Girl", and was also in a church music choir. He was a



See *In Memory* page 8

man's man, he was a man who didn't hide from anything, and I feel as if I knew him my entire life.

But most of all he was loved.

Letters from his children and his wife were read, and we saw the further depth of a man who did in 62 years what an army couldn't do in 300 years - he lived, he enjoyed life, he loved family, and he loved people, and he loved the water. And he touched everyone he ever met.

There were great photos of him, so well set up on a big screen to Beach Boys music, and a table with awards and pictures from surfing and the American Legion. And in celebration of Michael, Charla had a luau set out for everyone to enjoy lunch, and at every table there were a hundred stories.

Somehow, everyone who was there was not only touched by Mike's spirit, they carried it with them, and they were more alive also, because he was a giver, who gave and gave and gave, life and adventure, and his spirit is highly contagious.

I met many surfing friends at the funeral that I have known for years but I only knew Mike as Santa and Big Mike and a hundred other beach names, but never as Michael Spence, the husband of Charla. Michael and Charla are two as opposite as you could get in interests, but both are bigger than life in their generous hearts. Charla allowed a look into a man she has loved, and it was more than a funeral, it was a true celebration of life, and this day will always be special.

Thank you, Charla, for you had some great guy, and he has one very special woman.

I was blessed. Charla, I know his children and grandchildren and every friend was blessed today, for your faith was alive, and it was a fountain that exploded like fireworks, colored with love and joy and peace.

Thank you, Charla.



Glenda Brown Rynn has found some inspirational quotes at the Web site <http://www.famousquotesandauthors.com/>

What another would have done as well as you, do not do it. What another would have said as well as you, do not say it. What another would have written as well, do not write it. Be faithful to that which exists nowhere but in yourself - and thus make yourself indispensable.  
— Andre Gide

There is no greater joy than that of feeling oneself a

creator. The triumph of life is expressed by creation.  
— Henri Bergson

It is the child in man that is the source of his uniqueness and creativeness, and the playground is the optimal milieu for the unfolding of his capacities.  
— Eric Hoffer

Many times we will get more ideas and better ideas in two hours of creative loafing than in eight hours at a desk.  
— Wilfred Peterson

If you are seeking creative ideas, go out walking. Angels whisper to a man when he goes for a walk.  
— Raymond Inman

# Major Motion Picture Producer Talks Writing at SCWA

*Devlin*, from page 3

them they're **not** going to get it. Then give it to them"—as in *ET*. He notes that this is "simple but insanely difficult to pull off." He also likes to make the conflict fun—and then take away the fun. Regardless of method, he must be true to the "promise of the premise."

In those work sessions, Devlin often has another writer or more there with whom to explore ideas. One person may storyboard the script. However, collaboration is effective only if the interplay is focused on what's good for the film. "If it gets to be about ego, it won't work."

A sequel shouldn't be created just because the first story was a success. That's passion becoming cynicism, Devlin says. Your characters need ongoing conflict organic to the original. (But the audience shouldn't have to ask, "Why are the same characters in the same situation again?") A bad sequel can terminate a franchise. The "trick" built into a sequel is that the audience knows its ingredients. If those don't appear, the audience feels let down.

When shooting the film, a director must have "a certain amount of disrespect for the writing." Devlin shoots a scene according to the script and puts it aside. He stays open to the bag of tools each actor brings and "happy accidents" that he decides to develop. For example, in *Leverage*, actor Christian

Kane turned out to have comedic timing. "The more frustrated he was [in one scene], the funnier he was." During the editing, the director must now disrespect the shooting in order to refine

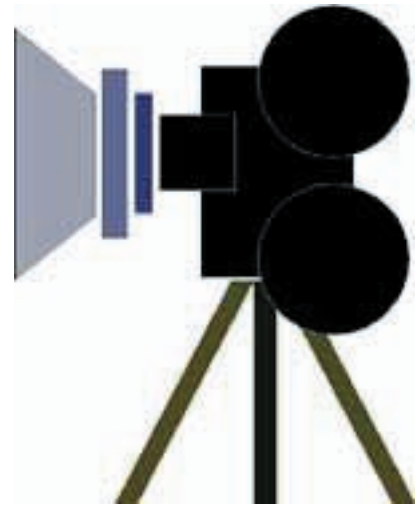
his material.

Devlin echoed Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch's statement that when writing, you often have to "[m]urder your darlings." Devlin said, "...kill your babies," referring to the scenes on the cutting-room floor.

While wearing the director's or producer's hat, you must be part shrink but tough. One difficult actress Devlin had to grab by the shoulders at 1AM and say, "Daddy loves you, all right!" Some prima donnas, a necessary evil, can be reasoned with; others have to be bullied. **The biggest egos of all belong to the digital effects artists.** Producers themselves are on the receiving end of terror by studios: on each film they are informed they'll be fired the next week." The industry is about **power** and **keeping it**. "There's no such thing as the 'good studio.'" In 2004 Devlin became independent by founding Electric Entertainment.

Producers are not allowed to read unrepresented scripts. Disclosure agreements protect not only the studios but also the writers. Devlin won't read synopses even from friends. No one agent is better than another. What will hook a studio's interest is the log line, like the blurb in a TV guide. A good premise with a bad script trumps a bad premise with a good script.

The new digital economy has made scripted entertainment financially treacherous because traditional paths of financing are disappearing. Forget about the vaunted film sensibility and go digital. Learn Final Cut, which is based on Photo



See *Devlin* page 9

# Major Motion Picture Producer Talks Writing at SCWA

*Devlin*, from page 8

Shop. If you like directing, Devlin says to grab your camera and put your work on YouTube. He related an example of an unknown whose YouTube display has led to a directing deal with a studio. “Today we live in a world where you can self-promote.”

In this high-energy business, “[y]ou have to kill yourself to be successful.” Devlin stresses that you have to take time off but adds that the break can benefit your films. In spite of his being hospitalized three times for exhaustion, Dean Devlin testifies that “[b]liss is proximity to creation and the closer you are, the happier you are. You **live** in the moment of joyous creation.”



## Extra Highlights

Mark Sevi, a director of the Orange County Screenwriters Association, graciously stepped up to the mike to explain options after Dean Devlin had to leave. At first he joked that Devlin and he are “natural enemies,” because screenwriters and their agents have to pitch to those in Devlin’s position. (Regarding the issue of needing an agent because of liability, Sevi

said another possibility is to “cold-query production companies and protect yourself.”)

The next step in the option process is for small production companies to take their scripts and ideas to the studios. The studio may option the screenwriter’s script for a year and even add a provision that would extend the option for an additional year. “Meanwhile, the screenwriter cannot do anything with that script.”

The contract may offer \$10,000 as a down/option for a later income of \$75,000-\$750,000 when filming. The film’s value is determined by how many production companies/studios want the property. “The Writers Guild determines the minimum sale price of scripts. There are set levels.”

**Warning:** Production can be shut down at the last moment!

*Glenda Brown Rynn*  
Reporter  
[grynn@cox.net](mailto:grynn@cox.net)



# March “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.

E-mail to: [contest@ocwriter.com](mailto:contest@ocwriter.com) with subject line: March 2010 “Will Write 4 Food Contest.” Put your daytime phone number or e-mail address in the message, along with the title of your story. Please attach the story without your identifying information, so the judging will be impartial.

Deadline: Stories must be received on or before 11:59 p.m. on March 13, 2010.

Winner: Attends their next SCWA meeting for free, a \$25 value! 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. Runners-up will also receive certificates and their stories will be on the 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, but you may receive as many honorable mentions you can win. At the end of the year, we will try to publish all winning stories in an SCWA chapbook.



## January First Place Winner:

### *Betrayal*

By Joyce Wheeler



Susanne promised her High Schooled brother, Ed, that she would not tell their parents of his dangerous exploits. It was a constant quiver in her mind as she watched his indiscretions. Susanne had just entered ninth grade whereas Ed was quite experienced. She observed him with his girlfriend who had punctured her lip with a safety pin and had a tongue stud and she knew Ed was straying into forbidden territory. Those two would duck into bathrooms then exit looking flushed.

If Ed was not careful he would father a child who would desperately need a rational mother. Susanne decided that if that occurred, and it easily might, she would offer her babysitting services. Susanne was on the college path but she might be the victim of Ed’s poor choices.

Susanne wanted to tell her parents about Ed having a stash of weed in the basement. This could destroy Ed’s future and she loved him immensely so she created a way that she could tell them without uttering a word. That way she wouldn’t have actually told them and she could keep her word.

The next time Ed slipped down into the basement with his girlfriend to practice their indiscretions Susanne appeared at the kitchen door where her mother was creating one of her culinary masterpieces. She placed her two fingers across her lips imitating smoking and tapped her mother who seemed perplexed. Susanne’s mother responded, “Why do you want me to hush?”

# Southern Expressions

*Authors Conference*

November 5-7, 2010

IP Resort

Biloxi, MS

*Writing... Photography... Music*

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The Gulf Coast Writers Association is opening the Call for Speakers to present at our *Southern Expressions Conference* November 5-7, 2010 in Biloxi Mississippi.

The conference will focus on scheduling speakers to cover the following information as it pertains to Writing, Photography and Music:

Writing Instruction—Genres

Fiction, Mystery, Romance, Young Adult,  
Non-Fiction, Sci-Fi, Etc.

Screenwriting

Poetry

Music

Securing an Agent, Editor, Publisher

Self Publishing

Branding

Self Promotion

Blogging / Social Media

Professional Promotion

Business of Arts—Legal, Financial. Protection

Editing / Self-Editing

Contests, Submissions, Queries

Photography—Indoor, Outdoor, People

Technique

Editing

Music—Writing, Production, Business

Open to Suggestions of New and Interesting Topics  
that will benefit our attendees.

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Please send an email with the following information to: **[writerpllevin@gmail.com](mailto:writerpllevin@gmail.com)**

Name, Title, Company or Organization

Address, City, State, Zip

Phone, Email

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**Please Include:**

Brief Bio/Resume including previous Conference or Class Speaking Experience.

Subject and Description of Presentation.

Any Questions or Special Requests, including equipment needs during presentation.

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*Note:*

Please copy and paste all information into the body of the email—no attachments please.

## *Crayne Business Model for Book Writers*

By Victory Crayne ©2010

As many of you know, the book publishing industry is undergoing tumultuous change. The old paradigm of first trying to sell to NY publishers causes a great deal of frustration for many authors.

With e-books selling for less than US\$10 and big box retailers like Wal-Mart and Costco demanding steep discounts so they can sell bestsellers at US\$17, publishers are feeling the squeeze. And with so many writers competing for the attention of agents and publishers, there is relentless pressure on writers to accept lower advances and lower royalty rates—if they can get a commercial publisher interested at all. We should accept the fact that the world of publishing is becoming less pricey. From the viewpoint of consumers, that's a very good thing. But for providers of information and entertainment, the old business model has become harder to sell in and harder to make a living in. But rather than try to resist or overcome the changes, we should accept them and embrace them.

After discussing the issues with many in the industry, I've come up with a business model that I think will be better for writers of books.



### **New business model**

The Crayne Business Model for Book Writers will work for both printed books and e-books. We need a business model wherein:

#### **—Writers create their manuscripts.**

There will always be a demand for the information and entertainment that only writers can provide.

#### **—Writers get their manuscripts professionally edited.**

Most books need to be rewritten and polished before they are marketable. Writers must get their manuscripts professionally edited if they hope to compete with the millions of other writers out there. The good news is that the vast majority of manuscripts are not well written. Professional editors find that less than two percent of their clients write at a publishable level. Many agents say the same thing.

#### **—Writers publish via an honest “pay to publish” firm.**

An honest “pay to publish” firm will package the book (cover art, ISBN, interior design, etc.), then print and fulfill orders. Such firms focus on helping writers create low cost and appealing products to aid writers in marketing their books. Those honest firms also help writers market their books to the public, rather than focus on selling printed books to the writers.

One such publisher is INDI Publishing Group at <http://www.writersreaders.com/indi-publishing-group/>.

As professional editing becomes more popular with writers (and the quality of manuscripts increases), other honest, pay to publish firms will enter this

See *Crane Business Model* page 13

# *Coping with Change in the Writing Business*

*Crane Business Model*, from page 12

market.

## **—Writers develop their own professional Web site.**

Writers need professional Web sites to provide their own personal showcase for their books. The Web site must be professionally developed and maintained to convey the image of a professional author and product. The fifteen year old nephew cannot prepare a Web site to successfully compete in today's competitive marketplace.

## **—Writers pay to get professional reviews.**

Paid-for professional reviews provide the "screening" step that agents and commercial press publishers currently provide. They enable the buying public to obtain informative reviews of titles before purchasing them, thus avoiding the flood of junk titles.

Agents can become professional reviewers since they have expertise in such screening. Journalists who have previously written book reviews would find professional review writing a new source of income and exposure.

Reviewers must make an income to stay in business, so professional reviews must be paid for by the writers. Conflict of interest can be avoided if professional reviewers work for a reputable syndicate or corporate entity. Such an organization would accept manuscripts and payments from writers and subcontract with professional reviewers for written reviews to be published on the organization's Web site.

A fee as low as US\$300 for the writers would allow a split three ways: \$60 to the syndicate, \$120 each to two reviewers. If a writer wants more reviews, he can pay extra. The fee to the reviewers needs to be high enough to pay for the time to read the manuscript

and write a realistic and professional review. Such reviews would not be the same as critiques (to point out weaknesses and show how to improve), but would present a sophisticated, genre-knowledgeable reader's opinion of the manuscript.

Manuscripts could be submitted to the syndicate or corporate entity via the Internet to reduce handling costs.

One option for a writer might be to not have the reviews immediately published. Such a fee-based review system would enable beginning writers to test whether their manuscripts are ready for the market before spending thousands of dollars on marketing and promotion.

Professional reviews would serve the book market like Rotten Tomatoes (<http://www.rottentomatoes.com>) does for movie reviews by the public.

## **—Writers market their books on their own.**

Book marketing often entails blogs, speaking engagements, radio interviews, web interviews, content articles submitted to Web sites, free samples of chapters, hiring publicists, and much, much more. The marketing side of the publishing industry is also undergoing rapid change.

## **—Writers refocus if their books sell very well.**

Regardless of format (print, e-book, etc.), if the book sells well, the writer should contact an agent for professional advice on legalities of contracts, auctioning of rights, and market options such as foreign markets, movie rights, etc. At this point, the writers will have some income from sales and may

See *Crane Business Model* page 14

# Writing in Today's World

*Crane Business Model*, from page 13

want to change their marketing strategy to take advantage of greater opportunities.

## What this means for different players in the publishing industry

**For writers**, this may mean abandoning their efforts to sell print rights to major publishers and depending on their meager royalties to make an income. Instead, successful writers can go directly to the public to sell their books at modest prices. Writers will get higher profits per book, will sell fewer books, but can continue to sell their books for many years. Continued sales means writers can depend more on building professional reviews and “word of mouth” advertising, rather than depending on promoting their books during the three to six weeks that major bookstores allow before pulling new books off their shelves.

Those books that sell well will garner more marketplace attention. This will stimulate new markets for firms that collect and publish successful sales figures on a Web site, broken down by category and author name, with links to professional reviews.

**For agents**, this means getting more queries from writers with proven book sales. They could market their services to successful authors to help them take advantage of greater opportunities. Agents would still have the option of screening floods of queries, sample chapters, and manuscripts and marketing to major publishers.

Some agents may become brokers or book shepherds, who assist writers in selecting the best publishing option, best marketing strategy, and best way to stand out from the crowd. Similar to the way many travel agents were affected by online booking, literary agents

may seek niches offering specialized packages. They will still experience the thrill of nurturing wonderful books into the publishing world and the reading public.

**For publishers**, this means developing Web sites to sell their books directly to the public (especially important for e-books). They could offer discounts to brick and mortar bookstores to have books available for same-day purchase from buyers.

For major publishers, this still leaves the option of buying print rights and e-rights from writers as they do now. Since books with established successful sales mean less risk for publishers than unproven manuscripts, publishers could compete for rights for those books, resulting in better royalties for authors as well as lower costs for publishers.



**For bookstores**, this means primarily stocking books that get good reviews and have good sales figures already on record, which reduces store costs and risks. For books they don't have in stock, bookstores can become mini-printers, providing fees back to the publishers. As with books on the shelves, customers can order books via the bookstore's Web site, pay, and pick up their purchases the same day.

## Conclusion

The Crayne Business Model for Book Writers would mean printing far fewer books, since they would be printed to fill orders. The current industry practice

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# Proposing A New Way to Do Business

*Crane Business Model*, from page 14

is to print in large batches and ship before being sold, with many books being returned unsold. This new model would reduce the costs of printed books and the consumption of limited natural resources. Of course, a great advantage of e-books is they don't require any printing at all.

Most writers create four or more manuscripts before their writing skills reach marketable levels. The Crayne Business Model for Book Writers provides millions of writers a means to test their books in the marketplace at low cost. Simultaneously, professional

editors and reviewers provide excellent means for developing writers to gain valuable feedback for improving their work before they invest thousands of dollars in their books.

Book buyers will have more options to find quality books at affordable prices.

-**Victory Crayne**, Independent Editor, Writing Coach, Ghostwriter, Writer, Public Speaker. E-mail: [victory@crayne.com](mailto:victory@crayne.com). Web: <http://www.crayne.com>

## How to Turn Your Blog Posts Into Paying Articles

By Patricia Fry



Are you a blogger? Do you post daily or at least fairly frequently? And what do you do with those blog posts after you publish them? Walk away and forget them? I'd like to suggest getting more mileage from the writing that you do, particularly those regular blog posts.

I post to my publishing blog daily with useful information, concepts and resources for people who are interested in publishing their written work. My blog is visited by only so many people; there are probably thousands who would be interested in my

blog that I am not reaching. Since my aim is to help educate and inform new and struggling authors, I also write articles for appropriate publications. And often, I will create new articles from my blog posts.

If your blog is designed to teach, preach, report, enlighten, update, coach, entertain and/or inform others on a subject of interest to many, you certainly should be writing articles for appropriate publications. And your blog posts are a good starting place.

**Choose your blog posts carefully.** Not all posts have the framework to become articles. However, if you offer something of value in your blog posts—a lesson, a new concept, a new product review, for example, it may be suitable as a magazine or newsletter article. Maybe your blog focuses on cats. Your blog post on a how to socialize feral kittens might be a perfect article for an animal-related newsletter, Web site or

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# Cashing in on Your Blog

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magazine. You might also submit your tip sheet listing ten ways to socialize a feral kitten to newspaper pet columnists nationwide.

Maybe your blog is all about gardening. Surely, your post featuring what to plant in patio pots during the spring in the southwest would make a great article for southwest regional magazines and newspapers.

Let's say that your blog covers aviation—and you like talking about some of your flying experiences and those of others. Consider creating interesting, entertaining and/or informational pieces for publications that your audience reads.

**Select appropriate publication.** You probably already know which publications would publish your articles or stories. These are the same magazines and newsletters that you read related to the topic of your blog. Also consider regional magazines (for those pieces that focus on a particular area), general magazines (when your article is rather generic) or women's, children's, trade, business, etc. publications. For example, maybe your article features a woman pilot who has achieved or accomplished something remarkable. Of course, this will be of interest to women and women's magazines generally pay well. Your blog post on summer gardening might include children's garden ideas. This might be a great piece for a family or children's publication. Locate additional magazines through *Writer's Market* (\$30 at most bookstores). Find newsletters in every category here: [www.newsletteraccess.com](http://www.newsletteraccess.com).

**Massage your piece to fit a particular magazine or newsletter.** An informative, useful blog post could be massaged into a valuable article for the right publication. In fact, you could turn some blog posts into more than one article for more than one magazine. Let's say that you posted a blog featuring an author who flew a vintage plane along the West Coast stopping at several small airports along the way to talk about her new book on women pilots. Now you could revise this piece to focus on the unusual promotional aspect for a writers' or authors' magazine. Your story of the flight along the West Coast might be perfect for a couple of regional publications. And you're bound to find a woman's magazine (or two) interested in this woman's unique story.

Maybe your blog is designed to support people who are caring for ill or elderly family members. Your posts on resources for caregiver respite, how caregivers can save energy by pacing themselves, red flag warnings for unscrupulous helpers, tips for screening at-home help, legal questions and answers, etc., would all make excellent stand-alone articles for a variety of publications and Web sites.

Do you spend hours per week adding to your blog? Do your posts have value to large segments of people? Are you seeking exposure for yourself, your cause or a published book? Would you like to make an extra \$100 to \$3,000 per month? If you can answer "yes" to any or all of these questions, you really should be turning your blog posts into articles. It's as easy as writing valid and useful blog posts and then expanding them into valid and useful articles and/or tweaking them to fit specific magazines.

Patricia Fry is the Executive Director of SPAWN (Small Publishers, Artists and Writers Network) [www.spawn.org](http://www.spawn.org). She is the author of 30 books, most of them for authors and writers. Her latest book is "The Successful Author's Handbook" [www.matilijapress.com](http://www.matilijapress.com). Visit her informative publishing blog often: [www.matilijapress.com/publishingblog](http://www.matilijapress.com/publishingblog).



**February Meeting:  
Saturday  
February 20**

# MICHAEL CASSUTT

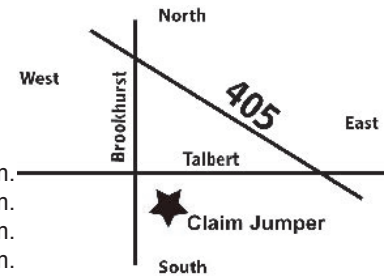
*Former CBS Executive, Screenwriter, Novelist*



## 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—\$35 AT DOOR; \$30 WITH RSVP  
MEMBERS WHO DO NOT RSVP PAY \$30 AT DOOR  
MEMBERS WHO DO RSVP PAY \$25



BE SURE TO RSVP WHENEVER POSSIBLE!

RSVP before February 16:

Sonia Marsh, Meeting Coordinator, P.O. Box 861, Lake Forest, CA 92609      Check payable to SCWA must accompany reservation. Our PayPal online account is temporarily out of commission.

After February 16:      E-mail Sonia at [meeting@ocwriter.com](mailto:meeting@ocwriter.com) or message (949) 309-0030

