

# LIFESTYLES

THE INDEPENDENT / SUNDAY, MAY 24, 2009

Get priorities straight: Looks aren't important

Everybody needs to quit worrying about how they look. Even more, they need to quit worrying about how everyone else looks.

Last week, the model Iman commented on first lady Michelle Obama's looks, saying she was "not a great beauty."

First, who cares what Iman thinks? What makes her an expert on beauty? She made a living from being a model, but take a look at models. Are they really beautiful, or are they just tall, lanky, expressionless, living clothes hangers? I choose the latter.

Second, I agree Michelle Obama isn't a naturally beautiful woman. She does, however, look healthy and neat and she's full of confidence and personality. I like to say she does the best she can with what

she's got to work with, and that's all anybody can do.



**LEE WARD**  
Lifestyles editor

Third, she doesn't have to be beautiful.

She did not choose a career field that demands physical beauty. Of course, these days, so many people are so superficial that looks count when they shouldn't, but honestly, do you want your attorney to be good looking or efficient? I choose efficient.

Most people aren't beautiful and it's not an issue, and with Mrs. Obama, beauty isn't what it's about. She's a Harvard-educated attorney who dedicates her life to public service. Iman should not have commented about her looks at all, in a positive or negative way, because it's not an issue given her life and career choices.

When it comes to looks, women can never escape the judgments of others, no matter how irrelevant their looks are to their lives.

Men are lucky; in most cases, they can get away with looking 10 times worse than a woman in the same position without having to endure unnecessary, critical remarks.

Iman did continue with more flattering comments, adding Mrs. Obama is interesting looking and bright, which she admits is more important than beauty.

Of course it is. Practically any positive quality is more important than beauty. The fact that beauty is so subjective ("Beauty is in the eye of the beholder") indicates the shaky ground it stands on in the arena of importance.

Look at it this way: Would you rather have a law degree from Harvard or a beauty pageant crown? I'd rather have the law degree. I bet Michelle Obama would, too.

LEE WARD can be reached at [lward@daillyindependent.com](mailto:lward@daillyindependent.com) or (606) 326-2661.

# SHARING SECRETS OF Success

Former Raceland resident to speak at Kentucky Christian Writers Conference

By **LEE WARD**  
*The Independent*

**ASHLAND** The Kentucky Christian Writers Conference's keynote speaker will be a writer with connections to the Ashland area.

W. Terry Whalin, author of more than 60 nonfiction books, spent some of his childhood in Raceland. His father, Wallace Whalin, is a graduate of Raceland High school and his grandfather, E.B. Whalin, was principal and superintendent of Raceland schools when he father attended. His mother lives in Frankfort.

"My family roots are deep in the Kentucky soil," he said.

Whalin will speak at the conference, set for June 19 and 20 at Northside Baptist Church in Elizabethtown.

**When did you live in Raceland?**

I was born in the C & O Hospital in Huntington because my dad worked for the railroad. He started as a clerk and worked up to be an executive. I was in Raceland until I was 12; then we moved to Baltimore for two of my junior high high years — then we moved to Peru, Ind., for my high school.

I graduated from Peru High School in 1971 and went to Indiana University and studied journalism and political science. I worked for the student newspaper for two years and had a life-changing experience there. I thought I was going to be a newspaper reporter and studied news editorial as my emphasis, yet out of college I joined a missionary group, Wycliffe Bible Translators, and spent 17 years with them — 10 years in linguistics. I have a certificate in Bible (Multnomah School of the Bible in Portland, Oregon. In 1984, I earned a master's degree in linguistics from the University of Texas at Arlington.

After 10 years away from my writing, I returned and joined the editorial department at Wycliffe. When I left, I was the manager of their editorial department, in charge of the face of the organization in print. I went to Decision magazine as associate editor with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and spent a couple of years there, then spent a number of years free-

The Kentucky Christian Writers Conference will be June 19 and 20 at Northside Baptist Church in Elizabethtown. For more information, visit [kychristianwriters.com](http://kychristianwriters.com)

lancing. I've been a book acquisitions editor for two companies and most recently a literary agent — now a publisher.

**How did you get interested in writing?**

Like many young parents, my mother read many books to me. When I was given a chance to select the book, Mom tells me I almost always chose "McElligot's Pool" by Dr. Seuss. ...In the opening pages, a farmer

laughs at the folly of a young boy named Marco who is actually called a 'fool' because "You'll never catch fish in McElligot's Pool" Then the farmer launches into all the reasons why the boy will not be able to catch any fish.

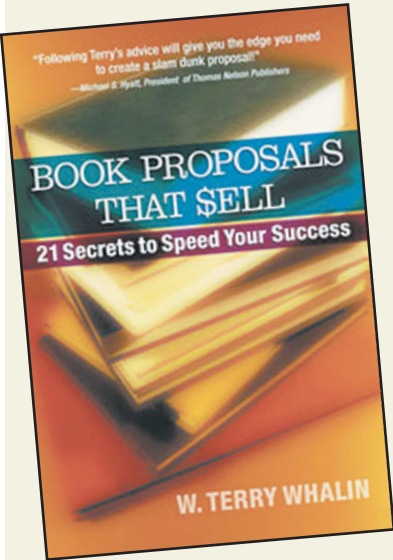
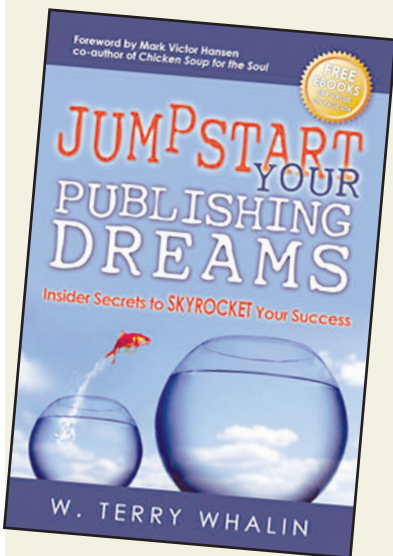
For the rest of the book, Marco spins an imaginative tale about what's really at the bottom of this pool and the wealth of possibilities connected to the sea loaded with fish. He concludes, 'Oh, the sea is so full of a number of fish, If a fellow is patient, he might get his wish! And that's why I think That I'm not such a fool When I sit here and fish In McElligot's Pool!"

From those early days, the dreams and sprit of imagination were stirred in my own life. They set me on a path to publishing which I continue walking today.

**Is your company a Christian publishing company?**

Intermedia is not a Christian company. The various members in the company are Christians, but we

See **WHALIN** /  
Page C2



"Book Proposals that Sell" and "Jumpstart your Publishing Dreams" are two of the more than 60 books Terry Whalin has written. His writing has appeared in more than 50 publications and he's the creator creator and webmaster for Right-Writing.com. For more than 12 years, he was an ECPA Gold Medallion judge in the fiction category. He has written extensively about Christian fiction and reviewed numerous fiction books in publications such as Faithful Reader.com and BookPage. For more than five years, he was an acquisitions editor in the book divisions of David C. Cook and Howard Books. A former literary agent, he now is a publisher at Intermedia Publishing Group. On a regular basis, he writes about the Writing Life. He and his wife, Christine, live in Scottsdale, Ariz. For more information, visit [terrywhalin.com](http://terrywhalin.com), [right-writing.com](http://right-writing.com) and [thewritinglife.com](http://thewritinglife.com).

