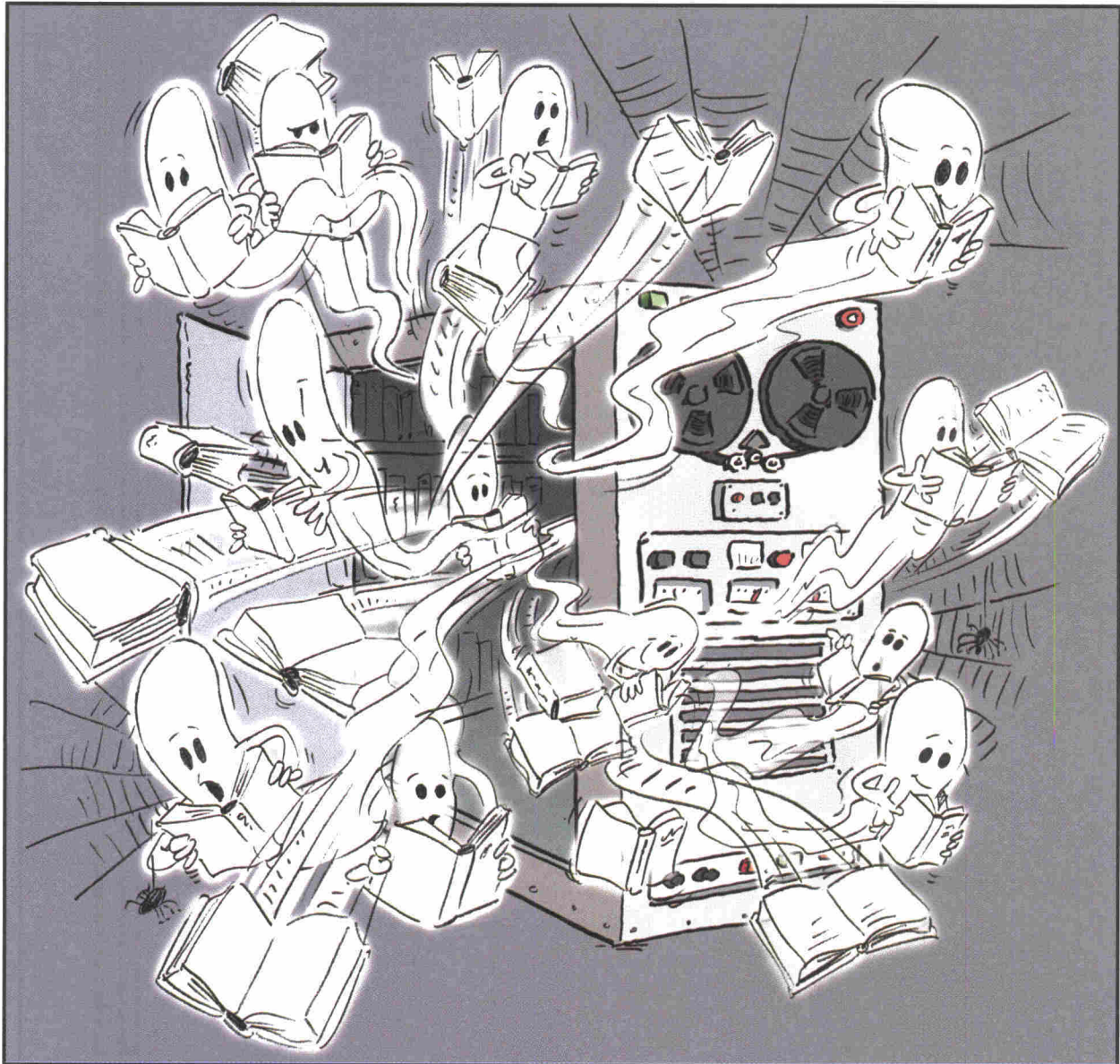


AUTHORS GUILD

Summer 2007 **BULLETIN**



**GHOSTS IN THE MACHINE: When do books go out of print?
Simon & Schuster's Rights Grab; Roy Blount Glimpses the Future**

Dead Celebrities & Free Speech

Literary Blogging

**Plus: Garrison Keillor, Lawrence Wright, Robert Whitaker &
James T. Campbell on Nonfiction Storytelling**

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Readers who enjoyed Cynthia Crossen's article on Max Perkins, "The Wizard Behind the Curtain" (Spring 2007 Bulletin), might also enjoy (do I sound like Amazon.com?) some of the published collections of Perkins's letters to his authors. The most recent is *Max & Marjorie: The Correspondence between Maxwell E. Perkins & Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings*, edited by Rodger L. Tarr (University Press of Florida, 1999). It reveals how Perkins not only improved writing but encouraged his authors in their less productive moments.

Beth Luey
Fairhaven, MA

The Guild encourages members to write to the Bulletin. Letters should be sent to "Letters to the Editor," The Authors Guild, 31 East 32nd Street, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10016. They can also be faxed to (212) 564-5363, or sent via e-mail to staff@authorsguild.org (type "Letters to the Editor" in the subject line). Letters may be edited for length, grammar and clarity.

I just finished reading the Spring issue (including Roy Blount's amusing piece that he expected to be unread). As I approached the end, it struck me that Along Publishers Row gave a disproportionate amount of attention to fiction and poets. I wasn't really sure that this was true, though, until I reached Deaths and Books by Members. I didn't do a detailed study of the latter, but the page 29 obituaries show that a clear majority of those listed wrote nonfiction—and was then followed by two full pages of poetry contests! It seems to me that the Bulletin rarely reflects anything

Continued on page 48

ALONG PUBLISHERS ROW

BY CAMPBELL GEESLIN

"Does literary talent, as well as all that goes with it, run in the family?" That's the question **Charles McGrath** asked in a Sunday Times Magazine article.

"It's not unheard of for the child of an author to try his hand at writing. **Stephen King's** two sons are writers, and so is one of **John Updike's**. **Hilma Wolitzer's** daughter **Meg** is a novelist, as is **Anita Desai's** daughter **Keran** . . . But writers' offspring tend to go into the family business with far less regularity than, say, the children of doctors or lawyers, and it seldom happens that over the long haul, and in the deepening shade, the younger equals or outstrips the elder—the way that **Anthony Trollope**, to take a famous example, bested his mother, **Fanny**." And there are the Dumas, father and son.

McGrath went on to write in praise and awe, perhaps, about the careers and lives of the late **Kingsley Amis** (*Lucky Jim*) and his son **Martin**, a producer of bestsellers in both England and the U.S.

Let's let Martin Amis have the last word. The following is from *Experience*, his autobiography published in 2000. Martin wrote: "What usually happens is that the child is productive for a while, and then the filial rivalrousness plays itself out. I think literary talent is strongly inherited. But literary stamina is not."

NO SINNER: **Henri Troyat**, who died in March at the age of 95, was the author of 105 books. The Russian-

born French writer won the Prix Goncourt when he was 27 years old. The obituary in *Le Figaro* said, "the favorite writer of the French is dead."

Troyat once told how he had acquired his style: "I would read a paragraph of **Flaubert** out loud and rewrite it from memory. Then, by comparing my version with the original, I would try to understand why what I had written was an affront to what I had read."

Troyat wrote popular biographies of **Flaubert**, **Maupassant**, **Verlaine**, **Baudelaire**, **Alexandre Dumas**, **Zola** and **Balzac**. He also tackled **Tolstoy**, **Pushkin**, **Gogol**, **Chekhov** and **Boris Pasternak**. Many of his books were translated into English and published in the U.S.

A fellow member of the Academie Francaise, **Maurice Droun**, was quoted in *The New York Times*: "He wrote a simple and clear language, a language that lasts, eternal French."

"A day without writing made him feel like a sinner. For a long time he wrote standing up. The carpet in front of his desk was full of holes."

FINALLY: After weeks of hype and big book sales, **Oprah Winfrey's** interview with **Cormac McCarthy** finally appeared. It shared an hour on TV with **Bono** admiring photos of Oprah on a cover of *Vanity Fair* and

Continued on page 30