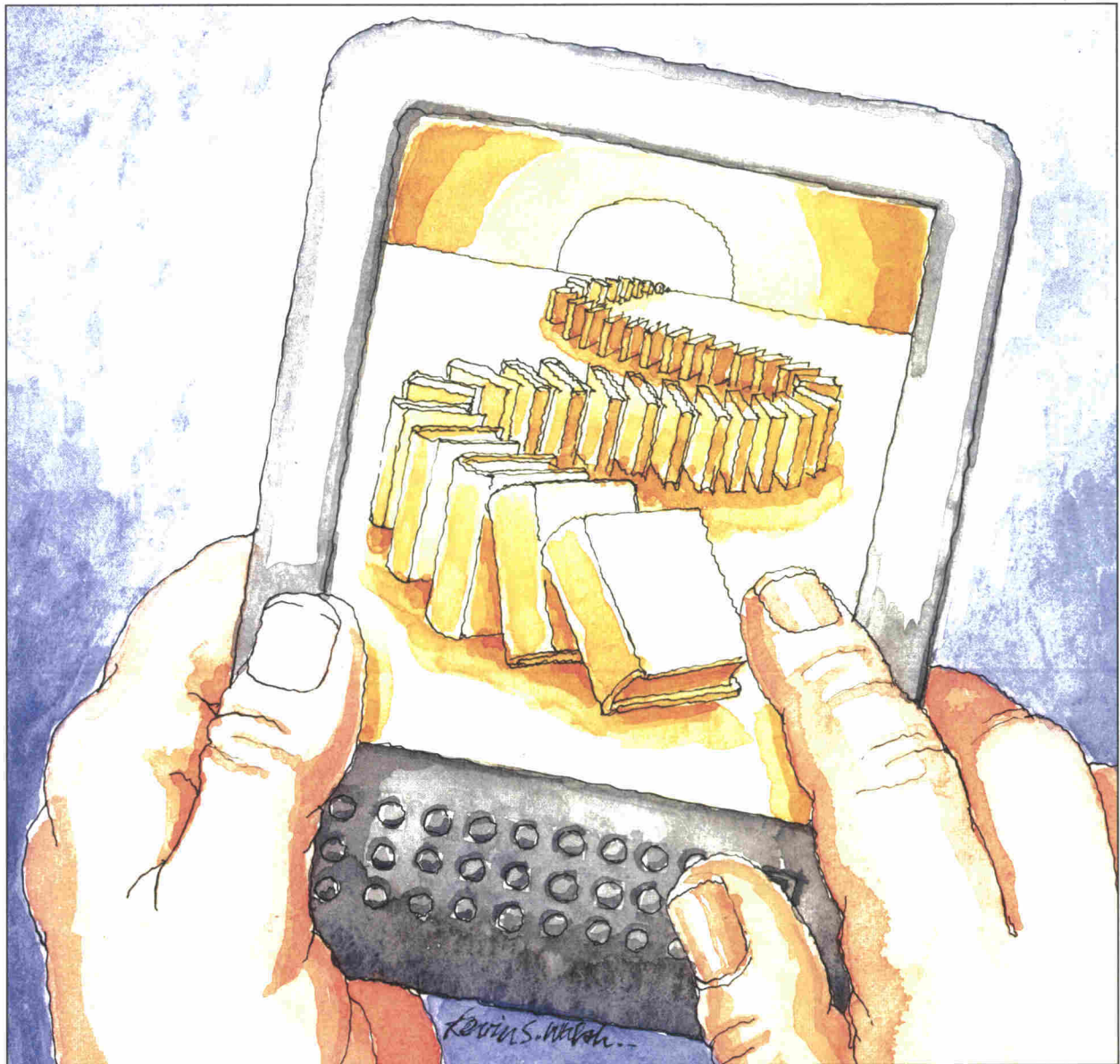


AUTHORS GUILD

Summer 2011 **BULLETIN**



Tipping Point?

Big Publisher E-Book Sales Surge Past Hardcovers

Scott Turow: Why We Sued HathiTrust and Five Universities

Authors Guild Honors Fresh Air's Terry Gross

Symposium: The Wild World of Multimedia Rights

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I read Scott Turow's Letter from the President in the Spring *Bulletin* with great interest. While I agree with everything he said, I also believe the "tipping" point is not related to the copyright issue per se, but to the digital format itself. The record industry died because of the MP3 format. Given the opportunity to get something for free, a great many people will grab it, and in the case of the MP3, enough did so to compromise an entire industry. It was MP3 file-sharing that killed the record business, not the lack of copyright enforcement, although weak enforcement certainly hastened its demise. The problem was simply too big and too overwhelming for a few file-sharing lawsuits to contain.

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 have always viewed the e-book with great trepidation for this very reason. How long will working professionals like Stephen King—or you—continue to work hard to produce the works we all love when the publishing industry starts hemorrhaging money the way the record industry did? Musicians at least can go out on tour and *perform* their music for an adoring public. Is anyone going to pay an author to read his or her entire book to them? I doubt that.

Brand name authors might be able to go out on their own after the publishing industry implodes, because their names and

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ALONG PUBLISHERS ROW

BY CAMPBELL GEESLIN

"There is a Wild West quality to the book business these days," wrote **Julie Bosman** in her *New York Times* coverage of BookExpo, the annual publishing trade show in Manhattan at the end of May.

"E-books have exploded, surpassing print sales for some new releases. The struggle for many brick-and-mortar bookstores has deepened as their customers began downloading books onto their e-readers from home rather than heading to stores."

While e-book sales are impressive, especially in romance, mysteries and thrillers, they are not yet much in children books, reference books and many nonfiction categories.

Included in the coverage of the trade show was the news that Amazon had hired **Laurence J. Kirshbaum** to head its new imprint of general-interest titles. Amazon will bring out thriller author **Barry Eisler's** next novel. He abandoned a six-figure contract with a publisher to go with Amazon.

But **Steve Bercu**, owner of BookPeople, a store in Austin, said that 2010 had been its best year ever. He joked that people in Texas "don't even know e-books are happening."

THE E-SALES BUMP: In March, the Association of American Publishers reported that e-book sales jumped 115.8 percent in early 2011. In January, rev-

enues from e-book sales were ahead of both adult hardcovers and mass market paperback sales.

SUMMER FARE: **Janet Maslin** of *The New York Times* did her annual round-up of books for summer reading. She wrote, "The beach book has undergone a makeover for 2011. As the season's traditional big names and story lines run out of gas, new variations on old formulas have emerged. . . ."

"Even if you wanted retreads of the same old stories, they would be hard to find. Chick lit? SO over. Police procedurals? Done to death. Sweet little cottages on Nantucket? They need renovating. . . . It's time to find new favorites."

ADULTS ONLY? **C. W. Smith** recently retired from teaching creative writing at Southern Methodist University. His latest novel, *Steplings*, was published in June. PW reported that he and his publicist **June Taylor** had an exchange about a subject that has been mentioned in this column: When is a novel about kids so adult in subject matter that it's unfit for teens to read?

Smith wrote to Taylor, "the two main characters [in *Steplings*] are a 17-year-old boy and his 11-year-old

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