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Jay Neugeboren: A Writer’s Diagnosis
Roy Blount’s Good Fortune
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

It’s a great pleasure to read Roy Blount Jr.’s letter in each issue, and hear it in my head in his voice. It’s an even greater pleasure to offer two amplifications to what he wrote in [From the President, Winter 2008]. Roy was searching for a term for “late, slow, wary adopter, or adapter.” I have it: early rejector.

My wife, a technology widow, has rarely seen a new fob or gee-gaw about which she hasn’t asked, “And what good is it?” She’s right, of course; I suggested she write a column complementary to my own work called The Early Rejector. She rejected that.

Roy notes that an out-of-copyright work cost “$1.80.” Or, rather, because he learned to type on a typewriter, he wrote “$” then a lowercase L, then “.80.” This made me unutterably happy. I was trained as a typesetter at the age of 16 in 1984, not appreciating that my profession would be mostly obsolete about six years later. Seeing an errant L instead of a 1 reminds me of the good old days. (I once noted via e-mail to Smithsonian magazine after a redesign of theirs that it bothered me that they were using both fake italic—artificially slanted letters—and true, drawn italic in the same issue. I said I suspect few people noticed. Months later, I received a brief and lovely piece of snail mail on letterhead thanking me—apparently some people in the organization thought no one did notice, and I’d provided contrary evidence.)

The Kindle is a deeply flawed device because it’s not book-ish enough. I spent a couple weeks with it, reviewed it for The Seattle Times, and was glad to return it. Its successor (a Kindle 2.0 or something from another firm) will likely feel much more book-y, and leave Roy with a warmer feeling. But I do hope he rejects it, too.

Glenn Fleishman
Seattle, WA

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ALONG PUBLISHERS ROW

BY CAMPBELL GEESLIN

Far-flung readers of this magazine comment that that what they like best in this column are items that tell them what is happening in New York. The following is how Charles McGrath, former editor of The New York Times Book Review, described the current literary scene: “the horde of struggling, would-be writers . . . hang on because every now and then a first-timer—a Colson Whitehead, a Zadie Smith, a Gary Shteyngart—hits the jackpot and makes the game seem worth staying in for just a little longer. You can spot them in coffee shops in Brooklyn and the West Village, clicking away on their laptops—when they’re not wasting time on Gawker, that is. You also see them at readings at Housing Works, KGB Bar and the Half King, dressed in black, leaning forward intently and sometimes venturing to ask a probing question. They idolize Lethem, Chabon, Eggers. They study The New Yorker religiously so that they can complain about how predictable the fiction is.” One of them is Charles Bock. His first novel, Beautiful Children, was published in January, and the occasion was greeted with a major article about him in the Times’ Sunday Magazine. This was followed by a review on page 1 of the Times’ Book Review, followed shortly by a Janet Maslin daily review.

DEAR SIRS: P. G. Wodehouse observed: “Every author really wants to have letters printed in the papers. Unable to make the grade, he drops down a rung of the ladder and writes novels.”

VIA CELL PHONE: Are the Japanese leading the way in the death of the novel as we know it? Of the 10 top-selling books in Japan last year, five were written as cell phone novels. Most of these are love story serials told in short sentences with little plotting or character development.

While she was a high school senior, Rin (cell phone writers use only one name) tapped out a novel on her cell phone. Rin’s If You was first a kind of serial (back

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THE AUTHORS GUILD BULLETIN

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About the Cover
Joe Shuster’s first Superman cover,
Action Comics #1, appeared in June 1938.
From the President

BY ROY BLOUNT JR.

I don't want to come off as whining. I feel extremely fortunate to have kept my head above water as an author all these years. (My first book came out in 1847, and sold exactly that many copies. Thoreau gave it a blurb, but due to an unfortunate typesetting mixup, his endorsement—"It is excellent, we must all allow"—wound up in the middle of the second paragraph of his essay on civil disobedience, and here's what appeared on my dust jacket: "I demand . . . at once a better government"—H. D. Thourea" [sic]. Hey, things happen.)

My question is, why is it necessary that authors be so fortunate? Do you ever hear anybody say that he or she feels extremely fortunate to have managed to make a living as a lawyer? As a realtor? As an acrobat, even?

I'll tell you why we have to be so fortunate. Because there are so many ways that people can avoid paying us. I believe it was Thoreau himself who said, "Monetize, monetize," but I think he was talking about pencils. For steady income, he had his father's pencil factory (the modern equivalent, I suppose, would be Microsoft) to fall back on.

You know what happened as I was signing books—had the privilege to be signing them, I mean—at the Southern Book Festival in Nashville last fall? A man came through the line carrying not the new book I was there to promote but, instead, a dilapidated copy of my first one, which in fact appeared in 1974. (I was just speaking emotional truth, above—in 1847 I was still in high school, dreaming of my future as a literary colossus, which now, so many years later, I still have to look up to see how many l's there are in it. The only things that went wrong with the publishing of my first book were . . . But don't get me started. In fact, a fitting slogan for the publishing campaign behind my debut might have been, "Don't Get Him Started!")

And of course this customer of mine, at the Southern Book Festival, told me proudly how he had managed to acquire this book for 75 cents. All right, fine. It would have been a nice gesture on his part to offer me the change he had got back from a dollar, but I would have declined to accept that anyway, probably.

I signed the musty volume for him, with an inscription adapted from an old Irish saying, "May the ground rise up to meet your face."

No, I didn't. He would not do the deal if it involved a personal inscription, because he had learned, "the hard way" (here he gave me a narrow look), that any additional authorial words would decrease the book's potential value as a collector's item.

OK. I gave him name and date only.

Then he lingered. "You notice," he said, "it doesn't have a cover. I wonder if you have an extra cover?"

Regrettably, no, I said. Usually I carry a sheaf of fresh 34-year-old jackets with which to spiff up books of mine that a generous patron has rescued from . . .

Well, there I go. Instead of laying out for you all the ways that the Authors Guild is fighting against all the forces that conspire to shortchange authors (see throughout this Bulletin), I have, indeed, whined.

Well. Don't you find that a good whine gets better with age? Thoreau didn't think so: "I would fain keep sober always . . . I believe that water is the only drink for a wise man; wine is not so noble a liquor . . . Of all ebriosity, who does not prefer to be intoxicated by the air he breathes?"

So he saved money that way. And he had no children to send through college—according to Wikipedia, he "wore a neck-beard for many years, which he insisted many women found attractive. However, Louisa May Alcott reportedly mentioned to Ralph Waldo Emerson that Thoreau's facial hair 'will most assuredly deflect amorous advances and preserve the man's virtue in perpetuity.'"

Neck-beard! There's a word.

As authors, we must keep steeling ourselves against the extent to which we are in this work not for the money, but for the words. Who would sit all day straining to extrude sentences through his or her fingertips who did not have a serious problem with words?

Ebriosity!

Do you ever hear anybody say he or she feels extremely fortunate to have managed to make a living as a realtor?
Opening Lines

Writing Home

BY NICHOLAS WEINSTOCK

It comes from fellow writers, writing professors, fast-talking agents and slow-talking mentors of all kinds: the stern and savvy mandate to write what you know. For some authors, this is a psychological struggle; for others, a canny exercise in self-branding. And for some, it’s an unconscious habit that has to be pointed out to them before they can turn it into a book.

Upon entering Columbia University’s MFA program, Kelly McMasters, 31, instinctively started with what—and where—she knew. “I remember the first day of the first workshop,” she says. “I had never been in a writing workshop before, coming from a blue-collar background: I had to stand there in the hallway that first day and kind of get my courage up and talk myself into it. Then when they first asked for volunteers, my hand shot up; and I came back a few days later, and had proudly written an essay about my town. And everyone else had come in with Chapter One of their novels. And I just thought: ‘Oh, God—what have I done?’”

Nonetheless, McMasters continued to mine the vein. By her second year, she had taken, by her estimation, “every opportunity in every class” to write about Shirley, her economically depressed but nostalgically rich hometown on Long Island, many of whose residents were tragically affected by the toxicity of a local atomic research laboratory. Finally Richard Locke, professor of writing at Columbia and former editor at Simon & Schuster and The New York Times Book Review, observed out loud what McMasters hadn’t even in private. “Richard sat me down and said, ‘You realize that you’re writing around something. You should take a hard look at whether it’s a book you’re working on,’” she recalls. “And that seemed extremely intimidating to me: like the big leagues. It seemed a really big jump to go from writing essays to... the B word.”

Yet McMasters had already made several big jumps: jumps that, initially, took her away from her small town origins as fast as she could go. Born in Shirley, she made her way through the local school system and various financial aid programs to Vassar College, then worked as a legal assistant at a corporate law firm in New York City—lured largely by the dress code. “I thought that in order to be a success, you have to wear a suit to work,” she admits. “That’s the thing nobody did in Shirley—wear a suit—so it seemed to me that that had to be the key.” But when her colleagues all started applying to law school, she balked: “It just hits me: ‘Oh my God, I don’t want to do that. So what do I do?’”

Although she’d won a high school scholarship for writing, she didn’t see writing as a financially viable career. She stumbled into an opportunity to join a dot-com venture that, like others in the late ’90s, went bust. Then she accepted the invitation of one of her coworkers to join him at PC Magazine as an assistant editor—where, despite her near-total lack of expertise in computer technology, she got to work on the writing of others; and, before long, her own.

“I would put through these checks to pay our freelance writers,” she recalls, “and it was the first time I thought: ‘Hey, I could pay my rent with what these invoices are coming out to every month.’ So she did. She left the magazine and began freelance writing for Time Out New York, The Village Voice, and other publications that—she admits—“didn’t pay much.” She took writing classes in the continuing education program at NYU and elsewhere and began writing essays. She secured enough financial aid to enter the MFA pro-

“I came back [to writing class] and had proudly written an essay about my town. Every one else had written Chapter One of their novel. And I thought, ‘Oh, God—what have I done?’”

—Kelly McMasters
gram at Columbia, got a bartending job, and took temp jobs during the summer to support her studies and her work on what was steadily becoming a book about Shirley, its charms and warm families as well as its nuclear history. Shortly after graduating from Columbia in 2005—in a whirlwind that included her marriage to a fellow artist, a painter; their purchase of a fixer-upper farmhouse in Pennsylvania; and her new husband’s heart attack, which rendered her a nurse for the better part of a year—she landed a contract from PublicAffairs Books for Welcome to Shirley: A Memoir from an Atomic Town.

But along with the thrill of publication this past April, and the theoretical validation of write what you know, have come the mixed feelings of the memoirist. McMasters admits: “It’s fun to read at KGB”—the Manhattan literary bar where she helps run a weekly series of author readings—“but where I’m really excited to go and read is at the local public library in Shirley, where I used to work when I was a kid. I want to read to the kind of kids who were me when I went to that library. And I’m not sure that’s going to happen.” Shirley has been in the news over the past year for its economic woes as well as local sex offenders the government relocated to the town thanks to its low-rent real estate; given such negative publicity, as well as McMasters’s candid and well-researched exploration of the town’s nuclear contamination, she and her book may be less than welcome.

“The director of the local library finally called me the other day,” she recounts, “and said that they are all reading the book and are going to have a conference to decide whether having me would be a positive experience for the town.” Having worked so hard to grow, creatively and economically, beyond her hometown, McMasters’s singular ambition as a published author remains to return. “I know that, as a sales locale, Shirley is pretty low on my publisher’s radar,” she considers. “I know that those people are not going to buy many books; not hardcover, anyway. But I wrote the book because I love that place; that’s where this all started. I can only trust in the fact that I’ve written a love letter to my hometown—and hope to go back.”

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For the Record:

Amazon Squeezes Publishing’s Long Tail

Adapted from the text of an e-mail sent to members of the Authors Guild on April 4, 2008.

In late March, Amazon announced that it would require that all books sold by the company that are produced through on-demand means be printed by BookSurge, their in-house on-demand printer/publisher. Amazon pitched this as a customer service matter, a way to more speedily deliver print-on-demand books and allow for the bundling of such books with other items purchased at the same time from Amazon. It also put a bit of an environmental spin on the move, claiming that less fuel is used when all items are shipped directly from Amazon. (This is unlikely, but that’s another story.)

We, and many others, think something else is afoot. Ingram Industries’ Lightning Source is currently the dominant printer for on-demand titles, and it appears to be quite efficient at the task. Lightning ships on-demand titles shortly after they are ordered—through Amazon—directly to the customer. It’s a nice business for Ingram, since it gets a percentage of the sales and a printing fee for every on-demand book that’s shipped. Amazon would be foolish not to covet that business.

What’s the rub? Once Amazon owns the supply chain, it has effective control of much of the “long tail” of publishing—the enormous number of titles that sell in low volumes but that, in aggregate, make a lot of money for the aggregator. Since Amazon has a firm grip on the retailing of these books (it’s not economic for physical bookstores to stock many of these titles), owning the supply chain would allow it to easily increase its profit margins: It need only insist on buying at a deeper discount—or it can choose to charge more for its printing of the books—to increase its profits. Most publishers could do little but grumble and comply.

We suspect this maneuver by Amazon is far more about profit margin than it is about customer service or fossil fuels. The potential big losers (other than Ingram) if Amazon does impose greater discounts on the industry, are authors—since many are paid for their on-demand sales based on the publisher’s gross revenues—and publishers.

We’re reviewing the antitrust and other legal implications of Amazon’s bold move. If you have any information on this matter that you think could be helpful to us, please call us at (212) 563-5904 and ask for the Legal Service Department, or send an e-mail to staff@authorsguild.org.
Writing For My Life

BY JAY NEUGEBOREN

In February 1957, a few months before my 19th birthday, I was diagnosed with Hodgkin’s disease. The malignancy, in my neck, was surgically removed, as were adjacent glands, and I was irradiated on both sides of my neck. In the half-century since, I’ve never had a recurrence.

Chance, Pasteur famously wrote, favors the prepared mind. When it comes to medical survival, it would also seem to favor those whom it chooses to favor.

At 19, my life was saved because, rarely sick, I became concerned about some swollen glands that appeared during an ordinary winter cold and didn’t go away when the cold did. Visiting on a Sunday afternoon with a cousin who was doing her medical residency, I asked her if she’d take a look at my throat. She looked at my throat, palpated my neck, and suggested that I get things checked out at my college health service. The next day, I went to the Columbia College health clinic, which was housed at St. Luke’s Hospital, where a young resident felt my glands, then called in another doctor. This doctor—a tall, elderly man with white hair and a neatly trimmed straw-colored mustache—felt my glands, nodded once, and told me to make an appointment to come in to the hospital at the end of the week for a biopsy.

In 1957, I didn’t know what a “biopsy” was (I figured it was some kind of test for an infection connected to swollen glands) and so I was a bit taken aback when, after telling my mother and father that I’d be staying overnight at St. Luke’s Hospital on Friday for a biopsy, they cloistered themselves in their bedroom, where I heard my mother, who was a registered nurse, weeping hystically while my father kept trying to calm her down. When my mother emerged from the bedroom, she told me that everything was going to be all right—I shouldn’t mind her tears, she’d had a hard day at the hospital—and that there was no reason for me to have the biopsy done at Columbia. Instead, she would make some calls to doctors she knew and worked with in Brooklyn.

She did, and two weeks later, a biopsy was performed at a Brooklyn hospital, and the surgeon, after opening my neck and seeing the glands, removed all that he could find—“stripped” them, in my mother’s words. When the results of the biopsy came through 10 days later, and I asked my mother what the report said, she told me that the excised lymph nodes had turned out to be “completely benign” and, again, that there was nothing to worry about. It was not until I had occasion to review my medical records 20 years later that I discovered, definitively, that two pathologists (one was Sidney Farber) had, in 1957, confirmed the diagnosis of Hodgkin’s disease.

On February 12, 1999, 42 years after the biopsy, and a few months before my 61st birthday, despite being physically fit (swimming a mile a day, playing full court basketball with teenagers), and having no conventional symptoms or risk factors (no chest pain, nausea, dizziness; I’d never smoked; I had normal blood pressure and cholesterol scores, and no positive family history of heart disease), and despite not having had a heart attack, an angiogram revealed that my coronary arteries were more than 98 percent blocked.

I’d been experiencing some occasional shortness of breath while swimming (but if, while swimming my daily mile, I rested for 30 seconds or so, I could complete the mile), and some intermittent burning sensations between my shoulder blades (which I figured was “swimmer’s shoulder”). Still, I was concerned—I just didn’t feel right—and I called my family doctor. His nurse, to whom I reported my symptoms, noted that I hadn’t been in for a check up in two and a half years, and she scheduled me for an exam. I went three weeks later, and given that I was 60 years old and had never had a stress test (or seen a cardiologist), my doctor recommended I make an appointment with a cardiologist. I went for the stress test/exam a week or two later, and although neither my family doctor nor the cardiologist saw any urgency in my situation, I did.

And so I telephoned several childhood friends who
were physicians, reported what was happening and how I was feeling, and when the cardiologist, after an electrocardiogram and an echocardiogram, diagnosed a virus of the heart muscle, one of my doctor friends, Rich Helfant, with whom I’d gone to Hebrew school and high school, shouted into the phone from 3,000 miles away (he was in Palos Verdes, Calif., I was in Northampton, Mass.)—“It’s not viral, goddammit! I want you in the hospital as soon as possible.”

Eighteen months later, visiting with this friend, and talking with him about his having gotten the diagnosis right by phone from across the country, he smiled. “Let’s face it,” he said. “You and I wouldn’t be sitting here today and talking if you hadn’t gone to high school with the right guys.”

We know many things—the percentages of those who survive cancer and heart attacks, and from which cancers and what kinds of heart attacks, and for how long, and how we can successfully treat some cancers and most kinds of coronary artery disease—but there remain many things we don’t know, and what we often overlook in our desire for answers and for “scientific” truths, are, simply, the facts of luck and of mystery. Why do some people who are in great shape and follow all the recommended rules (e.g., Jim Fixx [the runner]) suddenly keel over in the prime of life, while others, who seem to follow none of them (e.g., Winston Churchill), live full lives into advanced age?

And there’s this too: Given my mother’s often histrionic penchant for dwelling on illness, and my parallel penchant, when I was growing up, never to allow that anything was wrong with me, what prompted me on that Sunday afternoon, with my mother nearby, to ask a cousin to check out what might, on another day, have seemed the ordinary aftermath of an ordinary cold? And why did I, 42 years later, despite the lack of urgency expressed by doctors who physically examined me, persist in pursuing, with friends, what might, at another time, have seemed groundless anxieties?

When I was told at 19 that I didn’t have cancer, part of me believed this was so. But if there was no cancer, why was I being radiated? Believing, then, in another part of me that I was going to die within a year, and, romantic soul that I was, wanting to leave something behind, I decided to write a novel. (The novel, 200 pages long and satiric in intent, told the story of a young man who, convinced he is going to die within a year, feels compelled to deliver a message of hope to the world; through a series of improbable events he becomes a hero, dispensing homilies far and wide. At novel’s end, the rumor of his death has become nonexistent.)

At 20, I wrote a second novel, and by the time the magic five-year period arrived when, supposedly, I didn’t have to worry about cancer anymore, I’d completed another three (unpublished) novels. It was as if I somehow believed that as long as I kept making up stories, I could stay alive.

So, grateful for the gift of life given back to me at least three times (doctors, operating on me for a ruptured appendix when I was two and a half, lost my vital signs for 30 seconds), and without underestimating the supreme importance of surgical skill, biological luck, and the good fortune to have had access to doctors who knew me and listened to me, I sometimes think that the element of chance that favored me—that, against all odds, gave me life and kept me going—was enhanced, at least in part, by my desire, born 50 years ago, to spend my working hours imagining lives different from the one I was actually living.

For even while I may occasionally receive, from within, physical signals of alarm unheard and unseen by others, when I sit down to write fiction—to make things up—I also see worlds nobody has seen: worlds of possibility, where anything, for good or for ill, and against predictability, might occur. ♦
Man of Steal?
Truth, Justice and a Copyright Whodunit

BY JONATHAN LAST

You may not know Jerome Siegel, but you know his work. In 1933, Siegel and his high school buddy Joseph Shuster created Superman. In his first incarnation, Superman was a bald-headed, Depression-era villain bent on world domination. But Siegel and Shuster tinkered with the character until Supes became the hero we know and love: He came from an alien planet, had great strength and speed, was impervious to bullets, could leap a building in a single bound, and was known to the outside world as mild-mannered reporter Clark Kent.

Siegel and Shuster shopped their Superman comics to a number of publishers until Detective Comics purchased the strip, and the future rights to Superman (“to have and hold forever”), in March 1938 for $130. On April 18, 1938, Detective Comics published Action Comics No. 1—which pictured Superman on the cover, hoisting a car above his head—and changed the comic book industry forever.

The publisher and its succeeding corporate parents (it’s now owned by Time Warner) have made a vast fortune from Superman, with only small, grudging payments to the character’s creators over the years. It’s a classic case of big business bullying individual creators.

But on March 26, a California district court awarded a share of Superman’s intellectual property rights back to Siegel’s heirs, ruling the estate could claim a share in the profit. The story of how the heirs triumphed is a tribute to truth, justice and the American way.

The 1909 Copyright Act granted a copyright lasting 28 years from the date of first publication, with the option for renewal, also lasting 28 years. The idea behind the two tiers was that the value of intellectual property is not always immediately apparent. The renewal period was intended to let creators reap a truer value of their work after 28 years: If they sold the first rights to their work to another party, but the work increased in value, after 28 years the creators could receive a second copyright, which they could sell at a truer price. It’s what lawyers call a second bite at the apple.

It was a good system, but the Supreme Court stepped in and changed it. In the 1943 case Fred Fisher Music Co. v. M. Witmark & Sons, the Supreme Court decided that creators could sell both the initial rights and the renewal rights from the outset. As a result of that ruling, corporations demanded both sets of copyrights from creators. That negated the whole purpose of renewal as an instrument of fairness.

So in 1976, Congress tried to clean up the mess by passing a new Copyright Act. The 1976 version increased the length of both the initial and renewal copyrights by 19 years. Most important, it created a mechanism that would allow—after a passage of time—creators to terminate a grant of rights they had previously made.

This is what Jerome Siegel’s heirs had been trying to do: terminate the exclusive rights he had given Detective Comics back in 1938, allowing them to share

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(Superman’s copyright with Time Warner—thus entitling them to a share of the profit Supes has made since 1999 and going forward.

Termination is a complicated process. It begins with the creators’ filing a “notice of termination,” where they pick the date in the past that they designate as the moment of creation. Siegel’s heirs chose April 16, 1938, two days before Action Comics No. 1 was published. Their case looked solid, except for one gigantic problem.

Time Warner dug up two ads for Action Comics No. 1, which had run in other comic books before April 16, 1938. The ads featured a miniature black-and-white version of the famous Action Comics cover with Superman and the car. They were published on April 5 and April 10, 1938. Time Warner argued that the appearance of Superman in the ads before the date given on the termination notice meant that the rights the company held superseded the rights created on the date specified by Siegel’s family. It’s a hypertechnical mistake, but one Time Warner insisted was “fatal” to the termination claim.

Judge Stephen Larson of the Central District of California wrote a decision that reads like an episode from The Perils of Pauline. Page after page, he explains that Time Warner is correct! The two earlier ads could give it protection from the Siegel heirs’ attempt at termination! The court was prepared to grant Time Warner sole copyright to everything in those ads. But then Larson pulls off an amazing twist!

“The court begins by observing what is not depicted in the announcements,” Larson wrote (emphasis in the original). No mention of the character’s name or origins! No description of any of Superman’s powers (except for his strength, which is obvious because he’s holding a car above his head)! This leaves Time Warner with only what is pictured in the ads. And that picture was in black and white and quite tiny. Superman’s distinctive blue-and-red costume? Nowhere. He’s so minuscule, you can’t even make out the “S” on his chest.

Larson’s exciting conclusion? Time Warner may continue to exploit the image of a person with extraordinary strength who wears a black-and-white leotard and cape.”

But as for Superman—or at least the Superman we know from Action Comics No. 1—Time Warner now has to share him with Jerome Siegel’s heirs.

As in many suspense stories, there are lots of loose ends. The decision may be appealed. How much Siegel’s family is owed will be subject to litigation. And co-creator Joseph Shuster’s estate won’t have the chance to try to get his rights back until 2013.

But for now, Judge Larson’s decision is enough. It makes you believe a man can fly.

(Postscript for lawyers: I’ve elided certain other points of contention in the case—notably, the fights over collateral estoppel and the nature of work for hire—for brevity’s sake. Apologies; I throw myself on the mercy of the court.)

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**Acclaimed journalist and former Authors League President John Hersey honored with U.S. postage stamp**

War correspondent and novelist John Hersey (1914–1993) has been commemorated on a postage stamp in the second American Journalists series. Hersey, the author of Hiroshima, A Bell for Adano, The Algiers Motel Incident and The Wall, was a fierce advocate of free expression and fair contracts for writers, and spent decades working on behalf of authors with the Authors League of America and its affiliates. After joining the Authors League of America Council in 1946, he served first as its Vice President (1948–1954), then as President (1975–1980). He was also a member of the Authors Guild Council and The Dramatists Guild and served on the Authors League Fund Board of Directors.
William F. Buckley and His Catalogue

BY STUART W. LITTLE

Ealy one Sunday morning in the spring of 1983, I was startled to receive a telephone call from William F. Buckley Jr. I was a friend of the Buckley family and knew Bill, but his call to me was in my then capacity as editor of the Authors Guild Bulletin. He had an idea that he wanted me to propose to Guild authorities.

To a still sleepy recipient, he proceeded to outline a plan to reclaim out-of-print books, hoping that the Guild might embrace it. A little early in the morning for such talk, my wife felt. The infinite good manners of the Buckley family are well known, and Bill later apologized to my complaining wife for the early call.

Buckley envisioned a catalogue of out-of-print books available directly from authors. The plan: At the time a publisher declared an author’s book out of print and about to be remaindered, the author would buy a supply at the very low remainder price and store the books at home in garage or basement. Those books could then be gathered in a catalogue of such books, listing the author’s price, describing the book, and advising how it could be obtained from the author. He hoped the Guild would then undertake the printing and distribution of the catalogue to bookstores, libraries and the book-buying public.

While welcoming the idea, the Guild Council decided not to undertake it. They would, however, provide us with their indispensable mailing list of author members, then numbering about 6,000. Undeterred by the Guild’s reluctance, Bill thereupon decided to step into a new role, that of publisher.

“Let’s do it ourselves,” Bill said exuberantly. “There is nothing so satisfactory as making a profit in an eleemosynary pursuit.”

A lawyer friend of Bill’s in Chinatown drew up the incorporation papers for the Buckley-Little Book Catalogue Co., Inc. over chopsticks. “Why Robin W. W. Wu?” Buckley asked. “He once worked in the library of National Review and I expect we can get family rates.”

I found office space in the corner of a sixth-floor loft in the Cable Building at Broadway and Houston Street, four blocks from where I lived. My landlady was an attractive Italian blouse maker, who seemed more suited to be the model for a blouse than the cutter. Her long cutting table was perfect for laying out large catalogue mailings.

Bill supplied a new IBM computer, I found an NYU student, Melanie Merians, to run it, and we were almost ready. Bill sat down and rolled out a business plan, irregularly typed, on a single long sheet of paper, not quite as long as Jack Kerouac’s On the Road. Sitting bolt upright at the keyboard, Bill was a rapid touch typist, but I often had to call on the remarkable Frances Bronson, practically housemother to the overloaded National Review editor, columnist, novelist, debate interlocutor, lecturer, and international sailor, to decipher a sentence.

Almost apologetically, Bill defended putting his name first in the company title (The Buckley-Little Book Catalogue Co., Inc.), arguing that the reverse order wouldn’t work. And he was equally polite about the ownership split—51 percent for Buckley, 49 for Little. He had the idea and was providing the money. I would do the work.

Continued on page 38
CENSORSHIP WATCH

Smut in Indiana. Indiana booksellers are concerned about a new law that will require businesses selling sexually explicit materials to register with the state and pay a $250 fee. Retailers that don’t properly register could be subject to fines. But one big obstacle to compliance could be whether the booksellers will be able to figure out whether their inventory is the kind targeted by the legislation. Critics of the law say its scope is overbroad. As defined by the statute, relevant content is sexually explicit material which “appeals to the prurient interest in sex of minors,” and “lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value for minors.” At least one bookstore owner points out that the language of the law could be wide enough to cover both coming-of-age novels and instructive books on health and human sexuality. Potentially, a store selling the kind of classics that can be found in any high school library would have to declare itself in the same category as businesses that exclusively and primarily sell pornographic DVDs, magazines and books. An Indiana government spokesman rejected criticism of the law, explaining that it applies only to new or relocating businesses, or those that begin selling the relevant materials after the July 1 effective date. But it could mean that even established bookstores would have to continually reassess their obligation to register with each new shipment of books. The American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression announced plans to explore avenues to repeal the law, including contacting the Media Coalition, a First Amendment advocacy group.

Suicide in Okinawa. Novelist Kenzaburo Oe, winner of the 1994 Nobel Prize, recently won a libel suit brought against him in 2005 over an essay written almost 40 years ago. The claimants, a retired Japanese military officer, now 91, who served as a garrison commander on Zamamijima Island during the battle of Okinawa, and the younger brother of a deceased commander who served on nearby Tokashikijima Island, wanted the court to ban Oe’s 1970 book of essays, Okinawa Notes, because of its exploration of the controversial subject of whether the Japanese army encouraged or coerced Okinawans to commit suicide toward the end of World War II, when it was becoming apparent that American troops would prevail. Oe had testified in court that he believed mass suicides during the 1945 Battle of Okinawa were a result of military orders. The plaintiffs said that neither officer named gave such orders. The lawsuit is part of a long campaign in Japan mounted by conservatives who seek to discredit evidence of government-ordered suicides in Okinawa. On the basis of evidence from survivors and their relatives, historians generally believe that hundreds of Okinawans did comply with the suggestion that they kill themselves rather than surrender. Last September, more than 100,000 people demonstrated to protest a move by the Japanese government to remove references to the military’s involvement in the suicides from school textbooks. The protesters were successful in reinstating the stripped material. The judge deciding the case against Oe didn’t rule on whether the military ordered the deaths in Okinawa, but he did agree that the army was “deeply involved” in the suicides.

Smoke in Illinois. This past February, the student staff of the Naperville Central High School paper, the Central Times, published an issue featuring several articles about drug use, specifically marijuana, and, guess what? The administration didn’t like it. One article was an anonymous first-person take on using and dealing. Another was a column opposing drug use. A third was a general overview piece that quoted health statistics and pot smokers. The principal of the Illinois school expressed concern that the stories could be viewed as glorifying drugs. The staff adviser, an English and journalism teacher, characterized the principal as a Milqueofo who doesn’t know “squat” about the First Amendment and newspapers. The principal said he thought the staff adviser should take more of a supervisory role over the articles written by the students. The adviser said it was her job to guide the students, not censor them. After the opinions of the principal, Jim Caudill, and the adviser, Linda Kane, were aired in The Daily Herald, the local paper, the school administration fired Kane from her position as adviser and journalism teacher. She says she was told that she “had no business making comments like that” to The Daily Herald. Kane was told she would be allowed to stay on at the school as an English teacher until her retirement two years from now.
**Final Round**

_Ehrenfeld v. Bin Mahfouz_

_U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit_

As we have reported in past issues (Summer 2006 and Summer 2007 Bulletins), Saudi Prince Khalid Salim Bin Mahfouz brought a libel action in British court in 2004 against author Rachel Ehrenfeld for her portrayal of him as a financier of terrorism in her work, _Funding Evil_. Ehrenfeld defaulted in the English action and subsequently tried to obtain a declaratory judgment from the U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York, that Mahfouz could not prevail on his libel claims under the laws of New York and the U.S., and that the English judgment would not be enforced against her in the U.S., and in New York in particular.

The U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York initially dismissed her case for lack of personal jurisdiction. Ehrenfeld then appealed to the Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, which refused to rule on her appeal because it believed there were “long arm” jurisdictional questions that only the New York Court of Appeals could answer. The Second Circuit Court asked the New York Court of Appeals to rule first on whether New York’s long arm statute would provide for jurisdiction over Bin Mahfouz.

Acknowledging that this was a clear case of libel tourism, in which Bin Mahfouz purposely filed a suit in a claimant-friendly jurisdiction like England, the New York Court of Appeals unanimously held nonetheless that New York courts did not have long-arm jurisdiction over Bin Mahfouz. The court noted that there was little to no connection between the Ehrenfeld material considered libelous and England as a venue for bringing such a suit. Reluctantly, the court noted that its job was solely to interpret the New York statute at issue, as it had no ability to raise other issues that might be favorable to Ehrenfeld’s case. The New York Court of Appeals thus rejected Ehrenfeld’s argument that Mahfouz had transacted business in New York with the intent of chilling her speech there.

Ehrenfeld then argued two further points: that the interpretation of New York’s long arm statute by the New York Court of Appeals violated the First Amendment, and that the U.S. Court of Appeals should postpone its decision until the end of the current New York state legislative session, in which the “Libel Terrorism Protection Act” is pending. If passed, this measure would permit Ehrenfeld and other New York authors to challenge foreign judgments rendered against them in jurisdictions that have no legitimate connection to the challenged publication; the bill is intended to provide free speech and free press protections against the type of libel tourism on display here.

The court, however, denied both of Ehrenfeld’s requests. The court first concluded that since Ehrenfeld had the opportunity to raise First Amendment claims and failed to do so at any prior stage of the litigation, she effectively waived her right to assert these claims at this late stage in the litigation. It also refused to delay its decision in anticipation of possible pending legislation. It did note, however, that if a new bill is signed into law, Ehrenfeld can file a new action in U.S. District Court or make a motion to reopen this judgment and amend her complaint.

_Michael Gross_
—_Staff Attorney_

**A No-Show Win**

_Atlantic Recording Corporation, Elektra Entertainment Group, Inc., Interscope Records, Sony BMG Music Entertainment & BMG Music v. Christopher David Brennan_

_U.S. District Court: District of Connecticut_

On March 15, 2007, several major record companies, including Atlantic Recording Corporation, Elektra Entertainment Group, Inc., Interscope Records, Sony BMG Music Entertainment and BMG Music filed a copyright infringement action in the U.S. District Court, District of Connecticut, against Christopher David Brennan. In their complaint, the companies alleged that Brennan had violated the Copyright Act by downloading and distributing copyright-protected works owned by the various companies via the Internet. The plaintiffs claimed they were entitled to statutory damages and attorneys’ fees under Sec. 505 of the Copyright Act. When Brennan failed to respond to the complaint or otherwise appear before the court, the plaintiffs moved for an entry of default judgment pursuant to FRCP 55(a), which was granted by the Clerk of the Court on August 6, 2007. The record companies then filed a timely motion to procure a default judgment against Brennan.

In considering the plaintiffs’ motion, the court noted that once the clerk enters default pursuant to Rule 55(a), the factual allegations contained in the
had actually was due to neglect or whether Brennan would have a meritorious defense to the copyright infringement allegations; and the third was whether denying the record companies’ motion for default judgment would prejudice their action.

The key to the decision was the court’s approach to the second prong—whether Brennan might have had a meritorious defense to the copyright infringement allegations had the case been tried. In particular, the court noted that there was no evidence that Brennan had actually distributed copyrighted songs; the court had only the plaintiffs’ assertion that Brennan had “made them available” on the Internet. Since all three factors favored Brennan, the court held that default judgment against him was inappropriate.

The significance of the case is that there are many examples of similar default cases in the current wave of litigation that the recording industry is filing against consumers who use file-sharing services. Critics of the strategy assert that the industry is simply filing “boilerplate” lawsuits that allege the elements of copyright infringement without any specific assertions of the facts relevant to the specific allegations of infringement.

As an aside, the court also pointed to the fact that a recent case, Interscope Records v. Rodriguez, mirrors the facts in this one. In that case, the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California was faced with a similar motion for default judgment by Interscope Records against Yolana Rodriguez, who, like Brennan, did not respond to the action filed against her. In that case, the court found that Interscope failed to allege specific facts regarding Rodriguez that would indicate that the copyright infringement allegations against her were more than speculation. That court dismissed Interscope’s claim after concluding that it failed to sufficiently state a claim upon which relief could be granted. Based on the three-pronged query, coupled with the recent case law that also favored Brennan, the U.S. District Court, District of Connecticut, denied the record companies’ motion for summary judgment.

Michael Gross
—Staff Attorney

Authors Legacy Society

We invite members of the Guild to join the Authors Legacy Society, a group of authors who have elected to benefit the endowment of the Authors Guild or Authors Guild Foundation through their wills or estate plans.

There are a number of ways Guild members can make an estate commitment, including naming the Authors Guild or Authors Guild Foundation in your will or naming either organization as a beneficiary of your retirement plan or life insurance policy.

For more information on the benefits of The Authors Legacy Society and how to make an estate commitment, please contact Julia Berney, Director of Development, 212-594-7931, or write her at the Guild offices at 31 East 32nd Street, New York, NY 10016 or jberney@authorsguild.org.

Legal Services Scorecard

From January 12, 2007 through May 9, 2008, the Authors Guild Legal Service Department handled 366 legal inquiries. Included were:

- 48 book contract reviews
- 11 agency contract reviews
- 27 reversion of rights inquiries
- 30 inquiries on copyright law, including infringement, registration, duration and fair use
- 14 inquiries regarding securing permissions and privacy releases
- 11 electronic rights inquiries
- 225 other inquiries (including literary estates, contract disputes, periodical and multimedia contracts, movie and television options, Internet piracy, liability insurance, finding an agent, and attorney referrals)
CONTRACTS Q&A

By Mark L. Levine

Q. I am the author of a widely used college textbook that has gone through six editions. Because of illness, the seventh edition was delayed and sales dropped. Meanwhile, company mergers resulted in the acquisition of a number of competitive books, along with changes in editorial staff. The decision was made not to bring out a seventh edition, which is a death knell for my book as it needs to be brought up to date. My question is, do the rights revert to me?

Another publisher would like to bring out the updated book (which still has many admirers). Can my original publisher play dog in the manger and prevent us from bringing out the new book even though it does not plan to? What’s the procedure?

A. There should be a section in your contract that provides for all rights to revert to you when your book is out of print. It typically requires written notice from you to the publisher asking that the rights revert and gives the publisher a specified period to put the book back into print itself or by licensing reprint rights to another publisher. This period is often 12 months, but authors negotiating new contracts should try to make it six.

Read that section. In situations where a book is out of print and the publisher doesn’t intend to reprint it or sublicense the reprint rights, publishers who are asked often revert the rights in a brief letter without even waiting for the time period to expire.

In your situation, I suggest preceding the letter with a brief, friendly phone call asking your publisher to send you a letter reverting the rights because of the situation. That alone might be all that is needed, though be sure to follow up with another phone call in a week to 10 days if you haven’t received its “revulsion of rights” letter by then. If you haven’t already done so by that point, send your request letter to start the clock running on the time period specified in your contract in case your publisher is one of those that promises to do things right away but somehow never gets around to it.

Whether an author has plans to reissue his/her out-of-print book or not, every author with a book out of print should send a letter to the book’s publisher requesting it to revert the rights granted by the author in their contract. One never knows when the rights to an out-of-print book become valuable. If the opportu-

Q. I’ve written a number of personal essays over the past decade for local regional newspapers, and I’d like now to republish the best of these columns in a book. If I can easily find a publisher, that would be the way I’d go. If I can’t, I’ll self-publish. Either way, I’m concerned about what approvals I’d need from the various publications for this book of mine.

Two different situations:

1. If the entire publication has a copyright symbol on its masthead, along with the words that anything in the issue “cannot be reproduced without written permission” (or “without permission of the editor”), then presumably I simply write to the publication and ask for written permission, yes?

2. But if there is no copyright symbol anywhere in the publication, or no words like those above, do I need to ask permission to reprint the columns that ran initially in that publication? Perhaps it is simply polite to inform them of my wish to reprint these columns?

A. You do not need any approval from them if (1) you wrote all the columns after January 1, 1978 (when the current copyright law went into effect), (2) you were not an employee of the relevant newspaper when you

Mark L. Levine is a lawyer in New York who is a recognized authority on author-publisher book contracts.

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Change in the Wind:
Audio Books, Video Studios, and Multimedia Retail

By Isabel Howe

The literary world, along with the rest of the universe, has weathered the shift from paper to the Web with alternating bouts of grace and anxiety. First came online booksellers, then author websites, book blogs and e-books. Now we've got digital audiobook downloads and video to adjust to as well. For the most part, the innovations of the last decade or so have stimulated the business of selling as well as writing books, but every time a new one pops up, the tremors set in all over again. Recent developments—including book themed video websites, the new Borders "concept store," and a change in how audiobooks are sold—suggest that the ground has yet to settle.

Video: Will Book Trailers and Online Studios Sell Books?

Most writers cringe at the word video; append the adjective "digital" and watch the sweat start streaming down writerly foreheads across the world. Video, however, seems to be what readers want, as do publishers. With the launch of some glossy new websites for readers, video takes center stage.

Barnes & Noble has set up shop with Barnes & Noble Studio, a multimedia center for book lovers and shoppers. The Studio features several video series, audio interviews, links to its online journal, Barnes & Noble Review, and a "Book Clubs" discussion forum. One of its more ambitious programs is "Book Obsessed"—"a mini-documentary series that travels the length and breadth of the USA to meet folks whose love for books knows no bounds!" It's better than it sounds. An early episode visits the home of book collector Joe Perlman, who owns more than 35,000 books. We see his soaring shelves, cramped basement and dimly lit attic, all filled with books. Perlman even wears a red shirt decorated with a joke about books, but the camera never focuses on it long enough for the viewer to decipher the text.

Perlman shows off some of his favorite books, but says little of interest. Perhaps this is due to the length—just five minutes—and broad focus of the show, or perhaps it suggests it's for the best that they're keeping it short. Oddly, the episode never reveals that Perlman doesn't just own a lot of books, he sells them, too, as proprietor of Mostly Useful Fictions, an online store for used and rare books. In fact, he's the secretary of the Long Island Book Dealers Association and writes about book buying and collecting. The Mostly Useful Fictions website includes links to other features on Perlman as well as his published essays. With such in-depth coverage of his bibliophilia already available online, it's hard to think of a reason to watch him on "Book Obsessed."

Another Barnes & Noble Studio offering is "Tagged!", a show that takes its name from the act of assigning a keyword to an item on the Internet (blog posts, for example, are tagged with words that will bring the post up in a search; they range from simple descriptions—"magazines," "shopping"—to more subjective terms like "funny" or "To Do"). A new episode is added to the site each week, during which host Molly Pesce discusses new books, as well as book-related television shows and movies, chosen from "the best and the juiciest from the world of books." The segments run about five minutes and are essentially advertisements for the books and other media mentioned. As is often the case, the line between telling viewers what's hot this week and hawking a product is thin. Publicity shots abound throughout, and the first segment ends by announcing the winners of the 2007 Barnes & Noble Discovery Awards. A greater flaw, though, is that "Tagged!" fails to give us anything "juicy," or even novel.

Despite this, the most exciting series Barnes & Noble Studio offers is, in many ways, the most B&N-centric. Videos of the bookseller's New York City in-
store readings and talks are available in full on the “B&N Events” channel. These events, filmed at the Union Square location, are open to the public and tend to be packed, making it difficult for even the locals to get in. The speakers are best-selling authors, many of whom primarily fill another role—politician, actor, editor, scientist, or all-around-entertainer, such as Garrison Keillor. These videos are a great archive and a valuable contribution to the growing online storehouse of public intellectuals talking about books and writing.

Another project launched this year is Simon & Schuster’s collaboration with BookVideos.tv, whose tagline, “Watch the stories behind the story,” isn’t entirely accurate. Like those on “Tagged!”, the S&S videos are closer to extended advertisements than they are sources of information for curious readers and fans. The videos on the site feature authors of books published by Simon & Schuster and its imprints. Most are traditional author interviews, but on film the form seems more personal than in print—one might say invasive if the authors weren’t cooperating. Fiction writer Katie Crouch, for example, author of Girls in Trucks, is filmed walking around her neighborhood, talking about her emotional connection with her characters, and sharing life lessons she learned while writing the book. This format has more success in the videos featuring well-known authors, as seen in the segment on Mary Higgins Clark and Carol Higgins Clark. We get a glimpse of the best-selling mother-daughter writing team on a book tour, interacting with fans, and explaining how they began writing together.

Other videos focus more on the content of the book and less on the author’s personality. Former Authors Guild president Nick Taylor holds a virtual tour of sites in New York City that feature prominently in his new book, American Made: The Enduring Legacy of the WPA. While his segment engages the viewer by using the tropes of documentary television, many of the videos fall short, looking and sounding like infomercials.

Daniel Menaker, novelist and former senior editor at Random House, HarperCollins, and The New Yorker, is the force behind Titlepage.tv, which offers “passionate conversations about books.” The 45-minute episodes follow the classic interview-cum-discussion format of public and public access television, which allows for a slow, measured conversation. Each episode features four authors whose works are grouped by loose themes, such as first-time authors. The guests are each given about 10 minutes to speak, with little interruption aside from Menaker’s questions. The books, not author personalities, are the focus. The result is a traditional, substantive program that lives up to its promise—“conversations about books”—with discussions that may not always be passionate, but are consistently intelligent.

Titlepage.tv’s intellectual bent sets it apart from the other websites and gives greater significance to its mission, as stated by the show’s executive producer, Odile Isralsion: “You should not have to live in New York City or pay $150 to hear your favorite authors talk about their work. You can be having dinner in Gillette, Wyoming or Oxford, Mississippi and enjoy a great hour of conversation.” Still, each of these disparate websites is imbued with a desire to bring together “book people.” Book people—readers, writers, bookstore owners, book club enthusiasts—are known for their isolation, or for congregating in specific spaces like bookstores or cafes. These various Internet ventures, whether content-focused or veiled advertisements, invite book lovers to find one another indirectly and thereby nurture their shared passion. Titlepage.tv does the best job by way of its discussion page and by allowing comments to be listed below each episode’s page on the site. That Menaker himself participates in these forums underscores Titlepage.tv’s intent to stimulate and foster dialogue about books.

Aside from C-Span’s Book-TV (“Created by Cable. Offered as a Public Service”), which televises readings, panels, and Q&A sessions with writers, books have never found a place on cable TV comparable to the popular stations devoted to other aspects of arts and culture. Unlike such apparently lucrative subjects as forensic science and professional magic, books seem to promise too little a return for the big bucks world of television. Given that reality, the growth of book-
focused video online can be seen as a boom—a new home for an industry that never had the charisma (or the cash) to make it on TV.

The Multimedia Bookstore: Borders’ Last Stand?

This March, despite having suffered a record $157.4 million loss for 2007, Borders Group opened the first of its new “concept stores,” a 22,000-square-foot emporium of books, video and music. The brainchild of CEO George Jones, who joined Borders in 2006, the new store still sells books—lots of books—but its real reason for existing is to sell what can only be called “ purchasable media.” The store is located in Ann Arbor, Mich., home of the original Borders bookstore established by brothers Tom and Louis Borders in 1971.

Scattered throughout the store are sleek, brightly lit computer kiosks, each of which offers book-related activities and downloads. There is a Digital Center, where shoppers can buy devices for listening to music or watching video, as well as all the gadgets and add-ons the heart desires; there is a Music Service Center where customers can burn compact discs, download music to iPods and other MP3 players, and design cover art for their newly created CDs. There are also computers where customers can log on to Borders.com to order books not available in the store—an especially valuable addition since Borders has announced that it will be cutting its inventory by 5 to 10 percent in order to display more of its books face-out.

It’s not unusual for megastores like Borders and Barnes & Noble to expand from selling books to selling books and music, along with journals, pens, and other vaguely word-related miscellany. The new Borders store, however, has taken this media-based approach a step further, offering a Personal Publishing kiosk, where aspiring writers can publish their own books using Lulu.com, and a Genealogy Services center, where visitors can research their family histories on Ancestry.com and even order a custom-made book with information about the family name. (One imagines the Genealogy station is positioned within sight of the Biography section to lure customers inspired on the spot; let’s hope the Personal Publishing center is on the opposite side of the store.) Another personal service offered is the Photo Printing Kiosk, where customers upload photos taken with their personal cameras or cell phones and, using Shutterfly software, print 4" x 6" inch photos.

On the less personal side, the store features a Travel section where shoppers can buy accessories (such as travel pillows), watch video of travel shows, and even book a flight. More spontaneous book browsers may appreciate this service—“Honey, this book about Costa Rica is fascinating! Why don’t we fly there tomorrow?”—as would people without computer access, a shrinking group and probably not Borders’ target customers.

Equally random is the Wellness center, which displays instructional videos and allows customers to search a database of health-and-wellness book titles. That skin products are available for sale in this section seems reasonable—necessary, even!—when one remembers that, just across the room, a flight to Costa Rica is waiting to be booked. Perhaps Borders should consider more daring territory: We’ve all seen reading glasses in bookstores, but the real moneymaker might be a resident optometrist for those worried about declining eyesight, or a masseuse to rub the shoulders of readers stuck in position after hunching over a book for too long.

As ephemeral as the services being offered sound, the computer kiosks all rest on a savvy commercial notion. Customers enter the store loaded with portable devices and data: MP3 players, video players, cameras, cell phones and, apparently, manuscripts—and, with a little time and money, Borders can help them turn these into physical objects: CDs, books and photographs.

On April 8, Borders announced that it had entered a financing agreement with its largest shareholder, the hedge fund Pershing Square Capital Management L.P., which would effectively bail them out through a multi-
million-dollar loan and the purchase of the company’s international subsidiaries. The figures in the final deal were higher than Pershing first offered; it’s unclear whether the investors agreed to pay more because of the success and intensive news coverage the concept stores have received, or whether other factors came into play. Borders plans to open concept stores throughout the country in the following months. In addition, they are revamping their online bookstore with the same emphasis on multi-media: among their new offerings are video author interviews, music and an Oprah webcast.

With chains like Borders competing not only with Barnes & Noble, but also with Amazon.com and other online booksellers, the competition for customers has never been fiercer. Turning bookstores into media emporia may be just the stitch in time the megastores need, and prove a boon to independents as well—leaving them the last havens of just books.

Downloadable Audio: To Encrypt or Not?

Since the news broke in February that Amazon.com was purchasing Audible, the largest online audiobook retailer, publishing industry insiders have speculated on how this will affect the market for digital audiobook downloads. One of the biggest questions was whether Amazon would end the practice of protecting downloads with digital rights management, or DRM, software. In March, a New York Times headline confirmed that it wasn’t that Amazon was heading in this direction but publishers: “Publishers Phase Out Piracy Protection on Audio Books.”

While the publishers are moving toward greater openness, Amazon does not seem interested in removing DRM protection, which is intended to prevent legitimately purchased downloads from being posted on illegal file-sharing websites where users can access music or video files for free. Both Amazon and publishers are keen to learn from the mistakes made by the music industry, whose ongoing efforts to protect their earnings by keeping piracy at bay have been largely misdirected, and led to the dominance of Apple’s iTunes store—where all music files offered for sale are DRM protected. But the mammoth retailer and the publishers are approaching the matter very differently.

In late 2007 Random House tested the strength of piracy’s grip by releasing a selection of audiobook files without DRM, but encoded with a digital watermark that was later tracked on online file-sharing networks. What they observed surprised them: The files on these networks were not those Random House had released; rather, they were copied from CDs or were DRM protected downloads whose coding had been cracked.

Heartened by these findings, Random House announced in March that it would make available for sale all of their audiobooks, without DRM, through eMusic.com. Penguin signed up as well, but backed down because of continuing fears of piracy. Simon & Schuster is joining with limited offerings, and, as of mid-May, HarperCollins hadn’t yet made a decision.

Audiobooks have been available on CD for years, but digital downloads as a percentage of audiobooks have been increasing steadily. The Audio Publishers Association reports that Internet downloads made up 14 percent of all audiobook sales in 2006, an increase from 9 percent in 2005. With the eMusic deal, Amazon’s purchase of Audible, and the recent release of the Kindle, Amazon’s popular e-book reading device, which also plays audiobooks, we’re sure to see an even greater jump when the 2007 numbers are released.

If Amazon decides to keep DRM protection, the company may be able to position itself as the safe option for audiobook publishers concerned about piracy. The danger is that Amazon will become the only option, with a monopoly over the business, as iTunes essentially is for music downloads. Amazon recently demonstrated its willingness to increase its share of profits from book sales when it began implementing a drastic new policy concerning print-on-demand books: Only books printed by Amazon’s own print-on-demand service, Book Surge, will be sold through their online bookstore. That move, which has caused an uproar among writers and publishing insiders, is effectively forcing print-on-demand companies to comply and switch to Book Surge’s printing system, or else lose most of their customers.

At this point, no one can predict what will happen next. Random House’s piracy test, which suggested that publishers can safely release unprotected audiobook downloads, may prove irrelevant once the Web is flooded with audiobook files, while writers concerned with maximizing their revenues from audiobook sales—at least in the near future—may wonder whether offering DRM-free versions of their work will cost them sales. The other major publishers may back out of the eMusic deal, or refrain from joining, returning everyone, publishers and retailers, to a DRM-protected audiobook world. What is indisputable is that audiobooks are now easier than ever to purchase and download instantaneously from a home computer or portable device. There are also vastly more titles available than there were in the past. A considerable online marketplace for audiobooks has now been established.
Along Publishers Row
Continued from page 2

to Dickens?) on her cell phone, and then it was uploaded onto a website. It was then published as a hardcover book and sold 400,000 copies.

Many cell phone readers have never read a novel before, according to Japanese publishers. These books owe a lot to popular comic books. The New York Times said many of the cell phone novels read like diaries. Love Sky, by Mika, was read by 20 million people via cell phone or computer. It is a "tear-jerker featuring adolescent sex, rape, pregnancy and a fatal disease—the genre's sine qua non. In book form, Love Sky became the No. 1 selling novel last year and was made into a movie."

Kin, now 21, told the Times that young people "don't read works by professional writers because their sentences are too difficult to understand, their expressions are intentionally wordy, and the stories are not familiar to them."

HOW TO: Henry David Thoreau explained, "I put a piece of paper under my pillow, and when I could not sleep I wrote in the dark."

HOW-TO-SELL: If you are serious about getting your books on the bestseller lists, perhaps you should run for president. It's done wonders for author Barack Obama. All the publicity about his primary campaign helped make big bestsellers of Dreams from My Father (1995) and The Audacity of Hope (2006).

A spokesperson for the publisher of Audacity told PW: "We’ve noticed a steady climb that began shortly before the Iowa caucuses, and it has built ever since then."

All that exposure has also upped prices for some copies. AbeBooks.com sold an autographed Dreams for $1,798.

PLUGS: Marco, Manhattan’s most notorious fictional killer, keeps his mementos in a waterproof-fireproof safe he had ordered from the Hammacher Schlemmer catalogue. His prize is a Tiffany bracelet with 112 square-cut diamonds snatched from the wrist of the East Side matron he had slashed to death in front of Gucci’s. He straps on his Vacheron Constantin gold case watch with its power-reserve indicator and self-winding mechanical movement. The Wall Street analyst, who had paid thousands for it, no longer needed it. Marco had dispatched him with a five-inch Henckels forged synergy knife sold exclusively at Bloomingdale’s. Marco pulls on his L. L. Bean all-weather jacket and leaves his building, The Rushmore, a West-Side Paradise in Manhattan’s Premier neighborhood. He climbs into his new Toyota Prius, 45 miles to the gallon . . .

Will product placement find its way into all genres? Its growing presence in novels for teenage girls is stirring complaints once again. Ralph Nader’s watchdogs have urged reviewers to boycott such books. Novelist Jane Smiley complained about it in a Los Angeles Times op-ed essay, and The New York Times denounced the trend in an editorial.

But Susan Katz, publisher of HarperCollins Children’s Books, told The Times, "If you look at Web sites, general media or television, corporate sponsorship or some sort of advertising is totally embedded in the world that tweens live in. It gives us another opportunity for authenticity."

So loving Cover Girl’s Demure lip gloss and Converse sneakers makes a fictional Brittany authentic. Who would have guessed?

TWO TALENTS: Jeff Clark, a published poet, designed covers for 30 books last year. He lives and has his studio in Ypsilanti, Mich. Most of the covers he designs are for books of poetry, but about a quarter are for fiction and a few are for art catalogues.

Clark told PW: "I want to communicate that a book cover isn’t just like a television screen made out of paper. It’s the surface of something, yet paradoxically it’s the thing itself, the skin around the skull, not just a piece of advertising put on top of the book . . . Because I’m also a writer and a reader . . . I’ll be giving it a skin that would really fit."

TITLES: A cookbook due out this spring is Saucier’s Apprentice: One Long Strange Trip Through the Great Cooking Schools of Europe by Bob Spitz. Raymond Sokolov wasn’t happy about the title because 30 years ago, he published The Saucier’s Apprentice: A Modern Guide to Classic French Sauces for the Home. Sokolov’s book is still in print and is now in its 16th printing. Book titles cannot be copyrighted.

Sokolov told The New York Times he hoped the publisher would "promote the hell out of the book and that a confused buying public will buy my Saucier’s Apprentice instead of Spitz’s." Sokolov, a columnist for The Wall Street Journal, said he wasn’t working on a book at the moment, but "I am thinking about one, and maybe I should call it The Da Vinci Code."

HAIL TO THE QUEEN: Alan Bennett, British author of plays, screenplays, fiction and autobiography, has written The Uncommon Reader, a novella about the current Queen Elizabeth. In it, she becomes addicted to reading. She starts off with Ivy Compton-Burnett and moves on to Nancy Mitford, J. R. Ackerley, Anita Bruckner, Jean Genet and a flood of others, including Proust. All this reading brings about profound changes in the queen, who throughout this novel makes observations about the impact of books.

Sample: "The appeal of reading, she thought, lay in the indifference:
there was something undeferring about literature. Books did not care
who was reading them or whether
one read them or not. All readers
were equal, herself included. Lit-
erature, she thought, is a common-
wealth, letters a republic . . .
[Reading] was anonymous; it was
shared; it was common. And she
who had led a life apart now found
that she craved it. Here in these
pages and between these covers she
could go unrecognized.”

The book is funny, and the fic-
tional queen is an endearing charac-
ter. What I want to know: Has the
real Queen Elizabeth read it?

COMPLAINTS: Because of poor
health, Doris Lessing, 88, was un-
able to attend the Nobel ceremonies
in Stockholm to accept the 2007 lit-
erature award. Her British editor,
Nicholas Pearson, read her re-
marks.

Lessing deplored a “fragmenting
culture” where “it is common for
young men and women who have
had years of education to know
nothing about the world, to have
read nothing, knowing only some
specialty or other, for instance com-
puters.” The Internet got low marks
because it has “seduced a whole
generation into its inanities.”

TOP RATED: Michael Dirda has
a Sunday column in The Washing-
ton Post Book World. He writes books
too, and his latest is Classics for
Pleasure, in which he elevates several
writers who might not be expected
to be listed as “classic.” These in-
clude Edward Gorey, Eudora Welty,
Agatha Christie, Dashiel Hammett
and Philip K. Dick. An essay is de-
voted to each, explaining why they
belong among the great.

In Dirda’s essay on Willa
Cather, he quotes from an essay she
wrote about Sarah Orne Jewett.
Cather said that every great story
“must leave in the mind of the sen-
titive reader an intangible residuum
of pleasure, a cadence, a quality of
voice that is exclusively the writer’s
own, individual, unique. A quality
that one can remember without the
volume at hand, can experience
over and over again in the mind but
can never absolutely define . . .”

DON’T ASK: British novelist Ian
McEwan, author of Atonement and
other novels, was asked by Deborah
Solomon of The New York Times
the question no writer should ever
be asked: “Are you working on a
new novel?”

McEwan: “Yes.”
Solomon: “Can you tell us what
it is about?”

McEwan: “No, it’s too soon. I
don’t even tell myself yet.”

Solomon: “Is it set in the pres-
ent?”

McEwan: “Broadly. Now you’ve
ruined it. I’ll have to come up with
a new one.”

POST-BOOKS: An article in The
New Yorker was entitled “Twilight
of the Books,” and the subtitle was
“What will life be like if people stop
reading?”

The author, Caleb Crain, wrote:
“Some sociologists speculate that
reading books for pleasure will one
day be the province of a special
‘reading class,’ much as it was be-
fore the arrival of mass literacy, in
the second half of the 19th century.
They warn that it probably won’t re-
gain the prestige of exclusivity, it
may just become ‘an increasingly ar-
cane hobby.’ Such a shift would
change the texture of society. If one
person decides to watch “The So-
pianos” rather than to read Leo-
ardo Sciascia’s novella To Each His
Own, the culture goes on largely
as before—both viewer and reader
are entertaining themselves while
learning something about the Mafia
in the bargain. But if, over time,
many people choose television over
books, then the nation’s conver-
sation with itself is likely to change. A
reader learns about the world and
imagines it differently from the way
a viewer does . . . If the eclipse of
reading continues, the alteration is
likely to matter in ways that aren’t
foreseeable.”

PETITION: In London, more than
500 authors, including Ian Rankin,
Nick Hornby, Jackie Collins and
Andrew Motion, Britain’s poet lau-
rate, appealed to Prime Minister
Gordon Brown to do something
about childhood illiteracy.

The writers’ letter said that one-
fifth of 11-year-olds leaving primary
school are unable to read to the min-
imum standard for their age group.
The writers suggested that reading
be taught for an hour every day. “As
authors, we are deeply concerned at
the low levels of childhood literacy
across Britain. In a complex world,
reading has become increasingly
important—if not crucial.”

CHOICE: The paperback version of
Michael Crichton’s Next came out
in four different colored covers:
green, orange, white and yellow. His
publisher told PW, “We created four
cover looks for the mass market so
that the book would pop off the
shelves in a truly eye-popping dis-
play.”

The first printing was 1.75 mil-
lion copies, and the book immedi-
ately grabbed the No. 1 slot on the
paperback bestseller list.

THE SECRET LIFE: In his Aspects of
the Novel, E. M. Forster wrote: “The
speciality of the novel is that the
writer can talk about his characters
as well as through them or can
arrange for us to listen when they
talk to themselves. He has access to
self-communings, and from that
level he can descend even deeper
and peer into the subconscious . . .
The novelist has a real pull here. He
can show the subconscious short-circuiting straight into action (the dramatist can do this too); he can also show it in its relation to soliloquy. He commands all the secret life, and he must not be robbed of this privilege.”

VARIETY: Take the case of Stewart O’Nan. His latest novel is Last Night at the Lobster. The New York Times said that in the past 14 years he has worked with seven publishing houses. “Part of the reason, Mr. O’Nan acknowledged, may be that he experiments with genre, form and tone. He has written thrillers, horror and historical fiction, and followed a novel of postmodern irony with straightforward realist fiction.”

O’Nan told the Times, “No two consecutive books that I have worked on have been alike.” His only book that sold well is Faithful, a baseball book he cowrote with Stephen King.

O’Nan’s new publisher, Viking, is hoping for a larger audience with Lobster. John Kendall, his editor, told the Times, “This one is shorter, frankly, and the conceit of the novel with the political overtones of blue-collar downsizing felt apt and somewhat fresh.”

O’Nan said, “You always want more readers for the book. I don’t think you can worry too much about that as you are writing.”

SAME TOOLS: Iain M. Banks’s eighth sci-fi novel, Matter, is, according to PW, “blood-spattered and intrigue-laden.” Asked to compare sci-fi novels and more literary work, the British author said, “Really the differences are few. They all feature plots, ideas, characters, set-piece scenes, effectively real-time-generated dialogue sequences and so on. I describe it as being like being a carpenter: one day you make a chair, another day you make a table. They have quite different uses but to the person who makes them that’s irrel-
evant; you use the same skills, tools and material to make them.”

RIOTS: Last fall, thousands of Muslims rioted in India, demanding the expulsion of Taslima Nasreen, 45, a Bangladeshi author of a 1993 novel, Shame, about riots between Muslims and Hindus, who has lived in exile since 1994. Because of her book, she has been accused of blasphemy, and the protesters called for her execution.

The Indian government kept her under protection at an undisclosed location, and Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee told India’s Parliament, “India has never refused shelter to those who have come and sought our protections.” Recent reports suggest that Nasreen has taken refuge in Sweden.

THE MASTER’S MASTER: Sheldon M. Novick spends much of The Mature Master, his second volume about Henry James, explaining why the author wrote as he did, how writing for the theater changed his style, and how the pressure to earn a living caused other shifts in style.

When James was 61, and considered an old man, he visited the U.S. after decades in Europe and went on a speaking tour while gathering material for travel articles and books. He told audiences that Balzac had been the greatest influence on his own work. James, who was fluent in French from childhood, said that Balzac’s “plan was to handle primarily, not a world of ideas, animated by figures representing those ideas; but the packed and constituted, the palpable, provable world before him. . . . His happy fate [was] accordingly to partake of life, actively, assertively, not passively, narrowly, in mere sensibility and sufferance.”

Novick adds, “At every moment, Balzac engaged his experience imaginatively, seeking to penetrate and understand: this active engagement enabled him to paint his im-

mense portrait of the France of his day, an image of life.”

WISEACRE: P. J. O’Rourke told the editors of The New York Times Book Review how he works when he’s reviewing a book. He said, “I read something I’m reviewing the same way I read other things except more so. That is, I already keep a commonplace book (a file folder, really) for quotations, ideas, information, etc. If I’m going to write a review I mark the work for myself, but besides underlining what interests me I also underline what—as far as I can tell—interested the author. By the time I’m done I have an outline for the review. All I have to do is figure out a smart-aleck lead sentence and a wiseacre ending.”

EAVEDROPPED RESEARCH: Sue Miller’s latest novel, The Senator’s Wife, was an instant bestseller. An earlier title for the novel was A Private Life. PW said that a duplex in the book was based on a house Miller once shared in Cambridge, Mass. “She had first-hand experience with just how clearly you can hear your next-door neighbors.”

HOW TO READ: Philip Pullman discussed the controversy over the religious themes in his best-selling “His Dark Material” series. He has found his books a hot topic because, according to The New York Times, he has included “gay angels and a nifty example of evolution at work, and God himself makes a cameo appearance as a doddering, ineffectual codger who’s good-hearted but senile.”

In a talk Pullman made, reported by PW, he said, “The space that opens up between the reader’s mind and the book is a private space. It’s an extraordinary process, this process of reading. I am very much against anyone dictating how my books should be read.” He said, “I would much rather my readers
come to my books with an open heart and mind.”

AWARDS: Madison Smartt Bell and William T. Vollman were awarded the American Academy of Arts and Letters Strauss Livings prizes of $250,000, the biggest literary award in the U.S. Each will receive $50,000 a year for five years.

Juan Gelman, 77, an Argentine political activist who has published more than 20 books of poetry, has been awarded the annual Cervantes Prize of about $133,000.

WHY WRITE? Umberto Eco, 77, Italian author of The Name of the Rose and Turning Back the Clock, was asked by The New York Times if he cared whether or not people read his novels 100 years from now. Eco said, “If somebody writes a book and doesn’t care for the survival of that book, he’s an imbecile.”

VILE VILLAINS: Lydia Millet loves reprehensible characters. “I can’t get enough of them,” she told PW. “They’re so interesting.” Her new novel, How the Dead Dream, has a character who is, according to PW, “especially vile and especially Millet. He is a misogynist animal torturer.”

Millet lives in the Avra Valley, west of Tucson. She is 38 and, according to The Washington Post, has staked her reputation on taking chances. Her books are “sатirical and political” but never predictable. She says she’d be bored to death if she had to repeat herself. One novel, George Bush, Dark Prince of Love (2000) was about a 300-pound woman who stalked the 41st president. My Happy Life (2002) is narrated by a woman in a mental hospital. Oh, Pure and Radiant Heart is about atomic bomb scientists.

How the Dead Dream is the first in a trilogy. The second volume is completed, and Millet planned to start the third after her second child was born in December.

PURCHASE: The New York Public Library bought historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr.’s papers—all 280 linear feet of them—for an undisclosed sum. These include travel diaries, phone message logs, journals, datebooks, research files, sound recordings, clippings and correspondence. Schlesinger was a speechwriter for John Kennedy and a biographer of Robert Kennedy. Letters include those from Dean Acheson, Truman Capote, Lauren Bacall and Bill Clinton.

Paul LeClerc, president of the library, told The New York Times, “[Schlesinger] was a great historian and an incomparable witness. I can’t think of any other historian who had the level of access he did. Voltaire was the historian of France, but he didn’t get in the inner circle the way Schlesinger did.”

WAY TO RICHES: Douglas Preston’s new thriller is Blasphemy. PW said it’s about a physicist who builds a giant particle accelerator that allows people to talk with God.

Preston said, “I’ve long been fascinated with L. Ron Hubbard [the father of Scientology], who said the greatest thing a person can do was found a religion. Writing was a waste of time—if you really wanted to get rich and powerful start your own religion.”

Asked what he would do if he got up some morning and found supplicants gathering on his lawn, Preston said, “I’d be terrified.”

PROBLEMS: Michael Pollan’s In Defense of Food has caused some unusual problems for the author. PW said Pollan came home for an interview to find a photographer checking out his refrigerator.

Pollan also believes that he gets fewer dinner invitations these days because people think they have to serve him ethically correct food.

LOCAL LEVEL: In an op-ed article in The New York Times, novelist Lee Smith wrote from Hillsborough, N.C. that we should “Think Global, Read Local.” She quoted North Carolina’s poet laureate, Kaye Byer, who leads book discussion groups: “I want to show them all that their own region has its own literature. They have writers here who can give them a voice, who can tell their story with authenticity. The place speaks through its writers, and the writers speak for the place.”

WELL, IS THERE? Gertrude Stein visited Texas in 1935. A Houston Post reporter interviewed her and began his article with “Gertrude Stein is a broad, squat little woman of 61 with flat feet and a round, masculine head. Between these extremities something important is taking place—at least something that seems vastly important to Gertrude Stein.”

The reporter asked her to explain “what she is driving at in her system of writing, and if, as some critics contend, it is purely ‘automatic’ writing, depending more on the Palmer system of penmanship than on a conscious use of the intellectual faculty.”

Stein replied, “The conclusion of any sensible human being is that everybody writes the way everybody writes. When you have something in your head, it isn’t always what comes out at the end of your pencil. Does that answer the question—or is there any question to answer?”

nence wrote as many bad books as Norman Mailer."

Near the end of the essay, Smith noted that although Mailer and Gore Vidal had feuded, when Mailer died, Vidal said, "He was interesting, because he was interested. He had a radical imagination, a way of approaching subjects that was never boring."

In January, at the University of Texas in Austin, Mailer's papers were opened to the public. The collection is made up of 1,000 boxes, including handwritten and typed manuscripts, galley proofs, screenplays, letters, photographs, audio and videotapes and other materials from the early 1930s to 2005. It is the largest single-author archive in the Ransom Humanities Research Center.

NEXT: What is Scholastic doing to try and keep its bottom line up in the stratosphere now that Harry Potter is finished? They are producing a 10-book series of novels for readers 8 to 12 called "The 39 Clues." There will also be related Web-based games, collectors' cards and cash prizes. David Levithan, executive editorial director, told The New York Times, "We want to go where the kids are and really be part of their complete world, rather than going to one aspect of their world."

Rick Riordan, best-selling author of the Percy Jackson series, has written the first title in this new series, The Maze of Bones. He has also outlined the story arc for the next nine installments. Bones will be published next September.

The books will come out every two or three months. Gordon Korman, author of Swindle and Schooled, will write volume two. Peter Lerangis, author of books in the Spy-X and Watcher series, will write the third title, and Jude Watson, author of Star Wars prequels, will write the fourth.

J. K. Rowling holds the profitable rights to Harry Potter. They have made her the wealthiest woman in Great Britain. Scholastic will own all the rights of this new series.

REWRAITER: Ernest Hemingway was quoted in The Paris Review: "I rewrote the ending to Farewell to Arms, the last page of it, thirty-nine times before I was satisfied."

SURVIVOR: David Rieff has written Swimming in a Sea of Death, a book about his mother, the late Susan Sontag.

Rieff explained to PW: "I tried to describe her death as honestly as I could . . . . I wouldn’t have done it if I thought it would have been something she would have hated. I wasn’t settling scores. The book is really about the stripping down of illusions of power over one’s own death—that we’re not going to become dust . . . . the book is about the fact that anything I did was insufficient, and I think that’s what we survivors all feel."

OBSERVATION: The late Kurt Vonnegut once said, "I have long felt that any reviewer who expresses rage and loathing for a novel is preposterous. He or she is like a person who has put on full armor and attacked a hot fudge sundae or banana split."

SPY OUTS HIMSELF: Joseph Weisberg, 42, is a former CIA employee who lives in Brooklyn and teaches history and English at a Queens high school. His latest novel is An Ordinary Spy. He told The New York Times, "My goal was to write the most realistic spy novel that had ever been written." After training and working for the CIA for several years, Weisberg quit and began to write. His first novel was 10th Grade, published in 2002.

In his spy novel, he inserted black bars that conceal the names of countries and details that might be classified information. Two people in the acknowledgments are thanked for having "trusted me with their story." Their names are blacked out.

Writer Bruce Feiler, a college friend, told The New York Times that Weisberg was "much better at being a truth teller than he is at being a truth concealer. Ultimately he would not have been a good spy."

REVIEWED: The second collection of author interviews, reissued by The Paris Review, features 15 writers, including James Thurber, Eudora Welty and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. In a New York Times review, Richard Eder wrote: "Interviews run the risk, particularly when long and literary, of declining into monologue. A mirror is held up; writers who for so long have been their own mirrors, gaze into it. Responding to a questioner who is after not their dance but their working minutiae, they turn inward. Instead of doing magic, the magician tirelessly expounds on his collection of double-bottomed boxes and pre-rabbit hats. Refreshingly, the dour Philip Larkin complains about poets who explain their work: 'It's like going round explaining how you sleep with your wife.'"

REIGNING IN SPAIN: The most-read novel by Spaniards in the last 20 years is The Pillars of the Earth by British thriller-writer Ken Follett. It has sold 5.5 million copies. The Spanish translation of the sequel, World Without End, sold 525,000 copies within hours of going on sale. The publisher said that the single-day sale was unsurpassed, even by J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter books.

FAREWELLS: After 13 books in 42 years, Tom Wolfe has left Farrar, Straus & Giroux. His next novel, about immigration in Miami, will be published by Little, Brown and Company. The New York Times said
his advance was almost $7 million. The title will be *Back to Blood*. It will be published in 2009.

Wolfe’s last novel, *I Am Charlotte Simmons,* was not nearly as successful as *The Bonfire of the Vanities* or *A Man in Full.* Jonathan Galassi, Farrar publisher, told the Times, “We just couldn’t agree on terms.”

In another notable switch, Richard Ford left Knopf after 17 years and will publish next with Ecco, an imprint of HarperCollins. Ford is the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Independence Day* and *The Lay of the Land*. His first book for Ecco is tentatively titled *Canada* and is described by the publisher as a “novel of revenge and violent retribution set on the Saskatchewan prairie, in the early 1950s.”

AN AGENT’S PRAISE: John Les-croart, author of *The Suspect,* was described by his agent, Barney Karpfinger, in San Francisco magazine.

Karpfinger said: “He loves life, he loves food, he loves people, he likes kids, he finds it all interesting. All of this stuff ends up in the books one way or another and makes them richer. He’s had to work hard and be determined to get where he is, and he didn’t turn into an asshole. Which is not true of many people who have the same level of success.”

NEW JOB: Jon Scieszka, 53, has been named the first national ambassador for young people’s literature, a children’s book version of the Library of Congress’s poet laureate program. Scieszka has written more than 25 books, including *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* and *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales* (both illustrated by Lane Smith).

The author is to speak to groups of children, parents and teachers “to evangelize the need for reading.”

Scieszka told The New York Times, “There’s a huge population of kids who would be or can be readers, but just choose not to. Kids see it just as a school activity or something that just can’t compete with a Nintendo Wii or just hanging out and text messaging your friends. Parents and booksellers and teachers are dying for some help.”

NOT MAINSTREAM: A shop in Baltimore, Atomic Books, is operated by Benn Ray and Rachel Whang. Whang told PW, “We tend to avoid mainstream titles of all genres.” The store concentrates on art books, hip lit, weird lit, alternative and retro culture, zines and sex. It also publishes a couple of titles a year. Last October, it brought out Julia Wertz’s *The Fart Party.*

COURT CASE: Missy Chase Lapine, author of *The Sneaky Chef,* has sued Jessica and Jerry Seinfeld, the comedian, charging copyright infringement and defamation. Lapine accused Jessica Seinfeld of “brazen plagiarism” in Seinfeld’s cookbook, *Deceptively Delicious.* Both books include recipes that hide pureed vegetable ingredients. Both became bestsellers.

The New York Times said that Jerry Seinfeld had insinuated that Lapine was “wacko” on the David Letterman show. Seinfeld said, “If you read history, many of the three-name people do become assassins.” Lapine’s complaint states that she is “not a violent or dangerous person.” Her lawyer said, “She really brought this as a matter of principle to vindicate her own rights and her original work as well as her reputation.” Her publisher, Perseus Books, is not a party to the suit.

CONFESSION: According to PW, a bookstore owner reported: “Our story time reader greeted the children with, ‘Does anyone want to come and listen to some stories?’ and a four-year-old boy replied, ‘Yes. I watch too much TV.’”

BLURB BUSINESS: Eliezer Sobel’s latest book is *The 99th Monkey:* A Spiritual Journalist’s Misadventures with Gurus, Messiahs, Sex, Psychedelics and Other Consciousness-Raising Experiments.

Sobel wanted Guild members to know about what appears on his acknowledgments page: “I’m very appreciative of the people quoted on the back cover for agreeing to blurb me. One desperately needs blurbers in this life. I asked Tom Robbins for a quote, and he informed me that due to long-standing eye problems, he was virtually blind and could no longer read or write. ‘Which is unfortunate,’ he said, ‘because I found the Table of Contents very compelling.’ I wanted to put that on the back cover: ‘Tom Robbins found my Table of Contents very compelling’—does it get any better than that?”

BIG BUSINESS: Suzy Welch, a former editor of the Harvard Business Review and wife of John F. Welch Jr., former GE chief, sold her book 10-10-10 to Scribner for seven figures, The New York Times reported. The book is based on an article Mrs. Welch wrote for the Oprah magazine in 2006. The Times explained, “The book offers strategies for making decisions in which people think about what the consequences of a decision will be in 10 minutes, 10 months and 10 years.”

Nan Graham, editor in chief of Scribner, will edit the book with Samantha Martin. Mrs. Welch co-wrote the best-selling *Winning* with her husband.

DOWN SOUTH: Joshelyn Jackson of Powder Springs, GA, is the author of *The Girl Who Stopped Swimming,* her third novel. She told PW that her “strong sense of decorum,” something all Southern girls are born with, was difficult to overcome early on. “Now I’ve learned to set a character on fire and see what happens.”
REVEALED: In his novel *Mosquitoes*, William Faulkner has one of his characters say, “A book is the writer’s secret life, the dark twin of a man: you can’t reconcile them.”

NEXT: The latest project for Tina Brown, following her best-selling *The Diana Chronicles*, is *The Clinton Chronicles*. Brown told Motoko Rich of The New York Times, “I really felt that the Clinton story is such a sort of thrilling roller coaster of a story that also enabled me to write about the media and social culture of the era in which they’ve dominated the stage. The media has played a large part in that, with the rise of the Drudge moment and the blogosphere, and that’s the sort of material that speaks to me.”

BUSY: Best-selling British writer Jeffrey Archer, a former politician and member of Parliament, was sent to prison for perjury and served two years of a four-year sentence. He used his jail time well.

He told PW, “By the time I was released, I had written three prison diaries, a set of short stories (Cat O’Nine Tales) and A Prisoner of Birth.” That last is a novel about an escape from prison.

METHOD: Samuel Clemens once explained in a letter to a friend: “It is my habit to keep four or five books in process of erection all the time, and every summer add a few courses of bricks to two or three of them. Tom Sawyer and The Prince and the Pauper were put aside for two or three years and Old Times on the Mississippi sat around for eight.”

One unfinished book was in the process for 16 years; another 17. “This latter book could have been finished in a day at any time during the past five years.

“There seemed to be no hurry so I have not hurried. Tales of stirring adventure . . . do not need to be rushed to publication lest they get stale by waiting.”

The quotes above are from *The Selected Letters of Mark Twain*, edited by Charles Neider and published in 1982.

INSIDER: Sloane Crosley is a publicist at Vintage. Her first book is a collection of essays about life in Manhattan. The title is I Was Told There’d Be Cake. PW said that the book’s theme was “comic disappointment.” An interviewer asked Crosley if being in the business made her think differently about publishing her book.

She said, “It’s daunting, knowing how the burger gets made of course. I secretly hope my book will transcend everything I know about how rough the publishing industry can be on first-time authors.”

INNOVATIONS: The winners of the Newbery and Caldecott awards broke with convention. The Newbery Medal went to Laura Amy Schlitz’s Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! Voices from a Medieval Village. The text is made up of dialogues and monologues by characters in the Middle Ages. Robert Byrd did the illustrations.

The winner of the Caldecott Medal went to Brian Selznick’s *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*, a novel with blocks of text in 284 pages of drawings. One reviewer described it as a silent movie.

Selznick told The New York Times that after he wrote a 30-page draft of his story he started thinking about how movies told stories. He realized that he could do something similar with his book. A three-page written introduction became 46 drawn pages.

Selznick’s editor, Tracy Mack at Scholastic, said that for many authors, a book like Hugo would have crowned a career. But, she said, “To me, this is just the beginning for Brian.” He has started another novel that will be told partly in pictures, too.


Becky Saletan is publisher of the adult trade books. Gentel told The New York Times, “Highly regarded in the industry, Becky brings an innovative sensibility in publishing that will be important to Houghton Mifflin Harcourt as we continue what we do well, and look for ways to expand our programs in bold new directions.”

EFFICIENT: Will Leitch is a self-described blogger who has written
a book, God Save the Fan. He wrote an essay for PW entitled, "Writing a Book? Piece of Cake."

He explained, "Every day, I write about 7,000 words; this means that every three weeks, I write the equivalent of an extremely long book..." He said it took him five months without taking a day off to write God Save the Fan.

"In my work for print publication, I've found that editors love employing online writers because we are efficient, we are on time and we are not divas. It's just work. We care about what we do, and we make it the best we can. But we don't obsess over changes and pick petty fights over tiny word choices; there's more work to be done, elsewhere. Editors tend to appreciate this."

SOLD: Cormac McCarthy's correspondence, notes, drafts and proofs of 11 novels have been sold to the Southwestern Writers Collection of Texas State University San Marcos for $2 million. McCarthy's The Road won the 2006 Pulitzer and All the Pretty Little Horses won the 1992 National Book Award. Both were bestsellers.

BIG CHANGE: Will Schwalbe, editor in chief of Hyperion Books for seven years, quit to work on an Internet project. He told The New York Times, "I'm just incredibly excited by what is out there in new media. I've had some thoughts that I want to test and see if I can put them in practice."

SLOT FILLED: Priscilla Painton, a former executive editor at Time magazine, has taken over Michael Korda's job at Simon & Schuster. Korda retired from the editor in chief job two years ago. Painton, 49, will acquire and edit books as well as oversee nine editors. She said that she believed her network of contacts could help her find potential authors.

David Rosenthal, publisher at S&S, told The New York Times, "Media is critical to how we publicize and promote our books, so a sophisticated knowledge of that ain't a bad thing to have."

ONLINE REVIEWS: Jessa Crispin in Chicago "Rewrites the Rules of Reviewing." According to PW, her website, BooksSlut.com, has no full-time employees. Her stable of writers is made up of 30 or 40 volunteers. They select the books they review and are paid with books. Feature writers are paid cash. The site gets 8,000 to 9,000 hits a day.

STILL SELLING: Guild member John R. Knaffs of Austin, Tex., has found a way to keep one of his books in print and selling. The Bugles Are Silent: A Novel of the Texas Revolution from the Alamo to San Jacinto was published in 1977. It is in its 16th printing. From the beginning, 30 years ago, it has been offered for sale at the Alamo and other historical sites.

TRIBUTE: A eulogy written by Derek Walcott, a Nobel Prize winner in literature, was read at a memorial last December for the late Elizabeth Hardwick. It was printed in The New York Review of Books and said in part:

"Because she hated pomposity she was more fun than any American writer I have known. She preferred gaiety to malice and had the laugh to go with it. Memories of her rise like butterflies from a bush, all darting, elate, and light; the use of three adjectives is the signature of her style, perhaps because of the precise languor of her Kentucky accent."

IMPERIAL PLOT: John Burnham Schwartz, 42, got off to an encouraging start in 1989 with his first novel, Bicycle Days, about a young college graduate who goes to live in Japan. His new novel, The Commoner, published in January, is about a non-royal woman who marries into the Japanese imperial family. Her life turns out to be one of isolation and depression. She's not even allowed to take care of her children. While doing research in Tokyo, Schwartz had lunch with the imperial chamberlain, who offered to help. Schwartz said, "What I really want to know is, what colors are the carpets."

Schwartz also does screenwriting, but he had a bad experience writing the screenplay for his second novel, Reservation Road. The director reworked it. Schwartz told The New York Times, "the screenwriting satisfaction ends about here." He drew his hand across his neck. "And then there's the whole sort of middle of your body where the mysterious stuff goes on, that you wouldn't trade for anything in the world and that you only get from doing the work that's most personal and deepest to you."

THE EGG LIVES ON: The late Betty McDonald's first book, The Egg and I, was published in 1945 and has sold more than a million copies. A trade paperback is due out in June. McDonald died in 1958, just as she was about to be 50. March 26 was the centenary of her birth.

Four of her books for children about Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle have been rereleased, and Happy Birthday, Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle includes a previously unpublished story and seven new stories by McDonald's daughter, Anne McDonald Canhan.

SEQUEL: After eight years, Tony Early finally has a new book out, The Blue Star. His first novel, Jim the Boy, got a remarkable reception and the new book is a sequel.

Early told PW, "If it had had a horrible reception, I'm sure it wouldn't have taken another eight years to write another book. It's a
good problem to have. I don’t want to sound whiny, but it freaked me out a little bit.

“We adopted our daughter, Clara, three years ago, and it gave me some needed perspective. I don’t worry as much about writing. Although summer before last, Clara wandered up to my office and said, ‘So, dad, you finish that book yet?’ And I said, ‘Who sent you?’”

DIFFERENT: Gabriel Garcia Marquez, in his autobiography Living to Tell the Tale, wrote that he once thought “the story and the novel are not only different literary genres but two organisms and natures so diverse it is fatal to confuse them. I still believe that, and I’m convinced more than ever of the supremacy of the short story over the novel.”

ON MEANING: Peter Brooks, the theater director and author of Troubling Confessions: Speaking Guilt in Law and Literature, wrote: “Death is the ultimate conclusion in the 19th-century novel, the deathbed scene became a set piece, a moment when someone leaving the earth transmitted acquired wisdom to those who remained. Death marks the end in terms of which we can understand the full meaning of someone else’s life—a meaning denied to us in our own life. The German critic Walter Benjamin argued that one of our prime reasons for reading fiction is to understand the meaning of life in terms of death. The meaningful death in fiction, he claimed, is ‘the flame’ at which the reader warms his own ‘shivering life.’ It is a source of transmitted wisdom.”

FINALLY: Maurice Sendak’s Where the Wild Things Are has sold more than 19 million copies worldwide. A movie version will be released in mid-2009. At the same time, an adult novel by Dave Eggers, tentatively entitled Wild Things, will be published. Eggers cowrote the screenplay with the film’s director, Spike Jones.

The movie will combine live actors with digital animation and puppets.

FAST STRIKER: Sallie Bingham of Louisville, Ky., has written a memoir, several novels, a play and a new collection of short stories. Red Car, published in April. She told PW: “I read and write a lot of poetry, to narrow and hone. My work is denser and shorter now. Henry James is my prime influence—he is so brilliantly suggestive. That’s my aim: to strike hard and fast or you have lost your reader.”

BEGINNER’S LUCK: James Collins trimmed his 1,000-page manuscript to 600 pages and got almost a half-million-dollar advance. The title is Beginner’s Greek and it was published this spring. Collins is 50 years old with a background that includes Harvard, the Columbia Business School and a job at Spy magazine. He’s also written articles for The New Yorker. Collins, his wife and their two daughters live in an antebellum house in Virginia.

One agent turned down this first novel because she thought it was too commercial. It’s a romance, compared by friend and fellow writer, Kurt Anderson to books by Jane Austen and the late Laurie Colwin.

Collins told The New York Times that he set out to write a novel around a theme in Thomas Mann’s The Magic Mountain. He quoted Mann: “For the sake of goodness and love we must not let death dominate our thoughts.” Collins said that he “secretly sort of had this ambition to write a novel that was—mostly—funny, romantic and entertaining but that had the same moral.”

BUSY: Stephanie Meyer has three books on the children’s fiction bestseller list: Twilight, New Moon and Eclipse. The fourth and final novel in her Twilight series will be out on August 2. Like the Harry Potter books, Meyer’s novels have attracted many adult readers. Her first adult novel, The Host, was published May 6, and a movie version of Twilight will be released next December.

SUIT SETTLED: Publisher Judith Regan, fired from HarperCollins after the controversy over O. J. Simpson’s If I Did It, settled her $100 million defamation lawsuit against Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation, owner of HarperCollins. A statement from both parties, quoted in The New York Times, said that it was an “equitable, confidential settlement, with no admission of liability by any party.”

Regan said in the statement that “I am grateful for the opportunity to have worked with so many gifted people and am looking forward to my next venture.”

A PAIR: Oscar Hijuelos is writing a companion novel to his 1990 Pulitzer Prize winner, The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love. The title will be Beautiful Maria of My Soul and it is due out next year. He’s also writing a memoir to be entitled Thoughts Without Cigarettes, due out in 2010.

CUSER: Susan Wiggs has a paperback novel, Snowfall at Willow Lake, on the bestseller list. She explained on her website why she uses dirty words: “I write about real people who talk like who they are. Men in particular use salty talk. A fireman dealing with an exploding propane tank is unlikely to say, ‘Gosh, darn it.’ . . . A regular guy checking out a gorgeous woman does not look at her breasts and think of them as ‘milk white pillows of paradise.’ . . . Swear words are just empty air, but real people use them, especially in tense situations.”
The Next Step: Brad Stone, in the business pages of The New York Times, said that Amazon was buying Audible, the Web's largest provider of downloadable audiobooks. Stone wrote that Amazon's first step will be bringing audiobooks directly to its website and the Kindle electronic book reader. "What comes after that?" Stone asked. "How about a service that allows you to switch seamlessly from reading a book on your digital device to listening to the same book as you get in the car, or if your eyes are tired? And later, to switch back to the printed page?"

Later Stone asked, "How about audiobooks that you can easily transfer between your computer, e-book reader and cell phone? Or e-book downloads that come with a discounted audio track? Audible's new owner could now make all that possible, with a little cooperation from brave publishers."

Hat Trick: In 2001, Gabriel Cohen, 46, published a detective novel, Red Hook. It was nominated for "best first novel" by the Mystery Writers of America. Now he has three books out, in three different genres, published by three different houses, all in bookstores within a year. Cohen explained to The New York Times, "The publishing world wants to fit you into some kind of niche. You're a crime writer, you're a science writer, whatever. I'm passionate about a lot of different things."

Boombox, "a literary novel" was published last May. The Graying Dock, out in November, is a sequel to the earlier crime novel. The third, a nonfiction book out in March, was Storms Can't Hurt the Sky: A Buddhist Path Through Divorce. This last is described as "part memoir and part self-help book."

Burnout: After five novels about the Reverend Curtis Black (the first was Behind Closed Doors), author Kimberla Lawson Roby is tired of her skirt-chasing preacher. She said on a website: "I've considered ending the series for a while, so I tried my best to wrap up things in Sin No More to the best of my ability. Not to say that you won't see Curtis again in other stories of mine, but for now, I'd like to focus on a few new characters and story lines."

Online: HarperCollins will offer six books free online for a month each. These include novels by Neil Gaiman and Paulo Coelho and a cookbook by Robert Irvine. The books may not be downloaded or printed.

New Novelist: Alain Robbe-Grillet was 85 when he died in February. The noted filmmaker (Last Year at Marienbad) was also a novelist. Titles include The Erasers (1953), Jealousy (1957) and In the Labyrinth (1960). In an article for The New York Times, Rachel Donadio wrote, "The novel, Mr. Robbe-Grillet contended, was a 19th-century form, epitomized by the rich, naturalistic worlds of Balzac and Flaubert. The 20th century, though, was characterized by fragmentation and existential doubt, and the novel reached 'a degree of stagnation.' . . . He called for a radical departure: anti-realist, anti-naturalist, anti-descriptive, apolitical. 'In this future universe of the novel, gestures and objects will be the 'there' before being 'something,' he wrote. 'They will still be there afterwards, hard, unalterable, eternally present, mocking their own meaning.'

"Robbe-Grillet . . . wanted to do in literature what others had done in art: . . . valorized gesture, the movement of a brush stroke itself, over representation."

The End: The Quill Awards, begun in 2005, were discontinued, PW reported. Each year, 19 books were selected by online voting. The winners were pretty much like the names on the bestseller lists, and the annual black-tie awards ceremony on NBC-TV was painful to watch. Nora Roberts sells millions of books. Does she need awards too?

Job Changes, New Titles*

After 24 years at Houghton Mifflin's adult trade division, Janet Silver will be editor at large at Nan A. Talese/Doubleday. Silver will edit out of her home in Concord, Mass.

Lauren McKenna has been named executive editor at Pocket Books. Maggie Crawford, who was VP and editorial director, will focus on editorial duties, acquiring and editing both hardcover and paperback.

Susan Van Metre is editorial di-rector at Amulet Books, a children's imprint of Harry N. Abrams.

David Cashion, formerly at Penguin, is executive editor of Abrams Image, an imprint focused on illustrated gift books.

Sarah Landis and Brendon Duffy have been named editors at Hyperion's Voice imprint.

Barbara Jones is executive editor at Hyperion. She was deputy editor at More magazine.

Ginny Weissman is an agent at Martin Literary Management specializing in the mind, body and spirit category. She is based in Chicago.

Sally Kim is executive editor of HarperCollins's flagship imprint. She was a senior editor at Shaye Arheart Books.

Jennifer Levesque is executive editor at Stewart, Tabori and Chang.

Kristen Latta has moved up to associate editor.

*Compiled from Publishers Weekly

Deaths

Gerald Astor, 81, died December 30 in Scarsdale, N.Y. He was the au-

Allan Berube, 61, died December 11 in Liberty, N.Y. He was the author of Coming Out Under Fire (1990).

Walter Bowart, 68, died December 18 in Inchelium, Wash. He was the author of Operation Mind Control (1978). He also founded Omen Press, publisher of metaphysical books.

David Bradley, 92, died January 7 in Norway, Me. He was the author of No Place to Hide (1948), Lion Among Roses (1965) and Robert Frost: A Tribute to the Source (1979).

Frank O. Braynard, 91, died December 10 in Glen Cove, N.Y. He was the author of a six-volume history of the ocean liner Leviathan, seized from Germany in World War I. He also cowrote a three-volume history titled Fifty Famous Liners.


William F. Buckley Jr., 82, died February 27 in Stamford, Conn. He was the author of more than 50 books, beginning with God and Men at Yale (1951) and moving on to spy novels, accounts of sailing trips, harpsichord dissertations, historical novels and memoirs. A memoir about Senator Barry M. Goldwater is to be published this year and he was working on a personal memoir about Ronald Reagan when he died.

Arthur C. Clarke, 90, died March 12 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. He was the author of 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968) and almost 100 other books, including Against the Fall of Night (1953), Glide Path (1963), Childhood's End (1953), The Coast of Coral (1958) and Profiles of the Future (1962).

Margaret Truman Daniel, 83, died January 29 in Chicago. The daughter of President Harry S. Truman, she was the author of 32 books. Her first was Souvenir: Margaret Truman's Own Story (1956), followed by Bess W. Truman (1986), White House Pets (1969), Women of Courage (1976), First Ladies: An Intimate Group Portrait of White House Wives (1985) and The President's House: 1800 to the Present (2004). Twenty-three of her books were mystery novels set in Washington, D.C.

George Macdonald Fraser, 82, died January 2 on the Isle of Man. He was the author of a dozen fictional memoirs including Flashman (1969), Flashman in the Great Game (1975) and Flashman on the March (2005).

John A. Garraty, 87, died December 19 in Sag Harbor, N.Y. He was the author of Henry Cabot Lodge (1953), Woodrow Wilson: A Great Life in Brief (1956), The Nature of Biography (1957) and The Great Depression (1986). A Columbia professor emeritus, he was also the general editor of the American National Biography, which gives brief sketches of 17,450 people who shaped the U.S.

W. C. Heinz, 93, died February 27 in Bennington, Vt. He was a war correspondent, sports columnist, magazine writer and novelist. His books included American Mirror (1982), Run to Daylight! (1963), Once They Heard the Cheers (1979), The Professional (1958) and The Surgeon (1963). He was coauthor of *MA*S*H* (1968).

Edward D. Hoch, 77, died January 17 in Rochester, N.Y. He was the author of more than 900 mystery stories and novels, including The Transvection Machine (1971), The Fellowship of the Hand (1973) and The Frankenstein Factory (1975). Under the name Ellery Queen he wrote The Blue Movie Murders (1972).

Laura Huxley, 96, died December 13 in Los Angeles. She was the author of a memoir, This Timeless Moment: A Personal View of Aldous Huxley (1968), published five years after her husband's death. Other books included You Are Not the Target (1963).

Raymond Kennedy, 73, died February 18 in Brooklyn, N.Y. The former creative writing teacher at Columbia University was the author of eight novels, including My Father's Orchard (1953), The Flower of the Republic (1983) and Ride a Cockhorse (1991).

Jim Knight, 89, died December 30 in New York City. He was the author of a novel, The Master of Chambord (1994).


David Maybury-Lewis, 78, died December 2 in Cambridge, Mass.
The anthropologist and professor at Harvard was author of *Akwe-Shawante Society* (1967).


Robin Moore, 82, died February 19 in Hopkinsville, Ky. He was the author of *The Green Berets* (1965) and *The French Connection* (1969).


Frederick Seitz, 96, died March 2 in Manhattan. The physicist was a former president of Rockefeller University and the author of a textbook, *The Modern Theory of Solids* (1940).

Raymond Smith, 77, died February 18 in Princeton, N.J. He was co-editor with his wife, Joyce Carol Oates, of *The Ontario Review* and author of *Charles Churchill* (1977).


Phyllis A. Whitney, 104, died February 15 in Faber, Va. The New York Times described her as “a prolific best-selling author of romantic mysteries, young-adult novels and children’s mysteries.” Her first book was *A Place for Ann* (1941) and her last was *Amethyst Dreams* (1997). Other works included 39 adult suspense novels, 14 novels for young adults, 20 children’s mysteries and several books about writing. Her books were translated into 30 languages and sold in the millions. ✪

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**CONTRACTS Q&A**

*Continued from page 15*

wrote the column for it, and (3) you had no written agreement with any of the newspapers (x) saying you were writing the column on a work-for-hire basis, (y) giving it the copyright in the article (or any other rights to the column if those rights still exist), or (z) saying you were writing the column as an employee of the newspaper.

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E-mail questions to QandAColumn@authorsguild.org. Questions and letters are often edited for readability or to make them more broadly applicable.

The answers in this column are general in nature only and may not include exceptions to a general rule or take into account related facts which may result in a different answer. You should consult a lawyer for information about a particular situation. No question submitted, or answer provided, creates an attorney-client relationship with the column’s author.

Editor’s Note: Readers needing quick answers to their questions should contact the Guild’s legal department [staff@authorsguild.org] instead of this column. Only a limited number of questions submitted to this column can be answered, and e-mail replies are not given.

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BOOKS BY MEMBERS


Meg Cabot: Moving Day: Allie Finkle's Rules for Girls, Book 1; Stephanie Calmenson: Jazzmatazz!: Julia Cameron: Mozart's Ghost; Lou Cannon (and Carl M. Cannon): Reagan's Discipline; George W. Bush's Quest for a Presidential Legacy; Lynne Cheney (and Gary Braasch): How We Know What We Know About Our Changing Climate: Scientists and Kids Explore Global Warming; Thomas Cobb: Shavetail; Rachel Cohn: You Know Where to Find Me; Sneed B. Collard III: Teeth; Wings; Claire Cooke: Summer Blowout; Elisha Cooper: ridiculous/hilarious/terrible/cool: A Year in an American High School; Mike Cox: The Texas Rangers: Volume 1, Wearing the Cinco Peso, 1821-1900; Claire Hope Cummings: Uncertain Peril: Genetic Engineering and the Future of Seeds;


Solveig Eggerz: Seal Woman; Karen English: Nikki & Deja;


Debra Galant: Fear and Yoga in New Jersey; Albert Clayton Gaulden: You're Not Who You Think You Are: A Breakthrough Guide to Discovering the Authentic You; Lindsey Barrett George: Alfred Digs; Patricia Reilly Giff: Eleven; Jamie Gilson: Chess!: Richard Goodman: The Soul of Creative Writing; Chris Grabenstein: The Crossroads; Hell Hole; Laurie Graham: The Importance of Being Kennedy; Rita Gray: Mama Mine, Mama Mine; Ellin Greene (Adapt.): Mother's Song: An English Lullaby; Cynthia Greenwood: The Complete Idiot's Guide to Shakespeare's Plays;


Rick Kardone (and Eda Shapiro): Victor Kugler: The Man Who Hid Anne Frank; Karen Katz: Princess Baby; Michele Keith: Great Country French Style; Country Living Easy Makeovers: 101 Quick Design Fixes You Can Do in a Weekend; William Kemble: Backpacker & Hiker’s Handbook; Nancy B. Kennedy: Make It, Shake It, Mix It Up; Eric A. Kimmel: The McKeldy Book of Greek Myths; Stephen King: Duma Key; Steve Kluger: My Most Excellent Year: A Novel of Love, Mary Poppins, & Fenway Park; Susan Knopf: Johnny Tractor’s New Friend; Who’s New at the Zoo?; Barney Backhoe & the Big City Dig; Gordon Korman: Swindle; David J. Kundtz (and Bernard S. Schlager): Ministry Among God’s Queer Folk: LGBT Pastoral Care; Steven Kurutz: Like a Rolling Stone: The Strange Life of a Tribute Band;

Eric Lamet: A Gift from the Enemy; Michael Laser: Cheat; Ursula K. Le Guin: Lavina; Leslie Lehr: Wife Goes On; Jim Lehrer: Mack to the Rescue; Ron Leshnower: Every Landlord’s Property Protection Guide: 10 Ways to Cut Your Risk Now; Linda Lewis: The Road Back to Heaven; Reeve Lindbergh: Forword from Here: Leaving Middle Age—and Other Unexpected Adventures; Sally Lloyd-Jones: The Ultimate Guide to Grandmas and Grandpas; Old Mac-Nosh Had an Ark; Peter Lourie: On the Texas Trail of Cabeza de Vaca; Lois Lowry: The Willoughbys; Lisa Lutz: Curse of the Spellmans; George Ella Lyon: My Friend, the Starfinder;

Kerry Madden: Jessie’s Mountain; Margaret Marion: Death’s Half Acre; Trish Marx: Elephants and Golden Thrones: Inside China’s Forbidden City; Steel Drumming at the Apollo: The Road to Super Top Dog; Blair Mastbaum: Us Ones in Between; Norma Fox Mazer: The Missing Girl; Sandy McClure (and Bob Ingle): The Soprano State: New Jersey’s Culture of Corruption; Marilyn McFarlane: The Healthy Seniors Cookbook; Nancy McKenzie: Guinevere’s Gift; Jennifer McMahon: Island of Lost Girls; Mameve Medwed: Of Men and Their Mothers; Milton Melzer: Albert Einstein: A Biography; David Milgrim: Amelia Makes a Movie; Edward Miller: The Tooth Book: A Guide to Healthy Teeth and Gums; Claudia Mills: The Totally Made-Up Civil War Diary of Amanda MacLeish; Mark Monmonier: Coast Lines: How Mapmakers Frame the World to Chart Environmental Change; Craig Moodie: Seaborn; Honor Moore: The Bishop’s Daughter: A Memoir; Lois B. Morris (and Hao Jiang Tian): Along the Roaring River: My Wild Ride from Mao to the Met; Lillian Morrison: The Traveller; Barry Moser: Barry Moser’s Psalms 23; Walter Dean Myers: Game;


Barbara O’Connor: Greetings from Nowhere; Roxane Orgill: Dream Lucky: When FDR was in the White House, Count Basie was on the Radio, and Everyone Wore a Hat; Jan Ormerod: Ballet Sisters: The Newest Dancer; Cynthia Ozick: Dictation: A Quartet;

Katherine Hall Page: The Body in the Gallery; Barbara Park: Ma! There’s Nothing to Do Here!; Marjorie Blain Parker: Mama’s Little Duckling; Katherine Paterson: The Light of the World: The Life of Jesus for Children; Charles Patterson: Un Eterenal Treblinka; Ann Whitford Paul: Count on Culebra: Go from 1 to 10 in Spanish; Snail’s Good Night; Olive Pearl: Linked; Laura Pedersen: Buffalo Gal; Rick Perlstein: Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America; Wendy Pfeffer: A New Beginning: Celebrating the Spring Equinox; Eileen Pollack: In the Mouth: Stories and Novellas; John T. Price: Man Killed by Peasant: (and Other Kinships): A Memoir; Laurence Pringle: Imagine a Dragon;


Charles Salzberg (and Charlie Moore): The Mad Fisherman: Kick Some Bass with America’s Wildest TV Host; Cecilia Samartin: Tarnished Beauty; Tim Sandlin: Rowdy in Paris; D. R. Savastano: On the Breath of Angels; Christine Schutt: All Souls; Mimi Schwartz: Good Neighbors, Bad Times: Echoes of My Father’s German Village; Cathy Scott: Pawprints of Katrina: Pets Saved and Lessons Learned; Janice Shefelman: I, Vivaldi; Michael W. Sherer: Island Life: John Sherman: New Faces at the Crossroads: The World in Central Indiana; Bifra; Uri Shulevitz: How I Learned Geography; Matthew Silverman: 100 Things Mets Fans Should Know & Do Before They Die; Mets Essential; Matthew Silverman (and Greg Spiria) (Eds.): Meet the Mets; Matthew Silverman (and Jon Springer): Mets by the Numbers; Marilyn Singer: Eggs; Alexandra Siy: One Tractor: A Counting Book; Zilpha Keatley Snyder: The Bronze Pen; Eliezer Sobel: The 99th Monkey: A Spiritual Journalist’s Misadventures with Gurus, Messiahs, Sex, Psychedelics and Other Consciousness-Raising Experiments; Alexandra Soiseth: Choosing You: Deciding to Have a Baby on My Own; Domenic Stansberry: The Ancient Rain; Nancy Star: Carpool Diem; Wendy Corsi Staub:


Wendy Walker: Four Wives; Bev Walton-Porter: Mending Fences; Sun Signs for Writers; Bev Walton-Porter (and Pat McGrath Avery, Joyce Falkner, and Mindy Phillips Lawrence): The Complete Writer: A Guide to Tapping Your Full Potential; Carole Boston Weatherford: I, Matthew Henson: Polar Explorer; Elizabeth E. Wein: The Empty Kingdom: The Mark of Solomon, Book Two; Ken Wells: Crawfish Mountain; Stephen White: Dead Time; Macrina Wiederkehr: Seven Sacred Pauses: Living Mindfully Through the Hours of the Day; Tobias Wolff: Our Story Begins: New and Selected Stories; Meg Wolitzer: The Ten Year Nap;

Dan Yaccarino: Go, Go America.

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**BULLETIN BOARD**

Awards and Fellowships

The Ohio Arts Council supports Ohio-based creative artists, including fiction and nonfiction writers, poets, playwrights and screenplay writers, and critics, with Individual Excellence Awards of $5,000 and $10,000. Applicants must have lived in Ohio continuously for one year before the September 1, 2008 deadline and remain an Ohio resident for the term of the award. The application requirements and list of supporting materials are outlined at oac.state.oh.us/grantsprogs. Ohio Arts Council, 727 E. Main Street, Columbus, OH 43205. (614) 466-2613.

Each year, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation provides fellowships to assist writers and other artists in research and creative projects. Grant amounts vary. Applications for 2009 are available online at gf.org or write to The John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, 90 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10016. The deadline for residents of the United States and Canada is September 15, 2008; the deadline for residents of Latin America and the Caribbean is December 1, 2008.

The American Antiquarian Society (AAS), a national research library of American history, literature and culture through 1876, offers fellowships for historical research by writers and journalists whose goal is to produce an imaginative, non-formulaic work dealing with pre-20th century American history. It is preferred that applicants’ work address the general public rather than an academic audience. Fellowships are held at the AAS in Worcester, Mass., last four weeks, and include a $1,200 stipend and some travel expenses. Rooms are available for rent in the Goddard-Daniels house, a historic mansion across from the AAS library. Applications are available online at americanantiquarian.org/artistsfellowship.htm. Deadline: October 5, 2008. American Antiquarian Society, 185 Salisbury Street, Worcester, MA 01609-1634. (508) 755-5221

Multiple Genres

The Bellevue Literary Review offers three annual prizes, the Magliocco Prize for Poetry, the Goldenberg Prize for Fiction, and the Kaplan Prize for Nonfiction. Each winner receives $1,000 and publication in the Spring 2009 issue of the Bellevue Literary Review. Prose entries should be no more than 5,000 words and poetry entries should be no more than three poems (up to five pages). Submissions are made electronically; visit blreview.org/Contest/contest_guidelines.htm for instructions. There is a $15 entry fee (send $20 for a one-year subscription to the journal), also submitted online. Deadline: August 1, 2008. Contact info@BLReview.org with questions.

Ecotone, a literary journal focused on the environment, is publishing a special issue celebrating the bicentennial of Charles Darwin’s birth and the sesquicentennial of the publication of The Origin of Species. The magazine is accepting submissions in poetry, fiction and nonfiction for the Ecotone Evolution Contest for works that
creatively reflect the subject of evolution. First prize is $1,000, a limited edition chapbook of the winning manuscript, and publication in the special evolution issue, Spring 2009. Two runners-up will receive chapbooks of their manuscripts, and all three will be published in Ecotone. Send a manuscript, including applicant’s name, genre, contact information and “Ecotone Evolution Contest,” with a $15 entry fee. Deadline: **August 1, 2008.** Ecotone Evolution Contest, Creative Writing Department, University of North Carolina Wilmington, 601 South College Road, Wilmington, NC 28403-3297. evolution@ecotonejournal.com.

The Mississippi Review will accept applications for its 2009 fiction and poetry contest until **October 1, 2008.** Winners receive $1,000; winners and finalists will make up the Winter 2009 issue of the journal. To enter, send fiction of 1,000-5,000 words or three poems of up to 10 pages. Send a $15 fee with each entry; include an additional $10 for a one-year subscription of the Mississippi Review. Include “MR Prize,” entrant’s name, address, phone number, e-mail address, and title of the work on the first page of the manuscript. Mississippi Review Prize 2008, 118 College Drive #5144, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001. (601) 266-4321; rief@mississippi review.com.

**Fiction Contests**

The University of Iowa Press will accept submissions to its Iowa Short Fiction Award and John Simmons Short Fiction Award contests between August 1 and **September 30, 2008.** Winning manuscripts will be published by the University of Iowa Press under its standard contract. Applicants must not have previously published a volume of prose fiction; authors of a volume of poetry, any work in a language other than English, or those who have self-published a work in a small print run are eligible. Submit a collection of short stories of at least 150 double-spaced pages by mail with an optional cover and/or contents page. The author’s name may appear on every page, but this is not required. There is no reading fee. Iowa Short Fiction Award, Iowa Writers’ Workshop, 507 North Clinton Street, 102 Dey House, Iowa City, IA 52242-1000. uipress.uiowa.edu/authors/iowa-short-fiction.htm

The Texas Review Press is holding its annual George Garrett Fiction Prize competition for fiction manuscripts of up to 250 pages. The winner receives $200 and publication. Send a manuscript without the author’s name anywhere on it with two cover letters, one with the title, author’s name, address and telephone number, and one with the title. Send a $20 reading fee, which includes a one-year subscription to the Texas Review Press. Visit shsu.edu/~www_trp/ggfp.html to download the full application guidelines. Deadline: **September 15, 2008.** George Garrett Fiction Prize Competition, Texas Review Press, Department of English, Sam Houston State University, Box 2146, Huntsville, TX 77341-2146.

Boston Review will accept entries to its 16th annual Short-Story Contest until **October 1, 2008.** The winning author will receive $1,500 and publication in the May/June 2009 issue of the journal. To enter, send one previously unpublished story, up to 4,000 words. The author’s name should not appear on the manuscript; include a cover letter with the author’s name, address and phone number. Send a $20 entry fee, which includes a one-year subscription to Boston Review. Short-Story Contest, Boston Review, 35 Medford Street, Suite 302, Somerville, MA 02143. bostonreview.net/about/contest.

**Poetry Contests**

The Creative Writing department of the California State University, Fresno, holds the annual Philip Levine Prize in Poetry, which includes a $1,500 cash prize and publication and distribution of the winning entry by Florida-based Anhinga Press. The winner will also receive 25 free copies of the published book. To enter, send a manuscript of original poetry, unpublished in book form, of 48-80 pages, with no more than one poem per page. Do not include the entrant’s name on the manuscript; send two title pages, one with the entrant’s name and contact information and one with the manuscript title. Include an entry fee of $25 for each submission. Bind the manuscript with a binder clip; no staples. Deadline: **September 30, 2008.** Philip Levine Prize in Poetry, CSUF English Department, 5245 N. Backer Ave., MS PB98, Fresno, CA 93740-8001. csufresno.edu/crwr/07philprize05.htm

The Alice James Poetry Cooperative presents its annual Kinereth Gensler Awards to poets residing in New England, New York State, and New Jersey. Winners receive $2,000 and publication, and serve a three-year term on the Alice James Books Editorial Board. Submit typed, paginated manuscripts of 50-70 pages in length, single-spaced, not previously published in book form. Include a table of contents and a list of acknowledgments for poems previously published. Entrant’s name, address and phone number should appear on the manuscript’s title page only. Include one copy of the manuscript and two copies of the title page, using binder clips. The entry fee is $25. Deadline: **October 1, 2008.** Visit alicejamesbooks.org/KG.html for full submission guidelines and information about
the Alice James Poetry Cooperative and the judging process. Alice James Books, Kinereth Gensler Awards, 238 Main Street, Farmington, ME 04938.

The University of Wisconsin Press will award the Brittingham Prize in Poetry and the Felix Pollak Prize in Poetry. The two winning poets will receive $1,000 and a $1,500 honorarium to cover expenses of a reading in Madison. To enter, send an unbound manuscript of between 50 and 80 pages, single-spaced with a double space between stanzas, or entirely double-spaced. The manuscript should be previously unpublished in book form. Include a title page with the poet’s name, address and telephone number. Include a $25 reading fee, which covers both prizes. Entries must be postmarked between September 1 and October 1, 2008. Visit wisc.edu/wisconsinpress/poetryguide.html for full guidelines. Brittingham and Pollak Poetry Prizes, c/o Ronald Wallace, UW Press Poetry Series Editor, Department of English, 600 N. Park Street, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI 53706. rwallace@wisc.edu.

Other Genres

American Zoetrope holds an annual Screenplay Contest, judged by Francis Ford Coppola and the Zoetrope staff, to seek out and encourage compelling film narratives. The winner and top 10 finalists will be considered for representation by a number of agencies and considered for film option and development by leading production companies. Lists of both are available at zoetrope.com/contests, along with full submission guidelines. The winner will be awarded $5,000. Submissions are made online and will be accepted between June 2 and September 2, 2008, with an early deadline of August 1.

The Missouri Review will hold the 2008 Audio & Video Competition for short audio and video pieces. The categories are Voice-Only Literature (author-read short stories or creative nonfiction), Narrative Essay (may include layers of sound), Documentary, and Video, all of which should be submitted on CD or DVD with a completed entry form, a brief program synopsis, and a $24 entry fee, which includes a one-year subscription to the journal. First place in each category ranges from $1,000 to $1,500, and up to five finalists in each category will receive the Editors’ Choice Award and $100. All winning entries will be featured on the website of The Missouri Review. Deadline: September 15, 2008. Visit missourireview.org/contest/audio_competition.php for submission guidelines, including detailed descriptions of each category and a how-to guide for producing simple voice recordings. The Missouri Review Audio & Video Competition, 357 McReynolds Hall, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211. contest_question@moreview.com.

MEMBERS MAKE NEWS

The National Book Critics Circle presented its 2007 awards at a ceremony on March 6 in New York City. Edwidge Danticat, Brother, I’m Dying, received the award for Autobiography, and Sara Paretsky, Writing in an Age of Silence, was a finalist. Tim Weiner, Legacy of Ashes: A History of the CIA, and Alan Weisman, The World Without Us, were finalists for General Nonfiction.

The International Thriller Writers nominated From the Depths by Gerry Doyle and Volk’s Game by Brent Ghelfi for the 2008 Best First Novel award, part of their annual Thriller Awards. The winners will be announced at Thrillerfest 2008, held on July 12 in New York City.

The American Society of Journalists and Authors (ASJA) presented Margie Goldsmith its 2008 writing award in the category of First Person, Essay or Personal Experience for her article “The Sense of Being Stared At,” published in the July 2007 issue of O, The Oprah Magazine. The ASJA also posthumously awarded the ASJA Founders’ Award for Career Achievement to Sarah Wernick. The awards were presented at the 27th annual ASJA Writers Conference in New York City on April 11.

Each year, the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), a division of the American Library Association (ALA), chooses 10 books from its Best Books list for young adults. The 2008 list includes Your Own, Sylvia: A Verse Portrait of Sylvia Plath, by Stephanie Hemphill, and American Shaolin: Flying Kicks, Buddhist Monks, and the Legend of Iron Crotch: An Odyssey in the New China, by Matthew Polly. The ALA also announced the winners of the Schneider Family Book Award for an author or illustrator’s artistic depiction of the disability experience for child and adolescent audiences. Kami and Yaks, by Andrea Stenn Stryer and illustrated by Bert Dodson, received the award in the Young Children category. The award will be presented during the ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim, CA, in June.
The Massachusetts Center for the Book presented the 2007 Massachusetts Book Awards, honoring books published in 2006 by authors living in Massachusetts, or books with themes of significance to the state if their authors are not residents. In the Children’s/Young Adult Literature category, Alice Hoffman received the Award for Incantation, and Elizabeth Winthrop received an Honor for Counting on Grace. Kim McLarin’s Jump at the Sun and Mameve Medwed’s How Elizabeth Barrett Browning Saved My Life received Honors in the Fiction category. Nathaniel Philbrick, author of Mayflower, received the Nonfiction Award. The awards were presented at the Massachusetts Library Association’s annual conference in Sturbridge, MA, on May 3, 2007.

The PEN American Center presented its 2008 Literary Awards on May 19 in New York City. Cynthia Ozick received the 2008 PEN/Nabokov Award, an international prize funded by the Vladimir Nabokov Foundation that honors the career of a world-renowned fiction writer and carries a prize of $20,000. She was also honored with the 2008 PEN/Malamud Award, sponsored by the PEN/Faulkner Foundation, which recognizes a body of work that demonstrates excellence in the art of short fiction. Dalia Sofer received the PEN/Robert Bingham Fellowship for Writers, honoring an exceptionally talented fiction writer whose debut work represents distinguished literary achievement, for her novel The Septembers of Shiraz. She received $35,000. Theresa Nelson, author of Julia Delany: The American Version, received the PEN/Phyllis Naylor Working Writer Fellowship, an award of $5,000 intended to help a writer complete a book-length work in progress.

The Italian edition of Helen Barolini’s novel, Umbertina, was short-listed as a finalist for the Premio Acerbi prize, which is named for Giuseppe Acerbi and honors the literature of Italian Americans in the United States. The winner will be announced in June and the award will be presented in November in Castel Goffredo, Italy.

Marlin Bree won first place in the 15th annual Boating Writers International writing contest for his story “The Old Man and the Inland Sea,” in the Seamanship, Rescue & Safety category. The story was originally published in Ensign magazine as well as in Bree’s book, Broken Seas: True Tales of Extraordinary Seafaring Adventures. Bree also won second place in the Boat/Engine Care and Maintenance category for “The Artful Dodger,” originally published in Small Craft Advisor magazine. The awards were announced at the Miami International Boat Show in February.

Robert Caro was elected a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters at the annual induction and award ceremony on May 21 in New York City.

Annie Dillard was a finalist for the 28th annual Pen/Faulkner Award for Fiction for her book The Maytrees. She received $5,000 and was honored with the winner and other finalists on May 10 at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C.

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation established an award in honor of Ernest Gaines, the Ernest J. Gaines Award for Literary Excellence. The first award was presented to Olympia Vernon on January 24 at the Manship Theatre in Baton Rouge, La.

USA Book News presented the award for Best Book of 2007 in the Men’s Issues category to Good Dad/Bad Dad: Do’s and Don’ts from the Trenches by David George. The book is also a finalist for the Parenting/Family: Reference award.

My Best Friend, the Atlantic Ocean, and Other Great Bodies Standing Between Me and My Life with Giulio, by Jane Harrington, was named a Junior Library Guild Selection. Her book Extreme Pets! was included on the ALA’s Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers list.

Deborah Heiligman’s books, Celebrate Passover with Matzah, Maror and Memories, and Celebrate Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur with Honey, Prayers and the Shofar, were named as 2008 Notable Books for Younger Readers by the Sydney Taylor Book Award Committee of the Association of Jewish Libraries.


Barbara Novack, currently Writer-in-Residence at Molloy College in Rockville Centre, NY, was honored at a gala reception at the United Nations as part of a March 19 event celebrating the publication of Rehabilitation Medicine and Thermography by Mathew H.M. Lee and Jeffrey M. Cohen. Novack’s poem, “Searching for Pain,” serves as the introduction to the book. In addition, three of her poems were chosen by the Tidepool Poets poetry group in Plymouth, MA, and the Plymouth Public Library’s Poetry Club as their spring poetry selection.

Milton Meltzer’s novel, Tough Times, was awarded the first annual Carol Otis Hurst Children’s Book Prize by the Westfield Athenaeum in Westfield, MA. The award honors the children’s or young adult book that exemplifies the highest standards of research, analysis and authorship in its portrayal of the New England Experience.
Shakespeare’s Kitchen, by Lore Segal, was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for fiction. The 92nd Annual Pulitzer Prizes were announced on April 7 and presented at a luncheon at Columbia University on May 29.

Stalin’s Ghost: An Arkady Renko Novel, by Martin Cruz Smith, has been nominated for the 2007 Hammett Prize for a work of literary excellence in crime writing. The winner of the award, sponsored by the North American Branch of the International Association of Crime Writers, will be announced in June in Toronto.

Close Encounters of a Third-World Kind, by Jennifer J. Stewart, has been nominated for the 2009 Nutmeg Book Award sponsored by the Connecticut Library Association and the Connecticut Association of Media Specialists. The 10 nominated books will be voted on by children in grades 4 to 8.

The world premiere of composer Andy Kirshner’s “Sweet Music in Harlem,” based on the book by Debbie Taylor, was performed on January 27 by the Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra in Michigan. Taylor is also the recipient of the Senior Women in Their Most Productive Years (SWIMPY) “dream grant” from Case Western Reserve University. The grant will be used for expenses associated with writing books related to the careers of jazz pioneers Clora Bryant, Rosalind Cron and Mary Lou Williams.

Jeffrey Toobin was awarded the J. Anthony Lukas Book Prize for The Nine: Inside the Secret World of the Supreme Court. The Lukas awards are administered by the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism and the Nieman Foundation at Harvard University. Toobin received $10,000 and was honored at a ceremony on May 13 at the Nieman Foundation.

Stephen Trimble was awarded a Wallace Stegner Fellowship by the Tanner Center for the Humanities at the University of Utah, part of the centennial celebration of Stegner’s birth. Throughout the 2008–2009 academic year, Trimble will create and participate in a statewide conversation and ongoing blog about Stegner’s work.


G. K. Wuori’s unpublished novel, What He Would Have Done to Me, was a finalist in the University of Michigan Literary Fiction Awards, and his unpublished story collection, Respectful Beatings for Very Good Help, was a finalist for the Flannery O’Connor Award for Short Fiction from the University of Georgia Press.

William F. Buckley and His Catalogue

Continued from page 11

The first catalogue, listing more than 750 titles and looking handsome, came out in January 1984. Bill had a friend he could turn to for any chore. As a friend of Tom and Sheila Wolfe, he asked Sheila, a graphic designer, to design our catalogue. (If we made payment to Sheila, it was nominal.) Major newspapers remarked on the catalogue’s debut, among them, The New York Times, The Washington Post and The Wall Street Journal, giving a big boost to our distribution figures.

We published for three successive years, each succeeding catalogue fatter than the last. But the profit Bill anticipated never quite came. In the third year a large reprint house appeared on our doorstep with an offer to buy the catalogue. They had, we thought, more sophisticated methods of getting the catalogue into the right hands at libraries and bookstores where we were only hit or miss. So we accepted an offer substantial enough to allow Bill to recoup his investment and reeward me for the work, while still guaranteeing the life of the catalogue.

It came out the fourth year, 1987, under their auspices. But then the overextended reprint house went into bankruptcy and with it the catalogue.

Yet Buckley’s concept had life in it still. In 1997, it belatedly occurred to me that instead of an expensively printed annual catalogue, the Internet was the obvious outlet, allowing, for one thing, overnight updating. Bill agreed. I went around to see Paul Aiken at the Guild in March 1997, to find a copy of our 1986 Buckley-Little catalogue sitting on his desk. Planning for the Guild Backinprint.com program was already underway.

Paul wondered for a moment if there were any legal impediments remaining with the defunct reprint house. Bill’s reaction was unequivocal:

“I should think without consulting any lawyer in the world that the unlikeliest thing in legal history is that anyone would pursue us for revivifying our beloved catalogue, under the circumstances.”

Thanks to the perspicacity (a very Buckley word) of Paul Aiken and his colleagues at the Guild, Backinprint.com went on line in 1999. The Guild accom-
plished the shift from Buckley-Little catalogue publishing of the 1980s to the electronic world of today in partnership with iUniverse, the print-on-demand publishing company. iUniverse scans an electronic copy of a Guild member’s out-of-print book, creates a new cover for it, and then, printing copies as the demand comes in, offers it for sale online. A 20 percent royalty goes to the author.

Bill Buckley would have been enormously pleased to learn that, in 2007, 46,844 books were sold under this plan, creating $566,382 in sales, and earning the authors in the program a collective sum of $99,530.

Bill’s 1983 hope for the participation of the Authors Guild in a books out-of-print plan for authors had come full circle.

Letters

Continued from page 2

Could we please stop with the geezer-talk? I am tired of having otherwise educated people born before the invention of the semiconductor talk about technology as if they are morons and throw up their hands when something electronic doesn’t operate itself. This attitude is widespread, perhaps, but troubling: it suggests a willful ignorance, unattractive if actual, and cynical if feigned. In addition, articles like From the President cause younger folks to generalize incorrectly and condescend to those of us over 30 who can work things.

Roy Blount’s resistance seems reactionary, as if a farmer decided that a mule plows better than a tractor because he knows how to hitch up the mule. Meanwhile, however, the real questions—whether this contraption is worth its considerable expense, or what advantages it might have over what Mr. Blount calls “actual books”—remain unanswered. Yet this is a huge story.

Devices like the Kindle or the Sony eBook Reader, imperfect though they are right now, have the potential to do to traditional publishing what MP3 players did to the music business. While music companies and musicians remained hostile and dismissive instead of open and interested, their audience shifted. Like LPs, CDs, computers and human brains, books are containers for culture. Is the Kindle another? Some readers apparently think so: Amazon is currently sold out of them.*

Technology, which includes pencils, typewriters, paper, and of course books themselves, has revolutionized human interchange since the invention of writing, itself another technology. Mr. Blount has doubtless used all of those technological developments and has doubtless arrived at detailed, informed and considered opinions about them. Why balk at examining this tool objectively and carefully?

We make content; these gizmos deliver it. That should be reason enough not to brush off the Kindle and its siblings.

Deirdra McAfee
Richmond, VA

*A few encouraging words for Harriet May Savitz of Bradley Beach, NJ, who asked about older writers. I sold my first short story in 1966 when I was 31, but I didn’t sell my first novel until I was 52. (Jenny’s Mountain, St. Martin’s Press, 1987—subsequently published by the Reader’s Digest, Robert Hale, London and in large print by G.K. Hall & Co.)

St. Martin’s published my second novel, Bittersweet Country, in 1991 when I was 56. Then I took 15 years off from writing to become a double caregiver. After my husband’s death in 2003, I turned back to writing. Bear Ridge: A Novel, was published by University of New Mexico Press in 2006 when I was 71.

And the most fun . . . ! On February 16, 2008, one month and four days after my 73rd birthday, I recorded my first CD, Lone Wolf Suite: A Musical, Biographical Novel, for which I wrote the words and music and sang the lead vocal with my band—youngsters in their fifties. The CD was released April 4, 2008.

A note about those 15 years of not writing: Every one of the songs in Lone Wolf Suite rose in my mind as I drove the 64-mile round trip to the Alzheimer’s unit where my mother lived, and my upcoming nonfiction book for caregivers, based on those 15 years of caregiving, will be published in mid-2008.

I can’t quit. For me, writing is joy, and some of the rewards are priceless. Yesterday, my 14-year-old granddaughter said, “Grandma, your CD is awesome, and I’ve already put it on my iPod.”

Elaine Long
Buena Vista, CO

I love being a member of the Authors Guild. It just feels good. I particularly enjoy playing on my website, uploading new files and images and hearing back from people. The “sitebuilder” benefit and the Guild’s web services staff are just great.
I also read with interest the Bulletin. The symposium on book reviews was particularly good. Gee, and I thought I was the only author who'd had my spirit broken by a mean review. How energizing to find that it happens even to the well-known and critically acclaimed. It is so true, as several participants said, that a writer remembers a bad review verbatim, and a good review or even a few good reviews do not offset the hurt feelings or damaged confidence.

I have thought myself many times, just as Roy Blount said, that there should be a good review site, but more importantly I agree—and I'm saying this as an avid reader as much or more than as an author—that all book reviews should be, as Sara Nelson described, intelligent: "This works and this doesn't work."

Sally Pfoutz
Purcellville, VA

I found the article on Book Reviews to be very interesting and revealing. As an academic writer, I would like to see AG devote some time and space to the problems of academic writing and the problems of academic presses. In recent years, academic presses have fallen on hard times and book sales are mainly unprofitable. This is a serious issue concerning the advancement of knowledge in our culture. I also feel that academic politics has shaped the direction of trends, which has made academic publication a virtual closed shop. Making money, except for textbooks, is almost an oxymoron, as most academic presses must be supported by supplements from home-based universities or by author subventions. In addition, reviewers are mainly beginning assistant professors that want to get into print in academic journals. In other words, these reviews tend to lack the knowledge and the experience needed for the task.

On the other hand, I had a very interesting experience with a start-up academic press that influenced my work. I thought that my recent manuscript was close to being finished and this press contacted me and wanted to send my manuscript to an editor for review. Much of my academic writing had been as a coauthor with a very famous scholar at Stanford University, but since his death I was on my own. The reviewer of my manuscript was very late in submitting a review and after months of waiting I asked the press for the report. They contacted the reviewer, who first claimed that he had lost the manuscript, only to later write a blistering one-paragraph review, calling it the "biggest mess that he had ever seen." I was devastated, as I had worked on the manuscript for over six years, and it had passed muster with another academic press.

Two such different responses caused me to stop and reflect on the manuscript. I decided that it did indeed lack focus, and resumed work. After months of restructuring and rewriting, I cut almost 150 pages and rewrote both the preface and introduction to reflect a sharply focused hypothesis.

In this case, the stinging negative review had unanticipated consequences. The negative review contained clues that taught me to become more focused and to become a better writer.

Thomas L. Dynneson, Ph.D.
Odessa, TX

Hard Times? The Authors League Fund Wants to Help

The Authors League Fund helps professional writers and dramatists who find themselves in financial need because of health-related problems, temporary loss of income or other misfortune. The Fund awards open-ended, interest-free, no-strings-attached loans. Recipients of loans from the Fund need not be members of the Authors Guild.

These loans are not grants or scholarships meant to subsidize personal writing projects.

Writers experiencing financial hardship because of medical or other emergencies should not hesitate to apply for assistance. The Fund is particularly concerned about older authors or dramatists who are ill, uninsured, or who, for reasons of age, have been unable to continue in their profession.

For more information or to request an application, please write to The Authors League Fund, 31 East 32nd Street, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10016, call (212) 268-1208, or e-mail staff@authorsleaguefund.org
From the Archives

Justice Douglas’s Address
Accepting the Authors Guild’s 1952 Richard E. Lauterbach Award

In 1951, friends of Richard E. Lauterbach, newspaperman, author, editor, and member of the Authors Guild Council, established an annual award of $1,000 to perpetuate the memory of his contribution to civil liberties and to honor other Americans whose efforts were devoted to the same end. The membership of the Authors Guild was invited to make the 1952 selection by mail ballot, naming whatever book, article, poem, editorial, broadcast, court decision, or letter represented, in the members' opinion, the most substantial contribution in the maintenance of civil rights. The balloting resulted in the selection of an address entitled “The Black Silence of Fear,” which Associate Justice William O. Douglas of the Supreme Court of the United States delivered at Brandeis University and which was later adapted for publication in The New York Times Magazine.

The award was made at a dinner given in Mr. Justice Douglas’s honor by the Authors Guild Council in New York on December 3, 1952. Merle Miller, President of the Authors Guild, introduced John Hersey, Vice President of the Authors League, who made the presentation. Mr. Justice Douglas’s response, which reiterated the themes of his original address, was reprinted in the December 1952 issue of The American Writer, the predecessor to the Bulletin.

“"Our proudest boast has been a system that makes belief in the unorthodox a permissible way of life. . . . Ideas, like the people who have them, need expression. The marketplace tests them—accepting a few, rejecting many.”
—Justice William O. Douglas

The other day I was rereading some English history that followed on the heels of the American and French Revolutions. The ideas of liberty and freedom were rampant. There were plays ridiculing the monarchy, pamphlets denouncing the government for breaking up peaceful assemblies, schemes for reform that were fancifully described as “compassing and imagining” the death of the King, complaints against corrupt elections, demands for constitutional reforms. That was the stuff that made up much of the “subversive” literature of the day, and most of it was promoted by British counterparts of the Jacobin Clubs. The protagonists stirred public opinion and quickened the tempers of government officials. Those in positions of power thundered their denunciations and leveled the heavy artillery of the law against the reformers. Men were tried for treason and seditious libel.

England was suffering from tremors on account of the ideas of change that swept the world. We know from hindsight that most of England’s fears were fancied. But the powers-that-be, the rulers, those who represented the status quo, were tense and fearful, for the changes advocated might sweep them into the limbo. Their fears were transmitted to the citizens; the epidemic of anxiety spread.

Each period of history has experienced these fears of change. America is no exception. At the end of the nineteenth century the specter of anarchy and socialism stalked this country. Men whose most grievous sin was the advocacy and practice of freedom of thought were condemned by the public opinion of that day. Those who maintained that even anarchists and socialists were entitled to due process of law were themselves denounced as dangerous and subversive characters.

We witness today perhaps the most widespread suppression of views the country has known. The suppression comes not from fear of being jailed but from fear of being dismissed from employment, banned from radio work, disqualified for teaching, or held unacceptable for the lecture platform. Those sanctions are effective and powerful. They often carry as much sting as a fine or a jail sentence.

We know that the Communist threat is the basis of the fears that sweep our communities. We know that
that threat has substance to it. We know that Communist cells are much more dangerous than any Jacobin Club or Fabian Society or Socialist Party ever was. We know the nature of Soviet imperialism and the manner in which it plans to use Communism to conquer the world. We know that there are sensitive areas in government where the employees must be beyond suspicion, lest through indiscretion or stupid sentimentalism or downright treachery the safety of the country is undermined.

But we also know that the safety of our civilization lies in making freedom of thought and freedom of speech vital, vivid features of our life. Dr. Robert Hutchins the other day spoke of education as "a continuous dialogue," and he showed the importance of not setting limitations on discourse. What is necessary for education is necessary for all media of communication. The truth is not always a well-rounded, perfected organism that can be easily identified. Ideas in the humanities, history, economics, politics do not have mathematical precision. The only place where ideas can be reduced to capsule form are in the Communist, Fascist, or monarchical states. There man must believe the orthodox in order to be accepted or even to survive.

The Value of Unorthodoxy

Our proudest boast has been a system that makes belief in the unorthodox a permissible way of life. It is not because we want to destroy existing institutions, or to undermine an orthodox faith, that we make room for revolutionary ideas. Our sponsorship of tolerance for the unorthodox has been to keep any idea from going underground and festering there. Ideas, like the people who have them, need expression. The marketplace tests them—accepting a few, rejecting many. It is the interchange of ideas, the exploration of problems to their periphery, the challenge to prejudices that give any people the resiliency to meet changing conditions.

Political inventiveness is the great need of this age. People throughout the world have lost many of their moorings. The reasons are varied. But whatever they are, the result is a growing sense of insecurity. Their insecurity is more than a fear of being attacked, more than fear of the bomb. Their insecurity reflects the fear of isolation from other people. They know that there is no longer a narrow matrix for their lives, that their futures are closely tied to the destinies of peoples in far-off lands whom they do not know, whom they cannot reach, and with whom they should be allied in great undertakings.

It is in that insecurity that Communism curiously finds its greatest hold. Communism offers a worldwide fraternity that cuts across all racial, national, and color lines. It therefore has tremendous appeal among many people. We know that the fraternal aspects of Communism are false. But the successful political infiltration of Communism in many countries emphasizes that the desire to belong to an international group, to be a part of a living movement, is today a powerful force among men the world around.

"Restriction of free thought and free speech is the most dangerous of all subversions. It is the one un-American act that could most easily defeat us."

We who believe in a free society—and when I say we, I mean not only we of the West but Nehru of India, U Nu of Burma, Maghsaysay of the Philippines, Mosadegh of Persia, and kindred spirits the world around—we can offer much more liberty and much more fraternity than any Communist regime. But we must invent new political methods, if we are to enlist the peoples of the world in a new front. It cannot be done by military regimes. It cannot be written into blueprints that recast the world in the American image. It cannot be done by loans or grants of money. If it is to be done, it must result from the borrowing and adapting of a host of ideas.

No matter how we view the world scene, no matter what our starting point, we always return to the matter of ideas. It is our attitude towards free thought and free expression that will determine our fate. There must be no limit on the range of temperate discussion, no limits on thought. No subject must be taboo. No censor must preside at our assemblies. We need all the ingenuity we possess to avert the holocaust. We can never succeed if we limit ourselves to one creed, to one hypothesis, to one doctrine. The world of ideas is a large one. It must remain open lest we handicap ourselves with the same hobbles the Communists wear.

The task of keeping our civil liberties alive is not an easy one. But I believe our civilization will supply the necessary men. The people need leadership that makes a virtue of courage of conviction and freedom
of expression. The people need to be shown by example that there are men who are not afraid to speak up. The nation needs the exhilarating influence of new ideas, new proposals, new platforms.

The preeminent problem of this age is the invention of new institutions, new political methods for aligning the peoples of the world in a true crusade for freedom. The ingenuity will be lacking if fear of Communism shrinks the world of ideas to one school of thought, to one point of view. Restriction of free thought and free speech is the most dangerous of all subversions. It is the one un-American act that could most easily defeat us.
Membership Application

Mr./Ms. ___________________________ Pseudonym(s) __________________

Address __________________________________ City ___________________ State _____ Zip ______

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How did you become interested in joining the Guild? (check one) ☐ Invitation ☐ Writing journal
☐ Referred by ________________________ ☐ Other ________________________

What is your primary reason for joining? ☐ Support and advocacy efforts ☐ Legal services ☐ Health insurance
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Writers may qualify on the basis of being book authors or freelance journalists. Book authors must have been published by an established American publisher. A writer who has a contract with an established publisher for a work not yet published may join as an associate member. A contract with a vanity press does not qualify a writer for membership in the Guild. Freelance journalists must have published three works, fiction or nonfiction, in a periodical of general circulation within the last eighteen months.

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Please enclose a check for your first year’s dues in the amount of $90 payable to “The Authors Guild” or charge your Visa or Mastercard.

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