

AUTHORS GUILD

Summer/Fall 2009

BULLETIN



SYMPOSIUM

Getting It Right: The Measured Art of Nonfiction

The Google Settlement:

The Guild's Testimony before the House Judiciary Committee

Roy Blount: It's Hard to Write a Book

Walter Cronkite's Blue Pencil

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

When I replied to the man who had just asked, "I'm a writer," his next words were, "What kind of horse?"

Of course, this is Oklahoma. I enjoyed Alison Owings's article [Spring 2009 *Bulletin*].

—Peggy Fielding
Tulsa, OK

I'm sure you've had many responses to your article on people being told one is a writer. I'd like to add a few of my own favorites.

You're a writer? Have you ever been published?

Actually, yes. I only look stupid.

What do you write?

Lots of stuff, but mostly novels.

Novels? Fiction or nonfiction?

(This is a legal precipice that I bypass.)

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

Would I have read anything you've written?

I don't know what you've read, lady.

(Of course, this is really code for, "Are you famous?")

Where can I get your book?

Try the Korean deli or Easy Spirit shoe store.

Do you write under your own name?

No, someone else's.

What do you write about?

Life.

Where do you get your ideas?

I actually only need one or two.

How can I get an autographed copy?

You buy it and bring it to me and I sign it.

This seems to be the most offensive answer of them all, especially when I suggest that if they want a free one, they should go to the library, which in turn leads

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ALONG PUBLISHERS ROW

BY CAMPBELL GEESLIN

INSTA-BOOK: "You've Read the Headlines. Now Quick, Read the Book. Publishers hit the fast-forward button," said the headline and subhead on a *New York Times* article. In February, the Free Press published an e-book of *Dumb Money: How Our Greatest Financial Minds Bankrupted the Nation* in three weeks after Daniel Gross wrote it.

Public Affairs published George Soros's *The New Paradigm for Financial Markets* as an e-book in 10 days.

Amy Neidlinger of FT Press told the Times, "People can't wait a year to get timely information on critical subjects. Especially today it's dated ten minutes after you've just received the first installation."

FAST TRACK: Jonathan Galassi at Farrar, Straus & Giroux is speeding up publishing with *Fly by Wire: The Truth About the Miracle on the Hudson* by William Langewiesche. Galassi told *The New York Times*, "In the old days, it would be ideally a year from delivery of the manuscript to publication, but now I'm hoping we can do books in four months. Because today's readers' interest is intense and immediate—and sometimes it dissipates."

Galassi is developing a fast track by editing copy electronically and streamlining design. Capt. Chesley Sullenberger III ditched US Airways Flight 1549 into the Hudson River in January. The book is scheduled for publication in November.

VIA BLOGS: Does it take a blog to get an agent, to interest an editor and make a book deal? More and more, it's beginning to look that way. Christian Lander wrote scores of entries for his humor blog, "Stuff White People Like," and then turned them into a popular 2008 book with the same title. Now blog creators come up with an idea, post it on Twitter or Digg or Facebook, and contributors supply the content. "Just about every house in town is paying attention," Patrick Mulligan, a senior editor at Gotham Books told *The New York Times*. Web-watching agents like Kate McLean said, "There are a lot more agents chasing down hot properties." She watches sites that have measurable, consistent traffic. "You can use that information to prove marketability," she said. Randall

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