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.)

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

Continued on page 34

ALONG PUBLISHERS ROW

By Campbell Geeslin


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 Langlewiesche. 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

Continued on page 21
Articles
The Google Settlement: The Authors Guild Testimony before the House Judiciary Committee Page 5

Books in Limbo
By James Shapiro Page 7

Rejections Rejected
By Bette Ann Moskowitz Page 9

15th Annual Benefit
Page 10

Contracts Q&A
By Mark L. Levine Page 11

Symposium
The Measured Art of Nonfiction Page 13

Writing for Walter
By Alison Owings page 46

Departments
Along Publishers Row .................. 2
Letter from the President .................. 4
Legal Watch .................................. 12
Books by Members ........................ 31
Members Make News ........................ 33
Bulletin Board ............................. 36
Censorship Watch .......................... 40

Copyright © 2009 The Authors Guild, Inc.

About the Cover Artist
Kevin Sanchez Walsh is a freelance artist in New York City.

Overheard
"We're platform agnostic. We don't believe either phones or laptops have the answer. We believe people want to read our books on whichever platform they're using, and we're working hard to make that happen..."

"This is just the beginning."

—Penguin UK digital publisher Jeremy Ettinghausen on the company's alternative publishing ambitions.
Guardian.co.uk, September 1, 2009
From the President

BY ROY BLount JR.

W ell I should be holding forth on Google, but I am nowhere near as much a president as I am a writer. Who, by dint of getting published in books, is an author. And you wouldn't know it today, because I spent today working on yet another book that is due in February, and I also have a column to write for a magazine, and then too I have this column, here, to do—but by rights I should have a big load off my mind. And I do, have. A big load. Off. My mind.

Sort of, because I just turned in another book, my 22nd, and to my astonishment and relief, the editor not only finds it legible, but likes it. Except I need to fix the ending. I knew the ending probably didn’t work, but I had this stuff left over that I hadn't managed to work in, and I jammed it into the ending, and I thought, maybe that works, sort of, who the hell knows. But it didn’t. But that’s okay. I can fix it.

I say astonishment and relief because to finish a book I have to generate enough oomph to overcome my constant sense that I don't know what the heck I am doing. And the effort to generate that oomph obliterates any semblance of perspective I may have had, before, on that prospective book.

Not every author is like me. You may think that in confessing the following, I am a discredit to the profession. But, here it is: I have to get crazy to finish a book. This one is not War and Peace. I hate to say this, but, okay, I will: None of my books have been War and Peace. Okay? But I meant them to be. Sort of. And each of them felt like War and Peace to me.

Bullshit, I don’t know what War and Peace felt like, and no doubt I am thankful for that. I wouldn’t want to give birth to large quadruplets, either. (I’ll bet I could have done natural childbirth as long as it was a single—my admirable daughter did.) But here’s what I am saying:

It’s hard to write a book. And if anything, in my experience, it gets harder.

Is that what I was saying? Anyway, it is what I am saying now.

My first book, I was living alone, between marriages, and I slept during the day and wrote all night. Ate grapefruit and wrote all night. I wrote maybe 85,000 words in two months, and hand-delivered the physical manuscript to Little, Brown in Boston, and then my father died and a week later I kicked back in and wrote another 25,000 words in a couple of weeks. And it was pretty much a flop, commercially, but 36 years later it is still, modestly, in print. This is a business model?

My father died. What, you took off more than a week after your father died?

I resist the notion, which several of my friends have been glad to press upon me, that that first book was my best one. What would that say about the rest of them? A steady—no, not so steady—decline . . .

Oh never mind. I’m just saying: “authors” sounds like people with beards, male or female (in fact, Emily Dickinson, say, probably didn’t choose to shave, but I’m trying to be inclusive, and heaven knows I would love to be on a panel with her), sitting on their laurels and looking sage. Maybe that is true of other authors. Speaking for myself, I feel less sage, now, than I did when I was 15. I don’t think I have written the book, yet, that I figured I would write, back then, and I don’t know where the heck that book is likely to come from, and although I am healthy, I am wondering whether I

Call for Nominations: Authors Guild Officers and Council

A new slate of Authors Guild Officers and Council will be elected at the Guild’s annual meeting this winter. To suggest candidates to the nominating committee, please e-mail staff@authorsguild.org (subject line: Nominations) or send a letter to Nominating Committee, Authors Guild, 31 East 32nd Street, 7th floor, New York, NY, 10016.

Submissions received by December 1, 2009, will be considered by the committee.

"It’s hard to write a book. And if anything, in my experience, it gets harder.”

Continued on page 44
The Google Settlement: A Marketplace Solution

Authors Guild Written Testimony before the House Judiciary Committee, September 10, 2009

My name is Paul Aiken. I’m the executive director of the Authors Guild, the largest society of published authors in the U.S., representing more than 8,500 book authors and freelance writers. Our members represent the broad sweep of American authorship, including literary and genre fiction, nonfiction, trade, academic, and children’s book authors, textbook authors, freelance journalists and poets. Guild members have won countless honors and all major literary awards, including the Nobel Prize for Literature.*

The Authors Guild promotes the professional interests of authors: we’re advocates for effective copyright protection, fair contracts, and free expression.

The Challenges Facing Print Media

It’s a pleasure to be here before this committee, at this moment in book publishing history. Never in the Authors Guild’s long history has its straightforward mission—to maintain writing as a viable livelihood—been so daunting. The digital environment is brutal for print media. As we meet here today, the newspaper industry is dying. Credible estimates say that one newspaper is closing each week in America. The magazine industry isn’t much better off, as week by week we see venerable publications shrink in size and ambition.

The loss to our society from the collapse of these industries is immeasurable.

The book industry, happily, has to date fared better than our colleagues in the print media. This is, no doubt, partly due to our medium: print books are still superior in almost every way to their electronic counterparts. That advantage is rapidly fading, however; our transition to digital form is underway, and things change quickly in a digital environment.

The portents are not encouraging. Finding a sustainable business model for creative work in digital form seems nearly impossible on the Internet: if piracy doesn’t get you, the aggregators will.

We’ll likely need many things to go right to avoid the fate of our colleagues in the print industries.

The portents are not encouraging . . .

if piracy doesn’t get you,
the aggregators will.

The Opportunity

Yet, there are reasons for optimism. One of those reasons is our settlement with Google, which brings us here today. That settlement promises to address one of the oldest and most vexing of market failures: the loss to the commercial market of out-of-print books.

If you had asked knowledgeable people a couple of years ago whether we were close to delivering a near universal library to public libraries, colleges, and universities across the country, they would have scoffed. The technical challenges seemed too daunting, the rights clearance issues insurmountable, the passions stirred by the ongoing copyright wars far too intense for such a result to be achieved in the foreseeable future.

But here we are, on the cusp of that extraordinary achievement: the marriage of much of our collective library with the Internet. The benefits to readers, students, and scholars would be profound. Here are a few:

1. The settlement would turn every library into a world-class research facility, by offering every public library building in the U.S.—all 16,500 of them—a free portal to millions of out-of-print books. The settlement would also offer a free portal to that same vast database to more than 4,000 higher education institutions, from community colleges to our most elite universities.

2. Students and professors at colleges with the most modest of endowments would gain full access from every computer on campus to a library exceeding that of the finest Ivy League schools.

3. The visually and reading impaired would gain access to orders of magnitude more books than they currently have.

4. The settlement would offer anyone online in the U.S. free “preview” access to hundreds of millions

* Pearl S. Buck (1938) (who served as Authors Guild President), William Faulkner (1949), John Steinbeck (1962) and Isaac Bashevis Singer (1978). One Guild member, Elie Wiesel (1986), has won the Nobel Peace Prize.
of pages of text (up to 20 percent of each book). Readers, from their own home computers, would be able to review hundreds of accounts of the Battle of Vicksburg, or of the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution, or of the sources and interpretation of Moby Dick, at no charge. Should a reader find one book particularly compelling, she could buy access to the entire book. Access to public domain books is free, of course, and authors controlling the rights to their books can choose to give away access for free.*

Authors and publishers are willing to make this deal for several reasons. We of course hope to profit from the market that’s created. We would like to have the Internet work for us, creating a market of the previously unmarketable. We also have a vital interest in keeping books central to our students, scholars, and culture. We’re confident that making this vast library available online will help do just that.

Authors have another strong interest in making this deal work: authors need libraries. Libraries fuel their work. Authors of every type read, reinterpret and rely on their fellow authors, and those who have come before them. This is true of the scholarly writer and of the author of popular nonfiction. It’s as true for authors of books for children as it is for authors of books for adults. Authors of literary fiction also rely heavily on those who’ve come before them. The creative expressions are new, but many of the ideas underlying literary works are eternal. Writers of genre fiction are no exception. Romance writers read romance novels and other works and offer their own interpretation and variations on the romance theme.

Authors, in short, want not only to realize the untapped value of their out-of-print works; they want access to this new, vast online library so that they can more easily create new works that readers will value.

The Opposition

Opposition to the settlement falls into several broad categories. We’ll address two important objections in this Executive Summary.

Objection #1: Copyright doesn’t permit a system that asks authors and publishers to specifically exclude their out-of-print works from uses negotiated on their behalf.

This simply isn’t so. There is ample precedent around the world for dealing with market failures in copyright in precisely this way. For example, Germany today operates a system that nearly parallels the one the settlement would put in place. The German system allows for routine copying of out-of-print works written by foreign and domestic authors and routine copying of “orphan” (unclaimed) works, without regard to whether those authors and publishers have expressly approved those uses.

The German system, however, actually denies authors and publishers any ability to exclude their works. The German system goes even further, allowing the copying of in-print works without the permission of the author or publisher (in our settlement, the author and publisher must both approve of any displays of in-print works). Germany’s photocopy licensing system is perfectly legal, and meets with the norms of international copyright law.

In fact, this is the typical way for countries to deal with the market failure represented by the unlicensed photocopying of copyrighted materials, although many countries allow authors and publishers to exclude their works from such licensing. Other countries with similar photocopy licensing systems include Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the Nordic countries, among many others. The market for photocopy licensing often fails without intervention, because the transaction costs of the license, including the labor costs of the licensee, are simply too high relative to the value of the individual copy.

The inability to license out-of-print works to colleges, libraries and individual users presents a market failure on an epic scale. Here, as with photocopy licensing, a major component of the transaction costs involve rights clearance issues. Another impediment is the sheer scope of the project, and the capital and technological resources it demands. This settlement, with a financially strong and sophisticated technology part-

* Here’s the math: we expect the settlement to make at least 10 million out-of-print books available, which, at an average of 300 pages per book, represents at least 3 billion pages of professionally written, professionally edited text. 20 percent of that is 600 million pages of text available at every desktop computer in the U.S. as a free preview.

Continued on page 8
Books in Limbo

BY JAMES SHAPIRO

This piece originally appeared on The Huffington Post, August 19, 2009, and is reprinted here with permission of the author.

Much has been written of late about the Google Book Settlement, mostly about issues of copyright, monopoly and privacy. The tone has become increasingly nasty and the turn to scare tactics familiar to anyone following the health care debate. Lost in these broadsides and in the papers filed in the U.S. District Court that will soon rule on the case is the view from the trenches: What effect will the proposed settlement (or its derailment) have on students and scholarship?

Ask anyone how undergraduates go about researching papers these days and you’ll hear the same thing: They surf the Internet. The good ones quickly move beyond Wikipedia and consult the thousands of scholarly books and articles now easily accessible with a click. Going to the library or bookstore and lugging home a treasure-trove of books—one of the great pleasures of my life—holds less appeal for those I teach. They don’t have the time. It’s not how they are used to finding out about things. And with library acquisition budgets slashed, the books they seek are all too often only available through time-consuming interlibrary loans.

Happily, a lot of scholarly books are already accessible online, though nearly all of them were published either before 1924 (and are therefore in the public domain) or after 2000 or so, when academic publishers began making some books accessible in digital form. For a student researching a paper, most books published in the interim remain invisible and might as well not exist. Put another way, it’s easier for students to call up electronic copies of even the most obscure works of Shakespeare’s contemporaries than it is for them to get hold of important scholarly books on Elizabethan literature published only a decade ago. The intellectual labor of several generations of scholars across the disciplines is in danger of being, by default, condemned to limbo.

I’m the author of one of those books in limbo, Rizal


Playwrights, published in 1991 in hardcover by Columbia University Press and priced at $35. It has sold around a thousand copies and never appeared in paperback or electronic form. Technically, it is still in print but you wouldn’t be able to order a new copy on Amazon.com, find it at a B&N superstore, or download it onto your Kindle (though if you are desperate, I’m told that a used copy can be picked up for $248, plus shipping, from Canada). You can also check it out of the library—if, that is, you have borrowing privileges at a leading college or university.

That situation is about to change. It’s estimated that Google is spending upwards of a half-billion dollars in an effort to scan all the books—as many as 20 million—located in top research libraries. Google ran into trouble, though, when, without permission, it scanned books like mine that were still under copyright. The Authors Guild stepped in and sued. After extended negotiations a settlement was reached, one that protects the rights of publishers and authors through a Book Rights Registry while rewarding Google’s investment (the settlement also allows copyright holders to exclude their books or make only parts of them available). I don’t ever expect to make much in royalties from my book, but I feel good about the prospect of seeing it in wider circulation. And I’m cheered that my publishers stand to profit from the settlement and have already made snippets of my book and many others like it available through Google Book Search. Friends and colleagues with whom I have spoken—and I suspect many thousands of academic authors with books in limbo—feel the same way. When you spend a decade or longer writing a book that contributes to the conversation in your field you want the next generation to read it.

One of the arguments made against the Google Book Settlement is that it rides roughshod over the legal rights of “orphaned” books—the technical term for titles still in copyright whose owners cannot be found. It’s a threat that is considerably overstated (those in the business of hunting down copyright holders of orphaned books estimate that about 80–85 percent can be located). Orphaned books need to be acknowledges

What’s wrong with making out-of-print books available to students and scholars?

Continued on page 45
Testimony

Continued from page 6

...ner, addresses the market failure. The societal value in bringing these works back to the market is incalculable, but until our settlement there was no practical way to do so.

Objection #2. The settlement inappropriately permits the use of unclaimed (orphan) works.

No issue has been more misunderstood or misreported regarding this settlement than the unclaimed or “orphan” works issue.

The primary misconception is the size of the problem: it’s much smaller than has commonly been reported, for several reasons. First, finding the rights owner of a book is not as daunting as many seem to believe. Books do not present the classic orphan works problem, photographs do. Photographs, both in the physical world and online, often become separated from their identifying information. This makes finding the rights owner a near-impossibility. Books, however, always contain author and publisher information, and there’s often a copyright registration record to help locate the rights owner. Second, although a copyright-protected book may have been published as long ago as 1923, the vast majority copyright-protected books in our libraries are far more recent.

Another major misconception is the failure to recognize that countries around the globe are already dealing with the orphan works issue in a productive way. The photocopy-licensing systems in other English-speaking countries permit the use of orphan works. This, as previously discussed, is a natural result of those nations’ attempts to cope with the market failure represented by unlicensed photocopying of copyrighted works. As the licensing societies collect photocopy royalties and start to cut checks to authors, word spreads, quickly, and authors step forward to register themselves. The pool of unlicensed works shrinks. The licensing societies are duty-bound to actively seek out authors* for whom they have money. Year by year, they locate more and more authors, and the orphan works problem diminishes further.

We have some experience with this, since we helped found and long provided financial support to the Authors Registry, an independent, non-profit, rights-payment agency. The Authors Registry collects photocopy and other use fees from overseas, particularly from photocopy uses in the U.K., and pays authors in the U.S. the amounts due them. A sample of our success in paying authors of out-of-print works last year suggests that we reach 85 percent of such authors. The success rate of larger, more developed systems—such as that of the Authors’ Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS) in the U.K.—demonstrates that even higher success rates are possible. (The ALCS, representing more than 30,000 published writers, is an enthusiastic supporter of the settlement, for good reason. They know it can work, because they’ve achieved great success finding and paying photocopy revenues to authors of out-of-print books.)

Thus, this settlement presents a practical solution for the problem of orphan works for books. When an author is identified, then requests for all kinds of other uses—for permission to use an excerpt from the author’s work, reprint it, or to translate it into a foreign language—can be relayed to the author or the author’s agent and acted upon.

The orphan works issue is far smaller, and far more tractable, than some objectors would have you believe. The settlement itself is a big part of the solution.

Conclusion

We urge this committee to recognize this settlement for what it is: the outstanding result of a rare and productive truce in the copyright wars, negotiated by strong-willed and pragmatic representatives of the author, publisher, and library communities and a sophisticated technology partner.

To a dispassionate observer, we believe the solution presented by this settlement is how a rational, useful market for out-of-print books should operate in the digital age. The means of getting there, a class-action settlement, may be novel, but that shouldn’t distract us from the great good—for readers, students, scholars, authors, and publishers—that this settlement accomplishes. Similar systems, inevitably, will develop around the world.

This settlement doesn’t pre-empt congressional action, but there’s no need to act now, before we see how well this solution works in the real world. We suspect many of the concerns—including all of the major objections—will prove unwarranted as this settlement goes into operation. There’s no need to fix that which likely isn’t broken at all.

Allowing this opportunity to slip through our grasp would be a tragic loss to all those who value the riches stored in our nation’s libraries. ✦

* Publishers are sought out too, of course. In some systems, such as in the U.K., different societies represent authors and publishers. In others, such as in Australia and Canada, the same society represents both authors and publishers.
Rejections Rejected

By Bette Ann Moskowitz

I'm 168 in writer years and I feel my age. I have been writing and submitting manuscripts since typewriters were in vogue, and for every one I've published there have been more rejected. I used to keep the rejections in an old trunk in my workroom. It sat in the corner, bulging, oozing negativity from every seam, until one day it exploded, sending off bad karma all over the place. After I peeled it off the ceiling and the walls, I decided to keep only the noteworthy rejections from that day on, the ones I would want to remember. Lately, the memorable ones are hard to find. Rejections used to have attitude and passion; now they are about as exciting as bottled water.

For example, I just got a short story back from a magazine a year after I sent it. It was such a bland one-liner that it barely grazed me. (Of course, that might have been because in the long interim I had completely forgotten about the story, and the rejection arrived unhitched from my hopes. It felt more like losing the Publishers Clearing House Sweepstakes than anything else.) Something like, "Due to the volume of submission..."; you know.

Of course, the bedrock of rejection letters are generic forms, always were. Still, they were worded carefully, and could make you feel the editors had made some effort to tailor them to you. Some were imperious, some kindly, some collegial, as if the editors and you were all in this together. I would read the few lines closely, many times, and in between them, too. Was there something really regretful between "regret we cannot print the enclosed" and "the editors thank you for thinking of us"? I hated the falsely kind ones the most, the ones that wished me great success as a writer, taking on themselves the burden of their vetoes: "Dear Writer (though we really don't think you are one), We are grateful to have had a chance to see this (piece of crap) and want you to know that although it is not right for our pages (being the illiterate lump of junk that it, in fact, is), we wish you much luck in placing it elsewhere (yeah, lots and lotsa luck) and feel certain that (some numbskull) will have more of a taste for it than we do. Sincerely yours, The Editors."

Sometimes a generic came with a spittle of something else, often hand-written: Good read, Nice, but not for us. Thanks, anyway. Love to see more, or Try us again which would stuff my sinuses with such emotion that I could hardly breathe for half a day.

From time to time, some editor would write and sign a personal letter, rejecting me in the most accepting of terms. I had a long correspondence with one editor at The New Yorker. Sweet agony. Over several years (during which I wrote and published my first novel), I had many near-misses at this magazine, the worst/best of which was a story which, this editor said, was just a hair from... Well, they all loved it but... would I consider changing the ending? Consider it? Boy, did I. I pumped it up, toned it down, installed a detonator in the last sentence, rubbed it down with great slathers of Art. Ever see a story fall apart? The more I tried, the worse it became, the further from it I got. And each rejection was gentler and gentler, and more and more regreftul. By the time I gave up, it was barely a story anymore, and I have never put it back together, or tried it anywhere else. Now that is rejection at work.

I like rejections that show that a reader was affected by my work, like one, from this same editor, who turned down a story I wrote about a dying woman, and at the bottom, handwrote a concerned postscript, hoping that the sufferer wasn't me. (It wasn't, and I knew I had rendered the suffering real.) But my hands-down favorite rejection, by the glossy and now-defunct LEAR'S was when my short story came back torn in half and across the title someone had scrawled "THIS IS SHIT" in brown marker. Touched a nerve there, I'd say. Nowadays, rejections don't show that

"Nowadays, rejections don't show that kind of wit or enthusiasm. They are laconic, without a sense of self; no pride."

Bette Ann Moskowitz is a writer who lives in Woodstock, New York. Her latest work is the memoirDo I Know You: A Family's Journey Through Aging and Alzheimer's. (Taylor Trade, 2003.) She is currently completing a book about aging called What's the Point? They're Going to Die Anyway.

Continued on page 45
Annual Benefit

Feeding the Young

Dave Eggers, the author of *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* and founder of the independent publishing house McSweeney’s and the literary journal *Timothy McSweeney’s Publishing Concern*, was presented with the Authors Guild Award for Distinguished Service to the Literary Community at the Guild’s 15th Annual Benefit held May 18 at the Tribeca Rooftop in New York. Eggers was honored for his work as cofounder, with Nineve Clements Caligari, of 826, an innovative nonprofit writing center for children ages six to eighteen. Peter Sagal, author, playwright, host of NPR’s *Wait Wait . . . Don’t Tell Me*, and the evening’s guest host and speaker, presented the award to Mr. Eggers.

Since its founding in San Francisco in 2002, 826 has grown into a national program, with chapters in Ann Arbor, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, and Seattle. Staffed mainly by writer-volunteers and deeply embedded in their local communities, 826 chapters offer writing workshops and after-school tutoring and help pay expenses and inspire the wild thinking necessary to the writing life by way of themed stores that live up to the program’s storefront origins. San Francisco’s sells pirate supplies, Chicago’s secret agent paraphernalia, Ann Arbor’s robot supplies and repairs.

“The first time I walked into the writing center at 826nyc,” recalled Janaye Solomon, a young alumna of the New York chapter who spoke for hundreds of budding writers, “I was amazed. I couldn’t get how a place where I was supposed to be learning could be quite this cool. Books lined the walls; there were millipedes as pets and superhero getups in the front of the store.”

“To any of you who are feeling down, and saying, ‘Oh, no one’s reading anymore,’” said a cheerful Eggers after accepting the award, “walk into 826 on any afternoon. There are no screens there, it’s all paper, it’s all students working shoulder to shoulder invested in their work, writing and writing passionately. They put it all on the page, and they think, ‘Well, if this person who works next to me cares so much about what I’m writing, and they’re going to publish it in their next anthology or newspaper or whatever, then I’m going to invest so much more in it.’ . . . Meanwhile, they’re reading more than I did at their age.”

The evening’s proceeds benefited the Authors Guild Foundation and the Authors League Fund.

For more information on 826 or to volunteer, visit www.826national.org
Q. Both my publishers are telling me that my books will never go out of print because electronic and print-on-demand editions will always be available. Is there any way to deal with these claims?

A. You raise an important question. In my opinion, the best place to have dealt with the issue was in the author-publisher attachment to the Authors Guild’s proposed settlement agreement with Google, but unfortunately it wasn’t. Indeed, I am concerned that more publishers will claim that their books are never out of print because of their expected availability through the Google Books program. Fortunately, participating authors should be able to control how much, if any, of their books appears in the program (assuming the settlement is approved) by withholding consent if their publishers won’t confirm in writing ahead of time that a book’s availability via Google won’t be a factor in determining whether their books are “in print” under their existing contracts.

Whether the settlement is approved or not, the subject is likely to remain a contentious one and will probably be resolved only after several definitive and consistent decisions are reached in future lawsuits involving the issue.

Assuming that a contract does not specifically grant e-book rights to the publisher, the decisions in those lawsuits will largely depend on the specific language in each contract’s “out of print” clause. If, as the Authors Guild has been advising members for at least the past 35 years, your contracts specifically say that “in print” is based solely on the sale of hardcover and paperback editions, you don’t need to worry about e-books being a factor and even the most recalcitrant publisher should agree. If you also included language long recommended by the Guild that copies produced “by reprographic processes such as Xerox” are excluded for in-print determinations, a publisher is unlikely to have much success claiming that POD copies should be included since both photocopies and POD are single-copy on-demand production methods made possible by new technology. Failure to have either of these provisions in your contract, however, in no way means that your publisher is entitled to include e-books or PODs in its in-print calculations. Authors are not required to be prescient when reviewing proposed book contracts.

If your out-of-print clause has the very broad language widely used 20–30 years ago, viz., that the book is out of print “when the Work is no longer available for sale”—without any criteria for determining availability—it may be tougher to convince obstinate publishers. But your position is no less meritorious, especially if your contract is from that time period. Here, it will be important to argue that since the publisher had no right to print e-book or POD editions in the first place, sales of those editions cannot be considered proof under your contract that a book is in print.

In both situations, your case will be even stronger if your contract has the fairly standard “reservation of rights” clause that all well-advised authors should have in their contracts and which virtually no publisher has ever objected to, viz., “All rights in the Work not specifically granted in this Agreement to the Publisher are reserved to the Author.”

There are many other types of out-of-print clauses, most of them narrower in scope than the broad “no longer available for sale.” The specific criteria typically listed in those clauses, combined with the points mentioned above, may help you in negotiations with your publishers. Unfortunately, even many of these narrower definitions of out-of-print may not suffice to convince a publisher that you are right (nor clear enough for the publisher to convince you that it is right). This is because it is rare for contracts of any sort to provide specific exclusions for technologies not yet invented. Virtually all of these contracts were drafted by publishers, however, and any vagueness or ambiguity in them should be resolved against the draftsman, a concept often found in court decisions involving a broad variety of contracts.

Because this issue is such a common and important one, it would be good if authors with the same publisher and the same language in their contracts, or with different publishers but where the language in their contracts is the same, got together to share costs and hired a top-notch litigator to bring the case, or some organization did so on their behalf.

In any event, if you believe your book is out of print and your publisher says it isn’t because it has (or intends to) license an e-book edition or because an online POD or e-book edition is available through Google Book Search or another site, you should promptly give a written out-of-print notice to your publisher. Be sure

Mark Levine is Retired of Counsel to Sullivan & Worcester, a Boston law firm where he was previously a partner. The revised and expanded edition of his Negotiating a Book Contract: A Guide for Authors, Agents and Lawyers is now available in paperback and as an e-book at www.BookContracts.com.
/**Legal Watch**

**Still Feisty After All These Years**

_Salinger v. Colting_

_U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York_

Even at age 90, J. D. Salinger cannot be pushed around, at least when it comes to protecting his copyright interests. Salinger recently filed a copyright infringement suit in U.S. District Court in Manhattan against Swedish author Frederick Colting, writing under the pen name John David California, to block the U.S. publication of Colting’s _60 Years Later: Coming Through the Rye_, which Salinger alleges is an unauthorized sequel of his seminal work, _The Catcher in the Rye_. In addition, Salinger and his attorneys claim that _60 Years Later_, which has already been published in Britain, and depicts an aged version of Holden Caulfield, Salinger’s famous adolescent protagonist in _Catcher in the Rye_, violates Salinger’s copyright in the character.

Colting claims that his novel is not a sequel to Salinger’s work, but rather a “complex and undeniably transformative exposition about one of our nation’s most famous authors, J. D. Salinger, and his best-known creation, Holden Caulfield.” _60 Years Later_ focuses on a “Mr. C.,” a 76-year-old man who escapes his nursing home and wanders around the streets of New York in a manner that recalls Salinger’s depiction of Holden Caulfield’s escape from his prep school. In the novel, Mr. C. encounters his creator, Salinger himself, and revisits a number of locations and characters that Salinger’s Caulfield made famous. While Colting admits that he uses characters from _Catcher in the Rye_, his U.S. distributor, SCB Distributors, claims on the cover of _60 Years Later_ that the work is “A fictional examination of the relationship between J. D. Salinger and his most famous character” and makes clear that “This critical literary speculation has not been approved, licensed or endorsed by J. D. Salinger.”

On June 17, 2009, U.S. District Judge Deborah Batts issued a temporary restraining order blocking publication in the U.S. for at least 10 days while she weighed Salinger’s infringement claims. On July 1, 2009, the order was made permanent until a trial is held on the issue. In her decision, Judge Batts stated that Colting “had taken well more from _Catcher_ in both substance and style, than is necessary for the alleged transformative purpose of criticizing Salinger and his attitudes and behavior.” Judge Batts also found that the evidence did not support Colting’s claim that the work was a critical examination of Holden Caulfield and Salinger, nor did the evidence reveal that Colting’s work was a parody of _Catcher in the Rye_. If upheld, trial, these rulings would essentially deflate Colting’s fair use defense and render his work an infringement of Salinger’s copyright in _Catcher in the Rye_. Colting still has the opportunity to appeal Judge Batts’ ruling to the federal appeals court in Manhattan prior to trial.

—Michael Gross

_Staff attorney_

**Legal Services Scorecard**

From May 1 through August 1, 2009, the Authors Guild Legal Service Department handled 252 legal inquiries. Included were:

- 28 book contract reviews
- 13 agency contract reviews
- 6 reversion of rights inquiries
- 31 inquiries on copyright law, including infringement, registration, duration and fair use
- 13 inquiries regarding securing permissions and privacy releases
- 19 electronic rights inquiries
- 142 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)

**A Blog That Backfired**

_Tara Richerson v. Jeanne Beckon_

_U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit_

In 2004, Tara Richerson, a curriculum specialist and institutional coach employed by the Central Kitsap School District in Silverdale, Wash., started a personal blog in which she openly criticized her employers, union representatives and fellow teachers (albeit without using their actual names). Thereafter, several school employees complained to the district, threaten-
The Measured Art of Nonfiction

The J. Anthony Lukas Prize Project Awards were created in 1998 to honor the late Tony Lukas, the award-winning author of Common Ground and Big Trouble, president of the Authors Guild from 1996 to 1997 and inspiration and mentor to a generation of writers of narrative nonfiction.

The Lukas Prizes are jointly administered by The Columbia University School of Journalism and the Nieman Foundation at Harvard University, which host the award ceremony in alternate years. This year’s ceremony took place in New York, where Nicholas Lemann, head of the Journalism School, described the evening as a sort of “gathering of the clan of people who love book-length nonfiction.” The 2009 prize-winners and panelists for the discussion that followed were: Jane Mayer, the J. Anthony Lukas Book Prize for The Dark Side: The Inside Story of How the War on Terror Turned into a War on American Ideals; Timothy Brook, the Mark Lynton History Prize for Vermeer’s Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World, and Judy Pasternak, the J. Anthony Lukas Work in Progress Award for Yellow Dirt: The Betrayal of the Navajos. Daniel Okrent, author of Great Fortune: The Epic of Rockefeller Center and Public Editor Number One, a memoir of his stint as first public editor of The New York Times, moderated the discussion.

Our thanks to Linda Healey, the Lukas Prize Project, and the panelists for granting us permission to run an edited transcript.

DAN OKRENT: I’d like to start with a question for all of you—a question regarding audience. When we’re writing for newspapers and magazines we have a very clear sense of who the audience is. When you go out with a book, you’re going out into an unknown world. So do you think of the audience in a different way, do you think of the audience at all or do you just start writing? Jane, why don’t you start?

JANE MAYER: When I write at The New Yorker I feel that I have a very erudite audience. When I’m writing a book, the person I keep in the back of my mind is my Aunt Jane, who just turned ninety. She enjoys a great story and I’m trying to write for a wide audience. I don’t want to just write for specialists, I want to write for the whole country and I try to make it something that everybody’s going to care about. The question makes me think also about a story about Mary McGrory, who was a columnist when I got my first real newspaper job at the Washington Star. Early on, she was sent up to Congress and she wrote something that was not readable and her editor said, “Mary, just write it like you’re sending a letter home to your relatives in Boston.” And so she took another crack at it and wrote about it in a way that was full of color and real people and what she saw, not trying to be someone other than who she was. And so that’s what I try to do.

OKRENT: Don’t you presume that when you’re writing a book, that if it’s not The New Yorker’s audience, then you at least have a comparable audience, of people who are going to spend twenty-five or thirty dollars on a book?

MAYER: Up to a point, I mean I think that it’s a wider audience, I mean I presume less in writing a book. I really wanted to make it a page-turner, which as you can see from some of my New Yorker writing, doesn’t always meet that standard. I really wanted to make it something that would grab people, so that’s why the book opens with a scene of Cheney facing his own mortal peril in the situation room and thinking he’s been poisoned. I really wanted it to be a yarn, as well as everything else.
“When we’re writing for newspapers and magazines we have a very clear sense of who the audience is. [With] a book, you’re going out into an unknown world. Do you think of [that] audience in a different way?”

—Daniel Okrent

TIMOTHY BROOK: I never felt that anything I wrote qualified as a page-turner. But I’m coming from a different space. I’m a professor in a department of history, so in some ways—how can I put this as nicely as possible?—I don’t think about my audience.

OKRENT: That’s because you have tenure.

BROOK: Exactly. Nobody wants to buy the book, but money still comes in at the end of the month. That’s not quite true. This book comes out of teaching first-year students how to think about world history. So in a sense, the ideas in the book were shaped, by a not necessarily terrifically literate audience, but willing eighteen-year-olds—well, some of them are willing, I hope—who want to hear me make sense of the world. But in the end, my audience is really my spouse. If she thinks it’s readable then I’ve passed a huge hurdle. She’s not an academic, but if I can make it interesting to her, I think I’ve done my job.

OKRENT: One of the strengths of your book, it seems to me, is that it doesn’t seem to be written for academics at all, yet it has academic credibility.

BROOK: Well, yes, and this was the task and this was why I rewrote this book many, many times, because, as my agent, who is here tonight said, “You can write an academic monograph in your sleep. Stop doing it.” So I’ve taken her advice to heart, and I really enjoy it. It’s nice actually to be read by people.

OKRENT: Judy, how’s it for you? You worked at the Los Angeles Times until how long ago?

JUDY PASTERNAK: Officially last October, but it’s really been about a year because I started my book leave last May, so I was gone, but I decided not to go back and volunteered for a severance package.

In a lot ways I’m writing this book for myself because I had the advantage of working on a newspaper series on the subject before I started the book. I was so fascinated by this country within a country that I had stumbled into, and that most people don’t know a lot about, its history and the customs and the culture, that I wanted to be able to tell the story. Even though I had a lot of space in the newspaper series, I wanted to be able to tell some of what I had been learning, kind of behind the scenes. My editor at Free Press, Hilary Redmond, gave me really good advice. She said, you know, “talk to people at parties about your book and notice when their eyes start to glaze over and when they start looking over your shoulder. And notice when they are asking more questions and you’ll know what to include. Talk to lots and lots of people.” I really have been doing that.

OKRENT: Have you begun the writing or are you still in the reporting phase of the book?

PASTERNAK: I’m writing.

OKRENT: And do you find yourself using a different voice than you did when you were writing for the Times?

PASTERNAK: Absolutely.

OKRENT: How?

PASTERNAK: Well, I’m telling this in a chronological way. Actually, the idea for the story of the book came from something that was rejected for the series. The series had four parts. At one point we talked about maybe writing a story, one piece about one community and how that community had been affected by uranium mining. I found a really amazing place. And though I didn’t really know the full story at the time, there were enough elements there that I said, “This is going to be the place.” But when I started to write it, it was like too many pieces from those other parts. We wanted four very distinct parts, without overlapping characters. And when I started thinking about writing
a book, I realized that everything that made this wrong for the series made it right for the book. It’s got a beginning, a middle and an end; there are people who stay with you through it and it’s a very different way of kind of unfolding the whole thing.

OKRENT: Jane, in your case, much of your book appeared in different form in The New Yorker as articles. When you put it together, because of the different shape, and presumably different audience, did anything change in your approach to it or are you just piecing together a really big, really good New Yorker piece?

MAYER: I like to think that the whole is greater than just the sum of the parts. I mean, it was part of the reason I wanted to turn it into a book. My book editor is here tonight, Bill Thomas, and I hope he agrees. I felt very proud of the pieces and I have incredible editors at The New Yorker, but they didn’t really carry the full message that I wanted to get across, which was: decisions that were made, in Washington, at the highest levels of our government, had consequences that reverberated around the whole globe.

I had been writing about some of the programs and the consequences and then I’d do a profile of somebody in Washington, but what I wanted to do was to reassemble the whole thing chronologically, so that you could see that when those torture memos were written, immediately, something happened with Abu Zebeda, and who he was, and you began to understand and see the consequences of these things. Because I think, partly again on the subject of who the audience is, I was aiming to reach people who might not agree with me that this torture program was a bad idea. And so, I was really trying to reach and educate the country, because I cared about the subject and I wanted people to be surprised by it and maybe even see that. In order to reach people that might not agree with me, I used ambassadors in the book who were surprising: military figures and the FBI, and conservative lawyers in the Bush White House, people who had more credibility maybe than I do in my own right. And if you put the whole story together, I think it has a power to it that the stories in themselves couldn’t have had on their own.

OKRENT: That’s definitely true. I also wonder about voice. All three of you use an omniscient voice. You’re not relying on, “according to sources,” and “analysts say”; you’re stepping out and putting the responsibility on yourself, which is something you have the freedom to do when you’re not attached to an institution; you’re on your own. Is this a comfortable freedom, or is it at all intimidating? Or do you think this is some kind of a thrill, not having an editor saying, “You can’t say that” at the Los Angeles Times?

PASTERNAK: It’s difficult, but it’s kind of liberating. I can have a little more attitude than I would have been able to have in the paper. I can point out if somebody wrote something that was false or if somebody made a promise and didn’t keep it. I can have a little more of an edge in saying that they didn’t keep their promise, or that they lied!

OKRENT: Jane used the word torture, instead of “harsh tactics.” As a historian, Tim, do you feel that you have the freedom to be the authority?

BROOK: Well, I think my task is to reinsert myself into the text, because as a historian you are expected to kind of disappear. You assert your authority through the assembly of information and facts and you don’t directly comment yourself. So I had to put myself back in the story and it’s a little hard to put yourself back into the seventeenth century. But again, I had good advice from both my agent and my editor, that the only way anybody is ever going to be interested in the sev-

“I was aiming to reach people who might not agree with me that this torture program was a bad idea. . . .
I was really trying to reach and educate the country, because I cared about the subject.”

—Jane Mayer
enteenth century is if they trust you to be their guide into a period that’s very far from them. So putting myself back in was a lot of fun. I think in all my work, I’m there, but I kind of step back from the limelight. Here I put myself a bit forward as way to give the book a kernel of narrative, I guess.

OKRENT: What about the element that is imagination? That is beyond “here are the facts.” I’m going to read a quotation: “If history were a photograph of the past, it would be flat and uninspiring. Happily, it is a painting. Like all works of art, it fails at the highest truth unless imagination and ideas are mixed with the paints.” Because that’s a quotation from Allan Nevins, who was Jane Mayer’s grandfather, I’ll ask Jane to start with that one.

MAYER: That’s unfair! Okay. The problem with covering something that’s basically a clandestine program is, you don’t get to be there. I don’t make things up, as much as I would love to in some other format. What I have to do is rely on people to tell me what it was like, and luckily I could see from the people I was interviewing, that it was horrifying. It was actually the look in the eyes of some of the people I was interviewing that made me realize what a serious subject this was. There was one person I had lunch with and he couldn’t tell me everything that he’d seen about the U.S. torture program. He just said, “It is the most horrific, sophisticated program of psychic demolition that the world has ever seen.” And then he said that, basically, all the power and all the knowledge that the United States had about psychology and how to break people down was being focused on fourteen people. And they were just plain falling apart.

So it’s getting somebody else to tell me what it was like. There’s a quote in there from this person and there’s also a description, with him saying, “It’s not about waterboarding; it’s about the combination of all these things together. You have to imagine it all together, day after day.” It was important for me to get this across, because there’s been a kind of national failure of imagination, understandably. It doesn’t sound so bad to have sleep deprivation; anybody with a small child has been through it. In the same way, you know, even a little bit of water poured on a towel on your face, or being naked for a little bit or whatever. I mean, all these things, in and of themselves, they don’t sound like what you’d see at Ripleys’ Believe It or Not—the Iron Maiden or something—and that allows Rush Limbaugh to say, you know, “This isn’t torture, this is just a hazed ritual like what they do in fraternities.” So you really have to conjure it up, day after day, to explain what it was like for people going through it. I’m not sure I completely got there. As you see these memos coming out, you’re beginning to see more and more of it.

OKRENT: Do you worry about negative reactions from the people whose stories you are telling?

BROOK: I’m in a different position than Jane. Jane can actually interview the people involved and I can’t. So . . .

OKRENT: But then they can’t sue you so . . .

BROOK: This is true. So, I’ve got this sort of scattering of inert facts in front of me. And because I’m looking at the entire world for an entire century, I’ve got an infinite number of inert facts and I have to find some way to bring them together. So it’s definitely a work of imagination. I feel creative when I do this, this kind of nonfiction writing, but I don’t make anything up. I don’t try “it was a dark and stormy night,” or do that kind of scenic reenactment, because I just find that it’s corny. But I do want to combine the facts available to me in a way that people are going to be struck and they’re going to stop and they’re going to think and they’re going to want to read on because they’re seeing connections that had never occurred to them before.

OKRENT: You don’t win these prizes if you make things up. But if there’s a missing fact, there’s a missing element, there’s something that can’t be found that is between point A and point C. What do you do?

BROOK: I give them point A and point C. And then I talk about everything else that was going on at the time. And if there’s no smoking gun connecting, in my case, Vermeer with felt-making, it doesn’t really matter, because I’m stepping back, I’m looking for the larger picture and I have enough of a sense of the context of the times that I can allow point C to follow point A and if I don’t have point B, I’m not going to worry about it. I wouldn’t advise my graduate students to do it when writing their dissertations, but yeah, I think I can get away with it.

OKRENT: Judy, what about you?

PASTERNAK: If I’m missing a fact?

OKRENT: Where does imagination enter into the work?

PASTERNAK: Well you need, obviously, some imagination to make the connections, have the juxtapositions that show the impact of decisions made far away. What I have been trying to do is show what this Navajo family’s life was like at various stages, but also to pan out and show what was going on behind the scenes in the government. In some ways, it’s a very
"I’ve got an infinite number of inert facts and I have to find some way to bring them together. So it’s definitely a work of imagination. I feel creative when I do this kind of writing, but I don’t make anything up.”

—Timothy Brook

slow motion version of what Jane wrote about, in that people knew that there were dangers, people knew that there were going to be consequences in the future, but it was, you know, further out. There were scientists and researchers who stood up and tried to get something done and there were politicians or bureaucrats or people who didn’t care who had a national security issue that was pressing for them and they kind of went off and left the consequences to unfold there. Where the imagination comes in, I think, is in being able to get as deep as possible. They don’t let you all that close, but as close as you can get into the culture there, to show what was happening, and what they knew and what they didn’t know—and then to be able to show what everybody else knew, and didn’t care about. You kind of have to stitch that together.

OKRENT: I’m going to ask one more question and then throw it open to the audience. If you’re not writing for a newspaper or for a magazine, how do you know when you’re done? Obviously, with any of these subjects, you could go on forever. The answer can’t be because you got a deadline from your publisher because none of us meets our deadlines for our publishers, so—when do you know that you’ve got it all?

MAYER: Mine’s not done. I keep wanting to do new editions. And truthfully, I was begging for a couple more weeks in the end, and I don’t know if Bill Thomas is still here but he will remember that I was and that he was saying, “We have to get the book out!” So we knew that there was a limited window to get it out. Also, when I’m reporting, I find that there’s a point when people start repeating themselves and you know what they’re going to say and you feel like, okay, you do know this already. And it’s getting so boring to hear the same thing over and over again that it overcomes the terror of writing and you sit down and start writing. I think that’s what happens.

BROOK: I find that it’s when the story is visually full, when it’s visually round. I really stopped adding new material about two years before the book was finished, because the task for me was fashioning it. It was not finding more material, though in the last edit I did insert various bits and pieces. It’s when you feel that you stated what you’re trying to do, you’ve given the reader enough to understand what’s at stake, and then you’ve finished it off in a way that you feel you’ve somehow completed a journey. For me, the craft is in creating the finished outcome, not in the collection of data.

OKRENT: Judy, how’re you doing?

PASTERNAK: I know that I’m not done yet. I’m not sure when I’ll be done.

OKRENT: I’m sure that people in the audience have questions. Please step forward, say your name and ask a question.

AUDIENCE: My name is Michael Madsen. I was struck by something both Jane and Judy said. Jane, you said that you couldn’t really get your message across in The New Yorker in the way that you could in your book, and Judy, you said that you’re able to tell parts of the story that you couldn’t in the LA Times. What does that say about our publications, if you need a book form to really get across what you’re saying? Are you, in a way, giving an indictment of your own publications, about their limitations?

MAYER: No, I really don’t think so. I think that the stories in The New Yorker were as good as I could make them and made much better by the people who put out the magazine. It’s just that the whole story was bigger than even a magazine story. That’s why it was
a book. A lot of things that I’ve written are not books. You know, tons of stories, that’s as much as I could come up with on it. This one was just an epic subject, I thought. It was a huge sea change in the country, that we took this direction and it had huge consequences and you could write about it serially in the magazine but you really couldn’t put it all together. I think it’s just really a space issue.

PASTERNAK: I have to say that the Los Angeles Times gave me two years to work on this series that I’ve worked on, and a lot of resources. So I can’t accuse them of lack of depth, and I had great support when I did that. It couldn’t happen today, though they are actually still trying to do very ambitious series at the LA Times; they just aren’t going to do as many of them. I think, as Jane said, that the book tells the story a different way and may reach a different audience, but I think the newspaper series was also pretty deep. It was a different kind of writing and it got some results that are actually part of the book. But I can’t say that the LA Times skimped on anything.

OKREN: What about the inescapable fact that everybody who’s worked in newspapers, magazines or journalism in general experiences, which is that you work for a long time on something, it appears, and then it wraps fish. And it’s gone. Its moment has passed. But a book is a way of making it permanent. Do you feel that? Is that part of it at all?

PASTERNAK: Yeah, that’s part of it. I don’t know yet because I’ve never had a book come out. But the newspaper series got a lot of response. I got thousands of e-mails, there was a congressional hearing, they’re starting to do some of the cleanup now, so that was a very satisfying thing. It’s not totally over. But the book, I think, will feel different. Also, I tried to be visceral in the series, but I think this will generate more of an emotional response to the story.

AUDIENCE: I’m Kevin Buckley. My question is mainly for Jane Mayer. How do you feel reading daily coverage now of the ongoing issue of torture and do you think that the reporters who are writing about it have read your book? I refer specifically to a column today by Richard Cohen that was in the Daily News, saying maybe Cheney was right, maybe torture works, let’s get the memos. Does anyone know what these memos are, and how do you view the daily coverage of the subject you covered so well in the book?

MAYER: Well, I have to plead to being pretty addicted to the daily coverage still, so I’m following it closely. I did read Richard Cohen’s column, and I know he’s read my book because he called me up about it, but I guess he forgot the chapter about the man that they tortured into a false confession that helped get us into the war in Iraq. So I kind of wanted to say to Richard, well, you already know more than this. You know that it’s not like it just works, you know like turning on a light and getting what you need to know from people. But I didn’t call him; I was busy coming here. Anyway, the coverage is good. I have certainly been far from the only person that’s been writing about this subject and there’s been fantastic reporting on it.

You know, it’s obviously very fashionable to dump on the mainstream media, but without the reporting by Dana Priest, we wouldn’t know about the black sites, for example, or about the wiretapping program without James Ryerson and tons of other stuff. Carlotta Gall’s reporting coming out of Afghanistan, Jane Purliss’ [name?] from Pakistan, just to name a few of them, interestingly all women. Well, except for James Ryerson, yeah, sorry. But there’s been great reporting on this and it’s very, very politicized right now. The blogosphere is inflamed and anytime there’s anybody who writes a story that seems too friendly to the CIA or something like that, they get clobbered. And back and forth. It’s a real political fight going on right now and you can see it. I’m enjoying it, I mean I love seeing it become a great national debate.

OKREN: A follow-up to this for Tim Brook. Your book relied on the reporting of others. You didn’t do the reporting yourself, somebody else did, and you have to make the decision of whether you’re going to stand on those shoulders. You don’t have to go re-report it yourself, re-research it?

BROOK: Well, in my case, the shoulders I have to stand on are people who actually know something about Dutch art, for example. I talk a great deal about Vermeer and Dutch art in the seventeenth century. I have no training in this field, I just read what everybody else reads. But, since I’m not doing something that is so much in the public eye, I can sit back and decide, well, what will work for my narrative that I’m trying to write and what won’t. So I think I’m in a very different position to either Judy or Jane.

But I also read Chinese. So, when I’m dealing with something in seventeenth century China, I go and read the original seventeenth century Chinese texts. Because when it’s something I know something about, I don’t want to trust anyone else’s judgment, I want to go to the source.

OKREN: What about you, Judy? Do you rely on the reporting of others or do you go back and re-report?

PASTERNAK: I have been going back and re-reporting. I’ve been going back to original sources and
“I found a lot of suspicion when I started [reporting]. The people there have every reason not to trust outsiders. I spent a lot of time hanging out with people . . . [and] I made it a real point to keep in touch.”

—Judy Pasternak

According to someone,” kind of taking the burden off my own shoulders.

AUDIENCE: I’m curious about your relationship to the people that you interviewed for the LA Times. What was their reaction to the pieces you wrote, and how did your relationships change with those people? Did they provide more information for the book or did they become angry? What happened after the publication?

PASTERNAK: That’s a good question. It’s interesting because I found a lot of suspicion of me when I started doing this. The people there have every reason not to trust outsiders. I spent a lot of time hanging out with people. One of the things was that they were used to both academics and reporters spending time with them and asking questions, and then they never heard from them again or saw the work that they did. So I made it a real point to keep in touch with people, which was difficult because a lot of them didn’t have telephones.

But actually the most suspicion came from the Navajo Tribal Government. A lot of the officials there were really wondering what I was up to and part of it was because they have a very complicated role in the story. There had been times when the government did not want their own people to know the dangers in various local communities. The United States has a history of coming in and telling tribal officials that there were problems and then not helping them solve them. I’m not sure if that’s the choice that I’d make, to decide just not to tell people that there was a risk, but that was the choice they made. By the end of the series some of the people who had trusted me the least were writing me very warm notes about what I’d written. One woman did call me up kind of angry because she said a blogger had said something mean about one of her decisions, and I just had to say, well, I’m sorry, but I wrote what you said and I gave your explanation, and we’ll just leave it at that. But most people were actually surprised that somebody took so much time to try to understand them, because it doesn’t happen out there that much.

OKRENT: Obviously you’re dealing with people who are not used to being interviewed by reporters. What obligation do you have to let them know what they’re in for, which is to say, “Your words are going to appear in print, people will react, your name will be there, and they’ll have something to say about you.”

PASTERNAK: I do treat regular people a little different than politicians, who are not regular people, and they’re a little more savvy about what we’re doing and they use us as much as we use them. I’m sure there is

archives a lot. I want to understand it myself. If there’s something there that I can’t get otherwise, then obviously I’ll use the other reporting, but I’m pretty much doing it on my own.

OKRENT: Jane, because you specifically mentioned these other absolutely wonderful reporters who did this work—if it has Dana Priest’s name on it is that enough? Or do you have to go through the reporting again?

MAYER: I’ve tried to re-report what I could, just to check anything that I used that was from somebody else. So I would run it by the sources I had or even the public information office at the CIA and say, you know, “Did you have any problems with this story, blah blah blah,” that kind of thing. But I footnoted it all, so people can see if it came from someone else. And if it was dubious, every now and then, if I wasn’t completely sure, you’ll see in the text, I’ll say,
some of that going on here too, but I explained to them what I was doing. I gave them updates and, one of the things I was lucky enough to have the luxury to do, because this was a big project and because my editor insisted on this, was I called everybody back before the stories ran. And I fact-checked. I didn’t read them the story, I didn’t send them the story, but I went through hours of just checking. And I actually made trips out to the Navajo Nation for the people who didn’t have phones and sat with them and talked through everything to make sure that I was getting things right. And that helps a lot, obviously.

AUDIENCE: That sounds like you work for newspapers, not for magazines. Because magazines always expect to have the fact-checkers do it for them. But Jane, I’m curious about the reaction from your sources, the people who were in the Bush administration, what they said after your book came out.

MAYER: You know, I got surprisingly wonderful reactions from people on this book, and it’s certainly not true of all my work. My dad’s here tonight and he used to joke about how there’d be a party of all the people I’ve written about who hate me and that we’d have to rent out a ballroom. But this was really unusual. I got wonderful phone calls and notes from all kinds of people. And it was surprising. Now, I have heard through the grapevine that Lynne Cheney is not happy about this book. And I assume that when the former vice president writes his own book that, you know, I’ll have to go into an undisclosed location. But other than that . . . I was unable to interview him or fact-check with him, and the same with David Addington, who is a central character in the book. But basically I got wonderful reactions from people and it was really kind of moving to hear from them.

OKRENT: Well, thank you all three very much for the work that you do. And thank the Lukas Prize committee and the Columbia University School of Journalism and everybody for coming tonight. Good night.
Along Publishers Row
Continued from page 2

Munroe's Internet comic strip, xkcd, is being published as a book that will be sold, in the beginning, on the Web—just like posters and T-shirts. Alexis Ohanian, founder of the website reddit said, "The Internet really facilitates good stuff being read."

HIGH SPEED: Scribd, an Internet start-up in San Francisco, offers a way for anyone to upload a document to the Web and charge for it. With Scribd, authors can set their own price for their work and keep 80 percent of the revenue. They can decide whether to encode their documents with security software that will prevent their texts from being downloaded or copied free. Scribd also gives authors who are in a hurry a Web forum on which to post their books, charge for them and see immediate results.

The New York Times reported that Kemble Scott, who has released a novel through a conventional publisher, said he would post his new political comedy, The Sower, to Scribd and charge $2 for it, partly because standard publishing is so slow. "If this is a book that is going to be interesting to people, now is the time that it fits into the national mood," he told the Times.

In June, Simon & Schuster announced that it would sell digital copies of its books on Scribd.com. These will include novels by Stephen King, Dan Brown and Mary Higgins Clark.

A GOOD BOOK: Henry Thoreau published Walking in 1862. In it he wrote, "A truly good book is something as natural, and as unexpectedly and unaccountably fair and perfect, as a wild flower discovered on the prairies of the West or in the jungles of the East."

PEEKING: Voyeurism is inherent in reading fiction, according to Kathryn Harrison, author of While They Slept: An Inquiry into the Murder of a Family. Harrison kicked off a review in The New York Times Book Review with the following: "Fiction gives readers access to the private lives of characters who don't know they're being watched, people who seem real—as real as the reader, if their creator is sufficiently skilled—and whose unspoken thoughts and feelings are plundered for whatever enlightenment or diversion they might offer."

TWO TYPES: Joyce Carol Oates wrote in The New York Review of Books: "Short stories, for all the dazzling diversity of the genre, are of two general types: those that yield their meanings subtly, quietly, and are as nuanced and delicate and without melodrama as the unfolding of miniature blossoms in Japanese chrysanthemum tea, and those that explode in the reader's face."

STATS: In an article deploring the loss of his local bookstore in Chappaqua, N.Y., Peter Applebome of The New York Times quotes some interesting statistics: "The American Booksellers Association, which represents independent booksellers, now includes about 1,500 businesses at about 2,500 locations. Twenty years ago, it was 4,200 at about 5,500 locations."

RESEARCH: Kate Walbert's The Woman Question is about several generations of women in the suffrage movement. An interviewer for PW asked the author if she did her research first or wrote the story first. Walbert said, "I find that if I really get involved in research I don't have any time left to get involved with fiction. If I know too much it squelches the impulse. I have the most fun, I write the best lines, when it's completely coming out of my imagination. So I do research after to make sure I get my facts right."

WHY WRITE: The late Enid Bagnold was the author of the novel National Velvet and the drama The Chalk Garden. In Enid Bagnold's Autobiography, she wrote, "Who wants to become a writer? And why? Because it's the answer to everything. To 'Why am I here?' To uselessness. It's the streaming reason for living. To note, to pin down, to build up, to create, to be astonished at nothing, to cherish the oddities, to let nothing go down the drain, to make something, to make a great flower out of life, even if it's a cactus." She was 80 years old when she wrote, "To be old is magnificent."

CLIMATE CHANGE: Shelby Heron is the author of 15 novels, including Ella in Bloom (2001), Life Estates (1994) and Owning Jolene (1984). Heron, who was born in Kentucky and lived for many years in Texas, now lives in Burlington, Vt. Her new novel, Year of the Dog, is her first set in Vermont, and she said in a postcard: "In my Texas books I had to eke out the tiniest changes in the seasons. In Vermont, each season brings an avalanche of change, and I had to take care not to sound like the weather channel."

HIS GOAL: The late John Updike once wrote, "I don't wish my fiction to be any clearer than life."

LANGDON RETURNS: Dan Brown's The Da Vinci Code has 81 million hardcovers in print. His next novel, starring Robert Langdon too, will be The Lost Symbol, and it is due out in September. Brown's website says the book is about "the hidden history of our nation's capital, and
it is “set deep within the oldest fraternity in history,” the Masons.

TV FAN: Jude Deveraux (her Lavender Morning is a bestseller) says on her website that she loves watching TV. She explains, “When I read, I start editing in my mind and it takes the fun away from the book.”

TITLES: And the winner for the British Prize for the Oddest Book Title of the year was The 2009–2014 World Outlook for 60-Milligram Containers of Fromage Frais. The author is Philip M. Parker, a professor of marketing at Instead, an international business school. The price is about $1,129, if you’re thinking about buying a copy. It’s about cheese.

Runners-up included Curbside Consultation of the Colon, The Large Sieve and Its Applications, Strip and Knit with Style and Techniques for Corrosion Monitoring. Past winners include Reusing Old Graves, Sex After Death, Waterproofing Your Child and People Who Don’t Know They’re Dead: How They Attach Themselves to Unsuspecting Bystanders and What to Do About It.

THE HUNGRY NOVEL: Marguerite Yourcenar (author of Memoirs of Hadrian) wrote: “In our time the novel devours all other forms; one is almost forced to use it as a medium of expression.”

LETTERS: Annie Barrows shares the authorship of The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society with Mary Ann Shaffer. Their book has been a bestseller for more than half a year with 550,000 copies in print. Barrows said in a Powells.com interview: “I love what you can do with events in epistolary format, the way you can describe an event from one perspective, and then another perspective. . . . You don’t have to constantly amp up the descriptions because you don’t want to run out of steam before you run out of action.”

FOR ADULTS: Alain de Botton’s new book is The Pleasures and Sorrows of Work. He told PW, “My inspiration was Richard Scarry’s children’s classic, What Do People Do All Day? I wanted to write an adult version, partly because I’ve enjoyed reading it to my son. I also wanted to write in a literary way about something that literature normally overlooks. In most novels, people don’t really go to work. They spend all their energies falling in love and sometimes murdering one another—whereas what most of us do is, precisely, go to work.”

FROM LIFE: Ted Dekker’s idea for his best-selling Boneman’s Daughter came from an event in his life. Dekker told Publishers Weekly: “My idea . . . came from the loss of my own daughter when she left home at age eighteen to live with a monster. I wanted to throttle the man, but she was in love, so all I could do was hope, pray and cry. She came home in tears sixty days later, and we learned that the monster had abused her. Experiences like this are the genesis for my novel.”

FROM CARDS: Vladimir Nabokov’s last, unfinished manuscript will be published in November. The title will be The Original of Laura. It was written on 138 index cards, and each card will be reproduced with a transcript of the text on the facing page.

METHOD: In an introduction to a collection of Anton Chekov’s short stories, published in 1932, Robert Linscott wrote that the famous Russian “understands his people so completely that every gesture they make is in character and adds to our knowledge of them. As a result, he sets them before the reader with the utmost economy of words, without interposing description or moralizing, and in such a way that we accept their actions as inevitable.”

SING ALONG: Anna Dewdney’s Llama Llama Red Pajama, a children’s picture book, has become a musical. It had its premiere last April at the Nashville Public Library, and the Penguin Players performed it throughout May in Tennessee. PW reported that Llama Llama Misses Mama is the third in Dewdney’s series and a bestseller.

THRILLER MAN: Harlan Coben of Ridgewood, N.J., is the author of 18 thrillers, nine of them with the fictional Myron Bolitar in the central role. Coben’s latest is Long Lost. In a feature article in The New York Times, Coben said, “The preparation for building a series of thrillers based on a single character is kind of like the preparation for becoming a parent: the best part is the idea—wink, wink.”

Another quote: “There are three things that make a person a writer: Inspiration, perspiration and desperation. I’m on page forty of the next book; Myron hasn’t shown up yet. But you never know. That’s the beauty of getting paid to make stuff up for a living.”

POETRY FAN: Ana Menendez is the author of The Last War, a novel set in Istanbul. She told PW that all three of her books “are obsessed with memory—how we want it to be inffalible truth, but it’s not.”

She’s also been influenced by poetry. She said, “Poetry is a palate cleanser. It reminds you of why you are doing what you are doing. My uncle, a poet, gave me a book of kids’ poems when I was in kindergarten. Of course, in a Cuban household everyone’s an amateur poet—everyone is always reciting.”

AT THE TOP: Lee Child’s 12th Jack Reacher novel, Nothing to Lose, was
his first No.1 bestseller. There are more than 22 million copies of his books in print. His 13th Jack Reacher novel was published in May. Its title is Gone Tomorrow.

POSTHUMOUS PROMISE: Michael Crichton, author of Jurassic Park and other bestsellers, died last November. His publisher announced in April that he left behind one finished novel and about one-third of a second. The completed novel is Pirate Latitudes, an historical tale, and his publisher told The New York Times, “It's packed through with great detail about navigation and how pirates operated, and links between the New World and the Caribbean and Spain.” A coworker will be selected to finish the other book.

FREE: Kristen Hannah's Firefire Lane is a best-selling paperback. She explained on her website, “I write because it frees something in me. It's the greatest job in the world. It allows me to be the wife/mother/friend I want to be, with plenty of time for the people I care about, while still giving me something that’s mine, something that defines me as an individual.”

ESCAPE: Booksellers are struggling to sell books. But The New York Times reported that “sales of romance novels are outripping most other categories of books and giving some buoyancy to an otherwise sluggish market.”

"Harlequin Enterprises, the queen of the romance world, reported that fourth-quarter earnings were up 32 percent over the same period a year earlier,” said the Times. A Barnes & Noble spokesman said sales of romance novels were up. And in the first three months of this year, Nielsen Bookscan reported a 2.4 percent rise in romance sales compared with a slight decline in sales of general adult fiction for the same period. “Like the Depression-era readers who fueled blockbuster sales of Margaret Mitchell's Gone With the Wind, wrote reporter Motoko Rich, “today’s readers are looking for an escape from the grim realities of layoffs, foreclosures and shrinking 401(k) balances.”

STILL SELLING: Virginia Lee Burton's publisher, Houghton Mifflin, is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the birth of the late author and illustrator. Burton's Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel is still selling and so is her The Little House, which won a Caldecott. Forty-five million copies of Burton books have been sold.

SIN: The late novelist Robertson Davies wrote: “The great sin is to assume that something that has been read once has been read forever. As a very simple example I mention Thackeray's Vanity Fair. People are expected to read it during their university years. But you are mistaken if you think you read Thackeray's book then: you read a lesser book of your own. It should be read again when you are 36, which is the age of Thackeray when he wrote it. It should be read for a third time when you are 56, 66, 76, in order to see how Thackeray's irony stands up to your own experience of life. . . . Nobody ever reads the same book twice.”

THE OLD: Stephen Burn wrote in The Times Literary Supplement: “The writers who emerged in the middle of the last century . . . indisputably have stamina. But one of the by-products of their longevity is a late phase in their career when every book lies in the shadows cast by mortality. In these late works, narrative convention has to battle its way onto a page where bodily decline threatens to be the only subject.”

WESTERN VIEW: Craig Johnson's The Dark Horse is the fifth mystery featuring Wyoming sheriff Walt Longmire. A PW interviewer asked Johnson if he considered his books Westerns. He said, “They are in the sense that they are novels set in the American West, but I try to deal with the universal imperative of the human condition. I love and live in the West, but I also try to be honest about it. I’d be a fool not to realize that there’s a certain amount of baggage that goes along with writing contemporary Western fiction, but instead of falling into ruts, I try and take it down the road less traveled.”

PROBLEM: Under the label “Ideas & Trends” in The New York Times, Matt Richtel had an essay with the title “If Only Literature Could Be a Cellphone-Free Zone.” He wrote, “I recently finished my second thriller, or so I thought. When I sent it to several fine writer friends, I received this feedback: the protagonist and his girlfriend can’t spend the whole book unable to get in touch with each other. Not in the cellphone era.” Kamran Pasha, a writer, told Richtel, “We want a world where there’s distance between people; that’s where great storytelling comes from.” Richtel said he believes that “undone would be many a key underlying misunderstanding in Shakespeare’s comedies with a simple I.M.: Can you clarify whether u r man or gal?”

NO CELLS PLEASE: M. J. Rose’s books are about reincarnation. She said that she intends to set her next book in 1948 in part so she can let missed connections and miscommunications simmer. She explained, “You miss a train in 1888 or even 1989, and have no way to contact the person waiting at the station on the other end. He thinks you’ve changed your mind, been captured, weren’t able to escape. You miss a train in 2009 and you pull out your cell and text that you’ll be two hours late.”

AFTER PRISON: Joe Reddick of the
Bronx told The New York Times that he never read a novel until he was imprisoned for dealing drugs. There for 15 years, he was inspired to write by Jeffrey Archer’s 1979 novel Kane and Abel. Reddi published two books under the pen name of Joe Black while he was in prison. Street Team is about four teenage drug dealers and Squeeze is about a contract killer. The books are available from street vendors and urban bookstores. The Times said the first has sold about 9,000 copies, the second 5,000. Since Reddi lost his job as a painter’s apprentice in December, he has been working on a third novel he drafted while in prison, Movin’ Violation. He plans to self-publish it this summer.

TITLE MAKER: Could you resist a book with the title Yoga for People Who Can’t Be Bothered To Do It? The author is Geoff Dyer, a Londoner identified as a prizewinning author of both fiction and nonfiction. Other titles include Paris Trance, The Color Memory and Out of Sheer Rage. The following quote is from a Dyer essay entitled “Horizontal Drift.” “When you are lonely, writing can keep you company. It is also a form of self-compensation, a way of making up for things—as opposed to making things up—that did not quite happen.”

HAPPY BIRTHDAY: The Elements of Style by William Strunk and E. B. White was celebrated on its 50th birthday in April. Since 1959, 10 million copies have been sold.

ERROR? After two days of angry complaints on the Internet, Amazon.com admitted “an embarrassing and ham-fisted cataloging error.” It had caused thousands of books to lose their sales rankings and become harder to find in searches. The New York Times said that “titles that lost their sales rankings . . . included Unfriendly Fire, a recently published book about the government’s policies on gays in the military.” Amazon said 57,310 books in several categories had been affected, including books on health and reproductive medicine. Sales rankings on Amazon are important because they help place books on the website’s bestseller lists and help shoppers find them.

MORE OATES: Joyce Carol Oates is the author of 56 novels, 32 short-story collections, eight volumes of poetry and countless essays and book reviews. She admitted to The New York Times that she alone was probably the only one who had read everything she had published. Oates’s husband died last year, and she told the Times, “I wanted to write a memoir about being a widow. I was going to be the opposite of Joan Didion.” Hers is beautiful and elegiac. Mine would be filled with all sorts of slapstick, demeaning and humiliating things. Like trash cans whose bottoms are falling out.” Oates is engaged to Charles Gross, who is in the psychology department at Princeton, where Oates teaches.


Tower told The New York Times, “Initially, there was a lot more corn-poning and self-consciously vernacular language, cute little moments.” His editor, Courtney Holland at Farrar, Straus & Giroux, wrote “too admirable” many times on the manuscript, Tower added, “so I actually didn’t sit down to write a bleak collection. When I look back at the early stories, it seemed much more like a ‘Hee Haw’ episode.” He explained, “I suppose they’re stories about people in extremes, people who are just trying to find a little bit of peace in the world—usually after some horrific incident. And usually that quest for peace leads them to additional horror.”

Much of Tower’s material came from features he wrote for The Washington Post. He said, “I really came to identify with those blue-collar stories. So much of our economic life in America is built on the substrate of brutal and crushingly dull work. But if all you did were watch sitcoms, you wouldn’t even know this class exists.”

BIG JOB: Leo Tolstoy wrote: “The task of the writer is to seize the reader by the back of the neck and force him to love life.”

IS NOTHING SACRED? Is Jane Austen twirling in her grave? Who would have thought that combining an Austen novel and brain-eating monsters would put a book on the bestseller lists? Well, author Seth Grahame-Smith did, and his Pride and Prejudice and Zombies is a hit. The publisher, Grand Central, has signed the author for two more books at a reported half-million dollars plus. The next will be Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter. In it the 16th president will take on the task of removing the undead from the earth.

SO SORRY: Remember James Frey, author of A Million Little Pieces? A few years back, Oprah Winfrey chewed him out on TV for calling his fiction a memoir. According to vanityfair.com, Frey said Oprah telephoned him recently and said she was sorry. “It was a nice surprise to hear from her,” Frey added. “I really appreciated the call and the sentiment.” Reuters checked out the story and said an Oprah representa-
tive confirmed the phone call and the apology.

PALIN CONTRACT: Former Alaska governor Sarah Palin is writing a memoir to be published next spring. The New York Times said, “News of the book deal renewed speculation that Ms. Palin intends to mount a 2012 presidential campaign.” Palin told The Daily News that it would be nice “to put my journalism degree to work on this.” She graduated from the University of Idaho.

MORE MEMOIRS: Clyde Haberman, who writes a column about the city for The New York Times, reminds us that in politics, “Once they have let slip the reins of power, senior people in every administration race to their desktops to pound out their side of the story and (no small consideration) to cash in on it.” These books are important to New York because, “the city doesn’t have many industries left. The few that survive, like Wall Street and the news media, are hobbling. But we are still the country’s publishing capital.”

Later, he notes, “New York also tends to be the first stop when it comes time to huckster these works of self-promotion because we also have Matt and Meredith and Diane and Barbara and Scott and Katie, whose on-air interviews are needed to oxygenate even the most celebrated memoirists. Hey, it’s a living.”

Haberman observes: “Given some of their past statements, the Bush administration officials now birthing memoirs are bound to contradict one another. . . . Good luck trying to find out where reality lies.”

OH: In its Summer Fiction Issue, The New Yorker cartoon by David Sipress showed a smiling editor saying to an open-mouthed writer: “Great news! Your novel is in a medium-sized pile in the middle of the floor about four feet from the left side of Oprah’s assistant’s desk.”

WOMEN’S TURN: Carol Ann Duffy was appointed Britain’s poet laureate, a post that had been held by male writers for 341 years. Duffy’s poems, which won many prizes, are often extended monologues. A critic said of one of her collections that it had “the exuberant voices of psychopaths, lovers, depressed dolphins and mischievous wives, each at a critical point in their life’s journey, each with a compelling back-story revealed in glimpses.” Duffy can also be funny. The New York Times included one example, entitled “Mrs. Darwin”:

7 April 1852.

Went to the Zoo
I said to Him—
Something about that
Chimpanzee over there
reminds me of you

Duffy’s naming was followed by Ruth Padel’s election as Oxford Professor of Poetry. She was the first woman in that job since it was created in 1708, but she resigned after admitting that she had played a part in a covert effort to taint her main rival for the job, Nobel Prize winner Derek Walcott, with allegations of sexual impropriety.

SERIES PROBLEM: Laurie R. King is author of the best-selling The Language of Bees. She was quoted in PW about the pitfalls of writing a series and said, “What I wrote in 1993, I have to live with in 2008, even if I no longer have the faintest idea what I had in mind back then. Sometimes this creates ridiculously convoluted problems, and I spend hours and hours paging through to find out what color someone’s eyes were or if I credited them with a certain skill, and I end up wishing I could just recall all copies of the earlier book and make people forget about that line on page 238.”

FOR KIDS: Neil Gaiman’s first book for children, The Graveyard Book, is a bestseller. At a PEN panel in New York, he told how he had begun his career as a writer of comic books. Then he moved on to novels for adults. Becoming a parent turned out to trigger another shift. He said, “All of a sudden, you have these amazing little people living in your house and you can steal their ideas.”

HOW HE STARTS: James Rollins, a best-selling author, has published his sixth Sigma Force thriller, The Doomsday Key. He was asked by PW how he got started on a book. He said, “It starts with a box, a cardboard lawyer’s file box. Into that box goes anything that might make a story: a stray idea that pops into my head, an article from the latest Scientific American, a note jotted while watching the History Channel and so on. Once a month, I sift through that box and cull anything that no longer interests me. But during that process, by pure chance, odd bits end up next to each other on the floor: a piece of history that ends with a question mark, a bit of science that makes me go ‘What if?’ And in that moment I discover a possible story.”

SUBJECT MATTER: Jennifer Schuessler writes the column on bestsellers for The New York Times.
Book Review. She summed up "a few staples of the fiction list in recent months" as being about "aliens, kidnappings, Secret Service agents, and pastry-chef detectives with canine sidekicks and day jobs as wizards."

STORIES: Fourteen never-before-published short stories by Kurt Vonnegut will come out in November. Vonnegut died in 2007. The title of this new volume will be Look at the Birdie. At the same time, Delacorte will reissue 15 Vonnegut backlist titles with art by the author.

BREAD AND BOOKS: Do you browse the bookshelves at your supermarket? Last fall, Meijer, which has 200 superstores in the Midwest, had a three-day author bus tour. More than 25 writers signed books at nine Meijer stores as part of a Meijer "Read This Book" campaign. In July, Whole Foods planned a special promotion for Laurie Kresb’s The Beeman.

RISK TAKER: Patrick O’Keeffe teaches at Colgate University in upstate New York and is the author of The Road Hill, a collection of novellas that won the Story Prize in 2005. He read from a work in progress, The Moon in Cancer, at a Colgate lecture series and told the audience that he had worked with the homeless in Ann Arbor, Mich., and that getting to know them challenged his own limited notions of who they were. He urged students to break away from their own comfort zones because coming face to face with the unknown often facilitates discovery. He said writers must take risks. “Okay, I can’t get away with this, but I’m going to try to get away with this and hope it works.”

FOUND: “What discoveries I’ve made in the course of writing stories all began with the particular, never the general,” wrote Eudora Welty.

THEORY: Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, who died in April (see DEATHS below), was singled out for a long obituary that was followed a few days later by an “Ideas & Trends” essay in The New York Times. It was Sedgwick who pointed out homoerotic impulses in the work of Henry James, Friedrich Nietzsche and Charles Dickens. Sedgwick, an English professor at the City University of New York, used her theory to analyze fiction. She argued that in Herman Melville’s Billy Budd, the handsome young sailor’s accuser was a homosexual, “presented as different in his essential nature than the normal men around him.”

Patricia Cohen concluded that queer theory itself has been the subject of tension. She wrote, “Scholars and students in all sorts of disciplines have incorporated its ideas, using the theory as just another analytical tool in their kit. At the same time, it remains a symbol of wacky, out-of-touch academics.”

WHICH? Books vs. Kindle? Joanne Kaufman wrote an essay on that subject for The New York Times, interviewing and quoting several book people. Anne Fadiman was relieved that her book about her passion for books, Ex Libris, was not available on Kindle. “It would really be ironic if it were. There’s a little box on Amazon that reads ‘Tell the publisher I’d like to read this book on Kindle.’ I hope no one tells the publisher.” Kurt Andersen, a novelist and public radio host, said that he was proud to live in a two-Kindle household. He said, “Giving people a new other way to read books is fine and good.” Kaufman concludes her essay with: “Given the sorry financial state of the book business, most authors may be willing to set aside any prejudices.”

Chris Cleave, a novelist who writes a column for The Guardian, put it bluntly. “I love my readers and I want them to read my stuff,” he said. “I’d write it out longhand for them if necessary.”

THE AMERICAN WAY: The critic Peter S. Prescott maintained that the short story was essentially an American invention. “Americans who write them tend to create for each story a specific and highly individual tone of voice that is noninsensitive, and not its author’s own. It is this tone of voice, created for the story at hand and conveying a sense of a tale being told to the reader, that makes the story work, that gives it its distinctively American style.”

TRIAL RUNS: Jay McInerney’s lat-
est is How It Ended: New and Collected Stories. It was a short story that preceded McNerney’s big success, Bright Lights, Big City, and the characters in the novels Brightness Falls and The Good Life were introduced in a short story, “Smoke.” McNerney admits in the preface to this new volume that short stories often turn out to be warm-up exercises. He wrote, “There’s psychological as well as practical value in using one as a sketch for a novel; the idea of undertaking a narrative of three or four hundred pages, which might consume years of your life, is pretty daunting.”


Panel discussions were held on the growing impact of e-books and how best to deal with the Internet.

Sherman Alexie, author of the National Book Award-winning The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian, told booksellers he refused to allow his books to be made available in digital form. He called e-books expensive and “elitist.” He said when he saw a woman on the plane with a Kindle on his flight to New York, “I wanted to hit her.”

Later in her article, Rich commented: “Anxiety over digital publishing was heightened by the recession that has dampened book sales, and belt tightening was in evidence throughout the convention.”

BACKGROUND: Raymond Khoury’s third bestseller is The Sign. The first two were The Last Templar and The Sanctuary. Before becoming a writer, PW reported, Khoury was an architect, an investment banker and a dabbler in real estate. The Last Templar was adapted for a four-hour miniseries offered on NBC-TV in June.

GROUP WRITING: Six female psychotherapists meet on Friday mornings in Manhattan to write and talk about writing.

Bonnie Zindel started the group seven years ago. She told The New York Times, “Everybody comes in with their own stories, and they can be so staggeringly original. We all need stories to make sense of our lives. We’re all wired to tell stories, and nature gave us that. . . . There are mother stories, father stories, ghost stories and the universal story of a child trying to separate from its mother.”

At each session, Zindel assigns a topic (example: Bliss), and the therapists spend five minutes writing in silence. Then they read their prose aloud. “Writing in the presence of another is so wonderful,” Zindel said. “It feels that because it’s in relationship with others, it’s writing about yourself at the deepest level.”

CREATING CHARACTERS: Jonathan Tropper is the author of a novel, This Is Where I Leave You. PW asked him how much of his characters are drawn from real life.

He said, “My characters may come from ideas or people or situations I’ve heard about, but I tend to construct the characters more out of thin air. A character may have a particular quirk or idiosyncrasy that’s drawn from a person I know, but I’m more interested in putting together a psyche myself, and I think it’s a lot of fun to write in the first person in a voice you don’t necessarily agree with.”

SHORT IS GOOD: Inspired by new biographies of John Cheever, Flannery O’Connor and Donald Bar-theleme, Times movie critic A. O. Scott wrote an essay in praise of short stories. He said, “If the golden age of American magazines is long gone, the short story itself has shown remarkable durability, and may even be poised for a resurgence. . . . [T]he short story may provide a timely antidote to the cultural blight of the past decade, when it often seemed that every novel needed to be 500 pages long, and every movie had to last three hours—or four years if it took the form of a cable series.”

Scott thinks “the blog post and the tweet may be ephemeral rather than lapidary, but the culture in which they thrive is fed by a craving for more narration and a demand for pith.” He suggested that the Kindle might spur a revival of the short story and concluded that “the death of the novel is yesterday’s news. The death of print may be tomorrow’s headline. But the great American short story is still being written, and awaits its readers.”

HER TEACHER: Sherryl Woods’s best-selling paperback, Harbor Lights, has 310,000 copies in print. Woods told PW that working for a newspaper had helped her. She said, “Journalism taught me to be concise and clear as a writer, but it also taught me to become a great observer of people.”

BIG BOOST: Peter de Jonge has shared bylines on several books by best-selling author James Patterson. Now de Jonge’s first solo novel, Shadows Still Remain, has been published. He told The New York Times that he got most of his ideas from obliging detectives from the Seventh Precinct in Manhattan. De Jonge said, “I’m very grateful to Jim [Patterson]. He’s a friend and he’s been very generous to me. Without him I wouldn’t have been able to afford to write a novel of my own, or had the confidence to try.”
De Jonge added: “What I learned from him is that you can’t be self-indulgent. Even if the least literary book has to be a page-turner. You’re not accomplishing anything by writing something that’s hard to read.”

NOVEL DEFINED: Julian Barnes has written ten novels, two volumes of stories and two collections of essays. His latest book is nonfiction, entitled Nothing To Be Frightened Of. The subject? Death.

In this new book the London author said, “Writers need certain stock replies for certain stock questions. When asked What The Novel Does, I tend to answer, ‘It tells beautiful, shapely lies which enclose hard, exact truths.”

OFFICE SPACE: Michael Connelly’s latest thriller is The Scarecrow, which hit No. 1 on the bestseller lists. The New York Times said that Connelly has rented Raymond Carver’s former apartment as a writing studio. Raymond Chandler’s old digs would seem more appropriate.

NO BIO: David Benioff is a Los Angeles screenwriter who wrote City of Thieves, a best-selling trade paperback novel. In that book, he wrote, “Two years ago I was asked to write an autobiographical essay for a screenwriting magazine, and midway through I realized I had led an intensely dull life. Not that I’m complaining...I’ve had a good time existing. But as I struggled through the essay I decided I didn’t want to write about my life, not even for 500 words. I wanted to write about Leningrad.”

SUMMER FARE: J. Courtney Sullivan’s novel Commencement was singled out in a Janet Maslin survey of summer female fiction for The New York Times.

One of Sullivan’s characters was quoted: “When a woman writes a book that has anything to do with feelings or relationships, it’s either called chick lit or women’s fiction, right?” Another character says, “But look at Updike, or Irving. Imagine if they’d been women. Just imagine. Someone would have slapped a pink cover onto Rabbit at Rest and poof, there goes the Pulitzer.”

BANKRUPT: Arcade Publishing filed for bankruptcy in June. The company was founded by Richard Seaver and his wife, Jeannette Seaver. He died in January.

More than 200 creditors and liabilities of just over $6 million were listed. Arcade published Octavio Paz, Raymond Chandler, Ingmar Bergman and Shimon Peres.

FAN MAIL: Anita Shreve’s Testimony is a trade paperback bestseller.

On her website she was asked if she had ever gotten any unusual fan mail. She replied, “One woman wrote me and asked for her money back. It was in regard to my book Where or When. She was from Georgia and said, ‘You know, I paid $21.95 for this book, and I really expected a better ending than this.’”

Shreve said she sent the woman a check.

SIGNING ON: At a recent David Sedaris reading at New York’s Strand bookstore, the author of When You Are Engulfed in Flames was presented with a Kindle and asked to autograph it. He wrote “To Marty. This spells doom,” and initialed it.

In an e-mail message, Sedaris told The New York Times that he had signed other Kindles and “a fair number of iPods as well, these for audio book listeners.” Sedaris continued, “The strangest thing I’ve signed is a woman’s artificial leg.” That happened in Austin, Texas.

HOW TO SELL: Dean Koontz’s Odd Hours is a paperback bestseller. It is being promoted by 60 spots in movie theaters in seven major cities. PW said the spots were running on lobby screens as well.

FOUND: Two unpublished Agatha Christie short stories featuring detective Hercule Poirot were found among the author’s old notebooks. They will be included in Agatha Christie’s Secret Notebooks: Fifty Years of Mysteries in the Making, to be published in the fall.

GLORIA! GLORIA! Gloria Vanderbilt, 85, has written a novel, Obsession: An Erotic Tale, published in June. She told The New York Times, “I don’t think age has anything to do with what you write about. The only thing that would embarrass me is bad writing, and the only thing that really concerned me was my children. You know how children can be about their parents. But mine are very intelligent and supportive.”

Her son Anderson Cooper, the CNN newsman, read Obsession in manuscript. He said, “The six most surprising words a mother can say to her son are: ‘Honey, I’m writing an erotic novel.’ But actually she’s pretty unique, and there’s not much she does that’s surprising anymore. At 85, whatever she wants to write is fine with me.”

BUSY: Nora Roberts was the subject of “Real Romance,” a profile in The New Yorker. The subtitle was “How Nora Roberts Became America’s Most Popular Novelist.”

There were a lot of statistics: 27 Nora Roberts books are sold every minute. She (and her alter ego J. D. Robb, who writes futuristic police procedurals) has written 182 novels, in addition to short stories and novellas. “Penguin, Roberts’s publisher, shipped 637,000 copies of last year’s hardback release alone, for a total of more than eight million books in 2008. In addition, Roberts sold five and a half million copies of backlist titles, and J. D. Robb sold four and a half million books.
How does she produce so much?
"On a typical day, she gets up at around six, works out in the basement, and is sitting down at her computer by eight o'clock. She limbers up with a game of Gem Drop or Jewel Quest Solitaire, checks the blogs, and writes for six to eight hours, fuelling herself with Winston Filter 100s, Cheez-Its, and Diet Pepsi from a litre bottle. Around five each afternoon, she goes downstairs to prepare dinner."


An old favorite is Edward Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, published in 1776. The New York Times says, "Similarly titled books have chronicled the slide of other empires (the British, Ottoman, Japanese, American, Freudian); institutions (the C.I.A., the Roman Catholic Church, the American automobile industry, Hollywood, The Saturday Evening Post, the British aristocracy, the American programmer) and eternal ideals (truth and love goddesses)."

DEATHS


J. G. Ballard, 78, died April 19 in London. He was the author of Crash (1973), Empire of the Sun (1984) and other novels.


Thomas Berry, 94, died June 1 in Greensboro, N.C. The Roman Catholic priest was the author of Buddhism (1966), Religions of India (1971), The Universe Story: From the Primordial Flaring Forth to the Ecozoic Era (1992) and The Great Work: Our Way into the Future (1999). Two more books are scheduled for publication in August: The Sacred Universe and The Christian Future and the Fate of Earth.


Tom Braden, 92, died April 3 in Denver. The newspaper columnist was author of Eight Is Enough (1975), which inspired a TV series.


Julie Coryell, 61, died May 10 in Poughkeepsie. She was the author of Jazz-Rock Fusion: The People, the Music (1978).

Fleur Cowles, 101, died June 5 in Sussex, England. She was the author of Bloody Precedent (1951), The Case of Salvador Dali (1959) and She Made Friends and Kept Them (1996). She also created Flair magazine.


Amos Elon, 82, died May 25 in Italy. The Israeli writer was the author of nine books including Journey Through a Haunted Land: The New Germany (1967), The Israelis: Founders and Sons (1970) and The Pity of It All (2002).


Marilyn French, 79, died May 2 in Manhattan. She was the author of The Women’s Room (1977), The War Against Women (1992) and Season in Hell: A Memoir (1998).

Marjorie Grene, 98, died on March 16 in Blacksburg, Va. The professor of biology was the author of 13 books, including A Philosophical Testament (1995) and the coauthor of The Philosophy of Biology: An Episodic History (2004).

Hans Holzer, 89, died April 26 in Manhattan. He was the author of Ghosts I’ve Met (1965), The Amityville Horror: A True Story (1977), Murder in Amityville (1979), The Secret of Amity-


Jack D. Hunter, 87, died April 13 in St. Augustine, Fla. He was the author of 16 novels, including The Blue Max (1964), The Expendable Spy and The Ace (2008).

Stanley L. Jaki, 84, died April 7 in Madrid. His home was in Princeton, N.J. The physicist-theologian was the author of more than 40 books, including The Relevance of Physics (1966) and Science and Creation (1974).

Millard Kaufman, 92, died March 14 in Los Angeles. The screenwriter and creator of Mr. Magoo was author of Plots and Characters: A Screenwriter on Screenwriting (1999) and a novel, Bowl of Cherries (2007).


Irving R. Levine, 86, died March 27 in Washington, D.C. The TV correspondent was the author of Main Street, U.S.S.R. (1959).


Louis Lowenstein, 83, died April 18 in Manhattan. The business law professor was the author of What’s Wrong with Wall Street (1988) and The Investor’s Dilemma: How Mutual Funds Are Betraying Your Trust and What to Do About It (2008).

Martha Mason, 71, died May 4 in Lattimore, N.C. After contracting polio as a child, she lived more than 60 years in an iron lung and wrote a memoir, Breath (2003).

Jane Mayhall, 90, died March 17 in Manhattan. Her most recent collection of poems was Sleeping Late on Judgment Day (2004).


Harold Norse, 92, died June 8 in San Francisco. The beat poet was author of The Undersea Mountain (1953) and Memoirs of a Bastard Angel: A 50-Year Literary and Erotic Odyssey (1998).

Eleanor Perényi, 91, died May 2 in Westerly, R.I. She lived in Stonington, Conn., for many years. She was the author of Green Thoughts: A Writer in the Garden (1981).

Santha Rama Rau, 86, died April 21 in Amenia, N.Y. She was the author of East of Home (1950), View to the Southeast (1957), My Russian Journey (1959) and Gifts of Passage (1961).


Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, 58, died April 12 in Manhattan. She was the author of A Dialogue on Love (1999) and Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity (2003). She was working on Proust and the Little Queer Gods when she died.

Bud Shrage, 77, died May 8 in Austin, Texas. The sportswriter was the author of Blood Reckoning (1962), Blessed McGill (1968), Strange Poaches (1972) and The Borderland: A Novel of Texas (2000).

Michael Stern, 98, died April 7 in Palm Beach, Fla. He was the author of No Innocence Abroad (1953), The White Ticket: Commercialized Vice in the Machine Age (1963) and An American in Rome (1964).


BOOKS BY MEMBERS

Victoria Adler (and Hiroe Nakata, illus.): All of Baby, Nose to Toes; Jonathan Ames: The Double Life Is Twice as Good: Essays and Fiction; Laurie Halse Anderson (and Ard Hoyt, illus.): The Hair of Zoe Fleefenbacher Goes to School; Sandy Asher (and Keith Graves, illus.): Here Comes Gasling!; Avi and Brian Floca, illus.: Poppy and Erth;


Jane Feder (and Amy Schwartz, illus.): A Little Kitty; Kate Feiffer and Jules Feiffer, illus.: Which Puppy?; Eve B. Feldman (and Tuesday Mourning, illus.): Billy and Milly, Short and Silly; Paul Fleischman (and David Roberts, illus.): The Dunderheads; Betsy Franco (and Jessie Hartland, illus.): Messing Around on Monkey Bars: And Other School Poems for Two Voices; Betsy Franco (and Stefano Vitale, illus.): Pond Circle; Lucy Frank: The Home-school Liberation League; Jon Franklin: The Wolf in the Parlor: The Eternal Connection Between Humans and Dogs; B. H. Friedman: My Case Rests; Jack Santos (and Nicole Rubel, illus.): The Nine Lives of Rotten Ralph; Kathleen George: The Odds; Holly George-Warren (and Michael Lang): The Road to Woodstock; Ronald Goldfarb: In Confidence: When to Protect Secrecy and When to Require Disclosure; F. González-Crusi: Carrying the Heart: Exploring the Worlds Within Us; Chris Grabenstein: The Hanging Hill; Mind Scrambler; Nikki Grimes (and R. Gregory Christie, illus.): Make Way for Dyamonde Daniel; Michael Gross: Routines’ Gallery: The Secret History of the Moguls and the Money that Made the Metropolitan Museum;

Elissa Haden Guest (and Paul Meisel, illus.): Harriet’s Had Enough!; Charlie Haas: The Enthusiast; Brooks Hansen: John the Baptist; John Hart: The Last Child; Elizabeth Hawes: Camus, A Romance; Deborah Heiligman (and Tim Bowers, illus.): Cool Dog. School Dog: A. W. Hill: Nowhere-Land; Mary Ann Hoberman (and Wendy Anderson Halperin, illus.): Strawberry Hill; Alice Hoffman: The Story Sisters; Eva Hoffman: Appassionata; Chuck Hogan (and Guillermo del Toro): The Strain; Ellen Hopkins (and Leah Wilson): Flirtin’ with the Monster: Your Favorite Authors on Ellen Hopkins’ Crank and Glass; Katherine Howe: The Physick Book of Deliverance Dane; Patricia Hubbard (and Nancy Speir, illus.): Teacher! Shouting, Helping, Caring; Elisabeth Hyde: In the Heart of the Canyon; Donna M. Jackson (and Ted Stearn, illus.): The Name Game: A Look Behind the Labels; Donna M. Jackson: Extreme Scientists: Exploring Nature’s Mysteries from Perilous Places; Emyl Jenkins: The
Big Steal; Richard W. Jennings: Ghost Town; River Jordan: Saints in Limbo; Ward Just: Exiles in the Garden; Melissa Kantor: Girlfriend Material; Jacqueline Kelly: The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate; Ronald Kidd: The Year of the Bomb; Peter T. Killborn: Next Stop, Reloville: Life Inside America’s Rootless Professional Class; Stephen Krensky (and Amy Schimler, illus.): What Do You See?: A Lift-the-Flap Book About Endangered Animals; Steven Kroll (and Robert Byrd, illus.): Barbarians!;
Patricia Lakin (and Scott Nash, illus.): Camping Day; Christine Lehner: Absent a Miracle; Elmore Leonard: Road Dogs; John Lescroart: A Plague of Secrets; Jonathan Lethem: Chronic City; Thomas Levenson: Newton and the Counterfeiter: The Unknown Detective Career of the World’s Greatest Scientist; Richard Lewis: Monster's Proof; Sharon Linnéa (and Josh Cochran, illus.): Lost Civilizations; Emily Listfield: Best Intentions; Robert Littell: The Stalin Epigram; Sophie Littlefield: A Bad Day for Sorry; Cynthia Liu: Paris Pan Takes the Dare; Sally Lloyd-Jones (and Dan Krall, illus.): Being a Pig Is Nice: A Child’s-Eye View of Manners; Sally Lloyd-Jones (and Sue Heap, illus.): How to Get Married—By Me, the Bride; Jim Lynch: Border Songs; Joshua Lyon: Pill Head: The Secret Life of a Painkiller Addict;
Phyllis Reynolds Naylor: Faith, Hope, and Ivy June; Intensely Alice; Craig Nelson: Rocket Men: The Epic Story of the First Men on the Moon; Peter Nelson (and Rohitash Rao, illus.): Herbert’s Wormhole; Peter N. Nelson: A More Unbending Battle: The Harlem Hellfighters’ Struggle for Freedom in WWI and Equality at Home; Cindy Neuschwander (and Bryan Langdo, illus.): Pastry School in Paris: An Adventure in Capacity; Cindy Neuschwander (and Wayne Geehan, illus.): Sir Cumference and All the King’s Tins: A Math Adventure; Michael Norman (and Elizabeth M. Norman): Tears in the Darkness: The Story of the Bataan Death March and Its Aftermath;
Micol Ostow (and David Ostow, illus.): So Punk Rock: (And Other Ways to Disappoint Your Mother); James P. O’thmer: Adland: Searching for the Meaning of Life on a Branded Planet;
Elizabeth Partridge (and Lauren Castillo, illus.): Big Cat Pepper; Dale Peck: Sprout; Wendy Pfeffer (and Katherine Zecca, illus.): The Strange Life of the Hermit Crab; Wendy Pfeffer (and Steve Jenkins, illus.): Life in a Coral Reef; Wendy Pfeffer: Whale Songs and Sounds; Wings; DT Pollard: TARP Town USA;
Dian Curtis Regan (and Doug Cushman): Monster Baby; Dian Curtis Regan (and Paul Meisel, illus.): Barnyard Slam; Megan Reelahan (and Jose Martinez): Edgar Hernandez: POW—An American Hero; James Reston Jr.: Defenders of the Faith: Charles V, Suleyman the Magnificent, and the Battle for Europe, 1520–1536; Nancy Thalia Reynolds: Mixed Heritage in Young Adult Literature; Anne Rice: Angel Time; Katherine Russell Rich: Dreaming in Hindi: Coming Awake in Another Language; Laurie Viera Rigler: Rude Awakenings of a Jane Austen Addict; Ann Rinaldi: My Vicksburg; Peter Riva: Sightseeing: A Space Panorama; Jacqui Robbins (and Matt Phelan, illus.): Two of a Kind; Mary Rodgers (and Heather Hach): Freaky Monday; Michael Elsohn Ross (and Julie Downing, illus.): Play with Me; Susan Goldman Rubin (and Bill Farnsworth, illus.): The Anne Frank Case: Simon Wiesenthal’s Search for the Truth; Susan Goldman Rubin: Jacob Lawrence in the City; Robert Sabbag: Down Around Midnight: A Memoir of Crash and Survival; Cecilia Samartin: Vigil; Alex Sanchez: Bait; Laurie Sandell: The Imposter’s Daughter: A True Memoir; Maxine Schur (and Andrew Glass, illus.): Gullible Gus; Alfred Schward: The American Songbook; Vincent Scuro (written as Spencer Dane): White Gold; Sherry Shahan (and Paula Barragan, illus.): ¡Fiesta!: A Celebration of Latino Festivals; Michael Shapiro: Bottom of the Ninth: Branch Rickey, Casey Stengel, and the Daring Scheme to Save Baseball from Itself; Judy Sierra (and Melissa Sweet, illus.): The Sleepy Little Alphabet: A Bedtime Story from Alphabet Town; Erica Silverman: Cowgirl Kate and Co-Cat: Horse in the House; Rachel Simon: Building a Home with My Husband: A Journey Through the Renovation of Love; Seymour Simon: Dolphins; Marilyn Singer (and Evan Polenghi, illus.): I’m Your Bus; Alexandra Siy: Cars on Mars: Roving the Red Planet; Teri Sloat (and Stefano Vitale, illus.): There Was an Old Man Who Painted the Sky; Richard Slotkin: No Quarter: The Battle of the Crater, 1864; David Small: Stitches: A Memoir; Eileen Spinelli (and Anne Kennedy, illus.): Miss Fox’s Class Goes Green; Peace Week in Miss Fox’s Class; Eileen Spinelli (and Tim Bowers, illus.): Princess Pig; Judith St. George (and Brett Spencer, illus.): Zarafa: The Giraffe Who Walked to the King; Judith St. George: The Duel: The Parallel Lives of Alexander Hamilton & Aaron Burr; Warren St. John: Outcasts United: A Refugee Team, An American Town; John Stadler: Wilson and Miss Lovely: A Back-to-School Mystery; Tanya Lee Stone: Almost Astronauts: 13 Women Who Dared to Dream; Linda Tancs: Understanding Trademark Law: A Beginner’s Guide; Charles T. Tart: The End of Materialism: How Evidence of the Paranormal Is Bringing Science and Spirit Together; Christine Taylor-Butler: Sacred Mountain: Everest; Stephanie Tolan (and Amy June Bates, illus.): Wishworks, Inc.;
Rachel Vail: Gorgeous; Denise Vega: Access Denied; Richard Vetter: Baroque; Carole Garbuny Vogel (and Yossi Leshem): The Man Who Flies with Birds;
Western Writers of America announced the winners of the 2008 Spur Awards at their annual convention, held in June at the Cowboy Hall of Fame and Western Heritage Center in Oklahoma City. The winners included Thomas Cobb, Shavetail, Best Western Long Novel; Linda Peavy (and Ursula Smith), Full-Court Quest: The Girls from Fort Shaw Indian School—Basketball Champions of the World, Best Western Nonfiction Contemporary; and Stan Lynde, Vendetta Canyon, Best Western Audiobook. The finalists included Win Blevins, Dreams Beneath Your Feet, finalist for Best Western Short Novel; Robert Boswell (and David Schweidel), What Men Call Treasure: The Search for Gold at Victorio Peak, finalist for Best Western Nonfiction Contemporary; J.P.S. Brown, Wolves at Our Door, finalist for Best Long Novel; Lin Enger, Undiscovered Country, finalist for Best First Novel; and Sid Fleischman, The Trouble Begins at 8: A Life of Mark Twain in the Wild, Wild West, finalist for Best Western Juvenile Nonfiction.

The 22nd annual Bram Stoker Awards, sponsored by the Horror Writers Association, were announced at a banquet at the 2009 Stoker Awards Weekend in June in Burbank, Calif. The winners included Stephen King, Just After Sunset, Superior Achievement in a Collection, and Lisa Mannetti, The Gentling Box, Superior Achievement in a First Novel. King was also nominated for Superior Achievement in a Novel for Duma Key, and Amy Wallace (and Del Howison and Scott Bradley) was nominated for Superior Achievement in Nonfiction for The Book of Lists: Horror.

Elizabeth Ayres received the 2009 Feature Column Award from the MDDC Press Association for her essay “Sea Nettles,” originally published in the Maryland-based newspaper The Enterprise. The MDDC Editorial Contest recognizes excellence in the newspapers of Maryland, Delaware and Washington, D.C.

Judy Light Ayyildiz won the poetry competition at the 2009 Nazim Hikmet Poetry Festival for “View from the Top Floor, Istanbul, October downpour 2008.” The festival, held April 19 in Raleigh, N.C., was sponsored by the Gregg Museum of Art & Design of North Carolina State University and the American-Turkish Association of North Carolina.

Ruth Bass and Milton Bass received Honorary Doctorates of Humane Letters from Westfield State College in Massachusetts for achievements in journalism and the community. The doctorates were presented at the college’s commencement on May 16, 2009.

Eric Jay Dolin’s Leviathan: The History of Whaling in America received the John Lyman Book Award for U.S. Maritime History, given by the North American Society for Oceanic History.

You Are Not Forgotten: A Family’s Quest for Truth and the Founding of the League of Families, by Carol Jose (and Evelyn Grubb) and with a foreword by Henry Kissinger, received the gold medal prize for History in the Indie Book Awards.

X. J. Kennedy has received the 2009 Robert Frost Medal from the Poetry Society of America for his lifetime contribution to poetry. He also served as 2009 Poet in Residence at the Walt Whitman Birthplace in Huntington, N.Y.

Anne Landsman’s novel, The Rawing Lesson, was awarded the 2009 M-Net Literary Award for English fiction, sponsored by the South Africa-based Electronic Media Network. The book was shortlisted for South
Tosca Lee received the bronze award for Religious Fiction in the ForeWord Magazine Book of the Year contest for her novel Havah.

Buffalo Gal, a memoir by Laura Pedersen, won Best Autobiography from ForeWord magazine and an Honorable Mention for the 2009 Eric Hoffer Book Award.

Megan Rellahan was the winner in the Biography/Autobiography category of the 2008 DIY Book Festival for Edgar Hernandez: An American Hero, coauthored with Jose Martinez. The award was presented in March at the 2009 DIY Convention: Do It Yourself in Film, Music & Books, sponsored by JM Northern Media LLC to encourage independent film, music and books.

Isolina Ricci received the California Association of Family and Conciliation Courts Joseph Drown Award, for 2008, for outstanding services to children.

Albert Russo’s book Gaytude: A Poetic Journey Around the World, coauthored with Adam Donaldson Powell, received the first place award in the Gay/lesbian Nonfiction category of the 2009 National Indie Excellence Awards. He was a finalist in the Multicultural Fiction category for Shalom Tower Syndrome, and in the Photography category for Body Glorious/Corps à Corps. Body Glorious/Corps à Corps was a winner in the 2008 Books and Authors writing contest. Russo was also recently honored with the opening of the Albert Russo Literary Archives at the Archives & Musée de la Littérature, based at the Bibliothèque Royale in Brussels, Belgium.

Blue Diamonds by Vincent Scuro (written as Spencer Dane) was first place in the Published Thriller Category of the Florida Writers Association’s 2008 Royal Palm Awards.

Barbara Sjoholm was among the recipients of the 2009 fellowships awarded by The American-Scandinavian Foundation. The grant will support her creative writing.

Preserving Paradise: Opportunities in Volunteering for Hawaii’s Environment by Kirsten Whatley received a national merit award for Best Travel Guide from the 17th annual North American Travel Journalists’ Association (NATJA).

BUFFALOed, by Fairlee Winfield, was a Grand Prize Winner in the 2009 Next Generation Indie Book Awards contest, receiving $1,000 and first place in the fiction category. The book was a finalist in the Best Cover Design category, and was also a finalist in the Eric Hoffer Awards da Vinci Eye contest for superior cover art.

Kay Winters received the Carol Otis Hurst Book Prize for Colonial Voices: Hear Them Speak. The award honors outstanding works written for children and young adults that exemplify the highest standards of research, analysis and authorship in their portrayal of the New England Experience.

Letters

Continued from page 2

to such statements from offended questioner as “My tax dollars support the library.” I generally quit before I get to say your tax dollars also support the toilets in the library. But not before they inform me that if they had time, they would also write books, or at least articles. Lack of time seems to be the only thing that prevents authorship. Luckily there is Google, with whom the AG might have an ambivalent relationship but to which I can refer my fan. Somehow, this impresses them most of all, as if it were proof that my persona is not in itself fictional, though I am already struggling with an identity crisis. Googleswise, I have even known a few rare cases where I was looked up and my work actually purchased—or so I’m told. Which brings us back to—fiction or nonfiction?

—Ann Birstein
New York, NY

I was a bit embarrassed upon reading the article by Alison Owings in the Spring Bulletin. Her characterization of writers made us appear aloof and condescending, people who “prattle on” about their work without entertaining the thoughts, feelings, and aspirations of others. I guess I would get kicked out of the I-am-a-writer club if I were to encounter a “dour” mechanic who wrote articles for a flight magazine and I actually wanted to talk to him or her. Someone quick, send me the secret password: )

—P. Elizabeth Anderson
Arlington, VA

I know I should be grateful I was mentioned (my Forbes.com interview) on p. 35 in the latest Authors Guild Bulletin (Spring 2009), and not complain, but the item had such a glaring inaccuracy I feel I must.
The coauthored seven mysteries were written with my husband MARTIN MEYERS (not Martin Mann as appeared in the item). MARTIN MEYERS has been a member of the Authors Guild for over 30 years based on his own published works.

—Annette Meyers
New York, NY

A fter years of reading about the struggles of the publishing business to come to terms with the changes in the marketplace for books wrought by the revolution in information technology, and years of studying the effect of the information technology revolution on the authoritarian structure of Chinese society, I was greatly impressed by the contribution of Mike Shatzkin to the AAR panel on the future of publishing.

Mr. Shatzkin correctly points out that what the publishing business requires is new thinking on new distribution models.

The either-or model is obsolete. It is the everything goes model that operates here. Desktop computers still have Web delivery even though iPods and smartphones get mobile delivery. A Kindle buyer of a $9.99 book does not write out the hardcover buyer at $25.99. Although it will probably make the hair of publishing executives curl, the book business has become a little bit like the fashion industry, with designer labels servicing one market and knock-offs servicing another market. Not that I demean electronic delivery services as in any way inferior to print media.

If the electronic world is a democratizing world, it means the marketplace has opened up in new ways and some of those ways are new niches. The older marketplace may grow or shrink, or do both in cycles, but it does not go away. The difficulty is in adapting, as in the case of the network, getting more flexible, more adaptable, and as in the case of the smaller publishers cited by Mr. Shatzkin as recognizing that the diversity of the marketplace is a plus.

Good for Mr. Shatzkin. He is a visionary.

—Diane Wolff
Point Charlie, FL

I just finished reading the Authors Guild Interview by Sara Nelson. I found the interview very interesting, especially the great concern about the changing book market and the new conditions facing authors. Because I am an academic author, I have some of the same concerns.

My greatest concern is that our culture seems to be slumping even more after years of dumbing down our educational systems. I feel that we in the United States are in danger of losing our intellectual leadership. It also seems to me that the differences between trade and academic literature are very great, especially in regard to the changing reality of the publishing business. I would like to see the Authors Guild Bulletin tackle these differences and address the even greater threat facing academic publishing—i.e., the loss of nonprofit presses and the need or desire to promote our cultural development and our scientific knowledge. Academic books tend to become reference books and need to be in book form more often than not. The loss of these references is becoming an even more critical issue, as these books seldom make back the costs of publication. Please note the current threat to shut down the LSU press for a lack of funding and the growing unwillingness of the university to fund this old and respected university press.

—Thomas L. Dynneson
Odessa, TX

T hank you for the Spring 2009 issue’s informative and useful panel discussion on the state of the publishing industry. One of the points that panelists did not raise with regard to e-books and other online publications is the growing problem of sensitivity to electromagnetic fields (EMF). About 3 percent of the population is debilitated from EMF, and 30 percent are walking around with the sensitivity, either unaware or unable/unwilling to do anything about it. I, for instance, must write on a manual typewriter, read only books with paper pages, and enjoy very short stints on my computer.

According to Robert Becker, M.D., in his book Cross Currents, scientific findings suggest that the increase in EMF/RF on the body’s nervous system correlates with increases in cancer, short-term memory loss, headache, eye pain, hair loss, irritability, Chronic Fatigue, depression, suicide, emotional instability, diminished intellectual capacity, and more (all symptoms recognized by the World Health Organization). The science generated by the communications industry and the military, however, would have us believe there are no dangers.

If we do indeed have a “Silent Spring” on our hands with regard to EMF hazards, as many believe we do, then there might be a limited future for e-books or for writers who depend heavily on wireless connections and online support.

For further information see: www.weepinitiative.org/talkingtoyourdoctor.pdf

—Savitri L. Bess
Southwest Harbor, ME
BULLETIN BOARD

Fellowships

The trustees of Amy Lowell sponsor the Amy Lowell Poetry Traveling Scholarship to support travel abroad for American-born poets. The 2010-2011 scholarship will be around $50,000 and is intended to support one year of living outside the continent of North America. Application forms and guidelines are available at amylowell.org, or by mail before October 1. Submit two copies of the application and attachments by October 15, 2009. By mail, contact F. Davis Dassori, Esq., Choate, Hall & Stewart, Two International Place, Boston, MA 02110. By telephone, contact Sylvia Sanchez, Manager, Trust Administration, (617) 248-5248. amylowell@choate.com.

The James Merrill House, maintained by the Stonington Village Improvement Association in Connecticut, is opened annually to a writer-in-residence working on a specific project of literary or academic merit, not including dissertations. The resident is expected to provide a reading or lecture for the community, or contribute in other ways. To apply for the 2010–2011 term, full or half year, submit an application packet by email by January 15, 2010. Application packets include an application form, letters of recommendation, and additional documents as outlined at jamesmerrillhouse.org. James Merrill House Committee, 107 Water Street, Stonington, CT 06378-0018. writer@jamesmerrillhouse.org.

Fiction Contests

Tampa Review, the literary journal of the University of Tampa, offers the Danahy Fiction Prize for short fiction, awarding $1,000 and publication to the winner. To enter, send previously unpublished work of between 500 and 5,000 words with a cover page listing author’s name, full contact information, and word count, as well as a $15 entry fee. Deadline: November 1, 2009. Tampa Review, Danahy Fiction Prize, The University of Tampa, 401 West Kennedy Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-1490. utpress@ut.edu; tampareview.ut.edu/tr_prize.html.

The Tennessee Williams/New Orleans Literary Festival is holding its second annual Fiction Writing Contest. The grand prize includes $1,500, publication in the New Orleans Review, airfare, accommodations, and a VIP All Access Festival Pass to the festival (March 24–28, 2010 in New Orleans), and a reading at the festival. The contest is open to writers who have not yet published a book of fiction. To enter, send previously unpublished stories of up to 7,000 words, omitting the author’s name from the manuscript, with a cover page listing name, address, telephone number, e-mail address and story title. Include a $25 entry fee. Deadline: November 16, 2009. Visit tennesseewilliams.net to enter online (and for information about their One-Act Play Contest) or write to Fiction Contest, Tennessee Williams/New Orleans Literary Festival, 938 Lafayette Street, Suite 514, New Orleans, LA 70113. (800) 990-FEST; info@tennesseewilliams.net.

The Baltimore Review is holding its annual Short Fiction Competition, awarding $500 and publication to the first place winner. Second and third place receive $250 and $100, respectively. To enter, submit one previously unpublished story, up to 6,000 words, and a $20 fee per entry ($25 to also receive a one-year subscription to the journal). The author’s name, address, phone number and e-mail address should appear on the first page. Submissions will be accepted between August 1 and December 1, 2009. Visit baltimorereview.org for full guidelines. The Baltimore Review Short Fiction Competition, PO Box 36418, Towson, MD 21286.

The Ruth Hindman Foundation and the University of Alabama in Huntsville English Department sponsor the annual H. E. Francis Contest for short fiction. The winner receives $1,000. To enter, send three copies of a previously unpublished manuscript, no more than 5,000 words in length, with a $15 fee. Do not include the author’s name on the manuscript; send a cover letter with each submission listing the story’s title, the author’s name and address, and approximate word count. Deadline: December 31, 2009. Department of English, University of Alabama in Huntsville, Huntsville, AL 35899. uah.edu/colleges/liberal/english/hefranciscontest.

Poetry Contests

Truman State University Press in Missouri holds the annual T. S. Eliot Prize for Poetry. The winner will receive $2,000 and publication under a standard contract. Submit previously unpublished manuscripts of 60–100 pages, in English, with two title pages, one with the manuscript title and author’s contact information (name, address, phone, e-mail), the second with manuscript title only, plus a $25 reading fee for each manuscript. Deadline: October 31, 2009. Visit tsup.truman.edu/TSEliotPrize/guidelines.asp for full guidelines and information. T. S. Eliot Prize for Poetry,
Truman State University Press, 100 East Normal Avenue, Kirksville, MO 63501-4221.
SMARTISH PACE WILL OFFER THE SIXTH ANNUAL BEULLAH ROSE POETRY PRIZE FOR EXCEPTIONAL POETRY BY WOMEN. THE WINNER WILL RECEIVE $200 AND PUBLICATION, IN ADDITION TO A MENTION IN A YEAR OF ADVERTISEMENTS ABOUT THE AWARD. THE WINNER WILL ALSO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE HER POEM APPEAR IN AN ANTHOLOGY OF THE AWARD’S WINNERS PLANNED FOR PUBLICATION AFTER THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PRIZE. VISIT SMARTISHPACE.COM/HOME/BEULLAH/CONTTEST.HTML FOR DIRECTIONS FOR SUBMITTING WORK ONLINE AS WELL AS BY MAIL. SUBMISSIONS SHOULD INCLUDE UP TO THREE POEMS, A $5 ENTRY FEE, AND A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY. POET’S NAME, ADDRESS, E-MAIL ADDRESS, AND TELEPHONE NUMBER SHOULD BE LISTED ON EACH PAGE OF POETRY SUBMITTED. DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 1, 2009. CLARE BANKS OR TRACI O’DEA, SMARTISH PACE, BEULLAH ROSE POETRY PRIZE, PO BOX 22161, BALTIMORE, MD 21203. CBANKS@SMARTISHPACE.COM.

THE ANNUAL PERUGIA PRESS PRIZE FOR A FIRST OR SECOND BOOK AWARDS A CASH PRIZE OF $1,000 AND PUBLICATION FOR AN UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT OF POEMS BY A WOMAN WHO HAS HAD ONE OR NO BOOKS PUBLISHED. VISIT PERUGIAPRESS.COM/CONTTEST.HTML FOR SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS. EACH SUBMISSION MUST INCLUDE A $22 ENTRY FEE. APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED BETWEEN AUGUST 1 AND NOVEMBER 15, 2009. PERUGIA PRESS PRIZE, PO BOX 60364, FLORENCE, MA 01062. INFO@PERUGIAPRESS.COM.

EACH YEAR BEAR STAR PRESS AWARDS THE DOROTHY BRUMS -MAN POETRY PRIZE TO A WRITER LIVING WEST OF THE CENTRAL TIME ZONE. THE WINNER RECEIVES $1,000 AND PUBLICATION. SEND A POETRY MANUSCRIPT OF 50-65 PAGES AND A COVER LETTER WITH THE POET’S NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER (OMIT IDENTIFYING INFORMATION FROM THE MANUSCRIPT) WITH A $20 READING FEE BY NOVEMBER 30, 2009. VISIT BEARSTARPRESS.COM/SUBMISSIONS.HTM FOR FULL GUIDELINES. BEAR STAR PRESS, 185 HOLLOW OAK DRIVE, COHASSET, CA 95973.

THE ANNUAL CIDER PRESS REVIEW BOOK AWARD OFFERS $1,000 AND PUBLICATION FOR A FULL-LENGTH BOOK OF POETRY. TO ENTER, SEND MANUSCRIPTS OF 48-80 PAGES OF POETRY NOT PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED IN BOOK FORM WITH AN ENTRY FEE OF $25, WHICH INCLUDES A ONE-ISSUE SUBSCRIPTION TO CIDER PRESS REVIEW AS WELL AS A COPY OF THE WINNING BOOK, BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 1 AND NOVEMBER 30, 2009. OMIT THE AUTHOR’S NAME FROM THE MANUSCRIPT AND INCLUDE TWO TITLE PAGES, ONE WITH JUST THE TITLE AND ONE WITH POET’S NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION, AS WELL AS A TABLE OF CONTENTS PAGE AND AN ACKNOWLEDGMENTS PAGE LISTING PREVIOUS PUBLICATION CREDITS. IF SUBMITTING ELECTRONICALLY, THERE IS AN ENTRY FORM THAT REPLACES THE COVER PAGE WITH POET’S IDENTIFYING INFORMATION. VISIT CIDERPRESSREVIEW.COM/BOOKAWARD FOR DETAILED SUBMISSION GUIDELINES OR TO ENTER ONLINE. CIDER PRESS REVIEW, 777 BRADDOCK LANE, HALIFAX, PA 17032. BOOKAWARD@CIDERPRESSREVIEW.COM.

FENCE BOOKS SPONSORS THE ANNUAL MOTHERWELL PRIZE FOR A FIRST OR SECOND FULL-LENGTH COLLECTION OF POEMS BY A WOMAN WRITING IN ENGLISH. THE WINNER RECEIVES $1,000 AND PUBLICATION. TO ENTER, SEND AN ENTRY FORM AND A MANUSCRIPT OF 48-80 PAGES, BOUND WITH A REMOVABLE CLIP ONLY, AND WITH ONE COVER PAGE CONTAINING THE TITLE OF THE MANUSCRIPT. DO NOT INCLUDE AN ACKNOWLEDGMENTS PAGE. ENTRY FORMS CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM FENCEPORTAL.ORG/CONTEST/MOTHERWELL.HTML, WHICH ALSO LIST DETAILED SUBMISSION GUIDELINES. THE ENTRY FEE IS $25 AND ENTRIES WILL BE ACCEPTED BETWEEN NOVEMBER 1 AND NOVEMBER 30, 2009. MOTHERWELL PRIZE, FENCE BOOKS, SCIENCE LIBRARY 320, UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY, 1400 WASHINGTON AVENUE, ALBANY, NY 12222. FENCE BOOKS ALSO SPONSORS THE FENCE MODERN POETS SERIES, A CONTEST AWARDING $1,000 AND PUBLICATION TO A POET WRITING IN ENGLISH AT ANY STAGE IN HIS OR HER CAREER. ENTRIES WILL BE ACCEPTED BETWEEN FEBRUARY 1 AND FEBRUARY 28, 2010.

HUNGER MOUNTAIN, THE VERMONT COLLEGE JOURNAL OF ARTS AND LETTERS, SPONSORS THE RUTH STONE PRIZE IN POETRY, AWARDING $1,000 AND PUBLICATION TO THE WINNING ENTRY. TO ENTER, SEND UP TO THREE PREVIOUSLY UNPUBLISHED POEMS (UP TO SIX PAGES), WITHOUT THE POET’S NAME ON THE ENTRY, AND A STANDARD INDEX CARD WITH NAME, ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER, E-MAIL ADDRESS AND POEM TITLE(S). USE A PAPER CLIP OR SEND UNBOUND RATHER THAN USING STAPLES. INCLUDE A $20 ENTRY FEE. DEADLINE: DECEMBER 10, 2009. RUTH STONE PRIZE IN POETRY, HUNGER MOUNTAIN, VERMONT COLLEGE, 36 COLLEGE STREET, MONTPELIER, VT 05602. HUNGERMTN.ORG/POETRY.ASP.

CHELSEA, AN INDEPENDENT LITERARY MAGAZINE, WILL OFFER ITS ANNUAL POETRY COMPETITION, WHICH AWARDS $1,000 AND PUBLICATION TO THE WINNING ENTRY. SUBMIT FOUR TO SIX POEMS, NOT EXCEEDING 500 LINES IN TOTAL, WITH A $15 ENTRY FEE. THE POET’S NAME SHOULD APPEAR ONLY ON A SINGLE, SEPARATE COVER SHEET WITH NAME, ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER, E-MAIL ADDRESS AND TITLE(S). VISIT CHELSEMAG.ORG FOR DETAILED SUBMISSION GUIDELINES; NO QUERIES WILL BE ACCEPTED BY PHONE, FAX OR E-MAIL. DEADLINE: DECEMBER 15, 2009. CHELSEA AWARDS COMPETITION, PO BOX 773, COOPER STATION, NEW YORK, NY 10276-0773.

TAMPA REVIEW IS HOLDING A CONTEST FOR POETRY MANUSCRIPTS. THE WINNING MANUSCRIPT WILL BE PUBLISHED IN HARDCOVER AND PAPERBACK EDITIONS BY UNIVERSITY OF TAMPA PRESS AND THE AUTHOR WILL RECEIVE $2,000 AND ROYALTIES. TO ENTER, SEND PREVIOUSLY UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS (INDIVIDUAL POEMS MAY HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED
already; identify these poems on the acknowledgments page of the submission) of at least 48 pages (60–100 pages is preferred), using removable clips or rubber bands rather than staples or binding, and enclosed in a standard file folder. Include a separate title page with the poet’s name, address, telephone number and e-mail address, as well as a separate table of contents and acknowledgments page. The entry fee is $25 for each manuscript submitted. Deadline: December 31, 2009. The Tampa Review Prize for Poetry, University of Tampa Press, 401 West Kennedy Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-1490. utpress@ut.edu; tampareview .ut.edu/tr_prize.html.

Multiple Genres

Dogwood, a journal of poetry and prose, has annual fiction and poetry prizes, awarding $1,000 and publication to one winner in each category. This year’s winners and finalists will be published in the 10th anniversary issue in Spring 2010. To enter, submit previously unpublished work of up to 25 pages of fiction or up to three poems (no more than 10 pages). Include a $15 reading fee and a brief biography, and do not put the author’s name on the manuscript. Deadline: October 15, 2009. Kim Bridgford, Editor, Dogwood, English Department, Fairfield University, North Benson Road, Fairfield, CT 06824-5195.

Inkwell, the journal of Manhattanville College, is holding its 12th annual short fiction contest and 13th annual poetry contest. Winners will receive publication and cash prizes of $1,500 (short fiction) and $1,000 (poetry). To enter the fiction contest, send up to three previously unpublished stories, no more than 5,000 words, with a cover sheet listing author’s name, address, phone number, e-mail address, title(s) and word count(s), along with $15 per story. To enter the poetry contest, send up to five previously unpublished poems, up to 40 lines per poem, including a cover sheet with poet’s name, address, phone number, e-mail address, title(s) and line counts, along with $10 for the first poem and $5 for each additional poem. Author’s name should not appear on the manuscript. Visit inkwelljournal.org/competitions.htm for full submission guidelines. Entries will be accepted between August 1 and October 30, 2009. Inkwell, Manhattanville College, 2900 Purchase Street, Purchase, NY 10577. (914) 323-7239; inkwell@mville.edu.

The Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference of Middlebury College sponsors the annual Bakeless Literary Publication Prizes, an annual book series competition for new authors of literary works in poetry, fiction and creative nonfiction. Winners will have their book-length manuscripts published by Graywolf Press and each winner will receive a fellowship to attend the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference. For manuscript submission guidelines for each genre, and details about the agreement the winner will make with Graywolf Press, visit middlebury.edu/academics/blwcbakel ess. Entries are accepted between September 15 and November 1, 2009. Jennifer Bates, Contest Coordinator, The Bakeless Contest, c/o Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference, Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT 05753. (802) 443-2018; bakelessprize@middlebury.edu.

The Briar Cliff Review is holding its 14th annual Fiction, Poetry and Creative Nonfiction Contests. The winner in each category receives $1,000 and publication in the Spring 2010 issue. To enter, send short story or creative nonfiction of up to 6,000 words, or up to three poems with a $20 entry fee. Include a cover sheet with the author’s name, address, e-mail address, and title(s), omitting the author’s name from the manuscript. Visit briarcliff.edu/campus_info/bcu_review/contest_info .asp for more information and full submission guidelines. Deadline: November 1, 2009. Tricia Currans-Sheehan, Editor, The Briar Cliff Review, Fiction, Poetry and Creative Nonfiction Contest, 3303 Rebecca Street, Sioux City, IA 51104-2100.

Reed Magazine offers two annual prizes, the John Steinbeck Award for fiction, sponsored with the Center for Steinbeck Studies, San Jose State University, and the National Steinbeck Center, and the Edwin Markham Prize for Poetry, sponsored with San Jose State University. To enter the fiction contest, send previously unpublished stories of up to 6,000 words each, with a $15 fee per story, through the online system. The winner will receive $1,000, publication in Reed, and may be published in the Salinas-based newspaper, The Californian. To enter the poetry contest, submit three to five poems as a single file, with a $10 fee, through the online system. The winner will receive $500 and publication in Reed. The deadline for both contests is November 1, 2009. Visit reedmag.com to access the online submission system and read full submission guidelines. Reed Magazine, SJSU English Department, One Washington Square, San Jose, CA 95192-0090. reed@email.sjsu.edu.

Washington Square, the journal of New York University’s Graduate Creative Writing Program, sponsors the Washington Square Award for poetry and fiction. One winner in each category will receive $500 and publication. To enter, submit one short story of up to 20 pages or three poems of up to six pages, including a cover sheet with author’s name, title(s), address, e-mail address and phone number, omitting the author’s
name from the manuscript. Include a $10 entry fee for each submission. Deadline: November 15, 2009. Washington Square Contest, Creative Writing Program, New York University, Lillian Vernon Creative Writers House, 58 West 10th Street, New York, NY 10011.

The Fiddlehead, a Canadian literary journal, holds two annual contests, the Ralph Gustafson Prize for Best Poem and a short fiction prize. The winning entrants receive $1,000 and two runners-up in each category will receive $500 each; all winners will be published in the Spring 2010 issue of the magazine and receive additional payment for this. To enter, send previously unpublished work—one story of up to 25 pages or up to three poems of no more than 100 lines each—by mail, including a cover page with the author’s name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, title(s) and category (short fiction or poetry). The entry fee, which includes a one-year subscription, is $30 (CAD) for entries from Canada and $36 (USD) for entries from the U.S. or overseas. Deadline: December 1, 2009. Visit www.thefiddlehead.ca/contest.html for full submission guidelines. The Fiddlehead Contest, Campus House, 11 Garland Court, University of New Brunswick, PO Box 4400, Fredericton NB, E3B 5A3 Canada. fiddleh@unb.ca.

Phoebe, the journal of literature and art from George Mason University, offers two annual awards: the Phoebe Winter Fiction Contest and the Greg Grummer Poetry Contest. The winner of each prize receives $1,000 and publication in the journal. To enter the fiction contest, send one story of up to 7,500 words. To enter the poetry contest, send up to four poems, not exceeding 10 pages in total. For either contest, include a $15 entry fee and a cover letter with the author’s name, address and title(s), as well as a brief bio. Omit the author’s name and contact information from the manuscript. Deadline: December 1, 2009. Phoebe Winter Fiction Contest OR Greg Grummer Poetry Contest, Phoebe MSN 2D6, George Mason University, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030. gmu.edu/pubs/phoebe/contests.htm

Each year Crazyhorse offers the Crazyhorse Fiction Prize for a single short story and the Lynda Hull Memorial Poetry Prize for a single poem. Both winners receive $2,000 and publication in Crazyhorse. To enter, send a manuscript of up to 25 pages of fiction or up to three poems (no more than 10 pages). Send $16 per manuscript, which includes a one-year subscription to the journal; if you have entered this competition before, send a $14 fee for each manuscript and mention your earlier entries. (New fees will extend entrants’ subscriptions to Crazyhorse.) Include a cover letter with name, address, e-mail address and phone number; exclude personal information from the manuscripts. Visit crazyhorse.cofc.edu for further submission guidelines. Deadline: December 15, 2009. Crazyhorse Fiction Prize/The Lynda Hull Memorial Poetry Prize, Crazyhorse, Department of English, College of Charleston, 66 George Street, Charleston, SC 29424.

The Westfield Atheneum Library in Massachusetts sponsors the Carol Otis Hurst Children’s Book Prize honoring outstanding works of fiction and nonfiction, including biography and memoir, written for children and young adults that exemplify the highest standards of research, analysis and authorship in their portrayal of the New England experience. The winner receives $500 and travel expenses to participate in a public presentation of the prize and reading and/or talk. To enter, send an entry form and three copies of a book published during the current calendar year by December 31, 2009. Visit westath.org/about/CarolHurst_Award.htm for full submission guidelines and restrictions, downloadable entry forms, and an in-depth description of the theme, The New England Experience. Carol Otis Hurst Children’s Book Prize, Westfield Atheneum, 6 Elm Street, Westfield, MA 01085. (413) 568-7833. ♦

Authors Guild Announces Axis Pro WriteInsure Program

The Authors Guild has entered into an arrangement with the leading underwriter of media liability insurance, Axis Pro, which offers members affordable, quality insurance for all published work. Freelance writing, blogging and book authorship are insured under WriteInsure for claims of libel, invasion of privacy, copyright or trademark infringement, plagiarism, errors and omissions and other related risks.

Limits of liability start at $100,000 for each loss/$300,000 total limit of insurance. Higher limits are also available.

With respect to claims, the WriteInsure Program provides coverage for both legal expenses incurred in defending the claim and any monetary damages or settlements that you may be required to pay. The goal would be to cover defense costs at least until a court dismisses the lawsuit on a motion for summary judgment.

Visit www.authorsguild.org for more details or call 1-888-847-5575 (toll free).
CENSORSHIP WATCH

Tattoos Too “Original Gangster” for OC Principal

Never mind that pessimists might say that teaching a high school course in advanced journalism is like teaching Morse Code to someone hoping for a Coast Guard rescue; adults still want to teach kids the nuances of the old dinosaur known as traditional print and kids, bless their simple hearts, seem want to learn it.

So, in the old “Hey, kids, let’s put on a show!” spirit, the students in the advanced journalism course at Orange High School in Orange, Calif. pooled their collective talents and, under the guidance of 17-year-old editor in chief Lynn Lai and 16-year-old assistant editor Angela Kapiloff produced a literary magazine called Pulp. Following the old “write what you know” adage, the young journalists decided to run a cover story about senior class tattoos, entitled “Tattoo Mania.” The handsomely bound journal includes short stories, photography and artwork, a smart, modern graphic layout and a bold color cover photo, and it looks far, far better than anything my lit mag staff and I ever dribbled out in high school. However, there’s no accounting for taste, and Orange High School principal SK Johnson decided he didn’t like the look of the thing at all. Most of Pulp’s 300 copies were snatched up and locked in Johnson’s office. A few rogue copies survived in the hands of magazine staff.

In an interview given to the Orange County Register in June, Principal Johnson said he was motivated by his opinion that the magazine’s cover art—a Photoshopped picture of a man’s back tattooed with the phrase “OHS [Orange High School] Pulp” in a Gothic-type font and a black panther, the school’s mascot—was “gang-looking.” According to the June 29, 2009 OC Register article, Johnson said, “[W]e have an image of our school that I want to uphold. I don’t think that [cover] was promoting what we want to promote at our school.” Apparently, he made his decision to confiscate the magazines after a school custodian saw the principal with the magazine and asked him if he was reading a “gang-tattoo magazine.” Johnson also expressed distaste for an illustrated list of 10 things seniors should do before graduating because it included recommendations that seniors “Cut school/Go to the beach and ‘Sneak a swim in the OHS pool (clothing optional).’” This teenager’s equivalent of a Bucket List is accompanied by kicky little stick figure drawings and other suggestions such as take a “ROAD TRIP!!” and “Attend a dance.” Risqué directives all.

Editor in chief Lynn Lai says the cover story focused on the symbolism behind the tattoos chosen by OHS seniors and had nothing to do with gang tattoos. The First Amendment Center’s website reports that after allowing the magazines to sit around for a while—and after his actions drew fire from the Student Press Law Center, the National Coalition Against Censorship, the California First Amendment Coalition and the Citizen Media Law Project—Principal Johnson offered to distribute the Tattoo Mania edition of Pulp when school resumes in the fall, provided that the Top Ten list is removed, and he is given a role in the production of the magazine. To date, there’s no word on whether editor in chief Lai has made a final decision on whether to accept or reject that proposal. She did express reluctance to have Johnson more involved in the production. In the meantime, maybe nobody should point out to Johnson how closely his school’s black panther mascot—the huge one painted on the side of the Orange High School building—resembles the official logo of the Black Panther Party. Something tells me he probably wouldn’t have a very good sense of humor about that.

—Anita Fore

CONTRACTS Q&A

Continued from page 11

to carefully follow the procedures outlined in your contract’s out-of-print clause. Sending that notice will start the clock running on the time period in that clause. Delay in sending the notice helps only the publisher since it risks nothing by taking no action while “considering” the issue or stalling you.

State in that notice—which typically requires a demand that the publisher put the book back in print itself or via a licensee—that an e-book or POD edition will not satisfy that requirement. Also consider stating, after consultation with your lawyer, that if the publisher attempts to sell or license any such edition, or print any version whatever after the termination of the 6- or 12-month period specified in your contract’s out-of-print clause without having properly put the book back in print before that deadline or licensing it by that date, you explicitly reserve the right to exercise all rights available to you under law and will hold it liable for all damages that result if it publishes the book without authorization. Add that your remedies will in—
clude the right to injunctive relief and that those damages will include statutory damages under the copyright law.

Crucial to determining whether sales of e-books (or PODs) should be included in determining whether your books are out of print, however, is determining whether your publisher has the right to publish or license e-book (or POD) editions. Given your question, I have assumed in this answer that your contract does not specifically grant these rights (which, of course, may not stop some publishers from claiming otherwise). If your publisher clearly has those rights, then unless you had the foresight to include some sophisticated provisions in your contract, you likely have no good argument. But if your contract is one of the older ones where publishers were simply granted the right to publish books “in book form,” you are right to contend that it did not get e-book rights too. Although decided under circumstances that may limit its use as conclusive precedent, Random House v. Rosetta Books LLC, a 2001 case available online, is strong support for this view.

A final note: When signing any new contracts, try to include provisions that will enable you to regain the rights to traditional print editions of your book even while the publisher or its licensee retains the e-book rights if the latter are what keeps the book “in print.” How to do this is too lengthy to explain here. For those interested, the chapter in the new edition of my book that explains how to do this will be available without charge to Authors Guild members for 45 days after this issue of the Bulletin is published. Go to www.BookContracts.com/OutOfPrint and use code AG2009.

Please note that there are additional differences and similarities between e-book and POD editions that may be relevant to answering your question more completely, but space does not permit discussing those here.

E-mail questions to QandAColumn@authorsguild.org. Questions 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 that 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.

E-mails sent to the column will not receive personal replies. Persons seeking immediate advice on publishing matters can call the Guild’s legal staff at (212) 563-5904.

Legal Watch

Continued from page 12

ing to refuse to work with Richerson. This prompted the district’s director of human resources, Jeanne Beckon, to demote Richerson to a regular classroom teacher. In response, Richerson brought suit against Beckon personally under 42 USC 1983, rather than against the school district, alleging that Beckon’s decision to demote her because of her blog posts violated Richerson’s First Amendment rights. The district court rejected Richerson’s claims and granted summary judgment in favor of Beckon. Richerson appealed the decision to the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

In evaluating Richerson’s claim, the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit first pointed out that, as a matter of law, at least some of Richerson’s speech was “of public concern” and that her reassignment was an adverse employment action. As such, the court was required to apply a balancing test set out by the Supreme Court in Pickering v. Board of Education to determine whether a public employee’s First Amendment rights have been violated. The court considered several factors, including whether Richerson’s speech disrupted coworker relations; whether Richerson’s speech eroded close working relationships premised on personal loyalty and confidentiality; and whether Richerson’s speech interfered with the performance of her duties.

The court found that Richerson’s speech had “significantly deleterious effects in each of these ways.” In regard to Richerson’s disruption of employee relations, the court found that the evidence showed Richerson’s blog to have alienated and otherwise disrupted her coworkers, which undermined her ability to enter into trusting relationships as an instructional coach or curriculum specialist. This was supported by Beckon’s testimony, in which she made clear that several employees of the district reported that they would refuse to work with Richerson as a curriculum specialist or instructional coach in the future since they no longer trusted her. As such, the court concluded that Beckon had no choice but to demote Richerson to a regular teaching position. The court of appeals further concluded that the district court did not err in finding that the legitimate interests of the school district outweighed Richerson’s First Amendment interests. Richerson’s attorney has stated they are considering seeking an en banc review of the appellate decision.

—Michael Gross
Staff Attorney
Supporters of the Authors Guild Endowments

We are grateful for the generous support of the Authors Legacy Society members and all those who contributed to the endowments of the Authors Guild and Authors Guild Foundation. These gifts help to ensure that the Authors Guild and the Authors Guild Foundation will continue their work in behalf of writers for years to come.

Authors Legacy Society
Professor Alan P. Akmaajian
Robert B. Asprey
Eric and Barbara Carle
Anne Conover Carson
Neil Davidson
Inga Dean
Gerard Del Rê
James Duffy
Aaron Frankel
Mrs. Shirley Glubok-Tamarin
Bernice Grohskopf
Sid Gustafsson
Sussy Komala
Patricia Lauber
Tom Lee
Elmore Leonard
Gillian McCain
Ann McGovern
Morton A. Mintz
Joseph Woodson Oglesby
Sheila Payne
Sophie Rawls
Mary Lyn Ray
Frances Rickett
Virginia Smith
Barbara Lang Stern
Mary Walton
Patricia Weenolsen, Ph.D.
Robert L. Wells
Stuart Woods
Karen Spears Zacharias

Authors Guild Endowment
Samuel Abt
Eileen Ahrenholz
Helen Alpert
Gigi Amateau
John Anmerino
Cheryl Arguile
Melody Beattie
Liza Bennett
William H. Birchard, Jr.
Nancy Bogen-Greissle
Gwendolyn Bounds
Burt Boyar
Richard Broughton
Joan Winer Brown
Steve Cannon
Joan D. Carris
Paul Chance
Beverly B. Cleary
Mary Coddington
Annemarie Colbin
Pat Lowery Collins
Nancy Raines Day
Frank Defelitta
Robert DeMaria
Frances D’Emilio
P. T. Deutermann
Charles Dickinson
Suzanne Dunaway
Patrick Durantou
Ella Ellis
James and Jocelyn Ellison
Timothy and Carolyn Ferris
William Floyd
Lynne M. Foster
Paula Fox
Ina R. Friedman
Abby Frucht
Laura Furman
Celia Gilbert
Laurel Goldman
Noah Gordon
Margaret Bloy Graham
Linda Griffin
Helen V. Griffith
Nikki Grimes
Carolina Hamshaw
Alfred Hart
Katherine Hatch
Jeff Hecht
Jane Heller
Cheryl Holt
Robert Holt
Will Holt
Cathy Holton
Caroline Janover
Angela Johnson
Barbara Kafka
Melissa Kantor
Richard J. Kennedy
Ken Kolb
Anne Landsman
Michael Lee
Gail Levine
Laurence S. Lockridge
Elaine Long
Sally Mandel
Stephen P. Maran
Katinka Matson
Gillian McCain
Priscilla McMillan
James McPherson
Richard Meryman
Jack Miles
Frances A. Miller
Craig Moodie
Joan Morrison
Doris Ober
Robert S. Ogilvie
Sondra Spatt Olsen
Jennifer Ouellette
Sara Paretsky
Linda Peavy
Laura Pedersen
Joseph E. Persico
Seth Pferrerre
Paul Pines
Nina Planck
James Potts
Barbara Ravage
Dorothy Rich
Jerry Richard
Barbara Robinson
Lynda Robinson
Roxana Robinson
Theodore Rockwell
Donna Rosenthal
Malcolm Ross-Macdonald
Philip Roth
Robert Sabbag
Marilynn Sachs
Meghan N. Sayres
Mary Schoen
Dorothy Sheppard
Steve Sherman
Bonnie Shimko
Susan Shreve
Lan Sluder
Frank Stephenson
Donald Stewart
David Stiles
Joanna L. Stratton
Leon Tec
Susan Tiberghien
Elisott F. Tozer
Kate Walbert
Lucille Warner
Gary Wassner
Melanie Wells
Hans Wilhelm
Elaine Williams
Chris Wiltz
Linda Witt
Tobias Wolff
Bari E. Wood
Elisabeth Young-Bruehl
Laura Zubulake

Authors Guild Foundation Endowment
W. Royce Adams
Irving Adler
Gini Alhadeff
Barbara Allman
Lisa Alther
Jill Amadio
Gigi Amateau
Howard Anton
John Ashbery
Linda Phillips Ashour
Janet Jaepson Asimov
Anastasios Aslanis
Robert Asprey
Deborah Atkinson
Dr. P.M.H. Atwater
Harold Augenbraum
Richard Babcock, Jr.
Garrick A. Bailey
Donald Bain and Renee
Paley-Bain
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.

From the President

Continued from page 4

will even live until the prospective pub date of the book I just turned in, the ending of which I have to fix.

But today, as I say, I was working on another one. And meanwhile, I have been keeping my hand in on the Google settlement. And I do believe it will help authors stay alive. When I grudgingly (grudgingly, because I knew what they were likely to say) admitted to people that I had turned in this latest book, they said, "And now you can play!" No. I was playing while I wrote it. But to keep on playing, I got to get paid. ♦
Rejections Rejected

Continued from page 9

kind of wit or enthusiasm. They are laconic, and, well . . . sloppy, without a sense of self; no pride. I’ve gotten my own query letter back, on which was scrawled No thanks, and once, I got a raggedly torn third of an 8 1/2 x 11 page with “Not my cup of tea.” Or that year-late one. Or nothing, which is sort of cheating, isn’t it, letting their utter disregard reside in their having lost it before they read it?

If you work through an agent, book rejections are almost never generic, I guess out of respect for the number of pages you put into the project, and also for your agent, who might come up with something better next month. “I can see why you are so enthusiastic about this, but it is not right for our list”—which roughly translated probably means, “Ugh, you idiot, where is your taste?” Very occasionally a rejection letter will offer insight, and in one instance actually led me to a complete revision of a book.

For the most part, I think editors are readers like anyone else, and they react first with their gut, and then justify their gut with publishing jargon in hope of appearing professional. After all, there really is no reason to analyze and explain why they aren’t going to buy something any more than you would have to explain to the fruit man why you passed on those green bananas. An editor has to fall in love with your work, and if she doesn’t, she puts her lack of love into phrases like “The narrative is flaccid” or “The protagonist is problematic” after the fact. In a publishing world that likes a sure thing, reasons related to sales and marketing are also reality. Before I sold my book about aging and Alzheimer’s, most of my rejections talked about it being too difficult a subject to tackle, or the potential difficulty of finding an audience, but the editor who loved it saw the potential audience more clearly than the difficulty.

What I have learned from rejections, even the inferior ones, is that good work as well as bad is subject to them, and there is very little I can do about some editors’ personal taste or a publishing program that does not have room for my type of work. The only things I can do are to make sure that there are no soft spots in the work, and know my market before it goes out. Because I will only get one chance. That editor whose helpful comment led to my revision did not want another look.

I knew a guy who had had a huge success with his first book, and then went on to write nine unpublished novels. When I met him he was working on his tenth.

Yes, he was a little crazed, and I remember thinking what a nightmare and wondering what kept him going. I don’t wonder anymore. Sometimes rejections make me want to stop submitting material, and sometimes I do stop, for a while. But they never make me want to stop writing. If I have an urgency to say something, if the answer to the question “Would you write it even if no one would publish it?” is “Yes,” then I write it and don’t worry about it being rejected. And it helps that lately I can see that there are some rejections that are just not good enough for me. ♦

Books in Limbo

Continued from page 7

edged, but so too do books in limbo, whose intellectual importance has been all but ignored in debates about the settlement. And of course every orphaned book is currently in limbo.

If the settlement is approved it’s not only those affiliated with colleges and universities who will gain access to all these books. The settlement requires Google to make available at a terminal in each of 16,500 public libraries copies of every single scanned out-of-print book (except for those that authors or publishers choose to not display). Anyone can read them there for free. Access to knowledge will no longer be a function of privilege, as millions of citizens can consult a general collection that surpasses those found in the best Ivy League universities. Those who want to purchase copies will also be able to do so—with writers and their publishers receiving the lion’s share of these payments. All this should also enable university libraries to redirect resources toward acquiring and maintaining unique archives such as manuscript collections as well as cultural artifacts that can’t be scanned.

Would I prefer that research universities had dipped into their deep endowments and done this collectively before Google acted? Sure, but that was always a fantasy and those endowments have now dried up. Will the settlement bring back the scholarly book? I don’t know, but I’m betting that it will at least stem the rising tide of wiki-based research. Will we live to see the day when students store favorite books on their laptops much as they collect music on their iPods? We’ll have to wait and see. In the meantime, it’s worth reflecting on the consequences if those trying to block this settlement have their way. Who knows how many more years all that scholarship will be condemned to limbo. ♦
Writing for Walter

BY ALISON OWINGS

Walter Cronkite, who wrote four books and co-wrote three others, was a member of the Authors Guild from 1971, when he published *Eye on the World*, until his death this summer.

In all the heartfelt paeans to Walter Cronkite so far, virtually every view of him as a journalist has been cited, save for one.

To us, his writers, he was a superb editor.

His title included "managing editor" for good reason. The title may sound macro. Think micro.

Take this example. In a story about a study by dissident Teamsters, I wrote, "It charged that union by-laws give president Frank Fitzsimmons powers to 'harness the Goliath union and run it as he pleases.' And the group said that meant, among other things, his hiring do-nothing, highly paid Teamsters officials..." Walter changed it to, "It charged that president Frank Fitzsimmons has used his unlimited powers to hire do-nothing..." Next to the last sentence he wrote "30." That meant he had read the script, his famous voice reduced to a less famous rumble, then trimmed and timed it, stopwatch in hand, thumb on clicker, and got it to 30 seconds. He edited not just for better flow, but often to fit in a story that might have to be cut.

Walter Cronkite rarely met a sentence he could not shorten.

Why do I know specifics of the Teamsters story? Because after I retyped it for him to read more easily on air, instead of tossing the old version in the trash-can, I saved it. In fact, I saved several such scripts. I also sometimes took notes before, during, or after, the broadcast; I knew that writing for Walter Cronkite was an uncommon honor.

The honor took me a while to attain. I was hired by CBS News as a staff writer, and wrote for whichever broadcast needed me—days, nights, weekdays, weekends (a challenging body-clock blend). After some months, as if passing an unknown test, I was scheduled to fill in for one of Cronkite's three regular writers. Entering the newsroom and sitting at my assigned desk, I was well aware of the *Evening News*'s status in the country. A fellow writer immediately hissed under his breath, "A woman has no place in a newsroom," thereby making me well aware that I was one of the first women writers at CBS News. I took a breath of my own and got to work.

Mr. Cronkite, as I called him for a time, until he grumbled, "Walter," spent most of the day in his adjoining office, taking his spot at the anchor desk in mid, or very late, afternoon. Often he made no greeting to the awaiting quartet (three writers and news editor) whose desks surrounded his, but set to reading our work. His first words to any of us might come mid-broadcast; he twirled around in his chair and delivered a sometimes out-of-the-blue question having to do with a news story. "How old was Saypol?" he asked me, says one of my notes.

We all knew which question of his had become a legend. "When did life begin?"

Being faced, literally, with a difficult question was only part of the extraordinary pressure we writers weathered. My least favorite moments came when a story broke in the middle of the broadcast and I was assigned it. "Don't worry," the producer called to me, "commercial break coming up." That meant I had an extra minute, with-stomach-in-throat, to finish interviewing the police chief of wherever and writing co-gently and correctly, without jamming the typewriter keys (this was a pre-computer newsroom, of course) a story Walter would read to some 20 million viewers.

He himself was all but unflappable. Once, while he was reading a story that came in so late that the teleprompter operator had no copy, the last page fell to the floor. With the camera close on his face, Walter continued to read as if everything were fine, all the while gesticulating wildly with his left hand for someone to retrieve the missing page. The news editor and I dove under our desks, but as I recall, the errant page was somewhere near Walter's ankle and just out of reach. He managed to ad lib a finish without it.

Last-minute timing did not faze him, either. Five minutes to air, say my old notes, WC is numbering scripts. Three minutes to air, make-up woman applied powder as he worked, still timing scripts. One minute fifteen seconds to air, WC puts on his jacket. Seconds before a newsroom-wide heart attack, the stage manager cued him. "Good evening," Walter said jovially. "Well, it turns out..."

Alison Owings is the author of *Frauen: German Women Recall the Third Reich* and *Hey, Waitress!,* and is finishing a book about contemporary Native Americans.
Before the late afternoon pressure began, we writers went our separate ways to lunch, though as an Example for All Womankind, I often ate a cafeteria sandwich at my desk, the sole person in the newsroom. One time I ate out, I had a large glass of red wine with an omelet . . . and upon returning found an enormous pile of stories awaiting me. One was a lead-in to a correspondent’s piece about politics.

With wine-fueled wit, nerve and panic, I typed, “If the New Hampshire primary was the teething ring of the campaign, then Massachusetts is the first big bite. . . . So and so reports from Boston.” The news editor sternly whispered, “This will never get through, Alison.” Preoccupied with my workload, I wine-ily waved him off. With reluctance, he placed the script in Walter’s in-box. I truly forgot about it until we were on air and I heard Walter saying sonorously, “If the New Hampshire primary was the teething ring . . .” I sat back, amazed. He had used my lead verbatim. As the film rolled, he turned around and said his first words to me that day, “Good lead.”

I imagine all of Walter’s writers cherished his off air words the most.

In second place may be the words we wrote and he made better, and fewer. ✷

Where Did the Summer Go?

If you’ve been following the news, you know that things have been a bit busy this summer for the Authors Guild staff. In the interests of institutional sanity, we present this combined Summer/Fall issue, and will resume our normal publishing schedule with the next issue of the Bulletin.
Membership Application

Mr./Ms. __________________________________________ Pseudonym(s) __________________________

Address __________________________________________ City __________________________ State ____ Zip ______

Phone ( ) __________________ Fax ( ) __________________ E-mail __________________________

Agent Name __________________________ Agency __________________________ Agent phone ( ) ____________

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

☐ Site-builder and other Web services ☐ Other __________________________

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Field/Genre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Freelance articles | Title | Publisher | Mo./Year | Subject
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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. Account # __________________________

Signature __________________________ Expiration Date ____ / ____ Amount: $90

Mail to:
The Authors Guild
31 East 32nd Street, 7th Fl.
New York, N.Y. 10016

Bulletin, Summer / Fall 2009