On-Demand Books in Every Bookshop?
Jason Epstein’s Dream Machine
Making Peace Between Books and the Internet
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John Updike on the Act and Art of Writing
LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I read with great interest about the wonderful achievement of the settlement with Google (Bulletin, Fall 2008). It would appear that some financial benefit should accrue to the Authors Guild to compensate it for its effort and to help it continue to represent authors’ interests. However, I assume that efforts must already have been made to include benefits for the Authors Guild and reopening negotiations would be a hassle. Instead, perhaps authors who receive benefits from this settlement could be encouraged to make contributions to the Authors Guild.

—Florence Temko
La Jolla, CA

I was doing my book registry for the Google settlement and I saw that one of my titles, Jabberwocky, had listed as the coauthor, Humpty Dumpty! Honestly, as a “coauthor,” he was not all he was cracked up to be and did not pull his weight on the project!

—Jane Zalben
Sands Point, NY

Recently I received a letter from Random House saying that they wanted to include a book of mine in a group they were going to make available as e-books. If, as it now appears, books will increasingly be sold as e-books, it makes good business sense for both publishers and writers to place their books in some electronic system. I was therefore initially pleased to have one of my books in the e-book program.

I then noticed that Random House was offering to

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ALONG PUBLISHERS ROW

BY CAMPBELL GEESLIN

READER’S REPORT: Max Leone, a 13-year-old boy from New Jersey, wrote an essay in PW about what teenagers want to read. He said, “I beg you: please use only modern language, no matter what time period or universe your book takes place in.”

He asked, “Whatever urge compels writers to clumsily smash morals about fairness and honor or other cornball crap onto otherwise fine stories?” He said that teenagers get enough of that from parents and teachers.

Make certain that “the vampire is always a menacing badass. That is the kind of book teenage boys want to read.”

Leone’s cardinal rule: “Do not underestimate your audience.”

If writers follow his rules, Leone said, “they’ll be able to cash in on the four or five minutes each day that teenagers aren’t already spending on school, homework, video games, eating, band practice and sports.”

PRE-E-MAIL: There are eight volumes of Chekhov’s 4,200 letters, postcards and telegrams. Some were published in The Selected Letters of Anton Chekhov (1955), with an introduction by Lillian Hellman.

In one letter, Chekhov wrote: “being an eminent author is not so great a delight. For one thing, it’s a gloomy life. Work from morning to night, and not much sense to it. Money—as scarce as hen’s teeth . . . my place is smoky and cold. I get cigarettes, as before, but only on holidays. And impossible cigarettes! They are tough and damp, like little sausages. Before smoking I turn up the lamp wick, dry the cigarette over it and only then light it; while the lamp sputters and reeks, the cigarette cracks and darkens, and I scorch my fingers. You feel that death might be a welcome release.”

HOW TO DO IT: Daniel Suarez’s first novel, Daemon, was a bestseller. The author told PW how the book came to be: “I wrote Daemon several years ago, but couldn’t find representation, so I self-published using print-on-demand. As a book about the power of the Web, Daemon was perfect for Internet marketing. My

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President
Roy Blount Jr.

Editor
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Isabel Howe

Senior Contributing Editor
Campbell Geeslin

Contributing Editor
David Curle

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

Overheard
“This business was never meant to sustain limousines. . . . At best, you can get a Town Car now and then.”

From the President

BY ROY BLOUNT JR.

There’s no point rolling up your britches till you get to the creek. Which is to say, I am not into Depression mode yet. Just because multi-billionaires are scared of losing more billions than they managed to lose last fall, doesn’t mean anybody needs to be afraid of buying a book, or writing one.

However. In these shall-we-say unexpansive times, prudence lies, for us authors, in focusing on whether we should just shoot ourselves (No! No! Then all the naysayers, in particular certain idiot online “Customer Review” critics, will have been right!) or what.

Look. It was imprudent of us, in the first place, to become authors. We could have become something regular, but we managed not to. We were lucky, but we were also determined. There was something stuck in our craw (from the Indo-European root gwrokhi, wind-pipe), and we resolved to make a living using that snag (from the Old Icelandic svarga, a kind of ax) as an instrument of expression. Thank heaven we didn’t realize how unlikely were the prospects of our pulling this off.

And how unlikely they continue to be. As I write, for instance, it is 10 days before Christmas and amazon.com just ran out of my book for the second time! Friends are e-mailing me—they can’t find my book, they’ve gone to stores that also are out of it. They want to buy my book, and give it to others, in the name of Jesus! Or anyway, Santa Claus. And they can’t find it. Okay. Okay. I’m maintaining.

Every day, whatever the state of the nation’s economy, we are reminded how imprudent we authors are. But rather than compound that imprudence by putting our unlikely earnings at risk, we must resolve to protect those earnings, as a dog growls over the odorous bone independently dug up in the woods. Money gained by writing books or articles is no more equivalent to money gained by drawing a paycheck (not that there is anything wrong, necessarily, with that money) than fish caught with a homemade harpoon in desert-island surf is like fish you get in the store. Money earned by sweating aesthetically and earnestly over sentences is not money that should be turned over to some guy in an office who tries to tell you your heart-won money is chump’s change, is not in the swing of things, unless it is cranking out 15 percent interest. Interest which, we now know, could invert itself, or worse, overnight.

Seldom am I able to hold myself up as a good example, especially with regard to practical matters. But when it comes to investing I have been prudence itself. That is to say, I have not invested. I have spent, and I have saved. For 33 years I have been a freelance writer, literally never knowing where my next dollar is coming from, even when I knew from whence it was supposed to have come three or four months ago (“You didn’t get a check? Really? Oh, my. We’ll look into it”). Therefore, when I have had more wherewithal than I needed to pay the bills, my policy has been to never put it anywhere I can’t get it back out of. People have spoken to me of leverage. Yeah, well. Leverage can swing back around. Leverage can force you to write stuff you don’t want to write in order to support your money. No. I want money to support me, my family, my habit. For me empowerment, by which I mean relative freedom, resides in real estate, that I live in, and liquidity.

So I’m okay, so far. If my kids weren’t already grown, and if my mortgage weren’t paid off, and if I weren’t on Medicare, I would be scared. But I know this: Authors have been scared before, and not deterred.

“For 33 years I have been a freelance writer, literally never knowing where my next dollar is coming from, even when I knew from whence it was supposed to have come three or four months ago.”

Spreading the Word

In January, as part of the Authors Guild v. Google settlement negotiated last fall, a legal notice began running in newspapers, magazines and trade journals to alert rightsholders of their options under the agreement. By late February, the “Summary Notice” (opposite) had appeared in more than 200 countries and in 72 languages, including both U.S. and international trade websites.
Persons Outside the United States: This settlement may affect you because it covers U.S. copyright interests in books published outside the United States. If you hold such an interest in a book or other material in a book, this settlement could bind you unless you timely opt out.

If You Are a Book Author, Book Publisher or Other Person Who Owns a Copyright in a Book or Other Writing,

Your rights may be affected by a class action settlement regarding Google’s scanning and use of Books and other writings.

Authors and publishers filed a class action lawsuit, claiming Google violated the copyrights of authors, publishers and other copyright holders ("Rightsholders") by scanning in-copyright Books and Inserts, and displaying excerpts, without permission. Google denies the claims. The parties have agreed to a settlement. This summary provides basic information about the settlement. "Books" and "Inserts" are described below.

What Does the Settlement Provide?
The settlement, if Court-approved, will authorize Google to scan in-copyright Books and Inserts in the United States, and maintain an electronic database of Books. For out-of-print Books and, if permitted by Rightsholders of in-print Books, Google will be able to sell access to individual Books and institutional subscriptions to the database, place advertisements on any page dedicated to a Book, and make other commercial uses of Books. At any time, Rightsholders can change instructions to Google regarding any of those uses. Through a Book Rights Registry ("Registry") established by the settlement, Google will pay Rightsholders 63% of all revenues from these uses.

Google also will pay $34.5 million to establish and fund the initial operations of the Registry and for notice and settlement administration costs, and at least $45 million for cash payments to Rightsholders of Books and Inserts that Google scans prior to the deadline for opting out of the settlement.

Who Is Included?
The settlement class includes all persons worldwide who hold a U.S. copyright interest in any Book or Insert. The meaning of "U.S. copyright interest" is broad. Wherever you are located, please read the full Notice to determine whether you are included in the settlement.

There are two Sub-Classes:

- The "Author Sub-Class" (authors of Books and other writings, and their heirs, successors and assigns), and
- The "Publisher Sub-Class" (publishers of Books and periodicals, and their successors and assigns).

What Material Is Covered?
"Books" include in-copyright written works, such as novels, textbooks, dissertations, and other writings, that were published or distributed in hard copy format on or before January 5, 2009. U.S. works must be registered with the U.S. Copyright Office to be included in the settlement. "Books" do not include periodicals, personal papers, sheet music, and public domain or government works.

"Inserts" include any text and other material, such as forewords, essays, poems, quotations, letters, song lyrics, children’s Book illustrations, sheet music, charts, and graphs, if independently protected by U.S. copyright, contained in a Book, a government work or a public domain book published on or before January 5, 2009 and, if U.S. works, registered (alone or as part of another work) with the U.S. Copyright Office. Inserts do not include pictorial content (except for children’s Book illustrations), or any public domain or government works.

The Notice contains a more detailed description of these terms and other essential information about the settlement.

What Should I do?
Please read the full Notice, which is available at http://www.googlebooksettlement.com. Decide whether you should:

- Remain in the settlement. If you do so, you will be bound by the Court’s rulings, including a release of your claims against Google.
- Object to or comment on the settlement. You must object/ comment in writing by May 5, 2009.
- Opt out of the settlement and keep your right to sue Google individually. You must opt out in writing by May 5, 2009.
- File a claim for a cash payment (if you are eligible to do so). You must file your claim by January 5, 2010.

The Court has appointed Class Counsel to represent the two Sub-Classes. If the settlement is approved, Class Counsel for the Author Sub-Class will request attorneys’ fees and expenses that Google has agreed to pay. You can also hire your own attorney at your own cost.

The Court will determine whether to approve the settlement at a Fairness Hearing on June 11, 2009 at 1:00 p.m.

Get Complete Information, Including the Full Notice:

Visit: www.googlebooksettlement.com  Call: 1-888-356-0248

Write: Google Book Search Settlement Administrator, c/o Rust Consulting
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The Writer as Illusionist

BY WILLIAM MAXWELL

William Maxwell, the revered fiction editor of The New Yorker for 40 years (1936–1975), was the author of four novels, including They Came Like Sparrows and So Long, See You Tomorrow, many collections of short stories, including Over by the River, and the memoir Ancestors: A Family History. The speech from which this piece is excerpted was delivered at Smith College in 1955, and appears in its entirety in A William Maxwell Portrait: Memories and Appreciations, Norton, 2004.

One of the standard themes of Chinese painting is the spring festival on the river. I’m sure many of you have seen some version of it. There is one in the Metropolitan Museum. It has three themes woven together: the river, which comes down from the upper right, and the road along the river, and the people on the riverbanks. As the scroll unwinds, there is, first, the early-morning mist on the rice fields and some boys who cannot go to the May Day festival because they have to watch their goats. Then there is a country house, and several people starting out for the city, and a farmer letting water into a field by means of a water wheel, and then more people and buildings—all kinds of people all going toward the city for the festival. And along the riverbank there are various entertainers—a magician, a female tightrope walker, several fortune-tellers, a phrenologist, a man selling spirit money, a man selling patent medicine, a storyteller. I prefer to think that it is with this group—the shoddy entertainers earning their living by the riverbank on May Day—that Mr. Bellow, Mr. Gill, Miss Chase, on the platform, Mr. Ralph Ellison and Mrs. Kazin, in the audience, and I, properly speaking, belong. Writers—narrative writers—are people who perform tricks.

Before I came up here, I took various books down from their shelf and picked out some examples of the kind of thing I mean. Here is one:

"I have just returned from a visit to my landlord—the solitary neighbor that I shall be troubled with . . ."

One of two things—there will be more neighbors turning up than the narrator expects, or else he will very much wish that they had. And the reader is caught; he cannot go away until he finds out which of his two guesses is correct. This is, of course, a trick.

Here is another: "None of them knew the color of the sky. . ." Why not? Because they are at sea, pulling at the oars in an open boat; and so are you.

Here is another trick: "Call me Ishmael. . ." A pair of eyes looking into your eyes. A face. A voice. You have entered into a personal relationship with a stranger, who will perhaps make demands on you, extraordinary personal demands; who will perhaps insist that you love him; who perhaps will love you in a way that is upsetting and uncomfortable.

Here is another trick: "Thirty or forty years ago, in one of those gray towns along the Burlington railroad, which are so much grayier today than they were then, there was a house well known from Omaha to Denver for its hospitality and for a certain charm of atmosphere . . ."

A door opens slowly in front of you, and you cannot see who is opening it, but, like a sleepwalker, you have to go in.

Another trick: "It was said that a new person had appeared on the seashore—a lady with a dog . . ."

The narrator appears to be, in some way, underprivileged, socially. She perhaps has an invalid father that she has to take care of, and so she cannot walk along the promenade as often as she would like. Perhaps she is not asked many places. And so she has not actually set eyes on this interesting new person that everyone is talking about. She is therefore all the more interested. And meanwhile, surprisingly, the reader cannot forget the lady, or the dog, or the seashore.

Here is another trick: "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife . . ."

An attitude of mind, this time. A way of looking at people that is ironical, shrewd, faintly derisive, and

Reprinted by permission of Kate and Brookie Maxwell. Thanks to longtime Guild member Ann Birstein, who heard it live, for calling it to our attention.

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The Internet vs. Books

Peaceful Coexistence

BY BEAU FRIEDLANDER

"O

n or about December, 1910," Virginia Woolf once wrote, "the world changed." Sometime during the early aughts of this century, it changed again. The Internet leveled our cultural landscape. There was an epistemological free-for-all, a paradigm shift. The pyramid of media hierarchy flipped—top down became bottom up—and people-powered content started to change the way we think.

In 2002, I owned a small independent publisher, Context Books. That year, we published a beer coaster of a book titled War on Iraq. The substance was a hybrid: part-book, part-blog. Former U.N. Special Commission inspector Scott Ritter had spent the summer of 2002 telling anyone who would listen that President Bush was going to start a war in Iraq and that it would end in disaster. We boiled that down into a punchy project—concept to bookshelf: eight weeks. Six months later, the president was on TV telling America about the war he’d just launched.

What we did in 2002 is now an everyday occurrence on user-generated content sites such as Wikipedia (founded in 2001), Daily Kos (launched in 2002), MySpace (launched in 2003) and Facebook (launched in 2004). Internet users have very specific notions about what they want to know. But in this new world of mob-rules media, how do we know if what we’re reading is quality news, junk opinion or psychotic confabulation?

It used to be that the printing press was the final arbiter, a micro-layer of ink adding heft to words. Certain websites can do the same thing (the Christian Science Monitor just announced plans to go to a Web-only daily publication model), but there remains a chasm between virtual texts and their printed counterparts.

In 1945, Vannevar Bush wrote an essay for the Atlantic Monthly titled “As We May Think.” It was about a hypothetical machine called the Memex, a mechanized desk attached to microfiche scrolls that could potentially store entire libraries. Sixty-three years later, the Atlantic featured another essay by Nicholas Carr, called “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” The answer was an emphatic, if not altogether wistful, “Yes.”

Many old-schoolers fear that the Internet means the end of them. For the rest of us, suggests Markos Moulitsas Zuniga, founder of the political website the Daily Kos, “Google makes it possible to learn anything, near instantaneously. Like natural selection, there are species that adapt to the changing environment around them and thrive, and others die off.”

Google allows one to riffle through facts, history and the pages of our culture’s collective knowledge. It is like an external hard drive containing the everyday knowledge we used to carry around in our heads.

While planning her most recent book, The Zookeeper’s Wife, author Diane Ackerman used the Internet “to know what animals the Warsaw Zoo kept, what animals called when, what they sounded like, smelled like, looked like and so on. ‘Gibbon calls,’ I thought. I Googled them, and heard their duets! I needed to know what birds would have been there, so I used the Internet to discover the aerial flyways over Europe in 1939. Previously, I would have made a trip to Cornell’s Lab of Ornithology, and spent hours there.”

In theory, a tool like Google should free us to be more creative. In reality, there are pitfalls.

Jan Frel is an editor at the progressive news site AlterNet and a cultural critic who takes a wider perspective, holding that writing in general, rather than a reliance on oral tradition, has had a deleterious effect on culture. “This is a weird aberration,” he says, “all Beau Friedlander is editor in chief of AirAmerica.com. This piece originally appeared in the Los Angeles Times, November 9, 2008, and is published with permission of the author.
these people writing instead of one story being written by many people.” Frel likes the open-endedness of an Internet where “you can imagine knowledge and then find it.” But there is a downside, which, according to Frel, is rather dire: “Pretty good has become the new perfection.”

When Alexander Solzhenitsyn memorized passages of One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich, he had no choice but to enact the modernist version of oral traditions. This was not an expression of collective culture so much as an extreme example of what T. S. Eliot called “the individual talent.”

Today’s blogs are a mutation of Solzhenitsyn’s modernist mythmaking—where the merely personal becomes a matter of permanent record. Increasingly, mainstream writers cite blogs. Political journalists use them as sources. According to CommonSenseMedia.org, 74 percent of journalists recently surveyed regularly read blogs, and 84 percent “say they would or already have used blogs as a primary or secondary source for articles.”

“A seasoned reader,” CrooksandLiars.com founder John Amato claims, “can learn more about a political issue than a person who sticks to the old-style pros.”

A closer look at The Zookeeper’s Wife provides a snapshot of what’s missing on the Net. Ackerman did a lot of old-school research. “I read a sea of books, interviews and testimonies—by and about people who witnessed the Holocaust—and I studied World War II history, armaments, cuisine, leaders, airplanes, medicine, architecture, fashion, music, films and such,” she says. “Some of that I could find on the Internet, but not much; most of it meant reading books, some of which I had to have translated.”

Books require a different sort of communion with one’s subject than the Internet. They foster a different sort of memory—more tactile, more participatory. I know more or less where, folio-wise, Eliot gets nasty about the Jews in his infamous 1933 lecture series “After Strange Gods,” but I always have to read around a bit to find the exact quote, and the time spent softens the bite of his anti-Semitism because the hateful remarks were made amid smart ones. For literary works, books are still, and most likely always will be, indispensable.

But not all nonfiction requires that depth. I asked Freakonomics coauthor Stephen Dubner how the Internet is changing writing and more generally the way we think. “The crabbiness,” he says, “that emanates from a certain breed of thinker/writer—a breed that I generally admire, by the way—about how the Internet’s cornucopia of information is destroying book culture is based on fear of change more than anything. Most people don’t even like to change the part in their hair; asking them to accept a change in the way words are disbursed through culture is a bit much.”

Moulitsas adds: “We no longer have to depend on so-called or self-appointed experts to tell us what we should think.”

Or we have to do it less than we did a few years ago. The self-appointed experts are blogging on the Daily Kos. Things are shifting. I remember feverishly pitching War on Iraq in 2002. When I pushed one editor to assign it for review, he snapped: “It’s not a book, and I’m not going to assign it.” The irony: It had been on his paper’s list of best-selling nonfiction books for weeks.

When I began to think about this essay I listed all the writers I’d like to talk to about how the Internet is changing the way we think and write. The first person was Donald McKenzie, a fellow at Pembroke College, Oxford University. I took his course on bibliography and hypertext in the early 1990s, when the Internet was a baby.

I Googled him, only to discover that he’d died in 1999. One more click and I found a portrait of McKenzie in the permanent collection of the National Library of New Zealand. Looking at it, I was transported back to a cool autumn day in Oxfordshire, the windows open, a modern room in the ancient city. McKenzie held a book fanned open on his upturned palms, fantastically engaged. “This is remarkable technology,” he said with a whiff of his native New Zealand accent. “A wafer-thin sheet of paper, yet so much information.”

I found McKenzie, mourned him, and revisited Brideshead in about three minutes. Without Internet access, this could have taken weeks. I had not stayed in touch with him, although I referred to his insights from time to time—particularly the way he saw television, the Internet, e-mail and every other transient mode of communication stored in his ideal library system, one that trounced Vannevar Bush’s Memex.

Continued on page 32
Dick Yates Goes to the Movies

BY MARTIN NAPARSTECK

I n 1984 I was interviewing Richard Yates in The Crossroads Bar in Boston’s Back Bay and whenever I brought up the time he spent in Hollywood, he avoided the question. Finally, after three or four hours, after he had consumed seven or eight or nine double shots of Jim Beam with water, and two Rolling Rocks, when I asked him one more time to tell me about writing screenplays in Hollywood, he leaned forward and said, jabbing his forefinger into the table with each word, “I don’t want to talk about that fucking time in fucking Hollywood writing for the fucking movies.”

Now Dick Yates is going back to the movies. His first novel, Revolutionary Road, the most highly regarded of his nine books, has been made into a movie. A big movie. It stars Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet in their first film together since 1997’s super-hit, Titanic. It’s directed by Winslet’s husband, Sam Mendes, who won a 1999 Academy Award for directing American Beauty. The movie opened to limited release the day after Christmas and worldwide in mid-January.

Yates did later talk to me about Hollywood: This is one of the stories he told me: On the suggestion of William Styron, director John Frankenheimer hired Yates in 1962 to write a screenplay based on Styron’s novel, Lie Down in Darkness. Styron, who had married a very wealthy woman, didn’t want to write it himself and wasn’t attracted to either the money or glamour of Hollywood. Frankenheimer’s original plan for Lie Down in Darkness was to have Henry Fonda play the father and Natalie Wood play the daughter. Wood at first indicated a strong interest, but she had a lot of offers for a lot of roles, and she turned this one down. Frankenheimer then had an idea. Why couldn’t Jane Fonda play the role? The problem with that was that Lie Down in Darkness is about incest and contains a scene in which the father and daughter passionately kiss. When Henry Fonda was informed of Frankenheimer’s idea, Harry was outraged and withdrew from the project. Yates, in telling me this story, used a cliché to explain what happened next. “Hollywood is a small town,” he said. No name actors wanted to work on this particular project with crazy Frankenheimer; the people who were going to put up the money changed their minds. Frankenheimer’s plan to have Henry passionately kiss Jane on screen ruined Yates’s Hollywood career; at least, that’s what Yates told me, with a shrug and a sad smile. And with a lot of liquor inside of him.

But he had an addendum. He told me how pretty Natalie Wood was in person, how sad her death by drowning was. He told me she sought him out at a party and apologized. She said if she hadn’t pulled out of the project, the movie would have been made and Yates’s career in Hollywood would have been very different. Lie Down in Darkness still has not been made into a movie.

Yates told me he also worked on one other script in Hollywood, one about Iwo Jima, but that it was never produced. In a half dozen conversations with him, he never once told me about The Bridge at Remagen. That movie, directed by John Guillerman and starring George Segal and Ben Gazzara, was produced in 1969, with Yates getting credit for writing the screenplay. Well, sort of writing it. When the movie was released to theaters, the front credits proclaimed in very large

lettering—larger than is normal for screenwriters—that the screenplay was by Yates. No one else was listed. When a videotape was released decades later, the large lettering remained. When the DVD was released in 2000, however, the screen credit said the script was by Yates and William Roberts. Whoever made the decision to downplay Yates’s screenplay role on the DVD wasn’t alone. Yates, according to his biographer, Blake Bailey, wouldn’t even list it on his resume. Part of the problem was that, as often happens, many changes were made in the screenplay. Another problem is that it is a bad movie, filled with stereotypes and cliché situations. Movies lie, Yates felt, and *Remington* was a typical Hollywood lying movie.

In *A Special Providence*, Yates’s second novel, Robert Prentice finds himself in a fight with a bigger man partly because a Sergeant Loomis has learned how to be a sergeant by watching movies. Loomis has a sentimentalized method of solving problems between soldiers: have them go off someplace alone and fight it out. Prentice does and is beaten up. Prentice, who, like Yates, was an 18-year-old American soldier in France near the end of the Second World War, realizes what he doesn’t like about Loomis: “... he was such a God Damn actor: everything he said came out with the ponderous fraudulence of something in the movies; it was as if he had learned how to be a platoon sergeant by watching every Hollywood war picture ever made.”

Still, it is not surprising that Yates learned about stories as a child by watching movies. That was a fairly typical experience for someone growing up in the ‘30s and ‘40s, although not necessarily for someone who turned to a literary career. In one of his few pieces of published nonfiction, Yates wrote in *The New York Times* in 1981 that he did not read much as a child but he did watch a lot of movies. He told me the same thing when I was friendly with him for a few years in the mid- and late ’80s. Movies taught him, he told me, how stories are shaped, how dialogue works and doesn’t work, how changing a word here or there can create a lie.

And what he learned from movies is that they get life wrong: A secondary character, Aaron, in *Cold Spring Harbor*, his final book, complains that “the movies don’t even pretend to show the truth about the army and the war, any more than they ever show the truth about love.” Over and over movies in Yates’s seven novels and 27 published short stories are depicted as portraying a fraudulent view of life, and over and over that contributes to the unhappiness of the characters. Rachel in *Cold Spring Harbor* gets married at least partly because movies taught her lies about love and thus made it easier for her to overlook her boyfriend’s obvious faults.

Yates captures poor Rachel’s attitudes toward Hollywood: “The movies were wonderful because they took you out of yourself, and at the same time they gave you a sense of being whole. Things of the world might serve to remind you at every turn that your life was snarled and perilously incomplete, that terror would never be far from possession of your heart, but those perceptions would nearly always vanish, if only for a little while, in the cool and nicely scented darkness of any movie house, anywhere.”

In *Cold Spring Harbor*, Rachel meets a not very nice young man, Evan, who lies and cheats and once bashed in another young man’s head. Her parents warn her to stay away from Evan, and even his father warns her he’s no good. But Rachel has learned from movies that such young men are really good people at heart, so she has an affair with him and marries him, and he insults her in public places, beats her, and abandons her and their newborn baby. Movies taught poor Rachel a damaging lesson.

Helping make the connection more complete, Yates said several times that Rachel was based on his only, and older, sister, Ruth, and that her husband, Fred, like Evan, “looked just like Laurence Olivier.” Movie stars seduce their fans. Movies, more generally, seduce us into believing lies.

In *Disturbing the Peace*, Yates’s third novel, the character John Wilder recalls with admiration what some people would think was the rude behavior of soldiers at a base movie theater: “Funny thing: in civilian movie-houses people’d sit still for any kind of trash—you’d never hear anybody laugh out loud in a love scene or anything like that—but in the army there was nothing magic about the big silver screen any more, and we all got to be very vocal, brutal, movie critics. We could spot a fake plot or a fake ‘message’ a mile away; we’d stomp and laugh and yell obscenities at anything cheap or trite or hoked-up or sentimental,

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CONTRACTS Q&A

BY MARK L. LEVINE

Q. My contract grants me cover approval but the paperback publisher never sent me the cover to look at. It’s totally different from the dust jacket on the hardcover, which was fabulous. I’m told that paperback publishers have the right to design their own covers. Is that true?

A. The contract between you and your publisher essentially covers only copies of your work published by that publisher, whether hardcover, paperback or electronic. With very limited exceptions, its provisions do not apply to copies of your work published by licensees of your publisher. If there are particular provisions in your contract that you want carried over to an edition published by any of its licensees, you should list those provisions, by repeating them or by cross-reference to the clauses containing them, in a section of the contract which says that the publisher must include them in its contract with the licensee. Another way would be to say, each time one of those provisions appears in the contract, that the provision must also be contained in any agreement the publisher signs with a licensee for another edition of the book.

Among the clauses that an author is most apt to want included are a prohibition against material by anyone else (whether advertising, the work of another author or anything else) being included in your book; the right for you to purchase copies of the reprint edition at a discount for resale; and cover approval. The most important provision—no changes to what you wrote—is generally covered by the publisher’s contract with the reprint publisher and not something you typically have to worry about.

If your publisher balks at including certain provisions you request because it thinks they might limit its ability to license the book for reprint, you have three alternatives. One is to agree with the publisher and omit them from the contract. The second is to remind the publisher that if the relevant provision in fact turns out to be an impediment to signing the license, it can ask you at that time to waive the requirement, so the provision should be left in as mandatory. The third, for the arguably problematic provisions only, is to change the operative language in the section from “the publisher shall include the following provisions in the reprint contract” to “the publisher shall use its best efforts to include the following provisions . . .” I’m generally a fan of the second alternative.

Q. I am thinking of suing my publisher. It’s located in Florida, and the contract says that it’s governed by Florida law. I live in New York. Do I have to sue the publisher in Florida or can I sue it in New York? Do I need a Florida lawyer to sue it in Florida?

A. Just because the contract says it is governed by Florida law does not mean you have to sue in Florida. The “governing law” provision (also called “choice of law”) only dictates which state’s laws must be used in interpreting the contract, not where the suit must be brought. If the proper procedures are followed, the case can be brought in New York (or another state where the publisher does business) regardless of whether the issue involved is a legal or a factual one. To the extent the answer involves Florida law, the New York (or other) court can read the Florida statutes and cases and use Florida law to decide the case.

On the other hand, if the contract says that all lawsuits between you and the publisher must take place in Florida or has a sentence similar to “the jurisdiction of the courts in Florida is exclusive,” then you will have to bring your lawsuit there. Clauses like these are known as an “exclusive jurisdiction” or “choice of venue” clause. Not all publishing contracts have them.

If the suit must be brought in Florida and you know a good Florida litigator who is knowledgeable about book publishing and is within your price range, seriously consider hiring him or her. But the person you hire need not be a member of the Florida bar; you might find it more convenient to deal with a knowledgeable, experienced lawyer near where you live. In areas like contract law, the laws of various states rarely differ significantly in key respects. And many experienced litigators in New York know lawyers in Florida (and other states) who, for relatively small amounts, will nominally act as co-counsel on your lawsuit to assure compliance with the procedural requirements in the relevant state (primarily reviewing the papers to make sure they comply with technical procedural requirements of law and allowing the Florida lawyer’s name to appear on the legal papers as “local counsel”). If you and your lawyer decide to file the lawsuit in a federal court located in Florida instead of a Florida state court, then those steps should not be necessary.

Mark L. Levine is retired Of Counsel at Sullivan & Worcester LLP, a Boston-based law firm; he spent most of last year doing voter protection work during the presidential primaries and the general election. Levine has released the newly revised edition of his classic Negotiating a Book Contract: A Guide for Authors, Agents and Lawyers only as an e-book. It is available at www.bookcontracts.com.

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READING THIS WILL MAKE YOU GO BLIND. Sherman Alexie, novelist and National Book Award winner, has apparently hit the jackpot. His most recent work, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, is a Young Adult book, and it has finally, finally been temporarily banned from English classes in an Oregon school district. In a 2007 USA Today interview, Alexie cheerfully acknowledged that his YA novel contains scenes of “chronic masturbation and inappropriate erections and . . . some cussing” and playfully expressed surprise that there hadn’t been any parental backlash. In the December 20, 2007 interview with reporter Whitney Matheson, Alexie said, “As far as the book getting banned or even challenged, nothing yet. Part of it, I think people are afraid to ban a book written by an Indian about an Indian. I think they probably worry that they’ll feel racist.”

Well, the Crook County School District in Prineville, Oreg, has bravely rushed in to correct that impression. After a father complained to the Crook County school board in December 2008, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* was yanked from the freshman English curriculum pending further discussion of whether the book should be permanently banned from classrooms. So, no Crook County high-schoolers will be writing reports about the book for the time being. Instead, a six-person committee has been assigned to write a report for the school board on whether the district should keep the book as part of the lesson plan or eliminate it from the assigned reading list.

Sherman Alexie is a Native American author who deliberately and non-disparagingly refers to himself as an Indian, and *The Absolutely True Diary* is narrated by a 14-year-old Native American boy who is given a kick in the pants to escape the hopelessness of life on the Spokane Indian Reservation. Arnold Spirit transfers from a school on “the rez” to a high school where all the other students are white and the only other Indian around is the school mascot. And the alternate literature selection to teach Prineville frosh about the Native American experience? *The Education of Little Tree*, a fake memoir purportedly written by a Cherokee man that was actually written by Asa Earl Carter. Carter had been a member of the Ku Klux Klan, ran for governor of Alabama in 1970 on a white supremacist platform, and as a speechwriter for Alabama governor George Wallace, reportedly came up with Wallace’s hate speech slogan “Segregation today, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever.” *The Education of Little Tree*, which was exposed as a fraud many years ago, was first published as a memoir in 1976 and reclassified as fiction in 1991.

When asked to comment on the ban by the Pacific Northwest Inlander, Alexie teasingly remarked, “The amazing thing is these banners never understand they are turning this book into a sacred treasure. We don’t write to try and be banned, but it is widely known in the [young adult] world, we love this shit.” The YA novelist’s tongue-in-cheek wish is the Crook County school board’s command.

The school board took action after Hank Moss, the father of a Crook County boy required to read *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* as an English class assignment, brought photocopied pages from the book to a school board meeting, along with a complaint that the National Book Award-winning novel is inappropriate “trash” unsuitable for the 14-year-old boys and girls attending Crook County High. Moss told reporter Helen Jung of The Oregonian that he was disturbed by the fact that the YA novel includes “a reference about masturbation, and that it’s OK and no big deal.” When interviewed by the Bend Bulletin, Moss said, “There are people who agree with the book and think it’s OK to talk about this stuff openly, and I really don’t.” Two days after Moss complained to the school board, the book was jerked from the classroom.

—Anita Fore

EARLY WARNING PROTEST POLICY CRITICIZED AS CENSORSHIP. Impromptu student protests could soon be a thing of the past at Northeastern Illinois University. Anyone acting on a spur-of-the-moment impulse to distribute flyers and signs objecting to policies or activities would be prohibited from doing so if a policy proposed by the university’s administration is approved by the Faculty Senate. The measure has already been endorsed by a group representing campus employees and by the student government association.

The new regulation would require protesters to submit copies of any literature, posters and similar material to university administrators two weeks prior to bringing them onto campus. University president, Sharon Hahs, claims the policy has nothing to do with free speech restrictions and is only meant to address security concerns.

As reported at InsideHigherEd.com, Hahs said the requirement “would not be used to decide whether you may or may not hand [the materials] out” but will

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L E G A L W A T C H

Court Lesson: Exploit Your Art Before Others Do

Frank Gaylord v. The United States
U.S. Court of Federal Claims

In 1993, artist Frank Gaylord was contracted to work with the firm Cooper Lecky Architects, P.C. (CLA), which had a U.S. government contract to create a sculpture that would be the main feature of the Korean War Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. Between 1993 and 1995, Gaylord completed work on the sculpture, which in its final state depicted 19 soldiers of various ethnicities in a platoon formation. While Gaylord was required to consult with CLA throughout the creation of the sculpture, he was the sole sculptor assigned to the project. Eventually, Gaylord was able to secure sole copyright ownership in the final sculpture, entitled “The Column.”

In January 1996, photographer John Alli photographed “The Column” during a snowstorm and entered his photo, which he entitled “Real Life,” in a Naval Press Institute photo contest. After being told that “The Column” was copyright protected, Alli erroneously sought permission to sell the photograph from CLA, which wrongfully claimed copyright ownership of the original sculpture. On April 20, 1998, Alli met with William P. Lecky of CLA, after which they entered into a written agreement that provided that the licensing entity established by Lecky—KWVM Productions Inc.—receive 10 percent of the net sales of any prints, posters or artwork depicting “Real Life” sold by Alli. Alli began to account for all sales to Lecky.

In 2002, the U.S. Postal Service decided to issue a 37-cent stamp commemorating the 50th anniversary of the armistice of the Korean War and negotiated a deal with Alli and Lecky for the use of “Real Life” as the image on the Stamp. Again, Gaylord was left out of the negotiations and did not receive any compensation. From July 2003 to March 2005, over 86 million stamps were produced as well as a variety of other retail products that featured the image “Real Life.”

On July 25, 2006, Gaylord sued the U.S. Postal Service in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims, alleging that its use of “Real Life” as the image on the Stamp violated his copyright in “The Column.” The next day, Gaylord sued Alli in the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland for the same copyright infringement. While Alli and Gaylord settled out of court, Gaylord’s suit against the U.S. Postal Service proceeded.

At the outset, the U.S. Court of Federal Claims noted that for Gaylord to prove copyright infringement, he must show that he had a valid copyright in “The Column” and that the U.S. Postal Service copied his work when it issued the Stamp. In regard to the copyright ownership issue, the U.S. alleged that “The Column” was jointly authored by CLA, the Korean Veterans Memorial Advisory Board and the Commission of Fine Arts. The court noted that if found to be true, this fact would indicate the government had an unlimited fully paid license in the sculpture.

The court rejected this argument based on the fact that Gaylord had five copyright registrations, which covered the initial sketch drawings up through the final sculpture. Moreover, the court noted that while the CLA, the Korean Veterans Memorial Advisory Board and the Commission of Fine Arts made suggestions and recommendations to Gaylord on a host of issues pertaining to the sculptures, “the mere participation in, contributions to, and review of work” does not implicitly suggest the work is a “joint work” under the Copyright Act. Rather, the court found it was Gaylord’s artistic skill that created the work, and as such, he was deemed the sole author. Further, the court held that there was no evidence to support the contention that the parties intended the work to be a joint work, as required by the Copyright Act.

After finding that Gaylord owned a valid copyright in “The Column,” the court was next required to evaluate whether the Stamp copied “The Column” to an extent that it infringed Gaylord’s copyright. The court found that there was no issue as to the fact that the U.S. Postal Service copied “The Column” in the Stamp by using “Real Life” as an image. As such, the court found that the use of “The Column” by the U.S. Postal Service for the Stamp was an infringement of Gaylord’s copyright.

The court next turned to whether the U.S. Postal Service’s use of “The Column” was protected by fair use, a statutory defense to copyright infringement. To establish fair use, the court was required to evaluate the following four factors: 1) the purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes; 2) the nature of the copyrighted work; 3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyright as a whole; and 4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

In regard to the purpose and character of the use, the court was required to evaluate whether the Stamp
was “transformative,” meaning it added something new to “The Column” that altered its original meaning or original expression. In the case at hand, the court found that the Stamp was transformative in that it added a snowy background to Gaylord’s sculpture, which made it seem as if the statues were actually live soldiers in the midst of a snowy battle. The court noted that Alli took hundreds of pictures of “The Column” before he chose the specific photo that is “Real Life.” Moreover, the U.S. Postal Service altered the coloring of the photo so that it looked more realistic than it would look with the natural coloring of the statues. The final result shows that the Stamp is a transformative work having a different character and expression from “The Column.”

In regard to the nature of the work, the court noted that this factor carried very little weight. While the court acknowledged that under this factor, it would normally evaluate whether the infringing work was more expressive or more factual than the original, this inquiry was not relevant here. Nonetheless, the court held that Alli and the U.S. Postal Service had created a “new surrealistic vision” of the original work.

In regard to the amount of infringed work used, the court found that 14 of the original statues making up “The Column” appeared on the Stamp. While the court acknowledged that this constituted a large portion, it also found that alterations by Alli mitigated the importance of this factor.

Finally, in regard to the effect of the use upon the potential for or value of the copyrighted work, the court noted that it must evaluate the potential harm to the derivative work’s market as well as the potential harm to the value of the original work. Here, the court found that the Stamp has little or no impact on the value of “The Column” as a sculpture. Specifically, the court found that since the Stamp had transformative value, market harm could not be presumed with respect to the value of the original work. Moreover, the court held that the Stamp had no effect on the market for derivative works, as Gaylord had made only limited attempts to commercialize his copyright in “The Column.” Thus, the court found that the Stamp had not affected Gaylord’s attempts to exploit derivative rights in “The Column.”

After evaluating all four factors, the court concluded that the U.S. Postal Service’s use of the Stamp was a fair use, and thus immunized the United States from infringement liability. The case was subsequently dismissed.

—Michael Gross
Staff Attorney

**Heroes, Winners and Losers**

*The Romantics a/k/a Master Beat, Inc. Wally Palmar, Mike Skill & Coz Canler v. Activision Publishing Inc., Redoctane Inc. and Wavegroup Sound
U.S. District Court Eastern District of Michigan
Southern Division*

For several years, the rock band video game simulator “Guitar Hero” has been a big hit with “gamers”—people who spend a lot of time playing video games. To play Guitar Hero, the gamer attempts to hit a series of buttons on a guitar-shaped controller in conjunction with whatever popular song is being played in the game. Once a gamer has reached a certain level of proficiency with one song, a more difficult song is introduced, which the gamer must then attempt to master in order to move on in the game. “Guitar Hero Encore: Rocks the ’80s” contains approximately 30 songs, including the well-known hit “What I Like About You” by the Romantics.

In November 2007, the Romantics filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court Eastern District of Michigan, Southern Division, against Activision Publishing Inc., Redoctane Inc. and Wavegroup Sound (“the Defendants”) in which they sought a preliminary injunction to prevent the manufacture, distribution, sale and marketing of “Guitar Hero Encore: Rocks the ’80s.”

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Backlist Maestro

Mr. Epstein’s Dream Machine

BY JASON EPSTEIN

Backlist is a publisher’s most important asset: titles that have covered their initial costs, earned out the authors’ advances, require no further investment except the cost of making and shipping the book itself and sell steadily year after year without advertising or significant sales expense. Without a substantial list of such titles a publisher cannot survive. The same can be said of a civilization, for the books that survive the test of time, books that are treasured and read year after year, are humanity’s backlist, our collective brain. I do not refer simply to the classics of our various traditions but also to more recent books, hundreds of which are published every year and join the backlist, if not permanently, at least long enough to move the process forward, and provide depth and complexity to our understanding.

Journalism is often called the first draft of history. Books are the second, third, and in some cases final draft. Books are the ongoing dialogue of the present with the past, the endless confrontation of the human mind with the problem of existence. Even those millions who may never read these books, even those who may never have heard of them, could not survive if our collective backlists, our racial memory, the wisdom of our species were to disappear.

Since I joined the publishing business as an editorial assistant in 1951, I have been obsessed with the preservation and distribution of backlist, for I understood from the beginning two important truths about our business: the first is that publishing is not really a business at all, at least not a very good business. If it’s money that you want to make, go into a real business and take your chances. The second truth is that publishing is a vocation, a secular priesthood, for publishers are caretakers of our collective memory, indespensible servants to those other caretakers, poets, storytellers, librarians, teachers and scholars. The cultivation of backlist is not only our business but our moral responsibility.

In 1951, six years after the end of World War II, and two years after I graduated from Columbia College, I found a job at Doubleday, a large commercial firm with rather low literary standards. But it had large marketing and production facilities and even its own printing presses, so it was a good place to learn the business. Some six years before I joined Doubleday, Congress had passed a most enlightened law: the so-called GI Bill of Rights, which offered a free college education to everyone who had served in the armed forces during World War II and qualified for admission to an accredited school. The GI Bill democratized

American higher education and created, among other things, a mass market for serious books, for backlist books—a market that had never existed in such numbers before. My classmates were among the beneficiaries of this generosity, but the GI Bill did not cover the purchase of as many books as my friends and I wanted to own. We could not afford the expensive hardcover editions of the books we were eagerly reading. In those days paperbacks were mainly drugstore thrillers and romances and reprints of last year’s bestsellers—among them a copy of Norman Mailer’s *The Naked and the Dead* which I still own—but mostly they were ephemera. Deep backlist, however—what is today called publishing’s long tail—was available if at all only in hardcover.

So six months after I joined Doubleday as an assistant to an assistant I suggested to our editor in chief that it might be a good idea to publish, in well-made paperback editions, on acid-free paper, the kinds of backlist books my classmates were reading but could not afford at hardcover prices. My idea was to stock these titles as paperbacks permanently in bookstores. Today we take so-called trade paperbacks for granted; their annual sales are in the billions of dollars. But in those days most American bookstores didn’t carry paperbacks. Doubleday’s editor in chief, a wonderful man named Ken McCormick, agreed that we should test a preliminary series of 12 titles. I selected the titles, negotiated for their rights, chose the format, supervised the cover design, worked with the sales department to develop a marketing plan, met the major booksellers, and in this way learned at first hand at the age of 21 that the mechanics of book publishing were essentially unchanged from the time of Gutenberg 500 years ago. This is largely true 60 years later. Publishers still order an edition from a printer, store it physically in a warehouse and deliver copies physically to bookstores where they await customers, and at the end of six months unsold copies are shipped back to the publisher and destroyed or resold as remainders. Even at Doubleday in the 1950s I wondered whether there was a more efficient way to publish books. It would take 30 years and the advent of digitization for me to find the answer. But I am getting ahead of myself.

I decided to call my new series Anchor Books in honor of the famous Aldine colophon, the mark of the House of Aldus, a great Venetian printer of the 15th century. Anchor’s colophon was a dolphin wrapped around an anchor: the dolphin for brilliance, the anchor for depth. The first series of Anchor Books was a huge success, not because the titles themselves were so desirable—individually some of the more esoteric ones might not have sold at all—but because the idea of what we were trying to do seemed right to my generation of college-educated readers the way digitization seems right to young people today. Within a year or two the publishing industry had re-created itself. Every publisher now had a catalog of so-called quality paperbacks. What was called the paperback revolution changed the landscape of our industry as publishers searched their dormant backlists for likely titles to sell in the new paperback format. From a lowly assistant to an assistant, I had become a revolutionary hero. I decided to continue in that role.

From this experience I learned two lessons: first that book publishers are slow to seize the opportunities that history provides, for how else could a lowly editorial assistant, with six months’ experience, have recognized a perfectly obvious major new market for books that my older colleagues had not seen at all? And second, though I had taken a significant first step, there would be a long way to go before a truly comprehensive backlist of important books in all disciplines and languages could be assembled and distributed to readers wherever they might be. But this is what I dreamed of doing. A glaring example of the problem was our own American literature. A few individual works of America’s major writers—*Moby Dick, The Scarlet Letter, The Wings of the Dove, The Red Badge of Courage*—were now available as trade paperbacks, but the complete or collected works of American writers were not in print. This was a national disgrace, and with the encouragement of the great critic and advocate for American literature, Edmund Wilson, I decided to correct it.

By this time I had left Doubleday to join Random House, where I was offered an unusual arrangement. I would become an editor, and eventually editorial director, but I was also free to create my own businesses, provided they did not conflict with what Random was doing. Unlike Doubleday, Random House was a distinguished literary house, the publisher of Joyce, Proust and Faulkner among others, as well as a brilliant list of younger writers that included Truman Capote, Peter Matthiessen and William Styron. At Random House I found a home and remained there for the rest of my career. The first thing I did was make plans for what would eventually become the Library of America: a handsomely designed, clothbound series on fine paper to include the collected or complete works of important American authors. This was not nearly as easy to accomplish as Anchor Books had been because the series I envisaged could not be published profitably. Inventory expense for slow-moving, expensive hardcover titles would be prohibitive. I would have to create a nonprofit corporation with foundation support. This took rather longer than I had expected—25 years in fact—but I persisted. Today the
Library of America is a national treasure, the permanent repository of nearly the entire backlist of classic American literature.

But by this time—the mid 1980s—publishers' backlists had begun to shrink ominously. The reason was not hard to find. Starting in the 1960s and accelerating year by year thereafter, American families had been leaving the cities for the suburbs. With the great exodus to the suburbs, the downtown bookstores, with their vast, carefully catalogued backlist inventories in which readers felt that they might find whatever they wanted, began at first slowly and then rapidly to disappear, until today, from what had once been a thousand or so fully stocked major independent bookstores in America, only 50 or so, if that many, remain. Instead, suburban readers were now buying their books in shopping malls where the chain bookstores were paying the same rent as the shoe store next door and... needed the same turnover.”

in America, only 50 or so, if that many, remain. Instead, suburban readers were now buying their books in shopping malls where the chain bookstores were paying the same rent as the shoe store next door and therefore needed the same turnover in the same limited space. This meant a radically compressed inventory of celebrity biographies, popular novels, picture books, trinkets and so on, leaving almost no space for backlist. To make matters worse, the Supreme Court ruled in 1979 that unsold inventory could not be expedited for tax purposes. Publishers responded by destroying their slow-moving backlist titles and deducting their cost as losses.

By the 1980s this shift from city to shopping mall turned the book business upside down. Whereas before we depended upon our backlists for year-in, year-out stability, now we were forced by the shopping mall chains to concentrate on seasonal bestsellers, mostly popular fiction, self-help titles offering financial, spiritual or diet advice, and celebrity and political gossip that might sell hundreds of thousands, even millions of copies in the first year or so, but relatively little thereafter. These bestsellers set the sales target for the following year, which publishers had to exceed to meet their ever-increasing costs. For the right to publish these potential bestsellers, not all of which by any means lived up to their promise, publishers could no longer count on their authors' loyalty but were forced to bid against one another in auctions held by agents of popular writers, so that the eventual cost of acquisition often became more than the publisher could hope to earn back in royalties or even in gross sales, but we had no choice. The mall stores had no room for backlist; they needed turnover and publishers had to supply it. Soon smaller houses that could not afford to play this high-risk game merged with larger ones, and when the larger ones inevitably staggered they were bought up in turn by European conglomerates, which is where things stand at the moment.

You may recall that I said at the beginning that publishing is not much of a business, if it's a business at all. This held true for the small independent firms like Random House when I joined it in 1958, when its total sales were barely six million dollars, and it is no less true for today's conglomerates whose sales are in the billions. When the financial officers of these conglomerates decide to look for a better use for their capital, one may wonder if they will find a buyer for their American assets. What happens if they do not is hard to predict, but the possibility of chaos before order sets in again should not be discounted.

In the mid-'80s, when I first became aware of this dangerous shrinkage of backlist, I created the Reader's Catalog, a catalog the size of the Manhattan telephone directory from which readers could order books by telephone (the Internet would not be in wide use for another two years) from an annotated backlist of 40,000 titles: a traditional backlist bookstore in the form of a direct-to-consumer catalog and the precursor to online bookelling. The Reader's Catalog was an instant success. We sold several hundred thousand catalogs and many more hundreds of thousands of books to readers all over the world, proving once again that if backlist is available people will buy it. But the cost of handling individual orders proved prohibitive. The average order was $36 and the cost of packing and mailing, even after customers paid their share, was devastating. Three years after I launched the Reader's Catalog, Amazon and Barnes & Noble started their own Web-based catalogs. I chose not to do this, knowing from my experience with the Reader's Catalog that losses would be enormous, and they were. Instead, I looked ahead to the next stage. I wondered if there was a way to sell a large, even limitless backlist, without physical inventory. By the late 1980s the solution was in plain sight.

Digitization was now a practical possibility. This meant that publishers could store their digital inventory at almost no cost title by title and transmit it anywhere in the world as easily and cheaply as e-mail.
Now multilingual backlists could be expanded almost without limit and sold to a radically decentralized market wherever Internet connections exist rather than merely to specific retail outlets. Readers in the United States could, in theory if not immediately in fact, access the entire contents of the Beijing Library while readers in China could access all the books in the New York Public Library. Digitization meant the end of the 500-year-old Gutenberg era: no more physical inventory, no more warehouse, no more shipping and billing, no more returns, and theoretically limitless backlists for sale almost everywhere—a true revolution, orders of magnitude greater than Gutenberg’s had been. With the traditional publishing supply chain eliminated, all that was needed was a machine at the customer’s end—a kind of ATM for books as I imagined it—to which the buyer could transmit a selected digital file that the machine would then automatically spit out.

**Yes, It Takes Credit Cards**

Jason Epstein’s dream of a machine that would ease the pressure on publishers to put out bestsellers and recoup large advances, while at the same time expanding readers’ access to books, was first tested at the World Bank InfoShop in Washington, D.C., in 2006. The EBM 1.5, now in use around the world, is about nine feet long and five feet high and prints 40 pages per minute. On Demand Books, which Epstein founded with Dane Neeler in 2003, plans to release a new, commercial version, the EBM 2.0, in early 2009. The EBM 2.0 is a sleek, pared-down 36” x 30” that can spit out a 300-page paperback book, with cover, in about three minutes, and will cost in the neighborhood of $50,000.

In the United States, the EBM 1.5 is in use at the Internet Archive in San Francisco, the University of Michigan Library and Northshire Bookstore in Vermont. The prototype itself is in place at the New Orleans Public Library, which has been using the machine to rebuild the library’s collection that was damaged in Hurricane Katrina. It was given to the library by the Sloan Foundation, who partnered with On Demand Books to donate the machine, money for software development, and a temporary salary for the person hired to run it.

As with any new technology, the library faced initial difficulties: getting the large, heavy machine into the library wasn’t easy, and the software had some glitches at first. But Megan Albrighton, who ran the machine until recently, explained that once those issues were solved, the library began printing books every day, mainly titles that were out of print or did not have copyright issues. The library downloaded software to create book covers, using a white background to save money on toner, and hired a local artist to design a logo—a cup of coffee below a fleur-de-lis of steam. The books were then added to the library’s collection.

Visitors to the New Orleans Public Library can see the machine and ask questions about it, but, for now, cannot use it or buy books printed on the machine. At the Northshire Bookstore in Manchester Center, Vt., the machine is used for self-publishing, not for printing and selling books missing from the store’s inventory. However, Chris Morrow, the store’s manager, believes there is “tremendous potential for public domain books in the next couple years. Even the biggest store in the country is missing hundreds of thousands of backlist titles. These should be available to print out.”

For now, the store has established Shires Press, offering writers an alternative to buying an expensive publishing package from a print-on-demand company. By using the Espresso Book Machine, writers can print as many or as few books as they need—“ten copies for someone’s immediate family to hundreds of copies over the course of a few months,” Morrow explains—and come back to print and purchase more as needed. In many cases, the only costs are the $95 set-up fee and a per-page charge of nine cents or less.

Eventually, hundreds of thousands of books will be available for print-and-pay book buyers—more than 500,000 through the distributor Ingram Book Group’s Lightning Source subsidiary, which maintains a digital database of books, all with publisher’s approval, and more than 400,000 public domain titles through Open Content Alliance—and these numbers are sure to increase. The machine, named one of the Best Inventions of 2007 by Time magazine and often referred to as “an ATM for books,” promises to revolutionize the way we think about books, reading and accessibility. So far its impact has been limited—and local—but, as Vince Gunn, CEO of the British bookstore chain Blackwell, points out, “Who knows what the future model will be? But rather than thinking this is scary and holding onto the past, let’s think this is exciting and let’s work together.”

—Isabel Howe
print, bind and trim as a library-quality paperback. This at last was the solution I had been seeking from the time I first entered the publishing business, a worldwide, multilingual, all but limitless backlist that could serve readers wherever they happened to live—in Shanghai, New York, London, Mumbai, but also in the remote corners of the world where traditional booksellers had never penetrated.

Nine years ago I delivered three lectures at The New York Public Library, which became the basis for my book Book Business. In one of those lectures I laid out the digital future as I saw it and published that lecture in The New York Review of Books. A reader called me to say that such a machine as I envisioned had recently been invented and could be seen in its inventor’s workshop in St. Louis. I went there, saw this machine and thought, “Well there it is: the end of the Gutenberg era with its physical inventory, costly warehouses, limited marketplace and declining backlist.” The machine was not much bigger than an office copier. As I watched, it received a digital file and reproduced it, cover and all, as a library-quality paperback, identical to the factory-made version, in minutes, at less than a penny a page. It was a moment I shall never forget. I told the inventor that it was much too soon to develop his prototype because book publishers, cautious as ever, were not yet ready to digitize their backlists, and that a premature start is certain to be an entrepreneurial disaster. But I also said that when publishers showed signs of awakening to this historic opportunity his machine would revolutionize the industry. I said that we would keep in touch and we did.

Three years ago I decided it was time to move. My partner and I formed a corporation that we called On Demand Books, acquired the inventor’s patents and hired him as our exclusive consultant. We then built several handmade test models of his machine and placed them in various real world settings: The New York Public Library, the World Bank Infoshop in Washington, D.C., the Alexandria Library in Egypt, the University of Alberta bookstore in Edmonton, Canada, Northshire Bookstore in Manchester Center, Vt.—one of the great surviving independents—an other in the devastated New Orleans library system. Another is now in Australia and others are being readied for a large Midwestern university library and the Blackwell chain in Great Britain. A smaller version is being designed for a large American bookstore chain, and our company has formed an alliance with Ingram Book Group, the world’s largest English-language book wholesaler, which has assembled a very large inventory of digital titles.

Our machine is small enough to function in a library or bookstore or school or hotel. It is as easy to operate as an office copying machine. It prints and binds a high quality perfect-bound book in minutes at point of sale for less than a penny per page and trimmed to infinite sizes between 8.5/11 and 4.5/4.5 inches. We call our machine The Espresso Book Machine because, like the coffee machine, it delivers on demand one item at a time, selected by an individual customer, quickly, practically anywhere.

Five hundred years ago, in the German city of Mainz, Johannes Gutenberg combined several existing technologies to make a machine that printed uniform pages from movable type. Gutenberg was an ardent Catholic who made a living selling trinkets at religious fairs. He hoped that his machine could cheaply produce for all the parishes of Europe a uniform Catholic prayer book to heal the factional strife that was threatening the church in Northern Europe, a problem not only for Gutenberg’s church but for his trinket business. Before the invention of the press, prayer books were beautifully handmade, illustrated volumes created one at a time by monks and well beyond the budgets of ordinary people or most parishes. Now Gutenberg’s machine could put prayer books in everyone’s hands, rather like Mao’s “Little Red Book.” Alas for Gutenberg, his press had just the opposite effect from what he had expected. By making it possible for lay people to read for themselves the word of God, he overturned the authority of the priesthood as God’s sole interpreter and all but destroyed the Church in Northern Europe. Gutenberg’s printing press would force open the gates to the modern world with all its wonders and woes.

Within 30 years, presses had been established in all the major European cities. Now Europeans could read for themselves not only the holy books but an increasing flood of secular works of philosophy, science and practical knowledge.

The Protestant Reformation, the Enlightenment, the philosophical tradition that foreshadowed the French

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Along Publishers Row
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wife and I crafted a viral campaign focused on influential bloggers and tech experts. It was their support that resulted in a feature article in Wired Magazine. After that, sales took off, and mainstream publishers came calling.”

SOURCES: “Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.” It is from that famous and often quoted first sentence of Leo Tolstoy’s Anna Karenina that Carlos Fuentes named his collection of stories Happy Families.

Francine Prose reviewed the book for The New York Times Book Review and ended her essay with, “Obviously, it’s unfair to measure Fuentes against Tolstoy. But if you’re worried about your next novel being compared with Melville’s, think twice before calling it Moby-Dick.”

HELPFUL HINT? Susan Cheever’s new book, her 13th, is Desire: Where Sex Meets Addiction. The book is an autobiographical account of the author’s three marriages and busy sex life, which involved moving men, delivery men, doctors, lawyers and book salesmen; “any man associated with a threatening change in my life became erotically charged, with predictable results.”

In Joyce Wadler’s article about Cheever in the New York Times Home section, Cheever is quoted as saying, “The book rep was a classic one for me too—the guy who controlled whether or not the book sold. And you know, he made the book a bestseller.”

TOO SEXY: It’s the pictures, not the words. The Bratz dolls have been accused of being hyper-sexualized young girls in books like Catwalk Cuties. As a result, Scholastic Inc., the publisher, will not include any of the Bratz books in its school book clubs or fairs.

The Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, based in Boston, told The New York Times that they have been fighting for 18 months to purge clubs and fairs of the promotional material for such titles as Lil’ Bratz: Dancin’ Divas and Lil’ Bratz: Catwalk Cuties.

“There are a lot of books that are more just gimmicky,” said Allison Sharma, a technology consultant and mother of two in Newton, Mass. “They aren’t real books.”

INSIDE INFO: Some interesting information was found in an author’s note in a volume of short novels by Joseph Conrad. Youth and Two Other Stories was published in 1927 and is called “The Malay Edition.”

Conrad wrote of the origins of Heart of Darkness, “this much may be said: it is well known that curious men go prying into all sorts of places (where they have no business) and come out of them with all kinds of spoil . . . It is a record of experience pushed a little (and only very little) beyond the actual facts of the case for the perfectly legitimate, I believe, purpose of bringing it home to the minds and bosoms of the readers. There it was no longer a matter of sincere coloring. It was like another art altogether. That somber theme had to be given a sinister resolution, a tonality of its own, a continued vibration that, I hoped, would hang in the air and dwell on the ear after the last note had been struck.”

ABOUT THE PAST: A Voyage Round John Mortimer is the title of a new biography by Valerie Grove about the prolific British novelist and playwright. Mortimer’s most familiar creation is Rumpole, the fictional London attorney.

In this biography, Mortimer is quoted: “I have long wanted to write something about my father, not because he recalls my past, but because he is my present and will no doubt be part of my future, and of my children, and in time of their children too. And that, I believe, is the only sense in which we are all entitled to be called immortal.”

THE ROLE OF RELIGION: Novelist Graham Greene, a noted Catholic convert, once said, “I’ve always felt it was having no belief that makes the characters in Virginia Woolf so paper-thin.”

TRADITION: Maggie Griffin, co-owner of New York’s Partners in Crime Bookstore, told PW: “In the mystery field there’s a strong tradition of supporting each new crop of crime writers. There’s a real thrill in discovering new talent, a sincere pleasure in helping an unknown crime writer find their readership, and it’s good business to cultivate a customer base that’ll pull out their credit cards when you say, ‘Buy this mystery, you won’t regret it.’” Griffin added, “We read the books we sell and we listen.”

PAIRING: The headline on Page 1 of The New York Times said: “Using Video Games as Bait to Hook Readers.” PJ Haarsma, the author of a new science fiction novel for preteens, said, “You can’t just make a book anymore.” So the author created a video game that “brings the book into their world, as opposed to going the other way around.” One way game players advance is by answering questions with information that they can get only from the book. Haarsma’s novel is titled The Software: Virus on Orbis 1.

The Times says that “doubtful teachers and literacy experts question how effective it is to use an overwhelmingly visual medium to connect youngsters to the written
word. . . . Others suggest that video games detract from the experience of being wholly immersed in a book.”

TRIBUTE: Barney Rosset, 86, received The National Book Foundation’s Lifetime Achievement Award in November, and Martin Garbus did the presentation.

Garbus said that when Rosset was an eighth-grader in Chicago he published a school newspaper called “Anti-Everything.” But at Grove Press, Rosset was in favor of publishing writers that other publishers, were unwilling to tackle, including Henry Miller (Tropic of Cancer) and D. H. Lawrence (Lady Chatterly’s Lover).

Over the years Rosset also published five Nobel Prize winners.

SPIN-OFF: Marilyne Robinson’s Housekeeping came out in 1980. Her second novel, Gilead, didn’t come out until 2004, nearly 25 years later. A third, Home, was published in the fall. Robinson told The Wall Street Journal that she herself was surprised to be writing again so soon—about the same characters, indeed, and precisely the same events—recounted in Gilead.

“People kept asking me if there would be a sequel,” the author told WSJ. “I don’t like the idea of a sequel, so I didn’t write a sequel.” Some secondary characters in Gilead seemed to call out for further treatment. “So I thought, Why am I defeating myself? Why not give them their book.”

The Journal said, “The two books form a diptych of interrelated novels quite unlike anything in contemporary fiction.”

MYSTERY MAN: PW reported that James Patterson’s Cross Country is his 15th mystery and his seventh book to be released in 2008.

VICARIOUS LIVES: Jonathan Tropper of New Rochelle, N.Y., has written ten three novels that have been optioned for movies: The Book of Joe (2004), Everything Changes (2005) and How to Talk to a Widower (2007). He’s working on a fifth novel with the title Seven Days. The 38-year-old author also teaches fiction writing at Manhattanville College in Purchase.

Tropper told The New York Times that he was inclined to live vicariously through his characters. “There’s probably a level of wish fulfillment in it.” He has a wife, three children and a suburban neighborhood with Little League duties.

The main character in How to Talk to a Widower lives a quiet suburban life until his wife dies in a plane crash. “You know, nobody wants to rock their own life. But, on the other hand, when your life does get rocked it affords you a certain level of honesty. It liberates you to be who you really are. But nobody is willing, or should be willing, to rock their life simply to achieve that. So I get to write about people who are going through that so I don’t have to go through it myself.”

REJOINER: Peter Martin is the author of Samuel Johnson: A Biography. George Sim Johnston reviewed it for The Wall Street Journal and wrote that Johnson became a notable figure in the early 1750s when his twice-weekly essays appeared in the Rambler. “But the breakthrough came with his great Dictionary (1755).” The book, with its 43,000 definitions, “made Johnson a national figure. Some fashionable ladies once commended him for ‘the omission of all naughty words.’”

“What! My dears!” Johnson replied. “Then you have been looking for them!”

CRITICAL: World Without End by Ken Follett is a best-selling sequel to Pillars of the Earth. The author told USA Today: “I get inspiration from the past. I get texture too. One of the problems with my early books was I wasn’t very good at giving readers a very good feel for the grain of everyday life. And I was able to do that when I began to set novels in the past.”

World Without End takes place in 14th century England.


In October, Frady’s papers were sold at auction to his alma mater, Emory University, for $10,100. There were 123 boxes of papers including college essays, reporter’s notebooks, drafts of his unfinished biography of Fidel Castro and letters from Norman Mailer, James Dickey, Elizabeth Hardwick and other literary figures.

MEDICAL MAN: Oliver Sacks, 75, is the author of 10 books. The doctor’s latest is Musicophilia, published in paperback in September.

He told The Wall Street Journal, “For better or worse, or both, it’s true that I’ve played a part in putting careful narrative back in medical writing.” Sacks’s stories have become movies, plays, operas and TV shows. He said, “Human beings are storytellers, and I am a storyteller.”

MARKETING: PW reported that the strong sales of Toni Morrison’s latest novel, A Mercy, were attributed to a pre-publication collaboration with National Public Radio with broadcasts of serialized clips of Morrison’s readings.

REJECTED AGAIN: Robert Hendrickson tells about a rejection in his book The Literary Life and Other Curiosities.
An editor, George Horace Lorimer, was told by an angry writer that he had rejected one of her stories without reading it. She had glued together several pages and they had been returned still glued.

Lorimer replied: “Madam, at breakfast when I open an egg, I don’t have to eat the whole egg to discover it is bad.”

RECORD: The 2009 Guinness Book of World Records says that the “most translated living author” is Paulo Coelho. His novel The Alchemist has been published in 67 languages.


Then in April 1977, he was in a motorcycle crash that left him paralyzed from the shoulders down, and he spent two years in the hospital. He continued writing, a fantasy and then a religious novel about the life of King Herod, but with no success.

Then, in 1996 a good friend died after being pulled into a machine while loading corn. That death inspired Rhodes to write about the small-town world he knew best.

Now, 61, Rhodes has published a new novel, Driftless, after more than 30 years. He told The Wall Street Journal, “The fact that I have a new book to give to my dental assistant, that’s more than I ever expected.”

RECIPE: The late Muriel Spark had the following advice on writing novels: “You are writing a letter to a friend. Write privately, not publicly; without fear or timidity, right to the end of the letter, as if it were never going to be published.”

AD MEN: Ted Bell worked for an advertising agency before he wrote Tsar, a best-selling novel. According to The New York Times, Don DeLillo, James Dickey and Salman Rushdie also worked for ad agencies before they became successful writers.

Bell wrote on his website that writing ad copy wasn’t a bad way to learn how to write fiction. “You learn the idea of compression, which tends to make the writing more straightforward, less talky. . . . You learn how to create instantly recognizable characters with quick brush strokes.”

ROADBLOCKS: Wally Lamb told PW why it took him 10 years to write his best-selling The Hour I First Believed. He said, “I had a terrible time starting this book in 1999. The first year was spent spinning my wheels. . . . Concurrently, my elderly parents passed away. And I also had kids who over the course of nine years grew up . . . [And] I hadn’t meant to get involved in teaching at Connecticut’s York Correctional Institute for Women and later editing my incarcerated students’ stories for publication. But as much as that robbed time, it also aided the novel.”

WINNER: Aravind Adiga, 33, won the Man Booker Prize ($86,000) for The White Tiger, a novel described by The New York Times as “a vivid ex-

ploration of India’s class struggle told through the story of a village boy who becomes the chauffeur to a rich man.”

Adiga said his book was an “attempt to catch the voice of the men you meet as you travel through India—the voice of the colossal underclass.” He said he wanted to show them “without sentimentality or portraying them as mirthless humorless weaklings as they are usually.”

ASSESSMENT: Larry McMurtry’s latest is a memoir entitled Books. In it, he describes his life as a passionate book dealer. The author of The Last Picture Show and Leaving Cheyenne, includes a brief summary of his other “job.”

“As I went on through life I wrote novel after novel, to the number of about thirty. Most were good, three or four were indifferent to bad, and two or three were really good. None, to my regret, were great, although my long Western Lonesome Dove was very popular—the miniseries made from it was even more popular.

“Popularity, of course, is not the same as greatness.”

DIET BOOK? According to Tara Parker-Pope of The New York Times, some of the most popular books for teenagers feature girls who obsess about fashion, status and casual sex.

Now a new series, Beacon Street Girls, written under the pseudonym Annie Bryant, focuses on popularity, weight problems, alcohol and divorce.

Duke University researchers studied 81 girls who were enrolled in a childhood obesity program. The girls who read a novel with a positive message about weight loss had a decline in average body mass index scores of 0.71. Those who didn’t read the book had an average increase of 0.05.
Dr. Sarah C. Armstrong, a pediatrician who directs the program said, "The results of the study are not striking in how big they were but that it worked at all. It's such a positive, easy intervention. The next step is to follow these girls long term."

WHEW: Danielle Steel's best-selling A Good Woman is her 74th novel. Delacorte reported 700,000 copies in print. PW statistics: 570 million copies in print in 47 countries and 28 languages. I include this note just to make you feel like a lazy slug.

CRITIC: The Frankfurt Book Fair got off to a newsmaking start when Orhan Pamuk, the Nobel Prize laureate, denounced the Turkish government for its treatment of writers. This happened during the opening ceremony, while the president of Turkey, Abdullah Gul, was present.

Pamuk said, "A century of banning and burning books, of throwing writers into prison or killing them or branding them as traitors and sending them into exile, and continuously denigrating them in the press—none of this has enriched Turkish literature. It has only made it poorer."

In the past Pamuk has been charged with "insulting Turkishness" because, in an interview with a magazine, he condemned the genocide against Armenians by Ottoman Turks during World War I. The criminal charges eventually were dropped.

AGENT: Pat Kavanagh, a British literary agent whose early clients included Rebecca West, Tom Wolfe and S. J. Perelman and, later, Clive James, Margaret Drabble, Ruth Rendell and William Trevor, died in London at 68.

Her obituary in The New York Times quoted a Norton editor, Robert Weil: "She was glamorous, gorgeous and brilliant, but cutting if she thought you were less than the best." William Grimes, who wrote the obit, said, "She could be as tough with her authors as she was with publishers, refusing to varnish harsh truths or indulge writerly fantasies that ignored the economics of the business."

And Robert Harris, a client and the author of Pompeii, said, "She was fantastically efficient and just the person you wanted to have represent you. There was no one quite like her really. And she was exotic, like a bird of paradise."

ADDED: In a column on how to make a book a bestseller, PW's editor Sara Nelson wrote, "First, break all the rules."

One suggestion: "Get famous for a TV show—even one that didn't much resemble the collection from which it took its name—and you're a star author." Nelson was referring to Bushnell's Sex and the City.

COMPLAINT: Six weeks before publication, Rupert Murdoch got hold of a galley of Michael Wolff's new biography, The Man Who Owns the News: Inside the Secret World of Rupert Murdoch. Although Wolff had 50 hours of interviews with Murdoch, and access to his family and friends, Murdoch raised objections to suggestions in the book that the media mogul was embarrassed by Fox News.

Wolff told The New York Times: "I don't think this is necessarily real objections. It's all from the horse's mouth. And it's all on tape."

"Ultimately, I actually think they will be happy with this book. I think everybody around Rupert will see this and say, 'This is Rupert.'"

FAST START: Suzanne Collins's bestseller in children's fiction is The Hunger Games. Sales got off to a hot start when Stephen King praised it in Entertainment Weekly. Then Stephenie (Twilight) Meyer plugged it on her blog. PW says there are 250,000 copies in print and 24 foreign editions have been sold.

MEMORIAL: In late October, a memorial service was held in Manhattan for novelist David Foster Wallace, who committed suicide in September. Wallace was 46. Speakers included Don DeLillo, George Saunders and Zadie Smith.

Jonathan Franzen said that he and Wallace had spent years of conversations and letters about the ethical role of the novelist, and had concluded that the purpose of writing fiction was "a way out of loneliness." Franzen said Wallace was most comfortable and best able to relate to others when he was doing his best work. The New York Times quoted Franzen: "You could smell the ozone from the crackling precision of his sentence structure."

ONE ROAD: Zadie Smith's most recent novel is On Beauty. In an essay for The New York Review of Books, she wrote, "All novels attempt to cut neural routes through the brain, to convince us that down this road the true future of the novel lies. In healthy times, we cut multiple roads, allowing for the possibility of a Jean Genet as surely as a Graham Greene."

"These aren't particularly healthy times. A breed of lyrical Realism has had the freedom of the highway for some time now, with most other exits blocked."

NO HAPPY TALK: Jennifer Brice is the author of a memoir, Unlearning to Fly, and an associate professor of English at Colgate, the setting for an annual writers' conference in 2008.

Brice served on the conference staff and her talk was quoted in the Colgate magazine, Scene. She said, "Happiness is harder to write than pain. For the writer of personal narrative, happiness is a problem both
at the level of art and craft. For some reason, happiness is inimical to history and memory as well, perhaps, to imagination.”

WRITING PAIR: Jonathan Kellerman and his wife Faye are both best-selling authors. Kellerman’s current bestseller is Bones.

He wrote on his website that his relationship with his wife is not competitive. “Being married for thirteen years before either of us published may have helped—our relationship was solidified. . . . It’s great living with someone who understands why you need to get up at 3 a.m. and rewrite a phrase.”

BORROWED WORDS: The Secret Life of Words, by Henry Hitchings, is a history of the English lexicon. Many foreign words came into English as imports. Centuries of empire-building brought about the adoption of words from 350 languages. “Sash” comes from Arabic. “Pundit” is from Sanskrit. “Tycoon” is from “taikun,” a Japanese word brought back by Commodore Matthew Perry in the 1850s.

LOOKING BACK: Frederick Buechner’s latest book is The Yellow Leaves: A Miscellany. In the introduction, he wrote: “I can still write sentences and paragraphs, but for some five or six years now I haven’t been able to write books. Maybe after more than thirty of them the well has run dry. Maybe, age eighty, I no longer have the right kind of energy.”

Later, in an essay called “Wunderjahr,” he observes that being ordained a Presbyterian minister was a “fatal career move.” He believes, “If that second had been as topical and racy as my four Bebb books, say, who knows how differently my career would have turned out. I might have become as much of a celebrity as acquaintances like Truman Capote, Norman Mailer, and Gore Vidal. Even Hollywood might have come knocking on my door. But partly because I was too absorbed in my teaching at Lawrenceville to have time for much else and partly because for one reason or another, fame for the sake of fame never seems to have attracted me, I went my own way as a writer, alternately depressed or elated by the reviewers but never seriously influenced by them.”

Buechner describes his life as “quite unextraordinary with a wife and three children in Southern Vermont” and concludes: “All in all I wouldn’t have had it otherwise.”

What they had been looking for was a new novel by Dan Brown, the author of The DaVinci Code. The release for the next book was 2005, but Brown didn’t deliver. The result of all this was a 10 percent cut in Doubleday’s staff.

FOR CHILDREN: Richard Dawkins, author of The God Delusion, is writing a book for children. In an interview on TV in London, reported in The New York Times, Dawkins said, “I would like to know whether there’s any evidence that bringing children up to believe in spells and wizards and magic wands and things turning into other things—it is unscientific, I think it’s anti-scientific. Whether that has a pernicious effect, I don’t know.”

His book for children is to explore children’s relationships with fairy tales and encourage them to think about the world scientifically rather than mythologically.

SELLING TOOL: Will free recipes on the Web sell cookbooks? Will Schwalbe, former editor in chief of Hyperion Books, believes so, and so do chefs such as Jamie Oliver, Nigella Lawson and Mario Batali, often visible on television.

Each recipe will appear with a picture of the source cookbook cover. There will also be a link to one of four online retailers selling the book. More than a dozen publishers and 100 cookbook authors have signed up to contribute recipes to the site.

REVIEWS: Near the end of 2008, an editor at the British Guardian asked a large group of readers (including Guardian critics), “which books thrilled you most this year?”

Those who responded included a member of the Satanic Sluts, a leatherworker, a few chefs, a film director, a physicist (and former rock star), an archeologist, historian, teacher, architect, herbalist, politician, soldier, newscaster, comedian, artist, lawyer and more.

The result is a list not of best-sellers but of a wide variety of books that captured readers’ fancies.

Actor Michael Palin called Raja Shehdeh’s Palestine Walks “an elegy for a lost land” and “a poetic little book that has a lot of big things to say.”

QUOTE: The late James Michener, a Swarthmore alumnus, is quoted in the latest Bulletin of that college. He once said in an interview: “I was brought up in the great tradition of the late 19th century: that a writer never complains, never explains, and never disdains.”


Her latest, a novel entitled The School on Heart’s Content Road, was kicked off with an article in The New York Times Arts section. Imag-
ine a big color photo of a backwoods woman with her bearded husband.

Chute is a member of something she called “the 2nd Maine Militia,” a no-wing organization. Members include libertarians, greens, guys in camo, white supremacists, hippies off the land, anarchists, people from Communist organizations. She said that the militia “has been a real learning experience for me. Sort of like a living novel. I do feel like I’m on Pluto sometimes, just watching how people treat each other. And when I write, I just let my characters go, the way I let life go.”

WHY FICTION: John Banville’s novel The Sea won the Man Booker Prize in 2005. In a recent essay in The New York Review of Books, Banville wrote, “What is fiction for? This is one of those questions—How does a compassionate God permit cruelty? What do women want? Why is there dandruff?—which are not susceptible of an answer but which yet continue to niggle. At the simplest, we may observe that inside every adult there lives on a child who must have stories that thrill or soothe, and that even novels of the grandest seriousness are no more than elaborated fairy tales. But is this a sufficient accounting for, say, Middlemarch—which Virginia Woolf described as one of the very few novels written for grown-ups—or The Golden Bowl, or Samuel Beckett’s Molloy? In his essay collection The Broken Estate, James Wood observes that ‘fiction moves in the shadow of doubt,’ knows itself to be a true lie, knows that at any moment it might fail to make its case. Belief in fiction is always belief ‘as if.’”

BIG GAP: Katherine Neville’s best-selling The Fire is a sequel to The Eight, a novel published 20 years ago that has sold 1.5 million copies.

ANGELS SIGHTED: William Gibson, who wrote one novel, The Cobweb, died at the age of 94. He was known as a playwright, and author of The Miracle Worker, Two for the Seesaw, and many other plays, short stories and poems.

In his New York Times obituary, Gibson was quoted as having told The Hartford Courant in 2005, “Writers go bad when the angels desert them. Dylan Thomas was a marvelous poet and drank himself to death. Somewhere along the way, the angel left him. An angel has left me too, but the writing angel is still with me. And that’s the thing where I feel most alive—at least while I’m doing it. I started out to be a writer and I’m still a writer. Not bad.”

LOOKING BACK: Each daily book critic for The New York Times reviews almost 100 books a year. In a holiday gift guide, a few 2008 oddities were noted.

Janet Maslin wrote, “For me that meant a novel in which dogs were practically human (The Story of Edgar Sawtelle) and that 1967 began looking like the most interesting year in film history (Pictures at a Revolution).”

Maslin added, “Ms. [Michiko] Kakutani noted that there were surprisingly few big political books for an election year, that the flood of books about China seemed to be timed to the Olympics, and that she encountered both a sequel (from John Updike) and a prequel (from Toni Morrison) to well-known books in the past.”

POSTSCRIPT: Sixty million copies of Daniel Handler’s completed series about the Baudelaire orphans by his pen name, Lemony Snicket, are out there. In December Snicket returned with A Lump of Coal, a Christmas book. PW said that Handler has an idea simmering for a new series, and The Composer Is Dead, a picture book, is scheduled for February publication. It’s a picture book about a murder investiga-

tion that explains an orchestra to children.

Handler told PW that he has almost completed a novel for adults. It’s about pirates.

THE QUESTION: “For books, is Obama the new Oprah?” The New York Times noted: “When President-elect Barack Obama appeared on 60 Minutes on CBS-TV on Sunday in his first interview since winning the election, he mentioned having read ‘a new book out about F.D.R.’s first 100 days’ without specifically naming a title or author.”

At least three such books could fit that description and the publishers and authors wondered which one Obama meant. A spokesman cleared it up. Obama was referring to two books: Jonathan Alter’s The Defining Moment: FDR’s Hundred Days and the Triumph of Hope and a biography, F.D.R., by Jean Edward Smith, published last year. Both got a boost in sales, but so did FDR: The First Hundred Days by Anthony J. Badger.

HONORED: Between Fall 2008 and the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln’s birth in February 2009, more than 60 books about the popular president will be published.

REVEALING: “One book that got a lot of attention from reviewers last year was Patrick French’s The World Is What It Is: The Authorized Biography of V. S. Naipaul.”

In The New York Review of Books, Ian Buruma, author of The China Lover and a professor at Bard, wrote, “Many writers—myself included—owe a great debt to V. S. (‘Vidia’) Naipaul. He opened up new literary possibilities, ways of seeing and describing the world, especially the non-Western world. The hardest thing for admirers is to avoid imitating him. To sound like a writer one respects may be a sincere form of flattery, but it is also a pro-
found misunderstanding of what makes Naipaul, or indeed any good writer, extraordinary. Finding his own voice is something of an obsession to which Naipaul returns often in his reflections on writing: The constant search for his place in the world, a unique perspective, a writerly compass."

HOLIDAY NOTE: While doing research for her best-selling A Wallflower Christmas, Lisa Kleypas discovered a few odd facts about Victorian England. She told PW, "The tree skirt was originally made to catch the drips of hot wax from the burning candles, and the Anglo-Saxon translation of the word mistletoe is, rather inelegant, 'dung-on-a-stick.'"

THE FUTURE? Writer's Digest announced in a headline: "Digital Books Are Once Again on the Up-Swing." Bob Sacks, president and publisher of Precision Media Group, was quoted: "E-books are the future—exclamation point—for many reasons. There was a point eight years ago in which they started and crashed. That's not going to happen this time. We've passed the point of no return."

And Sacks was optimistic. He added, "I think this is a great opportunity for creativity. It's truly the democratization of knowledge. It's what Gutenberg accomplished when he invented moveable type and the printing press. People could afford to read. It's the same concept, but a hundred times more powerful."

DEATHS

Albert Boime, 75, died October 18 in Los Angeles. The art history scholar was the author of nearly 20 books, including a four-volume Social History of Modern Art. Other books included The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century (1971) and The Art of Exclusion (1990).


Hayden Carruth, 87, died September 29 in Munnsville, N.Y. The poet and critic was the author of 30 books of poetry, including The Crow and the Heart (1959), Journey to a Known Place (1961) and Brothers, I Loved You All (1978). He also wrote a novel, Appendix A (1963).

Marilyn Ferguson, 70, died October 19 in Banning, Calif. She was the author of The Brain Revolution: The Frontiers of Mind Research (1973), The Aquarian Conspiracy (1980) and Aquarius Now (2005).

Donald Finkel, 79, died November 15 in St. Louis. He was the author of 14 volumes of poetry including Simeon (1964), The Garbage Wars (1970) and What Manner of Beast (1981).

Tony Hillerman, 83, died October 26 in Albuquerque. The mystery novelist who wrote about the Navajo was the author of The Blessing Way (1970), The Fly on the Wall (1971), Dance Hall of the Dead (1973) and People of Darkness (1980).

John Leonard, 69, died November 5 in Manhattan. The cultural critic was the author of a dozen books. After several early novels he wrote Smoke and Mirrors: Violence, Television and Other American Cultures (1997) and When the Kissing Had to Stop (1999).


Mireille Marokvia, 99, died October 19 in Las Cruces, N.M. She was the author of Immortelles: Memoir of a Will o' the Wisp (1996) and Sins of the Innocent (2006).

William M. Murphy, 92, died September 26 in Schenectady, N.Y. He was the author of Prodigal Father: The Life of John Butler Yeats (1978) and Family Secrets: William Butler Yeats and His Relatives (1995).

William H. Pierson Jr., 97, died December 3 in North Adams, Mass. The painter and art historian was coauthor of the four-volume American Buildings and Their Architects, written from 1970 to 1978.


Edward Sheehan, 78 died November 3 in Boston. The foreign correspondent was the author of several novels, including Innocent Darkness (1993) and Cardinal Galsworthy (1997).

Dorothy Sterling, 95, died December 1, in Wellfleet, Mass. She was the author of Freedom Train (1954), Captain of the Planter: The Story of Robert Smalls (1958), Forever

Webster Younce is senior editor at Henry Holt.

Ginee Seo, editorial director of her own imprint at Atheneum Books for Young Readers (S&S), has resigned but continues to work on a freelance basis on those books scheduled for 2009 and 2010.

*From Publishers Weekly

JOBS CHANGES*

Jenny Rappaport has left the L. Perkins Agency to start her own agency. She will focus on fiction, fantasy, young adult and romance.

Carrie Thorton is executive editor at Dutton. Formerly at Three Rivers, she also acquired hardcover titles for Crown.

William Wharton, 82, died October 29 in Encinitas, Calif. The impressionist painter was the author of Birdy, a 1979 novel that won a National Book Award. Wharton's original name was Albert du Aime. Other books included Dad (1981), A Midnight Clear (1982) and Pride (1985).

William Woodruff, 92, died September 23 in Gainesville, Fla. He was the author of two memoirs, Billy Boy (2000) and Billy Boy II (2003). The books were also published under the title The Road to Nabe End (Billy Boy is a German brand of condom) and translated into 17 languages. He also wrote Paradise Galore (1985).

Charles Wright, 76, died October 1 in Manhattan. He was the author of three novels: The Messenger (1963), Absolutely Nothing to Get Alarmed About (1973) and The Wig. They were republished as a single volume in 1993.
Street; Jacqueline Dembar Greene (and Judith Hierstein, illus.): Nathan’s Hanukkah Bargain; Eloise Greenfield (and Jan Spivey Gilchrist, illus.): Brothers & Sisters: Family Poems; T. Greenwood: Two Rivers; John Grossmann (and Gordon Hampton): One Square Inch of Silence: One Man’s Search for Natural Silence in a Noisy World;

Kristin Hannah: True Colors; Linda Lee Harper: Kiss, Kiss; Rosemary Harris: The Big Dirt Nap; Carolyn Hart: Dare to Die; Libby Hathorn: Georgiana: Woman of Flowers; Libby Hathorn (and J. Andrew Johnstone): The Tram to Bondi Beach; Nao Hauser: Bronnoff’s Rules; Christy Heady: Buzz: How to Create It and Win with It; Thomas F. Heck (and Francesco Cotticelli and Anne Goodrich Heck) (Eds.): A Treatise on Acting, From Memory and By Improvisation (1699) by Andrea Perrucci; Florence Parry Heide (and Jill McElmurry, illus.): The One and Only Marigold; Deborah Heiligman: Charles and Emma: The Darwin’s Leap of Faith; Helen Hemphill: The Adventurous Deeds of Deadwood Jones; Carl Hiaasen: Scat; Julia Hoban: Willow; Mardi Horowitz: A Course in Happiness; Hugh Howard: The Painter’s Chair: George Washington and the Making of American Art;

Anne Isaacs (and Dan Santat, illus.): The Ghosts of Luckless Gulch;

Donna M. Jackson: Philomena: Secrets of the Senses; Patrick Jennings: We Can’t All Be Rattlesnakes; Lynne Jeter (and Phillip Martin): Chief: Raising Up the Choctaw Nation; Marthe Jocelyn (and Tom Slaughter, illus.): Same Same; Maureen Johnson (and John Green and Lauren Myracle): Let It Snow: Three Holiday Romances; Steven Johnson: The Invention of Air: A Story of Science, Faith, Revolution, and the Birth of America; Nils Johnson-Shelton (and Jay Dobyns): No Angel: My Harrowing Undercover Journey to the Inner Circle of the Hells Angels; J. Sydney Jones: The Empty Mirror; Sandra Jordan (and Jan Greenberg): Christo and Jeanne-Claude: Through the Gates and Beyond; Carol Jose (and Evelyn Grubb): You Are Not Forgotten;


True Kelley: The Dog Who Saved Santa; Elin Kelsey: Watching Giants: The Secret Lives of Whales; Elizabeth Cody Kimmel (and H.B. Lewis, illus.): My Penguin Osbert in Love; Elizabeth Cody Kimmel (and Jackie Urbanovic, illus.): Clamsters; Vincent K. Kirsch: Natalie and Naughtily; Steve Kluger: My Most Excellent Year: A Novel of Love, Mary Poppins & Ferryway Park; Eric Kraft: Flying; Edward Kritzler: Jewish Pirates of the Caribbean: How a Generation of Savashuckling Jews Carved Out an Empire in the New World in their Quest for Treasure, Religious Freedom—and Revenge; Steven Kroll (and Michelle Shapiro, illus.): The Hanukkah Mice; Kathleen V. Kulinski (and John Rocco, illus.): Boy, Were We Wrong About the Solar System?; Susan Kuklin: No Choir Boy; David Kushner: Levittown: Two Families, One Tycoon, and the Fight for Civil Rights in America’s Legendary Suburb;

Michael LaCombe: In Whatever Houses We May Visit: Poems That Have Inspired the Days: The Last Half Hour of the Days: Stories and Essays That Have Inspired Physicians; Wally Lamb: The Hour I First Believed; Jill Lauren: Succeeding with Ild; Joyce Lebra: The Scent of Sake; Michael Soon Lee: Cross-Cultural Selling for Dummies; Jeffrey Lent: After You’ve Gone; Peter Lerangis: The 39 Clues, Book 3: The Sword Thief; Ron Leshnower: Every Landlord’s Property Protection Guide: 10 Ways to Cut Your Risk Now; Julius Lester: Guardian; Lisa Levchuk: Everything Beautiful in the World; Anna Levine (and Ksenia Topaz, illus.): Jodie’s Hanukkah Dig; Irene S. Levine (and Jerome Levine): Schizophrenia for Dummies; Wendy Lewis (and Miki Sakamoto, illus.): My First Garden; Laurie Lisle: Western: Giving Girls a Place of Their Own; 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; Elaine Long: The Caregiver’s Choice: Find Strength and Serenity by Changing Your Mind; Peter Louie: On the Texas Trail of Elzeba de Vaca; George Ella Lyon (and Peter Catalanotto, illus.): Sleepsong;

Gregory Maguire: A Lion Among Men: Volume Three in the Wicked Years; Louis Maistros: The Sound of Building Coffins; John B. Manbeck: Brooklyn: Historically Speaking; Historic Photos of Brooklyn; Lisa Mannetti: The Gentling Box; Laurie M. Manning: Kitchen Dance; David Lozell Martin: Losing Everything: A Memoir; Kat Martin: Heart of Courage; Patricia Marx (and Roz Chast, illus.): Dot in Llyndarel: The Big Little Book of an Odd-Sized Friendship; Jean Marzollo: Ten Little Christmas Presents; Robert Masello: Blood and Ice; Wendy Mass: 11 Birthdays; Harry Mazer: My Brother Abe: Sally Lincoln’s Story; Ralph McNerny: The Wisdom of Father Dowelling; Meg Medina: Milagros: Girl from Away; Laura Krauss Melmed (and Jane Dyer, illus.): Hurry! Hurry! Have You Heard?; Carolyn Meyer: The True Adventures of Charley Darwin; Philipp Meyer: American Rust; David Milgrim: Santa Duck; Greg Mortenson (and Susan L. Roth): Listen to the Wind: The Story of Dr. Greg and Three Cups of Tea; Fred Morton: Historical Dictionary of Botswana; Children of Ham: Freed Slaves and Fugitive Slaves on the Kenya Coast, 1873 to 1907; Shirley Rousseau Murphy: Cat Playing Cupid; Walter Dean Myers (and Bonnie Christensen, illus.): Ida B. Wells: Let the Truth Be Told; Walter Dean Myers (and Javaka Steptoe, illus.): Anmi & Odette: A Love Story;

Sharon Naylor: 1001 Ways to Save Money and Still Have a Dazzling Wedding: Home from the Honeymoon; Love Bets: Cathy Nilon: Cheno Cat; Josephone Nobisco (and Katalin Szegedi, illus.): Take It to the Queen: A Tale of Hope; Sandra Novack: Precious; Rory Nugent: Down at the Docks;

Anne Sibley O’Brien (and Perry Edmund O’Brien): After Gandhi: One Hundred Years of Nonviolent Resistance; Carol O’Connell: Bone by Bone:


Daphne Uviller: *Super in the City; Susan Vaught: *Exposed; Denise Vega (and Erin Eitter Kono, illus.): Grandmother. Have the Angels Come?;


**BULLETIN BOARD**

**Multiple Genres**

Thurber House is accepting submissions for the 2009 Thurber Prize for American Humor for books published in 2008. Visit thurberhouse.org/program/adlt_prize.html to download submission guidelines and an application form. Submissions must be made by the publisher; finalists must be able to attend a reading in New York City and the winner must be able to visit The Thurber House in Columbus, OH, within one year of the announcement date. There is a $65 entry fee. Deadline: April 1, 2009. Susanne Jaffe, Thurber House, 77 Jefferson Avenue, Columbus, OH 43215. (614) 464-1032, x12; sjaffe@thurberhouse.org

New Letters sponsors three annual prizes: the New Letters Prize for Poetry, the Dorothy Churchill Cappon Prize for the Essay, and the Alexander Patterson Cappon Prize for Fiction. The winner in each category receives $1,500. Visit newsletters.org/awards.asp to view the submission guidelines for each contest. There is a $15 fee for the first entry, which includes a one-year subscription to the magazine, and $10 for every entry after. Deadline: May 18, 2009. New Letters Awards for Writers, UMKC, University House, 5101 Rockhill Road, Kansas City, MO 64110-2499

The Antigonish Review is holding two contests: the 9th annual Great Blue Heron Poetry Contest and the 5th annual Sheldon Currie Fiction Prize. Send up to four pages and a maximum of 150 lines of poetry (one longer poem or several shorter poems) or short fiction of up to 20 pages with an entry fee of $25, which in-
cludes a subscription to the journal. The fee is $35 if the applicant is entering both contests. First prize in both categories is $600. Second prize is $400 and third place is $200. All winners will be published in the review. Visit antigonishreview.com/contest.html for more information. The fiction deadline is May 31, 2009 and the poetry deadline is June 30, 2009. The Antigonish Review Contest, Box 5000, St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Canada B2G 2W5. (902) 867-3962; tar@stfx.ca

**Fiction Contests**

The American Literary Translators Association is offering its National Translation Award for a translation of literature from any language into English that has been published in the United States by an American publisher in the previous year. The award carries a cash prize of $2,500. Nomination is by publishers only; for each nominated book, send a letter of nomination, four copies of the book, and a $25 entry fee. Deadline: March 31, 2009. National Translation Award, American Literary Translators Association, The University of Texas at Dallas, Box 830688 (JO 51), Richardson, TX 75083-0688. utdallas.edu/alta/about/nta-entry.html. (972) 883-2093

The Passaic County Community College Poetry Center offers three awards with deadlines this spring. The Paterson Prize for Books for Young People awards $500 to winners in three categories (Pre-K to Grade 3, Grades 4-6, and Grades 7-12). The deadline is March 15, 2009. The Allen Ginsberg Poetry Award, honoring poetry reflecting Allen Ginsberg’s contribution to American literature, carries a first prize of $1,000, $200 for second place and $100 for third. The Paterson Fiction Prize for a novel or collection of short fiction published in 2008 carries a $1,000 cash prize. The deadline for both awards is April 1, 2009. Visit old.pccc.edu/poetry/Prize/index.html for detailed submission guidelines. Maria Mazzotti Gillan, Executive Director, Poetry Center, One College Boulevard, Paterson, NJ 07505. (973) 684-6555, mgillan@pccc.edu

Willow Springs will accept submissions for its annual fiction prize until April 1, 2009. The winner receives $1,000 and publication in the journal. To enter, send one unpublished story of up to 7,000 words with a $15 entry fee. Send a cover letter with writer’s name, address, phone number, e-mail address and short bio; do not include identifying information anywhere else in the submission. All entrants will receive the issue containing the winning work. The Willow Springs Fiction Prize, Willow Springs, 501 N. Riverpoint Boulevard, Suite 425, Spokane, WA 99202. willowsprings.ewu.edu/contests.html

The SouthWest Writers Contest honors excellence in writing in 16 categories. First prize is $150, second prize is $100, and third prize is $50; one first place winner will receive the Storyteller Award and $1,000. Deadline: May 1, 2008. For submission guidelines, including manuscript specifics for each category and the required entry form, visit southwestwriters.com/swccontest.php or contact SouthWest Writers, 3721 Morris NE, Suite A, Albuquerque, NM 87111-3611. (505) 265-9485, swwriters@juno.com

Southwest Review has established the David Nathan Meyerson Fiction Prize, a new award for fiction writers who have not published a first book, either a novel or collection of stories. The award carries a cash prize of $1,000 and publication in the journal. Send an unpublished story of up to 8,000 words with a $25 reading fee. Omit author’s name from the manuscript and include a cover letter with name and address; if submitting online, write this information at the top of the online form. Deadline: May 1, 2009. All entries will be considered for publication. Visit smu.edu/southwestreview for instructions for submitting via e-mail and paying the fee online with a credit card. The Meyerson Fiction Prize, Southwest Review, PO Box 750374, Dallas, TX 75275-0374. (214) 768-1037; swr@smu.edu

**Poetry Contests**

The Ledge Magazine is holding its 2009 Poetry Awards Competition for poetry of all styles and schools. To enter, send typed poems with name, mailing address, and e-mail address on each poem. The entry fee is $10 for the first three poems and $3 for each additional poem. Sending a $20 subscription (two issues) to The Ledge gains free entry for the first three poems. First prize is $1,000, second prize is $250, and third prize is $100; all three will be published in the magazine, and all entries will be considered for publication. Deadline: April 30, 2009. The Ledge 2009 Poetry Awards Competition, 40 Maple Avenue, Bellport, NY 11713. theledge magazine.com

The Academy of American poets sponsors the James Laughlin Award for a second book of original poetry, in English, by a citizen of the U.S. The winner will receive $5,000, and the Academy of American Poets will purchase copies of the book to distribute to its members. To be eligible a poet must have published one book of poetry in a standard edition and had a second book come under contract with a U.S. publisher between May 1, 2007, and April 30, 2008. The publisher must send four copies of each manuscript without the author’s name appearing anywhere; published books must be submitted in manuscript form (suggested

The Comstock Review will accept submissions for its annual poetry contest, the Muriel Craft Bailey Memorial Award, between April 1 and July 1, 2009. First prize is $1,000 and publication in the journal. Second prize is $250 and third prize is $100. To enter, send any number of unpublished poems, typed and no more than 40 lines in length each, with a $4 entry fee per poem. Include the poet’s name, address and phone number on the reverse of each poem; do not include identifying information on the front. Visit comstockreview.org/annualcontest.html to read the full guidelines. CWG Poetry Contest 2009, 4956 St. John Drive, Syracuse, NY 13215.

Nonfiction Contests

Event magazine, the literary journal published by Douglas College in New Westminster, BC, is holding a nonfiction contest for essays exploring the creative nonfiction form; the editors recommend reading previous winning entries in back issues of Event before entering. Submit an unpublished manuscript of up to 5,000 words, typed and double-spaced, with the writer’s name appearing only on a separate cover sheet listing name, address, phone number, e-mail address, and the work’s title. Multiple entries are allowed, although each must be accompanied by a $29.95 (USD) entry fee, which includes a one-year subscription. Deadline: April 15, 2009. Event, The Douglas College Review, PO Box 2503, New Westminster, BC, Canada V3L 5B2. (604) 527-5293; event@ douglas.bc.ca. event.douglas.bc.ca/community/event -magazine/contestdetails.html.

Teachers & Writers Collaborative (T&W) sponsors the Bechtel Prize, an annual award that recognizes an exemplary essay addressing important issues in the areas of creative writing education, literary studies, and/or the profession of writing. The winning essay appears in Teachers & Writers magazine and the author receives a $1,500 honorarium. Finalists share honoraria of $500. Prospective applicants are encouraged to read Teachers & Writers to familiarize themselves with its nonacademic style. Visit twc.org/publications/bechtel-prize for suggested themes and full submission guidelines, including length and formatting. There is a $20 fee for each entry, which includes a one-year subscription to Teachers & Writers. Deadline: June 30, 2009. The Bechtel Prize, Teachers & Writers Collaborative, 520 Eighth Avenue, Suite 2020, New York, NY 10018. bechtel@twc.org.

The Writer as Illusionist

Continued from page 6

that suggests that every other kind of writing is a trick (this is a special trick, in itself) and that this book is going to be about life as it really is, not some fabrication of the author’s.

So far as I can see, there is no legitimate sleight of hand involved in practicing the arts of painting, sculpture, and music. They appear to have had their origin in religion, and they are fundamentally serious. In writing—in all writing but especially in narrative writing—you are continually being taken in. The reader, skeptical, experienced, with many demands on his time and many ways of enjoying his leisure, is asked to believe in people he knows don’t exist, to be present at scenes that never occurred, to be amused or moved or instructed just as he would be in real life, only the life exists in somebody else’s imagination. If, as Mr. T. S. Eliot says, humankind cannot bear very much reality, then that would account for their turning to the charlatans operating along the riverbank—to the fortuneteller, the phrenologist, the man selling spirit money, the storyteller. Or there may be a different explanation; it may be that what humankind cannot bear directly it can bear indirectly, from a safe distance.

The writer has everything in common with the vaudeville magician except this: The writer must be taken in by his own tricks. Otherwise, the audience will begin to yawn and snicker. Having practiced more or less incessantly for five, ten, fifteen, or twenty years, knowing that the trunk has a false bottom and the opera hat a false top, with the white doves in a cage ready to be handed to him from the wings and his clothing full of unusual deep pockets containing odd playing cards and colored scarves knotted together and not knotted together and the American flag, he must begin by pleasing himself. His mouth must be the first mouth that drops open in surprise, in wonder, as (presto chango!) this character’s heartache is dragged squirming from his inside coat pocket, and that character’s future has become his past while he was not looking. ✦
Dick Yates Goes to the Movies

Continued from page 10

and I remember thinking Jesus, these guys are like me; we’ve all been raised on movies, and we’re just now beginning to figure out what frauds most of them are.”

Yates captures his own experiences with the film industry in his short story “Saying Goodbye to Sally”: Jack Fields is a 36-year-old novelist who goes to Hollywood to write a film script and has an affair with Sally Baldwin, an attractive secretary of about the same age. He fancies himself a 1960s version of F. Scott Fitzgerald having an affair with Sheilah Graham, but near the end of this long story (60 pages, making it by far the longest of any of his published stories) Sally calls him a “Counterfeit F. Scott Fitzgerald who comes stumbling out to movieland.”

There are dozens of references to movies in Yates’s stories and novels, every one of them negative.

Three of his own novels were optioned to Hollywood, Revolutionary Road, Disturbing the Peace and The Easter Parade. Yates, as much as he looked down on Hollywood, hoped one of them would be made into a movie so he would get both money and a larger readership. But none of them made it to the screen before he died in 1992.

Except, one sort of did.

In Woody Allen’s Hannah and Her Sisters, the Barbara Hershey and Michael Caine characters hold a brief conversation about Yates’s 1976 novel Easter Parade and, although his name is not mentioned, Yates told me he received about 50 fan letters as a result and that that was more than he received for all his other books combined, and he resented that Hollywood influence.

He has a few other connections to Hollywood.

His second oldest daughter, Monica, was the model for the Elaine Benes character on the Seinfeld TV comedy series (she dated one of the producers), which once did an episode about Elaine’s father, clearly based on Yates, coming to dinner. After viewing the episode, Yates complained that much of the minutiae was wrong: Benes wears a hat, and Yates didn’t; Benes is a veteran of the Korean War, Yates of World War II; and Elaine tells stories in the present tense, something Monica didn’t do. Again, Hollywood got it wrong.

In the late 1980s, Yates was hired by an ex-student, David Milch, producer of TV’s Hill Street Blues, to work on treatments. Yates didn’t even like Milch, who he had taught at the University of Iowa (Yates, a high school graduate who never took a college course, taught at six colleges, including Columbia and the University of Southern California). Working for Milch made Yates miserable. None of his treatments ever made it to the screen.

Revolutionary Road, the novel, opens with an amateur production of a play in a community theater in Connecticut. One actor forgets a key line, off-stage gunfire is much too loud, and the only talented actor on the stage, April Wheeler (Kate Winslet’s role) performs as badly as everyone else. “When the curtain fell at last,” Yates writes, “it was an act of mercy.”

That’s the line I first thought of when I read the novel was going to be made into a movie. But I wasn’t certain what to make of it. Did it mean, the curtain was at last falling on Hollywood’s refusal to make a movie of one of Dick Yates’s books? Or did it mean, as I suspected, that Hollywood would screw up another great novel? Or did it mean that Yates would resent, as he did with the brief reference in Hannah and Her Sisters, the increased attention the film will undoubtedly bring to his writing?

In Young Hearts Crying, Yates’s next to last novel, published in 1984, just eight years before his death, a character tells his ex-wife, just as Yates once said to his ex-wife, “We spent our whole lives yearning. Isn’t that the God damndest thing?”

And now Dick Yates is going back to the movies. Isn’t that the God damndest thing? •

The Internet vs. Books

Continued from page 8

McKenzie’s ideal library was the World Wide Web. His first speculative talk on the subject was a British Library Panizzi Lecture in 1986, four years before Sir Timothy Berners-Lee invented the first World Wide Web server in Geneva, Switzerland.

“The Internet is a volume in our library,” Ackerman says, “a colorful, miscellaneous, and serendipitous one—but not a replacement for books, and certainly not an alternative to spending time in the world and just paying attention to things.” Moultisas believes it’s the future, and the old guard needs to get with the times.

For the time being, both of them are right. •
Backlist Maestro
Continued from page 19

Revolution and shaped our secular, rational, humanistic modern world were the direct result of Gutenberg’s press. No wonder Islam in the 15th century banned the press, as Gutenberg’s own church might have done had it not been preoccupied by its various schisms.

Today, as the Gutenberg era ends and the digital age begins, the future is as unclear to us as the momentous future awaiting them and their successors had been to Gutenberg’s generation. To predict the digital future to any degree of specificity would be rash. Nevertheless, it is already apparent that reference books of all kinds, many of which are out of date the day they are published, need never be printed and bound again but will be updated and accessed online and read on computer screens, handheld readers, BlackBerrys and devices yet to be marketed, item by item for a fee or by subscription, or free, like the amazing if occasionally frustrating Wikipedia. This transformation is already well advanced and awaits only an entrepreneur to categorize and package these materials and offer them to subscribers at reasonable fees. But the books in which cultures are embedded—the ever refreshed backlist on which civilizations depend—will I believe continue to be read in traditional formats printed from digital files and bound at multiple sites worldwide by machines like the one I first saw in the inventor’s workshop nearly 10 years ago.

There is a place in the digital future for handheld electronic readers, comparable perhaps to that for audio devices, but their costs will have to be much reduced and their design simplified before they achieve the economy, durability, portability and convenience of a printed book, especially for those millions of new readers in tomorrow’s worldwide digital marketplace. A practical problem with electronic readers is copyright security. Music publishers may welcome the promotional benefits of file-sharing and in any case can do nothing to prevent it, while musicians can offset their foregone royalties with live concerts. Authors, however, cannot survive without royalties. Thus downloads to electronic readers will be constrained by software to prevent misuse. Buyers will not own the electronic book they have paid for: They cannot lend it separately from the machine to a friend, sell or give it to others or convert it to a physical book. This may sort itself out, somehow or other, but for books that embody the ancient and ongoing dialogue that constitutes civilization, the format of printed and bound books seems optimal, irreplaceable and uniquely protective of authors’ rights as well as readers’ needs. The digital world without physical books envisioned by some of our more extreme futurists seems to me an unlikely and highly undesirable prospect, a misreading of human nature and the nature of books.

As the digital marketplace evolves, the barriers to entry for publishers will fall, a process well under way in the United States, where thousands of independent publishers, including self-publishers, have already emerged. In this new marketplace, traditional readers of genre fiction—women’s romances, men’s adventures, and so on—will be replaced by a new generation that will find such entertainments on the Web, along with practical advice and instruction in electronic formats yet to be conceived. As this transition materializes, publishers will increasingly have to distinguish themselves by the quality and durability of their publications, leaving ephemera to the new media. In the digital future titles will be accessed not only from such general repositories as Google and Amazon but from websites of related interest, so that books of Chinese poetry or American constitutional history will be posted and evaluated by experts on such websites as well as within annotated bibliographies provided by Wikipedia and similar reference sources. In this way filters will be created to separate books of value from the undifferentiated material that will inevitably accumulate in cyberspace, while publishers’ imprints will become increasingly meaningful as marks of quality and depth of backlist.

With each innovation, from mnemonic verse to written language to movable type to digitization, the extent of transmission and the range of content have been progressively broadened until now these extensions approach their utmost limits—the limits of the earth itself. Gutenberg put the Bible and a few religious texts in the hands of the European elite. From this beginning there soon emerged the writers who gave the West the secular, experimental, skeptical, democratic culture from which our United States was hatched. None of this could have been foreseen by Gutenberg and his contemporaries. And nothing but the broadest outlines of a digital future can be seen by ourselves today. Yet it may not be unreasonable to extrapolate from our past a worldwide future of widespread literacy in which readers on all continents will one day embrace writers from all cultures as part of a common heritage, transcending but not obliterating traditional boundaries and local languages, an unimaginably vast and complex cultural transformation, both wonderful and, because we are human, terrible, as human history has been from the beginning.
Legal Watch

Continued from page 14

Specifically, the group asserted four claims against the defendants, including violation of the Romantics’ right of publicity, false endorsement under the Lanham Act, unfair competition and unjust enrichment. On December 18, 2007, the court denied the Romantics’ motion for a preliminary injunction, after which the Romantics and the defendants made cross motions seeking summary judgment.

In analyzing the Romantics’ right of publicity claim, the court noted that Michigan recognizes a right of publicity that protects against the “appropriation, for the defendants’ advantage, of the plaintiffs’ name and likeness.” The court also pointed out that Michigan law has never recognized a right of publicity in the sound of a voice or a combination of voices, even if the voice(s) are distinctive. Moreover, the court held it indisputable that the defendants made no reference to the Romantics or to the individual plaintiffs in advertising the game. The court also pointed out that it is possible to never encounter the song in the game if the player fails to reach the requisite level of play. In those instances where the song is encountered, it is clearly identified by title and a statement indicating the version used in the game is not the original recording performed by the Romantics. Thus the court concluded that no reasonable juror could determine that the song was used to promote the game or that the defendants commercially exploited the Romantics’ identities. As such, the defendants’ motion for summary judgment was granted and plaintiffs’ cross motion for summary judgment was denied with respect to the right of publicity claim.

In regard to the plaintiffs’ claims for false endorsement under the Lanham Act and unfair competition, the court noted that Section 43 (a) of the Lanham Act prohibits the use of “any word, term, name, symbol, or device . . . which is likely to cause confusion . . . as to the origin, sponsorship, or approval of his or her goods, services or commercial activities by another person.” To prove a violation under Section 43 (a), the court pointed out that plaintiff must show 1) Defendant used plaintiff’s mark and 2) such use was likely to cause consumer confusion. Here, the Romantics asserted that an artist’s distinctive sound or voice could serve as the trademark. However, the court found that case law did not support the Romantics’ assertion that their sound could serve as a mark for the purposes of proving a Lanham Act violation, as a musical composition can’t be protected as its own trademark under the act. It added, moreover, that even if the Romantics had made a Lanham Act showing that their song constituted a valid trademark, they failed to offer evidence to establish that the defendant’s use of their song was “likely to cause confusion, or to cause mistake, or to deceive as to affiliation, connection or association of such person with another person.” In fact, the only evidence offered in this area was an affidavit from the plaintiffs’ own attorney stating that he was confused as to whether the game version of “What I Like About You” was actually the version recorded and performed by the Romantics. Accordingly, the court concluded that the plaintiffs could not establish a Lanham Act violation or a valid claim for unfair competition and granted defendants’ motion for summary judgment on these issues.

Finally, the court considered the Romantics’ unjust enrichment claim, finding 1) that the Romantics had not established that the defendants received a benefit from them, and 2) that any benefit enjoyed by the defendant would not result in an inequity to the plaintiffs since the defendants had a valid synchronization license that complied with the Copyright Act’s statutory requirements and permitted the defendants to make a new recording of the underlying composition. Ultimately, the court granted the defendants’ motion for summary judgment on plaintiffs’ claim of unjust enrichment.

—Michael Gross
Staff Attorney

Letters

Continued from page 2

pay me 25 percent of the e-book receipts. I checked the original contract, which had been written some 15 years ago. It did indeed give the publisher rights to sell vaguely defined electronic works. However, I was supposed to receive 50 percent of such sales. I called Random House and said that while I was pleased to have my book included in their program, the contract called for a fifty-fifty split, and that I didn’t see any good reason why I should take less. I was told that Random House was not going to negotiate the price; take it or leave it. Needless to say, I left it.

I hope other writers can be persuaded to do the same. The danger of allowing publishers to keep the bulk of e-book earnings is huge. There is just coming to maturity the first generation of young people to whom doing business through the computer is far
more natural than going out to shops, libraries, banks, even classrooms. These young people are the book buyers of the future: in 10 years they will be a significant portion of the book-reading public, and in 20 the dominant part of it.

It is hard enough to make a living writing books as it is. We simply cannot allow publishers to scoop up most of the income from e-book sales. If we do we are lost, and the writing of books will become an eccentric hobby, like carving scrimshaw and crocheting egg cozies.

I suggest two courses of action. For one, the Authors Guild, in association with agents, other writers' groups and related organizations, ought to meet to hammer out a standard e-rights contract. A start has already been made with the Google agreement. Ideally, publishers would be included in the negotiations, but given that in this case writers and publishers have directly opposing interests, which was not entirely the case in the Google negotiations, it might be difficult to find common ground with them.

Second, it would not be difficult for the Authors Guild to set up its own e-bookstore. Authors (who could include non-Guild members) would pay a modest fee to have their books "shelved" in the Guild's e-bookstore, and would recieve the bulk of the income from sales.

However, to do any of these things it will be necessary for writers to take a strong stand on the issue. The fact that writers, myself included, have signed away e-book rights in the past does not mean that we must do so in the future. Until recently, e-books appeared to be a distant threat. Today the storm is moving rapidly toward us. If we do not do something now, it will be too late.

—James Lincoln Collier
New York

A study group of Authors Guild Council members has been reviewing the e-book situation and will be issuing a report soon. Its recommendations will be reported in the Bulletin.

—Ed.

Maybe tomorrow things will be sadder, but this moment, Olsson's closing ranks high on my list of sorrows. Sign on each door: "Olsson's is closed. Thanks to you and all our loyal customers who supported us for the last 36 years in the Washington area.

For more information or to post a response on our testimonials page visit www.olssons.com."

We will miss you, John Olsson.
As one of the few Guild members with no computer, I composed my own testimonial. Perhaps it will do as a letter to the editor in the Bulletin.

COLD FOLD/CREDIT CRUNCH

When Olsson's closed, local book store chain, I took it as one more stage along the route to old.

Relinquishing what one loves best, include rich foods, long walks, and sex, now this: unsold, yet locked.

—Barbara Ann Porte
Arlington, VA

CONTRACTS Q&A

Continued from page 11

In negotiating a contract where author and publisher are in distant states and the publisher's form provides that the jurisdiction of its home state is exclusive, authors should try to change "exclusive" to "non-exclusive." If the publisher won't accept that, seek to provide—on the "what's good for the goose is good for the gander" theory—that litigation in either of your home states will be permitted. In offering the latter, authors can point out that they are still giving up a lot because, without the contractual limitation, they would be entitled to sue the publisher in any state where it does business.

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

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

The James Beard Foundation presented the 2008 James Beard Foundation Book Awards for cookbooks published in English in 2007. Winners included Jean Anderson, A Love Affair with Southern Cooking, America; Judith Choate and The French Culinary Institute, The Fundamental Techniques of Classic Cuisine, Cooking from a Professional Point of View; Niloufer Ichaporia King, My Bombay Kitchen: Traditional and Modern Parsi Home Cooking, Asian Cooking; and David Wondrich, Imbibe!: From Absinthe Cocktail to Whiskey Smash, a Salute in Stories and Drinks to “Professor” Jerry Thomas, Pioneer of the American Bar, Wine and Spirits. The awards were presented at a ceremony on June 8 in New York City.

Among the 2008–2009 Isherwood Fellows, sponsored by the Christopher Isherwood Foundation, are Gregory Belliveau and Emily Raboteau. Isherwood Fellows receive grants of $4,000, which help fund research and enable them to devote time to writing projects.

Win Blevins was named a Writer of the Year for 2008 by the Wordcraft Circle of Native Writers and Storytellers, the organization for Native writers.

The International Reading Association’s 2008 Young Adults’ Choices list includes My Lost and Found Life, Melodie Bowsher; Nick & Norah’s Infinite Playlist, Rachel Cohn and David Levithan; Returnable Girl, Pamela Lowell; Mismatch, Lensey Namioka; Small Steps, Louis Sachar; A Bad Boy Can Be Good for a Girl, Tanya Lee Stone; Specials, Scott Westerfeld; and You, Maybe: The Profound Asymmetry of Love in High School by Rachel Vail. The list of 30 books was selected by students throughout the United States and announced in May at the annual convention of the International Reading Association in Atlanta, Ga.

Marlin Bree received the West Marine Writer’s Award and $5,000 from Boating Writers International (BWI) for his story “The Old Man and the Inland Sea,” originally published in the January/February 2007 issue of The Ensign magazine and recognized in BWI’s 2007 Annual Writing Contest. It is the second time Bree has received the West Marine Writer’s Award, BWI’s top honor. The award was presented on October 31, 2008, at the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show.

Bill Burnham and Mary Burnham’s book, Florida Keys Paddling Atlas, received first place in the Outdoor Adventure Guidebook category of the 2008 National Outdoor Book Awards (NOBA). The American Chestnut: The Life, Death, and Rebirth of a Perfect Tree, by Susan Freinkel, received first place for National History Literature. The awards are sponsored by the NOBA Foundation, the Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education, and Idaho State University.

Blue Diamonds by Spencer Dane won First Place in the Thriller category of the 2008 Royal Palm Literary Award contest, sponsored by the Florida Writers Association.

The Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA), a journal for librarians, educators, and other professionals who work with young adults, puts out an annual list of outstanding titles for middle school and junior high school youth. The Top Shelf Fiction for Middle School Readers list for books published in 2007 included Quaking, by Kathryn Erskine; The Amazing Flight of Darius Frobisher, by Bill Harley; Schooled, by Gordon Korman; Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life, by Wendy Mass; and The Golden Rat, by Don L. Wulffson. The Nonfiction Honor List included Who Was First? Discovering the Americas, by Russell Freedman; Hear Us Out! Lesbian and Gay Stories of Struggle, Progress, and Hope, 1950 to the Present, by Nancy Garden; Terrorists, Tornadoes, and Tsunamis: How to Prepare for Life’s Danger Zones, by Suzanne Harper and John C. Orndorff; America Dreaming: How Youth Changed America in the 60s, by Laban Carrick Hill; Comic Book Century: The History of American Comic Books, by Stephen Krensky; and Edward Hopper: Painter of Light and Shadow, by Susan Goldman Rubin.

The Understory, by Pamela Erens, was one of two finalists in the fiction category for the 2008 William Saroyan International Prize for Writing. Return of the Condor: The Race to Save Our Largest Bird from Extinction, by John Moir, was one of two finalists in the nonfiction category. The prizes are sponsored by Stanford University Libraries and the William Saroyan Foundation and are intended to encourage new or emerging writers.

Michael Maccoby has been honored by the International Association of Management of Technology (IAMOT) as one of the top 50 authors of technology and innovation management over the last five years. He will receive an award at the annual IAMOT conference in April 2009 in Orlando, Fla. Maccoby was also named a Commander of the Royal Order of the Polar Star by King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden for 25 years of research and consulting work with Swedish companies and universities, articles written for Swedish newspapers, and two books about Sweden. The ceremony took place in Washington, DC, on April 10, 2008.

Margaret Maron was one of 10 North Carolinians honored for their contributions to the state with the North Carolina Award, the highest civilian honor the state
can bestow. Maron received the 2008 Award for Literature, presented on November 17 by Governor Mike Easley and First Lady Mary Easley.

Gabrielle Mautner received a Mill Valley Creative Achievement Award, or Milley Award, from the Mill Valley Art Commission in California. The awards honor those who have brought honor to the Mill Valley community through their accomplishments in the arts, and were presented at a ceremony at the Mill Valley Community Center October 19.

Donald McCaig received the 2008 Michael Shaara Prize for Civil War fiction for his novel Canaan. McCaig is the only author to have won this award twice. The award, sponsored by the Civil War Institute at Gettysburg College, carries a prize of $5,000 and was presented at a ceremony in Gettysburg, Pa., on November 19, 2008.

E. M. Schorb’s poetry collection, Time and Fevers, received the award for poetry in the Writer’s Digest 16th Annual International Self-Published Book Awards. Time and Fevers also received the Eric Hoffer Book Award in the Legacy category in 2007.

Dating From the Inside Out by Dr. Paulette Kouffman Sherman received the award for best book in the Self-Help: Relationships category of the National Best Books 2008 Awards, sponsored by USA Book News. Rabbit in the Moon, by Deborah Shlian and Joel Shlian, was a finalist in the Thriller category.

Arrowhead’s Lost Hoard, by Hazel Spire, received an Honorable Mention at the 2008 London Festival of Books in the Children’s Books category.

Brenda Webster was chosen as a Literary Laureate for 2009 by the Friends and Foundation of the San Francisco Public Library. The Laureates, 34 Bay Area authors, will be honored at a fund-raising dinner on April 17 at the library.

The Susan B. Anthony Institute at the University of Rochester presented Miranda Beverly-Whittemore with the 2008 Janet Heidinger Kafka Prize and $5,000 for her novel Set Me Free. She received the award at a ceremony at the university on November 3. ♦

Censorship Watch

Continued from page 12

archive “information that might be helpful some day, some time” to show “what groups are on your campus and what materials they are handing out.” There is no indication that Hahs explained how a two-week notice period would better protect the campus than, for example, simply collecting a copy of the materials as they are distributed. There is also no indication that administrators would check to see whether materials actually distributed differ from the materials previously submitted for review.

In fact, it’s possible that the university will simply collect the materials and take no further action. If so, it’s hard to argue that the policy amounts to anything more than an attempt to attach the names of specific groups or individuals to distributed materials, perhaps in the hopes that greater source transparency would make protesters less likely to actually stage protests. But President Hahs continues to stake out a security-based argument.

InsideHighEd.com reports that Hahs believes the policy will help the university meet its obligation to keep the learning environment safe by knowing as much as possible about campus activities. Supposedly, the underlying rationale for the two-week rule is that knowing who was doing what and when they were doing it could help authorities after the fact, in the event that there is a shooting or similar criminal activity at the school. Presumably, a file of flyers and signs could help police crack the case. However, it is widely known that Hahs has expressed concern that attendance may be down at the university’s career fair because prospective employers and military recruiters are aware of past protests and do not want to encounter the same resistance. In 2007, two students objecting to the presence of CIA recruiters on campus were arrested and charged with battery, and Hahs has made clear her view that employers and recruiters participating in the fair need to be protected from such disruptions. Campus sentiment about the CIA protesters is divided. A justice studies professor has filed a lawsuit against Hahs and other administrators on the grounds that she was denied a department chair position because of the professor’s vocal support for the arrested students.

The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) objected to the proposed materials submission policy as “blatantly unconstitutional” and blogger John Wilson of CollegeFreedom.org says, “I’ve never seen anything quite that restrictive at a public university.”

—A. F.
John Updike
1932–2009

John Updike’s reputation as a “good citizen” was a recurring note in the flood of obituaries that followed his death in January. He served, as Christopher Lehmann-Haupt wrote in The New York Times, on “the Congregational Church building committee and the Ipswich [Massachusetts] Democratic town committee,” even wrote “a pageant for the town’s 17th-Century Day” celebration. Updike was widely known for his good citizenship among writers as well, offering encouragement to newcomers and dispensing criticism with exceptional care and generosity. He was also a longtime member of the Authors Guild. He joined the Guild in 1967, having more than met its requirements for membership by the age of 35—four published novels, five collections of short stories, three collections of poetry. Over the ensuing four decades, he had much more to say about American life and culture. We reprint here a few of his published thoughts on writing.


Why write? As soon ask, why rivet? Because a number of personal accidents drift us toward the occupation of a riveter, which pre-exists, and most importantly, the riveting-gun exists, and we love it. Think of a pencil. What a quiet, nimble, slender and stubby wonderworker he is! At his touch, worlds leap into being; a tiger with no danger, a steam-roller with no weight, a palace at no cost. All children are alive to the spell of pencil and crayons, of making something, as it were, from nothing; a few children never move out from under this spell, and try to become artists... 

In my adolescence I discovered one could write with a pencil as well as draw, without the annoying need to consult reality so frequently. Also, the cave beneath the written page holds many more kinds of space than the one beneath the drawing pad. My writing tends to be pictorial not only in its groping for visual precision, but in the way the books are conceived, as objects in space, with events and persons composed within them like shapes on a canvas. I do not recommend this approach; it is perhaps a perversion of the prime narrative urge. Storytelling, for all its powers of depiction, shares with music the medium of time, and perhaps its genius, its most central transformation, has to do with time, with rhythm and echo and the sense of time not frozen as in a painting but channeled and harnessed as in a symphony...

I have not spoken up to now of language, of the joys of using it well, of the role of the writer as keeper of the keys of language, a guardian of usage and enforcer of precision. This does not seem to me a very real notion, however ever it is put forward. Language goes on evolving in the street and in the spoken media, and well-written books are the last place it looks for direction. The writer follows after the spoken language, usually timidly. I see myself described in reviews as a doter upon words. It is true, I am grateful to have been born into English, with its polyglot flexibility and the happy accident, in the wake of two empires, of its world-wide currency. But what I am conscious of doting on is not English per se or its pliable grammar and abundant synonyms, but its potential, for the space of some phrases or paragraphs, of becoming reality, of engendering out of imitation another reality, infinitely lesser but thoroughly possessed, thoroughly human.

From an interview conducted by Charles Thomas Samuels for The Paris Review, issue 45, winter 1968.

Q. Are you bothered by having to write for a living?

No, I always wanted to draw or write for a living. Teaching, the customary alternative, seemed truly depleting and corrupting. I have been able to support myself by and large with the more respectable forms—poetry, short stories, novels—but what journalism I
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The Authors Guild, the oldest and largest association of published authors in the United States, works to protect and promote the professional interests of its members. The Guild’s forerunner, The Authors League of America, was founded in 1912. The Authors League now serves the joint interests of The Authors Guild and The Dramatists Guild.

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have done has been useful. I would write ads for deodorant or labels for catsup bottles if I had to. The miracle of turning inklings into thoughts and thoughts into words and words into metal and print and ink never palls for me.

Q. [Re the factual accuracy of his characters’ professions.] Do you actively research such material, or do you rely on what you already know?

Well, a bit of both, and I’m glad you do find it convincing. I’m never sure it is. A man whose life is spent in biochemistry or in building houses, his brain is tipped in a certain way. It’s very hard, I think, for specialists to convey to me, as I ask them more or less intelligent questions, the right nuance—it’s hard for me to reconstruct in my own mind the mind of a man who has spent twenty years with his field. I think the attempt should be made, however. There is a thinness in contemporary fiction about the way the world operates, except the academic world... Shaw’s plays have a wonderful wealth of professional types. Shaw’s sense of economic process, I guess, helped him (a) to care and b) to convey, to plunge into the mystery of being a chimney sweep or a minister.... Elementary author ethics dictate that you do at least attempt to imagine technical detail as well as emotions and dialogue.

My first thought about art, as a child, was that the artist brings something into the world that didn’t exist before, and that he does it without destroying something else. A kind of refutation of the conservation of matter. That still seems to me its central magic, its core of joy. ♦
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Book(s)  Title  Publisher  Year  Field / Genre

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