Symposium:
Standing Above the Crowd: Platforms and Publicity
$18 Million Settlement in Freelancers’ Class Action
BOING: From Bookstore Clerk to Children’s Author
Ann Birstein Remembers Saul Bellow
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Wow. If I was lucky enough to live to be 100, I never thought I would see an article about FOIA [Freedom of Information Act]. I just put down the current Bulletin. My “day job” for more than a decade has been to create acquisition training materials and conduct seminars for federal agencies and contractors. One of the key regulations is something called the “Federal Acquisition Regulation” (FAR). If any Guild members are interested in pursuing FOIA, the Bulletin articles are an excellent abstract. More information can be secured from FAR Part 24.203 (a). For insomniacs, a cure can be found by reading all 53 Parts of the FAR (about 1,000 pages.)

A word of advice. Uncle has been up to nefarious tricks regarding FOIA (pronounced “foyer”). It has, as noted, extended the definitions of the types of records that are exempted from public disclosure. To those of us seeking to secure FOIA records primarily relating to bidding and pricing efforts, this is, in my opinion, disturbing and abusive.

Uncle is also adept at keeping FOIA requests in motion by referring them to other agencies. In all fairness, the personnel in FOIA offices are buried in work. That is the reason there is much non-compliance with the time limits.

The Guild encourages members to write to the Bulletin. Letters should be sent to “Letters to the Editor,” The Authors Guild, 31 East 28th Street, New York, NY 10016. They can also be faxed to (212) 564-5363, or sent via e-mail to staff@authorsguild.org (type “Letters to the Editor” in the subject line). Letters may be edited for length, grammar and clarity.

Cary Cohen
Richmond, Virginia

I’m writing in response to Ursula le Guin’s article “A Whitewashed Earthsea.” My first novel was recently optioned for a film. Before my agent began shopping the book to film producers, she asked me what I had in mind for the movie. Whatever the producers wanted to do was fine with me. I did my job, I told her: I wrote and published a book. Le Guin said in her article that changing the plot or the characters of Earthsea would be dangerous because the books have been known to millions.

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ALONG PUBLISHERS ROW

BY CAMPBELL GESLIN

Publishers, dismayed that the National Book Awards no longer sell a lot of books and that largely unknown authors were selected as finalists last year, have come up with the Quill Awards. Edward Wyatt, in The New York Times, said they will be a cross between the Oscars and the People’s Choice Awards. No prize money will be given.

The 19 categories include first-time author; children’s book; graphic novel; literary fiction; suspense, mystery or thriller; science fiction, fantasy or horror; romance; biography or memoir; religion or spirituality; science; health and self-improvement; sports; business; and history, current events and politics.

Books will be nominated by a panel of booksellers, librarians and others. Then book buyers will be asked to vote on the winners in most categories. NBC Universal said it would televise the awards ceremony in October on stations in New York, Los Angeles, Dallas, Philadelphia, Washington and Miami.

Gerry Byrne, former publisher of Variety, will supervise the awards, and he told Publishers Weekly that the purpose of Quill “was to create an event in which the public can get involved” and provide readers with an opportunity to participate in choosing their favorite authors.

Did it escape organizers’ attention that most major newspapers in the U.S. publish a weekly list of best-sellers? Won’t the books nominated by the Quill panel just duplicate books that are already best-sellers? Just asking.

BLIP: Winners of some book awards do get a boost up the charts. In late March, when Marilyyn Robinson’s novel Gilead won the National Book Critics Circle Award for fiction, it jumped into the top 10 on best-seller lists.

BIG STIR: Last November, when Lily Tuck’s The News from Paraguay won the 2004 National Book Award, the novelist said, “Actually I have never been to Paraguay, nor do I intend to go.”

But in February, she was invited to visit and, al-

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Overheard

"[T]he freest and fairest societies are . . . those with a free press . . . publishing information the government does not want to reveal."

—Judith Miller, as she was ordered to be jailed for four months for refusing to reveal the identity of a source to whom she had promised confidentiality.

July 6, 2005
From the President

BY NICK TAYLOR

I open with a plea to all Authors Guild members. Go to www.copyrightclassaction.com and follow the instructions to file claims against the electronic rights database class action settlement. You have a limited time to do this. The claims deadline is September 30, after which the window will be closed. There won’t be another Bulletin in your mailbox before then to remind you again.

I’ve browsed the website. The number of publications covered is astounding, covering the length and breadth of periodicals published in the United States. If you’ve ever freelanced, you’re almost certain to be covered. I ordered a claims packet through the mail, but you can also download a claim form or file your claim/s online. Even for those of us who did much of our freelance writing some years back and never filed individually for copyright, it’s worth filing a claim because, after all, they are your rights and they were taken from you illegally and without your knowledge. Each writer will have to decide for herself whether to take a lower payment and retain some future electronic rights.

Please take the time to submit your claims. We would like to see the settlement, which should be approved by the court this summer, benefit as many writers for as much money as possible. Don’t let a memory gap stand in your way. A couple of Bullets ago, I wrote about the importance of locating your old clip files. My intention was to anticipate the settlement, which at the time was supposed to be reached any day. That was optimistic, but the intent remains the same. Climb to the attic, dive into the basement, find those clips. Or, if that’s not possible, rely on your best memory, since the burden of disproving a claim lies with the defendants.

There’s more about the settlement elsewhere in the issue.

* * *

As the deadline for this letter loomed, with few ideas in my head for meeting it, I thought of asking for a book leave. Newspaper columnists are awarded time off to work on books, so why not me? I am working on a book, so it wouldn’t be a case of the dog eating the homework. A substitute columnist could fill the space, I could recycle a long-forgotten letter, anything to avoid putting fingers to the keys.

Then salvation arrived, in the form of an AP story reporting on the number of books published last year. The figure was astonishing: 195,000. The story’s lead implied that a form of addiction was responsible: “Despite widespread agreement that too many books are in the marketplace, publishers apparently can’t help themselves.”

The 195,000 books published in 2004 was 14 percent higher than in 2003 and 72 percent higher than 1995. At the same time, 40 million fewer books were sold last year.

And it seems their tolerance is increasing and the addiction is getting worse. The 195,000 books published in 2004 was 14 percent higher than in 2003 and 72 percent higher than 1995. At the same time, 40 million fewer books were sold last year.

More books published, fewer sold, every author chasing an apparently finite number of readers. The first reaction is to view this as a problem. In a vast and confusing marketplace, how does a writer compete? But is that a problem, or an opportunity? Increasingly, authors compete by throwing themselves out there. Coincidentally, this issue of the Bulletin contains the transcript of last winter’s panel on “platform building”—the whole apparatus of publicity, public appearances, website building and general attention-getting that authors have to do to get and stay ahead. The panelists were great, and provided a lot of food for thought.

One avenue they didn’t emphasize was highlighted recently in Publisher’s Weekly, where Bill Goldstein wrote of the growing influence of reading clubs in the process of nudging books toward bestsellerdom. He featured an author who does her writing in the early morning before putting on her telephone headset and meeting by phone with an average of four reading groups.

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Opening Lines

From Bookstore to Book

BY NICHOLAS WEINSTOCK

For many, working in the book business effectively kills the romantic appeal of writing books. The fiscal cynicism of a hit-or-miss retail industry, the bloodthirsty competition for shelf space and window displays, and the withering volume of market-driven drivel are likely to squash the spreading petals of any budding writer. Now and then, however, a job in the book business fails to kill off the muse. Every so often, it actually inspires.

“I loved selling books,” professes Nick Bruel, 38. “And not just as a day job, but as a resource for my future writing.” Bruel, who worked in bookstores for 15 years—first at the venerable Shakespeare & Company and then at the independent children’s bookstore Books of Wonder, both in Manhattan—never lost his artistic optimism in the course of those long days behind the cash register; in fact, he found that it was fueled on a daily basis. “I think if you’re interested in writing books, spending all day in a bookstore gives you a great look at the widest possible display of styles and ideas: it’s a wealth of options, and an amazing variety, in any given corner of the store. Seeing all those illustrative possibilities, it’s really the equivalent of living in a well-stocked museum. And as I set out to hone my own kind of writing and style, I think that was a powerful tool.”

Bruel’s desire to write and illustrate children’s books was not born behind the counter of a bookstore. In his twenties, Bruel created a comic strip called Perfect World that appeared in the free newspaper New York Weekly (which Bruel remembers as having “about one-tenth the page count as The Village Voice, but with easily as many phone sex ads”)—until the paper’s owner abruptly quit and closed up shop before

Nick Bruel

Bruel had been paid a penny. But the strip was an effective calling card, and Bruel succeeded it getting it published in small newspapers in Indiana and San Diego as he built a modest reputation as an innovative illustrator. After working at Shakespeare & Company for seven years, he left to be the art director of a startup magazine that never quite started up. It was then that Peter Glassman, the owner of Books of Wonder, hired Bruel to create a new illustrated edition of The Master Key by L. Frank Baum, the novel Baum wrote just after The Wizard of Oz. That assignment led to Glassman’s hiring Bruel to work at Books of Wonder—where his love of bookstores met his love of writing once more.

“When I got to Books of Wonder,” he recalls, “I had never read a young adult novel in my life. But it was a requirement of working at the store—so I started playing catch-up, reading books that I should have read 20 years before. And it startled me. Just about every genre of adult novel I’d read and loved had a mirror version in the Y/A genre. And it hit me, really for the first time, that books for young people are what I can relate to best.”

If his decades in bookstores had taught him both the range of illustrative possibilities and the power of children’s literature, all that remained was for Bruel to come up with an idea for a book. He kept his pencils sharp by taking more freelance illustrating jobs (designing the Children’s Book of the Month Club catalog; supplying illustrations for Nail Pro, the national magazine of the manicure industry) on top of his duties at Books of Wonder. He sent a few book proposals to Random House, and received an equal number of polite rejections. And then it came to him.

“It was the morning of my 36th birthday,” Bruel remembers. “The title came first. I was taking a shower, and I just thought: ‘BOING. That would be a good title for a kids’ book.’ And I thought: ‘What would it be about? Huh. I guess . . . a kangaroo.’ And so I got out of the shower, got dressed, and sat down with eight pieces of paper, folded them over each other to make a mock-up of the book, and sat there until I had figured out how it would work.”

It took Bruel six months to write and illustrate a

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Copyright’s Orphans

BY ANITA FORE

Recently the Copyright Office announced an intention to examine the issue of orphan works—that is, copyrighted works whose owners are unreasonably difficult or impossible to locate—and invited all interested parties to submit written comments on whether the concerns raised by orphan works require changes in current copyright laws. Currently the law requires that anyone wishing to publish, quote or incorporate copyright-protected works in their own work obtain permission from the copyright owner. Failure to do so exposes the user to a range of legal liability for copyright infringement, including the possibility of injunction to prevent or discontinue the use, as well as damages, attorneys’ fees and court costs. Anytime an author uses the copyright-protected work of another author without prior permission, she runs the risk of a costly lawsuit.

When a copyright owner cannot be identified or located, creators who want to make use of orphan works in whole or in part may hesitate for fear that a previously unidentified copyright owner may surface at a later date and sue for a whole range of remedies. The question arises, therefore, whether the uncertainty surrounding orphan works has stifled the creativity of artists and authors who would otherwise make use of such works, whether the public is being robbed of access to orphaned works that might otherwise be made available in new editions and formats, and whether older works such as photographs, films and books must deteriorate rather than be preserved in digital archives or other formats. The assumption underlying these concerns is that scholarship and the intellectual discourse as a whole will suffer if the ability to exploit these works is denied.

Specifically, the Copyright Office asked “whether current copyright law imposes inappropriate burdens on users, including subsequent creators, of works for which the copyright owner cannot be located (hereinafter referred to as ‘orphan’ works). The issue is whether orphan works are being needlessly removed from public access and their dissemination inhibited. If no one claims the copyright in a work, it appears likely that the public benefit of having access to the work would outweigh whatever copyright interest there might be.”

All interested parties were invited to submit initial written comments by March 25 and reply comments by May 9. All comments submitted may be read by clicking on the appropriate links at www.copyright.gov/orphan, the Copyright Office website.

The Authors Guild submitted a reply comment after reviewing hundreds of initial comments and conducting an e-mail survey of our membership. All 6,900 Authors Guild members who have e-mail addresses on file with us were asked to complete a short, online survey concerning their experiences in obtaining permissions to quote copyright-protected work. The survey generated a strong response from the membership and enabled the Authors Guild to contribute something that almost no other commentators were able to offer to the discussion: empirical evidence about whether an orphan works problem really exists and hampers creators in their work. Other commentators claimed a widespread problem without offering much more than anecdotal evidence for this assumption. The Authors Guild recognized that it is important to know the scope of the issue before proposing any measures designed to “fix” it.

As we wrote in our reply comments, our survey revealed some interesting results. We discovered that while orphan works present a problem to some authors, the impact of the problem on free expression and the larger culture appears to have been overstated by some of the commentators. The overwhelming majority of respondents—85 percent—have “never” or “rarely” failed to reach a rights holder to request permission. Still, although the problem might be relatively small with respect to the creation of new literary works, it is not insignificant. Two-thirds of the authors who responded to our survey, and who had previously sought permissions to use the work of others, indicated that a solution that would allow them to use orphan works would appreciably ease their work as writers.

The Copyright Office also invited interested parties to suggest solutions to the problems of orphan works. Solutions tended to fall into one of three categories: (1) establishment of a licensing system for making use of orphan works that resembles a system currently used in Canada; (2) the enactment of changes to the Copyright Act that would limit the damages awarded for the infringement of copyright in orphan works; (3) the establishment of measures that would allow for use of orphan works without any liability under the Copyright Act. The Authors Guild urged rejection of both the Canadian-style licensing system and the argument for use without liability. Instead, we endorsed a

Anita Fore is the Director of Legal Services of the Authors Guild.

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The Bellow You Didn’t Know

BY ANN BIRSTEIN

Saul Bellow, who died April 5, was a member and supporter of the Authors Guild for 37 years, and a founder of the Authors Guild Foundation.

Since he died I’ve been reading all sorts of things about Saul Bellow—he almost knocked the Pope off the front page of the Times, he’d laugh to know—from people who knew him and from people who would never ever know him, and none of it seems quite right, except for the direct quotations, which are inimitable and timeless.

This just isn’t Saul, my Saul, I keep thinking. The pictures are wrong too, those last ones, with his parchment face, dour, ugly, like a mean mummy. The pictures I start with go back more than 50 years. There he is, young, incredibly handsome, curly haired, charming, funny, wise, laughing so much at his own jokes he can hardly get to finish them. Sometimes the punch line was in Yiddish. His Yiddish was terrific. He had no trouble being Jewish. He was a light in any room. Even in a crowded cocktail party you always knew exactly where he was. I certainly did.

My boyfriend at the time, later my husband, was Alfred Kazin, and Saul was one of the first friends of Alfred’s that I met, though Alfred complained later that they weren’t really even friends until I came along. It’s amusing now to read about Saul’s Savile Row suits. He was always dapper and natty, but in those days, his wardrobe was more restricted. In fact, once when he needed a tuxedo, and he didn’t have one—nobody had one—we went to my father, a man with connections for everything, including tuxedo connections, and Saul emerged from the wholesale manufacturer with a midnight-blue tuxedo, all the rage at the time.

It was OK, until at the formal event he ran into Philip Rahv, the burly, nasty editor of Partisan Review, who demanded, “What kind of a color is that?” and Saul could only think, “It’s Annie’s fault, it’s Annie’s fault.”

We were all living on the Upper West Side at the time, Saul in an apartment where if you stood on the toilet seat and looked out the window, you could see the Hudson, and lots of Sundays we’d walk along Riverside Drive, for the full river view, and then maybe drop into a Broadway ping-pong parlor. When I lost, after grudgingly being allowed to play—machismo was in full flower, though I didn’t know the term, only the effect—Saul sometimes came back home with us, and we talked and talked, and Saul was funny as hell and brilliantly serious at the same time. It was kind of like listening to Mozart.

One summer, we rented little furnished houses in Wellfleet on Cape Cod, and played baseball and card games with the two boys of divorce on loan for a few weeks, Saul’s Gregory and Alfred’s Michael. Saul’s favorite game was I Doubt It, where you had to guess whether a player was telling the truth about a card in his hand, and this time I was winning until Saul triumphantly guessed my method of deceit. “Ha! She pretends she’s lying when she’s telling the truth.”

Interesting that he knew that. One day Alfred and I took him to meet a woman friend who looked like Greta Garbo and Ingrid Bergman combined. She emerged from her cottage in a skimpy two-piece bathing suit to greet us, and shortly after Alfred and Saul dashed off to the village grocer and bought wheat

Ann Birstein, the novelist, is a longtime Guild member and former member of the Guild Council. She is the author of nine books and, most recently, an autobiography, What I Saw at the Fair.
friend of ours said, “Call Saul, he’s depressed, cheer him up.” That stupid I wasn’t.

When Alfred and I separated, Saul wrote me a letter so moving, referring to the first time we met, that I am still grateful for it. And when Alfred in turn said in his autobiography that being married to me was like living with Saul Bellow and I wrote and asked Saul how that grabbed him, Saul wrote back that it was strange since he had never been drawn to Alfred sexually. Later on, when Alfred attacked him in print, Saul sent me a letter more appalled than hurt. But theirs was a love/hate relationship, and with me it was just love.

The week that Saul died, I went to shul and said Kaddish for him. I like to think that if things were reversed, Saul, my Saul, would have said Kaddish for me.

Copyright’s Orphans

Copyright Act amendment that would limit the damages available in an infringement lawsuit involving orphan works.

Agreeing with some other commentators, we proposed that after executing a reasonably diligent search for the copyright owner of an orphan work, a user may use the work in whole or in part. If the owner of the orphan work subsequently steps forward, the only remedy available to the owner would be a reasonable license fee or royalty for the use of the work. No statutory damages, attorneys’ fees or court costs would be available. Furthermore, injunctions against the ongoing use of the work would be available only in those instances where no meaningful compensation for the use of the work exists, e.g., the archiving of orphan works in online databases. The Guild also proposed that any measures taken to change the law include the establishment of a searchable, online database wherein users could attest to having performed a reasonably diligent search for a copyright owner and, having failed to locate the owner, announce an intention to make use of the orphan work.

The reply comment submitted by the Authors Guild can be read in its entirety on this page of the Copyright Office website: www.copyright.gov/orphan/comments/reply/OWR0135-AuthorsGuild.pdf
Preliminary Approval for Freelancers’ Class Action Settlement

Writers Urged to File Claims Before September 30 Deadline

BY KAY MURRAY

Nearly five years after filing a copyright infringement suit on behalf of freelance writers whose articles were used by at least one of 12 electronic databases, the Authors Guild and two other writers’ organizations announced in March that they had reached a settlement worth $10–$18 million.

Judge George Daniels of the federal district court in New York City gave preliminary approval of a Class Notice, which provides a full description of the settlement’s benefits, identifies which articles are included and excluded, and explains authors’ rights.

Publishers that include The New York Times, Time Inc. and The Wall Street Journal, as well as database companies that include Dow Jones Interactive, Knight-Ridder, Lexis-Nexis, Proquest, and West Group, have agreed to pay as much as $1,500 per story, provided the writer registered the copyright in accordance with timetables established by federal copyright law. Writers who failed to register copyrights could receive up to $60 per article.

The amount paid will depend on factors that include:

• Whether the writer registered the copyright;
• The original fee paid for the article;
• The year the story was published;
• Whether you choose to permit future use of the article in the databases.

“We are delighted,” said Nick Taylor, president of the Authors Guild. “This is a substantial settlement, and if ultimately approved, it will vindicate freelance writers who deserve compensation for and control over their work in the electronic marketplace. It proves our contention that access and online advertising revenues shouldn’t all go into the pockets of big media, but should be shared with the creators.”

The settlement covers articles that appeared in a database after August 15, 1997, regardless of when they were first published. (The statute of limitations for copyright infringement is three years, and the suit was brought on August 15, 2000).

If you’ve ever had a freelance article published in a periodical, please visit the official settlement site, www.copyrightclassaction.com, to determine if your works are eligible—even if you didn’t receive a Class Notice. The Claims Administrator is using several methods to help class members determine if their works are eligible, including a list of the thousands of publications that licensed their issues to the databases, as well as several searchable databases. If your freelance articles appeared in one of the publications listed or on one of the databases, you should submit claims by September 30, 2005, or opt out of the settlement by July 15, 2005 to preserve your claims for future action. You can submit your claims or opt out of the settlement on the official website.

One of the key parts of the settlement entails the right to choose whether or not to grant a license to the defendants to keep using your works. If you don’t allow them to exploit your works, your recovery will be reduced by 35 percent. If you choose to let the defendants continue to use your works, you will not have the right to prevent the databases from continuing to make them commercially available to third parties, but you will receive 35 percent more compensation.

Unless you opt out of the settlement, any infringement claims you have against the databases or participating publishers will be lost forever if the court approves the final settlement. For that reason, we urge writers either to file claims or to opt out. Taking no action is not in your best interests.

Kay Murray is the assistant director and general counsel of the Authors Guild.
Report on the Annual Meeting

BY ABIGAIL MONTAGUE

The Authors Guild held its Annual Meeting on February 24 at the General Society’s Library in New York City. Guild President Nick Taylor called the meeting to order, collected the final ballots for elections to the Authors League and Authors Guild Councils and, after a vote, approved the minutes from last year’s meeting.

Mr. Taylor began his president’s report with a discussion of the U.S. Supreme Court’s review of the Grokster case, which was initiated by Hollywood motion picture studios and several major record companies. In their lawsuit, the plaintiffs contended that Grokster, an Internet peer-to-peer file-sharing service, should be shut down because it is used primarily for the illegal trading of copyright-protected music and movies. Lower courts disagreed, on the grounds that some of its uses are legal. Although the Authors Guild is not against file-sharing generally, Taylor said, we “always come down on the side of copyright” and have therefore joined in amicus briefs favoring the plaintiffs.

Mr. Taylor also noted that we continue to push for passage of the Artist-Museum Partnership Act (also known as the Artists’ Contribution to American Heritage Act), which would allow artists and authors to deduct the fair market value of materials they donate to nonprofit institutions, such as libraries or museums. He explained the Guild’s objection to the provision in the Patriot Act that allows the FBI to subpoena bookstore and library records, while prohibiting these institutions from informing the subject of the inquiry. That provision is set to expire at the end of the year.

Mr. Taylor and Authors Guild Foundation President Sidney Offit reviewed the last year’s successful program of roundtable discussions, seminars and panels.

Paul Aiken, the Guild’s Executive Director, delivered his annual report on services and membership. Actual membership numbers are down slightly, from 8,861 to 8,520, due to our tougher financial policy of dropping members who are delinquent with their dues, but recruitment is up 27 percent and dues revenues are up 10 percent. Dues have remained constant for 16 years and we do not expect to raise them for the foreseeable future, as we anticipate meeting rising expenses with increased membership.

Mr. Aiken reported on some of our other membership programs, noting that health insurance continues to be a popular feature of membership, as are the services provided by our Web Services department, which include domain name registration, website building and web hosting.

Mr. Aiken also discussed the change in Backin print.com. Formerly, the program had two arms: the first allowed members to sell existing copies of books through Shakespeare & Company, the second was a reprinting service with a print-on-demand publisher, iUniverse. Due to increases in the sale of used books online, Shakespeare decided that it no longer made financial sense to continue with backinPrint.com. After returning all unsold books to authors, we closed that part of our program. The on-demand program continues unchanged, with more than 1,161 titles returned to print.

AuthorsGuild.net remains popular with members; more than 1,400 websites have been built with our site-building software. In addition, we have built almost 600 sites for members with our Site Express service. We are in the process of creating Site Builder 2.0, which will feature new designs and capabilities. The Guild’s Internet domain registration service now includes over 2,000 domain names.

Mr. Aiken also reported that the Author’s Registry has paid out more than $3.3 million to writers since its inception. The majority of the money comes from photocopy royalties collected in the U.K.

Finally, Mr. Aiken discussed the new Google Print program, which allows someone using the search engine to find results that include low-resolution pages of relevant books. After the Guild discussed the program with Google, Google expressed its willingness to share tracking information with authors. Google Print also allows context advertising on the bottom of the page images with the publisher’s permission. (Context advertising allows the promotion of related products on a page generated by a single search. However, the ads that appear are often unrelated to the topic of the search, despite having similar keywords.) Google gets paid whenever anyone clicks on an ad and is sharing the ad revenue with the publishers. Most publishing contracts call for a 50/50 split of electronic income with the authors; most publishers are aware that they should be sharing that money, although we believe it is a modest amount.

General Counsel Kay Murray and Anita Fore, Director of Legal Services, discussed the activities of the legal department. Ms. Fore reported that she and

Abigail Montague is an Authors Guild staff member.
Staff Attorney Michael Gross have handled or supervised the handling of 744 individual matters the past year.

Ms. Murray reported that the Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) issued a regulation that prohibited publishers from doing what they normally do to publish a book—that is, engage in substantive editing—if the author lives in a country against which the U.S. has imposed sanctions (currently Cuba, Burma, Iran, the Sudan and North Korea). The prohibition included dissident writers. The Guild felt strongly that this regulation violated the First Amendment and misread the Trading With the Enemies Act. A number of publishers sued OFAC, and in response, OFAC rewrote its regulations to say that American publishers could engage in “all the transactions necessary” to publish. The suit is still pending, with certain details yet to be worked out, but the Guild sees the outcome as a victory.

Ms. Murray also noted that the Guild supported the appeals of Judith Miller and Matthew Cooper, reporters who refused subpoenas to reveal their confidential sources in the investigation of the leak of Valerie Plame’s identity as a CIA operative. Ms. Murray said that the Guild will be supporting a press shield bill that was recently introduced in the House of Representatives.

Finally, Ms. Murray discussed a new trend in author-agent contracts, noting that the William Morris Agency has recently changed its agreement to give the agent who represents an author’s work exclusive rights to represent it for the life of the copyright, which is the author’s life plus 70 years.

Paul Aiken then gave the Treasurer’s Report. Membership dues are up, thanks both to a good recruiting year and a 5 percent increase in renewals. Web Services revenue showed an increase of almost 48 percent. That growth will not continue, as most members who wanted a new website now have one. The Guild’s endowment has grown to $582,000 and the Foundation’s to $539,000.

Voting for the Authors League Board and the Authors Guild Council concluded and the results were announced. Roger Angell and Herbert Mitgang were reelected to the Authors League Board. Reelected council members include James Duffy, Clarissa Pinkola Estés, Daniel Hoffman, Nicholas Lemann, and James B. Stewart. New Council members include Oscar Hijuelos, Douglas Preston, Roxana Robinson, Sarah Vowell and Jonathan Weiner. (Bios of new members are on p. 50.)

Mr. Aiken, Ms. Murray and Mr. Taylor took questions from the floor, after which the meeting was adjourned.

**Pierre La Mure Fund**

The French-born writer Pierre La Mure, who came to New York in 1933 as a correspondent for the Paris newspaper *Le Jour*, and was the author of award-winning biographies of John D. Rockefeller and Thomas A. Edison (published in France in 1937 and 1938) was best known for his 1950 novel, *Moulin Rouge*, which was made into the movie of the same name in 1952. Over the next two decades, La Mure completed three more novels: *Beyond Desire* (1955), *Clair de Lune* (1962) and *The Private Life of Mona Lisa* (1976).

A member of the Authors Guild from 1953 until his death in Los Angeles in 1977, Mr. La Mure left a will directing that his estate go to his longtime assistant, Thelma Carr, and pass to the Authors League upon her death. Ms. Carr died early this year, leaving all her interest in La Mure’s estate, as well as much of her private capital, to the Authors League. Her gift will establish the “Pierre La Mure Fund,” to be used for projects that aid in the protection of authors. Such projects include, but are not limited to, the promotion of federal and state legislation to defend authors’ rights in copyright, freedom of expression and taxation, participation in litigation in behalf of both individual authors and the interests of authors collectively, and for research and publication of matters relevant to authors.

The Authors League acknowledges this generous bequest with gratitude.
A Book in Every Backpack

Kyle Zimmer, cofounder and president of First Book, an organization that works with publishers to distribute free books to children around the country, was honored in April with the Authors Guild Award for Distinguished Service to the Literary Community at the Authors Guild Foundation’s 13th Annual Benefit. Host Roy Blount, Jr. entertained the evening’s guests. Mary Pope Osborne, award-winning children’s book author and former Authors Guild president, presented the award to Ms. Zimmer.

In her introduction, Ms. Osborne spoke of visiting public and private schools as a children’s book author and observing the great gulf between children who can buy all the books they want and those who have no books at all, and the lasting consequences of that gap.

“A child growing up in a middle-class family has been exposed to between 1,000 and 1,700 hours of one-on-one picture book reading prior to entering school, while the average child growing up in a low-income family has been exposed to only 25 hours of one-on-one reading. A child from a home without children’s books has a much smaller chance of ever learning to read than a child from a house with books.”

Meanwhile, “millions of shiny new children’s books [are] sitting in warehouses all over the country. Every year, thousands of these books were being destroyed to make room for new books, as there was no centralized system to help authors and publishers make better use of them.

“Children’s authors talked about this situation among themselves. They talked about it with teachers and publishers. The Guild even talked about it. While we were all talking about the problem, someone actually set out to do something about it.”

In 1992, Kyle Zimmer was a corporate lawyer in Washington, D.C., tutoring a boy at a soup kitchen. Struck by the fact that this child and most of the other children at the center didn’t own a single book, she and her partners, Peter Gold and Elizabeth Arky, set out to change the odds with First Book. Working in partnership with publishers and interested corporations, the organization delivers books to children in 1,000 communities. To ensure that children enjoy the experience of having a perfect new book to call their own, each book goes home in the hands of an individual child, with bookplates supplied so children can write their names in their books. Last November, First Book distributed its 30 millionth book.

In accepting the award, Ms. Zimmer thanked publishers, authors, and other supporters of First Book, and reminded the audience of the size of the problem.

“More than 60 percent of families living at or below the poverty line do not have a single age-appropriate book for their children. More than 80 percent of the preschool and after-school programs serving this same population have no books at all for their children.

“No books at all’ is a phrase that haunts me. Honestly, after working with First Book for years, I still can’t tell you that I grasp what that really means for a child—no bedtime stories, no reading under the covers with a flashlight, and slim hope for a strong future.

“We owe many thank you’s for this success—to our

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From left, former Guild presidents Scott Turow, Mary Pope Osborne, and Letty Cottin Pogrebin, Foundation president Sidney Offit, former Guild president Erica Jong, honoree Kyle Zimmer, host Roy Blount, Jr. and Guild president Nick Taylor at the Authors Guild Foundation benefit on April 4.
Big Men Squeamish over “Naughty” Words. In March, two blogs that cover gay people in sports reported that the NFL’s online store has a list of more than 1100 “naughty” words, including “gay,” “lesbian,” “tongue,” and “Budweiser” (but not including “Hitler,” “bin Laden,” “dyke,” “fag,” or “Miller Lite”). The store will automatically reject any order for a personalized official football jersey if it contains one of those words. The existence of the list came to light when a college professor tried to order one of the $79.95 jerseys with the name “Gay” on the back in honor of her former student, New England Patriot defensive back Randall Gay. Her order was rejected with the message “[t]his field should not contain naughty words.” After the story first appeared, one Barry Gay tried to complain to the NFL through its online form, but his message was rejected because “[y]ou can’t use that word or phrase [i.e. “Gay”] in the last name field.” The NFL website was changed after the story, complete with a link to the long list of objectionable words, ran. Now, “naughty” orders are rejected with the message that “the personalization entered cannot be accepted,” and the store will sell “gay” jerseys (though not “lesbian” ones).

Public Appreciates Journalism. A national survey by the Missouri School of Journalism found that 62 percent of Americans agree that journalism is mainly a force for good and that by a 3 to 1 margin, they believe they personally benefit from what journalists provide. Seventy-five percent think that journalism helps them understand what is going on in America. The bad news is that 85 percent believe journalists are biased, 65 percent think they invade people’s privacy too often, and 77 percent believe they are “too negative.”

Alabama Legislator Moves to Ban Books that “Recognize or Promote” Gays. Alabama state representative Gerald Allen has introduced legislation that would ban the use of state resources for the “purchase of textbooks or library materials that recognize or promote homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle.” Juanita Owens, director of the Montgomery City-County Library, said that if the bill became law, “half the books in the library could end up being banned. It’s all based on how one interprets the material.” She cited the many cross-dressing roles in the works of William Shakespeare, as well as The Picture of Dorian Gray, Leaves of Grass and The Color Purple as vulnerable to such a ban. Content-based censorship by governments is prohibited under the First Amendment unless strict standards of necessity are met.

Reporter Jailed for Refusing to Name Source. On July 6, New York Times reporter Judith Miller was ordered to the Alexandria Detention Center for up to 4 months because she refuses to tell a special federal prosecutor who told her that the wife of a Bush Administration critic was a CIA operative. Miller had promised her source anonymity and the U.S. Supreme Court refused to review a court order that she testify. The New York Times and she maintain that breaking her promise would endanger a free press by discouraging whistle blowers from coming forth. But Time Magazine, embroiled in the same case and facing “meaningful” financial penalties for disobeying the court order, said that nobody is above the law and turned over its reporter’s notes in the case. After his source gave him specific permission to testify, Time reporter Matthew Cooper agreed to testify and avoided jail. Several bills are now pending in Congress that would create a “press shield,” or journalists’ privilege to protect the identity of their sources against government-issued subpoenas. Forty-nine states have such bills, but the United States does not.

Corporations Pull Purse Strings Tight against Bad Press. Advertising Age reports that Morgan Stanley, in the news lately for poor stock performance and management upheavals, has added a term to its advertising contracts with several key publications. The new guidelines require publishers to notify the agency “in the event that objectionable editorial coverage is planned . . . as a last-minute change may be necessary” and to “immediately cancel all Morgan Stanley ads for a minimum of 48 hours” if the agency cannot be contacted. Morgan Stanley spent $10.5 million in ads in the Wall Street Journal alone last year. Energy giant BP (which spent $95 million last year across all media) reportedly adopted even stricter rules, requiring publishers to inform the company in advance of any planned mention of the company, a competitor, or the oil-and-gas industry at large and letting it cancel ads without penalty. Failure to comply would “likely” lead to the immediate suspension of BP ads. While some publishers were quoted as saying they have “unwritten guidelines” with advertisers from some industries to pull their ads from issues containing negative coverage, none believed it acceptable or even possible to show or yet stories with advertisers in advance. One former magazine executive, however, pointed out that the ailing magazine and newspaper industry is not in a position to “buck rules from advertisers” and pred

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Making the Patriot Act Safe for Democracy

BY MICHAEL GROSS

In the aftermath of the September 11th attacks, Congress’s prime objective was to pass legislation that would enable law enforcement and intelligence agencies to prevent future acts of domestic and international terrorism. With Democrats and Republicans working together, Congress was able to pass the USA Patriot (Providing Appropriate Tools to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism) Act within 45 days of the attacks. The American public did not welcome it with open arms, however, as both conservative and liberal groups voiced concern over many of the Act’s provisions as fundamentally threatening civil liberties. Sixteen of the more controversial provisions are set to expire at the end of 2005. Congress is currently holding hearings to determine whether to curb the Act’s broad investigatory and surveillance powers or to wholly eliminate them.

One of the most problematic provisions from the perspective of the Authors Guild is among those scheduled to expire. Section 215 allows law enforcement officials to search a person’s library, medical or other personal records. Under this section, not only can officials seize these records pursuant to secret court orders, but the law also makes it a crime for the record holder to notify anyone of the seizure. There are no checks and balances within the law itself to regulate the government’s use—or abuse—of this power.

Other provisions that are set to expire include Section 209, which allows the seizure of a private citizen’s voice-mails which the Act considers the equivalent of e-mails. As such, they are subject to search and seizure under a regular search warrant rather than the more difficult to obtain wiretap order. Similarly, Section 212 requires communication service providers such as telephone and Internet service companies to disclose their customers’ records or the content of their customers’ communications in an emergency situation without a warrant.

Even if the expiring Patriot Act provisions are renewed unchanged, the SAFE Act (Security and Freedom Ensured Act) proposed by Senators Larry Craig (R-Idaho) and Richard Durbin (D-Illinois), offers a “fallback” position. In part, the SAFE Act would temper Section 215 of the Patriot Act by requiring law enforcement officials to present sufficient evidence that a suspected terrorist is a spy or foreign agent before any medical, library or other records can be searched without the suspect’s knowledge or consent. The SAFE Act would also require more judicial supervision of the execution of warrants and ensure that the recipients of these record search warrants are allowed to challenge them in court.

Additionally, the SAFE Act would limit Section 213 of the Patriot Act, which has been referred to as the “sneak and peek” provision. Section 213 permits law enforcement officials to carry out search warrants without telling the owner of such property for a “reasonable period” of up to six months. Civil rights advocates argue that these delayed notification searches violate the Fourth Amendment, which requires the government or its agents to announce their presence during a search or otherwise provide the property owner with prior notice if they are not present.

Finally, the SAFE Act would limit roving wiretaps permitted under several provisions of the Patriot Act, as well as limit the definition of terrorism so that the Act could not be used to stifle political dissent.

In mid-June, in a significant victory for the Guild and others concerned with readers’ privacy, the House of Representatives passed the Freedom to Read Amendment to the Commerce, Justice, State Appropriations Bill. The amendment cuts Justice Department funds to funds for library and bookstore searches under the USA Patriot Act.

The Authors Guild will continue to keep you up to date on developments involving this important legislation.

City Council Deals Blow to Agatha Christie, Jack London

In March, the El Segundo, California City Council rejected recommendations from its public library staff and supporters to name reading rooms after Agatha Christie and Jack London as “un-American.” Councilman John Gaines objected to Christie, asking “[C]an’t we pick an American?” Mayor Kelly McDowell, objecting to native Californian London, who was once a socialist, said “I don’t want to use one whose politics, in my view, weren’t in line with American ideals.” Jack London was a founding member of the Authors League, the Guild’s predecessor.

Michael Gross is a staff attorney of the Authors Guild.
Court Gives "Second Chance" To Suit Against Author James Patterson

Sharp v. Patterson
U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York

A federal court has refused to dismiss many elements of a lawsuit against bestselling author James Patterson, allowing his former fiancée, Christina Sharp, to proceed with certain claims of copyright infringement and breach of contract.

According to the complaint, Patterson was writing Cat & Mouse, the 1997 installment of his Alex Cross series, while he and Sharp were dating, but Patterson was having trouble writing convincing love scenes between Cross and the female protagonist. Sharp claims that Patterson asked her to write romantic scenes and otherwise assist him in fleshing out the character of Christine. According to Sharp, she not only discussed plot points with Patterson, but also wrote him letters containing short passages for the book. Patterson allegedly promised to dedicate the book to her and acknowledge her contributions. Sharp also expected, as Patterson's wife, to share in the proceeds of Cat & Mouse.

In addition, Sharp claims that she developed her own idea for a novel, and that Patterson suggested creative changes and introduced her to an agent. (Sharp completed the manuscript after their relationship ended, but it has yet to be published.)

All in all, Sharp alleges that Patterson stole her ideas, along with some original writing, and incorporated them into Cat & Mouse, Suzanne's Diary for Nicholas, and five other books. Her lawsuit claims breach of contract, breach of implied contract, copyright infringement, promissory estoppel, unjust enrichment and misappropriation of novel and literary ideas.

Patterson filed a motion to dismiss the entire suit, arguing that Sharp failed to allege the necessary elements of a breach of contract claim, and that her claim is preempted by the Copyright Act. The court disagreed, holding that Sharp had adequately alleged an agreement to exchange her writing services in exchange for financial consideration, and that these allegations went beyond claims of copyright infringement.

The court found, however, that the Copyright Act preempted the unjust enrichment claim, because Sharp alleged nothing beyond unauthorized copying. Her claim that Patterson misappropriated her "novel and original idea" to write an epistolary novel was also dismissed, since the idea was neither novel nor original enough to warrant copyright protection. In the end, the court allowed the specific infringement claims against Cat & Mouse and Suzanne's Diary for Nicholas only—not against the other five books.

The court did not opine on the validity of Sharp's claims, only on their legal sufficiency at the beginning stage of the suit. She will be allowed to pursue her case against Patterson for breach of express and implied contracts for Cat & Mouse, and for copyright infringement involving Cat & Mouse and Suzanne's Diary for Nicholas.

—Anita Fore
Director of Legal Services

Newspaper Beats Lawsuit Over Naming of Juvenile Rape Suspect

Bowley v. City of Uniontown Police Department
Third Circuit Court of Appeals

James L. Bowley's name was unlawfully revealed by police, but lawfully published by a Pennsylvania newspaper, according to the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, which dismissed a suit brought by the 15-year-old rape suspect against The Uniontown Herald Standard, among others.

Although Pennsylvania prohibits the disclosure of juvenile law enforcement records, an article in the Herald Standard identified Bowley as the alleged rapist of a seven-year-old girl. On seeing the published report of his arrest, Bowley brought suit in the Court of Common Pleas of Fayette County, Pennsylvania against the Herald Standard, the City of Uniontown, the City of Uniontown Police Department and Police Officer Fred Balsley. Bowley alleged that the police-
The plaintiff accused the newspaper of breaching confidentiality in violation of the Pennsylvania statute, as well as invasion of privacy. In response, the Herald Standard filed a motion to dismiss, arguing that the breach of confidentiality claim was not recognized under Pennsylvania law, and that Bowley could not establish each element of the invasion of privacy claim. The newspaper also claimed First Amendment protection from civil liability, since the article contained only truthful information.

Because there was a federal claim, the defendants removed the case to the Western District of Pennsylvania, where the District Court upheld the Herald Standard’s motion to dismiss, a decision confirmed by the Third Circuit Court of Appeals.

The appellate court relied on the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in Florida Star v. B.J.F., which held that police failure to comply with a Florida statute prohibiting the release of a rape victim’s name did not render a newspaper’s receipt of the protected information unlawful. In that case, the court ruled that if a newspaper lawfully obtained truthful information about a matter of public significance, state officials could not punish the newspaper for publishing such information, absent a need to further a state interest of the highest order. Moreover, the court found that if punishment was warranted, it must be narrowly tailored to serve the purported state interest.

In applying the Florida Star ruling, the Third Circuit first needed to determine whether the published information was truthful, and lawfully obtained. Although the court noted that Balsley allegedly violated Pennsylvania law by naming the juvenile suspect, it also noted that the Herald Standard article contained truthful information, which Bowley could not prove was unlawfully obtained. Because Pennsylvania prohibits only the disclosure, not the receipt, of juvenile law enforcement information, the court concluded that Balsley’s disclosures did not render the newspaper’s subsequent actions unlawful.

Next, the Third Circuit considered whether Bowley’s arrest constituted a matter of public concern. Looking again to Florida Star, where the Supreme Court held that the commission and investigation of violent crimes are matters of “paramount public import,” the court judged Bowley’s arrest for a violent crime to be a legitimate public concern.

Finally, the court had to decide whether civil liability could be imposed. The First Amendment shields newspapers from civil liability unless such cases are narrowly tailored to serve an interest of the highest order. Essentially, the court found that when government has stewardship over confidential information, withholding the information serves the public interest of preserving confidentiality more narrowly than punishing a publisher after the fact. Therefore, the appeals court found that imposing civil liability on the Herald Standard would not be narrowly tailored to protect Bowley’s anonymity. It would have been more appropriate if Balsley had not disclosed his name in the first place. As a result, the Third Circuit concluded that the First Amendment shielded the Herald Standard from liability, and that Bowley must look to the government to obtain compensation for his loss of privacy.

Although many states forbid publishing the names of under-age criminals and criminal suspects, the enforcement of such laws is sometimes sporadic.

—Michael Gross
Staff Attorney

Court Lets Company Modify Software Without Designer’s Permission

Krause v. Titleserv, Inc.
U.S. Court of Appeals, Second Circuit

Authors who purchase computer programs such as Microsoft Word or WordPerfect may not modify or reverse-engineer the software under the terms of the copyright agreements (to which they must consent prior to installation). In the absence of a written agreement, however, one programmer inadvertently ceded ownership of his work to a former client.

Between 1986 and 1996, independent contractor William Krause wrote 35 computer programs for the title service firm Titleserv Inc., for which he was paid $350,000. The programs allow Titleserv to track the status of client requests (among other functions) and were installed on its employees’ computers. Although Krause entered negotiations with Titleserv over copyright ownership in 1996, he terminated his relationship with Titleserv before reaching an agreement. Prior to leaving, however, he took steps to ensure that Titleserv could not modify his source code.

In July 1996, Titleserv filed a misappropriation suit against Krause in state court, but dropped the suit after it circumvented Krause’s protections and reverse-engineered eight crucial programs back to source code. Titleserv then modified the source code by fixing bugs, updating client information, and adding new features.

In response to these modifications, Krause filed a copyright infringement suit in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York, alleging that the modifications constituted unauthorized copying and

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AUTHORS GUILD FOUNDATION SYMPOSIUM

Standing Above the Crowd: Platforms and Publicity in a Packed Marketplace

The newest and, for many, the most unnerving job of the writer—to pitch one’s self along with one’s work—was the subject of an Authors Guild and Authors Guild Foundation-sponsored discussion at Scandinavia House in New York in January. The panelists were Beth Dickey, associate director of publicity at Hyperion Books, where she has worked with a number of bestselling authors, including David Halberstam, Candace Bushnell, Steve Martin and George Carlin; Nelson George, author of eight nonfiction books and five novels, winner of a Grammy and an American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation for Elevating the Game and Hip-hop America, and E. Jean Carroll, whose “Ask E. Jean” column in Elle magazine reaches almost five million readers a month, and who is the author of Hunter: The Strange and Savage Life of Hunter S. Thompson, Mr. Right Right Now and two collections. The evening was moderated by Guild President Nick Taylor.

NICK TAYLOR: Let’s start by asking Beth, what do you look for in an author? You want to know if they can talk, right?

BETH DICKEY: Talking is important. As important as writing.

TAYLOR: There’s a revealing statement.

DICKEY: It is very true, actually.

TAYLOR: What can an author bring to the table? What should an author think about?

DICKEY: As a publicist, an author whose platform lends itself to a nonfiction book is always more appealing to me, even though, as a reader, I prefer fiction. With that said, if it is a work of fiction, there are certainly angles that can be exploited, that can be used in media. Exploited is the right word. For example, I’m working right now on a book by the former sex columnist for the Yale Daily News. Her name is Natalie Krinsky and her book is titled Chloe Does Yale. It is a novel, but she had already made a name for herself. The Today Show had her on when she was an undergrad. Candace Bushnell is a novelist who made quite a name for herself with Sex and the City, which was a collection of newspaper columns. So works of fiction can have platforms too, but in general nonfiction is the easiest sell for the media.

TAYLOR: How do you find out if someone can talk? Do you do a pre-interview before you send the word out on an author?

DICKEY: Yes. That’s an integral part of the acquisition from a publishing standpoint. Unfortunately, it’s really a major part of the buy. It’s certainly a major part of the appeal. We always have someone in publicity, whether it’s me or my boss, sit in on each potential acquire because we have to be able to go back to the publishing side and to our peers and say, This person is articulate, camera ready, has had media experience. That’s very, very important.

TAYLOR: And that’s before you even acquire the book.

DICKEY: Yes.

TAYLOR: So would you say then that an author’s ability to be presentable on television or radio helps sell the book in the first place, as opposed to the book itself?
DICKEY: Without a doubt.

TAYLOR: Let’s move on to E. Jean and to Nelson. Both of you have made these kinds of national media appearances. What do you do to prepare for them? Or, what did you do before the first one?

NELSON GEORGE: I realized very early on in my writing career that being a specialist was an asset. I always wanted to write fiction, but my entry into writing was covering music. I worked at Billboard magazine from 1982 to 1989 as an editor. I ended up doing a book on Michael Jackson in 1984, a quickie book that actually did very well. I did a book on Motown Records. And I did a sort of a conceptual book, called The Death of Rhythm and Blues, in 1988. Those three books were centered in the music world and so there was a natural platform for me. I was working at a major trade publication. I started to do a lot of press interviews, even when I didn’t have a book out. Someone would say, I want a comment about this new direction in disco or hip-hop that’s coming up, and I made myself available. So I was able to build a name for myself as an expert in music.

The next leap was when I left Billboard in ’89. I didn’t want to write music books only. I started writing for the Village Voice. I still did music reviews but I also started writing a column, which was more of a general column about life in New York. I did pieces on sports. I did pieces on film. And eventually I wrote more books. I did a book on film. I did a book on basketball. Every step of the way my journalism career was sort of my baseline. And from that baseline I would go do books that somehow related to things I was covering and had some expertise in. So that’s my nonfiction career.

As I started doing novels it got a little more tricky because the things I wanted to write about in fiction were not necessarily the things I was writing about in nonfiction. Of the five novels, the books have been very up and down. The books that have done the best have tended to have a music connection. Having a music connection has made it easier for me to get press. A really good example is this past Sunday. I have a new novel out, my first mystery, but it’s grounded in the entertainment business. The lead character is the guy you see at every nightclub in New York, the big black guy who doesn’t let you in. That guy is the lead character in the novel, which is called The Accidental Hunter. I was on Hot 97 Sunday night on a show called Street Soldiers, which is a kind of community affairs hip-hop-related show, because there’s a connection between the novel and my brand, if you will. I was able to get on that show and get a kind of exposure I wouldn’t have gotten if I had just been a mystery writer and I didn’t have that kind of pedigree. I always worked very hard to use the brand that it took me so long to build as a music writer and also as a cultural critic, to help the fiction help my other activities. I think it’s very important to come from a place of specialization; it is very helpful in getting media.

TAYLOR: Before I get to E. Jean with the same question, let me mention some of your nonfiction titles, which include Black Face, Reflections on African Americans and the Movies; Post-Soul Nation: The Explosive
1980s as Experienced by African Americans Previously Known as Blacks and Before That Negroes; The Death of Rhythm and Blues, and Buppies, B-Boys, Baps and Bohos: Notes on Post-Soul Culture, an essay collection. That’s just a handful of your titles, but clearly you specialize in contemporary black culture.

GEORGE: When I was a young boy, just out of college, there were books that I wanted to read. I decided as I got older, I realized that nobody was writing the books I wanted to read. So I decided to write those books. That’s always been the motivation: to write the books that I wanted to read. I always try and write. I always think there’s a bright nineteen-year-old somewhere in America who is me now. And I want to write books for that person. That’s always been sort of my target reader—who I was when I was eighteen or nineteen.

TAYLOR: So becoming a specialist, becoming the go-to person for bookers on talk shows and so forth, certainly is a great aid in building a platform.

GEORGE: Absolutely. It can be limiting in a way, but if you have something that you know very well, there’s a show somewhere in America that wants to talk to you about it at some point.

TAYLOR: E. Jean specializes as well. And anybody who’s read her Elle column will know that she specializes in the concerns and anxieties and—

E. JEAN CARROLL: Idiocies—

TAYLOR: Desires of, I guess, young women in America, but young men as well. And her website, greatboyfriends.com keeps the buzz going. Would you talk about specialty from your standpoint?

CARROLL: When Nelson talked it almost didn’t make any difference what he said, because he’s so likable. You could be on a television show with the sound off the way your face is all lit up.

GEORGE: Thank you.

CARROLL: That right there is what Beth is talking about. It’s the way you talk. I don’t care what you’re saying. I understand that you’ve made yourself the go-to expert in music. That I understand. But they’re going to you because you’re so likable. That’s the essence of somebody who can sell a book. You are likable.

GEORGE: But I had to learn how to do that.

CARROLL: Oh, get out of here. You’ve got it. You’ve got it. [To audience] Am I wrong? No. He’s just likable. Right? He’s just likable. That’s it. Some authors come on and you’re just like, oh...Who’s that horrible woman who’s on the radio who answers questions?

DICKEY: Doctor…

CARROLL: Dr. Laura. Remember when they put Dr. Laura on TV? It was hideous. She couldn’t be on TV, her sales went down. As soon as they took her off TV, and put her back on the radio, her sales went back up. Now you, you could be put all over the TV and your sales would just boom, boom, boom. That’s all I’ve got to say. You need to know nothing more.

GEORGE: Let me jump in. I want to say that I didn’t go through media training formally but I actually watched people on TV and realized when you’re on TV you only have X amount of time to speak.

DICKEY: Like four to six minutes.

"Almost getting my ass kicked by Bryant Gumbel was really very good because I realized if I’m going to be on TV I have to have my thirty-second bites . . .”

—Nelson George

GEORGE: And that four to six minutes goes by like this. [Finger snap.] So I really learned. In 1985, I did a book on Motown, and I was on the Today show with Bryant Gumbel. I’ll never forget this because I thought, Bryant Gumbel’s black, I’m black, it’s going to be wonderful. It was not wonderful. I sat in the green room. I sat down and I said, “How you doing, Bryant?” “All right.” I thought, uh oh. He comes in and doesn’t look up at me. And he really came at me really hard with a lot of tough questions. I was really young, it was my first major book, and I was very, very nervous but I got through it. It was a trial by fire and it was a really good experience. Almost getting my ass kicked by Bryant Gumbel was really very good because I realized if I’m going to be on TV I have to have my thirty-second bites, at the very least, and I have to be very clear about what I’m going to say. That experience made me a better speaker. I see Bryant Gumbel now and I love him because I admire what he does and how he handles himself. But sometimes you have to go through those moments of awkwardness to learn.
TAYLOR: So it's a matter of really paying attention to the preparation for the kinds of things you may or may not want to do but have to do in order to get out there and stay out there?

GEORGE: Absolutely. I'm actually doing media training now of some recording artists. I've been working with a nineteen-year-old singer who has a hit record out. It's interesting working with someone that young who's already done a lot of media but has no idea how to tell a story about himself.

TAYLOR: Just being on a stage doesn't automatically make you a good talk show guest.

GEORGE: No, not at all.

DICKEY: That's an interesting point. Experts are incredibly articulate within their field of knowledge and that's how they've gotten where they are. But to boil that down to a four- to six-minute interview on national television and sell your book is a whole 'nother ball of wax. That's why there's media training. Ideally, the publishing house doesn't want to pay for that; they want someone to have it naturally.

TAYLOR: As Nelson said, they have to be able to tell a story.

DICKEY: Yes.

TAYLOR: In four to six minutes.

DICKEY: And make it interesting.

CARROLL: Here's the thing about that. All those authors who speak really well, who get their message down and say the name of their book every twenty seconds—that works against you. The "well spoken author." Don't you hate that? The thing is to differentiate yourself, let your real personality come through, don't pay any attention to the media training, which basically sucks. They will tell you the same thing: Wear something around your neck. Have your hair done. Wear quarter-size earrings. It's stupid. Don't pay any attention to it. Be yourself. Be eccentric. You know what I mean?

DICKEY: But honey, E. Jean, you are a fabulous version of yourself and some authors are not.

CARROLL: Anybody is more interesting than I am. I'm just saying, be that quintessential self.

GEORGE: One thing I learned working with this young singer was that he was told by someone to say the name of the album every sixty seconds. So I watched all these tapes of him. It's all "My new album is coming out, blah, blah, blah." No, no.

DICKEY: He'll probably never get another interview.

GEORGE: He's not projecting who he is. This is a really good lesson. I watched all of this guy's tapes, and you don't have any idea who he is. You have no idea who this young boy is. It turns out he has a fabulous life story, how he got to be a singer, his family. But he's been afraid to tell that. And ultimately it's who you are that's the connection.

CARROLL: It's a good thing you got ahold of him, that's all I've got to say.

GEORGE: I hope so. The specialist thing, though, I definitely believe in. But it's specialization through passion. You have to communicate the passion. I always tell stories about my mother. My mother was one of those women who used to have these parties on Saturday night. And she'd have the 45s stacked up—remember 45s, folks? And I used to look over at the little Motorola stereo and see them flip down. I would know the names of the record labels because Motown was blue and red, and Stax was light blue, and Atlantic was red and black. And so I would tell stories about how I got into music. Those were the ways—take those personal things and make them into stories. Because if you connect them to what you're writing about, they're priceless.

TAYLOR: This is a question for all of you—can an author develop a platform if he or she has trouble coming across as interesting?

CARROLL: I think Beth—Beth has a string of famous people who do really, really well.

"Experts are incredibly articulate within their field of knowledge and that's how they've gotten where they are. But to boil that down to a four- to six-minute interview on national television and sell your book is a whole 'nother ball of wax."

—Beth Dickey
DICKEY: I’d like to get back to your question about whether you could develop a platform if you weren’t a particularly interesting person. One thing I always tell authors is to pay attention to the headlines and pay attention to what’s happening out there. Look at the plot of their book and look at what they’re writing about and pay attention. I go back to Candace Bushnell. When the term metrosexual was all of a sudden being written about, she immediately integrated that into her stories. I work with Alexandra Robbins, who writes nonfiction, but she is an absolute pro at doing her research and paying attention to what’s happening in the news and connecting it to what she’s writing about, and then getting her voice out there.

CARROLL: Beth, when you call the publicist in, when you’re doing the pitch, you say, “Take Candace and the metrosexual”—is that how you pitch it?

DICKEY: As soon as I saw it, as soon as she called me, she was like, have you seen this about metrosexuals? Immediately I called The View and I said, Listen, you guys have got to be reading about this, Candace is the best person to have on to talk about it, and then she was a guest co-host for a week.

CARROLL: That is brilliant. Can I ask you one other thing because you have such a great personality? Do you call people on the phone or do you e-mail them?

DICKEY: Ninety percent of the time I e-mail. It is all about the e-mail now. I have friends who constantly comment on how quickly I respond. I couldn’t do my job without e-mail because writers are on deadline, producers are moving ninety to nothing. But I do make a call when it is a headline story or I have a very good relationship with the producer and I feel confident that I’ll get their ear. But you can get into it over e-mail.

CARROLL: So you called The View.

DICKEY: You can’t get into it over the phone unless you do have that relationship.

GEORGE: You only get so much time with them.

DICKEY: You’re not going to leave a mile-long message about things either. That’s the quickest way for them to never want to talk to you again. So the e-mail is the thing.

TAYLOR: I’m going to take it as a given, and maybe you’ll tell me I’m wrong, E. Jean, but I’m just going to assume that not everybody has the product to put up a website that attracts advertisements and six thousand hits a day. How many hits does your website get?

CARROLL: About a half-million a week.

“i think the day is coming when the book will not be the platform. The book is starting to be ancillary to the platform. Are you aware of this?”

—E. Jean Carroll
TAYLOR: So I’m going to assume that for many of us in the auditorium maybe selling the book is still the thing that they want to do. Most of us aren’t going to be on Today or Oprah talking about the current buzz word, or getting thousands of hits on our websites. How would you go about just selling the book?

CARROLL: This year was a catastrophe because I was on Oprah four times and it never coincided. The book was just coming out but she wanted me on for something else.

DICKEY: I know how that is. Always.

CARROLL: Whatever the queen wants. I am a complete ignoramus. I do poorly on television. I’m too all over the place. I can’t get my mind constrained, I am the worst there is. I am a moron and you really shouldn’t pay one bit of attention to what I have to say. Listen to Beth, listen to Nelson, listen to Nick, do not listen to me. I do everything wrong and I just completely screw up all the time. That’s it.

DICKEY: I’ll say quickly about the website thing, that you have to approach this as an investment in yourself. There are companies that know how to create a book website or a website around you as an author and make it interesting. It’s an investment. I know Hyperion, and I would imagine pretty much every major publisher, makes that investment directly for authors. We encourage authors, but a lot of times we also develop websites for them as well as a vehicle to sell their books.

GEORGE: Well, the website connected to Amazon or connected to whoever is the sales agent is the relationship you want. You want to have someone hear you on the radio, read about your book somewhere, go to the website, be intrigued and order that book immediately through Amazon or whoever your source is. I think that’s crucial. The commerce part of it is that you’re still selling books.

CARROLL: You sell them on your website?

GEORGE: It’s really, really important.

CARROLL: You give them away.

DICKEY: And you are not a moron because Oprah doesn’t book morons.

CARROLL: I’m just saying it’s so hard. I don’t know how anybody does their job. I don’t know how anybody gets a book on TV. It is so hard.

DICKEY: I’m happy you understand that.

CARROLL: Right, Beth? I don’t know how you do it. The competition to get your book on the Today show is so incredible. You’re out there competing against sixty or seventy thousand books every year. Luckily, there are only a few really, really sensational publicists in this town. And if you have one—and Beth is one of them—somebody who can get in and sell you, then you’re halfway there. As Beth said, it almost doesn’t matter what you write. I swear to God, that’s the kind of world we’re living in now.

GEORGE: I’ve been writing books now for about twenty years. The book tour was an essential part of the mechanism at one point. And now fewer and fewer publishers are doing book tours, or doing them as extensively as they used to. I understand the economics of it, but because there are fewer tours, there is less connection with the readership. A lot of great success stories start with these connections that writers make with the audiences one-on-one. Because the book business is increasingly mirroring the film business and the record business, with the idea of the big
opening, there is less and less of that building a book slowly over time. I still think the fundamentals apply to a great degree. Especially for fiction, I think, that you have to find your readers, you have to cultivate your readers, and independent bookstores, in my opinion, are still the best way to do that, especially for literary fiction and even some commercial fiction.

DICKEY: It’s critical for literary fiction.

GEORGE: It’s still about finding the bookseller who likes your book, going to their store, going to the book circle. Book clubs are essential. Being aware of book clubs, finding book clubs. For every topic, there is a book club that is interested. And they’re online to a great degree.

TAYLOR: So word of mouth is still important.

GEORGE: I think so.

CARROLL: Oh yeah, peer to peer.

DICKEY: I have an author on a thirty-city tour right now, which, as you said, is very unusual now. It’s the economics. But bookstores can be so defeating. This author is one of my favorites; she’s genuine and interesting. We’ve broken her out in some new markets. She’s a good new market, that’s really good. Because often there are zero people and zero books sold. But the advantage is that you have the opportunity to meet the bookseller, to discuss your book, and that will improve the hand sell of your book. It is very good for fiction. But there is an economic situation there too. The local media doesn’t book the way they used to either, because they too are more susceptible to the flashier news story.

GEORGE: I think the radio helps.

DICKEY: Make a difference, they absolutely make a difference. And it’s imperative that you find at least one interview here in your market.

CARROLL: What’s that station in Portland that will put a book on the bestseller list? A little one. TV and radio station in Portland.

DICKEY: Northwest Afternoon.

CARROLL: That’s it! Northwest Afternoon. You get an author on that show and those people will buy and read that book.

DICKEY: That’s a good show. Not every market has those. But it does absolutely make a difference. If nothing else, you have to look at it this way too: if nobody comes to your book signing, you were on the radio and somebody was in their car listening. That is going to get somebody to a bookstore, whether it’s the one you’re signing at that night or not.

TAYLOR: Authors are always complaining about in-
go well, who are the first people out the door? It’s the head of PR. Out the door. Do you know the average person in PR in big corporates lasts barely two years and then they’re the hell out of there? If an author’s book is not selling, who gets blamed? The publicist. You guys suck wind the minute you get out of bed. I don’t know how you do it. And of course we do hire outside publicists.

DICKEY: I hate to say I think she’s right. On a personal level, when an author hires an outside publicist, I’m always a little like, Oh, crap. The truth is it’s a blow to the ego.

TAYLOR: How many books are you working on right now?

DICKEY: I’m going to be perfectly honest. If I were an author today . . . I’d hire a publicist. . . . You are my client, but I work for the publisher and at any given time I’m working on twelve to fifteen authors, twelve to fifteen books.”

—Beth Dickey

house publicity, they’re saying my book was just published by—well, not Hyperion certainly—some other publisher.

DICKEY: Not Hyperion.

TAYLOR: And they’re not doing anything, they’re not getting the word out. And sometimes authors hire outside publicists. Is this a good idea? Is it worth the money?

CARROLL: Can I just say one thing about publicists?

TAYLOR: Please.

CARROLL: I think they’re the hardest working, and they’re the first people blamed when stuff doesn’t work. Blame it on the publicist.

DICKEY: Oh, I knew I loved you. I knew it.

CARROLL: It’s true. Publicists are blamed, publicists are fired. When GE, take all your big companies, if they’re launching a new product, the product doesn’t
GEORGE: He’s not dead. I thought you said late singer.

DICKEY: The lead singer.

GEORGE: Right.

DICKEY: He’s very much alive. But he’s an example. It’s Anthony Keidis, it wasn’t all that difficult to get him media, but I didn’t know that there’s a lot of specialized media out there. I worked with a woman I had met in passing who does music websites. She was invaluable to me for reaching that core audience.

If you do hire a publicist, it’s much more helpful to do it in the beginning phases. I’m very used to working with outside publicists and I love them. But it’s good to get that dialogue started early, so that you can divide and conquer. And you don’t step on each other’s toes.

GEORGE: You can monitor what they’re doing because you’re paying them.

DICKEY: Right.

GEORGE: You want a specific mandate so you can easily see what they’re doing and not doing for you.

TAYLOR: Let’s open the floor to questions at this point.

Q: What does it take to get the word out on a book?

DICKEY: First of all, organization is key. It’s absolutely key. One of the very first conversations that I want to have with an author is, “Have you interacted with the media at all? Who do you know?” I am so irritated when they go, “Oh, about two years ago I was on radio and—” No, no, no. I want a database here. If I were an author, that’s what I would do. You need to be very, very organized. So think outside the box. Think, oh gosh, I’ve never done an interview for anything, but my cousin’s nephew is a writer for the Tampa Tribune. Anything you can think of. I am always, always impressed and very thankful when an author is organized. The more that they can supply me with, the better able I am to increase their visibility. I mean I’m busy. I can’t be reading, I can’t be thinking about one book; I have to think about twelve. So if your client sees a headline and says, “Gee, I could really talk to that. That’s something I’m passionate about and that’s something I write about,” they should shoot me an e-mail about it. That makes a big difference. And it can increase their visibility because I can just tailor that e-mail a little bit and blast it to my contacts. And the next thing you know, we get a phone call. So, that’s a big deal.

CARROLL: You just said when your clients send you an e-mail to send you a really good e-mail so you don’t have to spend the rest of the afternoon working on an e-mail that you can blast out.

DICKEY: I usually do a little tinkering.

CARROLL: But it’s good to give you the basics.

DICKEY: I need the basics. Another thing is to be proactive about their careers. They need to get out, they need to be talking to people, they need to interact with their peers. The more you do that, I think, the more you get to know people. You get on those Rolodexes and you become a spokesman for your platform.

TAYLOR: In the third row, the lady in the hat.

Q: How do you persuade a publisher to buy a book on a subject that’s not new?

GEORGE: I’ll give you a good example. A friend of mine is a yoga instructor. She studied under a very well-known yoga instructor who had two books of her

“[Authors] need to get out, they need to be talking to people, they need to interact with their peers. The more you do that, I think, the more you get to know people. You get on those Rolodexes and you become a spokesman for your platform.”

—Beth Dickey

own. She came up with a take on yoga that involved weightlifting and mixing the two together. She asked me for advice, and I said, Why don’t you use the book that’s already sold and say you’re adding an element to it. So she went to the same publisher who had published her mentor and said, I’m taking that philosophy but I’m extending it sideways. And she showed how. Maybe she said an audience exists for this style of yoga, but by adding this other element to it I believe I’m extending it and opening it to another audience. She was able to get that published. I go into a bookstore right now, and her book’s there. She did it in two years. So I think it’s definitely possible, but you should also make sure that you look at the marketplace first.
Q: What do you mean by a platform?
TAYLOR: That’s a great question.
DICKEY: I have a definition. I have a dictionary.
GEORGE: I’ve got to tell you, I use brand, I never use platform.
DICKEY: Well, the dictionary definition is “a position of authority or prominence that provides a good opportunity for doing something.” I thought, I’m going to say platform a lot tomorrow, I better know what it means.
TAYLOR: Some platforms are more like a big three-ring circus. E. Jean, maybe you can add to that definition.
CARROLL: I’m telling you it’s ceaseless, it’s endless. You have to become a non-person. If you have a book, you do nothing; you do not eat, you do not sleep, you do nothing except badger people. You become a bad human being. Truly, you give up your soul, you do things you’d never dream you would ever, ever do. You’re making calls it kills you to make. You’ve got to

“If you have a book, you do nothing; you do not eat, you do not sleep, you do nothing except badger people. . . . You’re making calls it kills you to make. You’ve got to make the calls. It is endless. It is grinding. It is not fun.”
—E. Jean Carroll

make the calls. It is endless. It is grinding. It is not fun. You’re constantly on. You feel so sorry because you’re calling your publicist. You say, I can’t call, I’ve called her twelve times today. And you know what? Authors get nuts. Every agent in the audience knows what I am talking about. Authors are insane people when a book comes out. You act insane because you have to get so much done. And basically the platform is your energy. Remember Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil? That was a nowhere book. He got in his car and drove to every little bookstore in the South, and he made that book go on the bestseller list. He just willed it. He ate in his car, he slept in his car.

He made that book happen. I swear to God, nothing will stand between you and selling your book if you just have the enthusiasm. Emerson said you can accomplish anything with enthusiasm. I swear to God I think that’s true. But you will drive your publicist crazy. How many authors do you have right now who call you more than twice a day?
DICKEY: Oh, good lord.
CARROLL: How many?
DICKEY: I don’t know, maybe ten, fifteen.
CARROLL: See? But that’s what it takes. You have to not care whether you’re liked. If you want to have friends, forget it.
DICKEY: Wait. Now I’ve got to disagree. You do have to be driven. You do have to be passionate. But if you drive them crazy—
GEORGE: That’s not a good thing.
DICKEY: It’s not good. There’s a fine line.
GEORGE: I’ve been in meetings and I’ve heard publicists talk about other authors, and I didn’t want to be the other author.
DICKEY: I have groups. I love them and I hate them. And there is no one in between.
CARROLL: Tell me this, the ones you hate, do you work just as hard for them?
DICKEY: No.
CARROLL: Oooh.
DICKEY: I don’t. Because they are thankless and they are annoying. And that’s that.
GEORGE: One thing I have learned over the years is that your publicist and your editor—
DICKEY: Need to be your friend.
GEORGE: They are going to love you.
DICKEY: And if we love them, then I will work my ass off.
GEORGE: Okay, you know what happens, in those meetings you know nothing about, when they’re doing budgets and talking about where they are going to put ads and if you’re going to do the extra promotional thing, that likability is the difference between your book getting into the book fair, or not, or “let’s have that sign of his book”—as opposed to her book.
CARROLL: See, you’re likable, that’s what it is.
“I’ve been in meetings and I’ve heard publicists talk about other authors, and I didn’t want to be the other author.”
—Nelson George

TAYLOR: There’s a fine line between persistence and being annoying. Right back here, yes.

Q: How do I market my book to black audiences in the English-speaking Caribbean and the U.K.?

GEORGE: I can tell you one thing. There’s a couple of really good black newspapers in London that you should go to. Actually, you know the model for that. He does a literary festival in Jamaica every year. Colin Chandler is a black novelist with a Caribbean background. When I was in London he was doing readings. Very unusual to see an American author, especially a black American, doing readings. But he used a Caribbean connection. There’s a huge community of Caribbean blacks there. And a lot of media outlets, newspapers.

DICKEY: There are. I worked on Bob Marley’s wife’s book.

GEORGE: I think you can do that. But I think that community probably reads newspapers more than Americans. They’re very literate in terms of what they read and their newspapers are cleaner. They really pay attention to that. So I would really target the Caribbean media in the States. Because it works both ways. They read in both places.

DICKEY: I don’t do any kind of international media. I get lots of phone calls for it and I immediately pass it along to our subsidiary rights department. Or if I know that the agent negotiated for all rights outside of the U.S., then I immediately take it and send it to their agent. I would go completely insane if I did all that too. But it’s really important to remember your core audience. I’ve worked on several Irish-American books. And it is unreal to me, but there’s the Irish Times, the Irish Edition, the Irish Echo. And it makes the book. I mean these are the people that are interested. This is your core. You always have to target the core before you can even think about the outside, the rest of it. So there is a lot of press for you for that book here in the U.S. Like I said, I worked on Bob Marley’s wife Rita’s book, No Woman No Cry, and it got a good deal of that press.

Q: Can authors contact media venues on their own or do they have to go through publicists?

DICKEY: You need to go through your publicist. You really do. It’s the quickest way to totally annoy a producer.

CARROLL: Talk about that. What’s that like? What do you mean?

DICKEY: It depends. Someone like E. Jean, who’s been on the Today show several times, who’s been on Oprah several times, writes for Elle—if she wants to call them, fine. But 99 percent of the authors out there don’t have that luxury and they should not be calling. And it doesn’t matter if they’ve been on the Today Show before, what they need to do is keep careful documentation of every media individual you have ever met. Keep their e-mail, keep their phone, whatever you’ve got, keep it in a database. Then you can give that to your publicist and let him or her do the talking.

Q: How do you get people to come to your website?

CARROLL: You have to have publicity. We launched Great Boyfriends, no hits. I launched it in Elle magazine, no hits. The thing was I got all these letters from women complaining they didn’t have boyfriends. And I thought wait a minute. You all have great ex-boyfriends that you just have gotten tired of, or you broke up, and he’s got a great job, and you disagreed about religion, whatever. Why doesn’t every woman out there just recommend a guy she knows and then everybody who wants a boyfriend can have a boyfriend. So it’s a great idea. So we had all the girls recommend their ex-boyfriends. So I called somebody at The New York Times, and it hit the front page of the Style section. Boom. The website was born. That’s all I needed was one hit, one hit.
DICKEY: But you know what you could’ve done. The Style section is a great hit for anything. But let’s just say I was your publicist and you said I would really like for you to call. I would call.

CARROLL: And you probably would have gotten a better response, you know.

DICKEY: No, well, look what you got. But I’m just saying, to go back to my point, let’s not encourage a lot of phone calls.

GEORGE: Everywhere your name is, every time you send out your biography, your website should be on that.

DICKEY: On everything.

GEORGE: I did a radio show Sunday night. I was supposed to get the names of all the events I was doing. I said, it’s all on my website. I’m driving people to my website as much as possible. That’s how you create traffic. People tell their friends, and it gets on links, and that’s how you do it.

Q: What makes a good e-mail?

DICKEY: Well, the headline is critical. You’ve got to have something in that headline that’s going to make them open it up.

TAYLOR: You mean the subject line.

DICKEY: The headline of the actual topic. You don’t want to just write hello, or great book. No. You need to say what you are e-mailing them about. It doesn’t need to be a mile long but it needs to say what you are getting at. Then you go into the body of the message, you want to have an interesting opening. You want to get to what you’re doing here from the get-go. First line, get to it. Then you introduce yourself and the title of your book: E. Jean Carroll, author of Mr. Right Right Now, parentheses, HarperCollins, the price point, and the publication date. You put that in all bold, all caps. And then you go into it. If you’ve got them in those first two paragraphs, you can go on and on and on. I usually attach a press release, or a Q&A. I might have written with the author, a photograph of the author, if it’s for television, that kind of thing.

CARROLL: How many words? Do you keep it under four hundred words?

DICKEY: Oh God, yes.

CARROLL: Under three hundred words?

DICKEY: Oh yes.

CARROLL: Under two hundred? Wow.

DICKEY: Yeah. I mean it needs to get to it. Make him want to call you and talk about it further.

CARROLL: Do you ever send handwritten letters by messenger?

DICKEY: Sometimes.

CARROLL: Because you know what I suspect now? I suspect television producers get so many pitches that they’re like everybody in this room, you read your e-mails, you put it aside, say I’m going to deal with this later, and then you forget. So I’m starting to think if you messenger over a hard copy of what you just e-mailed—

DICKEY: I’ve done that. I don’t do it a lot, but I have done it.

CARROLL: Does it work?

DICKEY: Yeah, it works. It actually worked with the Style section once.

TAYLOR: Thank God, we’re entering the post-e-mail world.

Q: How does a mid-list author achieve a platform?

GEORGE: I think it’s very much what Beth said, being aware of ways your specialty intersects with what’s going on in the news. I think that’s really essential. The other thing is to look at magazines, specialized groups—like if you’re in the record business, the RIAA; then there are all these groups that do seminars for their clientele. There are many ways you can flip your information and introduce it to another audience. There’s a book that lists every trade organization in the country.

DICKEY: The Directory of Associations.

GEORGE: I would look closely at that list and see if there’s a trade publication or a magazine out that you don’t know about. You’re a product. And if you weren’t you and you were just a product you were selling, what would you do to sell that product?

CARROLL: You’re exactly right.

GEORGE: You have to look at yourself as that product. How do I take what I know and get it to the people who are interested in what I’m talking about? It’s particularly true of nonfiction, because with nonfiction there’s a real hook there. I met a barber once and he told me a great story about the dangers of being a barber, so I wrote a story about a barber and put it on my website.

CARROLL: I can’t wait to go to your website.
GEORGE: I got an e-mail from the National Barber Association. I had no idea they even existed. They told me, we loved your story. So you never know what groups are out there that are interested in what you’re doing.

CARROLL: I think this is the publishers’ fault. I think publishers are buying too many books by people who will never sell. Swear to God. You are getting stuck with authors you will never be able to get on anything. They feel bad, you feel bad, everybody feels bad about it. If they just wouldn’t buy these books to begin with, it would be much better and everybody wouldn’t have to go through the pain.

GEORGE: I agree. There are probably more books being published now than ever.

CARROLL: How many books are being published now?

TAYLOR: A hundred and fifty thousand a year? Something like that.

DICKEY: I thought it was 130,000.

TAYLOR: 175,000 is what I’m getting from the second row. And that doesn’t count self-published or print-on-demand, which really will get it up there.

CARROLL: So to get your book out there to more than four people—

TAYLOR: You’ve got to have more energy than E. Jean Carroll. Question here, yes.

Q: I worked on a book about martial arts with an instructor. Is there a way a ghostwriter or collaborator can help with publicity?

CARROLL: You should be because you are great looking. I swear to God, that’s 94 percent of it, right there. Talk to Roger Ailes, who runs the Fox News Network. When he hires anchors he never has the sound on, he just looks at the people. You should be on TV just for the way you look. No, really. Beth, am I wrong about that? Look how cute she is.

DICKEY: The attractive quality. Yeah, I agree with that but also I don’t. I don’t want my people, writers, to think—

CARROLL: I think you could help it, I really do. Am I way off here? When you get an attractive, articulate person like this who’s got a—

GEORGE: It’s not her story.

CARROLL: It’s not your story. Oh, okay.

DICKEY: You wrote it. It’s his story and you wrote it.

TAYLOR: So the question is, how can a ghostwriter help sell a book she wrote, though the story isn’t hers?

DICKEY: Your contacts are critical. I mean you’ve got the contacts, he’s got the story. But you want this book to sell too. You want to make some money from it too. Unfortunately, it’s his story, they’re going to want him to do the interviews. They’re going to want your contacts absolutely. You should do that as much as possible. And you can have as much of a dialogue as the other writer. I work with two authors all the time.

“I think publishers are buying too many books by people who will never sell. . . . If they just wouldn’t buy these books to begin with, it would be much better and everybody wouldn’t have to go through the pain.”

—E. Jean Carroll

GEORGE: I was going to say that since you’re an experienced journalist, you should be training him now. That’s where you can be really helpful to him. I’d make a list of the ten questions you know they’re going to ask this person and help him refine those ten questions into really good answers.

CARROLL: Another thing is how anybody makes any money selling books. Really, if we’re going to start telling the truth here, hardly any authors make the big money.

DICKEY: That’s true.

CARROLL: It’s the big lie. You work three years of your life, turn out the best thing you possibly can, the book may, if it does well, break even.

GEORGE: Can I ask you one more question? Does your friend have a company?

Q: Yes.

GEORGE: Then what he should be doing is thinking about ways of inviting media to get on-the-job training, with a TV crew. Morning shows love to have their
people come down there and act like they’re breaking a brick.

DICKEY: You could even do an event there. Wherever his hub is, wherever his big studio is, do an event there. Have him do a workshop and bring in a bookseller to sell books.

GEORGE: Absolutely.

DICKEY: That will also invite press.

Q: How do you find a private publicist?

DICKEY: There’s a website called Literary Marketplace that some publicists are connected to. Also, if you notice a particular book is getting a large amount of press, you may want to go onto the author’s website, the publisher’s website, because oftentimes the contact, if it’s not someone you know, if it doesn’t say Beth.Dickey@SimonSchuster, or Beth.Dickey@HarperCollins, if it says something else it’s probably a freelancer.

GEORGE: If you’re with a publisher, they often have people they work with that they’ll recommend.

DICKEY: I know a ton.

GEORGE: If your book’s already set up you can ask them.

Q: How much outreach is there to local public libraries for author publicity?

DICKEY: I would say there’s a fair amount. A lot of libraries are connected to festivals, so it’s important to think about what region of the country your author lives in or what region of the country their book is appealing to, and get them to that festival. You also like to have a presence as a publisher. Often, a bookstore has a unique relationship with a library and will bring an author to the library because it’s a bigger setting, and can hold a larger audience. I’ve had some library events and I have to admit I’ve not had strong fills. But we do try to work with them. I mean libraries are critical. They’re the bread and butter.

Q: Do you always wear glasses on TV?

CARROLL: I do. I always wear them. There’s a guy who watches television a lot and if I don’t wear my glasses he sends an e-mail saying he was frightened to death.

DICKEY: They’re your signature.

Q: With a book that is about to come out, how do you leverage early publicity into publicity when the book is actually available?

DICKEY: Book buyers are impulsive. If you do early publicity and you’ve made your point, then they rush to the bookstore and can’t get the book because it’s not publication date or it’s not been shelved yet. So it’s always good to say you know what, I would love to do your interview. My publication date is in about two weeks. But if they’re like, no, no, no, this is my dead-

“There is an advertising budget for every book you publish, and sometimes it’s zero.”

—Beth Dickey

line, this is when we’re going to do it, then you say all right, I’ll do the interview as long as you’re willing to plug my book on your website at least on pub date. You’ve got to work it a little.

CARROLL: What’s the name of your book? Let’s do a little publicity.

Q: Baby G.

CARROLL: Baby G. Look for it in your bookstores. Baby G.

DICKEY: Time Out New York is a fantastic forum for fiction, for literary fiction. Very good.

Q: What is the role of paid advertising in a book’s publicity campaign?

DICKEY: There is an advertising budget for every book you publish, and sometimes it’s zero. The problem with advertising is, let’s say a book is $24.95 in hardcover and you take out an ad. I’m not good with numbers, that’s why I’m in publicity, but let’s say you’ve got to sell 100,000 books to break even on that ad. Big car companies can bring out their big ads because their product is expensive and they will break even. In our industry, unfortunately, the price of the product is so low compared to the cost of an ad that it won’t.

I have to say in my career, Hyperion is noticeably more generous with their advertising dollars, and sometimes I really think it’s worked. But they’re also very selective. They do it very carefully. They target it, which is what everyone does, obviously. Also, if a
book does start to take off, and they want to continue the book sales, they’ll up the ad budget that way because they know the publicist has got to move on. Most of the time you’re going to hear, “This isn’t in our plan, this wasn’t in our budget.” I have to say I see the point of the publishing house because as publicity director at Long Street Press in Atlanta I had to do the marketing and the advertising. So I handled those dollars. Ads are ridiculous. I mean just ridiculous. Even a quarter-page ad in the Atlanta Journal Constitution when I left was $75,000.

CARROLL: Are you serious?
DICKEY: Quarter page in the AJC.
TAYLOR: But as Nelson and E. Jean have told us, you can use your website very effectively for advertising.
GEORGE: Unless your book is already climbing the bestseller charts and is already on its way and you’re trying to maximize it, advertising is not an effective use of your money.

CARROLL: Ditto.
DICKEY: As an author, you should really encourage those dollars to go elsewhere. I completely agree with that.
GEORGE: You’re better off having the local rep put a big poster in the store.
DICKEY: A blow-up. And those are expensive. And I can’t tell you how many times authors are like, Well how about a blow-up?
GEORGE: They are. They are expensive. But they’re reaching buyers.
DICKEY: It ain’t in the budget.
TAYLOR: I’m afraid that we’re out of time. Let me thank Beth Dickey, Nelson George and E. Jean Carroll. Let me thank the audience for coming out. We’ve learned that more and more, the author is the product in today’s book publicity machines. And I’m going home to work on my website. ◆
Along Publishers Row

Continued from page 2

though the book had not been translated into Spanish, her visit caused a controversy. Rancher Roberto Eaton told The New York Times, "This book is disgusting, absolutely pornographic and a calumny. . . . Just because her novel won a prize does not make it something magnificent."

One newspaper said the book portrayed Marshal Francisco Solano Lopez, who ruled Paraguay in the 1860s, as a "sexual maniac," but one of Lopez’s great-grandchildren, a former ambassador to Japan and Taiwan, had dinner with Tuck. He said, "I have no problem at all with the book, whose real message I think has been distorted. The novel has produced an effervescence that I think is healthy, reopening a national debate about our history."

PREPPY PROSE: A first novel by Curtis Sittenfeld got a lot of attention early this year. Prep is about a girl from the Midwest who is a scholarship student at an elite East Coast boarding school. Sittenfeld, 29, attended Groton, Stanford and the Iowa Writers’ Workshop. She is now a teacher and writer-in-residence at St. Albans School in Washington, a prep school for boys.

One reviewer wrote, "Sittenfeld’s dialogue is so convincing that one wonders if she didn’t wear a wire under her hockey kilt." Another said her main character could be the 21st century Holden Caulfield.

Sittenfeld told The New York Times, "In a way it’s flattering that it seems so real. But is it so easy to believe that I have no imagination and I can’t invent dialogue or those scenarios?"

The author said that Prep took three years to write and was "very plotted" with files and charts to keep track of the scenes and the characters. "I do think I was trying to entertain the reader more than I was trying to purge myself," she said. "I don’t see Prep as cathartic. It was hard work to write it. I almost think some people think I went home one night, I had a glass of wine, pulled out my yearbook and got lost in my musings."


Wilbur was asked by a columnist for The Dallas Morning News if there was a moment when he knew he was a poet. Wilbur said, "I think the moments when you say that to yourself are almost always sparked by the sudden expected strong approval of somebody else. Someone once asked Robert Frost how he knew he was a poet, and he replied, ‘When the editor of the Atlantic Monthly sends me a check.’"" Ask if his images come to him or does he sit and reach for them, Wilbur replied, "I think they come. I wish they came still oftener than they do. One thing about being a poet: It is, or should be, a very slow operation. You sit around and let what may come to you, and that may take hours."

NUMBER 2: The Secret Life of Bees, by Sue Monk Kidd, sold 3.5 million copies. Her second novel, The Midrash Chair, was inspired by a carved wooden chair the author saw in a church in Great Britain.

Kidd told Publishers Weekly that she "relocated" the chair to a monastery off the coast of South Carolina. The plot is about a woman who falls in love with a Benedictine monk, just before he is to take his vows.

INVISIBLE MAN: Gustave Flaubert once commented: "An author in his book must be like God in the universe, present everywhere and visible nowhere."

IDENTITY: An interviewer for Publishers Weekly asked David Rosenfelt, author of Sudden Death, "Is there a lot of David Rosenfelt in Andy Carpenter?" Carpenter is the author’s fictional lawyer hero.

Rosenfelt said, "I’m afraid so. We share a warped perspective on life; a complete inability to understand women; a lack of physical courage; a devotion to logic, dogs and sports, and an inability to curb our obnoxious tendencies. . . . if Andy were older and fatter, you couldn’t tell us apart."

MEMOIR: Jeannette Walls, a New York journalist who has worked for Esquire, GQ, and MSNBC, has written a memoir entitled The Glass Castle. It’s about growing up with an alcoholic father and a mother who painted and wrote (and has become a homeless woman in Manhattan) instead of looking after the family.


HELP: Pat Walsh is the author of a book entitled 78 Reasons Why Your Book May Never Be Published and 14 Reasons Why It Just Might. Publishers Weekly said, "This tough-love approach aims to enlighten writers committed to their craft and discourage those who are all talk and no work."

HEAVY LIFTING: Augusten Burroughs is the best-selling author of
Dry: A Memoir and Running with Scissors. He told The Writer: "Writing is like weight training, ... You need to build your strength and confidence."

LUCK? The headline on the story was: “The Lawyer Enters a Plea of Lucky.” It was 15 years ago that an agent telephoned attorney John Grisham and told him that the screen rights for his manuscript, The Firm, had been purchased even before the book was sold to a publisher for $600,000.

Grisham, whose 18th novel is The Broker, told The New York Times, “I woke up and won the lottery. I stopped practicing law. I stopped practicing politics. And so for 15 years I’ve had the luxury of staying at home, being there with my kids, coaching Little League baseball. I didn’t miss a play. I didn’t miss anything.”

But all the time, he was writing best-selling legal thrillers like The Pelican Brief and The Runaway Jury, books that have sold more than 100 million copies worldwide

It takes Grisham six months of writing to turn out one book a year. That gives him six months to do as his pleases—scuba diving, studying Italian, traveling, doing charity work with his church group. He said that his books keep appearing because “stories and ideas are still coming so easily. It’s not something that I have to struggle with.”

At the moment, Grisham is at work on his first book of nonfiction, a biography of Ronald Keith Williamson, a baseball player who wound up on death row. In 1999, DNA freed Williamson just five days before he was to have been executed. He died of cirrhosis of the liver last year. Publication is expected next year.

FLOOD: Can anyone remember back in the days of yore when The Da Vinci Code wasn’t on the bestseller list? The book has been in hardback more than two years and sold more than 25 million copies worldwide. Now Publishers Weekly reports that there is a flood “of new thrillers that mix arcane historical detail with a hint of conspiracy theory.”


The New Yorker published a cartoon by David Sipress that showed a storefront and a shop called “The Da Vinci Code Bookstore.” A sign in the window says: “Over 50,000 Da Vinci Code-related titles.”

The New York Times reported that Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, the Archbishop of Genoa, had described the book as “a castle of lies.” He said that the popularity of The Da Vinci Code was a disturbing sign of anti-Catholic sentiment. The same section of the Times had a full-page advertisement for the book with the line, “Isn't it time you read it?”

A full-page ad in PW offered bookellers 10 million thanks from Dan Brown. The Times estimated that Brown’s books have earned him $50 million in the last two years and said that he is working on a sequel to Code. Brown consults his editor, Jason Kaufman, once or twice a day. Kaufman said, “We go over every plot point and twist. I function as a sounding board for him.”

Publication is expected next year, but Stephen Rubin, publisher at Doubleday, said, “Why would I ever put pressure on Dan Brown?”

EASY WRITER: Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins are the authors of the “Left Behind” series of a dozen novels that have sold more than 40 million copies. The latest is The Rising.

Jenkins told Newsweek, “Pedestrian writing, thin characters—I can handle the criticism. I write to pedestrians. And I am a pedestrian. I write the best I can.... The literary-type writers, I admire them. I wish I was smart enough to write a book that’s hard to read.”

PRODUCT PLACEMENT: Publishers Weekly described a new television sitcom called Stacked on the Fox network. It stars Pamela Anderson, blonde darling of the tabloids, who lives up to the title of the show. She pretends to be a party girl who goes into a bookstore to find a self-help book about relationships with men. PW said that the first show featured books from Fox’s corporate sister, HarperCollins, and that Jack Welch’s Winning was displayed in the front of the bookshop.

Thanks to the article in PW, I was one of the 8.1 million viewers of the premiere. The dialogue included the following: “It’s a bitch!” “Kiss my ass!” “Hell, not!” “I found him in bed with two women!” And “Don’t whore it up!” Wasn’t Howard Stern fined millions for using language like that? A young boy actor stood transfixed by the cleavage and size of Anderson’s chest. The canned laughers roared.

At the end of this 30-minute wasteland, Anderson accepts a job in the bookstore because, “This will be the perfect place not to meet hot guys.”

QUARTET: The Westchester Library System held its 14th annual Book and Author Luncheon during Library Week. Host Maurice J. Freedman, director of the system, announced that the 38 libraries had decided to deal with the Patriot Act by destroying all records of materials checked out by readers. The crowd cheered and applauded.

Afshineth Latifi, an attorney in Manhattan and the author of a memoir, Even After All This Time: A
Story of Love, Revolution, and Leaving Iran, told the crowd of 350 that her father, a colonel in the Shah’s army, was imprisoned when the Shah was overthrown. He and Latifi’s mother exchanged notes while he was in prison, and Latifi’s mother saved them. He was executed when Latifi was 11 years old and her mother and four children fled the country. The notes helped Latifi research her book.

Joseph Lelyveld worked for The New York Times for 40 years. He said his book, Omaha Blues: A Memory Loop, was not a memoir but a reporter’s investigation of his family. He said that he thought that he had done a thorough job, but every day since the book’s publication, he had—to his surprise and pleasure—a call or a letter from someone with more information about his past.

Alice Hoffman’s 18th book, The Ice Queen, was described as an “erotic novel about a librarian.” She said the two greatest influences on her had been the public library and her grandmother. Her grandmother provided such guides to living as, “Everything can be made out of a potato.”

Joe Queenan is the author of Queenan Country: A Reluctant Anglophile’s Pilgrimage to the Mother Country. He said that when writers get together they talk about only two things: “Money and how much we hate editors.”

LAUGH: A cartoon in Publishers Weekly shows an outdoor café in Hollywood with a glamorous actress and her agent. He is saying to her: “Listen, babe, while your box office appeal is still solid, I think your next project should be writing a children’s book—or, maybe getting a messy divorce.”

ON TAPE: If it turns out that an audio version of your book happens, who will do the reading? Two of the top performers in the field are Barbara Rosenblat and George Guidall. Rosenblat has recorded more than 400 titles, and Guidall has done more than 850. Rosenblat delivers the dialogue of multiple characters, most of them men. She shifts between British, Indian, Arabic, Egyptian, Irish, Austro-Hungarian and Texas accents.

David Markowitz, director of operations at Recorded Books, told The New York Times, “The odds are probably 50-to-1 against a talented actor being a talented reader.”

Guidall said, “Some actors have to act every line. Some overact. Readers don’t want to be talked down to.”

A few authors read their own books, and John LeCarre, who recorded his novel Absolute Friends, is “simply one of the best author readers there is,” the Times reported. Frank McCourt’s 13-hour performance of Angela’s Ashes “is widely considered the high-water mark among author narrations.”

SOUND MAN: Paul Topping, a researcher at an audiobook publisher, Recorded Books, finds the correct pronunciations of foreign expressions, medical maladies and geographical and biological names.

A special challenge is finding pronunciations for words that an author makes up. For his Dune sci-fi series, Frank Herbert made up a language, Chakobsa, which is being used again by his son, Brian Herbert, and Kevin J. Anderson, for the new sequel. Dune: The Butlerian Jihad has 498 made-up words. Herbert, who died in 1986, recorded in the 1960s and wrote out some pronunciations, but many of his made-up words had no blueprint. The narrator talked to Brian Herbert, who broke out his father’s notes and found pronunciations for many words. The narrator was then told that the elder Herbert meant for every vowel to be pronounced.

Topping told The New York Times, “There’s no specific academic program to prepare you for this work. You have to know at least a dozen modern languages and be comfortable with at least three dead languages. You have to know popular culture. You have to be a polymath.” Topping said, “I’m only fluent in four or five languages, but I can work my way through thirty more; I could order a meal or pronounce anything in those thirty.” For the last five years he has been studying Korean.

MORE AUDIO: John McElroy runs his audio book business, Gaslight Production Company, from his home in Larchmont, N.Y. Each year he works on about 40 or 50 books. He does the abridging and, when he acts as producer, he auditions the actors who do the reading and selects the music. Two of his recordings won Grammys this year: Bill Clinton’s My Life and John Stewart’s America.

Clinton’s 1,003-page autobiography had to be reduced to a seven-hour recording, McElroy told The New York Times, “I had to decide which episodes wouldn’t be included, figure out some narrative line, and make it entertaining. . . . Of course, you gotta keep Monica in, everyone wants to hear about Monica.”

OLD-FASHIONED: Historian David McCullough writes on a manual typewriter because, he told Writer’s Digest, “I like the feeling of making something with my hands. I like paper. I like to see the key come up and hit that paper.”

DUAL ROLE: Harley Jane Kozak is an actress who writes. Her novel, Dating Is Murder, has a tall blonde amateur sleuth named Wollie, a designer of greeting cards.

Kozak compared acting and writing for Publishers Weekly: “You have to show up as often as possi-
ble. I have to go on a lot of auditions to get a job, and I have to do a lot of drafts before I come up with something that I feel like showing to someone. Both acting and writing show a reverence for the written word.”

BORROWER: Carrie Bebris wrote *Pride and Prejudice* in 2004. It was the first in a mystery series starring Mr. and Mrs. Darcy. Title of her new book is *Suspense and Sensibility or, First Impressions Revisited: A Mr. & Mrs. Darcy Mystery.*

A big fan of guess who, Bebris told Publishers Weekly, “The Darcy mysteries take place in our own world, one where science reigns but can’t quite explain everything... This is also a nod to the Gothic novels that were popular in Jane Austen’s day. The Darcy novels are also essentially ‘quest’ stories, in that the characters are essentially searching for the truth...”

Bebris said she was at work on a third Darcy mystery to be titled *North by Northanger.*

GONE: Michael Connelly’s fictional detective Harry Bosch is missing from Connelly’s next novel. The book, due out in October, is entitled *The Lincoln Lawyer.*

SELLING DIRECT: Scholastic Inc., the largest publisher of books for children, has a retail store in its Manhattan headquarters. Now it has opened a second bookstore in Scarsdale, an upscale suburb north of Manhattan.

Hope Van Winkle runs Scholastic’s retail operations, and she told The New York Times, “We felt that it was just the right thing at the right time. It’s the perfect demographic in Scarsdale. There’s a high interest in education, and it fits with our mission to help all children learn to read and love to learn.” Scholastic publishes the Harry Potter books and Clifford the Big Red Dog series.

Random House is promoting the sale of its own books on the Internet, and more publishers can be expected to go directly to book buyers, bypassing independent retailers, Amazon, Borders and Barnes & Noble.

FRESH BLOOD: Elizabeth Kostova’s first novel got her a $2 million advance. *The Historian* is yet another tale about that famous bloodsucker, Dracula.

Kostova said that the idea for the book came from her childhood travels with her father, who told “wonderfully creepy” Dracula stories as they hiked through the blood-sucking count’s haunts. Kostova told Publishers Weekly, “Then about ten years ago, I went on a hike with my husband and dog, and had a vision of a father telling his daughter these tales, and I thought: What if the daughter realizes that Dracula is somehow listening? I think every novel has a moment of genesis, and that was it for me.”

SEQUEL: Thomas Frank wrote the best-selling *What’s the Matter with Kansas?*, which some talking heads thought explained why John Kerry lost to George Bush.

According to Publishers Weekly, Frank’s next book will be about “what’s become of American liberalism and how liberals can set about regaining their power.” Publication is planned for early in 2008, the next election year.

NEWS BOOKS: Real events that get saturation TV coverage have proved a happy hunting ground for publishers. Several books about convicted murderer Scott Peterson and his trial became big sellers.

But the Terri Schiavo case, which dominated the news channels until the Pope died, may be an exception. Publishers Weekly asked, where are the books about Schiavo?

One editor said, “Americans don’t want to read about death.” Another, the head of a religious imprint, said that the national debate about Schiavo was framed by legal arguments rather than faith-based ones. Regnery, a conservative house, was suggested as a possibility because it specializes in political issues.

NO ANGELA’S ASHES: Actor and comedian Denis Leary has been signed by Viking to write a memoir about growing up Catholic. The title will be *Kiss My Irish Ass,* and it will be out in 2006.

BULL DETECTOR: Harry G. Frankfurt, 76, is professor emeritus at Princeton. He and his latest book were the subject of an article in The New York Times, which refused to print the book’s title and referred to it as *On Bull*—

According to the Times, the book’s opening paragraph “is a model of reason and composition, repeatedly disrupted by that single obscenity.”

Frankfurt began: “One of the most salient features of our culture is that there is so much [bull]. Everyone knows this. Each of us contributes his share. But we tend to take the situation for granted. Most people are rather confident of their ability to recognize [bull]. And to avoid being taken in by it. So the phenomenon has not aroused much deliberate concern, nor attracted much sustained inquiry.”

Frankfurt explained, “I used the title I did because I wanted to talk about [bull] without any [bull], so I didn’t use ‘humbug’ or ‘bunkum.”

RESEARCH: To gather material for her nonfiction bestseller *Nickel and Dime, Barbara Ehrenreich* went out and joined the work force at the bottom and then wrote about her experiences.

Now she plans to move upscale and write *Bait and Switch: The (Futile) Pursuit of the American Dream.* She’s
doing research by working in white-collar jobs.

NEW IRVING: John Irving’s new novel, Until I Find You, is due out in July—all 848 pages of it. Publishers Weekly said it’s about a Hollywood actor who helps his mother, a tattoo artist, look for his missing father.


Harvard law graduate Jeremy Blachman already had an agent, and a deal was made. The novel will be narrated in blog form, Publishers Weekly said. “It will be a suspenseful study of life inside a law firm where a senior partner has committed an indiscretion that gets blown out of proportion.”

MORE BLOG: A U.S. soldier, Colby Buzzell, wrote blogs from Iraq (My War) that were a commentary on the struggle from a G.I.’s point of view. These will be expanded into a book for Putnam. It is due out in the fall.

AND MORE LAW: Paul Goldstein, Stanford law professor, is author of a nonfiction book, Copyright’s Highway. Now he has written a legal thriller, Errors and Omissions, for Doubleday, home of John Grisham.

PUFF: Robert McCrum’s Wodehouse: A Life seems much lighter than most literary biographies because McCrum loaded it with many of P. G. Wodehouse’s best lines. Sample: “He spoke with a certain what-is-it in his voice, and I could see that, if not actually disgruntled, he was far from being grunted.”

In a letter to a friend who was also a writer, Wodehouse wrote: “I believe there are two ways of writing successful novels. One is mine, making the thing frankly a fairy story and ignoring real life altogether; the other is going right deep down into life and not caring a damn.”

MONEY STUFF: Rule No. 1 is the title of a book by financial guru Phil Town. The title comes from a quote by the billionaire investment giant, Warren Buffett, who once said, “Rule No. 1: Don’t Lose Money.” Publishers Weekly said that when the book appears next year, the publisher will send Town on an 80-city book tour.

TWO JOBS: Thomas Kelly is a sandhog, one of the men who dig tunnels in New York City. His new novel is Empire Rising. He told Publishers Weekly that although he has become a writer, “I still work a few days. I miss physical work. It’s just nice to get out. . . . I still feel like writing is not work, and it’s really not a good thing. I love what I’m doing and I’m glad I get paid to do it, but it’s almost like I’m cheating somehow. It’s bizarre—writing a novel is a helluva lot harder than driving tunnel.”

BIG BIZ: Back in the 1980s and early 1990s, business books were dominated by big bestsellers such as James B. Stewart’s Den of Thieves, Connie Bruck’s The Predators Ball and Barbarians at the Gate by Bryan Burrough and John Helyar. Then there was a long slump.

Now, according to The New York Times, publishers are hoping that two books will bring back the genre: Stewart’s DisneyWar and Kurt Eichenwald’s Conspiracy of Fools, about the Enron scandal. Steve Ross, publisher of Crown Books said the Stewart and Eichenwald books “are written like novels. I think it is a test and has an ability to resuscitate the genre.” Stewart’s book includes a first-person account of what it felt like to spend a day in a Goofy costume at Disney World.

GOLDEN RULE: The late Dr. Seuss (Ted Geisel) once wrote, “I made it a rule to sit at my desk eight hours a day whether anything’s happening or not.”

SLOWDOWN: The fact that Tom Wolfe’s latest novel, I Am Charlotte Simmons, was selling at a slower rate than his previous two novels struck someone at The New York Times as the occasion for a long article by Edward Wyatt. In February, the book was being discounted by 50 percent or more, “a move publishers often make to try and recoup some of their investment in a book that has not met expectations.”

BAD GIRL THRIVES: Barbara Park’s series about a little girl named Junie B. Jones began in 1992, and the 24 books have sold more than 20 million copies. Park told The Pittsburgh Post Gazette, “I think she appeals to kids because she’s not perfect. She’s just spontaneous and, in many cases, she’s worse than the reader is.” Parents have complained about Junie B.’s bad grammar and wild behavior, and Park says to them, “Lighten up. The kids get it. Every book doesn’t have to have a heavy moral lesson.”

TRAVELING MAN: Bernard Cornwell was English-born but married an American and moved to the U.S. 23 years ago. When he couldn’t get a green card, he began writing. He has produced 43 books, including the series about Richard Sharpe, an English rifleman in the Napoleonic Wars.

Cornwell’s latest novel is The Last Kingdom, set in the ninth century. Cornwell told Publishers Weekly that he travels extensively doing research so he can re-create accurate landscapes and weather. The Sharpe novels have taken Cornwell all over southern Europe. He said, “A real hardship! You’re wan-
dering around in all these great settings and can say you're working.”

He added, “I never stop re-searching, but when I get bored with it I just start to write.”

BRAINY TOO: Four teenage girls are the heroines of Ann Brashares’s three novels: The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants, The Second Summer of the Sisterhood and Girls in Pants. One of the rules about the magic jeans they share is No. 4: “You must never let a boy take off the Pants (although you may take them off yourself in his presence).”

Brashares, 37, attended the Sidwell Friends School in Washington, majored in philosophy at Barnard College and worked in publishing. Her characters have more than just jeans and boys on their minds. The New York Times revealed that the fictional characters are going off to college at Brown, Williams, NYU film school and the Rhode Island School of Design.


Bly concluded, “We all long for stories with narrative drive, stories that talk about relationships, and stories that aren’t riddled with violence or death. Romances reflect no more than what most of us hope for in daily life—and that includes being lucky enough to experience shared desire. I’ve got a good notion that many Americans, no matter their reading preference, are hoping for a Valentine’s Day that involves a bit of flying lingerie.”


Asked why he was so good at writing about female characters, Fergus told Publishers Weekly, “I don’t think you can be a good novelist unless you genuinely like people and are intensely interested in them, and unless you have some ability to imagine what their lives are really like. I love women and always have.”

MISSING MYTH: In a book review in a Canadian magazine, Don Gillmor wrote about the lack of a literary heritage for hockey. He said, “Hockey is our mythic game, as almost every hockey book states somewhere. It sings in our blood. Yet, unlike boxing or baseball, it has not produced a mythic literature. Perhaps the running debate on hockey violence has usurped an elevated literature. But boxing has the same essential rift—is it elemental or simply a barbarous anachronism?”

Gillmor lists some of the authors who have written about boxing: Joyce Carol Oates, Norman Mailer, David Remnick, George Plimpton and Nick Tosches.

SOMETHING NEW: Amy Hempel’s new collection of short stories is entitled The Dog of the Marriage. Publishers Weekly described it as “gorgeous, idiosyncratic and devastating.”

Hempel told PW, “A lot of my writing takes the form of an elegy—for a person, for a place, for a marriage—for so many things that were there or were good and aren’t there now or aren’t good now. That’s a huge motivation of mine.”

Hempel teaches a writing workshop at Columbia and is working on a master’s in forensic psychology at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. “I feel like, okay, I know how to write a short story now,” she said, “so let’s go learn something really different.”

PAUSE: The 17-year-old, four-build-
zie’s gay best friend, his love, Duck, and Weetzie’s daughter, Cherokee, possibly conceived during group sex with Dirk and Duck. There is also Witch Baby, Love Man’s child with a witch.” HarperCollins, the publisher, says 750,000 copies of this series have been sold. Titles include Weetzie Bat, Witch Baby, Cherokee Bat and the Goat Guys and Missing Angel Juan.

In January, the Young Adult Library Services Association of the American Library Association gave Block an award for lifetime achievement, sponsored by School Library Journal. Cindy Dobrez, a public school librarian and chairwoman of the award committee said, “Hers is a voice so unique that nobody will ever be able to imitate it.”

Y/A novels have come a long way since Judy Blume’s Forever. This spring, Simon & Schuster is publishing Paul Ruditis’s Rainbow Party, a young-adult novel about oral sex.

STYLE: Abraham Verghese is quoted in Ben Yagoda’s The Sound on the Page: “Typically, when your mother starts to dislike your writing, that’s when you’ve really found your voice.”

PROLIFIC PRES: Jimmy Carter’s new book is Sharing Good Times. Publishers Weekly reported that while he was on a book tour, the former president said, “I’m writing my 20th book now, you’ll be delighted to know.” And later, Carter added, “I work for the prince of peace, not the prince of pre-emptive war.”

SUCCESS: Jonathan Safran Foer, 28, is the author of a novel, Everything Is Illuminated, which sold 100,000 copies in hardback and another 150,000 in paper. His second novel, Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close, was published in March.

Foer was the subject of a major article in The New York Times magazine. It revealed that, just out of Princeton, he received a $500,000 advance for his first book and $1 million for the second. When PEN awarded him a 2004 Literary Award—a $70,000 fellowship—Foer gave the money back to PEN.

Foer told the Times, “Why do I write? It’s not that I want people to think I am smart, or even that I am a good writer. I write because I want to end my loneliness. Books make people less alone. Then, before and after everything else, is what books do. They show us that conversations are possible across distances.”

ON LANGUAGE: In Finding a Voice, a book by A. Alvarez, the author quotes the 19th century Behemian critic Karl Kraus: “My language is the universal whore whom I have to make into a virgin.” Then Alvarez continues, “Language is a whore because, left to itself, it turns the same old tired tricks with everyone. To restore its virginity you must first strip away the fancy clothes—the cliches, the tropes, the excesses—then you put the lady on a diet and reduce her to her bare essentials.”

NEXT: Television’s Tim Russert’s Big Russ and Me, about his father, was a big success, so it will be followed by a collection of tales about fathers and children of many notable Americans. It will also include excerpts from letters Russert has received from readers of Big Russ. The new book is due out next year—on Father’s Day, of course.

IT’S GOT EVERYTHING: In an introduction to Halldór Laxness’s novel Under the Glacier, the late Susan Sontag noted that there are books that “occupy the outlying precincts of the novel’s main tradition,” and for them, special labels are invoked. She lists: science fiction; tale, fable, allegory; philosophical novel; dream novel; visionary novel; literature of fantasy; wisdom lit; spoof; sexual turn-on. And she said, “The only novel I know that fits into all of them is Halldór Laxness’s wildly original, morose, uproarious Under the Glacier.”

The novel by the 1955 Nobel laureate was published in March.

PULP: Stephen King’s next novel, The Colorado Kid, will be published in October as part of a pulp paperback series. Hard Case Crime tales are edited by Charles Ardai and jointly published by Dorchester Publishing and Winterfall LLC, and include reprints of “classics” from the old days as well as new pulp fiction. The New York Times reported that 15 books, about half of them reissues, will be published in the second year, starting with King’s novel.

9/11: After three years, about a dozen books that tackle the events of 9/11 have made it into the bookstores. These are not thrillers, but novels by serious writers. They include Frederic Beigbeder’s Windows on the World, Reynolds Price’s The Good Priest’s Son, Ian McEwan’s Saturday, and The Writing on the Wall by Lynne Sharon Schwartz.

Joyce Carol Oates has written a short story about 9/11, and she told The New York Times, “This does seem to be about the right time for these novels to be coming out.” Her story, “The Mutants,” deals with a woman trapped in her Manhattan apartment when the towers are destroyed.

James Shapiro of Columbia University said, “A novelist has to sustain a story that feels right to people who actually lived through the event, who have a sense of what really happened. It has to be more than just a recounting of the event.”

WORKSHOP: Author Cathy Wald is a volunteer teacher of a group of Westchester people who, after disabling mental problems, are being assisted by Westchester Residential
Opportunities. She said, “Writing is a useful tool that connects individuals to a deeper level of understanding about themselves.”

Wald is also the author of a new book, The Resilient Writer, Tales of Rejection and Triumph from Twenty Top Authors, published in February. The book includes interviews with Amy Tan, Wally Lamb, Esmeraldo Santiago and others.

SHOCK: Raymond Carver and Tom Jenks were editors of an anthology entitled American Short Story Masterpieces, published in 1987. The introduction said: “The best fiction . . . should make such an impression that the work, as Hemingway suggested, becomes a part of the reader’s experience. In great fiction (and this is true, and we mustn’t fool ourselves that it’s otherwise), there is always the ‘shock of recognition’ as the human significance of the work is revealed and made manifest.”

TWICE TOLD: Michael Rips, 50, is a former corporate lawyer who once clerked for Justice William J. Brennan, Jr. of the Supreme Court. Now the former Nebraskan has published a memoir entitled The Face of a Naked Lady: An Omaha Family Mystery.

The New York Times said that the book describes Rips’s Nebraska as a place “where a dead man could drop through the ceiling of a coffee shop, a tornado could suck your grandmother into a garbage chute, or you could walk in on a man having sex with a chicken while singing ‘The Surrey with the Fringe on Top.’”

Rips told the Times that he is not concerned about questions of accuracy. The tales are like those from the Bible or from classical antiquity that are told and told again, perhaps losing their connection to accuracy along the way but gaining a greater truth in their accretions.

Rips said, “They may not line up with an original truth, but they do line up with the cultural truth of the country, especially of that part of the country.”

Rips now lives with his wife and daughter in the Chelsea Hotel in Manhattan.

MOVING OUT: More and more successful adult authors are writing for children and young adults.

A few of the writers and titles listed by Publishers Weekly included: Carl Hiaasen (Hoot and, due in September, Flush), Dale Peck (The House That Got Stuck in the Past), Ridley Pearson (The Stonecutter’s Quill), Joyce Carol Oates (Sexy), Isabel Allende (Forest of Pygmies), Louise Erdrich (The Game of Silence), Francine Prose (Leopold, The Liar of Leipzig), Neil Gaiman (Mirror-Mask), Garrison Keillor (Daddy’s Girl), Adam Gopnik (The King in the Window), Walter Mosley (47), David Baldacci (Freddy and the French Fries #1: Fries Alive!), Alice Hoffman (The Time Travelling), T. C. Boyle (Timothy Tugbottom Says No!), Peter Benchley (Shark Life: True Stories About Sharks and the Sea), Julia Alvarez (A Gift of Gracias: The Legend of Altargracia) and Joyce Maynard (The Cloud Chamber).

Another adult author getting into books for children is Clive Cussler. A fantasy, Vin Fiz, is about a pair of siblings who fly around in a model of the Wright Brothers’ airplane, helping kids in trouble.

NOTED: The sellers of children’s books chose their favorites of the year, and Publishers Weekly handed out their Off the Cuff awards. The best titles were One of Those Hideous Books Where the Mother Dies by Sonye Sones, and Al Capone Does My Shirts by Gennifer Choldenko.

The bookshop folks also complained about the most overdone subjects: “Daddy and me” books; bodily functions; teen chick lit, “mean girls” books and celebrity picture books.

The oddest request of the year came from a customer who “asked for an abridged version of To Kill a Mockingbird because her three-year-old was enjoying Moby Dick.”

HEROINE: Alia Muhammad Baker, chief librarian in Basra, Iraq, is the heroine of two children’s books in the U.S. Baker rescued 30,000 books just before the city’s main library was burned during the 2003 invasion.

An article by Shaila K. Dewan in The New York Times inspired the books. The Librarian of Basra: A True Story from Iraq is a picture book by Jeanette Winter. Alia’s Mission: Saving the Books of Iraq, is a graphic novel for middle grades by Mark Alan Stamaty. The Stamaty book has been bought by an Egyptian publishing company, which plans to bring out an Arabic edition.

Baker has thanked both the authors for “showing us Iraqis as an educated people.”

Can you imagine any library that wouldn’t buy a book that had a librarian for a hero?

HARMLESS: The Vagabonds is Nicholas Delblanco’s 16th work of fiction. He has taught writing at the University of Michigan for 20 years and told Publishers Weekly, “On balance I’d say we do less harm than good.”

He said that in his latest novel he has tried new things such as “exper-
imenting with the narrative voice, trying to create a different one for 1916 and 2003. I hope I've been successful, but if people don't think so I won't complain. I've always disliked the prima donna aspects of the profession. I just feel grateful to those who've paid attention.”

SETTINGS: Where do you like to write? Virginia Woolf once wrote in a letter: “To write a novel in the heart of London is next to an impossibility. I feel as if I were nailing a flag to the top of a mast in a raging storm.”

In an article for a travel supplement in The New York Times, novelist Karen Moline wrote, “I have always written in other people's houses; a flat in London, a cattle station in Australia, a ramshackle guesthouse in Izmir, Turkey. . . . I need the disorientation of someone else's property, furniture, sheets and gewgaws to escape from mundane reality, to make it easier to inhabit my characters' imaginary worlds.”

Moline worked on her novel Belladonna in southwest France, then in Cushendall, Northern Ireland.

Francine Prose, author of A Changed Man, told Moline, “When I'm surrounded by my things, I can ignore them, but when I'm surrounded by other people's things, they take on a maddening presence.”

MEMOIR: In his new book, This I Believe: An A to Z of a Life, Carlos Fuentes writes, “Politics can be dogmatic. The novel can only be enigmatic.”

WITH MUSIC: Rupert Holmes wrote a musical, The Mystery of Edwin Drood, based on an unfinished Dickens tale. It won five Tony Awards.

Now Holmes has published a novel, Swing: A Mystery, that includes a CD of songs that he composed.

The New York Times reported, “The book’s crucial clues crop up in songs. When Jonathan Karp, the editor in chief of Random House and a longtime fan, read the manuscript, he asked Mr. Holmes if he could record the songs so that a CD of them could be included with the book. Thus like his main character, Ray, Mr. Holmes found himself writing and arranging songs . . . . On book tour stops in Los Angeles and San Francisco he will sing as well as read.”


Kelley responded to an item about the suit in this column and wrote, we asked “the court to dismiss the suit and all its claims. We never got to court on this request because Mr. Wilson acknowledged that his charges were meritless and asked the court to dismiss the case. . . . Mr. Wilson had sought $5 million in damages for work that was not copyrighted at the time he brought suit. At issue were 80 words out of a 4,500-word article which Random House general counsel said fell within the concept of 'fair use.' Mr. Wilson's case was dismissed without apology or payment of any kind.”

TOO MUCH ENGLISH? The French are concerned that the English language is dominating the Internet, so French President Jacques Chirac has asked his national library and culture ministry to devise a plan to make European literature available online.

POET-PRINTER: When he is not writing his own poetry, award-win-
MEMOIRS RUN AMOK: In an article entitled “We All Have a Life. Must We All Write About It?” William Grimes of The New York Times said that the memoir has become a “playing field crowded with absolutely equal voices, each asserting its democratic claim on the reader’s attention. Everyone has a life, and therefore a story that should be told and, if possible, published.”

The excuse for one book is 10 years of headaches, another is about being fat, another is about being saved by dance lessons. Grimes set out to impose a little order on this genre, and lists categories that include “the retired-statesman (or more likely, bureaucrat) memoir, the traumatic-childhood memoir, the substance-abuse memoir, the spiritual-journey memoir, the show-biz memoir, the spirit-of-place or vanished-era memoir, the illness memoir and the sexual-exploit memoir.”

His article listed 28 examples that have just been published.

READINGS: In the spring issue of N+1, a new journal of politics, literature and culture, the editors write that authors shouldn’t read their books in public. The following is from The New York Times, quoting N+1:

“If you’ve made the mistake of going to literary readings, you know that the only thing that can make them endurable is to ha at each funny bit, and ah at each clever observation, and oh at any grotesque turn. Pity rescues art on these occasions. But art can’t survive it.

“A reading is like a bedside visit. The audience extends a giant moist hand and strokes the poor reader’s hair . . . in this format, who can tell if it’s any good on the page? Nobody. And suddenly it’s his life we’re talking about—not only the words and lines, but the pathetic effort he’s devoted his entire life to. This figure in front of you was formerly an independent artist, with at least the solitary belief in himself that a writer needs. Now he’s desperate for a laugh. . . .”

BUMP: The Purpose-Driven Life, written by Rick Warren, a California pastor, got an unexpected sales boost when Ashley Smith, the hostage in the Atlanta courthouse killings, quoted from the book to persuade her captor to release her. The book jumped from 12,000 copies sold a week to 64,000 copies the week after the event and hit the No. 1 spot on bestseller lists.

LATE TO BED: Is being an early riser a virtue? A lot of powerful and successful people believe so. But in an article about these people, The New York Times included writer Cynthia Ozick, who goes to bed after three A.M. and wakes up in the afternoon. She told the Times that she lives with constant disapproval. “I’m a creature of bad habits in the eyes of the world.” When Ozick answers the telephone in the early afternoon, she said, “You’re approached in the most accusing voice—‘Did I wake you?’”


The site Edward Champion’s Return of the Reluctant also bears down on The New York Times Book Review and its editor, Sam Tanenhaus. “Each week the site posts ‘The Sam Tanenhaus Brownie Watch.’ . . . It compares, among other things, the number of pages devoted to fiction versus nonfiction and the number of women assigned to review nonfiction, promising that if there are enough fiction pages or enough women Mr. Tanenhaus will be sent a brownie . . .”

BIG TASK: Ivan Held has been named president of G. P. Putnam’s Sons. His job, according to The New York Times, will be “to expand the imprint by recruiting a new generation of writers of commercial fiction and nonfiction.” Already on board are Nora Roberts, Dave Barry, Tom Clancy and Patricia Cornwell.

MOOD: Ian McEwan’s new novel is Saturday. Charles McGrath interviewed McEwan for The New York Times, and said that the book was McEwan’s “most autobiographical novel.”

McEwan explained, “I had this idea of seeing how one could write a novel without having to invent everything. I suppose it had something to do with 9/11, but I wanted a sort of documentary quality. I wanted a feeling of what it was like in the early years of the 21st century. I wanted to get the right level of bafflement.”

His hero is a brain surgeon because McEwan wanted to evoke “that sort of paradise-on-earth feeling of total absorption when time just falls away.”

“Brain surgeons have this feeling in abundance,” he added. “It happens to me, but not nearly often enough—a complete evaporation of self-awareness. There ought to be a name for this. You can’t really call it happiness, because at the time you’re not even aware of it.”

About being a celebrity author,
McEwan told Publishers Weekly, “If I’m going to meet an American journalist in London, I’d quite happily have him come to my home, because he isn’t going to focus on my private life. I wouldn’t let a British journalist through the door.”

STILL GOING: Shel Silverstein died in 1999. His recently published Runny Babbit, made up from “stray pieces of paper” he left at his death, debuted at No. 1 on the children’s picture book bestseller list. Not only did Silverstein write and illustrate books for children, but he was also playwright, a cartoonist for Playboy and a country-western songwriter. The New York Times reported that he left an estate worth $20 million.

SHIFT: The Atlantic Monthly magazine announced in its May issue that it is cutting out the regular publication of fiction. The editors said that the change will allow more space for “long-form narrative reporting.” The magazine will add an annual fiction issue each August for sale on the newsstands. The New York Times said that the change is part of a trend of general-interest magazines publishing fewer works of fiction.

AND A BOOKSHOP? How many writers have been exploited by a theme park? Dickens World, 35 miles from London, will open in 2007. It will include an Ebenezer Scrooge ride, the Old Curiosity Shop and a Victorian music hall of “naughty delights.” The chief executive of the project, Kevin Christie, told The New York Times, “We have great expectations.”

ADDING ON: Amazon.com has bought BookSurge, a book publisher in Charleston, S.C. that specializes in on-demand printing. According to a BookSurge executive, the company has created software that has automated the printing process to the point where even single-copy print orders are profitable. Authors pay about $50 for the service. An executive at Market Partners International told The New York Times, “You can now use color in a book, and produce hardcovers as easily as paperbacks.”

The Times reported, “Amazon charges authors and publishers about $750 monthly to promote their books on the site’s item description pages for various best-selling titles. “These ads, which have been a fairly well-kept secret in the industry, could attract new authors who are experiencing slow sales. After all, as any author knows, if a book does not sell well, it is clearly a marketing problem.”

BREAKDOWN: AllReaders.com, a website, said that Elizabeth George’s 13th novel about Detective Inspector Thomas Lynley (a bestseller) was 40 percent “feelings, relationships, character bio/development.” Another 40 percent is spent on “planning/preparing, gathering info, debate puzzles/motives.” Ten percent is about “how society works and physical description (people, objects, places), and 10 percent is “description of violence and chases.”

The book’s title is With No One as Witness.

GOING WEST: Judith Regan, who has her own imprint at HarperCollins, is moving her operation from Manhattan to Hollywood. Regan publishes about 100 titles a year by such authors as Rush Limbaugh, Howard Stern, General Tommy Franks, wrestler Mick Foley, and porno film star Jenna Jameson. The New York Times says her books earn $120 million a year and account for about 8 to 10 percent of HarperCollins’s business.

Regan told the Times, “I’m not interested in moving to L.A. to do movie star books. I have a big budget to buy material and develop it.” Regan said her move came in part out of frustration with the cost of doing business in New York. She also said she intended to bring a different idea of culture to Southern California. “I would like to create a cultural center,” she said. It was described as a sort of salon where authors could meet informally with people in the television and film businesses, with a bookstore and café, space for readings or other cultural events, and perhaps a studio for a TV show for which she hopes to serve as host.

NEW CHIEF: Lan Samantha Chang has been chosen to succeed Frank Conroy (see Deaths below) to be the director of the University of Iowa Writers’ Workshop. Chang, 40, is an alumna and former visiting faculty member. She will take up her new post, which pays $115,000, in January, with the title of professor of creative writing in the English Department.

Chang once wrote of her own work: “Is ordinary love not a kind of burden, stifling and terrifying in the choices and responsibilities it forces on us? And yet we yearn for it, suffer for it, define ourselves by our experience of it, cannot live without it.”

JOBS CHANGES, NEW TITLES*

Steerforth Press in Hanover, N.H., has hired Roland Pease to acquire poetry and literary fiction. He will be located in Cambridge, Mass.

Elisa Petrini, a longtime editor at Morrow, Bantam and Dutton, is now an agent at Vigliano Associates. Mark Chait, formerly with Hyperion, is a senior editor at New American Library.
DEATHS

Frank Conroy, 69, died April 6 in Iowa City. Conroy headed the Writers’ Workshop at the University of Iowa for 18 years, and he was the author of *Stop-Time, Midair and Time and Tide: A Walk Through Nantucket* (2004).

Harold Cruse, 89, died March 26 in Ann Arbor, Mich. The professor emeritus at the University of Michigan was the author of *Crisis; Rebellion or Revolution?: Plural but Equal: A Critical Study of Blacks and Minorities and America’s Plural Society and The Essential Harold Cruse: A Reader.*

Alan Dundes, 70, died March 30 in Berkeley, California. A folklorist who taught at the University of Calif., he was the author of *The Shabbat Elevator and Other Sabbath Subterfuges* (2002), *Why Don’t Sheep Shrink When It Rains?* (2000) and *Cracking Jokes* (1987).

Alice Thomas Ellis, 72, died March 8 in London. Her real name was Anna Margaret Haycraft and she wrote a dozen novels, including *The Sin Eater* (1977), *The Birds of the Air* (1980) and *Fairy Tale* (1998). *The 27th Kingdom* (1982) was a finalist for the Booker Prize. Asked by the Times of London to compose a Valentine’s Day verse, her submission began: “Men love women/ Women love children/Children love hamsters.”

Robert Greeley, 78, died March 30 in Odessa, Texas. The poet was winner of the Bollingen Prize in 1999 and he wrote, edited or was a major contributor to more than 60 books of fiction, essays and drama.

Howard Gruber, 82, died January 25 in Manhattan. He was the author of *Darwin on Man: An Introduction to Scientific Creativity* (1974) and *Evolution of the Mind: The Early Writings of Charles Darwin* (1980).

Henry A. Grunwald, 82, died February 26 in Manhattan. The former managing editor of Time magazine was the author of *A Saint, More or Less* (2004).


George F. Kennan, 101, died March 17 in Princeton, N.J. The American diplomat was the author of 17 books, two of them Pulitzer Prize winners. These included *Around the Cragged Hill* (1993), *American Diplomacy 1900-1950; Russia Leaves the War* (1957) and two volumes of memoirs.


Chalmers Roberts, 94, died April 8 in Bethesda, Md. He was author of five books, including *First Rough Draft: A Journalist’s Journal of Our Times* (1973), *Washington Past and Present* (1950) and *How Did I Get

Connie S. Small, 103, died January 25 in Portsmouth, N.H. She was the author of a memoir, Lighthouse Keeper’s Wife (1999).

Hunter S. Thompson, 67, died February 20 in Aspen, Colo. He was the author of Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail (1973), Hell’s Angels (1967), The Proud Highway and Kingdom of Fear. His most recent book was Hey Rube: Blood Sport, the Bush Doctrine, and the Downward Spiral of Dumbness.

Nathan Wright, Jr., 81, died February 22 in East Stroudsburg, Pa. He was the author of 18 books, including Good Manners for Good People, written when he was 15 years old, and Ready to Riot (1968).

Censorship Watch

Continued from page 13

icted the trend would continue. Elsewhere, in April, Apple Computers responded to the planned release of Jeffrey Young’s unauthorized biography of CEO Steve Jobs by John Wiley & Sons by removing dozens of the publishers’ other titles from its 104 Apple stores around the world, after it failed to persuade Wiley to kill the book.

Journalists Refused Access After High School Shooting on Red Lake Reservation. Reporters descending in droves on the Red Lake Chippewa Reservation to cover the school shootings there in March were prohibited by tribal leaders from traveling to the Reservation to interview residents about the tragedy, according to the Kansas City Star. The media was confined to a parking lot at Red Lake’s jail at the edge of town and prohibited from leaving the main highway. Police with guns drawn arrested two photographers who tried to break the restriction and confiscated their equipment. The family of one victim disagreed with the limits and sent a representative to make a statement about their loved one to the media. They said the tribal chairman stopped and questioned the spokesperson, but ultimately allowed her to speak. As a sovereign nation, the tribe is subject to the First Amendment, but cannot be forced by a U.S. court to comply with it.

Indecency War Escalates. Several powerful legislators have rhetorically upped the ante in the broadcast indecency controversy. F. James Sensenbrenner III, Chair of the House [TK] Subcommittee told executives attending the Cable and Telecommunications Association conference in May that he believes criminal prosecution of broadcast indecency is more efficient and effective than the current regulatory system, in which the FCC punishes offenses with fines. Congress recently voted overwhelmingly to increase the maximum fines more than tenfold. Meanwhile, Senator Ted Stevens, chair of the Senate Commerce Committee, and Representative Joe Barton have said they want current federal indecency standards, which apply only to network TV, expanded to cover cable and satellite TV. A coalition of networks and politically diverse interest groups recently launched a new initiative, TV Watch, to fight government control over programming in favor of parental controls. It commissioned a poll that concluded three out of four Americans do not want the government to censor TV content. The Hollywood Reporter said TV Watch is preparing a legal challenge to the increased fines.

Inclusive Editor of US Catholic Magazine Ousted After New Pope’s Election. The Rev. Thomas J. Reese was forced in May to resign as editor of America, an influential Jesuit magazine five years after the Vatican agency headed by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, placed it under “scrutiny.” During Reese’s seven-year tenure, America published articles and opinion pieces, many of them by professors at Boston College, which questioned Church teachings on controversial subjects. The Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, led by Ratzinger, formally objected to the stories. Boston College president Rev. William P. Leahy said that BC is “not directly linked to the Vatican; we operate under principles of academic freedom; and BC is not going to tell” faculty members what they may and may not write. But an editor at US Catholic magazine expressed concern that pressure from the Vatican on American Catholic magazines goes beyond Reese’s ouster.

CORRECTION

In our Spring APR column, author Marilyne Robinson’s name was mistakenly rendered as Marianne Robinson, and the title of her first novel, Housekeeping, was mistakenly given as Good Housekeeping. We regret the error.
Lloyd Alexander: The Xanadu Adventure; Jeanette Angell: Madam; John Annerino: Canyon Country: A Photographic Journey; Kathi Appelt: Miss Lady Bird's Wildflowers: How a First Lady Changed America; Jennifer Armstrong: Magnus at the Fire; Linda Ashman: To the Beach!
Susan Cahill: The Smiles of Rome: Bebe Moore Campbell: 72 Hour Hold; Alyssa Capucilli: Little Spotted Cat; Philip Caputo: Acts of Faith; Elisa Carbone: Last Dance on Holladay Street; Elizabeth Doyle Carey: The Callahan Cousins: Summer Begins; Lillian Stewart Carl: The Secret Portrait; Lori Marie Carlson (Ed.): Red Hot Salsa: Bilingual Poems on Being Young and Latino in the United States; Caleb Carr: The Italian Secretary; Sue Carswell: Faded Pictures from My Backyard: A Memoir; Michael Cart (Ed.): Rush Hour: Face: A Journal of Contemporary Voices, Vol. III; Betsy Carter: The Orange Blossom Special; Patricia Chao: Mambo Peligrosa; Clara Gillow Clark: Hattie on Her Way; Andrew Clements: Naptime for Slippers; Rachel Cohn: Shrimp; Allan George Cole: Dying Good; The Complete Timurans; Michael Connelly (Ed.): Murder in Vegas; Alan Cook: Hotline to Murder; Audrey Couloumbis: Summer's End; Linda Crew: A Heart for Any Fate: Westward to Oregon—1845; Chris Crutcher: The Sledoming Hill; Laura Shaine Cunningham: The Midnight Diary of Zoya Blume; Jane Louise Curry: The Black Canary; Jane Cutler: Common Sense and Fowls; Rose and Riley:
Aches; The Gluten-Free Bible; Chris Lowney: A Vanished World: Medieval Spain’s Golden Age of Enlightenment; Lois Lowry: Gooney Bird and the Room Mother;


Aimée Thurlo (and David Thurlo): White Thunder; Nick Tosches: King of the Jews; Charleen Touchette: It Stops with Me: Memoir of a Canuck Girl;

Rachel Vail: If We Kiss; James Van Oosting: Walking Mary; Lori Van Pelt: Amelia Earhart: The Sky’s No Limit; Denise Vega: Click Here: (To Find Out How I Survived the Seventh Grade); Ultra Violet: Famous for Fifteen Minutes: My Years with Andy Warhol;

Carol Wallace: One Nosy Pup; Sally Warner: Only Emma; Adam Weiss: The Backsmart Fitness Plan: A Total-Body Workout to Strengthen and Haul Your Back; Susan Wheeler: Record Palace; Gloria Whelan: Friends on Freedom River; Gloria White: Death Notes; Sean Wilsey: On the Glory of It All; Don Winslow: The Power of the Dog; Jonah Winter: Roberto Clemente: Pride of the Pittsburgh Pirates; Elizabeth Winthrop: Squashed in the Middle; Lisa Winton: Dirty Blonde and Half Cuban; Gretchen Woelfle: Animal Families, Animal Friends; Ferida Wolff: It Is the Wind; Stuart Woods: Two Dollar Bill; Nancy Means Wright: Mad Cow Nightmare; Nancy Henderson Wurst: Able! How One Company’s Disabled Workforce Became the Key to Extraordinary Success;

Jane Yolen: Grandma’s Hurrying Child; Jane Breskin Zalben: Hey, Mama Goose; Harriet Ziefert: Beach Party!
MEMBERS MAKE NEWS

Winners of the American Academy of Arts and Letters 2005 literature awards included Edwidge Danticat, recipient of the Benjamin H. Danks Award to a promising young writer of fiction, nonfiction or poetry, and Councilmember Daniel Hoffman, winner of the Arthur Rense Poetry Prize. Both awards carry prizes of $20,000.

The Walt Whitman Birthplace Association presented the Long Island School of Poetry Award to Philip Appleman at a ceremony in October. Appleman is distinguished professor emeritus at Indiana University and has published seven volumes of poetry.

Margery Facklam is the winner of the 2005 Knickerbocker Award, given by the School Library Media Section of the New York Library Association to an author/illustrator living in New York whose body of work supports the school curriculum. The award includes a $1,000 honorarium.

Muriel Feldshuh was selected as New Yorker of the Week by NY1 in February.

The Fellowship of Southern Writers awarded the 2005 Cleanth Brooks Medal for Distinguished Achievement in Southern Letters to George Garrett. The Brooks Medal, awarded biennially, is the highest honor given to a fellowship member.

George W. Green was the keynote speaker at the 26th annual meeting of the Motor City Packard Club, in May. Green was employed by Packard in the 1950s and edited The Packard News dealer magazine.

Margaret Morganroth Gullette’s Aged by Culture has been named a Noteworthy Book of the year by the Christian Science Monitor. Gullette’s Declining to Decline: Cultural Combat and the Politics of the Midlife won the Emily Toth Award for the best feminist book on American popular culture.

JoAnne Gullickson was nominated for Marquis Who’s Who in America for her book A Five Step Guide: For the Woman Just Diagnosed with Breast Cancer and for starting two cancer support groups in Arizona.

Homer Hickam’s eighth book, The Ambassador’s Son, has been optioned for a movie.

Chuck Hogan’s Prince of Thieves: A Novel has been nominated for The North American Branch of the International Association of Crime Writers’ Hammett Prize.


In February, Dr. Charles Patterson’s Für die Tiere ist jeder Tag Treblinka, the German edition of his book Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust, was selected as one of the month’s 10 most important nonfiction books for Sachbücher des Monats.

Laurence Pringle was awarded the Science Books & Films Prize for Excellence in Science Books by the American Association for the Advancement of Science and Subaru. The prize celebrates outstanding science writing and illustration for children, young adults, and general audiences.

David Quammen was a 2005 National Magazine Award winner for his essays in National Geographic.

Jeff Redmond won first place in the National Fantasy Fan Federation’s Short Story Contest for “The Temple at Twilight.” Redmond received a cash prize.

Jerome Richard’s novel, The Kiss of the Prison Dancer, was designated a runner-up for the 2005 PEN/Hemingway Award. He will receive a fellowship at the Ucross Foundation in Wyoming, a retreat for artists and writers.

ForeWord Magazine chose Still Pitching by Mike Steinberg as the Small and Independent Press Memoir/Autobiography of the year.

Jane Breskin Zalben’s Baby Babka, the Gorgeous Genius was a finalist for the Koret Foundation award in Children’s Literature.

The American Booksellers Association’s 2005 Book Sense Book of the Year Awards included Honor Book awards to Philip Roth for The Plot Against America (Adult Fiction); Augusten Burroughs for Magical Thinking (Adult Nonfiction); Eric Carle for Mister Seahorse (Children’s Illustrated); Judy Sierra for Wild About Books (Children’s Illustrated, illustrated by Marc Brown) and Dave Barry (and Ridley Pearson) for Peter and the Starcatchers (Children’s Literature).

The Small Press Center of New York held its First Annual New York Round Table Writer’s Conference in April at the Small Press Center in Manhattan. The two-day conference included guests Mary Higgins Clark, Rona Jaffe and Meg Wolitzer.

the creation of derivative works in violation of Section 106 of the Copyright Act. In response, Titleserv claimed Krause had compromised its software, because the company could not fix bugs and perform certain routine operations with the program as Krause had left it.

Following discovery, the case was referred to Magistrate Judge Wall, who recommended summary judgment in favor of Titleserv. The District Court adopted Judge Wall’s recommendation in October 2003. On appeal, the Second Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the district court’s judgment.

Section 117 (a)(1) of the Copyright Act allows the owner of a copy of software to “reverse engineer” to modify the software. To prevail under this section, the court noted that Titleserv had to demonstrate that the adaptation of Krause’s program: 1) was made by the “owner of the copy of the computer program,” 2) was created as “an essential step in the utilization of the computer program in conjunction with a machine,” and 3) was used in “no other manner.”

To determine whether Titleserv “owned” the physical copy of the program, the Second Circuit examined whether Titleserv exercised sufficient incidents of ownership to be considered the owner under Section 117 (a)(1). The court acknowledged that Titleserv paid Krause substantial sums to develop programs for its sole benefit; that Krause customized software for Titleserv’s operations; that copies of the software were stored on Titleserv’s servers; that Krause agreed Titleserv could possess them forever; and that Titleserv was free to discard or destroy the copies. Based on these incidents, the Second Circuit held that Titleserv was an owner of the programs.

To determine if the adaptation was “created as an essential step in the utilization of the computer program in conjunction with a machine,” the appeals court looked to its decision in Aymes v Bonelli. In Aymes, the Second Circuit allowed unauthorized modifications to a computer program, provided the modifications were designed to align the software with changes to the defendant’s business.

In this case, the court decided that the modifications were made to (1) fix bugs in the program, (2) update client information, (3) make the program compatible with a new Windows-based system, and (4) add new capabilities. In the court’s opinion, the first three modifications were essential for using the program with Titleserv’s machines. Although it struggled with the fourth type of modification, the court held that a new functionality might qualify as an “essential step” in “making the program useful to its owner.”

The Second Circuit also addressed Krause’s objection that the modifications failed to be “used in no other manner” when Titleserv shared copies with subsidiaries, and granted clients dial-up access. Here, the court deemed use of the programs by Titleserv’s subsidiaries as a “continuation” of the original intended use.

In the end, the Second Circuit held that Section 117 (a)(1) authorized Titleserv to adapt its copies of Krause’s programs without his permission, granting Titleserv summary judgment and dismissing Krause’s claims for copyright infringement.

– Michael Gross  
Staff Attorney
dummy version of the book: the warm, lively and literally moving story (featuring an unexpected pop-up) of a mother kangaroo teaching her joey to jump. And that’s when, naturally, the book business came to the aid of the book writer once again. A regular customer of the bookstore inquired over the counter how Bruel’s freelance work was going, and when he offered to show her his book proposal, the woman—a literary agent, as it turns out—immediately offered to represent him. The book was soon bought by Roaring Brook Press, a small and well-regarded publisher that, having been in business only a couple of years, already published two Caldecott Medal winners. All was going exceedingly well—which is when, as anyone with business experience in the book world can tell you, your luck is likely to change. Less than two months after the purchase of BOING, Roaring Brook’s parent company went bankrupt. For the next six months, Bruel wondered if his book would ever be published. But when the media company Van Holtzbrinck (also the parent company of Farrar, Straus & Giroux and St. Martin’s) stepped in to purchase Roaring Brook, BOING’s production went forward and the book was published in the fall of 2004. For Bruel, the happy ending only got happier when the book climbed onto the New York Times Bestseller List for several weeks. He now has a deal with Roaring Brook for another two books, and no longer has any reason to work in a bookstore again. Or does he?

“I’ll tell you, I do worry that by not being in a book-store, I can’t stay on top of the trends in book publishing the way I once was,” he admits. “It’s hard to keep exposing myself to the variety and richness of children’s books, which is continuously unfolding. To be honest, even now, I would say that if some retail opportunity came to me, I just might take it.” The move, certainly, would make him one of the few bestselling authors to be roaming the bestseller section in an apron and name tag, but would only underscore the truth: that the author Nick Bruel sells a lot of books. ♦

From the President

Continued from page 4

groups a week. The story makes the point that these are the readers most of us hope to reach, because they’re dedicated to reading, read a book a month or more, and like to talk about it with authors and each other—a source of the elusive and ever precious word-of-mouth. Their reading choices tend to be quirky and intelligent. Such groups are demanding more from publishers and writers, in the form of readers’ guides and telephone chats, and in return they are giving new legs to trade paperbacks and even hardbacks that they like.

Talking to committed and enthusiastic readers—far from the burden that so much of publicity can seem to the writer dealing with deadlines, research, creative challenges and family matters—actually sounds like fun. Even if more books are being published than ever before, the ways to highlight them are increasing too. We authors just have to keep looking for the opportunities, and making sure that they’re the right ones. ♦

BULLETIN BOARD

Spire Press has a New Short Story Contest. The story must be 1,200 to 3,000 words. A prize of $400 and 10 copies of the published work will be given to the winner. A cover letter with story title, name, e-mail and address should be submitted along with a SASE and a $15 application fee. The author’s name should not appear on the manuscript, but the story title should appear on each page. Deadline: July 31, 2005. Contact: Spire Press, 532 LaGuardia Pl, Ste 298, New York, NY 10012. www.spirepress.org.

The Boston Authors Club is accepting publisher submissions for its two annual Julia Ward Howe Awards of $500 each, for trade books copyrighted in 2005. One goes to an adult book, the second to a book for young readers, from chapter books through young adult titles. (Children’s picture books and self-published works are not accepted.) Authors must live or have lived within a 100 mile radius of Boston (school or college counts). Two copies of each book must be submitted; these cannot be acknowledged or returned. Deadline: January 15, 2006, but early submission is desirable. Awards will be presented at the Boston Public Library May 11, 2006, and honorable mention is given to finalists. Please send books to The Boston Authors Club, c/o Andrew McAleer, 121 Follen Road, Lexington, MA 02421. For our recent winners, visit our website: www.bostonauthorsclub.org ♦
New Council Members

Born of Cuban parentage in New York City, Oscar Hijuelos is the author of six novels, including The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love (1989) and A Simple Habana Melody (2002). In 1990, he became the first Hispanic-American writer to win the Pulitzer Prize in fiction, for Mambo Kings, which was the basis for the 1992 film The Mambo Kings. His awards include the American Academy of Arts and Letters Rome Prize in Literature and fellowships from the National Endowment of the Arts and the Ingram Merrill and Guggenheim Foundations. Mr. Hijuelos has also contributed to various publications, among them Cool Salsa: Bilingual Poems On Growing Up Hispanic in the United States (1994). His works have been translated into many languages.

Douglas Preston was born in Cambridge, Mass., and graduated from Pomona College in California. He worked as an editor and writer at the American Museum of Natural History for eight years, and taught nonfiction writing at Princeton University. His first book was Dinosaurs in the Attic, a history of the American Museum of Natural History. Additional nonfiction includes Cities of Gold, which chronicles Coronado’s futile search for the Seven Cities of Cibola, and Talking to the Ground, about the Navajo creation story, both published by Simon & Schuster. His first novel, Jennie, was published in 1994, after which he embarked on a series of mystery novels written with Lincoln Child. The ninth and latest in the series, Brimstone, was published last summer. Mr. Preston has won a number of awards for writing and occasionally writes about archaeology for the New Yorker. He has also written for Smithsonian, Harper’s, Natural History, and National Geographic.

Roxana Robinson is the author of seven books: Three novels, Sweetwater, This Is My Daughter, and Summer Light; three collections of short stories, A Glimpse of Scarlet, Asking for Love, and the forthcoming A Perfect Stranger, as well as the biography, Georgia O’Keeffe: A Life. Four of these were named New York Times Notable Books; the biography of O’Keeffe was shortlisted for the National Book Critics Circle Award. Her fiction has appeared in The Atlantic, The New Yorker, Harper’s, Daedalus, Best American Short Stories and elsewhere. Her essays and reviews have appeared in The New York Times, The Boston Globe, The Washington Post, Vogue, Travel and Leisure, and elsewhere. Roxana Robinson is also a gardener and environmentalist, and her essays in those fields have appeared in House & Garden, Horticulture, The Boston Globe and Fine Gardening. She is as well a scholar of nineteenth-and twentieth century American art. Her essays have appeared in national arts magazines and exhibition catalogues and she has lectured widely on Georgia O’Keeffe. She has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the MacDowell Colony, and the Guggenheim Foundation. She has taught creative writing at the University of Houston and at Wesleyan University. She is on the Board of PEN, and has served on the board of the National Humanities Center.

Sarah Vowell is the author of four books: Radio On: A Listener’s Diary, for which Newsweek named her its “Rookie of the Year” for nonfiction in 1997, Take the Cannoli: Stories from the New World, and The Partly Cloudy Patriot, a national bestseller that was recently released on audio CD featuring the voices of Norman Lear, Paul Begala, and Conan O’Brien. Her newest book, Assassination Vacation, published this spring, is about tourism and presidential murder. She is best known for her monologues and documentaries for Public Radio International’s This American Life, for which she has been a contributing editor since 1996. As a critic and reporter, she has contributed to numerous newspapers and magazines, including Esquire, GQ, Artforum, Los Angeles Times, The Village Voice, and Spin, and she is a regular contributor to McSweeney’s. As a columnist, she has covered education for Time, American culture for the online magazine Salon, and pop music for San Francisco Weekly, for which she won a 1996 Music Journalism Award. Ms. Vowell is a fellow at the New York Institute for the Humanities at NYU. She has appeared on Late Show with David Letterman, The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, and Nightline, and is a regular on Late Night with Conan O’Brien.

Jonathan Weiner is the author of five nonfiction books about science and nature. His latest book is His Brother’s Keeper: A Story from the Edge of Medicine (Ecco Press, 2004). His last book, Time, Love, Memory, won a National Book Critics Circle Award in 2000. The Beak of the Finch won a Pulitzer Prize in 1995. His first book, Planet Earth, was the companion volume to an Emmy Award-winning PBS series in 1986. His book research has been supported by grants from NASA and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. His articles and essays have appeared in many newspapers and magazines, including The New York Times, The New Republic, and The New Yorker. He has taught at Princeton University as McGraw Professor in Writing; at Arizona State University as Rhodes Chair Professor; and at Rockefeller University as Writer in Residence. He lives in Bucks County, Pa., with his wife, Deborah Heiligman, who writes children’s books.
Letters

Continued from page 2

Indeed, the books have and will always be known to millions—that’s the point—and for far longer than any film version, whether or not the film was exact in its use of relationships, race or language. Books and films, two very different genres, can rarely be compared. Besides, it’s pretty great for a writer to again be paid for something he or she wrote over 30 years ago.

Anne N. Marino
San Francisco, CA

A Book in Every Backpack

Continued from page 6

heroic publishing partners, to retailers who have stepped in to support us along the way, and to our thousands of committed volunteers who work with us every day. We are certainly delighted by our progress but we also are always aware that there are children waiting.

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Writers may qualify on the basis of being book authors or freelance journalists. **Book authors** must have been published by an established American publisher. A writer who has a contract with an established publisher for a work not yet published may join as an associate member. A **contract with a vanity press does not qualify a writer for membership in the Guild.** **Freelance journalists** must have published three works, fiction or nonfiction, in a periodical of general circulation within the last eighteen months.

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Bulletin, Summer 2005