

# AUTHORS GUILD

Summer 2005 **BULLETIN**



*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.

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](mailto:staff@authorsguild.org) (type "Letters to the Editor" in the subject line). Letters may be edited for length, grammar and clarity.

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.

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.

*Continued on page 51*

---

## ALONG PUBLISHERS ROW

---

BY CAMPBELL GEESLIN

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 **Marilynne 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-

*Continued on page 32*