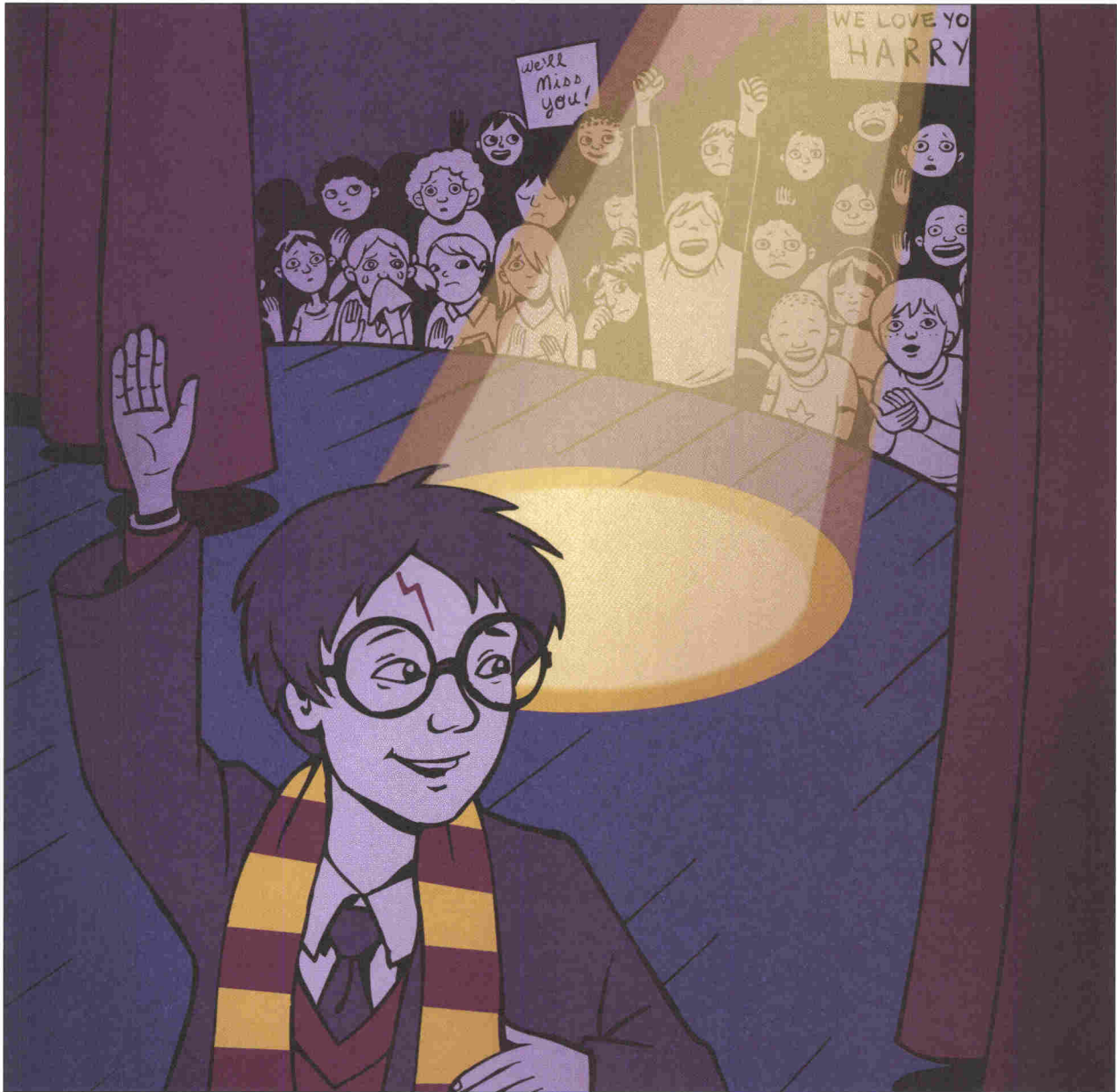


AUTHORS GUILD

Winter 2007

BULLETIN



WHAT'S NEXT?

Sustaining the Boom in Children's Book Publishing

Roy Blount Reflects on Compost and the Future of Books

FOIA's Forgotten Father

Ian Frazier on the Economics of Readership

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Just for fun and in case no one else responds, in re p. 40 of the Fall AG Bulletin, the Snark can be found starring in *The Hunting of the Snark* by Lewis Carroll. "for the Snark was boojam, you see."

Pete Cohen
Alta Vista, CA

No one there has read Lewis Carroll's "The Hunting of the Snark"? Admittedly, Pollit's use of the word is a bit beamish, not to say frumious, but she may be thinking of the state of being snarked, when "the bowsprit got mixed with the rudder."

On the other hand, Wikipedia more seriously says that "snark" "refers to a belittling or sarcastic style of speech or writing."

William Borden
Royce City, TX

We write our books to be read—if possible, widely read—so I can certainly appreciate Deborah Lightfoot's observation [Fall 2006] that "writers may

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

be more inclined to participate [in the Accelerated Reader program] now and take sides later." It's tempting to have one's books accepted by this company for inclusion on the list of AR titles that students will be more inclined to pick up.

But I think we have a moral obligation to take sides here because the stakes are so high. If someone from the dark side commissioned me to devise a program to *undermine* children's interest in reading, I'd probably come up with something very similar to AR. More than 70 studies have shown that the more people are rewarded for doing something, the

more they come to lose interest in whatever they had to do to get the reward. Sure, it's possible to buy a behavior in the short run (for example, reading a book) by dangling an incentive in front of kids. But what psychologists call intrinsic motivation tends to decline as a result of the use of extrinsic inducements.

AR is doubly damaging because it affects how children read as well as why they read. The point is to

Continued on page 50

ALONG PUBLISHERS ROW

BY CAMPBELL GEESLIN

"What is so spectacular about the book industry," author **Brad Meltzer** told *The New York Times*, "is that it has no idea of its own demographics, no Niensens, no way to track who is reading your book. Why would you be foolish and market to just one tiny demographic?"

Meltzer's latest thriller, *The Book of Fate*, opens with a scene at the Daytona Speedway, so Meltzer had an advertisement for the novel painted on the hood of Car No. 12 in a race. Meltzer didn't say how much it cost, but he said, "The best we can do is to be the first at anything, in terms of trying something new and different. Some authors will say, 'I don't want to be on a Nascar car because I'm above that,' and I'm like, 'That sounds like a great idea.'"

Before moving to novels, Meltzer began his career in marketing, comic books and television. In late September, *The Book of Fate* book hit the No. 1 spot on the bestseller list. And you probably thought Nascar fans couldn't read, didn't you?

DIVIDED: **Kyle Smith**, a film critic for *The New York Post*, took a crack at those writers who say on their dust jackets that they divide their time between Provincetown and Provence. On his novel, *A Christmas Caroline*, the flap reads, "He divides his time between the front and back rooms of his apartment."

CREDITS: "The bibliography has lately been creeping into novels, rankling critics who called it a pretentious extension of the acknowledgments page, which began appearing more than a decade ago and was roundly derided as the tacky literary equivalent of the Oscar speech," wrote **Julie Bosman** in *The New York Times*.

Norman Mailer's new novel, *The Castle in the Forest*, lists 126 authors and titles that enriched his book. At the end of **Martin Amis's** *House of Meetings*, the author lists six books that he read while writing his novel.

Robert Ferrigno, in *Prayers for the Assassin*, credits

Continued on page 30