

Novelists' Ink

The official newsletter of Novelists, Inc.—a professional organization for writers of popular fiction

Volume 9, Number 7

July 1998

I LOVE ME - WHO DOES MY PUBLISHER LOVE? or SHOULD I DO PUBLICITY ON MY OWN?

Just Ask...

GREAT NEWS! Beginning next month we'll have an ongoing column entitled "ASK THE LAWYER."

Alan J. Kaufman brings to this column more than 25 years of publishing legal expertise and a thorough knowledge of the business of publishing. He has been a literary agent/attorney and was senior vice president and general counsel for Penguin Books for 19 years.

He currently practices law with the New York-based intellectual law firm of Frankfurt, Garbus, Klein & Selz, where he specializes in publishing and media, with an expertise in copyright, libel, licensing, and contract negotiation on behalf of authors and packagers.

E-mail your questions to the editor at LBryant316@aol.com. With such illustrious credentials, Mr. Kaufman's answers are sure to be beneficial to our membership.

LB

By ELAINE RACO CHASE

What author hasn't asked this question—to themselves, their agents, their editors—anyone with an opinion. And those opinions certainly vary. We've been having an ongoing discussion on this topic in *Sisters in Crime* for over a year and still haven't come to any conclusions.

Coming from a background as a publicity agent at an advertising agency, then doing PR for SinC and as its former national president—I believe publicity can make a difference. I've seen it happen. What can an author do to publicize a book and not break the bank?

What can an organization like Novelists, Inc. do to make its members known to the book buying public? Here's a variety of suggestions for your consideration. Of course, if your publisher has paid you a mega-bucks advance or you've already hit the *New York Times*, you can stop reading this article. We'll be seeing you in glossy repetition on the pages of *People Magazine* or during the commercial break in *Ally McBeal*.

However, if you're trying to get noticed among the single title release, midlist, or category crowd, increase sales and hopefully print-runs, then here're a few ideas that might help.

Find me someone who isn't writing a book. Just being an author is not enough to get you publicity. **You have to look beyond that for another niche.** Award-winning mystery author Elizabeth Daniels Squire did just that and found numerous niches to promote herself and her books. Liz is a youthful senior writing about a senior sleuth; this enabled her to get interviews from quite a few magazines aimed for seniors and have her books recommended as a "good read."

Then there's Liz's sleuth, Peaches Dann, the absent-minded amateur detective who's writing *How To Survive Without a Memory* and solving crimes with her memory tricks. The memory tricks are real—gleaned from ancient Greeks, Mark Twain, and other sources—and explaining how to use them has also garnered Liz interviews on radio and in print. When *Whose Death Is It, Anyway?* debuted in January of 1997, Liz had more radio/TV/print interviews than she knew what to do with

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Novelists, Inc.

FOUNDED IN 1989

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Volunteers Make New NINCLINK Go

After my column in last month's issue of the Novelists, Inc. newsletter (you remember, the one in which I *vented*), it's a delight to be able to pass along some good news. As many of you already know, the NINC Internet digest—NINCLINK—has found a new home. The transition to the new server went very smoothly and, as a result, the digest has already been recharged and renewed. There are several interesting discussion threads going on as we speak. So jump in and join the fray. If you aren't already subscribing to NINCLINK, just turn to Brenda Hiatt Barber's column in this issue to find out how to go online. It's one of NINC's hottest perks.

I have to thank the people of the NINC Internet Committee for their work and support in making this move. CurtissAnn Matlock volunteered to chair the committee just as we were beginning the move. She moved into a tough job at a tough time and is handling it wonderfully.

Patricia de la Fuente handled the technical aspects of the transition and the actual moving of our subscriber list to the new server. She had to take time out of her busy schedule to learn new software, something not many of us would handle as well or as cheerfully as she did.

Brenda Hiatt Barber kept NINCLINK members informed of what was happening and fielded an apparently endless number of inquiries about the new system. She dealt with each question and each problem with her usual grace and humor.

Eileen Bucholz, meanwhile, kept the NINC web site under control and functioning smoothly as NINCLINK moved to a new server. Her work continues to make Novelists, Inc. a presence on the web.

I'm grateful to everyone who worked so hard on this committee to make one of NINC's greatest benefits an even greater one. The next time you run into any of these folks, give them a well-deserved hug. I know I will.

Conference Brochure soon

You'll also be receiving the 1998 NINC conference brochure soon. Take a look at it, as the Lake Tahoe conference is shaping up as one of the best ever. In response to the overwhelming sentiment of our members, this conference will be very different from the New York conference. At Lake Tahoe, we're going to work hard and learn as much as we can, but we're also going to decompress and have some fun. So sign up; it'll be a good party.

— Steven Womack

This Month from the President:

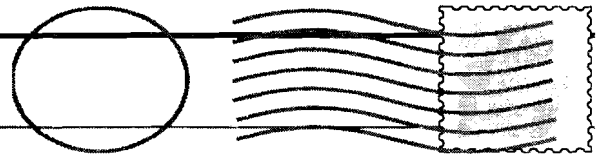
*Thanks to
volunteers who
made our new
NINCLINK
a reality*

Members: To obtain a copy of the full minutes of the Board of Directors' meeting, send \$2 plus SASE to the P.O. Box. For an updated copy of the Bylaws, send \$2 plus SASE. For a copy of the Treasurer's Report, send \$1 plus SASE to the P.O. Box.

Missing NINK?

Missing an issue of *NINK*? Didn't receive your subscription copy? Contact the Central Coordinator, Randy Russell, for replacement [not the editor].
Novelists, Inc., P.O. Box 1166
Mission KS 66222-0166

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Letters to the Editor is the most important column in our newsletter, since it is the monthly forum in which we can all share our views and express our opinions. Anonymous letters will never be published in NINK. Upon the author's request, signed letters may be published as "Name Withheld." In the interest of fairness and in the belief that more can be accomplished by writers and publishers talking with one another rather than about each other, when a letter addresses the policies of a particular publisher, the house in question may be invited to respond in the same issue. Letters may be edited for length or NINK style. Letters may be sent to the NINK editor via mail, fax, or e-mail. See masthead for addresses.

Another Weapons Resource

Further to my article, "Stab that Villain! (Researching Traditional Weapons and Combat)," I would like to recommend an additional source, one which may be particularly useful to historical writers.

Renaissance Magazine is aimed at interest groups such as the Society of Creative Anachronism and regional Renaissance Fair enthusiasts. Articles cover subjects of historical interest, particularly aspects of daily life, cultural trends, and costume. I've also seen interviews with armour makers, articles about Wicca, and examinations of period poetry and music in its pages. Many articles include a list of recommended reference works. In addition, the magazine often lists web sites for research into many aspects of the readers' likely interests. Finally, the magazine is chock full of intriguing ads. (Did you know, for example, that you could research combat hands-on by going to an actual jousting school?)

Renaissance Magazine is carried by major bookstores such as Borders, Barnes and Noble, Supercrown Books, and large independents. It's also available by subscription at: *Renaissance Magazine*, 13 Appleton Road, Nantucket MA 02554-2705, or phone 508-325-0411 10 am-6 pm EST, M-F. They accept checks, Visa, and Mastercard, and subscription rates are reasonable (\$17 for one year).

— **Laura Resnick**

Colleagues Applaud Candid President's Column

The June President's Column struck, at least for me, one of those deep but unwanted cords. It may be of little consolation to Steven, but I believe there are few of us who haven't been where he is right now—wondering what in the hell has taken hold of his publisher's senses and logic and business practices, and what, if anything, he can do about it. Steven's honesty highlights what I believe NINC exists for—we are all small businesses trying to survive in the midst of a swirling ocean and our sense of hope, of sharing, and knowledge comes from our fellow small businessper-

sons. In fact, I'd love to see more of this kind of "laying it all out on the table," so to speak. It's time we got down and dirty about the good, bad, and ugly that's taking place in our chosen careers. Suffer in silence? To hell with that!

— **Vella Munn**

I just ate two chocolate chip cookies out of the oven and devoured the fearless June issue of *Novelists' Ink*. Many thanks to Steve Womack for his courage in telling his story—it's so easy to think, "If only I'd written a better book," or, "It's my fault," when the truth is, sometimes everyone—writer, agent, publisher—can do their job and it still doesn't work. 'Tis the nature of the beast. (Then there are those times when someone drops the ball...) As one editor told me recently, "We just cut [paperback] print-runs across the board by 30 percent. For a writer with a million-and-a-half print run, going down to a million isn't so terrible. But for a writer with a 100,000 print-run, going down to 70,000 is a disaster." I'm reminded of the old marketing adage: "If sales aren't going up, they're going down."

That said, I've heard so many writers say they're cutting loose, digging deep, no longer playing it safe, taking off the gloves, and otherwise going for broke—and I don't mean in asking for money or promotion budgets or doing business. I mean creatively. With nothing left to lose, they're taking creative risks that ultimately just might reinvigorate the popular fiction market, from the stand-out genre novel to mainstream.

Sure, these are scary times businesswise, but creatively, they're damned exciting. Or am I just an impossible optimist?

— **Carla Neggers**

Thanks, Steve Womack, for sharing a depressing career experience. It takes a lot of courage to address several hundred writers and wonder aloud if your career is finished, and then try to sound optimistic about new directions you never intended or wanted to take.

Steve, you're right that your experience is one many of us may face. Your story is also mine. I've got a film option that looks like it might actually go to film. I'm selling regularly to Doubleday Bookclub. Getting fabulous reviews. Winning buckets of awards. Hitting a few minor but nice lists. And in response, my publisher steadily cut my print runs until I couldn't possibly earn out.

Then the editor began to talk about the reasons why I was failing so badly. You know the reasons, you heard them, too, and listed them in your column. Collapse of the ID market, shrinking market, yada yada. With the faint but definite hint that somehow I'm to blame for my lousy print runs. Or maybe that feeling is merely paranoia brought on by the shocking discovery that all the wonderful ▶ ▶ ▶ ▶



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things happening in my career didn't matter even a little bit to my publisher.

And then came the talk about taking a pseudonym because it would make starting over a bit easier.

I know the shock, disbelief, and depression you're experiencing, because I'm only now beginning to struggle out of those feelings. I'm a little ahead of you in time. I changed houses and I'm starting over without a pseudonym but at a serious cut in pay. I feel damned lucky that someone out there still wanted to publish me. Now if I can vanquish the feelings of being a failure, and resurrect a little bit of ego, maybe I can write a book to justify my wonderful new publisher's faith that I'm not finished yet. I need to know it, too.

And I needed to know I wasn't the only one of us who stupidly thought I was having a bit of success only to discover that my publisher considered me a failure and adjusted my print run accordingly. That's a lonely, angry place to be. Thanks for making it a little less lonely.

— **Maggie Osborne**

In regards to Steven Womack's heartfelt message in the June issue:

I know it doesn't help much to say we hear your cries. We've heard similar cries from countless other writers in the same position these last few years of collapsing markets and industry consolidation. Maybe the economy is booming outside of the publishing marketplace, but we've hit severe downsizing within our industry, and since our world is such a small one, it's a severely personal anguish. Worse yet, because our marketable talents are so individual, it's impossible to comprehend the loss without feeling as if, in some way, it's our fault. Maybe if we'd written another type of book, maybe if we wrote better, maybe if we'd used first person instead of third.

Having had a 15-year career as a historical writer hit broadside by the Harper debacle, I barely escaped by the skin of my teeth through sheer good fortune, timing, and the need to write a different kind of book at a miraculous moment. I'm still shivering in fear and reaction at the impact of the collision. I still look at everything I write and wonder if I ought to steer it in a different, more marketable direction, if it's really good fiction or trash that I've somehow sold in error.

It very much looks to me as if the bean-counters have finally succeeded in selling our souls. Like theater and art, we may now have to rely on the government to fund our creativity in a few years. Technology has won; creativity has lost—unless we do something drastic.

Publishing as we know it is as archaic as the dinosaurs. The embryonic e-books online have a long way to go before

the technology will support them in the same manner as publishing currently does. I have this dream. Of writers and editors working together on wonderful books that are good because of their content and not because of the name on the cover or the marketability of angels and O.J. Simpson. Of a distribution system that eliminates the middle man, that ships books by computer demand, direct from the publisher to the bookseller within days and with complete sales histories at our fingertips and no returns. Of bookstores that....

Well, I'm imaginative. The dream gets pretty detailed. Anyone want to buy our own publisher and start our own dream? (And Julie Tetel, I hear you. When you get a sales team in place, I'll do the accounting!)

— **Patricia Rice**

Publisher's Open Letter to Maxwell Rebuts "East of the Hudson" Commentary

Dear Evan:

I read with interest your piece in *Novelists' Ink* dated April 1998. First, I would like to thank you for some of the nice remarks you made about me. However, I think there are a few inaccuracies about QVC, and before I discuss the remarks made in this article, I want you to know I think you should have done a little more research first. (*Editor's Note: The New York Times was the resource for Mr. Maxwell's facts.*)

First of all QVC has over 62 million viewers, not five million. (*Editor's Note: are we talking subscribers rather than viewers?*) Secondly, we did not pay for the space on QVC. We made them a business proposal, which they understood. You probably don't know that a number of other publishers were upset because we got to QVC before they did. We understand marketing and were able to sell them our concept before other publishers woke up.

As for not treating writers with the utmost respect, that is simply not true. I have great respect for authors, but that does not mean that the needs of this company will always coincide with the needs of an author. As an example of this, I would cite that I released an author from a multiple book contract when it became clear that the author's health was in jeopardy. Clearly it was not in the best interest of this company to release the author. Nevertheless, out of respect for the author, I did just that.

We are always looking for new areas to market books, as there is tremendous shrinkage in outlets and display spaces. If I were an author I would be concerned with the shrinkage of publishers and, more importantly, the lessening of display spaces for most authors, whether you are only a midlist or better-selling author. Too many accounts only want the top-selling authors. We have kept many authors

alive when they have been turned down by other publishers by exploring new marketing techniques at a great cost to Kensington Publishing. Many of these writers would not be around today if we were not in the business.

I fought the battle with the giants for more years than I can remember and frankly, if the authors will stop complaining and start using their own economic clout, they might help us get more display space in supermarkets, chains, warehouse clubs, etc. Think of the economic clout of all the authors in Novelists, Inc. and Romance Writers of America.

How does an author feel when they spend money in a supermarket for groceries, but then can't find their own book displayed? Have they ever talked to the manager and asked why? There is only so much that a publisher can do to get these large outlets to display authors. However,

there are many things that members of Novelists, Inc. or Romance Writers of America can do to help publishers like us.

You probably don't know anything about me, but I am in this business because it is the only thing I wanted to do. When I read your article, I really questioned whether it is worth the fight. Maybe you wrote this article because you think it is your position to lambaste the publishers. I don't think it does you or the authors any good.

— **Walter Zacharius**
Chairman of the Board, Kensington Publishing

P.S. Since you are well respected in the *Novelists' Ink* publication, why don't you have this letter published in its entirety, and if you are ever in New York, call me; I'll give you an education in publishing.

SHOULD I DO PUBLICITY?

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—Why? The mystery centered around reading hands and the *Mark of Murder* line as clues to solving a murder. Interviewers couldn't and didn't pass that up, especially since Liz herself had read the hands of well-known people like Carl Sandburg, Joan Rivers, Jack Paar and Salvador Dali! By the way, Liz is also a calendar girl—Ms. August—for an internationally distributed calendar by the Dyslexia Society. She's even parlayed dyslexia into positive PR and has spoken to many adults and students who have this problem.

Miriam Grace Monfredo is the author of the Glynis Tryon historical mystery series...all her books have received starred reviews in *Publishers Weekly*, but even that wasn't publicity worthy. What was? The fact that Miriam created a planned body of work focusing on the evolution of women's and minorities' rights in the US from the 1800s to the present. Starting point: Seneca Falls. Publicity point: Women's History Month, weaving real historical figures into actions with fictional characters, make "herstory" entertaining yet historically accurate. Results: numerous invitations from colleges and universities for speaking engagements and booksales.

There are many niches authors can take advantage of with positive consequences: African-American Heritage Month, Women's History Month, Valen-

tine's Day/Mother's Day/Father's Day—the list of possibilities is endless and the **ABA (American Booksellers Association) has a calendar that targets these events among others.**

Press Kit—this is your oversized business card and door-opener. If you're at all handy and have a color printer and scanner, you can whip up one in a few hours. Scan in your book covers, list your reviews, add a biography sheet, a Q&A sheet and a glossy B&W or color photo. If you are interested in doing speaking engagements, add a sheet that lists topics you feel comfortable doing—make them intriguing. Some of Liz Squire's topics stand out: *How I Write About Murder When I've Never Killed Anyone*, *Do Peaches Dann's Memory Tricks Really Work*, *How I Read the Hands of Carl Sandburg and Joan Rivers*. Use quotes to capture attention. Liz's quotes have turned into fabulous **bumper stickers and bookmarks**, most notably: "Of All the Things I've Lost, I Miss My Mind the Most." Other inserts, depending on what you write, might include: Reading guide for library and bookclub groups, first chapter reprint, or even the publisher's sales brochure sheet on your book. The latter makes a quick and easy flier for any author to reproduce.

You can slide your sheets into colorful Duo-tang folders and paste a bookcover on the front or ▶ ▶ ▶ ▶

"It's obviously important to support first novelists—or where will second books come from?"

Otto Penzler,
publisher and bookseller

Writing Changes Everything,
edited by Deborah Brodie

SHOULD I DO PUBLICITY?

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you can have inexpensive folders engraved with your name and your publisher's if desired. Can't manage a bit of artistic conception? Hire it done; it's not that expensive. You might even look to a college or high school graphics art major for help.

Head for Staples, Office Depot, OfficeMax, or Kinko's and see what the on-staff help can do for you. With sale coupons, color copying of a sales brochure can be as cheap as 50 cents or less a page. Imprinting can easily be handled at these places for less than \$2 a folder. There are so many specialty paper companies out there, it's almost impossible to be bland on the inside of your presskit. You might take a look at My Software Company—they have no-brainer software that easily creates brochures, newsletters, business cards, and postcards, as do companies like Paper Direct and Paper Showcase. Scanners are on sale at less than \$100 with rebates that bring them down to under \$40; color printers are down to under \$100 as well.

We put a press kit together for *Sisters in Crime*—white glossy Duo-tang with our red dagger logo on the front. Inside: brochures, newsletters, Books-in-Print Catalogue, and lists of where we'd be at major book events for the year.

One media source called us "ubiquitous"—I admit I had to look it up...it means omnipresent, all over, everywhere. I guess it seemed as if we were...our press kits certainly were, media was calling, and our profile was climbing.

Internet—Let's get the first problem out of the way: If you don't have a modem, server, newer computer, etc., just head to your public library. If they don't know you, introduce yourself, then ask if you can set up some "do not disturb time" to surf the net.

What are you going to do on the Internet? For fun and a few surprises, just type your name into any of the search engines (Infoseek, Altavista, Hot Bot) and see what happens. I was stunned to find reviews on all my books in the most unusual places, articles on speeches I'd made, even photos at mystery conventions.

Next, head for **Amazon.com**, the Internet's largest bookstore. Search for your name and book titles, do the online author interview and take a look at your reviews. No reviews or a bad one—courtesy of strides made by *Sisters in Crime*, Amazon has offered to add reviews. Just e-mail additional reviews to **catalog-dept@amazon.com** with date, newspaper, and critic name. You might also see if your books made it on their bestsellers' list!

Next surf to **http://www.bookwire.com**—BookWire is packed with information and they want to hear from authors. They'll list your upcoming events on the Authors Highway for free; just send e-mail to: **road-trip@bookwire.com** or call them at: 800-226-6594

Using the various search engines (or purchase one of the many Internet Yellow Pages Guides) begin to tour the sites that can help promote you and your books. You'll find a huge selection dealing with true crime, mystery, romance, science fiction—all the genres and single title categories. Nonfiction abounds with computer, business, self-help...just pick a topic and see what comes up.

You'll also be able to check out your publisher's website (make sure you're in there—if not, get in), other authors' web sites (visit Liz at **http://www.booktalk.com/edsquire**), and major chain sites like Barnes & Noble, Borders, Books-A-Million, WalMart. Most independent bookstores have sites to visit, author interviews and reviews, bestsellers' lists in categories, and other points of interest. Numerous fanzine publications are online as well.

See where you can leave information about yourself and your books—that's your goal. And it may take you a half-dozen trips to accomplish this. The Internet grows daily, and it can be a handy reference tool for writing books as well as marketing.

Do you need a web site? It's certainly something to think about and gets easier to do every day. Often your Internet server provides a free webpage, there are numerous sites that offer free pages as well (**geocities** and **success**). With all the software available, it doesn't take an artist or computer nerd to create a simple site and more complicated ones can be purchased at ever-reduced rates. You should make sure your site is linked to a bookstore so that visitors can buy your book. If you want to be able to have visitors get in touch with you, I'd advise setting up a separate e-mail account from one of the free services like Juno, or HotMail and RocketMail that are offered on the web.

Bookselling This Week Spotlight—Huh? *Bookselling This Week* is a weekly publication of the American Booksellers Association that is sent to all their members. They have created a very inexpensive ad for authors. Contact Ben Berry at 800-637-0037 ext. 254 or via his e-mail: **bberry@bookweb.org** for information on how \$175 will get you two weeks of Spotlight advertising, featuring your bookcover, write up, what you want to say about your book—with BTW doing all the layout and design work.

Publishers Weekly—think you can't afford an ad in PW? Wrong. Robin Mays is ready, willing, and able to help both organizations and authors with advertising in all sizes at competitive rates. Contact Robin at: phone: 770-565-1233; fax: 770-565-6604; address: 3605 Sandy Plains Rd., Suite 240-243, Marietta GA 30066. You might do something dramatic like a multi-author ad, reverse B&W, or full color mini-ad.

Sisters in Crime, as an organization, started doing major 4+ page group ads in both mystery/suspense issues of PW when I became publicity chair. It turned out to be one of our best marketing ideas, reasonably priced to members (\$40), they and got us noticed. We had over 200 new members; bookstores said it made ordering easier, and

since most mystery authors are hardly publicized by the publishers—it gave authors a chance to shine in the biggest industry magazine. It also made Sisters in Crime noticed by the media as well as the American Library Association and various regional ABAs. They were intrigued; could we provide authors for their conventions and would we be interested in participating at the regional shows.

It was so successful and so talked about—Romance Writers of America soon copied our efforts. Mystery Writers of America went a step further and took a group ad in the *NYTimes Book Review* Section a few years back. Just a thought: With Novelists, Inc.'s varied membership, a group ad in any issue would be appropriate.

Events—Most of the major chains and libraries are doing book discussion groups of all types: Mystery, mainstream, non-fiction, westerns, romances, business...you name it, they are meeting about it. Introduce yourself to the community events coordinator at your local Barnes & Noble, Borders, or library. Bring in your press kit and a book and talk to them about having your book be the one everyone is reading. I did this at the Barnes & Noble in my area, the mystery group had 32 members which equaled 32 sales, which then parlayed into another 20 the night of the book discussion. 54 copies of *Amateur Detectives* sold at one B&N...that caused 10 more Barnes & Noble's and two Borders who heard about it to call and more books were sold!

If you're not comfortable doing this, work on it, practice, take a speech class. This is something that provides a domino effect and PR from local press in your surrounding area. In most cases, the community events coordinator writes up the event for the chain's in-house newsletter...there's a photo of you at the event for all of the chain's officials to see—including their buyers!

Fanzines and Bookstore Newsletters—Do I have to mention names? Probably not in regard to the various fanzines that populate genre fiction. It's a symbiotic relationship—they need you; you need them...and they have a de-

voted readership that more and more is crossing genre lines. So—use them. Give yourself a money limit for an ad/interview. Many of SinC's mystery authors are wandering into romance territory and getting new readers. If you're putting some mystery in your romance, western, or SF, let *Mystery Scene Magazine* know about it. Author ads run \$100 and putting out your PR on upcoming cross-over books is free.

Some of the major independent bookstores, such as Tattered Cover, Book Passage, Mystery Books, Old Book Barn, have major newsletters that are more like magazines. They do interviews, reviews, reports on author tours, etc. Let them meet you and get your information out—make it fun and interesting.

Chains have their newsletters like B&N's *Ransom Notes* for mysteries and *Explorations* for SF, fantasy, and graphic novels. Their editors invite you to write. Take them up on their invitation.

Radio and TV—Voice of America's Nancy Beardsley loves authors. If you can't get into Washington, DC, she'll do a phone interview. Contact her with book/presskit: Voice of America, 330 Independence Ave. SW, Room 3230, Washington, DC 20547; phone: 202-619-1107. There are thousands of radio and TV shows that focus on books and authors. Sisters in Crime set up a speaker's bureau and a booklet on author tours for our members. Novelists, Inc. could do the same. If every member researched their own area—what a collection of data you'd have for touring authors or those who want to do phone/radio talk shows in the comfort of their own homes.

Publisher's Reps—Yes, they still exist. Yes, most of them like to know the authors in their area. How do you find one? Go to an independent bookstore, make a friend out of the owner, have them introduce you to your rep. Take the rep out to lunch or whatever. Don't be pushy. If they seem put-off, then back off. But most of them love authors, will put you in touch with their biggest local accounts, set up autographings, find you co-op money, and push your book. I may be prejudiced, but I've never met a nasty BDD rep in New York, ▶ ▶ ▶ ▶

"I often think how shocked authors would be if they listened to the salesmen selling their books. They've worked for a year on their book—two years, three years, maybe longer. And there it is. A word or two and the decision is made. I don't think many authors could stand it."

George Scheer,
sales representative

Writing Changes Everything,
edited by Deborah Brodie

SHOULD I DO PUBLICITY?

▶ ▶ ▶ ▶ *Continued from page 7*

Florida, Texas and Virginia. St. Martin's reps are joys, especially the ones in Texas, and I never even wrote a St. Martin's book!

When *Sisters in Crime* had its first (and I hope not only) convention in Houston, we invited all the reps for Texas, the Southeast and West to a "Thank You" luncheon. They all came. They were thrilled to be invited, thrilled to meet their authors, and they answered lots of questions like: Which bookcover colors and styles sell best? Will you take promotional material from me? What can I do to help you sell my book?

We all had endless questions and they gave us something that was priceless: time and information. Some authors and reps have really clicked and friendships have developed that have withstood years and distances. We've even had reps ask us for help in promoting books!

Suggestion: at your next convention, invite the reps in that area to attend a tea or ice cream social or luncheon. Add in some of the local wholesalers/ID's...Ingram contacts, Anderson News, Levy. Let the people who get the books out meet the authors and make the connection that will translate into sales. Many regional authors today are becoming nationally known because they worked with their reps, made outstanding regional sales, and stood out for the publishing house.

ABA and Regional ABAs—The major ABA BookExpo is set in Chicago every year (at least so far) and is mighty big. SinC had a table there twice and we were lost among the major publishing houses and their fabulous displays and give-aways. But we joined ABA and many of the regional ABAs as well like: SEBA, NEBA, Mid-South, PCNWBA, Rocky Mountain. Why?

From the main ABA, we are able to have our members rent mailing lists at very low cost, plus they can be targeted (mystery bookstores, romance stores, gay/lesbian, etc.) By joining the regional ABAs, we can take advantage of the smaller shows and buy a table (in some cases, tables have been given to SinC).

What do we do there? Well, we highlight the organization and we showcase authors in that region or authors who want to promote their new book and know their publisher isn't doing anything for them. Every year, we do a sell-out breakfast at Mid-South and have done special events at SEBA, various California ABAs, and the children's book-show.

What do we gain? Our authors meet the booksellers who sell their books or have just discover them. Often, if the author is from that region, store events are set up for the future. This proved especially well for our gay/lesbian mystery writers as they were able to talk to booksellers, an-

swer questions, promote their books to a wider audience than they ever had. We had a group of children's booksellers ask to borrow one of my catch phrases—"Our mystery authors have been giving kids goosebumps forever!"—and host SinC authors for a Halloween event.

American Library Association (ALA)—SinC has been a presence at this twice-a-year event for nearly 10 years. One was held at the end of June here in Washington, DC. We had two breakfast panels and a table for the entire show. Mysteries, of course, are major library acquisitions, be they hardback or paper. But libraries buy all types of books and the librarians like to meet authors and just about all of them have the power to walk over to your publisher at the ALA and put in an order for your books.

Promotions—Pens, chocolates, calendars, mouse pads, cookbooks, candy, bookmarks, door knockers, cups—pick an item. Will it sell your book? I don't know. It certainly will get the attention of a bookseller, until they eat it! Or it runs out of ink. Or paper. Or breaks. Or.... I like doing pens. They are inexpensive—300 for \$50—and it makes a nice give-a-way at trade shows, autographings, etc.

Of course all the publicity and promotional ideas need one thing—A FABULOUS BOOK! Some of these ideas take little time and money. But they certainly can introduce author/book into new venues that will promote sales. Depending on what type of book you write, it can be more than just a short term deal. Non-fiction PR goes on as long as the book stays in print. Category is limited to a month or six weeks. Mysteries and their backlist titles, especially series, have lengthy followings. As does series science fiction, westerns, and military.

Some of these ideas can also introduce NINC as a group and its members as individuals to booksellers, wholesalers/ID's and reps. They may even boost sales—and that's what we're all after, isn't it? *NINK*

Elaine Raco Chase has written 19 books, published in 24 countries and 17 languages. She served as publicity chair, vice president, and president of Sisters in Crime International. Her current release is Amateur Detectives—a writer's guide, from Writer's Digest Books' Howdunit Series, which was nominated for the prestigious Agatha Christie Award.

INTRODUCING...

The following authors have applied for membership in NINC and are now presented by the Membership Committee to the members. If no legitimate objections are lodged with the Membership Committee within 30 days of this NINK issue, these authors shall be accepted as members of NINC:

New Applicants

Leslie LaFoy, Goddard KS
Linda Needham, North Plains OR
Lisa Plumley, Chandler AZ

New Member

Chelley Kitzmiller, Tehachapi CA

HOW TO MARKET YOUR NOVEL:

A PUBLICIST'S PERSPECTIVE

By **HAL COPELAND**

Much as they would like to do so, many publishers simply fail to provide their authors with sufficient marketing and media support. For the lack of budget, time or professional staff, even the largest publishers often find it difficult to devote much attention to any but a "superstar" author. What is the published novelist to do?

One good option is to retain your own media/marketing specialist. Book publishers usually call them "publicists." In the Yellow Pages you'll find independent individuals or firms listed under "Public Relations Counselors" or "Publicity."

Before you begin your search, let's consider the activities you may want to share or delegate.

1. MARKETING PLANS & CAMPAIGNS

As Yogi Berra said, "If you don't know where you're going you could wind up somewhere else."

A professional with experience in book marketing can supplement and extend the work of your publisher's staff. He or she can analyze the strengths of your novel to help determine the strategies most likely to build public awareness and sales...and help you see the "big picture," which may include dozens of little-known marketing opportunities for your title. Our theme is "With a Goal and a Plan, Success Began!"

Whether you and your PR counsel live in the same area or thousands of miles apart, he or she can become your confidant; bringing you an outside, objective point of view, and helping you to avoid some serious media or marketing mistakes. As one author told her PR counsel, "You have kept the momentum building long after my publisher turned his attention to the newer titles."

By handling a variety of assignments, the PR pro can sometimes benefit several author clients simultaneously. A producer, editor, or corporate sponsor interested in one author may also have some exciting opportunities for others. An author's PR counsel can also work with her agent whenever this is appropriate.

2. YOUR PRESS KIT

You may be among those fortunate authors whose publishers have produced press kits for them. When this is not the case, many authors, with outside assistance, produce their own.

Busy editors and reviewers often check out the press kit before they even look at the book. Kits in the press room at a Book Expo (ABA) or CBA convention draw the media's

attention to the most interesting publishers, authors, and their titles. A press kit that accompanies the book

offers the reviewer or broadcast producer special insight and knowledge of the author and title

The typical kit contains a news release, the author's biographical sketch and photo, and a list of suggested interview questions. Endorsements (sometimes called "blurbs") from celebrities, other authors, media professionals, etc. should certainly be included in the press kit. A page of short excerpts from the book can quickly demonstrate the quality of writing and hasten a decision to either review the book or interview the author.

3. SPEAKING DATES & SIGNINGS

Authors who are competent public speakers usually outsell those who are not. Many major bookstores want authors to step up to the microphone, entertain, possibly read from their books, and make friends with the audience.

A PR pro can often help you improve your speaking skills. He could draft a short script and coach you on your delivery, or refer you to a Toastmasters Club or a public speaking course. He can probably "sell" you more effectively and obtain more live audiences than you can for yourself.

Have you heard of an author who had a booksigning and nobody showed up? This would seldom if ever happen if the event were preceded by:

- ◆ Invitations mailed to accessible and qualified buyers,
- ◆ In-store posters and displays,
- ◆ Advance newspaper and newsletter coverage, and one or more radio or TV interviews announcing the event.

4. PRINT REVIEWS & NEWS RELEASES

In addition to those review copies your publisher will distribute to a basic media list, you and/or your PR counsel can probably find many more opportunities for reviews—in local, regional or specialized publications and syndicated columns, for example.

PR consultants often make follow-up calls to encourage reviews as well as to schedule live or phone interviews, which often produce greater readership than reviews alone can do.

5. RADIO & TV INTERVIEWS

Unless the author is a "household word," booking interviews on the air media requires a substantial amount of time, specialized knowledge, and patience.

Modesty may prevent an author from ▶ ▶ ▶ ▶

Hal Copeland of the Hal Copeland Co., Dallas TX, has been selling fiction and non-fiction books with media and marketing consulting services since 1983. His clients include fiction authors Patricia Anthony, Flanders; and Athol Dickson, Every Hidden Thing; nonfiction authors Denis Waitley, Seeds of Greatness, The Psychology of Winning; Paul Rogers, The Whiz Kids & The 1950 Pennant; Deborah Morris's "Real Kids, Real Adventures" on the Discovery Channel, and a host of national and regional publishers. For a free copy of "The Author's Marketing Quiz," contact Hal by phone 214-361-8788; fax 214-691-1573; or mail, 5646 Milton, Ste. 336, Dallas TX 75206.

HOW TO MARKET YOUR NOVEL

▶ ▶ ▶ ▶ *Continued from page 9*

praising her book as effectively as a "third party" can do. Many program producers have all their calls answered automatically by voice mail. They return only the calls they find especially intriguing. Consequently, many very capable potential guests are ignored. At major stations the volume of daily letters and incoming faxes are so numerous, it becomes impossible for anyone to read them all. Yet electronic media can pay big dividends.

Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hanson, authors of the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series, credit "an interview a day" (primarily telephone interviews on radio shows) with the sale of over 24 million books in four years. Not all results are as spectacular, but consistent air media coverage effectively builds public awareness for a title and its author.

While it is true that many "talk show" hosts prefer to interview nonfiction authors, programs on National Public Radio, C-Span's "Booknotes," and Public Radio International, for example, are especially receptive to discussions of good fiction.

Broadcast producers who know and respect the reputation of a PR firm will be inclined to accept the firm's "unknown author" client.

Is there a "hook" that will entice producers to book you as a guest? It can be something as simple as a descriptive phrase, one that will increase the show's ratings, and hold the audience at attention. Here is how the "hooks" might read for some of this summer's best-selling hardcover and paperback fiction.

- ♦ "A killer targets lonely women on cruise ships. A popular talk show host finds herself in danger when she tries to expose the killer. Mary Higgins Clark discusses her novel, *You Belong to Me*."
- ♦ "From Imperial Rome to 20th Century Paris and New Orleans, a 2,000-year-old vampire recalls her experiences. The book is *Pandora* by Ann Rice."
- ♦ "A young attorney discovers his prestigious firm's dirty secret in *The Street Lawyer* by John Grisham."
- ♦ "A Long Island couple is murdered. The murder may involve germ warfare research. The title is *Plum Island* by Nelson De Mille."
- ♦ "In *Serpent's Tooth*, a couple pursues a gunman who has turned his restaurant into a slaughter house. The author is Faye Kellerman."
- ♦ "To save her own life, a chance witness to murder must live anonymously. *Pretend You Don't See Her* by Mary Higgins Clark."

A good PR person can help you develop an effective hook for your book. George Godek, author of *1001 Ways to be Romantic*, has sold over one million books. He says, "My primary job is to appear on radio and television—and on the side I write books." That's how important the electronic media can be.

6. OPPORTUNITIES ONLINE

Your publisher may have already arranged for your book to be offered on its own web site as well as on amazon.com or barnesandnoble.com and others.

There are also opportunities for online book reviews and promotion on many smaller web sites. For example:

Book Wire: www.bookwire.com

Book Zone: www.bookzone.com

Booktrac: www.mammothartists.com/booktrac

Some online booksites take no discounts but advertise books at fees, some as much as \$200 per title, per year. Major search engines can direct users to numerous bookstore sites that market books for publishers at some 40% or 50% discounts.

Literally hundreds of web site designers are available to serve authors who want to maintain their own web sites. To check out examples of interesting author web sites, try www.patricia-anthony.com/ or Deborah Morris's www.realkids.com.

7. MARKETING EXPERIENCE

Some PR people are especially knowledgeable about buying and distribution patterns and habits. They help publishers and distributors expedite sales to non-bookstore outlets, such as specialty stores and newsstands. They locate mailing lists that will produce more than five percent returns and associations that market books to their members. With strategic telemarketing they can help the author and publisher tap into some profitable new markets.

HOW MUCH HELP DO YOU WANT?

Ask yourself these questions: Are you writing another book? Do you want to spend your time writing or would you prefer to spend fulltime promoting your latest published title? Are you confident about conducting some PR activities yourself? Would you be more at ease with the advice and services of a specialist for most functions? What's an acceptable budget for you?

Some consultants may charge only \$500 for a single project, such as locating the consumer magazines and columns that review books in a specific genre. Fees may range from \$1,000 to several thousand per month for full campaigns. Many PR pros base their quotations on an hourly rate plus expenses.

When you begin your interviews, ask about the firm's background. Be sure to interview the person who will actually be serving your account. Ask about success stories, especially in the marketing of books. Ask for specific titles, authors and publishers, and, by all means, check out references. There is no substitute for integrity, dependability, and successful experience.

If you feel confident about conducting certain areas of promotion yourself, discuss this with the PR counsel. Most will be receptive to a division of duties. For example, one

author might prefer to make all public speaking or booksigning contacts herself, and rely upon the PR pro for his advice and recommendations.

If your budget is very limited, it may be wise to begin by concentrating your marketing activities in just one area—newspaper or trade publication book reviews perhaps; or only telephone interviews on radio talk shows. As your income increases, you might then consider a tour of

selected cities, to include TV, radio and newspaper interviews, as well as public speaking dates and booksignings. Another nationwide media alternative is the satellite media tour of a dozen or more stations, from a single television studio.

Now you have some more ways to market your novel to America. With the marketing of foreign rights, your newest title could also become a world-wide bestseller! **NINK**

Tahoe '98 Putting It Together

By the time you read this article, the official brochure for the Novelists Inc. 1998 Annual Conference will be in the printer's hands, ready to wing its way to you. But in late May, when this article is being written, Program Chairman Kathy Chwedyk and I are still in the final stages of nailing down our list of outside speakers and the topics they'll cover. So lean back in your seat, munch that movie popcorn, and let me offer you a few previews.

HEY, MR. TAX MAN! Does the mere mention of April 15th send a shiver down your spine? Are you uncertain about the intricacies of exemptions and record-keeping? If so, bring your toughest questions to the conference for guest speaker Paul Doerr of the Internal Revenue Service. I guarantee you'll find him "user friendly."

YOU PAYS YER MONEY AND YOU TAKES YER CHANCES... No, this isn't more about the IRS, she said with a grin. A representative from the Hyatt Hotel's casino staff will give us a tour of the facility and enlighten us about the games people play and the hidden details of how a casino is run.

HISTORICALLY SPEAKING We're looking forward to hearing from Philip Earl, the Curator of History at the Nevada Historical Society in Reno. We're also trying to arrange a presentation by the Curator of Clothing, for those of you with questions about authentic costumes for your characters.

INTERESTED IN A BOOK SIGNING? We are currently contacting several Reno bookstores (chains and independents) to explore the possibility of organizing signings by NINC members in connection with the conference. If you would be interested in participating in such a signing, please contact me so that we can discuss the details.

TRIVIA QUESTION OF THE MONTH "What is a Hey For Four?" If you think you know the answer, send your response to me (by snail mail, e-mail or phone). I'll offer a prize to the sender of the first correct response I receive. (No fair answering if you're among the few who have

already heard me talk about this topic elsewhere.)

THE VERY BEST SPEAKERS Of course, as has become the tradition at a NINC conference, the outside speakers and activities are only a small part of the picture. The heart of the conference will lie in the nine Night Owl Sessions and numerous discussion groups and round-table debates where the members themselves take the pulse and talk about the prognosis for this crazy, cranky, exhilarating business we call publishing. But your voice can't be heard unless you're there! Members and their views are the bedrock on which a NINC conference is built, so please plan to join us.

It just won't be the same without you!

1998 Conference Coordinator Judy Myers



NINC 1998 CONFERENCE FACTS

PLACE: Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe Resort, North Shore, Incline Village, Nevada
Phone: 702-832-1234

DATES: Thursday, October 15 through
Sunday, October 18

REGISTRATION: Brochure and registration form
will be mailed to members this month

PRICE: \$255 for members

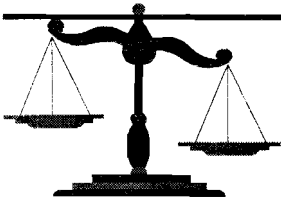
GUEST SPEAKER: Catherine Coulter

ROOM RATES:

\$125/night: Single Room or Double Room
\$250/night: 1-Bedroom Tower Suite
\$275/night: 2-Bedroom Tower Suite
\$325/night: 1-Bedroom Cottage
\$425/night: 2-Bedroom Cottage

QUESTIONS? ANSWERS TO THE TRIVIA QUESTION? CONTACT:

Conference Coordinator Judy Myers
E-Mail: NTNX79A@PRODIGY.COM
Phone: 916-721-6863
(Monday thru Saturday, 1-7 p.m. PST)



Advocacy Column:

Association of Authors' Representatives

In 1991, the Society of Authors' Representatives (founded in 1928) and the Independent Literary Agents Association (founded in 1977) merged to form the Association of Authors' Representatives, Inc. (AAR), the professional organization for agents.

This month I asked members of their board to answer questions about their organization. Richard Parks of the Richard Parks Agency and Barbara Hogenson of the Barbara Hogenson Agency, Inc. are co-Vice Presidents. Mr. Parks represents the literary branch of the organization while Ms. Hogenson serves the dramatic branch. Arnold Goodman of Goodman Associates is the Chairperson of the Ethics Committee.

1. What is mission statement of AAR and what qualifications must an agent meet to join the organization?

Richard Parks: The opening paragraph of the AAR By-laws states as follows: "... The members of the Association shall be individuals engaged in the business of representing authors, owners, or other custodians of rights to literary, dramatic, movie or picture, television, radio, or other similar material. Affirming a unity of purpose to act for the enhancement of their profession and the interest of their clients, and desiring always to maintain the individuality of each member while promoting their mutual objectives, the members of the Association agree to behave ethically towards each other, their clients, and the public, and to adhere to the Association's Canon of Ethics."

Membership in the AAR is restricted to agents whose primary professional activity for the two years preceding application for membership has been as an author's representative or a playwright's representative.

To qualify for membership in the literary branch, the applicant must have been the agent principally responsible for executed agreements concerning the grant of publication, translation, or performance rights in ten different literary properties during the 18 months preceding application. Alternatively, if the applicant is a dramatic agent, the agent must have executed agreements for the grant of rights for at least five stage productions before live audiences in First Class theaters, Off-Broadway theaters, LORT theaters, or major institutional theaters in New York City during the preceding two-year period. At least one such grant must have used either the Approved Production Contract of the Dramatists Guild, Inc. or have been a grant for the production of the play Off-Broadway in New York City.

To be a member, agents must conduct their business in such a manner as to be in compliance with the agent's legal and fiduciary duties to their clients, and each member

agent must agree in writing to adhere to the AAR's Canon of Ethics.

Associate members are full-time employees of a sponsoring agent member. They do not themselves qualify for full membership but are actively engaged in the selling of rights to literary or dramatic properties.

2. Does the AAR license agents? If not, should it? Does it provide education and training to agents on an annual basis?

Richard Parks: The AAR is a not-for-profit membership organization of literary and dramatic agents and as such has no authority to license agents.

At its monthly membership meetings, the AAR presents programs which focus on issues of concern to its membership. These programs often present the results of studies conducted by various standing committees. Recent programs have dealt with such topics as international book-selling, the termination of contracts, motion picture rights agreements, and other such subjects. Minutes of these meetings are mailed to all members so that those unable to attend are given the benefit of the information presented. The AAR also publishes a quarterly newsletter.

3. What do your members see as the hot concerns in publishing today? In the motion picture and television industries? In the theater market?

Richard Parks: We are deeply concerned about the contraction and conglomeratization of the book publishing industry and the degree to which this pattern has reduced and will further reduce the competitive field for books and authors. The recently announced purchase of Random House by Bertelsmann's is probably the most dramatic example of this disturbing trend, but by no means the only one.

Barbara Hogenson: I spoke with Christopher Wilson, Acting Executive of the Dramatists Guild, and it is clear that some of the most pressing issues in the theatre are the concerns among playwrights over the ownership of material. The *Rent* case, which is currently being appealed, brought into question the ownership of creative contributions made by a dramaturg (or anyone else for that matter) to a playwright's work. With another case pending, the issue of ownership of stage directions is also of great interest. And, last but certainly not least, the recent Manhattan Theatre Club release and reinstatement of Terrance McNally's play *Corpus Christi* brought the question of artistic freedom to the forefront.

As for film, the "hot concern" is the ratification of the MBA (Minimum Basic Agreement proposed by the Writers

Guild), which deals with the following topics: residual payments (at this time no residuals are paid for original re-use programming on Basic Cable and in the Foreign Markets); increases in writer minimums; and pension and health contributions to the P&H fund applied to purchases of literary material (this is a first).

4. Does the AAR work closely with other writers' groups?

Richard Parks: The AAR has instituted a system whereby members serve as liaisons to a wide range of writers' groups. We hope through this system to provide ongoing channels of communication which will serve to benefit all writers. An example of our work with other groups was the joint statement issued by the Authors Guild and the AAR in response to the announcement of the Bertelsmann/Random House deal.

5. Let's talk about the author-agent relationship. In your opinion, what should an author reasonably expect from an agent? What are unreasonable expectations?

Richard Parks: We publish a brochure which lists a number of things which an author might reasonably expect an agent to do: "Literary and dramatic agents are engaged in the marketing of rights to literary properties. They serve as their clients' representatives with respect to the clients' literary work, they review their clients' work and advise them about its quality and potential marketability and the possible strategy for securing its publication. An agent's relationship to a client is fiducial and includes fiscal responsibility for funds collected on the client's behalf."

In addition, the Canon of Ethics establishes the ethical standards to be followed by its members. Specifically, they pledge themselves "to loyal service to their client's business and artistic needs" and that they permit "no conflicts of interest that would interfere with such service."

Authors should expect their agent "never to mislead, deceive, dupe, defraud, or victimize their clients or any other person with whom they do business." They should expect their agent to "treat their financial affairs as private and confidential (except for information customarily disclosed to interested parties as part of the process of placing rights or as required by law or, if agreed with the client, for other purposes)."

They should expect their agent to "take responsible measures to protect the security and interpret of their clients' funds," to "maintain separate bank accounts for money due their clients so that there is no commingling of authors' and agents' funds," and to deposit and disperse funds received on behalf of clients promptly.

An agent's books of account "must be open to the client at all times with respect to transactions concerning the client." Authors should expect their agent to "keep each client apprised of matters entrusted" to the agent and to "promptly furnish such information as the client may reasonably request."

Authors should not hold unreasonable expectations of

their agents, such as the ability to sell material unsuited for a given market. Nor should they expect their agent to assume any responsibility for the management of their personal affairs.

6. Does AAR recommend written contracts? Is there a sample contract form that the organization has drawn up and is it available for authors to review?

Richard Parks: Apart from the Canon of Ethics, the AAR does not govern specific business practices of its members and therefore has no sample agency contract that it recommends to them.

7. What are the responsibilities of AAR's Ethics Committee? If an author has a grievance with an agent who is a member of AAR, what steps can the author take to have the complaint heard by the Ethics Committee?

Arnold Goodman: The mandate of the Ethics Committee is to consider complaints against AAR members relating to claimed violations of the Canon of Ethics. The Ethics Committee does not regulate the conduct or business practices of its individual members provided, of course, that such conduct or business practices are in conformity with the Canon. Nor will the Ethics Committee become involved in contractual disputes between an author and an agent.

If an author believes that an AAR member-agent has violated the Canon of Ethics, the author should write to the AAR providing full details and appropriate documentation. The Ethics Committee will then undertake an investigation of the complaint and inform the author of its determination in the matter.

In those rare instances where the Committee finds that a violation has occurred, it is required to report its findings to the AAR Board of Directors. The AAR Board will then determine what disciplinary action should be taken with respect to that member.

My sincere appreciation to these AAR Board members who took the time to answer my questions. To contact the AAR, snail mail to AAR, 10 Astor Place, Third Floor, New York, NY 10003 or check out their web site www.aar-online.org. The web site features a copy of their newsletter as well as the Canon of Ethics.

If you have a question that you would like to put to the AAR or a question on another topic, please contact Cathy Maxwell, 804-744-3376 or cmaxwell@bellatlantic.net.

— Cathy Maxwell

"Knowing that most authors write for love, publishers [in earlier times] tended to assume that they didn't need to write for money."

Richard Curtis, agent

Writing Changes Everything



Online Confidentiality—an oxymoron? I'm on several author mailing lists (more than I have time for!), including PANlink, NINclink, HSlink, and the new PASIC link, and also follow the author and industry topics on Genie's RomEx bulletin board. All are "private," in that they admit only published authors and restrict the discussions from being shared outside the forum, and almost all have had confidentiality breached at least once.

Whether prompted by malice or simple thoughtlessness, it's definitely a problem and probably won't go away. Some authors respond by dropping off of the listservs or bulletin boards entirely, others by never posting, only "lurking," while still others loudly declare that they'll say whatever they please and damn the consequences. As I mentioned last month, online communication has given us a measure of power over our careers that was unprecedented only a few years ago. I think what we've gained outweighs the risk of having our "private" words repeated where we'd prefer they not be.

Still, there ARE precautions we can take, short of unplugging entirely or restricting ourselves to lurker status. When posting, try to weigh the value of the information you're sharing against the potential risk of having it repeated to your publisher or agent. Our contract and financial information is no secret to the publishers, of course. It's the *sharing* that tends to worry them—and benefit other writers. If you're concerned that your publisher might retaliate in some way if they find you're doing so, then don't—or only share it via private e-mail, perhaps to be pooled anonymously with others' information. (HSlink does just this, in fact.) Remember, many more people read than post, and you may not know who all of them are. Given that, posting slanderous or mean-spirited comments about individuals by name is probably a bad idea, since it could easily get back to them. Similarly, avoid posting personal information about yourself that you wouldn't want strangers reading, or that might hurt your career if it got back to your editor or agent. Again, weigh the potential benefit of such information to other authors against the potential risk to yourself.

Though privacy breaches are always upsetting, realize that we writers have far more privacy in our workplaces than most. A survey by the American Management Association showed that nearly two-thirds of employers record employee voice mail, e-mail or phone calls, review computer files, or videotape workers in the workplace. Yikes! Compared to that, I'd say *our* risk of the occasional copied post or dropped name is well worth the benefits we gain by communicating among ourselves. So read back

through your posts with a critical eye before hitting the "send" button, but don't give up this powerful networking tool.

Now on to other topics, like the great web sites I've collected this month. If your characters travel the world, you might want to make use of www.xe.net/currency/ to convert dollars to pounds or any other currency you can think of. In fact, this site is useful just for getting the names of currency for dozens of countries. Similarly, <http://babelfish.altavista.digital.com/cgi-bin/translate?> can translate words or phrases from English, Spanish, French, German, or Portuguese. One of the most useful sites I found is the Library of Congress site at www.loc.gov which includes a link to the Copyright Office. There, you can find a comprehensive FAQ (question #58: "How do I protect my sighting of Elvis?") and the complete texts of copyright law. For the promotionally minded, you might want to enter the book excerpts you've posted to your own web page in the "Touched By an Excerpt" contest at www.geocities.com/TheTropics/8977/award.htm.

This isn't a web site, but I heard about it online: Getz Graphics will do quality flyers and postcards from your disk at rock-bottom prices—2,500 8½ x 11 flyers for \$460 or 20,000 postcards for \$595. Call 1-800-562-7052 for a catalogue.

The new NINCLINK listserv is up and running without a hitch so far! The changeover went smoothly, and now we're discussing great stuff like Year 2000 glitches, English tea, the 2000 conference site, solutions to back pain, and the finer points of copyright law. To subscribe, send an e-mail:

To: **LISTSERV@PEACH.EASE.LSOFT.COM**

Subject: Your-Ninc-Membership-Name (as it appears in the roster)

Body: SUBSCRIBE NINCLINK Your-First-Name Your-Last-Name

If you've lost your welcome message, which includes commands to turn off the acknowledgement feature, go no-mail and switch to or from digest format, you can get another anytime by sending an e-mail to **LISTSERV@PEACH.EASE.LSOFT.COM** with the message GET NINCLINK.WELCOME in the body. Remember, if you run across any interesting web sites or online news, send it to me at **BrendaHB@aol.com**. See you online!

— Brenda Hiatt Barber :)



The Moon and the Stars:

Some Thoughts on the Triumphant Ending in Popular Fiction

By JO BEVERLEY

"For years I've been unhappy with the term 'happy ending'...We write triumphant fiction, and that's what makes it popular."

Words mean a lot to me—as they doubtless do to everyone reading this. The technical terms we use as writers are extremely important in our deeper understanding of what we do.

For years I've been uneasy with the term "happy ending" as applied to romance fiction, and I've played around with distinguishing between the "happy ending" and the "happy ever after" ending. Now, however, I have a term that I find really useful in understanding, encapsulating, and explaining what we do, what, I believe, all writers of popular fiction do. The triumphant ending.

We write triumphant fiction, and that's what makes it popular. By this definition, it doesn't have to be a "happy ending." My thesis here is that all popular fiction involves a quest, and that in order to work—and thus be popular—the quest has to be achieved. However, the quest needn't be personal happiness, or even survival. Therefore, triumph can be achieved even in loss and tragedy.

Let's say that the quest in an SF novel is to stop someone using the Year 2000 problem to take over the world. This could end triumphantly by achieving that goal, even if the protagonist died, or ended up mind-blasted in a mental institution. If there was a romance involved, one of the couple could die and the book could still work. If, however, it was written as a romance novel, the love story would have to end triumphantly, and probably the external quest, too, for, as you'll see below, I believe a triumphant romance addresses the future, and how could the future be triumphant amid the ruins of Earth?

Though I've never read this story, a mystery could end triumphantly if the sleuth tricked the murderer into confession only by committing suicide. On the flip side, even though many mysteries today involve love relationships, if the couple developed deeper understanding of each other and became devoted mates but did not solve the crime, I doubt it would fly as a mystery. Wrong—thus irrelevant—triumph.

This, in my opinion, is why the happy ending—that is, the couple together with strong hope of a long, positive relationship—is crucial to the romance genre. Why love followed by parting or death doesn't count. Because the quest in a romance is not for love, for a brief moment of union, it is for the long-term relationship, generally including a whole implied package of family, community, and generations into the future. (Hence the problem with the blasted Earth.) At the end of a romance, there must be at least hope of this, and ideally more than hope.

This, to me, is the importance of conflict in a romance and in other forms of popular fiction. Conflict does not just spin plot; it tests the protagonists' worthiness to achieve their quest. If a mystery is easily solved, not only is there no story, the sleuth (and therefore the reader)

gains no real victory. Same if the wizard in the dark tower is easily overcome.

In a romance, this is even more important because the quest is for future achievements. It is not enough to see them happy, hear them profess love, even witness great orgasmic sex in the course of the book; it is necessary to believe in their triumphant future.

If the couple survives the tests of internal and external conflict, demonstrating clearly that they have the qualities to understand each other and grow closer, then the triumphant ending is proved and believable, and the future is assured. In romance, a bittersweet ending can work if it's the sort where the couple still has a way to go, or they are parted with hope of reunion. If the story has convinced the reader they have what it takes, she'll look forward and see triumph. I suspect that a fantasy which ended with the implication that next time the heroine took on the Wizard she'd really annihilate him wouldn't work at all.

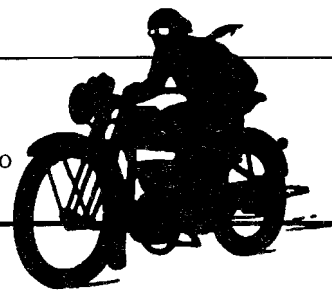
Gone with the Wind, often raised in debates about romance and happy endings, is triumphant popular fiction, but it is not, in my opinion, a romance. Scarlett's quest was never love. It was survival and personal strength, and, by metaphorical extension, the survival and strength of the devastated South. This was achieved, and one could even argue that by the separation from Rhett, the true goal and triumph is made clearer. A similar thing in reverse often happens in romantic fiction, where an alternative goal—revenge, acquisition, freedom—is sloughed off as the real treasure is recognized.

So perhaps success in popular fiction depends on understanding the appropriate quest for the genre, then achieving triumph in it, perhaps emphasizing victory by showing how little some alternative quest means in comparison. **MNK**

Jo Beverley is the author of 19 romance novels. Her most recent publication was Lord of Midnight (a medieval), an April Topaz release. Triumph is assured.

DISPATCHES FROM THE FRONT

Dispatches from the Front is a "war stories"-type feature. If something funny, black comedy to slapstick, happens to you, send it in. Anonymity will be preserved, of course, if you desire it.



The Infernal Revenue Service

If I came from a religious family (on either side), right now I'd be saying either kaddish or last rites.

I have just paid my taxes.

I've been paying taxes for years, of course, but somehow I'm never prepared for the below-the-belt blows, the collapse of my world, the triumph of evil over good, and the victory of bureaucracy over common sense and hard work. Somehow, I always delude myself that *this* year things will be different. (Of course, I also delude myself that I'm eventually going to bump into Val Kilmer on safari and be set for life, so perhaps my grip on reality is a trifle tenuous.)

I should have learned by now, really, since the year always follows the same pattern. It always goes like this:

As April ends, I'm supposed to make my first estimated pre-payment to the IRS; but I'm reeling from having just paid the previous year's tax and am too penniless to cough up grocery money let alone the criminal sum my accountant has just informed me I already owe the IRS for the upcoming year. During the next two quarters, something always goes so wrong (a deal falls through, a royalty check is significantly lower than expected, an advance check gets lost) that I become convinced my tax burden will be significantly lower than expected, so there's no point in pre-paying the disgraceful sums expected of me. Besides, with things going so badly, I don't have the quarterly payments to spare.

Sometime around November, my accountant asks me what my gross income for the year is. My October royalties have not yet arrived, of course, since, gosh, it's only November, and my next advance check is due anytime between now and Armageddon (my agent offers to send food in the meantime, if I'm desperate).

So I tell my accountant that I don't know what my gross income for the year is, because there are still 40 days left (just enough time for a cataclysmic flood, incidentally). After a decade of this, she still thinks I'm being coy. So I say, no, really, I honestly can't yet estimate my gross income for the year within a 70% margin of accuracy. She thinks I'm stupid, as well as coy.

As the year winds down, I'm desperate for money and desolate about my income. But I console myself with this one thought: at least my tax burden will be light, since I've made no money this year. At least there is that.

Then, somewhere between Thanksgiving and Christmas, every publisher who has ever owed me money suddenly decides to pay up; I mean, even people in *Russia* send

By LAURA RESNICK

checks. My gross income for the year suddenly multiplies geometrically.

Just in time to be figured into my tax bill. (Just *once* couldn't everyone pay me in January?)

For about six glorious weeks, I have enough money to pay for things! Rent, groceries, car repairs, books, dental work. (Heigh ho, the glamorous life!) Then my accountant does my tax returns, and almost every penny still left over after my six-week orgy of paying rent and fixing the car gets carted off by Uncle Sam, the State of Ohio, and the City of Cincinnati. I examine all the tax forms in shocked disbelief, sure there must be a mistake somewhere. At the bottom of each page in this voluminous pile is an oxymoronic footnote explaining that this is yet another form complying with the Reduction of Paperwork Act. And I never find a mistake; I really do owe all this money to the same government whose federally funded "food aid" winds up for sale at exorbitant prices to Americans like myself lost somewhere in Central Africa.

And, sadly, I write this knowing that none of you feels sorry for me, at a time when I most grievously need compassion. I know this because I spent most of this April trying to evoke compassion, and failing.

I complained to my best friend about the exorbitant amount of money I signed away to the government in a single day; she testily pointed out that she and her husband pay approximately *seven times* what I pay. Okay, no sympathy there. I cried on the shoulder of a *New York Times* bestseller who I figured would pity me; she owes, at a conservative estimate, 50 times what I paid. (Okay, no sympathy—and I ducked.) Lowering my sights, I whined to a writer of more moderate success; she still owes the IRS for '96—a leftover sum equal to three times my recent tax bill—and can't even bear to think about what she'll also owe them for '97. (I didn't duck fast enough.) I complained to a writer who makes less than I do—but I couldn't get through the catatonic shock induced by her own tax bill, which is nearly equal to the amount of the incoming advance check she'd hoped to live on for a while.

In desperation, I complained to a friend living overseas. He merely suggested that I never reveal that I wrote part of a book and several travel articles in his house, since the government of his country would levy an income tax on whatever they estimated I had earned during the time I was his guest.

(In other words: they're *everywhere*!)

However, April is

Continued on page 17 ▶ ▶ ▶ ▶



EAST OF THE HUDSON

Ebb and Flood

(I know, I know, the cliché is “ebb and flow,” but I just passed my US Power Squadron advanced piloting course. Trust me, the cliché is wrong.)

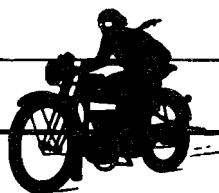
One of the nice things about getting older is that you get to see how things turn out. You also get to see how people manage to really foul up their lives and, in the process, the lives of others.

A case in point is Crown Books—not the Random House imprint but the once-powerful and successful chain of bookstores whose chief, Robert Haft, made cultural/business history a decade ago by telling the world in his television and print ads, “Books cost too much. That’s why I started Crown Books, where you can buy bestsellers for less.”

Yep, Bobby Haft, son of a famous East Coast business family with billions in food and drugstore holdings, spotted a weakness in the book business and developed a business strategy to exploit that weakness. His insight may well have destroyed modern civilization, if independent book-sellers are to be believed.

Haft noticed that book sellers were getting fat on the full-price margins of high-volume hits, better known as “bestsellers.” The markup on James Michener’s *Hawaii*, for instance, was as tall as the markup on your average esoteric literary novel. That meant book retailers were making tons on Michener, and financing their midlist and slow-movers on profits from megahits.

DISPATCHES FROM THE FRONT



▶ ▶ ▶ ▶ *Continued from page 16*

coming to a close as I write this, and as I tighten my belt (only figuratively speaking, alas), I suspect that I won’t earn what the IRS estimates I’ll earn this year. So there’s no point in pre-paying them all the money they want in advance. Besides, I don’t have it. And, ah, yes, I can tell, I’m sure of it this time—*this year*, things will be different....

Laura Resnick’s life of noisy desperation is relieved by writing fantasy novels, i.e. stories wherein the IRS never triumphs or—better yet!—doesn’t even exist. Keep an eye out for In Legend Born (Tor Books, August 1998).

It was, as they say, a situation ripe for business rationalization.

Haft started Crown and instituted the discounting practices that have revolutionized our once staid business, turning it into a free-for-all of consolidated publishers, chain stores, and deep-discount warehouse clubs.

Haft was an early advocate, as well, of this thing called the superstore, which offered readers big inventories. In other retail businesses, such stores are called “category killers.” In Southern California, where we used to live, Super Crowns were the principal book outlets for most of the first half of this decade. I lived in the suburbs, 50 miles from a self-sustaining big city bookstore. I thought I had died and gone to heaven when a Super Crown went in within a 20-minute drive of home.

But then Crown fell on hard times. The Haft family got to squabbling among themselves—always a recipe for corporate disaster—and Borders and Barnes & Noble and Star and a bunch of other superstores came along to compete. Then came the warehouse clubs that creamed the entire retail business.

All of this has happened, remember, in less than ten years. Crown lost its vision and, almost overnight, its business dominance, as well. Last month its auditors filed papers with the Securities and Exchange Commission admitting that there is “substantial doubt about (Crown’s) ability to continue as an ongoing concern.”

If Crown fails, as is entirely possible, there are going to be a number of dedicated and probably poorly-paid employees who will be out of work. In the last year, 11 stores in the chain were closed, but there seems to be a good chance that all 179 remaining stores, including 131 superstores, may go under.

Change is constant, and sometimes change happens so quickly it makes you dizzy. Bob Haft was right. Books did cost too much. But Crown’s experience is another illustration of the truth that being right is no guarantee of success.

Keep the Change

Speaking of tectonic shifts, the Simon & Schuster deal finally seems to have fallen together. The outcome, for those of us who write fiction for a living, was odd and ambiguous.

Recounting the action: Viacom, the media/cable TV giant, has been trying since the first of the year to spin off its publishing components for cash with which to pay down vast conglomerating cooperative debt. S&S consisted of educational, reference, business and professional units, as well as its highly-visible S&S/Pocket trade operation. ▶ ▶ ▶



EAST OF THE HUDSON

▶ ▶ ▶ ▶ *Continued from page 17*

Everything was on the block.

After more than four months, a deal was finally concluded. In a complex transaction, Pearson, the London-based firm that also owns Putnam and Viking/Penguin, bought everything except the S&S trade division. Then Pearson resold the reference, business, and professional groups to an investment firm, keeping the educational business for itself.

What was missing from the sale? The trade group.

That's right, S&S and Pocket didn't sell. There were several bidders for the other units but none—no serious ones, anyway—for the consumer group. So the consumer group will stay put at Viacom and will have to put together a back-office infrastructure of its own to stay in business. At the same time, the trade group will continue to operate in the increasingly consolidated and cut-throat environment.

The deal, or rather, non-deal, seemed to mean one of two things: Either S&S/Pocket was regarded as a bad business risk or Viacom valued it too highly to let it go at a price the market would bear. Either way, the trade group looks weaker, on paper, than it did before the deal.

Time will tell on this, as it does on almost everything. There are lots of smart and aggressive people at S&S/Pocket. A couple of break-through hits, a mega best-seller or two, and the firm could well be a winner.

But I have to admit I am made uneasy by the outcome. Trade publishing doesn't seem to be regarded as a good business bet in New York or any of the other seats of economic power in our brave new world.

Maybe the suits of the world are finally learning that the book business isn't really a business: never was and never will be.

The Federal Trade Commission, after a small burp, digested and approved the transaction under which Bertelsmann, the German giant, will acquire Random House, America's largest trade publisher.

The deal, announced several months ago, drew delaying fire from the Authors Guild and the Association of Authors Representatives. The group did some admittedly creative math and came to the conclusion that the combined firm would control more than a third of the market for what were loosely called "quality books," a situation that they said was anti-competitive and not in the public interest.

The FTC looked at the situation and, while not commenting directly on the objections, rejected the Guild/AAR complaint.

As a personal matter, I am uneasy about the conglomer-

ation of power that the transaction represents. As I said last month, I am at least as uneasy about the contortions the Guild went through to justify its complaint. To reach the conclusion that Bertelsmann/Random would be anticompetitive, books of the sort you and I write—romances, mysteries, and science fiction—were relegated to a second-class status. In other words, they were dumped out of the competitive equation in order to pump up the "quality" book statistics.

The Guild continues to draw the distinction between books of so-called cultural significance and popular fiction. Paul Aiken, executive director, accepted the FTC ruling but said, "We're still very concerned that high-quality works will not be published, at least not by major publishers..."

That smacks of the kind of cultural elitism that regularly makes me want to quit sending my dues to the Guild. If the organization can't find a way of making itself important except by denigrating mass-market books, then it isn't serving the cultural interests I hold dear.

But laying that quarrel aside, the Bertelsmann/Random deal and several other industry trends continue to worry me. Andre Schiffrin, former publisher of Pantheon Books, an arm of the old Random House, wrote recently in the *Washington Post*, that he, too, is worried.

He is also amused, since he was axed by the new head of Random House, Alberto Vitale, eight years ago in one of the more public blood-lettings to take place east of the Hudson this decade. Schiffrin feels the sale is a repudiation of the philosophy that cost him his job.

Schiffrin ran Pantheon, a *trez literary* little imprint which was culturally important and economically marginal. Vitale, a banker by training, came in and immediately began restructuring Random, emphasizing bestsellers, and weeding out the rest, much to the chagrin of Schiffrin, who quit in reaction...or was fired, depending on who you talk to.

The underlying strategy was to bring Random's profits in line with those of Newhouse's other media holdings, which could be counted on to make 20 percent or more. Schiffrin wrote last month, "The solution [Vitale's] seemed a simple one: Eliminate the smaller, more demanding books that formed the core of the firm's reputation and replace them with more bestsellers.

"The problem was that every other conglomerate had a similar agenda. Everyone wanted the same handful of books and was prepared to overpay for them."

As a result, Schiffrin says, Random (and, by inference, Vitale) had to write down some \$80 million in 1997, for



instance, most of that in what was suggested were “unearned advances” to authors.

“The problems did not affect Random House alone,” Schiffrin goes on. “Harper-Collins wrote off some \$270 million last year as a consequence of overspending in a frantic search for bestsellers to satisfy its new conglomerate

owner, Rupert Murdoch. And throughout the industry, we are faced with the same sad spectacle of many of the best editors being forced to transform their firms in search of huge profits.

“The irony is that all these sacrifices were in vain. Clearly, Vitale failed to deliver the profits he had promised, and Newhouse decided to bail out...”

“*The New York Times* reported Random’s profits to have been a mere million on sales of a billion in 1997—i.e., one-tenth of one percent.”

In that way did Schiffrin take his revenge on Alberto Vitale. He concludes that the legacy of “Vitale’s eight bestseller-obsessed years” was the destruction of the “reputation and achievement of what had been a great publishing house.”

Now I have taken my digs at Vitale, but even I didn’t get that nasty. And I would disagree with Schiffrin in one regard: It wasn’t merely literary works and “important” books that were axed. Throughout the industry, hundreds of books and writers, got squeezed in the past eight years. Many of them were genre books and writers.

Market forces have not been kind to any of us in the writing game, or in the publishing game, for that matter. As a result, we end up with a smaller number of outlets for our work. There are higher advances for a few trademark writers and tough sledding for everybody else, high-toned *artiste* and hack alike.

Hell, I imagine that even Alberto Vitale, the Great Devil in some people’s minds, has paid a price. And we are all left with Bertelsmann as a kind of superpublisher.

I am not in total despair, because the German firm has shown an interest in staying in the book business. That may sound like faint praise, but it’s the best I can offer.

(My thanks to NINC member Pat McLaughlin, who forwarded the Schiffrin clipping. If anybody else runs across such nuggets, please ship them to me at PO Box 187, Anacortes WA 98221.)

Fluff

I always thought the squabble between independent booksellers and superstore chains was a matter of limited interest to the general public. Sure, you and I may worry about this little skirmish in the cultural wars, but is it the stuff of great drama? Or comedy?

I don’t think so....

But maybe I just lack dramatic imagination. Nora Ephron has written a movie with a bookstore premise. Her central characters, played by Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan,

meet in an intimate on-line chat room and it’s, well, love at first byte. Only after they meet do they discover they are star-crossed as Romeo and Juliet, since Hanks owns a Manhattan chain store and Ryan an independent children’s bookstore.

In the hands of a masterful writer like Ephron—who scripted “When Harry Met Sally,” one of the finest films of the 1980s—the bookstore conflict may turn out to be fun. She seems to have avoided cheap choices, not really taking sides in the dispute. She told *Publishers Weekly* that her first paying job, at the age of 14, was in an independent bookstore and she loves them. But “the truth is I (also) love my local Barnes & Noble. I find it sad that no one who works in it can answer a question, but the theme-parking of the American bookstore is not entirely a bad thing.”

The film, titled “You’ve Got Mail,” is being shot in Manhattan this summer and will be released before the end of the year. And it seems that life does imitate art, or impinge on it. The film’s independent store was inspired by a real establishment, Books of Wonder, in Manhattan. When the production company started to construct a set a few blocks away from the authentic Books of Wonder, loyal customers spread the alarm that some kind of superstore was moving into the neighborhood....

Thin Skin

Elsewhere in this issue, you’ll find a letter from Walter Zacharius of Kensington Books, taking exception to an item that ran earlier in the year. While I disagree with some of his complaints and comments, I welcome his letter, because I undertook this particular assignment in hopes of stimulating dialogue, conversation, dispute, and maybe even a little decorous mayhem in the book business.

Up to now, I’ve been a little disappointed in the response. No matter how outrageous I’ve been—and I admit I have been outrageous—I have often felt as though I were writing into a vacuum. Now Mr. Zacharius has seen fit to respond. I applaud his willingness to share his ideas.

That said, I think he took my scribblings far too personally. “When I read your article, I really questioned whether it is worth the fight,” he said. That wasn’t my intent and I’m a little surprised my words had that effect, particularly since I thought I was being relatively even-handed and judicious.

I mean, if what I wrote had any impact in the real world, I would be looking over my shoulder for Alberto Vitale’s hit man.

This is a rough business at the moment. It’s hard not to take things personally. I know because I make that mistake all the time.

But that doesn’t mean I’m going to give up the chance to lambaste a publisher every once in a while, even if it “doesn’t do me any good.”

On the other hand, I may also buy Walter Zacharius a drink next time I’m in New York. I like independent publishers, even if their skins are as thin as mine.

Maybe that’s why I like them.

— Evan Maxwell



The Fast Track

Compiled by **MARILYN PAPPANO**

NINC Members on the USA Today List

The Fast Track is a monthly report on Novelists, Inc. members on the USA Today top 150 bestseller list. (A letter "n" after the position indicates that the title is new on the list that week.) Members should send **Marilyn Pappano** a

postcard alerting her to upcoming books, especially those in multi-author anthologies, which are often listed by last names only. Marilyn's phone/fax number is 918-227-1608, fax 918-227-1601 or online: pappano@ionet.net. Internet surfers can find the list at: <http://www.usatoday.com>. Members who write under pseudonyms should notify Marilyn at any of the above "addresses" to assure their listing in "Fast Track."

Member	Title	May 7	May 14	May 21	May 28
Sandra Brown	<i>Fat Tuesday</i> , Warner Vision				21n
Stella Cameron	<i>The Wish Club</i> , Warner		129n	122	
Jayne Castle	<i>Orchid</i> , Pocket	91			
Catherine Coulter	<i>The Target</i> , Putnam	49n	68	114	149
Kathleen Eagle	<i>The Night Remembers</i> , Avon			111n	130
Tami Hoag	<i>A Thin Dark Line</i> , Bantam	19	32	35	37
Linda Howard	<i>All That Glitters</i> , Mira	78	124		
Jayne Ann Krentz	<i>The Pirate</i> , Mira		257	86	67
Jill Marie Landis	<i>Glass Beach</i> , Jove		99n	89	
Elizabeth Lowell	<i>To The Ends of the Earth</i> , Avon	42	76	116	
Debbie Macomber	<i>Dr. Texas</i> , Harlequin	36	47	69	140
Mary Jo Putney	<i>One Perfect Rose</i> , Fawcett Gold Medal		154	106	115
Anne McCaffrey	<i>Freedom's Choice</i> , Ace		106n	79	101
J.D. Robb	<i>Holiday in Death</i> , Berkley			45n	46
Nora Roberts	<i>Sanctuary</i> , Jove	10	17	16	16
Nora Roberts	<i>Public Secrets</i> , Bantam	81	127		
Nora Roberts	<i>Homeport</i> , Putnam	120	123		
Deborah Smith	<i>A Place to Call Home</i> , Bantam		74n	58	61
Amanda Scott	<i>Highland Treasure</i> , Zebra		145n	145	
Antoinette Stockenberg	<i>A Charmed Place</i> , St. Martin's Press		134n	137	118
Joan Wolf	<i>The Gamble</i> , Warner Vision	134			

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