



NINK

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

HAPPY FIVE YEAR: Numerology's Good News for Novelists

BY HELEN CAVANAGH

Pythagoras, in the sixth century B.C. declared: "Everything lies veiled in numbers."

Mathematics and numerology are not the same, but both are necessary to numerology, two sides of the whole. Math is the trusty, material world worker of figures; it is objective, conscious-mind, left-brain logical. Numerology is subjective, invisible, unconscious-mind, right-brain magical. It deals with inner qualities, meanings, characteristics, and potentials. A numerologist reads between the lines, translates numbers into letters of the alphabet, decodes words within words and interprets what is hidden in plain sight.

And what might numerology reveal for the new year ahead?

2003 = 5 = Change!

For everyone in our world and beyond, a five universal year spells change.

Five energy is fast and synchronistic, so stay aware and expect the unexpected. The number five is all about action, adventure, inspiration,

freedom, fun, and multiple opportunities.

Unlike the past four foundation-building years, this year is breakout time, a new chance to be seen, heard, and acknowledged. If you're not hooked up yet to the five dynamic, you soon will be. Get ready.

Numerologically speaking, five is another new beginning. It's unlike a one-year energy, though, when you carry a clean slate into a brand new nine-year cycle. In a five universal year, the previous four years (if used well) give you a sturdy four-square foundation or higher platform, a fine launching pad for your talents, skills, and good ideas. Although recent times have been unusually rough on everyone, causing most to put security issues first and huddle close to home, this year we'll dare to put ourselves "out there" again.

Communicators and communications groups of all kinds are specifically covered in a five year. Writers, editors, agents, publishers, publicists, producers, journalists, lecturers, and sales executives are suddenly more open to ideas and projects which were unwelcome only a short time ago.

For anyone able to synchronize

quality work with the higher five energy and follow through to completion, 2003 could be a soul-satisfying, life-changing year. In numerology, 23 is a powerful, fortunate number. Dependent on whether it is used for good or ill, 23 has been known to bring significant material rewards and high honors. As well, the double-zero positioned inside the two and three denotes a powerful spiritual force at work. (Novelists, take note: the word "novel" adds to 23=5. And, the three letters of our alphabet with the numerical value of 5 spell N-E-W.)

Are you, by any chance, beginning to feel new again?

If not the strong winds of change, my guess is that you've already felt a few inner breezes, intimations of options and opportunities directly ahead. Hints of a universal energy shift always begin well in advance of the new year. For a couple of months now, long before the ball dropped in Times Square, creative minds in particular have been activated, despite alarming world events.

Have you caught yourself hatch-

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THE PRESIDENT'S VOICE....

Aloha!

I've started my New Year with a bang--on the very first day of the year I and my dogs left wintry Montana for a new home in Hawaii. Now, I've moved a lot in my life--there was one 11-year period in my life when I moved 13 times, and that included three changes of continents as well as abode—but this move has really brought home the essential difference between book people and non-book people.

Most of my books are packed in boxes in my brother's basement in Colorado. I sold my four-bedroom home in Colorado Springs a year and a half ago and moved to Montana to house-sit my sister's two-bedroom townhouse. Since I had to keep things simple, I brought only essential reference books and a few fiction titles with me to Montana...four tall bookshelves worth, which as any self-respecting book person knows is pretty much bare bones. After all, I had my sister's books to browse through, too: Besides the boxes of books she'd packed away, she'd left three more bookshelves crammed, top to bottom, in case I grew bored on a cold winter's night.

So when the estimators from the moving companies came to look over what was to be shipped, I thought things were in pretty trim shape. One by one, they marched in the door, clipboards and checklists in hand. Sofa? Check. Dining room table? Check. Coffee table? Check. Dishes? Check. I could almost hear them thinking: *Piece of cake. Nothing to worry about here.*

Then we went upstairs to the office and extra bedroom.

Whoa! Their eyes bugged out. Their mouths dropped open. They gaped, swallowed, tried to find the words. "That's...uh...that's a *lot* of books," they said. "Do you...umm...know just how much books *weigh*?"

I nodded. Sure do. I'd packed up every one of those suckers, carried the boxes to the van, drove the van to Montana, dragged the boxes out of the van and up the stairs and put every one of those books on the shelves. Including the *Condensed OED* and the atlases and *The New Columbia Encyclopedia*, which must weigh 12 pounds, all by itself.

"I'll pack them," I said. "I'm used to it, and I can sort them so I get them into the fewest number of boxes possible."

"But...but there might not be enough room in the shipping container for your furniture *and* all those books," they said.

"That's all right," I said. "If there's no room, I'll just leave some of the furniture behind."

That got 'em, every one. One guy actually collapsed into a chair he was laughing so hard. "I've been in this business over 20 years," he said, "and I've *never* had anyone say they'd take the books and leave the furniture behind!"

Now, if that isn't crazy, I don't know what is. I can buy another sofa. I can buy another dining room table and another set of dishes. I can get a new coffee table for less than another copy of the *Columbia Encyclopedia*, for heaven's sake! But just where would I find another first-rate copy of that housewife's almanac, cookbook, and medical reference published in 1848 and out of print for almost a century and a half? Or the 1892 scholarly volume on the clothing and fabric available in Colonial America, including detailed information on what it all cost and where it came from? Or that copy of the household rolls for King Edward I for the last 10 years of his reign? Or the 1792 Spanish translation of a French medical treatise on women's health? I found that one at a street fair in Santiago, Chile years ago. The airfare to Chile alone would buy me a new

living room set! And then there are books like my Modern Library collected works of Jane Austen, which I bought hardback when I was a teenager and which has traveled everywhere with me. Silverfish got to the spine in Venezuela, but it's still in pretty good shape, even after all these years. Austen may still be Austen in a cheap paperback, but I swear it's more enjoyable reading her in that much-loved, much-traveled tome than in any other edition on earth.

Book people wouldn't need all that explained, of course. They would know that, when push comes to shove, it's the books that count. They're as important as family and less likely to wreck the car or hit us up for a loan. They're as loyal as our dogs and they never mess on the carpet. They don't cost much and, in return, they give us the past and the present and a hundred imagined futures, and they'll be there on those shelves, waiting for us, until we totter off to the old folks' home...or give 'em up in favor of that old sofa. Me, I'm planning on hanging onto those books until they haul me off at the age of 112. To hell with the sofa!

Enough with the rant. Time to get down to work.

And the first order of business is to find people to serve on the site committee that will investigate possible locations for our next conference, which is scheduled for the Spring of 2004. Julie Kistler, who has bravely led other site committees and who rashly agreed to serve as Advisory Council Rep on this year's board (thank you, Julie!), is in need of some intrepid souls who possess a first-class pair of walking shoes and an eye for details to help her explore some of the sites that will be considered for the conference. Site committee members must be free for a few days of travel and hard work, very polished and professional (the hotels take you more seriously as negotiators if team members look like hard-nosed business people), and have attended at least one Ninc conference in the past. Experience working with hotels, convention planning, or the travel industry is a plus, though not essential. Stamina *is* essential, however, as committee members will be putting in a lot of hard work and high mileage in the few days they'll have in each city.

Ninc covers the travel and meal costs of the committee (hotels interested in hosting the conference usually provide the rooms). Because we try to keep costs down, we may choose people who live close to each city being considered, so that we'll actually end up with several sub-committees, all under Julie's direction.

If you're interested in volunteering, please contact Julie at julie@juliekistler.com or me at anneholmberg@juno.com. We'd love to put you to work!

— Anne Holmberg

LETTERS TO NINK.....

Even in this online age—with Ninc link—we still welcome your letters. Submit to the editor via e-mail, fax, or old-fashioned snailmail [see masthead on page 2]. Letters may be edited for length or NINK style.

Heart-Book Burns

Julie Elizabeth Leto's article about the book of the heart was an interesting take on the subject, but it didn't relate to the book of the heart as I know it.

I might have originated the term many years ago, but even if not, it was never meant to mean what it seems to have come to mean to some. A book of the heart is by definition unique. It is, or was, defined by two things—its handicaps, and its compelling power. The significant handicap is that it seems unlikely to sell. Its power is that it burns to be written.

It's not that other books don't come from the heart; it is that this one sticks in the head, often blocking other projects, while it lacks what the other books of a successful commercial writer have—a good fit in her or his chosen genre at that point in time.

What, then, does the writer do? The general opinion years ago seemed to be, forget it. It's a waste of time. Or, shape it, change it, to fit the genre and market. Even if unwilling to do that, most writers went no further than proposing the idea to an editor or two, who generally squelched the idea and told the writer to get back to the excellent work that fit the market. The writer then complained that publishing was ridiculously restrictive, and was generally miserable and frustrated.

It was from this that the daring idea rose of writing the damn book anyway, usually while or between writing the other,

▶ ▶ ▶ ▶

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 15 days of this NINK issue, these authors shall be accepted as members of Ninc:

New Applicants:

Lynda Sue Cooper (*Lynda Sandoval*),
Conifer Co
Danielle Girard, San Francisco CA
Sharon Mignerey, Brighton CO
Muna Shehadi Sill (*Isabel Sharpe*),
Wauwatosa WI
Karen L. Smith (*Karen Lee*),
Ashburn VA

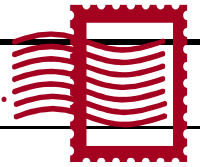
Susan Freya Swift (Sue Swift), Citrus
Heights CA

New Members:

Carla Daum (C.J. Carmichael), Calgary,
Alberta, Canada
Dar Tomlinson, Scottsdale AZ

Ninc has room to grow...
recommend membership to *your*
colleagues.

Prospective members may apply
online
at www.ninc.com.



▶ ▶ ▶ ▶ more marketable projects. Thus it was a book of the heart because the heart or the gut was the only reason for writing it. The writer hoped it might sell, perhaps dreamed that it would be seen for the brilliant work it felt like, but at the same time they accepted the fact that they might be writing it only for themselves.

However, the result in many cases was that the book did sell. Editors who'd squelched the vision as an idea, were won over by the execution. Sometimes the editors were so excited that the author's career moved to a new level. In this way, genres expanded, pushed out by the authors who went where their heart, or their wild muse, drove them, ignoring common wisdom and prudence. But

in some cases, of course, that book remained a book of the heart—worth writing, but not yet finding a place in the world.

That, from my point of view, is what a book of the heart is. Of course editors want us to write them because one in a hundred, one in a thousand, will be the magical book they hope to discover; that something "fresh" they always used to talk about. Now they talk about the book of our heart.

Whether we write them depends on whether the muse brings us a scary, demanding vision, and whether we're willing to risk "wasting" writing time on it.

— Jo Beverley

"Ditching" a Grabber

Between deadlines and holiday stuff, I had zero time to read when my *NINK* arrived. But the headline "Ditching the Book of Your Heart" grabbed me. I sat down, the fistful of mail in one hand, *NINK* in the other, and devoured the article. Bravo, Julie Elizabeth Leto! For 20 years I've battled guilt because I write snappy, sassy, funny stories. I figured none of them could be classified as "the book of my heart," because I didn't rip any of them from my gut.

But they've all been "the book of my voice," and now I see that's enough. More than enough. A plentitude. Thank you, Julie. I'm reborn.

— Vicki Lewis Thompson

Happy Five Year

Continued from page 1 ▶ ▶ ▶

ing a really big novel, a la Jean Auel, or James Michener? Or, as J. K. Rowling did for Harry Potter, are you busy inventing a whole new world for some fascinating characters? Maybe this year Rowling will be credited with paving the way for adult readers who relish really big novels, 700 pages and up. If you have such a proposal, pitch it as is. Some brave editor won't insist you break it up into a trilogy or a series, but will realize that at a time like this, more means more of what readers want now.

It could be that the novel you've always dreamed of writing "someday" may be visiting you again. Or maybe you're seeing your next story as an extra-length movie or television miniseries, perhaps along the lines of the recent ten two-hour episodes of "Steven Spielberg Presents Taken" on the Sci-Fi Channel.

If you are already planning a new

project, there's a good chance that it's unlike anything you've ever attempted, or did attempt but were unable to sell before. For instance, if you're known for serious novels, this year you might find yourself writing humor. Or the opposite. Don't worry, you're not crazy, grandiose, or being overly optimistic this time. Five energy, and the Jupiterian three in 2003 supports expansion, ambition, optimism, drama, big thinking, and expression.

Five energy lifts minds and spirits to a new perspective—a place where intuition and inspiration are your best friends. That new vantage point isn't all fun; it's definitely scary leaving a familiar cage to walk so far out on a limb, to take that leap of faith and fly again.

Actually, in a five year, leaps of faith are required. Here's why:

According to numerology, everyone and everything in the universe evolves in cycles from one through nine. The nine numbers each have a different energy or vibration, with particular qualities, meanings, and correspondences. A universal year num-

ber describes the dominant themes, issues, and characteristics of our collective unconscious. (The same information can be found for an individual. A personal year number is derived from an individual's age and birthdate.)

A five universal year is the midpoint of the nine cycle. The first four years of the cycle are the past, the five year is the bridge, and the final four years are the future. During a five year, the future is still unmanifested, which explains why walking the bridge (or a limb) without a sure support on the far side takes faith and courage. Of course, faith and courage and the zest for travel are also attributes of the five vibration.

If you'd like a better reminder of what five energy feels like, subtract nine years from 2003 to check back on what your personal and professional life was like in 1994. Subtract nine again to 1985. What about 1976? 1967? What was happening in those number five years?

This year you'll meet up with comparable situations, issues, and people. Based on what you've learned

about yourself in the past nine years, your choices and decisions may be different. It's the universe giving you another chance to fulfill your true purpose.

You know what they say: "Those who don't understand history, are doomed to repeat it."

Here's my own example of how a five year works out: In 1994, after the death of my husband, I moved to Marco Island, Florida. After 33 years of marriage and a 28-year New Jersey residency, it was a radical change in both location and lifestyle.

That year I sold another novel for young readers to Simon & Schuster. I decided to paint (a long-held dream which had been put on a backburner while I raised four kids) and rented an art studio. My first creations were large-scale, oil-on-canvas angels. It gave me so much pleasure and, happily, many of my paintings sold right off the easel.

Additionally in 1994, I held numerology classes and conducted a "Make Your Own Luck: Numerology for Writers" workshop at several writers conferences. I also did private numerology readings which put me in closer touch with some great people and, at the same time, with my inner self. At the end of that five year I truly felt expanded and very much changed for the better.

I lived on Marco Island for a total of nine years, a full cycle. Slightly in advance of another five universal year, I've moved back to New Jersey and found a new home/studio where change, expansion and innovation are more than welcome.

The study and practice of numerology continues to enrich my life as a writer and artist. A numerologist learns to read, write, and interpret the language of energy symbolized by numbers. Knowing the universal language of numerology helps with everything—relationships, work, timing. Especially timing.

Consider learning numerology this five year. Try it, you'll like it.

Native American wisdom has it that "Everything is bundles of one."

Nature is number. Numerical patterns are present in seashells, snowflakes, stars, trees, the seasons, the tides. Check out the numbers in art, music, architecture, poetry, in your own written works, in your editor's name.

So much valuable information is hidden in the number five. To help you brainstorm your next creative project, here's a list of some five energy qualities/ keywords: changes, choices, decisions, contracts, movies/television/media, motivation, excitement, curiosity, spontaneity, sociability, sensuality, sex, promotion, publicity, action, inspiration, innovation, travel, sales, persuasion (a silver tongue), networking, relocation, all forms of communication.

And, five tendencies to avoid: being scattered, careless, fickle, unreliable, unscrupulous, over-committed, irritable, burned out.

A few correspondences include: Planet Mercury, Winged messenger-god Mercury, mercury (shapeshifting substance), sun sign Virgo; diamond, sapphire, quartz crystal, platinum, silver, pewter, steel; shades of gray, blue, white, silver, metallic, all things that shimmer and shine.

A reminder: If you haven't dropped off your old psychological baggage yet, do it now. At this time, as you journey into the future, travel light, carry only a kit of your very best stuff: all that hard won experience, talent, expertise, flexibility, and a great smile.

Happy Five Year. It'll be fun. Count on it!

Helen Cavanagh is the author of a dozen novels for young adults and middle readers published in the U.S. and 15 other countries. Her last book from Simon & Schuster, a reincarnation mystery, was an Edgar award runner-up. She is a professional artist, numerologist, and tarot reader, and is available for private or group readings, and offers workshops that combine the creative with the mystical arts. Helen is a past president of New Jersey Romance Writers and now lives in Flemington, NJ. Contact her at Helencav@aol.com.

Bits'n'Pieces

I REGRET TO INFORM YOU THAT enough finally happened in publishing in December and November so you don't get the filler material I set aside on the black hole that's heading toward earth or "How Mushrooms Will Save The World." Darn. I was really looking forward to telling you about those things. Instead here's your regularly scheduled news...Harper Selling e-Books Through Their Sites... HarperCollins has launched four retail e-book websites in the U.S., U.K., Canadian and Australian markets in order to sell e-books released through its e-book publishing imprint, Perfectbound.

The sites allow Perfectbound to sell certain e-book titles simultaneously in all global markets, while restricting the sale of other titles to markets in which HarperCollins owns territorial rights. Different international pricing and promotions apply, and HarperCollins can sell e-books in places where print versions of books may not be available.

In certain markets, a 20% discount off the list price is offered. The U.S. perhaps?

*"Bits" Compiled
by Terey daly Ramin*

BY RONN KAISER

Author, Break A Leg

Several years ago the artistic director of a professional theatre company in my town arranged a dramatic reading of a play I'd written. Since theatre is a medium of the spoken word, a reading is a useful tool for the playwright to determine whether a scene is working, whether the pattern and rhythms of the speeches are effective.

A dramatic reading also helps the playwright get a feel for the quality of his or her characters, the chemistry between them and effectiveness of the dramatic interplay. As you listen to the actors, you can tell immediately if the play is working. It was both an interesting and humbling experience.

Thanks to the insensitivity of one of the actresses who participated in the reading, I learned a valuable lesson which continues to benefit my work as a novelist to this day. The woman, a very talented actor who has since gone on to Hollywood, though she is not yet a star, read the part of Beth, a shy, reclusive young woman who has a crush on a stranger. Though all the other actors put energy and expression into their performances, reading even awkward lines with passion and conviction, "Beth" groaned and mumbled her way through her speeches like she was being tortured. She all but said, "God, why are we bothering? This is sh*t."

I was annoyed because it seemed if she'd made even a minimal effort, like the other actors, her speeches wouldn't have sounded so bland and uninspired, the character so dull and uninteresting. Clearly, the material wasn't scintillating, but I couldn't be sure whether to blame the horror that was unfolding on the bad acting or the bad writing.

The experience forced me to take a good hard look at not just the words on the page, but at the character I had created. In being brutally honest, the actress had taught me something very important—if a character is not interesting and/or challenging enough for an actor to want to portray, the character is also not worthy of the attention of the audience. Good acting can cover up some flaws and divert attention from some shortcomings in the material, but a character must be both well conceived and well drawn if he/she is to work in the story and in the minds of the audience.

What does this have to do with the writing of popular fiction? The principle is the same—the novelist must strive to create characters so fascinating they *command* the reader's attention. In this respect, actors have much to teach us. I would go so far as to say that the dramatic arts are a wonderful pedagogical tool for the novelist. Sure, actors can be egocentric, insensitive, disdainful, and totally self-obsessed, but you must give them this—they understand character, if only at a gut level.

The actor's job is to find something meaningful to portray, something beyond mouthing words. He/she must discover what's going on inside the character and figure out ways to project to the audience. The most important question for the actor to ask is, who is this person? There'd better be something in the script for

the actor to get his/her teeth into, otherwise the character is nothing more than empty words, pat phrases, clichés and banalities.

Ever notice how many playwrights were actors first? From William Shakespeare to Sam Shepherd, writers who started out as actors seem to have a practitioner's knowledge of the requirements of character, an understanding of the importance of what is going on beneath the surface and how that serves the dramatic requirements of the story. Actor/authors often say that acting gave them the insights they needed to be able to write effectively.

It's enlightening to hear a thoughtful actor talk about character. They will tell you what they yearn for in order to do their job. And isn't it interesting that certain roles are so highly coveted. Every stage actor wants to play Hamlet. Could it be because he's among the most complex, yet fully realized and elemental characters ever created? An actor playing Hamlet has so many things to do, so many places to go, so many options, so many potential nuances and subtleties to pair with the broadsides. Yes, the importance of a role is key but, above all else, actors love parts they can get their teeth into. That means substance.

Acting is all about showing what's going on inside the character, about portraying elemental and universal feelings, emotions, attitudes. It's about making recognizable joys and fears and passions immediate, understandable, and real. It's about engendering empathetic responses. It's about transforming the audience through shared experience.

None of this happens in a vacuum. It is the playwright who creates the character, who provides the necessary substance. And it is the author who creates character for the novel.

The difference, of course, is that it is the reader's *imagination* that brings the character to life, rather than an intermediary (the actor).

In the case of the novel, the process is more subtle, perhaps the deficiencies more difficult to identify. We novelists express ourselves directly to the reader. Therefore the art of writing fiction is the art of creating fodder for the imagination of another person. Yet the fundamental principles of character remains the same.

Here's the point of this piece: a writer would be well served to learn to think like an actor when it comes to understanding character. In other words, strive to become aware of the importance of character content.

When an actor acts, he/she is "in-character." When a writer writes, he/she must be in-character, too. The actor's greatest resource is the well of his/her own emotion, his/her own humanity and life experience. So, too, for the novelist. In developing a character, we turn deep into ourselves and become that personage we create on the page. If you listen to actors discuss their vocation they talk about what they do as coming from inside. What they do is not "out there," it is "within." Our characters cannot be alien to us, they must be a part of us, if only a small part and if only on our dark side. Characters that are "other" are never quite fully realized. To *feel* something substantive, i.e., something human and significant, it must live first in our hearts, then leak into the characters we create.

Here's my tip for the month: if you aren't already aware of it, check out "Inside the Actors Studio" on the Bravo cable network. James Lipton of The New School for aspiring actors, playwrights, and screenwriters does live audience interviews with all the big name stars and directors in Hollywood. I think there are a couple hundred hour-long interviews in the series, all on the craft of acting, directing, and writing. Some interviews are more informative than others and some interviewees more articulate and insightful than others. Remember this

as you listen: most of what is said about acting applies to writing as well. Yes, there's a lot of show biz schmaltz in the interviews, but there are also numerous gems about character and story, insights for the writer that are, in my view, extremely valuable. In my area the programs are rerun on a continuing basis a couple of times a week. Check your local listings.

After my experience with "Beth," and after years of listening to what actors have to say about their craft, I've developed the habit of imagining how an actor would play a character I've created. What is there beyond words and actions? What clues have I given as to the inner workings of their minds? What can my imaginary actor do with this character? I search for a detail, some quirk, sub-text, trait, impulse, contradiction, or anomaly that an actor could use to convey a sense of the character, if the work were a play or screenplay.

The characters we create must be human, but what we choose to reveal about them must also be significant for purposes of the story. The duality of substance and function is at the heart of creating a fictional character. In that sense, at least, the writer is God. Readers have only what we give them. If we do not feed the imagination, and thereby the soul, they will stop believing and we will lose the flock.

In sum, the secrets of acting are not all that different from the secrets of writing. Indeed, in many important respects they two crafts are but facets of the same gem. Given that we are in a creative business, we must find our inspiration where we may. Why not Hollywood and Broadway?

Break a leg.

Note to the reader: Now that we are in the second year of this column, we thought we'd try something different. This month's column is intended as a thought piece to elicit your comments, insights, rebuttals, rebuffs, and derision (hey, I'm a writer, I've got thick skin), which constitute the true opportunity for sharing and learning among the members of Ninc. If you'll sit down immediately (but

in no case later than January 13, 2003) and e-mail me your thoughts, we'll include as many as possible in the "Your Turn" segment of this two-part topic to appear next month.

Write to me at:

ronn.kaiser@prodigy.net

Bits'n'Pieces

AND AT LONG LAST, IT LOOKS LIKE A MERRY CHRISTMAS For Midlist Authors...

According to a piece in the *Washington Post* that says more people are buying books at Costcos, Target and Wal-Mart than they are at Barnes & Noble, which is bad for big name authors. Wal-Mart is apparently the bookstore of the future, if the quotes from *WP* can be believed—and the news regarding sinking sales of name brand authors such as Crichton, Clancy, Turow, King, and Mary Higgins Clark, among others. Why? Because people don't want murder mysteries and technology in their soup anymore: "Who wants to buy a book on nano-freaking-technology?" is the exact quote used. Books for and about women are the key sellers now—because we're 70% of the purchasing market. And buyers are being choosy, buying by word-of-mouth and hand sales, not by who's on first according to the *NYT*. Plus, Wal-Mart, huh? Deep discounts. Hand picking what book covers stare readers in the faces. No wonder the major bookstore chains find this, in the words of one exec, "a little disquieting."

— TdR

The Buzz in the Biz.....by Peggy Webb

All of us have experienced that heart-in-throat moment when we read our reviews. Will a bad one hurt our sales? Will a good one boost them? We've demystified editors and agents by hobnobbing with them at conferences, but we see very little of the reviewers who hold such power over our careers. Or do they? This month's column takes you behind the scenes with three top notch reviewers.

Joyce Dixon is owner of the online magazine *Southern Scribe* which is a sponsor of the South Carolina Book Festival and a Friend of the Southern Festival of Books (Nashville). A graduate of the University of South Carolina, Joyce is a member of National Book Critics Circle, Southern Book Critics Circle, Southeastern Booksellers Association (SEBA), and Publishers Association of the South. Our second reviewer, Pam Kingsbury, a former professor of English at the University of North Alabama, is a member of the Alabama Humanities Foundation "Speaker of the House" program. Pam travels the state speaking on Southern literature and culture. Her reviews appear regularly in *Library Journal*, *ForeWord*, *Southern Scribe*, *BookPage*, *The Anniston Star* and *FirstDraft*. Wilda Williams, who holds a B.A. in English and a Masters in Library Science, is Senior Editor, Book Review at *Library Journal*, a position she's held for 12 years. Prior to that she was the manager and senior indexer at Dow Jones & Co., editing the monthly and annual *Wall Street Journal* index. Here's what they have to say:

NINK: Although most of the authors in Novelists, Inc. write commercial fiction, some of us are also writing literary fiction. Does literary fiction have distinguishing characteristics that the ordinary reader (as opposed to a doctoral student) can identify?

Joyce Dixon: First I want to say that one is not better than the other. They are different styles of writing. Commercial fiction tends to follow current social trends and attracts the masses. They are sometimes considered "light reads," but that doesn't have to be the case always. Commercial fiction is escapist fare. It involves the emotions, often provides adventure, and can be very stimulating. Literary fiction should include allusions to past literary works, history and culture within the work itself. It may involve more work and research for the author to create a winning plot structure. Sometimes, a work is considered literary for illuminating a social issue that cannot be treated in an escapist medium—thus inciting cultural change.

Pam Kingsbury: I'm not sure writers can set out with the intention of writing literary fiction. Authors have to write from their own experiences, impulses, and imaginations. Sometimes their vision resonates with editors, critics, and readers; and sometimes it doesn't. While Americans like believing hard work yields success, the truth is timing

and chance are factors in success too. I would argue longevity makes fiction literary. The university of experience transcends the particular.

Wilda Williams: I am not sure I am comfortable with the term "commercial fiction." I believe all fiction is in some way commercial. Isn't the goal of all writers to find readers for their work, to sell their books to readers? What could be more commercial than that? Maybe a better term to use would be "popular fiction" which covers the gamut from mysteries to women's fiction. I think a lot of readers have the misconception of literary fiction as this elitist, ivory-tower inaccessible kind of fiction. But I believe a good literary novel needn't be difficult to appeal to a wide range of readers. If the book tells a great story in a fresh and original way with well-developed interesting character, it will find its reader and become a "commercial, popular success" as *The Lovely Bones* demonstrates. In addition, I think some of the best literary writing today is not in the academic world of "highbrow" fiction but in such genres as mystery and science fiction where writers such as China Miéville, Kim Stanley Robinson, Neal Stephenson, and Ian Rankin are writing marvelously complex, original books.

NINK: As Wilda pointed out, the lines between literary and commercial fiction are blurring with such books as *The Lovely Bones* appearing on the *NY Times* List. How and why is that happening?

JD: Ah, can we say connections? It's true, some recent literary works are not far removed from women's fiction, etc. If the author is coming from an academic background or from literary circles, he/she may find his work listed as literary, when it is truly more commercial. Part of this is that the author promotes it as literary for career and social reasons. The publisher may also push a borderline novel as literary to attract the numerous media book clubs, national/international book awards, and C-Span Book TV. I wouldn't hold the *NY Times* Bestseller List responsible for this event. The "List" is reflecting book orders/sales. It is also a reflection of the publishing buzz, which can create a runaway bestseller for the first month.

WW: I recently went to a panel discussion on the relationship between Best Books and Best Seller Lists. One publisher on the panel pointed out that the books that we regard as classics today were substantial bestsellers in their time. Hemingway and Fitzgerald's first novels were commercial successes.

NINK: No one knows the impact our books will have fifty years from now, but we can all take heart...and be sobered by the possibilities. As for the present, when you review a book, Wilda, what grabs your interest first?

Are your preferences personal or do you, as a professional reviewer, look for specific elements?

WW: We have five book review editors at *Library Journal*, each in charge of assigning books in certain subject areas. My subjects include science, natural history, health and medicine, as well as popular fiction and genre fiction. When I look at the nonfiction galleys, I consider the author's credentials, what has he or she published before, have we reviewed the previous works, what is the writer's educational background? I also consider the subject matter. Does the book offer a fresh take on an old topic? Or is it the same old thing? For example, in the past year or so I have been inundated with yoga books. Since our review space is limited and since my reviewers burn out if they keep reading the same books, I tend to skip most yoga books unless there is an original and unique perspective on the subject that makes the book stand out from the herd. I also will look at the publisher. Is the house a respected publisher well-known for specializing in certain subjects? For example, Houghton-Mifflin excels in the area of natural history and fiction. I am more likely to consider a Houghton-Mifflin title than a book from a publisher that I know does schlock books. In terms of fiction, I use much of the same criteria: author and publisher.

With novels, especially first novels, I will read several chapters to get a sense of the story and the quality of the writing. I tend to be biased in favor of first-time authors and will sometimes skip reviewing a big name in order to highlight a talented newcomer. Why waste precious review space on Judith Krantz or Danielle Steel when our readers (the library market) are going to order their books anyway. I also look at the trends. I am really tired now of the Bridget-Jones clones. I can't review any more of them. I am always looking for something unique and original to grab my attention.

NINK: What about you, Joyce?

JD: I review commercial and literary fiction, as well as nonfiction. When I pick up a book to review, I look at the cover art, the title, and the back cover blurb. I am asking myself does the artwork and title fit the promise of the blurb? That's a personal preference. As a professional reviewer, it is the hook; that is, the opening line and first chapter. I know professional reviewers who may not get further than the first chapter. If the book excites their curiosity, they will read on. If it disappoints them, they will either throw it against the wall or write a brief, scathing review. I have been told they don't have time to waste on a poorly written book.

NINK: Do you finish the book?

JD: Personally, I feel obligated to read the entire book. I owe it to the author as well as my readers. My hope is that the book will get better or will have other redeeming factors. Sometimes it does, often it doesn't. My frustration then is with the publisher, not the author.

NINK: How many galleys per month do you receive? How many does space allow you to review? Do you receive galleys from authors as well as publishers, and how responsive are you to those?

PK: In an average month, I probably read 12 to 15 books for review and/or pleasure. Most of the books I read for review are assigned by editors who have sent me lengthy questionnaires about my interests and educational background. I'm fortunate that they usually do a good job of matching manuscripts to my tastes and interests.

NINK: Matching tastes and interests serves the author well, too. Wilda, what is your work load?

WW: At *Library Journal* we receive about 125 galleys daily, about 3,750 galleys monthly. Depending on how much advertising we get, we review 250 books per issue, which comes out every two weeks. In our monthly issues (July, August, December, January) we review 350 titles. Of the 100,000 books that are published annually, we can only review about 30,000 titles. As you can see, competition for review attention is fierce. It is our policy to exclude self-published books. Plenty of authors do send us galleys but because we are so inundated with materials, we do not have time to respond to queries from individual authors.

NINK: Joyce?

JD: *Southern Scribe* receives about 10 ARCs a month and up to 30 during the seasonal push months (March, May, September). On average we have 15 reviews a month, but I hope to increase that in the future. *Southern Scribe* has cultivated a relationship with some publishers to get advance galleys without request. Others we request. Authors do contact us for review, and if the work fits our mission of southern regional writing, we are happy to include it. Unlike many review magazines (print and online), *SS* does not exclude self-published works.

NINK: Prolific writers sometimes suffer burnout. Joyce, do you see signs of this in their work or in your association with authors?

JD: It's my opinion that a truly prolific writer cannot burnout. Writing to prolific writers comes as naturally as breathing. It is a life force and need. They are writing every day. It may appear that a prolific writer has burned out if the publisher and reading public are demanding for them to produce new versions of successful past works. Thus, the writer is limited creatively and frustrated. It could be an act of defiance to turn out droll work, while creating unpublished masterpieces that the publisher and public are unwilling to accept from that author. Prolific writers are always growing and changing. Look at the works discovered after an author's death. Not accepting their growth during their lifetime is our loss.

NINK: As a prolific reviewer, Wilda, do you ever burn out? If so, how do you handle it?

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The Buzz in the Biz...

▶ ▶ ▶ ▶ **WW:** As a book review editor, I burn out from receiving too many books, and having too little time to review them or too few reviewers to handle the books. Sometimes I feel like I'm performing emergency triage when the galleys come in. I deal with it by selecting the most important books first, and hoping I will have a reviewer or the editorial space to review a worthy smaller title.

NINK: What are the five best fiction books you've reviewed during the past year? Why did they leave a lasting impression?

WW: I think because maybe I am burning out, there really weren't that many novels that impressed me. We have just finished selecting our best books of the year, a rigorous, grueling process, and after reading so much, the titles start to blur. But of the novels we looked at this year, I really admired Jeffrey Eugenides' *Middlesex* for its unusual protagonist, humor, and originality. I also liked Yann Martel's *Life of Pi*, despite the controversy—after all, Shakespeare borrowed plots from other sources. The narrator's voice is so strong, and that tiger! I have always been a big fan of the new Indian writers so I was very much taken with Rohinton Mistry's *Family Matters*, a bittersweet portrait of intricate family relationships.

JD: 1) *No Enemy But Time* by William C. Harris, Jr...The wealth of accurate historical facts, local color, and well-developed characters solving a mystery makes this a page-turner. The plot structure puts me in awe (so many great subplots that come together to solve the mystery.) Historical fiction writers should consider this a teaching novel. 2) *The Last Girls* by Lee Smith...In a year of women's group books, this one stands out. Smith uses the journey down the Mississippi as an allusion to the life journeys of the characters. Intensely emotional, it shows a variety of characters from different backgrounds coming together as writers. In fact, Smith offers lessons on plot and character within the work. 3) *A Place Called Wiregrass* by Michael Morris. The author tells an empowering tale of strength and independence, while weaving domestic violence into the background. 4) *Savannah Blues* by Mary Kay Andrews...This is a well-crafted mystery with loads of eccentric humor. Plus it teaches the ins and outs of buying antiques. 5) *The Dixie Belle's Guide to Love* by Louanne Jones. The heroine reinvents herself in a fast-paced romantic comedy filled with eccentric characters.

PK: If I have to limit myself to five books, I'd like to "plug" some books from smaller presses with smaller publicity budgets. I loved Michelle Richmond's collection of short stories, *The Girl in the Fallaway Dress*. Her characters are quirky, funny, and believable. She's a writer to watch. Jackson Tippet McCrae's *The Bark of the Dogwood* blended elements from Faulkner and Borges. While the length (600+ pages) may be a turn-off for some readers, the alternating

chapters and homage to Truman Capote will be irresistible to others. Kelly Cherry's *My Life and Dr. Joyce Brothers* (a novel in short stories) was reissued by the University of Alabama Press. I tend to think of Kelly Cherry as being one of the great undiscovered treasures in American literature. She has always written about the quiet triumphs in women's lives with heart and humor. Sheri Joseph beautifully handles the theme of what constitutes a family in *Bear Me Safely Over*. I liked the book enough to hope for a sequel. Mary Ward Brown's second collection of short stories, *It Wasn't All Dancing*, is not to be missed. Her use of language is poetic in its elegance and grace.

NINK: How much reading do you do outside your work? What are some of the books you've enjoyed as pleasure reading?

PK: Like everyone else, I rely on advertising, word of mouth, and trusted friends for reading suggestions. Most of the books on my "memorable" list are women's fiction: Alice Sebold's *The Lovely Bones*; Jennifer Weiner's *In Her Shoes* and her first novel, *Good in Bed*; Kathi Kamen Goldmark's *And My Shoes Keep Walking Back to You*; Jeanne Ray's *Step*Ball*Change*; and Mary Gaitskill's *Bad Behavior*.

WW: To relax I enjoy mysteries. They are sort of my brain candy. When I come home from work, I am too tired to read a complex literary novel so I turn to my favorite mystery authors for relaxation: Peter Robinson, Ian Rankin (although he's pretty complex), George Pelecanos, Tony Hillerman, S. J. Rozan, and Sue Grafton.

JD: I tend to read two books a month for my pleasure. I love biographies, romance fiction, and humor essays. I choose topics that reflect where I am in life, that make me consider change and that inform me about a loved topic/author. Some of my personal favorites from 2002 are: *Isadora: A Sensational Life* by Peter Kurth; *Savage Beauty* by Nancy Milford; *Among the Heroes* by Jere Longman; *Close to Shore* by Michael Capuzzo; *In Her Shoes* by Jennifer Weiner; *The Best-Loved Poems of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis*, selected by Caroline Kennedy.

NINK: Many writers work from the home, juggling a career with kids and carpool and guilt. (How can you sit there writing when Sally punched Josh in the mouth and he's bleeding all over the carpet?) Describe your work routine.

PK: I do work from my home. I set aside blocks of time when I can turn off the phone and concentrate. Some of my editors send assignments with deadlines for review, while others send several books at a time encouraging a more leisurely approach to writing reviews. I organize by deadlines, though occasionally, a book will call to me. Vicki Covington's collected columns, *Women in a Man's World*, *Crying* was impossible for me to put down. Alternately poignant and thought-provoking, the essays dealt with all the phases of professional women attempting to juggle career, marriages, and family. Other times I wonder what I will say

until I actually sit down in front of the computer. It helps that most editors set specific guidelines and word counts.

JD: Well, I am single and childless. Honestly, I can't imagine doing my routine with anyone under foot, not even a pet. I love having a man over for the evening, and I love seeing him leave so I can get back to my reading/writing. I wasn't always this way. I'm beyond the age of childbearing, so the need to nest has passed. I can't imagine traveling for book events, while worrying about the little folk. My routine: I rise at 5 a.m. and read e-mail and newspapers till 7 a.m. I read galleys from 9 a.m. till 4 p.m. I write from 4 p.m. till 10 p.m. I live among piles of data and books.

NINK: And now for the one question every writer wants to know: How much impact do reviews have on sales and why?

JD: If the author is unknown, a good review can have a powerful impact. I think that review placement is important; i.e., know your market. Know who your potential readers are and where they are most likely to learn of your book. Book buzz is as powerful as reviews for established authors. Book buzz can create reviewer interest—it's the hot book that all must review to be up on the current trends. You can usually get an interview from the media if: 1) you are from that region; 2) your private life enhances the work; 3) your novel is fresh and exciting; or 4) your track history demands media attention.

WW: In our market, reviews definitely have an impact on library sales. Many public libraries are required by state law to have written justification (i.e., published reviews) for the purchase of materials. If we recommend and star a book, they will immediately order that particular title. Libraries rely heavily on the reviews of *Library Journal* and *Booklist* for building their collections. However, don't forget the powerful impact of great word of mouth. Often the bestsellers in an independent book store are quite different from the *NY Times* Best Seller list. That is the result of the owner's handselling particular titles. Librarians do the same thing with their readers' advisory services.

NINK: And it would seem that reviewers and writers do much of the same thing in their own professional capacities—struggling through mountains of paper while trying to do the very best job possible. Kudos to Pam, Joyce, and Wilda for honest and informative answers. And a special thanks to Joyce for the comment about our languishing masterpieces, which we will all now rescue from file cabinet oblivion and send back to our willful publishers.

Until next month this is Peggy Webb, author of 5,000 books (oops! 55), over 200 magazine columns, and who is, according to a select few, still relatively sane.

What They're Saying About You Behind Closed Doors

BY IRENE GOODMAN

Authors love to have gabfests. They love to congregate at conferences or online and dish about the industry. This is a necessary and very human part of the business. Being an author is isolating by nature. You have to be able to reach out and connect with your peers in order to gain information, compare notes and war stories, show off, and hold onto your general sanity. What you may not realize is that agents and editors need to do the same thing once in a while. While we are obliged to maintain a professional demeanor, there are times, especially with long-time colleagues, when we let our hair down.

What do you think we talk about? Do we discuss option clauses, royalty rates, editorial meetings, and cover conferences? Get real. We talk about those things all the time, on the record. When we're not recounting interesting, huge, or difficult negotiations, what we really talk about is...you.

Don't worry. We don't divulge your secrets or talk

nastily behind your back. It's not like that. There are plenty of things that can never be said, and never will be. That's as it should be. You entrust us with your careers, and we do our very best to safeguard and nurture them. We do not exchange personal tidbits, actual amounts of money, unusual contract terms, and all the things that would make us detestable if we spilled the beans.

So what are we saying?

There are certain authors who get talked about by just about everyone because they manage to make complete spectacles out of themselves. So-and-so's "latest" will always get talked about because it's just so out there. Whether or not so-and-so actually wants to be a spectacle is usually open to question. What some people consider to be appropriate or acceptable behavior may be the exact opposite to others. However, you can be sure that if you have made a messy and complicated scene about something, that people will hear about it.

Authors who work hard are talked about with great respect. This is true even



What They're Saying About You...

▶▶▶▶ if they are “difficult.” Hard work is a commodity. When you do your job and do it well, people notice. There are too many people who don't work that hard and don't do their jobs as well as they might, so when you give an A+ effort, it gets noticed. This is particularly true of authors who revise thoroughly, promptly, and well. Don't think this isn't respected, moving right up the line to the Publisher. It counts, and don't fail to use it at contract time if you have earned it.

Possibly the unkindest cut is when you don't get talked about at all. Even if being the subject of someone else's lunch date makes you squirm a little, remember that this is what lunch dates are for. If you don't register on anyone's radar screen, you need to do something about it. Quiet authors usually get quiet treatment.

When you are a big name and you are also a dream to work with, everyone sits around and tries to think of ways to keep you happy. This is an enviable position, to be sure, and it's far more enviable than the prima donna author who gets her due but whose support may be accompanied by behind-the-scenes eye-rolling.

If you act like a true professional, people will rhapsodize about how great you are. If you have ever had fantasies of publishing people breathlessly running into each other's offices to say how great your latest manuscript is, or how wonderful you were in an interview, or how intelligent the sales reps thought you were, take heart. This can and does happen. When you conduct yourself in an admirable manner, you will definitely be admired.

On the other hand, if you do things that are not exactly dreadful, but you just act like a jerk, those things get noticed too. For example, if you are asked for a quote and you don't like the book—and you choose to respond personally to the author of that book with a nasty and detailed critique—this will necessarily be talked about, because the poor author who got slaughtered will have to be consoled. Don't be surprised if you don't get asked for any more quotes after that.

While I have never been a fly on the wall inside a publishing company, it doesn't take a genius to know that the one thing they really want to talk about is your numbers. Numbers are analyzed, crunched, and predicted constantly. They are what ultimately define your status and your identity within the company. Numbers don't lie, and no matter how much hype you have gotten, or how much you think they haven't done, or how much they paid you, how many media events you did, or how big or small you think they are or they think you are, no one and nothing can argue with how many books you actually sold. Location, location, location is the theme song of real estate. Numbers, numbers,

numbers is the mantra of book publishing. Yes, there are times when it's their fault and they know it, and there are times when no one can explain a book's success or failure. But we all have to deal with the reality of how the last book did, and with the overall sales patterns. That's a fact of life.

I always encourage authors to come to New York to meet with their publishers, because this is always so revealing for everyone. It's good for you to see them in their native habitat. It makes you realize that despite your secret wishes and imaginings, they really do have other authors besides you, and they really do work hard. But of course it's also very revealing about them. Watch carefully and see how they treat you. If they pet and stroke you and take you out for a fancy lunch or dinner and bring along the art director and the contracts guy and the publicist, does this mean they truly love you?

Not necessarily. Anyone can invite a bunch of people to dinner and call a restaurant for a reservation. True, they aren't going to spend the time or money if you aren't reasonably important to them, but that's not the issue. What have they been saying about you before you arrived? Did they plan a serious and realistic presentation that will truly show you what their vision is for you, what they are planning, what worked and didn't work, how they plan to fix the things that didn't, and how and why they are going to move you to the next level? If your last book exceeded all expectations, how, specifically, are they going to capitalize on that? If your sales have been lackluster, do they know why? Will they tell you? Be sure to ask them what their business plan is for you. If they don't seem to have one, or if they talk glibly around the subject without ever really answering, then don't expect them to do much for you besides dinner. If, on the other hand, they really snow you with detailed and intelligent analyses and plans, have the sense to pay attention and participate, even if you don't always like what you hear.

Trust me, every author has a book in there somewhere that didn't do as well as it should have, and you can and will recover from this. The important thing is that you know about it and face it sensibly. It might explain a lot of things—why the advance orders were lower on the next book, for example. But if you're selling great and they don't seem to be on the bandwagon, that's another signal. If you ask them what they're going to do for your next book, and they say, “Oh, everything we did for the last book. We'll get it out there and see how it does,” then this tells you they're not as serious as they should be.

This is exactly the kind of information you need in order to grow and to be in charge of your own career, and if they don't share it with you, they are robbing you of that

chance. So what they were saying about you before you got there is vitally important. Ideally, your agent should have obtained that information and analyzed it ahead of time, but this is the ideal place to talk about it.

Publishing is a huge bazaar, and talk is a key form of currency. Sure, we talk about you, just like you talk about us. It's a good thing we do. More than one such friendly conversation has resulted in a contract. Talk keeps the

wheels turning and the lights flashing. It's all a part of the business we have chosen.

Irene Goodman has been an agent for over 20 years, representing best-selling authors as well as talented newcomers. She specializes in career planning, focusing on areas such as women's fiction, suspense, thrillers, romance, historical fiction, and chick lit.



Sticky Notes from the Edge

— Cheryl Ann Porter

Western Heroics

See if you can relate. Here are the players: Me, a reporter, my parents, and my two sons. The setting: My parents' living room. The purpose: The hometown newspaper wants an interview about me and my writing and my family's opinions on all that. This is a true incident, I kid you not. Now picture this:

REPORTER: So, Mrs. Cheryl's Mom, what do you think about your daughter being a published writer?

MOM (normally ebullient and talkative): It's fine.

DAD: I like it, too.

SON #1: I thought she'd make more money.

SON #2: Me, too. It sucks.

CHERYL: Son, don't say "sucks."

SON #2: You just said it.

CHERYL: I'm telling you not to—

REPORTER (interrupting): And Mr. Cheryl's Dad, do you read your daughter's Westerns?

DAD: No, I like Louis L'Amour. Now there's a real Western writer. (Turns to my sons). Did I tell you boys that Louis L'Amour used to live in Choctaw? (That's Oklahoma, where we lived at the time)

SONS (groaning): Not in the last hour, Grandpa.

REPORTER (struggling to keep up): Do any of you have an opinion about the sex in the books?

SON #1: Dude, like I want to know about that, OK? I made a deal with Mom. She doesn't tell me about her sex life, and I don't tell her about mine.

CHERYL (horrified, to SON #1): You have a sex life?

SON #2 (looking ill): There's sex in Mom's books?

MY MOM: I didn't know there was until the ladies at the beauty shop read one and told me and I was so embarrassed to think that my daughter—"

DAD: My daughter's had sex?

CHERYL: Dad, where do you think I got your grandsons?

DAD: Well, it better have been at a church picnic, I know that much.

REPORTER (valiantly trying): I don't see any of your daughter's books here on your bookshelves.

MOM: We have a nice bookshelf out in the garage where we keep them.

DAD: We had to buy our own copies. She didn't give us any of the free ones.

MOM: Her sister does her research. Did she tell you that?

DAD: I gave her the idea for her last book—the one about the Dalton gang. We were sitting right here in the living room and I got up (he gets up out of his recliner) and went over here to the encyclopedias (goes over to the encyclopedias) and pulled out this book... no, it was this one (searching, can't find the one he wants). Wait, here it is. (Takes it to the reporter). D for Dalton gang. I'm from Dalton. That's in Georgia. That's how it all came up, so write that down and put it in your story.

AND ON AND ON...but you get the picture.

The author wants you to know she no longer writes Western romances and lives a good 1400 miles away from her family.

OUTSIDE THE BIG APPLE

My mother-in-law became blind following botched laser surgery. I never knew my grandmother to have “normal” sight, and diabetes is robbing my uncle of his vision. In other words, when I see Large Print Books, I pay attention. I had one romance published by Thorndike a number of years ago, and although I didn’t make much money from it, I felt good about the experience. Now I’m thinking it’s time to revisit that publishing avenue.

For the more than 150 million Americans who spend \$15 billion on corrective eyewear every year, large print books are becoming a great boon. For members of Novelists Inc, the same might hold true. We’re not going to get rich this way, but it’s looking better and better.

Which publishers are getting in on this growing niche market?

Simon & Schuster has been bringing out large print books in considerable volume for four years but usually chooses house authors, five or six a season. Women’s fiction works well for them, and although they’re comfortable with the present program, they anticipate expanding as they acquire more bestselling authors.

HarperCollins has had a large print program for around three years and brings out about 25 books a year. Associate publisher Carrie Kania believes the market will grow and they’re trying to, “pick the right books that will fit the demographics and will contribute to the backlist.”

Warner just completed its first year in the big letter business. Rebecca Oliver, coordinator for the Warner and Little Brown large print book program says they were prompted by the figures coming from Thorndike, Wheeler, and Random House. For now, Warner is releasing five to eight large prints a season.

Random House has taken an interesting approach toward getting the word out about their large print titles, specifically teaming up with AARP and joining them at road shows in an RV along the eastern seaboard. Doubleday’s large print book club has been around since 1985, offering bestsellers, celebrity biographies, romances, mysteries, spy thrillers, and historical fiction.

I’m most familiar with Thorndike’s Large Print Books and their sister publication, 5 Star, which specializes in genre fiction, so I did a little digging and learned that Thorndike is under the Gale Group. The parent company of both is Thomson Corporation, which operates the Thomson Learning division. This year Thorndike acquired Wheeler Publishing which publishes both hardcover large print titles and the Large Print Press paperback line. In

addition, Thorndike acquired the large-print program of Christian titles from Walker.

This should bode well for bookstores because Thorndike’s releases traditionally went to the library market due to their higher price points and lower discounts. Now with Walker and Large Print Press, 43% trade discounts and free shipping will be made available. The first 10 new titles have cover prices from \$12.95 to \$14.95 and include Fern Michaels’ *Kentucky Heat*. In the spring, look for Nora Roberts, Sue Grafton, and Carl Hiassen. Thorndike publisher Karen Huyser’s crystal ball shows 35 to 40 Large Print Press books and maybe 40 from Walker. Although historically Walker was doing nonfiction large print, fiction is on the horizon. The bottom line for all of Thorndike’s imprints adds up to about 100 large print titles a month with everything from fiction to true crime, science fiction to children’s and young adult. Approximately 1,700 titles are planned for 2003.

And what might the future hold? My own crystal ball shows some interesting possibilities. The “old fart” stigma against large print books has eroded, to a significant degree because of attractive packaging. Also, new releases are available and bookstores can now make money from them. Awareness is growing, partially because of some interesting promotion on the part of bookstores. For example, Elaine Petrocelli who owns Book Passage in Corte Madera, California, does numerous talks on books and always brings along large print books which are snapped up for friends and relatives with vision problems. Jen Reynolds, buyer for the Joseph-Beth chain, features large print for Grandparent’s Day, etc. Marian Haugh who owns The Large Print Book Shop in Denver sees a strong interest in escape fiction among their middle-aged readers, specifically romance and mysteries.

Finally, here’s something that’s worthy of note: Mary Beth Roche, former director of publicity at Random House Audio Publishing uses large print while on the treadmill and exercise bike at the gym. Me, too! Which leads me to envision large print books being promoted in untraditional ways—via the chain gyms, AARP, the medical community, and beyond. And as I look ahead in this direction, I see previously untapped readers snapping up titles.

What might your own vision be?

— Vella Munn

Love at First Splash: Exercising in Water

BY SHERRY-ANNE JACOBS

OK, I'll admit it: I've avoided serious exercise for most of my adult life. But early last year the doctor suggested hydrotherapy for my arthritis, and since I'd lost all bounce in my knees, needed to push/pull to get out of a chair, and going upstairs hurt like hell, I was desperate enough to try it.

Oh, boy! It was love at first splash! Warm water (about 34°C) caresses your body. Suddenly you've lost all that weight and can jump around like a frisky colt, in spite of arthritic knees and spine. None of that nasty sweaty feeling, either, and yet your body is humming its thanks and you've definitely got your pulse rate up after half an hour's solid exercise.

A side benefit for writers: it gets your brain functioning sharply and is an ideal time to plot.

WHAT SORT OF POOL?

The dedicated exercise pool at my physiotherapist's is made by a US firm called Swimex. (www.swimex.com) It has smooth-flowing water driven by a paddle-wheel, and the speed of flow can be adjusted—thank goodness! The pool is about four yards by two, with little ledges along the sides for stepping up and down on, or bracing against, and is about four feet deep. They're not cheap.

WHAT SORT OF EXERCISES?

There are all sorts of exercises to do in water. Mine were designed by a physiotherapist and include:

- ▼ walking up and down against that current, facing it, backwards and sideways—harder than it sounds.
- ▼ stepping up and down on a ledge about a foot high
- ▼ standing a yard away from the end, holding the rail and chinning oneself against it
- ▼ paddling with a miniature paddle against the current
- ▼ tramping up and down on the spot in various ways
- ▼ doing squats till chin meets water
- ▼ holding a small foam board and swishing it from side to side, then forward and back—water resistance/current makes it quite difficult

PHYSICAL RESULTS

I was told by the physio that it takes two months to put on real muscle. I used to be a virtually muscle-free zone, but after four months I feel different when I walk, as if my body has a built-in "corset." I have much more energy and I feel happier, too. I'm still junoesque, and always will be, because I think 600 calories a day is too miserable to endure, but I feel really good.

And last week I walked up and down a flight of stairs at my daughter's new house without any heaving on the handrail! This may sound a very minimal achievement to you fit folk, but I haven't done it for years with my horrid, moon-cratered knees. The fact that we live in a single-storey house in a very flat town had exacerbated the problem. So for me it was an achievement and OK, I'll admit it: I ran down the stairs and immediately went up again, shouting "Look at me!"

My husband did some research on the Internet and found it's better to be overweight and exercising regularly than thin and not exercising. I *really* like the idea of that. It also said it takes about six months to do some remedial work on your heart by exercising regularly. I like the idea of that, too.

TWO WARNINGS

1. This water exercise stuff can lead to major expense. After trying to persuade me into exercising for years, my beloved didn't even quibble at having an indoor, heated exercise pool and room built on to our home. We can't afford to import a Swimex pool so have settled for concrete with a stepping ledge at one side, and water jets to work against. It's under construction as I write.

2. I've now had to eat my own words and admit that exercise does make you feel better.

MY CONCLUSION

It's no good telling people to do exercise that they don't enjoy. I haven't enjoyed walking for years—it hurt my knees and back, also I'm very good at tripping and falling over—have proved that several times. So if you're still searching for a way to ease the guilt about not exercising, try hydrotherapy or try finding something else you do like.

Australian Ninc member Sherry-Anne Jacobs, writing as Anna Jacobs, hit the UK bestseller lists above non-Ninc member Stephen King for her paperback, Down Weavers Lane. In its second week of release, the novel hit number 1 on The Bookseller's Heatseekers list. The Bookseller is the UK equivalent of Publishers Weekly.



"There are no real messages in my fiction. The first duty of the novelist is to entertain. It is a moral duty. People who read your books are sick, sad, traveling, in the hospital waiting room while someone is dying. Books are written by the alone for the alone." —Donna Tartt

A Web Beacon is a .gif on a website which allows that site to “count users or access certain cookies.” *Yahoo!* <http://www.yahoo.com>, uses Web Beacons within Yahoo for research purposes to customize your visits to the site. It also uses Web Beacons to conduct research outside the Yahoo! Network. If you don't want your information used for research, go to <http://privacy.yahoo.com/privacy/us/pixels/details.html>. About halfway down the screen, under “Outside the Yahoo! Network,” you'll find “Please click here to Opt out.” Click those words. You are now opted out—Do **NOT** click the CANCEL OPT-OUT button, which will be your first impulse. If you do, you undo what you just did. Instead simply click RETURN TO YAHOO. Note that the Beacons identify browsers not users so you must go through this procedure for each computer you use to browse the Internet.

PROMOTION

Romance Designs, <http://www.romancedesigns.com>, invites “you to submit an article on a certain time period, sub-genre, research idea, or any other romance related topic to us. If accepted, we will include it in our newsletter with a photo of you, your web site, and latest release information. Send your feature ideas to info@romancedesigns.com.”

In addition, “we encourage you to use the free promotional services we offer on Romance Designs. Here are a few of them that are a continual way to keep your fans and readers updated!

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RESEARCH

Writers' Medical and Forensics Lab, <http://www.dplylcmd.com>, provides information on the medical aspects of crime. Douglas Lyle “is currently working on his 4th novel and writes ‘The Doctor Is In,’ a monthly medical and forensic Q and A column.” He has the answers to many questions archived at his site.

Victorian Dictionary, <http://www.victorianlondon.org>, provides information on everything Victorian: death, lighting, police, the list goes on. The site is organized using folder icons which make it extremely easy to navigate.

Regency Garderobe, <http://www.regencygarderobe.com>, is dedicated to “Researching and reproducing the fashions of the early nineteenth century.” There are a few articles of interest, several fashion plates, and books available on CD.

The Project Gutenberg EBook of 1811 Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue by Captain Grose, et al is now available online: <http://ibiblio.org/gutenberg/etext04/dcvgr10.txt>

Texas Beyond History, <http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/>, was created by the Texas Archeological Research Lab. The front page displays a Texas map showing the locations that the site provides information on. The Red River War, the Haas House, the Caddo Indians, and other information is provided from the viewpoint of archeologists.

Creative Proverbs from Around the World, <http://www.creativeproverbs.com/>, allows you to search for over 12,000 proverbs from more than 300 countries and cultures. You can also select a particular country and view a list of proverbs from that country.

Sabrina Jeffries shared an incredible site provided by the UCLA Department of Epidemiology School of Public Health. It has devoted a portion of its site to Dr. John Snow, “a legendary figure in the history of public health.” One of the most fascinating aspects of the site is *London Historical References and Sights*, <http://www.ph.ucla.edu/epi/snow/1859map/londonindex.html>, which provides drawings and brief descriptions of many areas of London in 1859. I could have spent all night reading the varied offerings. The site is well worth the trip.

Carolyn Greene shared two of her favorite sites. “Unlike name books and sites that give you the meanings of certain names, *Kabalarian Philosophy*, <http://www.kabalarians.com>, gives personality traits that are supposedly common among people with those monikers. It even goes so far as to say how those personality traits (both positive and negative) affect the person's body and health.” *The Word Spy*, <http://www.wordspy.com>, “is a great place to look up trendy new words (such as bridezilla), where they were first used in print, and the meaning of the word.”

PART OF THE BUSINESS

Wondering who else has books coming out the same month that you do? Visit the *International Periodicals Distributors Association's Industry Home Page*, <http://www.ipda.org>, where you can access the "Latest Mass Market Update" or the "Latest Hardcover/Trade and Juvenile." In December when I checked the mass market list, it was showing books through August. The list is comprised of the lead titles from the major publishers.

A CAUTIONARY TALE

Unfortunately, people are now preying on our paranoia regarding computer viruses. These mischievous souls send an e-mail warning about a virus that cannot be detected but is housed in a particular *.exe file. The sender will advise you to search for the file and if you find it, immediately delete it. Unfortunately, the file is usually necessary to run a program. Terey daly Ramin experienced the hassle of dealing with this hoax and recommends checking out <http://www.symantec.com/avcenter/venc/data/jdbgmgr.exe.file.hoax.html> for more information on the hoax. "If you've already deleted the file, I think the hoax site will tell you how to restore it."

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Lorraine Heath	lorraine-heath@attbi.com

FOR FUN

Visit *The Moonlit Road*, <http://www.themoonlitroad.com>, where you can read or listen to ghost stories and folktales of the south.

If you discover sites that you think would interest Novelists, Inc. members, I'd appreciate it if you'd e-mail them to me. I'm always looking for interesting and useful sites to include in the column. E-mail me at lorraine-heath@attbi.com. Thanks!

Bits'n'Pieces

AND THE BIG NEWS IS... Massive Changes Ahead

for 2003 At HARLEQUIN/SILHOUETTE: Here's what's up that we know for certain—so far: A couple of new lines... Mary Theresa Hussey is acquiring "big book" female-oriented fantasy of 100-150,000 words to launch in 2004. Keep the word romance firmly in mind should you decide to write and submit to this line—though they are heroine-centered fantasies first and foremost, with any romance playing a secondary role. Guidelines are nearly finished but weren't available at press time. The books will be released in the RDI trade paper format, and are not being considered "fantasy chick lit" as has been speculated. ...Rumors are also circulating about Duets changing over to a single book 60,000-word romantic comedy line (working title Flipside) as of October 2003. At press time we've learned that Flipside is a "go" for late in the year 2003. ... Lynda Curmyn has announced that she's acquiring 80,000-word books for a new line called Bombshell set to launch in July 2004 with four books a month. "These are heroine-driven, female action/adventure stories. Think *Alias* or *Lara Croft in Tomb Raider*. Geena Davis in the *Long Kiss Goodnight*. Demi Moore in *GI Jane*. The emotional experience in this book is the thrill factor as reader watches the uniquely skilled heroine get out of the precarious, often high stakes situations she finds herself in. Every book will have a romance, but the romance is the subplot—it is the heroine and her "kick ass" life/thrilling plot that drives the story. Though books don't need to necessarily end in marriage, there needs to be a commitment to move the relationship to the next level, whether that be a first kiss, new

awareness between the couple or even married couple, or marriage. Authors to read for examples of this type of heroine: Maureen Tan, Linda Barnes, Laura Lippman, Janet Evanovich. Sensuality level is up to the author—everything from closed door to super sexy allowed. Can be written in first or third person." Do remember these will still be category books...Red Dress Ink will also up its production of trade books from two to three per month in November 2003 and will publish its first hardcover in July. Hardcover RDIs will be released on a regular schedule in 2004.

FURTHER THERETO...HARLEQUIN ENTERPRISES EDITORIAL REORGANIZATION...The following notes on editorial realignment comes from HQ and are effective as of January 1, 2003. The company is now structured into five key groups in its hopes to become a greater "growth player in the broader women's fiction arena." Series Business: Editorial Director Tara Gavin (Harlequin, Silhouette, Continuities, Steeple Hill); Single Titles: Editorial Director Dianne Moggy (MIRA, Red Dress Ink, Historicals, Harlequin/Silhouette Single Titles); Overseas: Editorial Director Karin Stoecker (UK Core and Overseas Channel Management); Editorial Planning and Programs: Editorial Director Randall Toyé (Editorial Business Strategies, World Wide Mystery, Gold Eagle); New Product Development: Editorial Director Malle Vallik (NPD and eHarlequin Content Development)... **EDITOR PROMOTIONS AND CHANGES** are listed on the Novelists, Inc. website, www.Ninc.com. **AND FINALLY...Silhouette New York Offices** are moving...to the Woolworth Building about the end of January 2003.

— TdR



Laura Resnick is

THE COMELY CURMUDGEON

“Resolutions”

As the cold days and long nights of winter settle into my bloodstream and produce a sleepy, apathetic effect not unlike my reaction to sitting through *Titanic*, I take this opportunity to review my New Year’s resolutions. Being thrifty by nature, I tend to use many of the same ones every year, thus cutting down on the amount of thought I have to invest in them.

1. Resolved: I will invest more thought in things.
Oops.

2. Resolved: I will eat right.

This one didn’t go so well in 2002. (Or in 2001, 2000, 1999, 1998, 1997, 1996, etc., etc., etc.) By mid-year, I was on first-name terms with all the lads at the new pizza delivery place, and my chocolate consumption had a perceptible effect on the worldwide economy.

3. Resolved: I will exercise regularly.

I was such a total stranger at the local yoga school in 2002 that I was stunned to discover it had doubled its size, changed its class schedule, completely remodeled its interior, and shifted the location of its lobby between the day I first joined it and the day when I finally showed up to take a class.

On the other hand, I did start tai chi lessons in 2002—only six years after first deciding to do so. And what good timing! Classes began soon after my publisher suddenly decided to spend several weeks torturing me to the best of its ability—and we all know how good publishers are at that.

What a relief it was, after a day of being repeatedly poked in the eye with sharp sticks (so to speak), to go to class, with soothing pseudo-Chinese music playing softly on the stereo, and lose myself in the moment. (In addition to which, I’m convinced that I look really *cool* doing tai chi.)

4. Resolved: I will wear clean clothes every day.

Isn’t it good that I’ve still got a realistic goal to pursue from scratch in 2003?

5. Resolved: I will deliver work early.

Okay, I only keep this resolution on the annual list as

a nostalgic reminder of how young, energetic, and foolishly optimistic I once was.

6. Resolved: I will meet all deadlines.

This resolution has become ambivalent over the years.

The first time I ever missed a deadline was way back in my early days as a Silhouette writer, when I phoned my editor to warn her I’d be delivering a book two weeks late. At the time, I was consumed with guilt and a burning sense of inadequacy over such behavior.

That’s only because I was so inexperienced.

An editor once told me that a colleague asked her why she had such a high proportion of writers who delivered on time, compared to the colleague’s own list of many late-deliverers. She explained that it was because her writers responded to her own behavior: She read MSs soon after delivery, authorized payment quickly, and edited books within a very reasonable period of time.

While such measures may sound to a novice like the minimum prerequisites of a competent editor, any writer who’s been in the business for a dozen years knows how special such behavior actually is.

I myself have waited up to five months for a signing check, 13 months for an edit, six months for a delivery check, and 27 months for publication. Your mileage may vary, but I certainly know from the complaints and anecdotes of my friends and acquaintances that this kind of treatment is all too common. One writer I know was heavily pressured by both editor and agent to deliver a MS by a certain date... and then it sat around for over half a year with no editing. Another writer’s editor still hadn’t even given her MS a first read (let alone a delivery payment) six months after delivery.

Given enough experiences like this, the staunch sense of professional obligation to meet those deadlines can eventually—go figure—get a little weak. A writer’s self-respect may well stop being defined by meeting deadlines if no one she deals with seems to be on any more specific a schedule than “I’ll get around it to eventually.”

I’m not saying that lowering our professional standards as writers is right or good. Please note, I still put “I will meet all deadlines” on my New Year’s Resolutions list every year. Despite my exasperation with a profession sheltering editors who treat delivered MSs with all the

urgency I normally reserve for dusting the basement, I nonetheless fully intend to—and make every effort to—meet my deadlines. I don't always succeed (and, on one occasion, my lateness was truly epic), but I always try, and I mostly do succeed. I make this effort because meeting deadlines honors the standards I set for myself as a professional. And also because, frankly, meeting deadlines places me on the moral high ground, and I like the view.

Nonetheless, while striving to meet all my deadlines in 2003, I'll keep in mind the words one editor wrote to me in 2002: "You're not the first writer to be late, and if all of them delivered such terrific final results as this, I'd be tickled pink."

7. Resolved: I will eschew envy.

Writers drive themselves crazy with envy all of the time. You know: "Why do her semi-literate books sell ten times better than mine do?" or, "We started out at exactly the same time, but now he makes double the money I do," or, "We have the same editor and write in the same subgenre and I get better reviews, so why does she get five times the promotional support that I do?"

Envy is most seductive when it seems justified: *I* am the better writer, *I* am the nicer person, *I* have worked harder, *I've* been publishing longer, *I* do better research, *I* deserve more success than they do!

But envy is always poisonous. *Always*. It always hurts me far more than it hurts whoever I'm envying. It gains me nothing, and it costs me far too much: peace of mind, focus, energy, contentment, self-worth, self-respect, good digestion, sound sleep, and—need I even add?—personal charm.

So I vow that every time I feel the poison of envy seep into my blood, I will try to flush it out. Luckily, my local ice cream shop makes a chocolate shake that really helps with this; because no matter how much I envy you, I know that *you* don't live three blocks from Graeter's Ice Cream Shop. (So there's a valid *reason*, you see, that I have trouble with Resolution 2.)

8. Resolved: I will not compare myself to others.

Nursing a sense of inadequacy is no more productive than harboring envy. If someone writes faster than me, gets up earlier, has a smaller waistline, understands the business better, keeps her office tidier, does more research in less time, and always has a sunny disposition...

Well, actually, yes, that's *plenty* of reason for me to feel inadequate by comparison.

But I vow not to do so. That person has her own inadequacies, even if they're not immediately apparent to me; after all, *my* inadequacies aren't always immediately apparent to everyone I meet. The beauty of this profession is that it's so individualistic. As long as I work towards being the best writing professional *I* can be, I'm doing my job. And my job isn't going to get any easier if I worry about how you're doing yours.

9. Resolved: I will not let the bastards get me down.

This is a tough one. Especially because the definition of "the bastards" for a writer can be a lot like the definition of "parasites" if you're a mammal in tropical Africa. I mean, wow, there's so many possibilities that I sometimes find myself paralyzed just by the sheer volume of life forms lining up to eat my eyeballs or infest my liver.

(Sorry about the imagery.)

My publisher spent the autumn of 2002 torturing me. Each time I thought that surely they had finally run out of possible ways to screw up my professional life, they came up with yet another innovation. Things got so bad that, at one point, I instructed my agent to pull everything under contract there; I decided I'd actually rather never publish again than keep working under those circumstances. I meant it. I still mean it. The camel's back broke, Elvis left the building, the temple of the Philistines came crashing down.

Go on, tell me *you're* so zen-enlightened serene that this crap never gets you down. I dare you.

As it happens, my agent—may he be in heaven half an hour before any publishers know he's dead—managed to resolve that whole mess in my favor, so all's well that ends well. Apart from, oh, the insomnia, the digestive disorders, and the tension headaches which dominated that entire season.

Three of my friends were dumped by their publishers around that time. At least two of them were working with editors whom I frankly think should be locked in a room with old disco albums for the rest of their lives. Another friend spent part of the year having agent-from-hell adventures.

Been there. Done that. Compiling a list of suitable LPs.

Internet piracy. Plagiarism. Hate mail. Ugly *Kirkus* reviews and snide *Publishers Weekly* reviews. Vicious Amazon reader reviews, and really strange cover copy. Shipping mistakes, distribution disasters, art department gaffs, and printer errors. Spiraling sales figures, the midlist crunch, disappearing markets, rising costs, and vanishing retail outlets.

Oh, man, I'm making myself depressed.

But, despite all the reasons there are for a working writer to feel really, really down, here's what I don't like about giving into it: It lets the bastards win. It gives them too much power.

Besides that, depression makes it hard to write.

10. Resolved: I will count my blessings.

The truth is, the bastards *do* get me down. So I have to pick myself up. I have a real dread of becoming an embittered troll surrounded by a dark cloud of venomous gloom—and I certainly picked the wrong profession if I wanted to make sure I could definitely never wind up like *that*. So I vow, once again, to combat the forces of darkness (i.e., almost everything that occurs to me





THE COMELY CURMUDGEON



on a daily basis in the publishing world) by regularly remembering to focus on all the reasons I have, as a writer, to thank the universe.

I have my health. And I know there are people whose health interferes with or affects their ability to write.

I have great and cherished friends in this business. Their value is above rubies, and I wouldn't have missed knowing them for the world.

I have the opportunity to meet many writers whom I read. I even have the opportunity to read many writers whom I meet.

I'm a multi-published novelist, in a world where most people will only ever dream of selling even one novel.

I mostly get to write only what I want to write. Although I have written some things just because I needed the money, I haven't had to do it very often or very recently.

In a tough market where many good writers are currently unable to get contracts or getting offers with bad terms, I'm under contract and happy with the terms.

Though I don't always agree with my agent, I know he's nonetheless tough, shrewd, trustworthy, and genuinely cares what happens to my work.

Though I certainly have a love-hate relationship with my subgenre, epic fantasy, I nonetheless find it artistically challenging, exciting, and satisfying, and it has so far been professionally rewarding for me.

I am often struck by how many people hate their jobs, or at least are indifferent to their professions. You know: "It's okay," or, "It's a living," or, "I like parts of it," or, "It's better than digging ditches." Writing, however, is an obsession and a way of life. And no matter how the bastards get me down, aren't I LUCKY to have such a driving passion in my professional life! Aren't I LUCKY to do something for a living that I'd probably be doing for free if I hadn't been able to turn it into my profession! I count it as a blessing that, despite the frustration and despair which my profession regularly inflicts on me, I am not going through my professional life only half-alive, the way so many people in this world do.

Finally, I count as a blessing that, once a month, I get to force my opinions on *you*.

Bits'n'Pieces

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS OPENS ANNEX AT FORT...

The Library of Congress has become so over-crowded that many books sit on the floor for lack of shelf space. To deal with the problem a storage center at Maryland's Fort Meade was opened that will ultimately house over a million books. "It's part of a 50-year project to move part of the library's overflowing collection into high-density, climate-controlled storage, something the library couldn't build at its Capitol Hill site," the *Baltimore Sun* reported. Drivers will make twice-daily runs between the facilities so patrons still have ready access to relocated books.

— TdR

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