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In Memory

Cheryl Anne Porter

DEAR NINC MEMBERS:

When your president offered her space this month for a remembrance of Cheryl Anne Porter, I was as deeply touched as I know Cheryl would be. I only hope she's watching over me (and editing liberally) as I try to find words worthy of the occasion. Cheryl was my very best friend, writing teacher, mentor, PR client, inspiration, favorite author, and all-around favorite person to be with. She was even more fun than her "Sticky Notes" columns were to read.

I hope all of us who ache now with the loss of such a funny and gifted lady will remember Cheryl with laughter. She'd want that. She always thought she was the funniest person she knew. Recall her "Sticky Notes" about her Pet Body?

My evil Pet Body also insists on being fed things that aren't good for it but require major preparation time (i.e., not writing). And then, once it gets these things, it spitefully gains weight and sometimes even makes random or heinous noises at inopportune times because it ate those things earlier. Stop laughing. Try having your pet body rumble loudly when there's a microphone right in front of you and you're the keynote speaker. See? Not funny.

Are you smiling yet? Good. Cheryl would want you to. She loved writing her column for *NINK* and over the past year it was the only writing she was able to do. Even when she had to dictate it from her hospital bed while she was receiving chemo, she didn't want to lose this link with her calling, or with you, her colleagues.

I met Cheryl in 1996 when I first took her fiction-writing course at Hillsborough Community College in Tampa, FL. Like most of her other students, once I'd taken a class, I became a convert. And I kept signing up. If Cheryl taught it, I'd take it. Soon that extended beyond classes to conferences and workshops around the country. As a public relations specialist, I offered my professional services. It was a pleasure to help introduce others to her wonderful writing and speaking. Well, you know Cheryl. It wasn't long before I found myself juggling the busy details of her work life and "Driving Miss Cheryl."

Well-behaved women rarely make history. That was Cheryl's favorite quote. Who's surprised? She was a woman who never shied away from difficult questions. We who took her writing classes and were called on to defend our characters or our stories can attest to that. But we kept coming back for more, even though—or maybe especially because—we knew we'd be held to the highest standards. She was a skilled and informative teacher who always had time to help others make their writing better. A number of new authors have been published because of her guidance. And a few well-placed phone calls or emails behind the scenes saw to it that those new writers found the way smoothed when they needed introductions to editors or agents.

As a speaker, Cheryl was second to none. She keynoted (sans pet body noises!) at the venerable Chautauqua Writers Institute in New York and held an audience of esteemed writers spellbound. Even those leery of the "romance writer" who'd invaded their hallowed halls were on their feet cheering when she finished. Cheryl put the same awesome energy and joy into speaking to conference attendees, elementary school kids, elderhostel groups, and to writers across the country, inspiring one and all to seize

their dreams and dare to share their words.

Teacher, speaker and writer. If you've read her books, you know Cheryl's talent for creating fascinating worlds between the pages. She could evoke settings so well that you'd read one of her Westerns and swear you'd have to stop to pour desert sand out of your shoes. She could make 1850 or 1860 or 1870 so real that you'd absorb a history lesson before you realized it. That amazing ability to recreate the America of a century and a half ago led the US Library of Congress to choose her book *Jessie's Outlaw* for its Rare Book Collection. An honor seldom accorded contemporary authors and a distinction of which she was very proud.

Readers who loved her dark historical mysteries were astounded to find the lighter side of Cheryl in her romantic comedies. Somehow she managed to capture the wackiest aspects of modern life and then use them to challenge her characters. In her capable hands, otherwise ordinary people wound up in extraordinary circumstances. There was the hapless house sitter who found herself wrestling with a high-tech computer for control of her employer's home. A dog hater whose unexpected inheritance turns out to be a furry, four-legged atrocity that would make even a humane society volunteer think twice. And who but Cheryl would think to toss together in the dark of night a naked man and an overwrought dog in a hopeless tangle of mosquito netting? Critics praised her mastery of dialogue, inventive plots, believable characters, and the depth of her stories. She never wrote happy endings, she said, just satisfying ones. Like all of us, her characters had something to learn, compromises to make, and changes to go through. It made for some of the best reading around. Luckily, those words live on in her 22 books.

Cheryl the professional was talented, caring, skilled, and giving. Cheryl the woman was, too. She was also just plain fun. Ask people about Cheryl and inevitably you'll get a smile. Her sense of humor was boundless. She could find the funny side of just about anything. And never at another's expense. She parlayed a string of annoyances in a just-remodeled Atlanta hotel room that would have had most of us complaining bitterly into a hysterically funny speech and sellout audiotape, deftly entertaining a conference of writers while also capably illustrating key ideas about how to write humor.

As I mentioned, Cheryl often said she was the funniest person she knew, and she enjoyed her own foibles as much as anyone. It was deliciously fun to share her world because you never knew what might happen next. In Chicago for a writers' conference, a reservation mix-up forced us to relocate to a very upscale historic hotel. Before the day was over, Cheryl lost her wallet not once, but twice; charged into and backed out of a mis-assigned and already *very* inhabited room; together with me, barged into a formal wedding dressed in shorts and

t-shirt, clutching an empty ice bucket under one arm; was escorted out of same by an appalled waiter who ushered us through the most remote back hallways to the kitchen ice machine and then *insisted* on personally seeing us back to our room; then ended the day stalking what she thought was an inconsiderate late-night hallway whistler, only to find the culprit was the musically-inclined toilet in our own 1900-era bathroom.

Enthusiasm fueled Cheryl. She was always ready to try anything. She hid her intellect behind her humor, but no mind was sharper or more insightful. She loved crossword puzzles and God help anyone who challenged her at Scrabble. She was unfailingly kind, believing that everyone had a rough road to travel. I could throw a stone and hit someone worse off, she said, even during the darkest days of her illness.

Cheryl was a devoted mother and a doting grandmother, albeit one who insisted on being called Goddess instead of Granny. She loved her family and she loved her friends. She embraced new ideas and continually challenged herself to grow. She abhorred prejudice of any sort, speaking out against it at every opportunity and forcing the characters in her novels to rise above it. She loved writing and she loved the writer's life.

So many of you sent cards, emails, flowers, and gifts. Cheryl, of course, would want to know who among you had sent jewelry...and why everyone hadn't! Seriously, though, your words brought her strength, comfort, smiles, and encouragement when those were needed most. As her caregiver, I got to see firsthand what a positive effect that had for her. Her Ninc family rallied around her and you really made a difference.

It's impossible to sum up a force of nature by using mere words. Here in Tampa, on the day she died, we had a thunderstorm of epic proportions. Certainly not the *first* time I'd seen Cheryl change the weather! Wherever we went, Cheryl was the star and I handled the details. Driving Miss Cheryl invariably led to the greatest adventures, and I am lucky to have shared them with her. She made this world and this life bright with a light uniquely, brilliantly her own. Cheryl will shine on. Always.

– Carol Morrison

The author would have you know that your kindnesses continue to warm her heart and will remain among her most cherished memories.

Donations in memory of Cheryl Anne Porter may be made to the Linda Kay West Benevolency Fund, which benefits Ninc members. Checks can be sent to Novelists, Inc., P.O. Box 1166, Mission, KS 66222-0166.

Audio Rights

Continued from page 1



That is not to say that you would get the same deal from Mom&Pop Audio as you would from Random House or Brilliance. The size of the advance and the range and power of distribution vary widely by publisher, and a James Patterson hardcover would command a much different advance (is this news to anyone?) than a mass market historical romance whose author has never hit any of the national bestseller lists. Reality bites.

I am constantly amazed, however, at the number of otherwise savvy authors who do not treat audio rights with the seriousness they should. When a publisher is dangling that advance in front of an author it wants to sign, most agents and authors do not even hesitate. It's "grab the money and run." Can't blame them. But what they don't consider is that most (yes, most) of the time, the print publisher's audio division will not produce an audio of that book—no matter what they say at signing. A small fraction of the time it will license off those rights to others, but for the most part they go unused. An opportunity to forward your career has been lost.

And even if your print publisher decides that you are a "big enough" author to warrant an audiobook, it will most likely only be abridged. A sublicensed library market unabridged audio is not going to give you the attention at retail you want. The only thing most of your readers will see is an abridged audio—10% to 20% of the book you wrote.

There are literary agents who don't want to deal with audio at all, and will always include audio rights in the print contract. There are other agencies which make it a matter of protocol that they deal separately with audio rights, just as they do with film rights. They may still sell audio rights to the print publisher's audio division, but it will be under a separate contract. Or they might offer audio rights to all the major audio publishers and go to auction. It is not unusual at all for a Putnam book to be published in audio by Random House Audio, or for a Random House book to be published in audio by Brilliance Audio. It is a very competitive business.

The only scrap I want you to take from this is: you need to take control of your audio rights. Since this can be a significant profit center for an author these days, and since many people discover an author through audio, this is an important issue.

Back to the idea of new readers discovering your work: if the abridgment is not good, it can turn people off your books. You don't want the listener to have a sense of something missing. There is nothing worse than listening to a story and being rudely jerked out of it by something that doesn't make sense. *Who is that character and where did he come from?* Brilliance has some incredibly talented abridgers who—without changing the author's words or writing style—deliver the core story needed to create a seamless abridgment. Unfortunately for you, the author, that means

eliminating a lot (if not most) of the character development and all those subplots and minor characters that add so much to the richness of the novel.

Since the majority of major publishers only publish abridgements, it is important to the author to control that process. You must demand the right to approve the abridgment script. Brilliance puts this approval in its contracts as a matter of course, but I am constantly amazed at the number of authors who do not see the proposed script; an editor at the print publisher is the one who actually approves in many cases.

Again, the name of the game is control. Do you have it, or have you allowed others to take it?

The one place an author should not have control of the audio process is in the narration. Your husband and kids say you have a lovely voice, and you think you should read your own novel for audio? Believe me, your work will be much better served with a professional actor at the helm. This actor or group of actors can make your characters come alive in a way that your untrained voice cannot. It takes incredible vocal energy to sit in a recording booth and "act out all the parts" for eight hours a day, for a few days or a week, or more. Don't even consider the fact that you'll have to do take after take of that line (and there will be hundreds of them) that you keep fluffing. Leave this to the professionals and you'll be much happier with the final product. Besides, who wants to give the reviewers something additional (you, personally) to snipe at?

Some authors make the mistake of wanting to select a specific actor to narrate their books. Another mistake. I have had authors request Brad Pitt, Tom Cruise, and others. Besides the fact that movie stars are not necessarily capable of carrying off an audiobook performance (they are used to "acting" a few minutes at a time), the costs are astronomical, the scheduling a nightmare, and the product no better (and usually worse) than hiring an established audiobook narrator. So this is an area in which you can give up control. Leave it to the audiobook professionals to cast your book. Trust me, if the book is a first person account by an English lord, the actor chosen won't be an Alabaman with a deep southern twang.

OK, so now you're looking for an audio publisher for your next book. Where do you go? Well, your agent may/should know most of the major players. But (reality really, really bites) they want to sign the most commercial titles available. If your book is a nonfiction about the mating habits of starfish, you need to find a publisher who focuses on nonfiction, science, and/or natural history works. The Audio Publishers Association website, www.audiopub.org, has a list of all member publishers, with contact information. That can be used as a starting point to begin dialogue with those you think would be a good fit.

The audiobook business is (reality bites big time) front-list driven these days, and the audio buyer at most of the major accounts won't even look at a title that is not simulta-

neous with hardcover release. You cannot wait—or let your agent wait—until you have those lovely bound reading copies, before you sell audio rights. Brilliance typically signs titles a year or more prior to publication, and most of our competitors—at least the major publishers—tend to do the same. Those smaller, niche publishers may have more flexibility, but their advances and sales are usually lower as well.

One last word. When you are touring to promote your new work, remember that audiobook sales add to the money in your bank account. Mention the audio. Ask the bookstores you'll be visiting to make sure there is audio on hand as well. When you appear on *The Today Show* (Congratulations, you've made it), work in a little mention

of the audio version. Nora Roberts did that so skillfully, telling the charming story of the big, tough truck driver in tears listening to the audio version of one of her books.

In short, remember that the audio version of your book is important: it generates revenue for you; it adds to your recognition factor; and it can introduce new readers to your work. Take control of your audio rights, and your career will be the better for it.

After years and years as a school librarian, Eileen Hutton cut off her bun, discarded her sensible shoes, and began a new career as editorial director at Brilliance Audio. Under her leadership, Brilliance has grown into the third largest audio publisher in the world.

Duo-logue

A Conversation on Branding

BY PAT MCLAUGHLIN WITH BEVERLY BRANDT

Pat: Branding. Boy, just say the word and I can feel the hot metal searing into my skin. An indelible mark that appears only after pain—not my idea of fun.

Yet I keep hearing over and over that branding is beneficial to a writer's career. I also hear that you're a proponent of branding, Beverly, so I'd like to first hit you with some questions.

Why branding?

Beverly: Well, the idea of branding is not something I consciously thought about in the beginning of my career. It was actually thrust upon me by my publisher, who, after accepting my first three books without batting an eye, rejected proposal after proposal at the beginning of 2003. Finally, my editor said, "Could you *please* just send me a proposal for a romantic comedy and stop sending me romantic suspense and this dark, angsty crap?" Those may not have been her exact words, but that's what she

meant! It hit me then that if I wanted to build my readership (or, frankly, sell another book), I was going to have to be consistent with the product I was delivering.

That doesn't mean writing the same book over and over again—I would hate doing that. But it does mean taking the elements that I think make a "Beverly Brandt" book and using them to my advantage with every book I write under that name. To me, branding is all about meeting reader expectations. I don't want someone to pick up one of my books expecting to get a fast-paced, funny read and end up being disappointed because there's no humor or character growth or light-hearted suspense in the book.

Having said that, I think that sometimes authors think that branding sticks their creativity in a box. I choose not to see it that way. By defining myself as someone who writes "humor and character growth and light-hearted suspense," I feel that I have a pretty broad palette with which to work. As a matter of fact, this "brand" actually helps to keep me focused on writing books that will sell. If I did not have those boundaries, I could be all over the map, writing emotional angst, and suspense, and maybe even a time-travel thrown into the mix. I feel that this would work against me, because readers wouldn't know what to expect when they pick up a book with my name on the spine. ▶ ▶ ▶ ▶

Duo-logue

▶ ▶ ▶ **Pat:** Why does reader expectation have to be limited to what are fairly narrow elements? (After all, if they were broader, they would allow the emotional angst, the suspense, the time-travel.)

Has packaging – in other words marketing – trained readers to narrow their expectations? I think about Georgette Heyer’s books, which range from humorous Regencies with a touch of intrigue, to pathos-laden Regencies (ah, you’re thinking “Regencies – that’s the brand”), but she also wrote deeply historical novels in several eras and contemporary (for her) mysteries. In all of them, I got the sort of satisfying read I expect from her. Particularly, I got a world view and a voice that I like. (Though the voice did change depending on the book.)

Isn’t knowing when readers pick up a book with your name on the spine that they will have a satisfying read enough brand?

Beverly: I guess to me what branding (and meeting reader expectations) boils down to is giving the reader the emotional experience he or she wants at that specific moment in time. That’s why I think an author “brand” can be broad enough to include time-travel *and* suspense, but you’d better get the same level of emotional angst in both books.

I was thinking about this the other day in terms of a dinner party. Say a friend is hosting a small dinner party and she hands you the guest list and says, “You get to pick who will sit to your left and right, but you won’t be able to change seats, so choose wisely.” You go down the list, looking at these names, and each elicits an emotional response from you. You may reject one person because you know he goes on and on about the Civil War each time you meet, and you’re just not all that interested in the Civil War. You reject another person because she’s a social worker and her stories about her cases always make you cry and you’re just not in the mood to be sad. That doesn’t mean you wouldn’t want to sit next to this woman some other time, but for this one night, being sad is not the emotional experience you are looking for. That’s how I think about author branding. The reader is stuck with you for however many hours it takes her to read your book, so

she wants to know when her finger runs across your name on that guest list that you’re going to provide her with whatever it is she’s in the mood for.

I’m not sure that packaging has narrowed readers’ expectations. Perhaps what’s happened is that there are simply so many more books to choose from that readers don’t have to rely on just a handful of authors anymore. Using your example of Georgette Heyer – say you had a reader who loved her humorous Regencies but wasn’t so keen on the pathos-laden ones. Well, how did she know unless she read the latter book that it was going to make her sad? Say she gets halfway through it and stops reading because she wanted a funny read, but that’s not what’s being delivered. At the time, however, our dear reader didn’t have two thousand other choices. So, when the next Georgette Heyer comes out, she buys the book because she knows that at some point, Ms. Heyer *will* deliver her another funny read. Nowadays, that same reader might say, “This author is funny sometimes, but not always. But this other author is funny all of the time. Maybe I won’t take a chance on Author A, because I know what I’ll get if I choose Author B.”

Pat: The flaw I see with that logic is that it assumes that readers restrict themselves to a certain type of book – that readers who like funny will never read angsty. Sure, there are some readers who will only read Highland historicals with a busty heroine, but they are the minority in my experience in talking with readers (not to mention being one).

Plus, the flip side of being Author B in your scenario is that the author limits him/herself to appealing to only one mood that readers might have. It’s basically becoming an author version of that only-Highland-historical-with-a-busty-heroine reader. So a reader will only come to an author for one specific thing, rather than a satisfying read.

Thinking about what you said earlier about your editor wanting you to deliver a particular kind of book, I can understand the benefit of that for the publishing houses – they have a list they want to keep balanced and diversified, and that’s much simpler if each author delivers an assigned type of book. I’m not convinced it benefits an author.

It reminds me of an article written by an academic

talking about academia becoming increasingly fragmented and narrow, with aspiring academics told that they had to be a specialist in something, and with more and more people obtaining advanced degrees, the areas of specialization are being sliced thinner and thinner. (Anybody up for a lively dissertation on socialization patterns among synchronized swimmers from formerly Communist countries in non-Olympic years?)

Beverly: I agree completely that readers do not restrict themselves to one certain type of book. My example was only to go through a reader's thought process when trying to decide whether or not to read one particular book at one particular moment in time.

You use the term "satisfying read" when talking about how writing to a brand can limit an author's audience, but I think what makes a book a "satisfying read" to a reader varies depending on his or her mood at the time. If a reader is in the mood for something that will make her laugh and she buys one of my books expecting it to be a romantic comedy but gets a fast-paced romantic suspense instead, I'm guessing that she's not going to find the suspense a satisfying read. Because there are so many other romantic comedy authors out there—some of whom *only* write romantic comedies and never felt the desire to write anything else—this reader may very well vow to buy someone else's books and to never to buy another of my books because she felt I wasted her money by giving her a story she wasn't expecting. That same suspense novel may well have been a satisfying read for that reader at some other time, but for the moment, she was disappointed. And that means that while I've been free to express myself creatively and all that, my sales will suffer and I may have just "created" myself out of a job.

Just because I do try to deliver a certain general type of book every time, that doesn't mean that I always write an "only-Highland-historical-with-a-busty-heroine" story. It means that when I'm writing a proposal that I hope will sell, I ask myself questions about whether or not this story fits within the brand I'm trying to build. But certain things—like my characters, the plot, the setting, etc.—are always different. Does that make me "a specialist on socialization patterns among synchronized swimmers from formerly Communist countries in non-Olympic years?" I certainly don't think so! Just because the books fit within some broad idea of a brand doesn't mean that they're all the same.

Pat: Okay, so you're saying that you're setting up a brand

where a reader sees the name "Beverly Brandt" on a spine and thinks "Beverly Brandt = romantic comedy." So the reader is saved from having to, say, look at the cover art or backcover blurb in order to figure out what kind of book it is. I do see a benefit to that. I also see a potential downside in that some readers who might like your books won't pick them up because they have decided for whatever reasons that they don't like that category of book. (Similar to readers who will dismiss a mystery/romance/science fiction book solely on the basis of its genre, rather than looking at the specific book.)

I can also see diminishing returns on a brand as broad as, say, "romantic comedy" or "cozy mystery." There are so many in each category that it doesn't really distinguish one author from another. In the effort to distinguish is where I can see those synchronized swimmers coming in.

There's another factor. Some books, some writers slip easily and neatly into a brand. Others don't. It's rather like political cartoons. Some politicians have specific, individual physical characteristics that make a portrait created with five or six pen strokes instantly recognizable. Others' particular assemblage of features does not lend itself to that shorthand. They might be equally attractive (or not attractive <g>), but they have different types of faces.

I absolutely concede that branding can be good for your career because it is something that many publishing houses appear to want (for understandable reasons, as I said before). However, I wonder what happens to those authors whose work doesn't lend itself to shorthand, to a brand. As a reader I would find it a shame if only authors whose works were readily branded continue to publish.

But if branding is the only way, then yes, I get back to wondering about the creative aspects. You mentioned that if you're writing a proposal you ask yourself if your idea fits into the brand you're building. What happens to good story ideas that don't fit that brand?

Beverly: First off, I have to say that if someone sees my name on the spine of a book and says, "Oh, she writes romantic comedies and I don't like those," then I'm perfectly okay with that reader *not* buying my books. Why? Because I write romantic comedies! If someone is disinclined to like that sort of book, I don't want them to be tricked into buying it by deceptive packaging. And I don't want someone who actually likes my romantic comedies to go and buy all of my backlist and find a moody vampire paranormal, a cozy mystery, and a gritty suspense mixed in there. I'd rather know that the readers who "get" me are likely to enjoy all of my books because that core of loyal readers are the ones who are going to pre-order my next book and help to create that all-important buzz.

I would also say that I don't think of my brand as something as broad as



Duo-logue

▶▶▶ “romantic comedy.” I know the details of what sets my books apart from other authors’ books and I have those things in mind when I sit down to write a proposal. Those things—like always having significant character growth, or having at least one character with something dark in his or her past, or knowing that my books are always going to be plot-heavy—are things that maybe only I really know about my writing, but they are what I use to define my brand, if only to myself.

As for what happens to good story ideas that don’t fit that brand, well, what I’ve done is to take on a pseudonym to write heroine-centered action/adventure in addition to my romantic comedies. That helps provide me with another outlet to my creativity and I’m enjoying that very much. Are there other story ideas that I have that don’t fit either brand? Yes, of course. What happens to those ideas is that they languish in a drawer, and I’m not convinced that’s a bad thing. I mean, it might seem nice to have a publisher that will buy everything an author sends in. We all like those advance checks, right?! But maybe when I submitted my very dark, trailer-park, incest, dead baby, blackmail proposal, my comedy publisher was doing me a huge favor by rejecting it. In single title, I am lucky to have one or maybe two chances a year to see my books hit the shelves. If I take a chance on a book I love (and I still *do* love that dark book...) and readers loathe it, how many years will it take my career to recover? That does not mean that I don’t take risks with my writing—in my next romantic suspense, my heroine sleeps with the villain and I know I’m going to catch hell for that. It just means that I am more focused on taking risks on books that fit within my brand rather than writing completely different types of books, instead.

Does this mean that I’d encourage anyone who wants to write something different to take on a pen name? Not necessarily. It’s a big investment of time and money to start up a new brand. If an author sees her writing going in an entirely new direction, it’s possible that at least some of her readers will follow her into a new genre. I also

know of authors who write in multiple genres under one name, and it seems to work for them. As with anything in writing, there’s no one right answer that works for all authors all of the time.

Pat: It’s clear you believe strongly in branding, and it seems you’re a good fit with the concept. Including taking risks within your brands.

For those whose muses push them to take risks that don’t fit within an established brand, the brilliant Laura Baker shared some fascinating material from a workshop she does that searches for a writers’ hallmark—looking at what the writer already does, loves doing, does best, and articulating what that is. It’s a very interesting process that I made the error of trying while on deadline. I’m going to tackle it again now that I’m off deadline. I like the idea of looking at an individual’s body of work and personal writing process to discover a hallmark. (Note to Ken: Maybe Laura would lead a Night Owl session on this?)

As for branding, I still have that “yeah, but ...” reaction. I keep hoping some author will develop a brand for “diversity”!

Pat McLaughlin has just finished her twenty-second book for Silhouette, writing as Patricia McLinn. She continues to edit part time at the Washington Post because her mortgage company insists. You can visit her website at www.PatriciaMcLinn.com.

Beverly Brandt writes romantic comedies under her own name and recently acquired the “brand name” of Jacey Ford in order to write romantic suspense. She has no idea if branding really works, but she does enjoy having an alter ego!

Don’t Miss Out!

Our Novelists Inc. website, www.ninc.com, has a section, the Next Page, which lists members’ currently available books. Books are listed the month before, the month of, and the month after publication. This web page is on the public area of our site, so that anyone can check out exactly which authors have a book coming out during the current three-month period. The more books we list, the more impressive our page appears. So send Neff Rotter (neff@belgravehouse.com) your new book listings: name (and pseudonym), title, publisher, date of publication, and ISBN. You can send a whole year’s worth of listings, or just the ones currently available.

A Conversation with Chuck Adams

Chuck Adams is a giant in the field of commercial fiction. He has edited and/or acquired nine novels by Jackie Collins, eighteen novels and a memoir by Mary Higgins Clark, five novels by Barbara Delinsky, *White Hot* by Sandra Brown, five novels by James Lee Burke, and ten novels by Kinky Friedman. And that's just for starters. His list of celebrity authors includes Cher, Betty Comden, Faye Dunaway, Larry Hagman, Mariel Hemingway, Neil Simon, Elizabeth Taylor, and Sara, the Duchess of York.

In addition, he holds degrees in English from Duke University and Law from Duke Law School.

Was I intimidated when I decided to interview him? You bet!

I need not have worried, however. Talking with Chuck Adams was as easy as talking to my favorite Southern uncle. He's not only articulate and knowledgeable, but he's also accessible and modest.

It's a pleasure to share his story and his insights with you.

NINK: How did you get into publishing?

Chuck Adams: Like most young people, I didn't know what I wanted to do when I was in college. I became an English major because I would get to read books all the time, especially novels. I went to law school because I still didn't know what I wanted, and that seemed as good a choice as any. My first job was in New York working in a legal capacity on Wall Street. After I'd postponed the bar for a year, my boss said, "You don't really want to be a lawyer, do you?" I realized that I didn't. I could make a decent living in law, but my heart wasn't in it. A person spends most of his waking hours at work, and that's hard if you're not doing something you love.

I started looking around for work that really excited me. I wanted to get into communications or some entry level job in publication. I started with Holt, Rinehart & Winston and worked my way up from the bottom. Fortunately, publishing turned out to be something I love.

NINK: You're called a "top gun" in the publishing industry. How did you earn that distinction?

CA: I'm not sure what a top gun is. Through the process of changing jobs, I got to work with Michael Korda, and I think his reputation rubbed off on me. He was the power. We did a lot of projects together, and we made each other look good.

I've worked with some very high profile people. Perhaps being in the presence of power is more important than who you are.

NINK: What motivated you to leave Simon & Schuster and move to Algonquin?

CA: It wasn't so much motivation as a series of circumstances. I come from this area, went to school at Duke, know and love this part of the South. Twelve years ago I bought a house here and spent a lot of time traveling between here and New York.

I would have continued working with Simon & Schuster, but they wanted to cut back. Since Michael (Korda) was going to retire in a couple of years and I wanted to continue working, I made the change. This job was available, and it couldn't have suited me better. I was already physically and emotionally here. I've known and loved Algonquin for a long time.

After the changes at Simon & Schuster, several agents who had become close friends started working to help find the right place for me. I wasn't ready to give up working with writers. It's a bit like falling in love. To have a book come across your desk, pick it up, read it, and fall in love is a great feeling.

I can get that here. Working at Algonquin is a fantasy job.

NINK: What is your vision for Algonquin?

CA: They would like for me to broaden the scope to include more commercial fiction, but I don't intend to change what Algonquin has done for years and does so well, i.e., publish great books. Perhaps we will start publishing a greater variety of books.

They said it's not for me to learn how to do Algonquin books but for Algonquin to learn how to do my books. I don't think we'll start paying million-dollar advances, but if you begin seeing more commercial books on the list, that will be part of my doing.

NINK: How many books does Algonquin publish in a year's time?

CA: I don't have those figures, but it's about 26, half of those fiction and half, nonfiction. We can't buy everything we'd like to. We can only take on the books that will work for us.

NINK: What types of manuscripts are you looking for? What elements make a submission stand out for you?

CA: Good stories. I think a good story is the most important element of the book. Good writing is important, but I don't have any patience with books that are just about writing. I want to see characters I can get involved with, a strong narrative voice, and a great story that is well done.

Algonquin has many types of fiction and nonfiction including memoirs, true crime stories, ▶ ▶ ▶

The Buzz in the Biz.....

► ► ► ► philosophical and abstract books and purely literary novels, but I'm not the editor for that.

NINK: To what extent does an author's track record affect your decision to buy?

CA: One of the realities is that computers make it impossible to escape failure. If an author's latest book didn't succeed it's tough to get support when you go back with the next one. You have to take an author's track record into consideration.

However, if you believe in the book, you will find a way to overcome the obstacles. I don't think a track record would keep me from buying a book I fell in love with.

NINK: Advances continue to discombobulate authors, especially when we read of first-time writers who receive huge advances that many authors with multiple books and solid track records only dream of. What are the determining factors in advances? Powerful agent? Celebrity author? Amazing first book? Amazing break-out book?

CA: Let's talk about nonfiction first. In working with celebrities you're dealing with a certain amount of ego. You're not going to take the book on if you don't believe it will reach a certain level. Five or six figures is fairly common for that type of book. Bestseller potential in a competitive situation changes those figures. If you believe you can make the book a bestseller, you pay a reasonable amount of money you believe you can earn back.

Another factor you take into consideration in nonfiction is the amount of time an author will need for research. If he's going to need a year to research and write the book, you have to pay him enough to live on. It's a very unsatisfactory situation for both publisher and author if the advance is so low the author can't live.

Powerful agents are definitely a factor in advances. They know how to play the game, stir up the pot, get a frenzy going to get people to bid.

Publishers tend to overpay for first-time authors who have received a lot of hype, authors with tremendous potential, and authors whose first novel got great reviews. Sometimes authors with one successful novel are lured away from their first publisher for a lot of money.

NINK: Algonquin's fall lineup looks intriguing, especially *Bloodsworth: The True Story of the First Death Row Inmate Exonerated by DNA*. I noticed in the catalog that you have a big publicity campaign planned for that book. Would you talk about Algonquin's marketing/promotional strategies? How do you determine which books and which authors to push?

CA: Because Algonquin is small and we don't have the luxury of a midlist, we make an effort to push every book and every author. Some have a bigger potential than others, but we try to put maximum effort behind every book. Dif-

ferent books lend themselves to different kinds of campaigns. We use whatever we can get. With first fiction novels, we usually have to work from a regional base. If a book starts to get good reviews, we expand our publicity.

NINK: Does author promotion have an impact on sales?

CA: Yes, author promotion has an impact on sales. If he or she gets involved, it's a tremendous bonus for us. Self promotion is really important.

NINK: What current trends do you see in publishing, and what do you think the future holds for this industry?

CA: I'm not sure I have a finger on the pulse of the business.

If we're going to continue, though, we need to have more young readers.

I'm sure Simon & Schuster will bring in somebody much younger to replace me. It's inevitable. I don't know chick lit...don't want to have to learn a whole new thing. We're constantly bringing people into the business who will represent a bigger segment of the population.

Currently we're seeing a lot of confessionals with people's private lives exposed. That's not likely to change. I've seen some excellent memoirs.

As far as the future is concerned, I pray we can keep people reading. I'm not a luddite; I do know how to use a computer and a cell phone, but I don't pretend to understand its (computer) potential. Technology is not second nature to me. I grew up reading. That's the way I entertained myself.

NINK: Is there anything else you'd like to share with the NINK readership?

CA: Keep writing, for goodness sake. The thing I try to get across to writers is that this is not an adversarial situation. I don't exist without the writer.

Every time I pick up a manuscript, I bring a positive approach. It's not about me: it's about the book, the writer, and the reader.

The publisher and the editor are your friend. I am supportive of authors and do everything I can for them and their books. I've always prided myself in making every book I've worked on as good as it can possibly be.

I've done the best I could. I want people to keep writing. ▲

Bits'n'Pieces

Literary

If you need to recall a classic storyline, you can get a free online read from Cliff Notes at www.cliffnotes.com. Downloading or printing the material will be \$5.99, which is exactly what the book would cost at the bookstore (but now you don't have to acknowledge you're only reading the abstract).

Writing

Tech

Spam



Wars

BY ALEXIS HARRINGTON

About a year ago at this time, before the new federal law regarding spam went into effect, my email inbox was inundated with offers for everything from cheap mortgage money and credit repair, to supplements promising to increase the size of various body parts, to offers for getting a “date.” This was all irritating, as everyone knows and, in my opinion, had nothing to do with First Amendment rights. The most startling of all the garbage I received, though, was retina-searing, graphic HTML pages that opened directly to photographs of people (sometimes with animals) engaged in sexual amusements I’d never even heard of. I don’t mind telling you, I rather resented receiving this stuff. But what concerned me even more was that any child going online would have seen it, too, especially when the subject lines were as innocuous as “Hi!”

Of course, I dutifully reported this junk to my ISP, as they directed, but it never seemed to help. When the feds stepped in to limit this junk, spam originating from the U.S. dropped off quite a bit, although the law doesn’t apply to spam coming from other parts of the world.

Then there was the matter of getting weird email from readers who were interested in foisting their spiritual or political views on me. One woman put me on her list and despite the repeated requests I sent to be dropped, I couldn’t get rid of her. She was Tar Baby and I was Brer Rabbit. I couldn’t escape. I wanted to bounce those emails back to the senders but neither Outlook Express nor my ISP offered this option. I mentioned this on Ninlink and a kind soul (please forgive me because I don’t remember who) directed me to a free anti-spam program called MailWasher Pro from Firetrust.com.

MailWasher Pro is a screener that lets you preview your email before you open it. Once open and sitting on your Windows task bar, it automatically downloads your email at whatever interval you set. Then it lists what it has received and gives you the chance to look at each message without actually opening it or downloading it. It offers the options of Bounce and Delete, among others. The initial download is a trial of

MailWasher Pro, which comes with additional features, and you can pay for this version anytime (\$37.00), although I can’t say I noticed a big difference. At the end of 30 days, the program reverts to plain old MailWasher, and I’m happy with it.

At last, I’m rid of the pesky reader, and I can delete or bounce any mail I don’t want to reach Outlook Express. The bounce feature, by the way, is especially rewarding. From the help menu: “This means that a **fake address not found message** is sent back to the address the unwanted email originated from. Because the spammer thinks your address is not a valid email address, the bounce function in MailWasher Pro reduces the possibility of receiving more unwanted email from this address.”

If you’re still having trouble with spam, I recommend this program. The price is right, any way you look at it. Visit their website: www.firetrust.com.

Alexis Harrington obviously spends way too much time online to be so well acquainted with email, spam, and the Internet in general. When she’s not distracted with those activities, she writes historical romances – eleven so far – and is even taking a stab at a contemporary.

The September 2004 *Consumer Reports* article “Protect Yourself Online” provides practical, cost-free tips to protect your system against spam, viruses, hackers, spyware, and identity thieves. In addition, it discusses and rates various software programs which can also assist in the battle to keep your system safe.

—ED.



Repeat After Me: You're Getting Creative...You're Getting Creative

DEAR ANNETTE:

I've always had a lot of trouble getting consistently focused to write. When I think about the amount of time I waste getting ready to write...let's just say, I've played more than my share of Minesweeper. Self-hypnosis is something I've always wanted to try. Is this something that might help when my mind strays?

Signed: Unfocused

DEAR UNFOCUSSED:

Sure, a self-hypnosis/visualization routine could help get you back on task. Hypnosis is very useful for **focusing** and for setting long term goals that require a lot of confidence and dedication, which is why many people use hypnosis for weight loss and smoking cessation. Big time sports psychologists commonly use hypnosis to help athletes perform at a higher level. Why not us?

My only concern is that hypnosis can be frustrating to learn on your own. In the beginning, self-hypnosis is awfully hard for a lot of people to do. It's like trying to find a needle in a haystack, but you have no idea what a needle looks like.

If you have the opportunity, my first recommendation would be to work with a therapist who does hypnosis. In just a couple of sessions, they should be able to help you create a routine and teach you how to use it. Barring that, there are a number of good books on

using hypnosis that could guide you through the process.

Hypnosis is essentially a process of becoming so deeply relaxed that you can hyper-focus. It generally consists of a relaxation phase, then a deepening, or induction phase. This second phase is where concentration is focused on the suggestions or directions you want to follow.

The steps:

1. **Practice:** For hypnosis to work most effectively, you're going to have to practice. Consistently. Sigh. The good news is, the more you practice, the more easily you'll be able to achieve the sort of focus I think you're looking for. My suggestion is to find a script that you like and make it a daily part of your writing routine.

Then pick a quiet place. Sitting up, lying down, it doesn't matter. Neither does background music. Whatever you do, just make sure to keep it consistent.

2. **Relaxation:** Before you work on what we call the actual *Induction* phase of hypnosis, it's critical to become relaxed. Deeply relaxed. This can take anywhere from seconds, for someone with a lot of practice, to half an hour or longer for most beginners. The more you practice, the more quickly it tends to happen.

You can use your own relaxation script, but I'd recommend finding a guided relaxation on a CD or tape that you like. It's kind of hard to relax and try to remember a relaxation script all at the same time.

3. **Induction:** At some point between the deep relaxation and the induction you will move into a hypnotic state, which I'd describe as a paradoxical mix of deep relaxation and hyper-focus.

Often people can't pinpoint it, especially if they're new to hypnosis. Have patience. This can be a frustrating and elusive thing. Beginners often focus on "looking for it." They keep waiting for hypnosis to happen, for some change in their awareness to signal that they're hypnotized.

The hypnotic state is a lot like sleeping. If you try and catch yourself falling asleep...you'll chase it away. Even after all these years, I don't recognize the instant I fall into a hypnotic state, but I do recognize afterwards that I was there.

Conducting an induction can be done in a zillion different ways. The most common is the counting method where the evil megalomaniac scientist swings his pocket watch in front of the heroine to... ahem. Sorry. Thrillers aside, the counting method really does work. Often I'll have people count backwards from thirty using their breath.

4. **Suggestions:** Once you've finished whatever induction exercise you're using, it's time to get to the main point: suggestions. Suggestions are the heart of hypnosis, and there are more (and less) efficient and effective ways to use them. There are books upon books

talking about how to design them. It's definitely a bit of an art.

Here are a few of the top highlights regarding what to consider:

It's best to have them worked out ahead of time. Wording is important. I suggest that people write out their suggestions and memorize them.

Simple is better. "I'm eating less everyday," is better than, "Food is becoming less important to me every day and I am filling my time with more important and meaningful pursuits, etc."

Use the "I" word. It's much more direct.

Positive is vastly superior to negative. "I won't get blocked," won't work. "I'm feeling creative. Ideas spring to mind constantly," will.

Images and sensations are by far the most effective form of suggestion. An image of a finished manuscript, or the imagined feeling of having taut, sleek muscles are hugely powerful.

5. **Termination:** Again, as with any form of meditation, hypnosis works best if you have a ritual to end the session. Plus, it helps guard against the hypnosis session turning into a nap. Associating self-hypnosis with sleeping is not going to work very well.

Using some sort of suggestion that you'll count to three and with each number become more alert and awake is usually all that's necessary.

That's a vastly simplified overview of the hypnosis process. If you're seriously interested, I'd recommend finding a good book or recorded induction method. It's fun, and it could be well worth the investment.

Annette Carney, PhD has succeeded in hypnotizing her way to the top of the local club's tennis ladder, but not, drat it, into losing that last stubborn twenty pounds.

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Bits'n'Pieces

Book version

of the "Director's Cut"

HarperPerennial launches a new trade paper line that includes bonus material to their authors' backlist. With 16 bonus pages, this promotion is directed at building new audiences and providing material of interest to reading groups. The "P.S." program will begin in the fall with 10 titles.

The additional material will vary from book to book with the authors involved in the process of selecting the add-ins. Part of Anne Marie MacDonald's literary murder mystery will include information about the true crime that inspired her 1960s era plot.

Harlequin Gives New Meaning to Sugar and Spice

Word is that SPICE will be a single title imprint, not a line for HQ, and be more erotica than romantica. There will be one title a month.

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:

- Mika Boblitz (*Mia Zachary*), Orchard Beach, MD
- Anne Gracie, Thornbury, Victoria, Australia
- Alesia Holliday (*Jax Abbott*), Orange Park, FL
- Kathryn Johnson (*Kathryn Jensen, K.M. Kimball*), Silver Spring, MD
- Leslie Kelly, Melbourne, FL
- Sandra Marton, Storrs, CT
- Carolyn McSparren, Collierville, TN
- Edie Swihart (*Edie Claire*), Pittsburgh, PA
- Christy Yorke, Boise, ID

New Members:

- Karen Brichoux, Lawrence, KS
- Kresley Cole, Windermere, FL
- Nancy Herkness, Glen Ridge, NJ
- Patricia Knoll (*Patricia Forsythe*), Tucson, AZ

Ninc has room to grow...recommend membership to *your* colleagues. Prospective members may apply online at www.ninc.com.



The Care and Feeding of the Girls in the Basement . . .

BY BARBARA SAMUEL

The Art of Rituals

Every spring, I indulge the same ritual: during the week the lilacs are blooming, I cut an armload and bring them into my house to put in a blue glass vase. I then put the vase on a small table in my dining room, beneath a painting of lilacs.

Simple. Every spring, year in and year out, I go outside, cut the lilacs, bring them in, enjoy the look of them in that cool, blue and white room, beneath the painting of other lilacs that bloomed in some unimaginably distant season.

Simple. Pleasurable. And also very complex, layered with a hundred moments, dozens of memories.

It begins with the painter, who painted the lilacs. Her name was Zoë. All of her paintings are simply signed like that, with her first name. Many of us in the family have a painting done in her impressionistic style—I wouldn't say she was a brilliant painter, particularly, but her vision pleases me. We all have these paintings because my grandmother—remember, *She Who Believes In Genius?*—somehow acquired a half dozen or more, and passed them around. My own favorite is no longer in existence, actually—it was a painting of houses scattered down a hillside, white walls with red roofs, and it looked like Mexico to me. Loved it. It was the first

piece of art I owned, and met an untimely end when I broke up with a jealous boyfriend in my ill-spent youth and he—in dramatic angst—sliced the painting to pieces. (Terrible, I know. But not really *so* terrible. Not domestic violence terrible, just dramatic youth terrible. I met him again years later and he was just as handsome and sensitive as he'd ever been and I was chagrined to realize I was a hedonistic young girl. But...well, hearts are made to be broken, and I've been on the other side, too.)

Anyway, the painting in my dining room. It used to hang in my mother's lavender and green kitchen through most of my youth, and I've always loved it. It's nothing particularly spectacular, just lilacs painted in a vaguely Impressionistic way. I like the colors, blues and some black and of course purples, but I also like having a painting with a story. It turns out my father always hated it, and only confessed to it after a decade because they moved to a new house and he really didn't want to look at it anymore, so I volunteered to take it off her hands.

I love the painting because I love lilacs. They grow very well in the dry, bright sunlight of Colorado, loving the cold, cold winters and the blustery, warm Chinooks

that blow through in spring, so I grew up with the short but exuberant season of their blooming. In a good year along the Front Range, there are days the scent of lilacs hangs so heavily in the spring air that you can get dizzy on it, days when I've turned a corner on a gray afternoon and been blown over by a block long bank of soft purple flowers. It seems not enough to simply smell them. You want to eat them, wear them, sleep in beds of lilac blossoms. I've planted many lilacs around my old house, and they're gratifyingly huge now.

Another of my loves is cobalt glass. A few years ago, one of my sisters gave me a vase made of that material for Christmas. Every spring, I wait for the moment I can go outside and cut the most perfect blossoms from the bush outside my old office window, and arrange them in their gloriousness in that blue vase, then put them in the dining room beneath the painting of lilacs by Zoë.

I love the way that vase and lilacs look so much that I have taken photographs of it, and the photo of lilacs in a blue vase beneath the painting of lilacs hangs above my desk. It's like the mirrors that reflect mirrors that reflect mirrors.

It often feels there is little order to life besides that which we impose on it. It's even more true when you spend your life in an artistic pursuit like writing. Most of us have no idea what the source is, where the ideas come from, how we do it, and the rewards and punishments are as fickle as shoe fashions. It's not easy.

One myth about artists that never fails to amaze me is the idea that the creative person loves chaos. It seems perfectly obvious, after all—if you look at many an artistic studio or the household of a woman on deadline, or even the back seat or purse of many an artistic type, it's a mess. Our lives often seem to have a freer form than many of our neighbors and friends.

But you and I know the truth: writers are control freaks. Since life itself is so capricious and unpredictable and chaotic and will not behave itself, ever, we devote our lives to writing and rewriting it until it all has order.

Human beings are ritualistic creatures. Glance at any culture and you find highly ordered patterns of behavior in nearly every arena of our lives—from dances before the hunt to family dinner time, marriage vows to funeral pyres, we have a way to manage the events of life with rituals. One of my personal favorites is the Rosary, because the words themselves create a sense of order, and the beads are set up in a particular pattern, and the whisper becomes a chant with a rhythm of petition. There is a story behind the word "rosary," the roses themselves, the flower of heaven, and all those

lovely underpinnings please my need for mythic order.

Writers, with their need for control, often take this practice to rather extreme measures. In an effort to impose order on the capriciousness of life, we write books where things are worked out. In order to cope with the unpredictability of the writing life, we create rituals to give the appearance of order.

The ritual of the lilacs and the blue glass vase is not my only one. (Oh, if only! I wouldn't say I'm obsessive compulsive, but I have been known to fall completely to pieces over the wrong color of stockings.) I have rituals to cope with the work, with imposing an illusion of order on the day, with switching from the writer person to the Author Person (I believe a lot of us get rattled in public because we haven't devised rituals for this switch—more on that in a minute). There are particularly important things to be done before starting work.

In my case, before I begin writing, I must do the dishes. It's not that I'm particularly neat, but I need that little space of orderliness somewhere in my home before I feel the stillness of the writing mind start to stir.

In fact, it's deeper than just making the sink area all tidy and clean. There's a whole long list of things that must be done just so—I get up and go downstairs and fix my tea and then check email, and then when the tea is finished, I can get dressed and make the bed. I like to have the red pillows on the outside and the gold one in the center, and then I love it when Esmerelda, the aged Snow point Siamese, graces the very center of the New Orleans style iron bed with her perfectness. It's a painting, a pool of still elegance and order, a photograph.

When I am dressed and have done my hair and taken my breakfast outside to eat on the patio in the spring and summer and even into the fall, only then do I return to the kitchen. I switch from tea to coffee to signal my brain that I am moving from ordinary day to work day, and I make a ritual of the coffee itself. I use filtered water and I heat the thermos carafe with hot water, and then, while the coffee is brewing, I do the dishes and polish the sink, happy in the comfort of the scent of coffee filling the kitchen. I pour the fresh coffee into whichever cup is my favorite at the moment—currently it is a big glass mug that's black on the outside and purple on the inside—add my sugar and cream, and carry it to my desk.

Where I open the file with the MIP and chaos and disorder and the messy what-if-ness of the novel. I can face the chaos on the page because I've ritualized other things.

Rather than fighting this tendency, maybe it's better to pay attention to those rituals and allow them to assist us. One good example is the need to have rituals for switching from being Jane Every Woman Who Happens to Be a Writer, which is where most of us live on a daily basis, to Jane The Author, who can

▶ ▶ ▶



the Girls in the Basement . . .

▶ ▶ ▶ manage crowds and strange readers and book-sellers and the public life. I only noticed that I had created this particular ritual when I did fall apart over the wrong color of stockings I'd brought to a conference.

Is that silly? Sure it is. And it's important to keep rituals somewhat flexible, but it's also not such a bad thing to recognize that it's difficult for an empathetic,

generally introverted person to go out into the world and cope with a kind of energy that can be positive or negative, but is often quite intense. If painting horses gave Native Americans courage in battle, how is it any different for me to put on a particular lipstick and certain kinds of stockings?

For a month or two, notice what rituals you've employed to get yourself moving, to keep yourself writing, to make it possible for you to do your work and live your life. Maybe if there are things you'd like to change about your life or the way you're working, rituals could be a way to help make it happen. Rituals of work, rituals of life...and don't forget, rituals of reward. ▲

Bits'n'Pieces

So, is Colin Firth responsible for making Jane Austen the new Shakespeare?

A recent Washington Post article by Jennifer Frey has Jane returning to public interest as a 21st century pop culture icon with movies, books, and board games that include her or her characters.

"Cite Jane these days and it's like playing a smart card. Remember how puffed up you felt the first time you quoted from "Hamlet" by heart?" So, it looks like Regency authors were ahead of everyone else for a change. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A22819-2004Aug21.html>

Agency Moves

Manie Barron was at William Morris, now joins the Claudia Menza Literary Agency.

Michelle Tessler was at Carlisle & Co., now at Michelle Tessler Literary Agency.

Joe Veltre was at Carlisle & Co., now at Joe Veltre Literary Agency.

Paul Bresnick was at Carlisle & Co., now at Paul Bresnick Literary Agency.

Carlisle & Co, Arthur Pine Assoc. and Witherspoon Assoc. merging under name Inkwell Management.

BookExpo is looking for speakers – June 2005

Send in requests or proposals for convention events, including author breakfasts and lunches, to Tina Jordan at tjordan@reedexpo.com, and education program proposals to Mark Dressler at mhdressler@chartermi.net. The deadline is December 17. Proposals for the Children's breakfast go to Molly Ker Hawn at molly.ker.hawn@cbcbooks.org by October 28. BEA will be in New York City June 2 – 5, 2005. <http://www.bookexpoamerica.com>

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