

### The Kitty Kelley Files

by Pat McNees

The first thing to do when you start writing a biography, says ASJA member Kitty Kelley, is create a chronology to take along on your interviews. It takes a while to create such a timeline, but it's often a godsend. When the person you're interviewing says he knew your subject best between 1936 and 1946, you can pull out your chronology and make sure you ask all the natural questions. She also goes in with a written list of questions, for fear of forgetting to ask them all.

In a recent talk to the Washington (D.C.) Biography Group, Kelley spoke and answered questions about how she manages her research and writing. The chronology she passed around (for *The Royals*) was so well done that she actually wrote parts of the book directly from it.

She does not exploit the potential of electronic databases to manage all her material. She's still a quill-type writer, she says, who uses a computer to write but needs to see research and quotes printed on paper. Kelley organizes the massive amounts of material she accumulates for a biography by subject, by date, and by person. She makes so many copies of a single page of research or a transcript that she's Kinko's dream client. She organizes her files in file folders in cardboard boxes.

She does *not* recommend using the index cards Doris Kearns Goodwin uses. Goodwin and Stephen Ambrose, recently accused of plagiarism, are victims of their own celebrity and pressure to produce, she thinks, but Kelley believes there is no excuse for such sloppy procedures—especially with the three full-time researchers Goodwin is said to have. (Kelley has only one, but she is

full-time.) After all, researchers do what they are told, and Kelley makes sure hers document where they get every piece of information, just as carefully as Kelley herself does.

Publishing is more difficult now than it ever was. "You can't just write a couple pages of proposal—you almost have to go to an agent with camera-ready copy."

Kelley believes in agents. Choose your agents and your friends carefully, says Kelley, because there are no editors in publishing any more. She depends on her writer friends for frank reactions to her manuscripts and hires

a professional to edit a manuscript before she turns it in to her publisher.

She's also careful about who publishes her books. She recently turned down a generous bid on her current project (about the Bush "dynasty") from St. Martin's Press because, at the time, they didn't have libel insurance or house counsel, which are important to her. (They might by now.)

As a biographer of subjects who are still alive, she said, first and foremost you must know the laws about libel and invasion of privacy. These are not issues  
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"There are no editors in publishing anymore."

## ASJA

## c a l e n d a r

Events are open to the public unless otherwise specified.

### Creating Your Own Web Site: A Primer

May 21 – New York City

Having your own Web site is one of the easiest ways to promote yourself without lifting a finger. Directing editors, clients, and other business contacts to your Web site can guarantee your credibility as a professional while providing a showcase for your writing and other talents. Come hear seven writers with Web experience tell you what a site must always include, what to avoid, how to do it yourself, what to expect if you hire someone to do it, and the key ingredients to a successful site that will get you jobs and acknowledgment.

• **Susan Miller** started her site, Astrology Zone (<http://astrologyzone.com>) in December 1995. Her monthly e-mail newsletter goes to 400,000 readers. She is also the author of *Planets and Possibilities* (Warner Books, 2001) and *Year Ahead 2002* (Barnes & Noble Digital, 2002). For the past five years, Susan has been a contributing editor to *Self*. She is about to sign contracts with Yahoo.com as well as Family.com, a division of Walt Disney Company.

• **Bill Dyszel** is the author of 13 books including *PalmPilot for Dummies* and *Microsoft Outlook for Dummies*. His magazine credits include *Computer*

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**newsletter**

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Volume 51 Number 5 May 2002

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PRODUCED BY THE ASJA PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE: Melba Newsome (chair), Kathryn Lance, Bruce Miller (Web master), Timothy Perrin (newsletter editor), Hal Smith (newsletter assistant editor).

The ASJA Newsletter (ISSN 1056-3849) is published monthly except for a combined July-August issue by the American Society of Journalists and Authors, Inc., 1501 Broadway, Suite 302, New York, NY 10036. Subscriptions are \$120 per year as a benefit of membership (information on membership requirements available on request). Periodicals postage paid at New York NY and additional mailing office. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to ASJA Newsletter, 1501 Broadway, Suite 302, New York NY 10036.

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# Thanks from a Llewellyn Miller Grad

by Katharine Davis Fishman

Over the past few years, the Llewellyn Miller Fund has been awarding grants in a steady stream. Most grantees send us gracious acknowledgements and receiving them is the greatest satisfaction of this job. But a particularly affecting letter from entertainment writer William Avery arrived last week. Because it seemed to sum up what we do – and offered a familiar vignette of the freelance writer's life – I asked and received Avery's permission to share it with you. It reads:

*Thank you for your extraordinary gift. You have given me the wherewithal not to be depressed and to have hope for the future.*

*My whole mental attitude has changed. For example, I am including an article, which I began in June 2001. The interview was not accepted by the Poughkeepsie Journal because A Beautiful Mind had not been released. When it was nominated for eight Oscars, they reconsidered. I quickly returned to my subject, and I was able to write this long article. I am now generating ideas for more.*

*Of course, the Poughkeepsie Journal only pays \$75 per freelance article, and this is the third interview I have written for them. Which brings me to the monetary grant: your gift has allowed me to partially pay some hospital and doctors' bills,*

*and other debts with which I have encumbered myself as a freelance writer and adjunct professor. Ah! For the fulltime position.*

*Nevertheless, I will soldier on, applying for jobs and doing freelance.*

*Finally, your gift has allowed me to be more realistic and structured, rather than be scattered, nervous and fearful of the future.*

*Your gift, and the attitude behind it, has given me faith. I am now able to pursue my career as a communicator, which is all I have ever wanted to be. In my own small way, I hope to inform and enlighten readers.*

*I can only do this because of concerned individuals like yourself and your Board of Trustees who have given me another chance. Thank you.*

Most Llewellyn Miller grantees – or occasionally their immediate families – have medical problems that cause or exacerbate a professional crisis. It is a special pleasure to see a writer – with our help – begin to get back on his or her feet. That we do this – that we help our own, whether or not they are ASJA members – is a source of pride for the Society. We do so only through your contributions, and we hope that those who are moved to support others in difficult times will think first of colleagues, and give generously to the Llewellyn Miller Fund. ■



## calendar

Events are open to the public unless otherwise specified.

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*Shopper, PC Magazine, and Success.* He appears frequently on national television as a guest expert for CNNfn and Tech TV and can show even the least technical person how to get a Web site up with little or no cash outlay.

● **Sally Weiner Grotta** is a contributing editor at *PC Magazine* and *ExtremeTech* where she is a Web site critic known for her expertise on Web graphics.

● **Michael Napolitan** is a promotional designer at HarperCollins Publishers and also runs a business, MN Design & Illustration, which provides everything from logos to Web sites to illustrations for a wide variety of clients.

● **Cheryl Solimini** is a freelance editor, writer, and humorist; a frequent contributor to *Family Circle*; and a control freak who has taken Web publishing classes to learn to build her own site from the ground up.

● **Madeleine Glick** owns MJGDesigns.com. She is a Feng Shui consultant and designer of a Feng Shui jewelry line that has appeared in *Marie Claire*, *Good Housekeeping*, and *Accessories* magazines.

ASJA Program Chair **Estelle Sobel** will moderate. Estelle is an ASJA executive board member at large, co-author of *Beautiful Skin: Every Woman's Guide to Looking Her Best at Any Age* (Adams Media, 2000), editor in chief of *The American Breast Cancer Guide*, and the editor in chief of four other national consumer publications.

**Date:** Tuesday, May 21, 6:00-6:45 p.m. cash bar and snacks

**Time:** 6:45-8:00 p.m. panel and question period

**Place:** The Roger Smith Hotel, 501 Lexington Avenue (47th Street)

**Price:** ASJA Members: \$18 in advance, \$23 at the door. Non-ASJA Members: \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door

Call the ASJA office at (212) 997-0947 or e-mail staff@asja.org to reserve your spot.

# from the President

by Jim Morrison



## Conference Reminds Us Why We Write

When I left for ASJA's annual conference at the Grand Hyatt Hotel, I intended to return and write a column focusing on the success of the weekend. After all, for the first time in anyone's memory, we sold out the Saturday session, attracting 700 people. (In fact, our only regret about the conference was the overcrowding at some sessions.)

While we've added panels and short seminars about craft issues – writing, reporting, researching – the conference core remains marketing and networking. In short, the conference is about hearing from editors what they want and how to give it to them as well as listening to writers who do the kinds of stories for the markets that we aspire to do.

There was plenty of that this year, beginning early in the day when people shoehorned themselves into a popular first session titled: "Earn a Six-Figure Income Freelancing." The crowds at those sessions cried loudly about the state of the industry.

There were other, less obvious treats. For one, you have to love an editor from *The New Yorker* who tells writers it is their job to pester him until he responds.

But what I took to heart, what I thought about after the whirlwind weekend had ended and I got back to begin working, were the writers I heard speak. Especially, the acceptance speeches of the writers who received ASJA awards during lunch on Friday.

In brief, they reminded us why we're journalists. Not for the paycheck, though that comes in handy when the mortgage is due. We're journalists because we can educate, cajole, instigate and in countless other ways change

people's lives – sometimes even change our own.

Andrea Warren, who won in the children's book category for *Surviving Hitler: A Boy in the Nazi Death Camps*, said the lesser pay for writing young adult books is balanced by the reality that she is getting stories that might not otherwise be read into the hands of young readers.

Bruce Henderson reminded us to continue opening door after door – or in this case, one library stack after another. His book *Fatal North*, about the first United States expedition to the North Pole in 1873, came alive when he discovered the ship's log in the National Archives. The ship had sunk, but somehow the log survived.

Sara Solovitch won the award for Reporting on a Significant Story for an article in *Wired* titled "Citizen Scientists." She talked about the genesis of her piece during a phone call with a *Wired* editor and the satisfaction that came from revealing how the Web has united parents of desperately ill children. Now, they're participants in finding a cure, steering research, and rewriting the rules of the medical industry.

Then there was Andrea Cooper, a repeat winner in the best essay contest. The winning piece explored Andrea's feelings about her daughter's imaginary friend, an otherwise unremarkable rite of passage for a child unless you come from a family where your mother talked to imaginary people, too. Andrea said she showed a more lighthearted early draft of her essay to a friend, whose comment was, "You're not being honest." She took another shot at it and the result is an essay of

layers, at first light, then dark, a work that explores the question: "Where does inventiveness end and madness begin?"

"The child whose favorite game is pretend, who can imagine a truck out of a cookie and devise a new song every hour, is teaching me how to feel safe with invisible people, and even be their friends," she writes.

Whether they were exploring their feelings, as Andrea was, or the story of the long-dead captain of the ill-fated USS *Polaris* on its mission to the North Pole, their words were inspiring, miniature Gipper speeches reminding us all why we suffer through the slammed doors and insulting contract offers to sit down at our desks daily.



Speaking of insulting contract offers from tightfisted publishers, there is a bit of news out of last month's ASJA board meeting. The board voted unanimously to merge The Authors Registry (AR), the electronic licensing agency co-founded by ASJA, and The Authors Guild with the Publication Rights Clearinghouse, founded by The National Writers Union. NWU President Jonathan Tasini has agreed to the merger in principle. The action creates a single, unified licensing agency to collect and disburse monies to freelancers.

According to Terry King, the AR's operations manager, in 2001, the agency collected \$305,124 and disbursed \$316,613. Most of the money was copyright sharing from overseas. However, there was about \$25,000 collected for electronic uses by *Cooking Light*, *Travel & Leisure* and *Harper's*, which have agreements with the AR. The Registry has \$415,197 in its current account. That includes monies collected, but not disbursed. Since inception, it has distributed \$1,956,916 to writers.

We anticipate a merged entity will be only more effective in collecting and paying writers their fair share for extra uses of their stories.

Jim Morrison  
Norfolk, Virginia

We're journalists  
not for the  
paycheck, though  
that comes in  
handy when the  
mortgage is due.  
We're journalists  
because we can  
educate, cajole,  
instigate and in  
countless other  
ways change  
people's lives –  
sometimes even  
change our own.





**John Zukowski** reports the publication of his latest books: *Learn Java with JBuilder 6* in March from Apress and *Mastering Java 2, J2SE v. 1.4* in April from Sybex. Look for a book he edited, *Java 2, J2SE v. 1.4 Complete* in May, also from Sybex, and the third edition of *The Definitive Guide to Swing for Java 2* from Apress around July.



**Elyse Zorn Karlin** has been elected for a two-year term as president of the American Society of Jewelry Historians. She has also just celebrated the third anniversary of her publication *Adornment, The Newsletter of Jewelry & Related Arts*. In addition, Elyse recently had an article on mourning jewelry published in *Auction Market Resource for Gems and Jewelry*. Over the past several months, she has spoken on antique jewelry at the Chautauqua, Greenburgh, Croton, Rye, Pelham, and Hendrick Hudson libraries (all in New York State), to the Dobbs Ferry and Larchmont, New York, Women's Clubs, and at Skinner's Auction House in Boston, Massachusetts. Elyse was the subject of a feature article recently in *Women's News*.

**A.B. (Bud) Feuer's** *America at War: The Philippines, 1898-1913*, uses previously unpublished diaries, letters, and photographs — along with the writings of war correspondent John T. McCutcheon — to construct a vivid account of America's war in the Philippine Islands during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Greenwood Publishing Group is releasing the book this month.

**Gene and Katie Hamilton** recently celebrated 15 years of publishing their weekly home improvement column *Do It Yourself ... Or Not?* The column is syndicated by TMS and also available online at [www.diyOrNot.com](http://www.diyOrNot.com).



One of the first plant families a botany student learns to recognize is the mint family, which includes such well known plants as rosemary, sage, thyme, lavender, and peppermint. Now, **Barbara Perry Lawton** has written *Mints: A Family of Herbs and Ornamentals*, the first book to survey the entire mint family. Bar-

# Member NEWS

bara chronicles the history, lore, modern uses, cultivation, distinctive characteristics, and classification of the species in 67 genera of mint. The book is available from Timber Press Inc. in Portland, Oregon.

**Paul D. McCartney** has become the first-ever Professor in Writing, Editing, and Publishing in the history of the University of Ulster in Great Britain. Paul is also a member of the Professoriate Committee of Senate and the College of Professors. In the British University system, being a full professor is the American equivalent of an endowed chair professorship. The University of Ulster is the British university for Northern Ireland, with four major campuses and more than 20,000 students. Paul's promotion is related to his being co-creator and co-director of an unprecedented three-year undergraduate program in writing, editing, literary agenting, and publishing. This program makes Ulster the first British university ever to teach editing and publishing at the undergraduate level. The program will launch in October, and Paul will be there to deliver the inaugural address.

**Michael S. Broder, Ph.D.**, has a new book arriving in the stores this month to complete his trilogy of relationship self-help books. *Can Your Relationship Be Saved? How to Know Whether to Stay or Go* (Impact Books) helps readers to address this crucial question in completely neutral terms. It follows *The Art Of Living Single* (Avon), and *The Art Of Staying Together* (Hyperion). Psychologists and other mental health professionals can obtain home study continuing education credits for learning the techniques in this book, which was also written to be an excellent source of bibliotherapy for their clients.

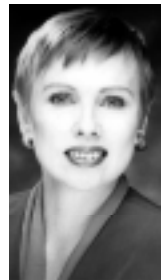
**Judy Babcock Wylie's** book *Best Places® California Central Coast: From Santa Cruz to Santa Barbara* was published by Sasquatch Books in April. The book reveals the best (but not necessarily the most expensive) places to stay and eat as well as some offbeat things to do and see along this prime slice of the California coast. Judy will be speaking at Book Passage in Corte Madera as well as at several other

West Coast bookstores. She also taught her weekend workshop in travel writing for UC Berkeley Extension on April 20-21 at their Laguna Street campus in San Francisco.

**Joan Rattner Heilman's** book *Estrogen, Third Edition*, co-authored with Lila Nachtigall, M.D., is now available in Spanish. Published in Spain, the new edition will also be distributed in the U.S. and Latin America. As well, a new German version is being translated for publication later in the year. Joan's perennial bestseller, *Unbelievably Good Deals and Great Adventures That You Absolutely Can't Get Unless You're Over 50* (Contemporary Books/McGraw-Hill), comes out mid-April. Revised every year, this is its 14th edition.



**Jan Jasper**, author of *Take Back Your Time: How to Regain Control of Work, Information, & Technology* (St. Martin's Press), is gaining national recognition as a high-tech time management expert. Jan has been appointed as IKON's office efficiency consultant and will do a national media tour. IKON provides products and services that help businesses communicate, such as document management systems and networked printers and copiers.



**Stefan Bechtel's** sixth book, *Growing A Fortune: Twelve Investment Secrets To Financial Prosperity*, has just come out from Sourcebooks. The paperback edition of his last book, *What Women Want* (coauthored with Laurence Roy Stains), has just been issued in paperback from Ballantine Books.

**Beryl Lief Benderly's** new book is *Her Works Praise Her: A History of Jewish Women in America from Colonial Times to the Present*. Her co-author is Hasia R. Diner; their publisher is Basic. According to *Publishers Weekly*, the book is "...a well-researched and consistently absorbing chronicle...a fundamental contribution to women's and Jewish studies that is certain to inform and engage." *Jewish Woman* magazine calls it "worth reading on... many...counts" and [gadflyonline.com](http://gadflyonline.com) has chosen it a Notable Book. For more information, visit [www.HerWorksPraiseHer.com](http://www.HerWorksPraiseHer.com).

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## Entrepreneur Case to Trial

A federal appeals court has struck down a summary judgment and injunction in favor of *Entrepreneur* magazine that prohibited a public relations firm from using a similar name. In a highly-detailed 30-page opinion, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals also set aside an award of \$337,280 in damages.

"Because of the intensely factual nature of trademark disputes," the court said, "summary judgment is generally disfavored in the trademark arena." The upshot: the case now goes back to the trial court for a full trial.

Defendant in the case is ASJA member **Scott Smith**, who runs a Sacramento-based public relations firm called **EntrepreneurPR** which publishes *Entrepreneur Illustrated*, a quarterly book featuring his company's clients.

The appeals court ruled that the trial court judge was wrong to give Entrepreneur Magazine, Inc. (EMI) exclusive rights to the use of the word "entrepreneur" just because the magazine had registered the word as a trademark. The court pointed out that at least six other magazines use the word in their titles including *Hispanic Entrepreneur* and *Big Former Entrepreneur*. "Although the incontestable status of EMI's trademark 'ENTREPRENEUR' gives EMI the exclusive right to use its trademark in printed publications pertaining to business opportunities, the common and necessary use of

# from the COURTS

the word 'entrepreneur' provides strong evidence that EMI cannot have the exclusive right to use the word entrepreneur in any mark identifying a printed publication addressing subjects related to entrepreneurship," wrote Judge Marcia Berzon. "The descriptive nature and common, necessary uses of the word 'entrepreneur' require the courts to exercise caution in extending the scope of protection to which the mark is entitled."

However, the court did agree with the trial judge that the cover design of *Entrepreneur Illustrated* was confusingly similar to *Entrepreneur* magazine. The appeals court instructed the trial judge to "devise an injunction that only enjoined Smith from using the term 'Entrepreneur Illustrated' on the cover of a printed publication in a manner that obstructs or otherwise downplays the word 'Illustrated.'"

## About.com Sued by "Guides"

Thirty-four current and former **About.com** "guides" (writers) have filed a suit against About.com and its parent company, **Primedia Inc.**, for, among other things, copyright infringement and fraudulent accounting. The complaint was filed in federal court (Southern District of New York) on March 20. The writers also claim that they were employees and that Primedia failed to comply with the *Fair Labor Standards Act*, the *New York Labor Law*, and the *Federal Income Contributions Act*. The case says that Primedia ran About.com into the ground, pushing expenses on to the Web site while funneling revenues to Primedia. The suit also alleges that Primedia instructed About.com not to pay the writers and to infringe their copyrights.

## Register Your Own Copyrights

A federal appeals court has again confirmed that a magazine's registration of its collective copyright in an issue of the magazine does not constitute registration of a writer's copyright in an individual article. While you need not register your copyrights in order to have copyright protection, only if you have registered your copyrights within 90 days of publication can you claim court costs and punitive damages.

ASJA member **Lois Morris** has been arguing that the magazine's registration of its collective copyright in the magazine should cover her registration in her article. However, the 2nd Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals has now refused to rehear her case and, in fact, has narrowed its previous opinion. Previously, the court had said that if the magazine held a portion of the copyright, the registration *might* extend to the individual article. The court now says that unless a publisher registering a collective copyright also owns all of the rights to an individual article, a collective work registration will not extend to the individual article.

## Random House Loses Round Two to Rosetta

A federal appeals court has thrown out an attempt by **Random House** to get a preliminary injunction against electronic publisher **RosettaBooks**. The e-publisher sells electronic versions of eight old Random House titles. RosettaBooks has deals with the authors, but Random House claims that the electronic rights belong to them. Random says their acquisition of e-rights was implied in the contracts, signed in the early '80s. Further, they say electronic books are merely another representation of paper books.

A three-judge panel of the 2nd Circuit U.S. *continued on page 15*

## Member News

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**Antoinette Bosco** has received a Christopher Award for her latest book, *Choosing Mercy, A Mother of Murder Victims Pleads to End the Death Penalty* (Orbis Books). Her book was one of six, out of 850 considered, to be given this award, along with *John Adams* by David McCullough and *An Hour Before Daylight* by Jimmy Carter. Christopher Awards, given annually, recognize outstanding film, TV shows, and books that "reflect the highest values of the human spirit" and can make a difference for good in the world. Toni was honored along with the other winners at a ceremony at the Time-Life Building in New York on February 28.



◆ ◆ ◆  
Imagine being published in the language of your immigrant parent. **Tina B. Tessina, Ph.D.** was delighted to discover that *The Ten Smartest Decisions a Woman Can Make After Forty* (Renaissance 2001) had been published in Ital-

ian when the magazine *Io Donna* e-mailed her to ask for an interview.

And, for its 22nd anniversary, her best-selling *How To Be a Couple and Still Be Free* (co-author: Riley K. Smith) was just published in March in a newly revised and expanded third edition by New Page Books.



◆ ◆ ◆  
**Karen O'Connor** of San Diego, California, received a Special Recognition Award at the Mount Hermon Christian Writers Conference in March for her years of service as a writing mentor and author of over 35 books.



Karen has also been invited to be a featured speaker at the Toyota Women's Conference in Lexington, Kentucky, in October 2002. ■





## The Kitty Kelley Files

*continued from page 1*

for subjects who are dead, but Kelley writes only about people who are alive and who are big enough to warrant a full biography. For biographies of the living, when you finish a chapter, she advises, go through it and do a list of sources for your legal files. A lawyer is going to want to know how you got every piece of information in the chapter, so document it right away. *You won't remember later.*

Kelley writes only about people who are immensely powerful (and can afford lawsuits) so she has to be particularly careful. After each interview, she sends a thank-you note to the person interviewed, who might forget, four years later, that the interview ever took place. She tapes the interviews and also takes notes, because even the best tape recorders can skip sometimes, so it's hard to get everything verbatim. She recommends keeping a careful record, because it is so easy to forget to whom you have talked. If the publisher calls to say that X denies ever saying Y, as Kelley reported, she can usually tell them the date and length of the interview and report that she has the tape and transcript.

While you are at it, keep an acknowledgments file, so you can remember to thank

people—that is the least you can do.

Because memoirs are so intimate, a person writing a private memoir may have more problems with invasion of privacy than Kelley has with problems of libel writing about public figures.

Legal problems pose a particular problem in England, where libel is anything that holds a person up to the disrespect of their parents, peers, or contemporaries. Although *The Royals* was vetted by American and British lawyers, it was still suppressed (not published) in the UK because of the less-than-adulatory content about people still alive.

Lawsuits for libel can be an expensive problem, even if you don't commit libel. Lawyers concerned about potential lawsuits will ask first if the subject of you're writing about can afford the costs of a long legal battle. Frank Sinatra, who had deep pockets, sued Kelley when she was writing about him, and her legal bills got up to \$100,000 without a single deposition

being taken. He dropped the suit after a year, and Kelley credits the public support she received from writers' groups around the country, especially ASJA. She has been honored for going forward despite Sinatra's intimidating legal threats, and she has never lost a lawsuit, largely because she keeps such careful records.

There *are* things Kelley would not include in a biography. She would not, for example, publish information about the psychiatric care of a minor child. Until recently she would not have written about the Bush twins' drinking problem, but once someone breaks the law, their arrest is public record. And when people set themselves up as supporting "family values," then whatever is at odds with family values is part of the story.

In answer to a question about who owned the rights to letters, Kelley explained that the person who receives the letters owns only the physical letter; the person who *writes* the letter owns the copyright. Do not reprint a letter without per-

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## Linda Cashdan's Basic Nonfiction Book Proposal Outline

Writing is not self-indulgent; we do it to be read. If you need help getting your book or proposal into shape, Kelley recommends D.C. book doctor **Linda Cashdan**, one of two partners in The Word Process, (202) 234-7116, e-mail: [Wordpro@wizard.net](mailto:Wordpro@wizard.net), [www.bookdoctoring.com](http://www.bookdoctoring.com). Here is Cashdan's basic outline for a nonfiction book proposal.

**Part One – Summary.** This is your pitch, the kernel that explains precisely what this book is. You can lead into the subject creatively (a personal anecdote that caused you to come up with the concept, teasers that might provoke interest in the subject matter itself, etc), but it is best to get to the point quickly and clearly. Agents and publishers are impatient.

**Part Two – The Market.** Why is your book needed, and what types of people will rush out to buy it? Include demographics on the age, sex, or racial group to which the book will appeal, or the demographics for books somewhat similar to the one you are writing that have done very well (and therefore point to a solid market). This section calls for research (at the library or on the Internet). It's important to check out the competition to find out just how many books on the same or a similar subject are already in print, and why yours will add something special to the mix.

**Part Three – Bio.** Here you explain why you are the perfect person to be writing this book. Include only those experiences and prior publications that illustrate your expertise on the subject matter at hand or your ability to write. (You can include a full résumé at the end of the proposal to underscore the impressive details of your life that are not relevant to the proposal). You can write this in either the first person or the third. Cashdan thinks the third person reads better. If your fame, reputation in the field, press connections, or proven on-camera TV or radio experience would make you an asset in selling this book, by all means stress that here.

**Part Four – Table of Contents, followed by Chapter Outline.** The Table of Contents (chapter title, one sentence embellishment) gives an agent/publisher a quick map of the book. The chapter outline adds context and color to that map. For each chapter in the Outline, you need to include a fairly detailed abstract (i.e. substance over generalizations like "Here I will examine"). These can range in length from a paragraph or two to several pages each.

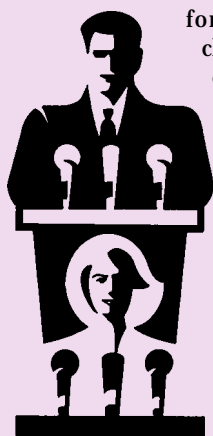
**Part Five – Chapter sample.** This is not essential, especially if your chapter outline has succeeded in showing off your writing prowess, but if there is a chapter you are especially proud of, this is where you put it.

Book proposals can range from 5 to 100 pages. Most are from 15 to 30 pages long. ■

## Knowledge Is Power

Does your writing group have questions about contracts in this post-*Tasini* world?

ASJA's Contracts Committee has assembled a crack team of knowledgeable members throughout the country willing and able to address your group on contract matters large and small. Addressing challenges like work-made-



for-hire, indemnity clauses, making unfair contracts palatable, and negotiating strategies, we can give your members the kind of nitty-gritty, on-the-ground information they need to protect their rights and improve their bottom lines. For information, e-mail us at [contracts@asja.org](mailto:contracts@asja.org).





## The Kitty Kelley Files

continued from previous page  
mission of the letter *writer* (or the writer's estate).

For personal papers in an archive, you would usually write a letter seeking permission to reprint to the director of the archives.

Usually a photographer owns a photograph, but it could be the agency, or it could have been work-made-for-hire. Always give credits for photographs.

"One of the most expensive things to deal with is the photo insert," says Kelley. You need photos to show the progression of a life, but the cost of the *physical photos* comes out of your pocket, so it's better for you to get as many photos as you can from the people you interview. And be sure to write into the contract that the publisher pays for the *photo rights*.

Kelley says you should hold on to your files at least two years. Publishers say at least one year (in the United States) but the statute of limitations for someone who is incarcerated at the time of the interview starts when he or she gets out of prison.

To deal with writer's block, Kelley throws out a wide net and vows she'll keep writing.

She recommends the book *The Artist's Way* by Julia Cameron for breaking through such a block.

When she is interviewing someone, she doesn't save her toughest questions till last. She asks them first—because she's always afraid she's going to be thrown out. She never asks negative questions ("When did you stop beating your wife?"); she considers them highly insulting. The negative information will come—people will volunteer it, telling you things you don't want to know, as they did about Nancy Reagan's sex life. She also doesn't fight with her sources. If they have a different view of how things happened, she might show them her timeline.

"Persistence and determination" are what see her through the tough work of tracking down the details of a life. For 25 years, she has kept this quotation from Calvin Coolidge on the bulletin board where she works: *Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated failures. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.*

It took persistence for Kelley to track down the woman who had become pregnant by Frank Sinatra as a teenager, whom Sinatra had asked to get an abortion. When she finally learned that the woman lived at a certain address in Lodi, New Jersey, Kelley decided that the best approach would be to go there without announcing that she was coming. She knocked on the door, announced that she was doing a biography of Frank Sinatra, was invited in, and learned the full story of what happened. ("Frankie" and the woman had been sweethearts. After the pregnancy and abortion, the woman's policeman family had Sinatra put in jail on a morals charge—a story that had been effectively hushed up.) Kelley kept in touch with the woman and finally asked her: Why didn't you tell this story before?

The woman's response? "Because nobody asked."



Pat McNees got her start writing biographies and memoirs through Kelley, who, in declining a commissioned assignment, suggested an Ohio family seeking a professional biographer get in touch with ASJA's writer referral service. The Washington Biography Group meets once a month on Monday evenings in the dacha (library) of the Washington International School, in the District of Columbia, to discuss the craft and marketing of biography under its guru, Marc Pachter. ■

Frank Sinatra, who had deep pockets, sued Kelley... He dropped the suit after a year, and Kelley credits the public support she received from writers' groups, especially ASJA.

the bulletin board where she works: *Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated failures. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.*

## Get the ASJA Newsletter Electronically

How would you like to receive the *ASJA Newsletter* two to three weeks earlier than you now get it in the mail? You can! The electronic version of the newsletter is available by e-mail and Web-based download the same day it goes to the printers, usually around the 20th of the month. Read It on the Web Site

Most of the Newsletter is available on the ASJA.org Web site around the 20th of each month. The cover stories, Member News, most interior stories, the markets columns and PayCheck are all online for your convenience. Items from the public section of the Newsletter are available from the ASJA home page. You'll find items from the confidential section on the Members Only page.

### Adobe Acrobat Reader

To read the newsletter you will need a copy of the free Adobe Acrobat Reader software available from the Adobe Web site at

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readermain.html>.

### Receive the Newsletter by E-mail

To receive the newsletter by e-mail, sign up for the newsletter listserve at <http://www.eGroups.com/subscribe/ASJANews>. You will then receive the newsletter as two e-mail file attachments as soon as it is available.

### Download the Newsletter from the Web

About the same time the newsletter goes out by e-mail, it is also available for download in the ASJANews file section at eGroups.com. You might want to choose this option if you have a very small e-mail box. The two Acrobat files that make up the newsletter total about 500k in size.

To be able to download the newsletter, subscribe to the ASJANews listserve as above but select the "Digest" mode. In Digest mode you will receive the message that the newsletter is available but without the attachments. You can

then download the files as follows.

- Go to <http://www.eGroups.com>
- Click on "My Groups."
- Click on "ASJANews."
- Click on "files."

From there, you will be able to download the files. Files will stay available in the eGroups file section for as long as we have room, usually a year or more.

Alternatively, you will be able to download the newsletter from the ASJA Web site but it usually takes two or three days longer to get it posted there. ■



# ASJA Cites Members' Best Work of 2001

Each year, ASJA honors its members who have produced some of the best work of the year with the annual ASJA Awards. This year's winners are below.

## Books

### General

#### ***Creatures of the Deep* (Firefly Books) by Erich Hoyt**

Erich Hoyt is a Canadian-American author and marine naturalist living in North Berwick, Scotland. His books include *Orca: The Whale Called Killer* (Dutton/ Firefly Books), *The Earth Dwellers* (Simon & Schuster), *Whales & Dolphins* (HarperCollins), and *Insect Lives* (Wiley). Hoyt has been Vannevar Bush Fellow at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and twice James Thurber Writer in Residence at The Thurber House.



*Creatures of the Deep*, Hoyt's thirteenth book, began as "a sea monster-shark tale". He soon realized that the real untold story lay in the human quest for deep-sea secrets: the predator-prey dramas, odd symbioses, bioluminescent communication, and the origin of life itself in this deep, dark, high-pressure world. The book eventually doubled in length and in cost, with many rare, state-of-the-art photographs.

#### **Honorable Mention to *Fatal North* (Signet Books) by Bruce Henderson**

The Polaris Expedition led by Charles Francis Hall – the first U.S. attempt to reach the North Pole – began as President Ulysses S. Grant's bid for international glory after the Civil War. It ended in a struggle for survival on the polar ice, followed by scandalous charges of incompetence, murder, and government cover-up. In *Fatal North*, Bruce Henderson, backed with extensive archival research, tells the chilling story of what went terribly wrong. A former newspaper reporter and magazine writer who has taught at USC School of Journalism, Henderson is the author or co-author of more than a dozen books of nonfiction, including *And The Sea Will Tell*, a



*New York Times* number one bestseller which was adapted for network television and became a highly-rated miniseries. A longtime ASJA member, he lives in northern California.

### Service/Self-help/

#### **Collaborative/Specialty**

#### ***Informed Decisions* (American Cancer Society) by Dianne Partie Lange, et al.**

A former registered nurse, Dianne Lange gave up bedpans for keyboards 25 years ago. After working her way up to a position as editor-in-chief of Family Media's now-departed *Health*, she went freelance and has, among other things, been a contributing editor and columnist for *Allure* and author of the weekly health news column, *Capsules*, for the *Los Angeles Times*. *Informed Decisions* is her third publishing project with the American Cancer Society. The first edition of *Informed Decisions*, written with ASJA member Lois Morris, was named one of the best books of 1997 by *Publishers Weekly*. In 1999, she wrote *Women and Cancer* along with two American Cancer Society doctors. Then, in 2000, she was asked to update and revise *Informed Decisions*, which is the version that has won this prize.



### Children's

#### ***Surviving Hitler* (HarperCollins) by Andrea Warren**

Andrea Warren's book, *Surviving Hitler: A Boy in the Nazi Death Camps* (HarperCollins), tells the true story of a Polish Jewish teenager imprisoned for three years in the concentration camps. It is Warren's fourth book of nonfiction history for young readers. All four have been widely adapted for use in schools and have won many awards, including the Horn Book Award for *Orphan Train Rider: One Boy's True Experience*. Warren's stories focus on ordinary children caught up in extraordinary experiences. She also writes for magazine and corporate publications. Warren is a previous winner of the ASJA outstanding article award. She is a native of Nebraska and lives in the Kansas City-Lawrence, Kansas, area.



## Articles

### Business/Technology

#### **"It's Time for a Clockless Chip" by Claire Tristram; *Technology Review*, October 2001**

Claire Tristram has written for *Technology Review*, *Wired*, *Red Herring*, *Fast Company*, and *Inc. Technology*. "A Time For Clockless Chips" is about an arcane area of microprocessor design where researchers have been laboring for 40 years with no one paying any attention to them. "Needless to say they were delighted to speak with me," Claire says, "and the story practically wrote itself."



### First Person/Essay

#### **"If This is Madness" by Andrea Cooper; *Hope* magazine, Spring 2001**

Andrea Cooper is a journalist and essayist based in North Carolina. Her recent credits include *Newsweek*, *Reader's Digest*, *Working Mother*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Oxford American*, and National Public Radio's *All Things Considered*. Cooper is a two-time finalist in the William Faulkner Creative Writing Competition. She also won ASJA's 2001 Outstanding Article Award for First Person articles. Her winning submission this year, "If This is Madness," looks at the line between madness and creativity, as expressed by the author's mother, who is mentally ill, and the author's young daughter, who is quite well. Andrea is currently at work on a memoir.



### Service

#### **"The Most Important Discussion You Must Have" by Sally Stich; *New Choices*, April 2001**

Sally Stich is a contributing editor at *Woman's Day* and a former contributing editor at *New Choices*. She writes regularly for women's and parenting magazines. Her winning article "The Most Important Discussion You Must Have" (*New Choices*, April 2001) was inspired



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## ASJA Award Winners

*continued from previous page*

by a piece in her local paper about some middle-aged children who had no idea what their parents' end-of-life wishes were when the aging mother was diagnosed with a debilitating disease and the aging father with a terminal disease. Their painful journey discussing everything from finances to funerals became the springboard from which this story evolved.

### Profile

**"Roquefort Files" by Florence Williams; *Outside*, June 2001**

Since 1996, Florence Williams has won four ASJA article awards, including two for personal essay. A graduate of the creative writing department at the University of Montana, she writes regularly for *Outside*, *The New Republic*, *The New York Times* and others. This year's winner in the profile category, "The Roquefort Files," was published in *Outside*. It is a profile of French farmer and activist Jose Bove, who infamously dismantled a McDonalds restaurant in southern France to protest U.S. trade policies and American cultural imperialism. What started out as a story highlighting global environmental policies took an unexpected turn into the European hysteria over Mad Cow and Foot and Mouth Disease, both of which were appearing in France while she was reporting. Needless to say, Florence did not sample a lot of meat products while visiting the continent. She currently lives in one of the cow capitols of the U.S., western Montana.



### Reporting on a Significant Topic

**"Citizen Scientists" by Sara Solovitch; *Wired* magazine, September 2001**

Sara Solovitch began her journalism career in daily newspapers, first as a staff writer for the *Buffalo Courier-Express* and then for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. For nearly six years, she wrote a weekly column for the *San Jose Mercury-News* on Kids' Health. Her stories have appeared in *House Beautiful*, *Omni*, *USA Weekend*, *The Washington Post*, *Wired*, and many other publications. "Citizen



Scientists" got its start after an old newspaper buddy of Sara's, *Wired* editor Amy Linn, read Sara's story about autism in the *San Jose Mercury News*. Amy asked Sara if the kind of parent advocacy she had described in her story was happening in other childhood diseases. "After maybe 20 minutes on the phone, I realized I had a great story on my hands, one involving dozens of orphan diseases and a sea change in medical research and practice," says Sara. Sara lives with her husband, Richard Scheinin, and three sons in Santa Cruz, California.

### June Roth / Medical Journalism

**"The Lobotomist" by Jack El-Hai; *The Washington Post Magazine*, February 4, 2001**

Jack El-Hai has been an ASJA member for seven years. His magazine work - usually covering medicine, psychology, crime and law, or architecture - has appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The Washington Post Magazine*, *American Heritage*, and many other publications. He has also published three trade books and is a partner in Civic Corporate Histories, a book writing and design group. "The Lobotomist" kindled one of Jack's current projects, a biography of Walter J. Freeman that will be published by John Wiley & Sons in Fall 2003. The recipient of fellowships from the McKnight Foundation, the Jerome Foundation, and the Center for Arts Criticism, he lives in Minneapolis with his wife and two daughters.



### Career Achievement

**Bonnie Remsberg**

Bonnie Remsberg is a speech/theatre graduate of Northwestern University. She began her freelance writing career right out of college with an article for *Modern Bride*. In the long career that has followed, she has written for *Reader's Digest*, *Family Circle*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Redbook*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Esquire*, *Seventeen*, *Consumer Reports*, and many other

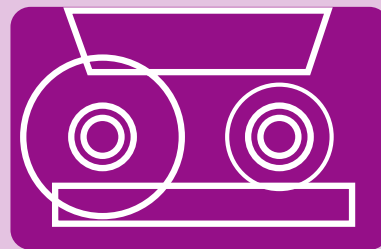


magazines. She has authored three books, had many works optioned by Hollywood and written speeches, commercial projects, and scripts for film, television and video. For many years, she hosted a talk show on NBC-TV in Chicago, appeared on a morning program, and wrote and narrated award-winning documentaries. She is cited in *The Art of Writing Non-Fiction* (Syracuse University Press) as a modern writer who keeps the public informed "in the tradition of Samuel Adams, Tom Paine, Ida M. Tarbell and Woodward and Bernstein."

Bonnie has taught writing at the University of Chicago, Northwestern's Medill School of Journalism, Columbia College, Stanford, and Indiana University. She has been a member of SMW/ASJA since 1963. She won the ASJA Outstanding Article Award in 1984.

### Investigative Journalism

No award ■



### 2002 Conference Audio Tapes/CDs Available!

If you missed the ASJA conference this year, don't worry. We have you covered!

The ASJA Writers Conference is each year's premier conference for nonfiction writers. Each panel or workshop session is packed with insightful and powerful information designed to improve your writing life and increase your income.

If you could not attend this year's conference - or even if you did attend but couldn't get to every session you wanted - we recorded each session so you can conveniently listen at home, in your car, or at your desk.

And, for the first time this year the recordings are available on cassette tape *or* CD.

You can order recordings of any of the panels and workshops by calling (888) 522-5023 or by logging onto [www.asja.org](http://www.asja.org) or [www.nrstaping.com](http://www.nrstaping.com).





## Documentary Films Showing in Bay Area

ASJA member **Charlotte Beyers** will be showing six of her award-winning documentary films on homeless teenagers, AIDS prevention, and people with disabilities from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. on May 5 at Spangenberg Theatre, Gunn High School, 780

Arastradero Rd. (near Foothill Expressway), Palo Alto, California.

Beyers began making independent documentaries after her brother-in-law died

of AIDS in 1985. Her written work has been published in *The New York Times*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Newsweek*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, the *American Medical Association News*, and *The Higher Education Supplement of The London Times*, among many others.



## Writer as Publisher Seminar Or, How to Make More Money Publishing It Yourself

Think you need an agent, publisher, and publicist to get your book out to the world? Think again! Get to press faster, keep complete control over your work, and make more money by publishing it yourself. Learn how at the "Writer as Publisher: Independent Publishing Seminar" given the National Writers Union. This all-day seminar is Saturday, May 18, 2002, at the Oakland Asian Cultural Center in downtown Oakland, California. You will:

- Discover the potentials and pitfalls of independent and print-on-demand (POD) publishing from **Pat Holt**, the award-winning former *San Francisco Chronicle* book editor and current online publishing critic ([www.holtuncensored.com](http://www.holtuncensored.com)).

- Hear **Dan Poynter**, one of the pioneers of modern self-publishing and the author and publisher of over 100 books, speak on the new techniques and technologies that are allowing writers to "make more money, get to press sooner and keep control of their work." ([www.parapublishing.com](http://www.parapublishing.com))

- Listen to award-winning novelist **Naida West** as she tells how she successfully published her own books – and how your own beliefs and attitudes might be the biggest thing holding you back.

- Learn from **Don Monkerud**, the NWU's

national political issues committee chair, as he hosts a panel on "How I Published My Fiction/Nonfiction" with other successful self-published authors.

- Learn how to create an on-line store and start selling your books for under \$100. Web e-commerce expert **Stephanie Cota** and technical publications and web guru **Andreas Ramos** will show you how easy it is.

Other speakers include **Adam David Miller**, poetry author and the founding editor of the *Graduate Student Journal* at UC Berkeley; **Carla King**, successful self-published travel and technical writer; **Kim Chernin**, an internationally-known author and founder of EdgeWork Books; Bay Area poetry writer and publisher **Jeanne Powell**; **Rand Richards**, the author of *Historic San Francisco*; and **Andrena Zawinski**, the features editor of [PoetryMagazine.com](http://PoetryMagazine.com).

In short, the "Writer as Publisher" seminar will guide writers in bringing out their work independently at a time when industry consolidation has constricted many of the old avenues to market. Get involved and get published! Visit [www.writersaspublisher.com](http://www.writersaspublisher.com) or call (510) 839-1248 to learn more.

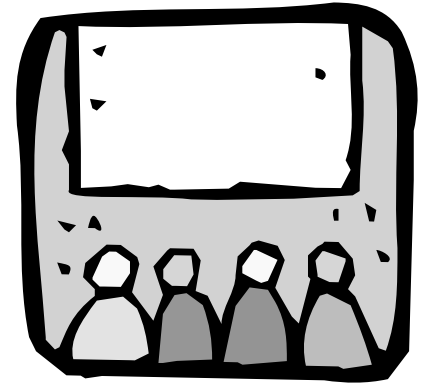
## Writers and Editors/ One-On-One

The deadline is near. Slots at the eighth annual **Writers & Editors/One-on-One Conference** are quickly filling up. Being held July 26 to July 28, 2002, the conference is a way for experienced magazine freelancers to get in person meetings with editors from *Self*, *Reader's Digest*, *Cooking Light*, *National Geographic*, *Meredith Integrated Marketing*, *Continental* (the in-flight of Continental Airlines), *Profit*, and *Modern Maturity*. Hear what these editors want from writers and meet with some of them in private 10-minute sessions.

More details, daily schedules, and application forms are available at [www.magazinewriters.com](http://www.magazinewriters.com). Deadline for the early bird registration fee is June 20, but attendance is limited to the first 60 qualified applicants.

Please remember, this line-up, like everything in life, is subject to change.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS



## Screenwriting Competition

The **Austin Heart of Film Screenplay Competition** and the **Prime Time Television Competition** are now accepting entries. Deadline for the Screenplay Competition is May 15th, and the fee is \$40. Deadline for the Prime Time Television Competition is June 15th, and the fee is \$25. The contests receive entries from all over the world. This is their ninth year. The contests are run by a non-profit organization "dedicated to launching talented writer's careers." For an application or for any questions, call (800) 310-3378, or visit [www.austinfilmfestival.com](http://www.austinfilmfestival.com).

## Fellowship from Bertlesmann AG

The **Reinhard Mohn Fellowship** is intended for people who have initiated, led or impelled innovative projects: leaders and entrepreneurial talents from all sectors of society – business, the public and non-profit sectors, science, culture, sports, or social services. Between five and seven talented people from all over the world will spend twelve months in the **Bertlesmann AG Group**, going through a demanding fellowship program. Degrees and academic merit are of secondary importance. The important thing is that their projects have made a discernible contribution to society.

Fellows are given the opportunity to obtain valuable knowledge and expertise and build up extensive networks through selective training and a wide range of project work in a variety of divisions and at different locations within Bertlesmann's global media company. Thus

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## Announcements

continued from previous page

equipped, they are expected to expand on their existing potential and apply it to projects in their own field of activity. On top of this, they will become familiar with a philosophy of leadership that will serve both as an example and as motivation.

Interested persons may apply until June 1, 2002. At the end of July 2002, the fellows will be named by a jury at a selection convention. The jury consists of outstanding public personalities who represent the spirit and attitude Bertlesmann is looking for in the Reinhard Mohn Fellows.

More detailed information is available from [www.reinhard-mohn-fellowship.com](http://www.reinhard-mohn-fellowship.com) or from Dr. Anette Bickmeyer, Program Director, Reinhard Mohn Fellowship, [Info@reinhard-mohn-fellowship.de](mailto:Info@reinhard-mohn-fellowship.de), Bertlesmann AG, Postfach 111, 33311 Gütersloh, Germany, Phone: +49 (0) 5241-80-89214, Fax: +49 (0) 5241-80-6620.

## More Authors Tell Major Publishers to Take a Hike

ASJA members and self-publishing gurus **Tom** and **Marilyn Ross** have released a newly revised and expanded 4th edition of *The Complete Guide to Self-Publishing: Everything You Need to Know to Write, Publish, Promote and Sell Your Own Book* (Writer's Digest Books 2002). The new edition "rips away the masks, deflates the myths, and bares the face of all the new publishing venues: e-books, print-on-demand, and traditional printing."

The book is the classic "bible" for self-publishing and includes:

- appendices that list marketing contacts, organizations, vendors and hard-to-find names, addresses and Web addresses
- tactics for penetrating the Internet with killer PR and sales; over 200 essential Web sites
- production techniques that can cut design and printing costs in half
- case studies and examples of how other publishers excel
- a detailed month-by-month marketing plan and timetable to keep you on track
- samples of proven sales letters, cover designs, catalog sheets and forms

Marilyn and Tom Ross have self-published more than a dozen titles, including the award-winning *Jump Start Your Book Sales*. Five of their books have been picked up by major publishers. They are the co-founders of the 1300-member Small Publishers Association of North America (SPAN), and launched About Books, Inc., a book producing and marketing company in 1977. They speak about their passion for publishing to associations, corporations, and groups all across North America. The Rosses have helped thousands of self-publishers, independent presses, and authors sell millions of books. In 2000 they were inducted into The Guerrilla Marketing Hall of Fame.

Additional information about the book is available online at <http://www.CommunicationCreativity.com/g>.

Readers of the *ASJA Newsletter* qualify for a special 20% discount and a personally autographed copy. Normally \$19.99, you pay \$15.99 (plus \$4 shipping) from Communication Creativity, POB 909-NR, Buena Vista, CO 81211. Call credit card orders toll-free to (800) 331-8355.

## Deadlines and Reminders

**Excellence in Urban Journalism Award** for quality reporting on major community development issues facing the nation's urban populations, particularly in inner cities. Deadline for applications is May 31st. Details in the April newsletter.

Radio station **KACM** in Sedona, Arizona, has a weekly talk show called *The Bookmark*. Station general manager Tom Tabbac has put out the call for authors seeking to publicize their books. You can reach him at (928) 282-4154.

ASJA member Gini Graham Scott, who for a long time has offered comprehensive lists of publishers, agents, and others in the publishing trade, is now offering a **submission service** for writers seeking publishers or agents. You can choose e-mail or postal mail submissions. For more information, visit the Web site at <http://www.PublishersAndAgents.com>. De-

tails in the April newsletter.

You're invited to attend a fully funded **Age Boom Institute** in San Jose, California, May 9 and 10. The program includes a working dinner, breakfast, intensive seminars, and a working lunch. It is for beats from politics, business, and medicine to lifestyles and editorials, anything that touches on the baby boom generation, which is turning 50 at the rate of one every 7.6 seconds. To learn more, visit [www.ilcusa.org](http://www.ilcusa.org), call (212) 517-1281, or e-mail [ageboomstitute@ilcusa.org](mailto:ageboomstitute@ilcusa.org).

The deadline is June 1 to apply for the **Kurt Schork Awards in International Journalism**, administered by the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. Schork was an American freelance journalist who was killed in a military ambush while on assignment for Reuters on May 24, 2000, in Sierra Leone. The awards are only open to freelancers. Contact Columbia at (212) 854-8653 or via e-mail at [schorkawards@jrn.columbia.edu](mailto:schorkawards@jrn.columbia.edu) or visit their Web site: [www.jrn.columbia.edu/prizes/schork](http://www.jrn.columbia.edu/prizes/schork). Details in the April newsletter.

The deadline is May 15th for entries in the **Arizona Film Commission's** annual screenwriting competition. The contest is open to all writers, not just those living in Arizona. However, 85% of the screenplay must be set in Arizona. For full rules and an application form, visit the film commission's Web site at [www.azcommerce.com/azfilmcommission.htm](http://www.azcommerce.com/azfilmcommission.htm)

Entries are now being accepted for the 22nd annual **Lorian Hemingway Short Story Competition**, created to recognize and encourage the efforts of writers who have not yet achieved major-market success. Writers will compete for a \$1000 first prize, \$500 second prize, and \$500 third prize in this internationally acclaimed competition. The deadline is May 15. For details visit [www.shortstorycompetition.com](http://www.shortstorycompetition.com) or see the April newsletter. ■

newsletter

deadlines

The deadline for the July/August issue of the ASJA NEWSLETTER is June 1.

TO SEND COPY TO THE NEWSLETTER:

E-MAIL: [newsletter@asja.org](mailto:newsletter@asja.org)

FAX: (253) 399-7321

MAIL: 2966 Sandstone Drive, Westbank, BC V4T 1T2, Canada

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e-mail: [writers@ASJA.org](mailto:writers@ASJA.org)





# The Breakthrough

by Marian Sandmaier

Excerpted from "The Breakthrough," published in *The Family Therapy Networker*, May/June 2000

On the day I understood that something had to change, I was sitting in a news paper editorial meeting, feeling the slight, probing pressure behind my right eye that signaled the onset of a migraine headache. *Stay cool, I told myself. You can handle this.*

"Handling this" meant doing what I had been doing for the past 18 years of persistent headaches – dosing myself with drugs and pretending to be fine. Politely, I excused myself and made my way to the women's room, where I loaded a syringe with a cartridge of migraine medication, took a deep breath, and plunged the needle into my upper leg. Three minutes later, I was back in the conference room – smiling.

Just your basic bathroom break, my expression conveyed as I met the questioning looks of the newspaper's Sunday magazine staff, from whom I was trying to wrest a freelance assignment. Except that this time, the migraine medication simply didn't work. When I realized there was an excellent chance I might actually throw up, I excused myself again, dove back into the women's room and leaned my forehead against a stall.

I felt defeated. In the course of my migraine career I had ricocheted from doctor to doctor, successively collecting prescriptions for ergotamine, barbiturates, prescription anti-inflammatories, Tylenol with codeine, Elavil, and now Imitrex, which worked better than the others but not reliably. I had also presented my desperation to various alternative healers, including two acupuncturists, a massage therapist, an herbalist and a craniosacral practitioner. Yet my situation was steadily worsening: I was now facing up to ten migraines monthly. Could things get even worse? I felt scared, and utterly alone.

Though, in a certain, disturbing sense, I knew I wasn't alone at all. Any of us can gaze around our circle of family, friends and colleagues and identify several who struggle with illness of one sort or another. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, more than 50 million people in the U.S. cope with chronic illness, from arthritis, diabetes, back problems, headaches, disabling injuries and cardiovascular diseases to a raft of chronic lung disorders,

gastrointestinal ailments and autoimmune diseases. Many people who contend with these diseases have discovered that drugs and surgery are partial remedies, at best, and have been advised by their doctors that their only option is to learn to "live with" often severe pain or disability.

But maybe not. Far from the medical mainstream, a new movement is quietly emerging that may offer people with chronic illnesses a greater sense of agency and optimism. A small cadre of alternative medicine institutes, from the Harvard-based Mind/Body Medical Institute to Washington D.C.'s Center for Mind-Body Medicine, is developing a distinctive model of health education and emotional support known as "mind-body-spirit" groups. What is purportedly new about these programs is that they offer themselves, quite explicitly, as a potent counter-punch to the learned helplessness that chronic illness often breeds. Merging mutual sharing with simple self-care approaches – meditation, imagery, movement, and so on – these groups aim to activate one's own bodily, emotional and spiritual resources for healing.

"At bottom, we're supporting a process of self-discovery," said James Gordon, founder and director the Center for Mind-Body Medicine, when I called him with my questions. "Beyond helping people better manage their medical symptoms, we believe that illness can be a powerful opportunity for personal growth." When I pressed for the whys and wherefores, Gordon told me that CMBM would shortly be putting on its annual training program for health care professionals who wanted to learn how to lead these groups. "Come and experience it," he invited.

I hesitated. "Illness as opportunity" – I had heard that phrase before, and it had always made my lip curl. It seemed both romantic and deeply disrespectful to propose to people in pain that their suffering was their big chance for some kind of spiritual metamorphosis. In my experience, migraines were hell; end of story. Yet I couldn't deny that the way I had approached my own illness thus far – as an alien invasion to be vanquished by experts – had left me feeling dispirited and impotent. Could

these groups be a way to help people like me burrow through this wall of defeat and find something more healing on the other side? I wouldn't get my hopes up. But I would give this "mind-body-spirit" concept a shot.



"It's not just a bunch of woo-woo ideas anymore." On a warm November morning on South Carolina's Hilton Head Island, James Gordon is notifying a roomful of 115 health care practitioners that the training program they are about to begin – CMBM's Professional Training Program in Mind-Body-Spirit Medicine – takes the concept of self-healing seriously. Gordon, 58, a Harvard-trained psychiatrist, respects the power and utility of Western biomedicine, but he believes that Big Medicine's tentacles have extended entirely too far, rendering patients dangerously passive. A major thrust of this program, he informs us, will be to teach health care practitioners to "give people back their own healing power."

Gordon, a tall, loose-limbed presence in a purple shirt, khakis, and running shoes, begins to speak more softly. "The soul of your experience here," he tells us, "is working on yourself." He informs us that for a big chunk of each day, we will meet in small groups in order to discover, in our guts, something about the frayed links between our own bodies and emotions and the power of mind-body-spirit approaches to knit us back together. "Enjoy," he grins.

Later that afternoon, I show up at the appointed room for my first group session. My designated group-mates include two psychotherapists, a nurse, a nurse-practitioner, a psychiatrist, three other physicians and me, plus our facilitator, a gentle, dark-haired therapist named Nancy Harazduk. We make nervous, jokey small talk until Nancy asks us to arrange ourselves in a circle and introduce ourselves.

Peter, a 48-year-old anesthesiologist from San Diego, goes first. "I have the big house, the two boats, and the ten-grand vacations," he ventures. "But most days I work 12 hours, come home, yell at my kids and surf the Web to unwind until I fall into bed." He makes an effort to smile. "It's a money trap. And I have psoriasis."

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A new movement is quietly emerging that may offer people with chronic illnesses a greater sense of agency and optimism.





## The Breakthrough

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The ice has been decisively broken. As we continue around the circle, people begin to talk about hating their out-of-shape bodies, stoically coping with pain of one sort or another, and generally longing to restore some balance to their harried lives. I tell people I'm writing a magazine piece on the training program, and also that I deal with migraines. I notice that each of us – including me – takes pains to let the others know how professionally competent we are. We scatter titles and accomplishments like birdseed.

Now Nancy moves us into our first exercise – making a crayon drawing of the biggest problem we currently struggle with. “Don't think, just draw as fast as you can,” she instructs.

Three minutes later I am staring at my picture, which shows a tightrope stretched across the length of the page, with a fragile-looking figure barely balanced upon it. Below, a huge, out-of-control fire rages. I am shaken. I know I often feel pressure to do everything right – classic perfectionism stuff. But this picture shows something far more disturbing. Get it right or tumble into hell? Is this what I'm calling my life?

When we return to our small group the next

morning, Nancy picks up a small pair of Buddhist *tingsha* bells. “We're going to start our time together with a brief meditation,” she tells us. We are to merely focus on our breath, notice and accept thoughts as they come, and return to our breath. The idea, she tells us, is simply to experience ourselves, without judgment.

I like the sound of this. Not having to accomplish anything, justify myself, impress anybody. Just be. When Nancy softly rings the bells, I close my eyes and try to follow her instructions. But before long I notice a prickle of anxiety in my gut. Immediately, I squelch it, and struggle to regain my sense of calm. Then I hear again the faint ringing of bells; impossibly, ten minutes have passed.

Once again, Peter breaks the silence. He holds up his self-portrait, which features a man with a hugely distended belly and psoriasis patches covering his body. The man stands in a cage. Peter tells us, then, that he works all day in a small operating room, often with only ten minutes between surgeries. “During my breaks, I run out to the snack machines, eat some junk, then race back to put the next patient under.” He smiles wanly. “I hate my life.”

I show my drawing and say that I think the

hellfire represents my acute fear of failure. I know what everybody is thinking – *ergo*, migraines! Instantly, I begin to defend myself. My headaches, I inform them, are chiefly a matter of bad-luck bloodlines, passed down from my grandmother to my mother to my sister and me. Yet even as I press my case for genetic inevitability, I feel the insistent presence of the drawing in my hand. Why do I experience my life as so precarious?

The process of unveiling our self-portraits has noticeably loosened up the energy in our circle. We begin to talk about control, especially the terror of losing it. Then somebody mentions love. “I spend so much energy trying to get my wife to love me,” muses Michael, a Detroit-area family physician. Annie, a spirited, sixtyish therapist from rural North Carolina, tells us she is dating a special man. “Wanting somebody to want you,” she whispers, “is scarier than hell.”

I am drinking in these revelations but I am also feeling edgy and distracted. I remember, now, that I've scheduled an interview later in the day and am feeling miserably unprepared. And so when our group disbands for the afternoon and people gather in companionable little knots, I bolt past them, scribbling notes and queries and wondering if I've left out some central, critical question.



By midweek, we “students” have sampled a prodigious assortment of mind-body techniques, including the ancient Indonesian practice of whole-body shaking, two kinds of guided imagery, thermal biofeedback, self-hypnosis and an outdoor walking meditation. Later in the week, we will use music to facilitate healing, sample a progressive relaxation process known as the body scan, and try out a tension-releasing Tibetan ritual called “chaotic breathing.”

At first, I enter into these experiences somewhat shyly, especially the more physical ones. You want us to do *what*? I think while watching Gordon go red-faced and sweaty as he violently jerks and jounces in place, eyes shut, during our lesson in whole-body shaking. When he invites us to gyrate along with him, I execute a few decorous jiggles and hope the exercise will be over soon, especially since I am feeling the ominous prickle of a developing migraine. But before long I find myself bending low to the ground and swaying to the insistent drumbeat, bobbing my head like some possessed rag doll. When we finally stop I notice, to my astonishment, that my headache hasn't worsened but instead has softened, ever so slightly.

But Gordon wants to make sure we understand the deepest potential of the tools we have come here to learn. “These practices aren't just

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## Getting Personal

by Marian Sandmaier  
recipient of the ASJA June Roth  
Memorial Award for Medical Journalism

For most of my writing life, I've produced reportorial pieces full of research and interviews, and kept myself in the background. Somewhere along the line, I learned that personal invisibility was the mark of a “professional.” Then, a few years ago, I wrote a magazine piece about weekend marriage workshops and participated in one with my husband in order to get a general feel for the subject. When I turned in the piece, crammed with studies and interviews and descriptions of other people's experience in the workshop, my editor called me. “Lots of good information here,” he said. “But where are *you*?”

It was a real turning point, because he helped me to see that, by keeping myself absent, the real juice of the piece was missing. In rewriting the article in a more personal way, I discovered that not only did it “sing,” but I felt a sense of aliveness and intensity in my writing that I hadn't experienced in a long time. So when I got the assignment to write about mind-body groups for chronic illness, I knew

from the beginning that my own experience would be part of the story.

Since I deal with frequent migraines, it's hard to imagine how I could have left it out. Still, six or seven years ago, I probably would have gone to great lengths to keep myself hidden.

I've gotten more feedback from “The Breakthrough” than from any piece I've ever written. Much of it has come from readers who also suffer from chronic illnesses. They seemed to feel that I validated their reality. Several people offered remedies for migraines. Others wrote to say that the bigger theme of the piece – seizing your life and embracing the moment – resonated for them.

This feedback has felt great, because what I most hope for in writing these kinds of pieces is to offer readers a sense of felt connection, whether the issue at hand is health, intimacy, parenting, spirituality, or anything else. I know that when I write this way, I feel more connected. I truly believe that we are more like each other, and less out there on the margins, than we often feel. If I can convey a bit of that experience through my writing – well, for me, it doesn't get much better than that. ■





## The Breakthrough

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about pain control," he informs us during one morning lecture. "The idea is to *live* these approaches." I think of the shaking exercise, how I felt as happy and loose as an eight-year-old at recess. "What we're really trying to teach here," says Gordon, "is the wonder of waking up."

I am beginning, already, to witness such stirrings in some of my group-mates. On Thursday morning, Peter tells us that he has decided to drop a work shift – "screw the dough!" – which will allow him to arrive home most afternoons at the same time his kids do. "I've always told myself, 'things will be better when I retire,'" he says, tears welling in his eyes. "I know now I can't wait that long."

The following morning in our group, as we prepare for the opening meditation, Nancy urges us to carefully attend to our feelings. "All of them," she reminds us. As I close my eyes I feel, almost instantly, a tight sensation in the pit of my stomach. Then, without warning, I become aware of a deep, piercing sense of loneliness. I continue to breathe, feeling wave after wave of sadness wash over me. I feel lost and small.

Now Nancy is ringing the *tingsha* bells, and before I know it, I am speaking. "It's so hard," I begin, "to be here with all of you, when..." My voice wobbles. "When I'm spending all my time taking notes and prepping for interviews and worrying about angles for this – this *assignment* I've got."

I think, then, of my highwire-over-hell drawing, how endlessly strung out I am about doing everything right, especially the work stuff. And I tell the group, now, that I'm getting how this perfectionism business doesn't just keep me perpetually on edge and, okay, maybe it does contribute to my migraines, but it also keeps me apart from people – not just here this week, but everywhere, all the time. "Work eats up my *life*," I hear myself saying. "It's not what I want." I am crying.

As I slowly look up, I see everyone gazing at me. Michael is nodding with a kind of been-there, sober sympathy. Peter leans forward on his chair, listening intently. Nancy, meanwhile, radiates something that feels in that moment like a kind of embracing, persevering presence. "I hope," I whisper, "that before this week is done, I get to connect with each of you."



When I returned home from my encounter with mind-body-spirit medicine, I was headache-free for nearly three weeks – something approaching a personal best. Then the migraines returned, as fiercely and implacably as ever. They continue to be a part of my life.

My response to these headaches, however, is no longer what it was. Now, when I feel the first finger of pressure against the back of my

eyelids that signals an oncoming visitation, I take a pill and find a place to sit quietly. Sometimes I just focus on my breath; other times I visualize a cool stream flowing through the interstices of my cranial blood vessels. Often, though not always, it softens the pain – and I am grateful for that.

I see now, though, that the deepest teaching of this illness is not about my power to control it. Instead, it came during that moment of my group session when I understood how life-sapping was my driven, white-knuckled compulsion to stay upright on that tightrope. It came when I recognized not merely that my migraines might be fueled by my workaholic ways, but that this single-minded focus on perfection left little space for what I longed for most in my life – the solace and sustenance of simple connection.

I saw, all at once, how often I missed the chance to truly *be* with the people I cared for, whether they were the nine extraordinary individuals whom I knew for a brief week or the people in this world I have loved longest and best. I knew, deep in my gut, that I wanted a different life. And I knew, too, that I needed a way to transform this jolt of understanding into

something real and enduring.

And that is why, upon waking each morning, I no longer march dutifully from bedroom to office to begin another workday. Instead, I head downstairs to the early-morning stillness of my living room, where I meditate. I had no words to describe the kind of difference this was making until I read an essay by physician Rachel Naomi Remen about the Spanish bull-fighting concept known as *querencia*. This term refers to the place in the ring where, mysteriously, a bull stops running and becomes utterly calm and peaceful, even though he remains in full view of the matador. The bull has found sanctuary; he is gathering his strength.

When I meditate, I feel myself seeking – and sometimes, fleetingly, actually make contact with – my own *querencia*. It is a place where I feel safe and rooted and somehow purely, intrinsically good, and where all of my carp-ing, fault-finding demons are temporarily silenced. In those moments, I rediscover – for I must have known it, once – the space in myself that doesn't need to be busy or productive or impressive or, in fact, any special way at all, in order to feel worthy of a place on this planet. I'm beginning to get it: I already belong. ■

## Meet Freelancer Marian Sandmaier

by Karen O'Connor

"It is fun  
To bake a bun."

That poem, written by Marian Sandmaier at age six, launched her as a writer. "Not that I'd ever baked a bun," she says playfully, "but that's artistic license for you."

Within a couple of years, Sandmaier and her older sister, Donna, wrote and illustrated a series of little books and "peddled them door-to-door in our neighborhood for five cents each." By then, Sandmaier was hooked on writing and knew she wanted to be a writer when she grew up.

At age 23, she landed her first writing job as a reporter for a small daily newspaper. "I was assigned to cover all the news in four suburban townships, with no training except two words of advice from my managing editor: 'Make contacts.' How? Where? I wondered."

Fortunately, an older reporter became her mentor. "She taught me the basics of gathering and reporting news, a kindness I've never, ever forgotten."

As Sandmaier looks back at those years, she views the job as "a terrific experience because it forced me to jump in and become proficient at a variety of tasks." She learned to interview, research, write quickly, and – finally – to make

contacts with the confidence she lacked initially.

The second major turning point in Sandmaier's writing life came in 1994 when she published *Original Kin*, a book about adult sibling relationships. Sales were slow and Sandmaier was feeling a bit discouraged when, out of the blue, the magic phone call came – from Oprah! Sandmaier flew to Chicago for the taping, where she snagged a full half-hour on the show. Fast forward to June 17, 1994, when the show was to be aired. Nearly airborne with excitement, Sandmaier switched on the TV at the appointed time and was thrilled to see herself chatting comfortably with Oprah about sibling struggles when, suddenly, the show was interrupted for a special bulletin. "O.J. Simpson has just escaped in his Bronco," the news anchor intoned. Oprah never came back on the air.

"I didn't sell a single book from that show," Sandmaier recalls. "It was horribly disappointing at the time. But what I learned from the experience is that I need to invest less in results and more in simply enjoying the writing process. It's been a tremendous lesson."

Today, she keeps that lesson alive by spending every Thursday morning working on personal writing – unassigned essays on subjects

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## From the Courts

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Court of Appeals has unanimously upheld a trial court decision that Random House is not likely to succeed on the merits of its copyright infringement claim and cannot demonstrate irreparable harm. And while Random House expresses fear about harm to its goodwill, the court notes that an injunction could put RosettaBooks out of business. Unless Random House appeals the case to the Supreme Court, it will now go to trial.

### Registrations Must Be Originals

Another federal Court of Appeals, this time the Sixth Circuit, has also decided that, for a copyright registration to be valid, you must register either the original work or a "bona fide copy." The court turned down a registration based on a "reconstruction" of a song the composer claimed was created in 1982.

### Sandmaier

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that interest her. In addition, "I have a wonderful freelance job as features editor for the *Psychotherapy Networker*, a kind of literary therapy journal published in Washington, D.C. I get to write a lot about psychological issues, my favorite subject matter."

Sandmaier also writes relationship/behavior pieces for *Health*, *Child*, and other mainstream magazines. "To be honest," she says, "this isn't as rewarding as the other writing, because the editors tend to know exactly what they want, and my job, more or less, is to fill in the blanks."

When I asked if she had any secret writing goals, Sandmaier said her one emerging desire is "to be much more honest and real in my writing. One of the reasons I'm moving in the direction of personal essays is that I want to write about what moves me, rather than just respond to assignments."

Sandmaier says she has felt a lot of support from her membership in ASJA. "The newsletter and some of the position papers have given me courage to ask for better contracts." She also felt validated by the June Roth Memorial Award received last year for her article, "The Breakthrough."

"The kind of writing I did for that piece," she says, "is exactly what I want to be doing more of — communicate what is meaningful to me, and with luck, connect with others through that effort." She wants readers to know that "No matter how up-against-a-wall they may feel, possibilities do exist." ■

### AOL Wins One Against Spammers

Netvision Audiotext has been ordered to pay America Online an undisclosed amount in damages and to cease sending unsolicited e-mail through its Web master affiliates as part of the judgment in a civil lawsuit AOL brought against the company. Netvision claimed it enforced a "no-spam" policy, but America Online said the company encouraged third-party Web masters to send out spam, often specifically targeting AOL users.

### E-Business Served by E-Mail

A federal appeals court has allowed a Las Vegas casino to e-mail legal documents to an offshore company without a physical address. "When faced with an international e-business scofflaw playing hide-and-seek with a federal court, e-mail may be the only means of effecting service of process," the court said. "We acknowledge that we tread upon untrodden ground." The Rio Hotel-Casino in Las Vegas claims a Costa Rican online sports book is infringing on the hotel's trademark by operating gambling web sites at [www.Riosports.com](http://www.Riosports.com) and [www.betRio.com](http://www.betRio.com). The trial court judge had allowed the casino to use e-mail to serve the documents because no physical address could be found.

### Media Wants Utah Governor's E-Mail

Four news organizations have sued Utah Governor Mike Leavitt saying that his policy of destroying his e-mail after three days is illegal and amounts to destruction of public records. When a newspaper asked for the governor's paper and digital correspondence on congressional redistricting last year, his lawyer announced that he had advised the governor to routinely delete e-mails. The news organizations say this deprives the public of "its constitutional right of access to information concerning the conduct of the public's business."

### DCMA Protects AOL in Harlan Ellison E-Book Case

A lawsuit by science-fiction author Harlan Ellison has been thrown out by a Federal District Court judge who has ruled that America Online is protected by provisions in the *Digital Millennium Copyright Act* (DCMA). The law protects Internet service providers from charges of copyright infringement as long as they take down infringing items as soon as they are notified of their existence. Ellison had sued AOL saying that they had violated his copyright by

permitting unauthorized copies of his work to remain on Usenet servers for two weeks. However, the judge said that AOL was protected by the DCMA, and that it did not induce or encourage the infringement.

### Pennsylvania ISPs Must Block Kiddie Porn

A new Pennsylvania law now requires Internet service providers with customers in Pennsylvania to block access to child pornography. The state attorney general's office will notify ISPs of what Web sites have to be blocked. ISPs that do not comply face fines of \$5000 on the first offense, \$20,000 for the second, and \$30,000 plus prison time of up to seven years for the third and subsequent offenses.

### Turkish Publisher Facing Charges

A Turkish translation of a book on Kurdistan has landed the publisher in court, charged with "separatist propaganda." The book is Jonathan Randall's 1997 title *After Such Knowledge, What Forgiveness? My Encounters in Kurdistan*. Abdullah Keskin heads Avesta publishing which produced the Turkish translation of the book last year. The charges against him say that, by referring to Kurdistan, and by mentioning "a Kurdish nation and also a Kurdish state within territories of the Turkish Republic," the book becomes "separatist propaganda through publication in order to sabotage the indivisible integrity of the state and nation of the Republic of Turkey."

### Massachusetts Backs off Son of Sam Law

The Massachusetts State Senate has backed off from a proposed Son of Sam law after being told by the Massachusetts Supreme Court that the law would violate both the state constitution and the First Amendment. The court did hold out the possibility that they differently written bill might be constitutional.

California's Son of Sam law was also recently found unconstitutional.

According to Zick Rubin, a Boston lawyer who filed a brief on behalf of media companies in the Massachusetts case, "It now appears likely that courts in other states will invalidate laws that require publishers and filmmakers to place into escrow payments that might be related to crimes." ■



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