



Writing Right Newsletter

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Books. It Is Never Too Late by Mark Dillonno	2
ASA Mentorships	3
For Successful Fiction, Add Conflict—Twice!	4
Writing Powerful Endings For Kids	5
Penguin Group Guidelines Writing Rules By Diane Beer	6
The Worst First Sentences	7/8
The Great Mystery: Making A Bestseller	9/10
Membership Application Form	11
Pacing—Keep The Editor Reading Opportunities For Writers	12
Book Industry Study Group	13
Pan Macmillan Submission Guidelines	14
Who Said Research Was Uninteresting	15
Contact Us	16

ANNOUNCING THE WINNERS!

The next meeting on Friday June 15th 6.30 pm (above Cafe Buongiorno — take the lift to the 2nd floor).

Subject of the workshop: Analysing the Anthology to be followed by critique groups. Bring work along to be assessed, discussed and analysed by the group.

Copies of the 2007 Anthology UNCENSORED will be available for sale if there are any left. We only printed a limited number because Writing Right can't afford to be left with a box full of unsold books.

Members of the SA Writers' Centre are invited to attend the launch of Sir Anthony Bran's new book 'Ravens of Ravensgate'.

The book is a tale of fiction, based on fact, set in the turbulent years of the Tudors and beyond.

Murder, Mayhem, Mysticism, Kidnap and Erotica combine with touches of humour, when two young brothers strive to protect their beloved Queen Elizabeth 1st and her country from enemies at home and abroad.

Please come and help celebrate the launch of 'Ravens of Ravensgate', at 2pm on Sunday 3rd of June at the SAWC.

**Critique Session on
SATURDAY
JUNE 2nd
at 12 Sandford St,
Kensington Gdns
(in cottage at rear)
Ph: 8332 6085
at 2.00pm**

**Next Meeting on
FRIDAY
JUNE 15th at the
SA Writers' Centre
Rundle St,
2nd floor above
Cafe Buongiorno
at 6.30pm**

THE NEW WRITING RIGHT ANTHOLOGY FOR 2007
"UNCENSORED" IS NOW AVAILABLE
ONLY \$20.00 EACH OR \$25.00 INCLUDING POSTAGE
FOR MORE INFORMATION EMAIL kerrina23@bigpond.com

96-YEAR OLD WRITER DISCOVERS SUCCESS — AT LAST

Books. It is never too late.

By Mark DiIonno

Newhouse News Service. — Harry Bernstein sits in his small library, in a soft chair as comfortable and well-worn as an old robe, surrounded by works of writers for the ages: Plato and Homer, Dante and Shakespeare, Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky.

On other shelves are the writers from his age: Steinbeck, Hemingway, Richard Wright, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.

Next to Bernstein's chair is a wooden filing cabinet, filled with unpublished manuscripts, novels and short stories, a lifetime's worth of unfulfilled dreams. On the shelf above the filing cabinet is the dream come true: a few copies of "The Invisible Wall: A Love Story that Broke Barriers," the first book that Bernstein, at age 96, has had published and distributed.

"The Invisible Wall" is a memoir, a slice of pre-World War I England, where in a mill town in Lancashire, young Harry Bernstein became a facilitator and co-conspirator in a forbidden romance between his sister, Lily, and a Christian boy across the street. In this

way, "The Invisible Wall" is a story for the ages, from "Romeo and Juliet" to the untold love stories that cut across ethnic, racial, religious or national lines. It is especially a story for this age, Bernstein says, as current events suggest more invisible walls are being built rather than torn down.

The book, written in the same gentle manner with which Bernstein carries himself, is getting very good reviews, and foreign language rights have been sold in Finland, Germany, Italy and Sweden. The success of "The Invisible Wall" has landed Bernstein a contract for a sequel, called "The Dream," which is about his family's migration to America.

If anything, "The Invisible Wall" is proof of two truisms of writing. Rejection is universal, as certain for writers as death and taxes. And it is a lonely profession.

"I wrote about 20 or 30 novels. I threw a lot away," he said.

When his last book was finished he sent out to publishers. American groups rejected it, but the English offices of Random House passed it on to editors at their Ballantine Books imprint.

Harry Bernstein had arrived.

ASA MENTORSHIPS

ONE FROM SA. DAVID BRADBURY
CONGRATULATIONS.
MORE SHOULD APPLY NEXT YEAR!!!!

The Australian Society of Authors (ASA) has announced the twenty successful applicants for its mentorship program in 2007-08.

The program's judges--Georgia Blain, Tohby Riddle, Brooke Emery, Margo Lanagan and ASA executive director Jeremy Fisher--were impressed with the overall quality as well as the quantity of the entries. Fisher said: 'If these applications are an indication of the future of Australian literature, then we need have no fear of its demise. Literary creativity in Australia is alive and kicking.'

Selected from over 500 entries, the 20 successful applicants will have the opportunity to develop their manuscripts to the highest professional standard and to bring their work to the attention of publishers, literary agents and future readers.

The 20 writers and illustrators will work closely with a mentor of their choice for 30 hours over up to 12 months. At the completion of the program, selected participants will be invited to read their work, appear 'in conversation with' or participate in panels at state and regional writers' festivals.

The 20 successful applicants are:

Alisa Boland (WA, picture book illustration)
David Bradbury (SA, fiction)
Quynh Dao (Vic, non-fiction)
Sue deGennaro (Vic, picture book illustration)
Robert Engwerda (Vic, fiction)
Rowena Evans (NSW, picture book illustration)
Carolyn Goodwin (Singapore, children's)
Catherine Harris (Vic, fiction)
Tanya Heaslip (WA, non-fiction)
Andy Jackson (Vic, poetry)
Elena Knox (NSW, fiction)
Lee Kofman (Vic, fiction)
Lisa Lang (Vic, fiction)
Judith Lanigan (NSW, non-fiction)
Mary Lightfoot (NSW, non-fiction)
Heather Marsh (Vic, picture book illustration)
Michael Neophytou (NSW, fiction)
Elizabeth Quinn (Vic, children's)
Andy Segal (Vic, children's)
Andrew Slattery (NSW, poetry)

Thanks to continued funding from Copyright Agency Limited, the mentorship program will be offered again in 2008 and 2009. Published: 09/05/2007

FOR SUCCESSFUL FICTION, ADD CONFLICT -- TWICE

by Laura Backes

Children's Book Insider

Previously in the pages of CBI I have often written about the basic structure for children's fiction: a character encounters an obstacle or conflict of some kind, and then resolves it through his or her own purposeful action. This makes up the events of the story, or the plot. How the character changes as a person through this conflict and resolution process reflects the book's theme, or underlying message. But lately I've been thinking that the above explanation is too simple.

After studying many successful children's novels for ages eight and up, it's become clear that the character really confronts two kinds of conflict: external and internal. The external conflict is often beyond the character's control; it's a situation he is thrust into, for better or worse, and it's what pulls the plot along from page to page. It could be a mystery that needs solving, moving to a new neighborhood or a death in the family. The external conflict makes the period of time between the first and last page of the book different from any other time in the character's life.

The internal conflict is something the character brings to the story on page one. This conflict may be unknown to the character – it could be lurking just under the surface – or it could be a problem the character is aware of but has been ignoring. But when the character is confronted with the external conflict, the internal conflict is brought to light. The internal conflict is contained within the

main character – guilt over cheating on a test at school, anger at parents who are recently divorced, lack of self confidence – and must be resolved in some way for the character to grow. Middle grade and young adult novels, which require complexly-layered stories, need both internal and external conflicts. Without internal conflict, the characters have no depth. Without external conflict, there is no plot – only angst. But there has to be a connection between the two for a cohesive and believable story. One brings on the other. They feed off each other until the character takes active steps to resolve one conflict, thus leading to the solution of the other problem.

An example of this intricate structure is Suzanne Fisher Staples' young adult novel *Dangerous Skies* (Frances Foster Books/Farrar, Straus & Giroux). The narrator, 12-year-old Buck Smith, lives on the Chesapeake Bay. His family is descended from the English settlers who moved to Virginia in the 1700s. His best friend, Tunes, is descended from the slaves who were brought from Africa to work the Smith farm. She shares Buck's last name, and the two were raised together since infancy. But Buck remarks at the beginning of the book how lately he's noticed the adults watching them as they go off fishing together, and that suddenly Tunes is growing and turning from a girl to a woman. Buck resists this inevitable change in their lives – this is the internal conflict he brings to the book.

The external conflict soon presents itself; Buck and Tunes find the body of a friend in the Bay while fishing, and Tunes acts strangely and immediately takes

off into the marsh. A few days later the sheriff appears at Buck's house looking for Tunes – he wants to question her about the murder. As Buck helps Tunes hide from the law he is confronted with other external conflicts: racial prejudice that takes the word of a white man over a black girl; punishment from his parents when he tries to help Tunes; suspicion from the sheriff that he might be involved in the crime when he lies about Tunes' whereabouts. Internal conflicts Buck was never aware of also surface: his relationship with his parents deteriorates when they don't stand up for Tunes, even though she was always like a daughter to them; Tunes puts up an invisible wall between herself and Buck, keeping information from him that will allow him to fully understand her predicament.

The ending of the book is bitter-sweet. The external conflict is resolved, though not to Buck's satisfaction. He also comes to terms with his internal conflicts, but it's not a traditional happy ending. As with many great young adult novels, not all loose ends are neatly tied up. This is a story about real life, and Buck learns that people are not perfect and sometimes prejudice is too big for one person to fight. He sees this time as the end of his childhood, a loss of innocence. He accepts this and moves on, and in doing so he grows.

When creating problems for your main characters, think along two lines. A big, external conflict that forms the plot and keeps the story moving, and an internal conflict that forces your character to change, reflecting the theme. This will give your story depth, and give your readers something to think about.

WRITING POWERFUL ENDINGS FOR KIDS

by **Laura Backes**

[Children's Book Insider](#)

The first few lines of any story are the most important – and often most difficult – words you'll write. The next most challenging piece of writing is the ending. Once you draw your readers in and take them through your story, you need to leave them with a satisfying conclusion. Here, then, are some tips for writing powerful endings:

Fiction picture books: The story in a picture book must come to a natural, logical conclusion. The action should end at a definitive moment, with no plot points left hanging. The reader needs to be satisfied with the way the story ends; the main character (with whom the reader is identifying) must solve the conflict by the last page. The conclusion cannot be implied or left open; readers shouldn't have to choose between several possible outcomes.

Some authors try to sum up the message of the book in the last paragraph. If your story is well-written, the reader will know what the character learned without your having to blatantly spell it out. Once the action is over and the conflict resolved, the story ends. Anything beyond that point dilutes the impact of all that's gone before.

Chapters: Chapters must feel complete in themselves.

Some of the best authors limit their chapters to one scene or event, starting a new chapter with the next scene. A powerful way to end a chapter is at a climactic moment in the middle of a scene. This causes the reader to want to turn the page and see what happens next. The most effective chapters end in the same way they begin: with action or dialogue.

Novels: Novels, like picture books, must have a complete ending. Your character faces a problem or conflict during the course of the book, and once that problem is resolved the story ends quickly. Many beginning authors add a final chapter that shows how life returned to normal after the story took place; this is unnecessary information that takes away from the impact of the story's resolution.

Any subplots must be tied up before or at the same moment as the conclusion of the main story. The last chapter focuses on the main character and the results of his actions. Show how that character has grown or changed in some way, but avoid preaching to your readers. This information can generally be summed up very quickly and dramatically with a short final chapter.

Articles: Think of the end of an article as a conclusion, rather than simply summing up facts. The final paragraph draws information from the body of the article and shows the reader why this topic is

significant to him. The ending must relate to the initial premise of the piece, answering the questions posed at the beginning. The conclusion packs the final punch of the article, showing the reader why this information is important in the first place. Ending with an interesting quote or point can entice readers to further explore the topic.

Nonfiction books: As with articles, the end of a nonfiction book is the conclusion of all the information you have presented. However, with books you have an entire chapter to make your point. Many authors title their last chapter with a question, such as "Where Do We Go From Here?" or "What Does the Future Hold for the Amazon?" The body of your chapter will answer this question, drawing from the facts in the book and posing possible solutions. If you relate the subject to the reader's own life, he will continue to have an interest in the topic long after he finishes your book.

Endings are important. They are the final contact you'll have with your readers; your last chance to make an impression. Take time with your endings and write them carefully. A satisfying conclusion will not only make reading an enjoyable experience, but children will anxiously await your next work.

PENGUIN GROUP GUIDELINES

Penguin Group (Australia)

PO Box 701

HAWTHORN VIC 3122

www.penguin.com.au

Guidelines for writers

Unfortunately Penguin is unable to enter into individual correspondence about book proposals. Please read the information provided below if you require advice on how to get a book published, but please note the following:

*The Adult Publishing department - comprising Penguin Books (our primary paperback imprint) and Viking (our hardback imprint) is **NOT** accepting unsolicited manuscripts at this time.*

*The Books for Children and Young Adults Department is **NOT** accepting unsolicited manuscripts for the Aussie Nibbles and Aussie Bites series until further notice.*

Other proposals, including submissions for the Aussie Chomps series are currently being accepted. For submissions made, you can expect to wait up to four months for a response. Manuscripts should be submitted in hard copy (double-spaced, and may be printed on both sides of the paper) along with a stamped self-addressed envelope to:

The Editor

Books for Children and Young Adults

Penguin Group (Australia)

PO Box 701

Hawthorn VIC 3122

SUBMITTING MANUSCRIPTS

Within the Penguin Group (which is comprised of various imprints) it is extremely rare for any unsolicited manuscripts or proposals to be accepted for publication. Manuscripts and proposals submitted by literary agents will always take precedence. Note that Penguin no longer publishes new poetry and only very rarely publishes short stories.

When you have completed your manuscript you can:

Have it checked by a manuscript assessment service. For a fee, a number of literary and writing organisations offer this service. Check the Yellow Pages telephone listings under WRITERS, CONSULTANTS &/or SERVICES

Give it to a literary agent, who will be able to advise you on your work and will know the most suitable publisher(s) to whom you should submit it. Names and addresses of Australian literary agents can be found in the Yellow Pages telephone listings under WRITERS, CONSULTANTS &/or SERVICES, or at www.austlitagentsassoc.com.au/members.html

Submit it directly to various publishers, strictly according to their submission guidelines. These can be found on their websites or by phoning the publisher.

General Information and Advice

CONTRACTS AND PAYMENTS

If a decision is made to publish the manuscript, the publisher will send a contract to the author. An agreement should be reached (with the assistance of a solicitor if necessary) between the two parties before the contract is signed.

PUBLISHERS (GENERAL)

There are several useful directories of publishers that list their addresses and the types of books they publish. These are available in libraries:

International Literary Market Place (Bowker) covers 159 countries worldwide.

Directory of Publishing (Cassell) lists publishers in Great Britain and the Commonwealth.

APA Directory of Members is a pocket-sized listing of Australian publishers and is available from the Australian Publishers Association:

Suite 60/89 Jones Street Ph: 02 9281 9788

ULTIMO NSW 2007 Fax: 02 9281 1073

Web: www.publishers.asn.au

PUBLISHERS (POETRY AND SHORT STORIES)

In the case of poetry and short stories, if you are an unpublished author, you have a greater chance of success approaching a book publisher with a complete collection and an established readership of work. For this reason it is advisable to seek publication initially in magazines or literary journals. Check libraries and bookshops for these magazines and follow their specific submission guidelines. Penguin does not publish poetry and very rarely short stories.

WRITING RULES

By Diane Beer

Rules in writing become quite overwhelming at times. We have to have the punctuation perfect, the layout right and all the characterization, plotting and conflicts in place.

However, at times we can throw rules to the wind and do whatever comes naturally. Don't let rules kill your muse. But how far can you gamble?

Michele Roberts, one of Britain's best novelists broke quite a few in her book, *Fair Exchange*, which was reprinted in 2004. When reading the book it is interesting to see how it breaks rules, particularly in dialogue, where instead of quotes the reader's only clue is a dash at the beginning of the line.

Huge slabs of writing with unrelentingly long black paragraphs did not stop me from reading until I finished the last page long after midnight.

But Michele Roberts has already earned her straps with a long list of top selling books and publishers are willing to look at her work – which wouldn't happen for a beginner with no publishing wins on the board.

When reading check how books are laid out and observe how the rules of writing are observed.

THE WORST FIRST SENTENCES

Supplied by Chris Ostermann

Every year, the Bulwer-Lytton Society sponsors a contest for the worst first sentence of a novel. It's named after a nineteenth-century British writer of potboilers:

"It was a dark and stormy night; the rain fell in torrents—except at occasional intervals, when it was checked by a violent gust of wind which swept up the streets (for it is in London that our scene lies), rattling along the housetops, and fiercely agitating the scanty flame of the lamps that struggled against the darkness."

—Edward George Bulwer-Lytton, Paul Clifford (1830)

Lytton of Grand Prize Winners (<http://www.bulwer-lytton.com/>) > <http://www.bulwer-lytton.com/books.htm>

The camel died quite suddenly on the second day, and Selena fretted sulkily and, buffing her already impeccable nails—not for the first time since the journey began—pondered snidely if this would dissolve into a vignette of minor inconveniences like all the other holidays spent with Basil.

—Gail Cain, San Francisco, California (1983 Winner)

The lovely woman-child Kaa was mercilessly chained to the cruel post of the warrior-chief Beast, with his barbarous tribe now stacking wood at her nubile feet, when the strong, clear voice of the poetic and heroic Handsomas roared, "Flick your Bic, crisp that chick, and you'll feel my steel through your last meal."

—Steven Garman, Pensacola, Florida (1984 Winner)

The countdown had stalled at T minus 69 seconds when Desiree, the first female ape to go up in space, winked at me slyly and pouted her thick, rubbery lips unmistakably-lips

unmistakably—the first of many such advance prove to be the longest, and most memorable, space voyage of my career.

—Martha Simpson, Glastonbury, Connecticut (1985 Winner)

The bone-chilling scream split the warm summer night in two, the first half being before the scream when it was fairly balmy and calm and pleasant for those who hadn't heard the scream at all, but not calm or balmy or even very nice for those who did hear the scream, discounting the little period of time during the actual scream itself when your ears might have been hearing it but your brain wasn't reacting yet to let you know.

—Patricia E. Presutti, Lewiston, New York (1986 Winner)

The notes blatted skyward as the sun rose over the Canada geese, feathered rumps mooning the day, webbed appendages frantically peddling unseen bicycles in their search for sustenance, driven by Nature's maxim, "Ya wanna eat, ya gotta work," and at last I knew Pittsburgh.

—Sheila B. Richter, Minneapolis, Minnesota (1987 Winner)

Like an expensive sports car, fine-tuned and well-built, Portia was sleek, shapely, and gorgeous, her red jumpsuit molding her body, which was as warm as the seatcovers in July, her hair as dark as new tires, her eyes flashing like bright hubcaps, and her lips as dewy as the beads of fresh rain on the hood; she was a woman driven—fueled by a single accelerant—she was a woman man, a man who wouldn't shift from his views, a man to steer her along the right road, a man like Alf Romeo.

—Rachel E. Sheeley, Williamsburg, Indiana (1988 Winner)

Professor Frobisher couldn't believe he had missed seeing it for so long—it was, after all, right there under his nose—but in all his years of research into the intricate and mysterious ways of the universe, he had never noticed that the freckles on his upper lip, just below and to the left of the nostril, partially hidden until now by a hairy mole he had just removed a week before, exactly matched the pattern of the stars in the Pleides,

down to the angry red zit that had just popped up where he and his colleagues had only today discovered an exploding nova.

—Ray C. Gainey, Indianapolis, Indiana (1989 Winner)

Dolores breezed along the surface of her life like a flat stone forever skipping across smooth water, rippling reality sporadically but oblivious to it consistently, until she finally lost momentum, sank, and due to an overdose of fluoride as a child which caused her to lie forever on the floor of her life as useless as an appendix and as lonely as a five-hundred-as useless as in a steroid-free fitness center.

—Linda Vernon, Newark, California (1990 Winner)

Sultry it was and humid, but no whisper of air caused the plump, laden spears of golden grain to nod their burdened heads as they unheedingly awaited the cyclic rape of their gleaming treasure, while overhead the burning orb of luminescence ascended its ever-upward path toward a sweltering celestial apex, for although it is not in Kansas that our story takes place, it looks godawful like it.

—Judy Frazier, Lathrop, Missouri (1991 Winner)

As the newest Lady Turnpot descended into the kitchen wrapped only in her celery-green dressing gown, her creamy bosom rising and falling like a temperamental soufflé, her tart mouth pursed in distaste, the sous-chef whispered to the scullery boy, "I don't know what to make of her."

—Laurel Fortuner, Montendre, France (1992 Winner)

She wasn't really my type, a hard-looking but untalented reporter from the local cat box liner, but the first second that the third-rate representative of the fourth estate cracked open a new fifth of old Scotch, my sixth sense said seventh heaven was as close as an eighth note from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, so, nervous as a tenth grader drowning in eleventh-hour cramming for a physics exam, I swept her into my longing arms, and,

THE WORST FIRST SENTENCES CONT'D

humming "The Twelfth of Never," I got lucky on Friday the thirteenth.

–Wm. W. "Buddy" Ocheltree, Port Townsend, Washington (1993 Winner)

As the fading light of a dying day filtered through the window blinds, Roger stood over his victim with a smoking .45, surprised at the serenity that

filled him after pumping six slugs into the bloodless tyrant that mocked him day after day, and then he shuffled out of the office with one last look back at the shattered computer terminal lying there like a silicon armadillo left to rot on the information super-highway.

–Larry Brill, Austin, Texas (1994 Winner)

Paul Revere had just discovered that someone in Boston was a spy for the

British, and when he saw the young woman believed to be the spy's girlfriend in an Italian restaurant he said to the waiter, "Hold the spumoni—I'm going to follow the chick an' catch a Tory."

–John L. Ashman, Houston, Texas (1995 Winner)

"Ace, watch your head!" hissed Wanda urgently, yet somehow provocatively, through red, full, sensuous lips, but he couldn't you know, since nobody can actually watch more than part of his nose or a little cheek or lips if he really tries, but he appreciated her warning.

–Janice Estey, Aspen, Colorado (1996 Winner)

The moment he laid eyes on the lifeless body of the nude socialite sprawled across the bathroom floor, Detective Leary knew she had committed suicide by grasping the cap on the tamper-proof bottle, pushing down and twisting while she kept her thumb firmly pressed against the spot the arrow pointed to, until she hit the exact spot where the tab clicks into place, allowing her to remove the cap and swallow the entire contents of the bottle, thus ending her life.

– Artie Kalemeris, Fairfax, Virginia

(1997 Winner)

The corpse exuded the irresistible aroma of a piquant, ancho chili glaze enticingly enhanced with a hint of fresh cilantro as it lay before him, coyly garnished by a garland of variegated radicchio and caramelized onions, and impishly drizzled with glistening rivulets of vintage balsamic vinegar and roasted garlic oil; yes, as he surveyed the body of the slain food critic slumped on the floor of the cozy, but nearly empty, bistro, a quick inventory of his senses told corpulent Inspector Moreau that this was, in all likelihood, an inside job.

–Bob Perry, Milton, Massachusetts (1998 Winner)

Through the gathering gloom of a late-October afternoon, along the greasy, cracked paving-stones slick from the sputum of the sky, Stanley Ruddlethorp wearily trudged up the hill from the cemetery where his wife, sister, brother, and three children were all buried, and forced open the door of his decaying house, blissfully unaware of the catastrophe that was soon to devastate his life.

–Dr. David Chuter, Kingston, Surrey, ENGLAND (1999 Winner)

The heather-encrusted Headlands, veiled in fog as thick as smoke in a crowded pub, hunched precariously over the moors, their rocky elbows slipping off land's end, their bulbous, craggy noses thrust into the thick foam of the North Sea like bearded old men falling asleep in their pints.

–Gary Dahl, Los Gatos, CA (2000 Winner)

A small assortment of astonishingly loud brass instruments raced each other lustily to the respective ends of their distinct musical choices as the gates flew open to release a torrent of tawny fur comprised of angry yapping bullets that nipped at Desdemona's ankles, causing her to reflect once again (as blood filled her sneakers and she fought her way through the panicking crowd) that the annual Running of the Pomeranians in Liechtenstein was a stupid idea.

Sera Kirk, Vancouver, BC (2001 Winner)

On reflection, Angela perceived that her relationship with Tom had always been rocky, not quite a roller-coaster ride but more like when the toilet-paper roll gets a little squashed so it hangs crooked and every time you pull some off you can hear the rest going bumpity-bumpity in its holder until you go nuts and push it back into shape, a degree of annoyance that Angela had now almost attained.

Rephah Berg, Oakland CA (2002 Winner)

They had but one last remaining night together, so they embraced each other as tightly as that two-flavor entwined string cheese that is orange and yellowish-white, the orange probably being a bland Cheddar and the white . . . Mozzarella, although it could possibly be Provolone or just plain American, as it really doesn't taste distinctly dissimilar from the orange, yet they would have you believe it does by coloring it differently.

Mariann Simms, Wetumpka, AL (2003 Winner)

She resolved to end the love affair with Ramon tonight . . . summarily, like Martha Stewart ripping the sand vein out of a shrimp's tail . . . though the term "love affair" now struck her as a ridiculous euphemism . . . not unlike "sand vein," which is after all an intestine, not a vein . . . and that tarry substance inside certainly isn't sand . . . and that brought her back to Ramon.

Dave Zobel, Manhattan Beach, CA (2004 Winner)

As he stared at her ample bosom, he daydreamed of the dual Stromberg carburetors in his vintage Triumph Spitfire, highly functional yet pleasingly formed, perched prominently on top of the intake manifold, aching for experienced hands, the small knurled caps of the oil dampeners begging to be inspected and adjusted as described in chapter seven of the shop manual.

Dan McKay, Fargo, ND (2005 Winner)

THE GREATEST MYSTERY: MAKING A BEST SELLER

There are two ways for a book to become a best seller. One is to make it on to a best-seller list by selling many copies in a week. Other books sell steadily over months and years, eventually outselling many official best sellers.

"Unanswered Cries," a true-crime book by Tom French, was acquired in 1989 by St. Martin's for \$30,000. It now has 400,000 copies in print in paperback and sold at least 31,000 copies last year alone.

These older titles are crucial to profits because marketing and acquisition costs have usually already been recouped. Yet publishers focus much more attention on the hardcover release. As they prepare to introduce a book, any combination of timing, packaging, marketing and other factors could help ignite the mysterious spark that leads to best-sellerdom.

Contributing to the success of "The Secret," for example, could be any or all of the following: the subject, the title, the initial DVD release, the marketing campaign, the power of the Internet, "[Oprah](#)" and the latest trend.

But "The Secret" is only the most recent book of its type. "Many people have spent lots of money trying to publish the book 'The Secret' has become," says Susan Petersen Kennedy, president of the Penguin Group. "A lot of books are just like that that haven't worked."

The same uncertainty surrounded "Prep." When Ms. Sittenfeld was writing the novel, she recalled, colleagues said, "The boarding school book has already been written. Why are you doing it again?"

But after it became a best seller, Ms. Sittenfeld said, she heard the opposite: "Of course it did well! It's a boarding school book!"

The publisher of "Prep" attributes the success, in addition to the story, to a catchy title and book cover and creative marketing and publicity. A team of four publicists made belts that matched the cover for giveaways, and sent splashy gift bags (holding pink and green flip-flops, the belt, notebooks, lip gloss) with the galleys to magazines. The pitch letter included photocopies of the publicists' own high school yearbook photos.

"It got attention, and we started getting calls wanting more and more galleys," says Jynne Martin, one of the publi-

cists.

An impressive lineup of press coverage followed. The book ended up with coveted crossover market appeal: in addition to young women, the book was read by adolescents, more mature readers and males, according to anecdotal evidence. Information about readers is often anecdotal because publishers argue that market research would be too expensive, or too difficult to pull off because one book is so different from the next.

"Some of the best and most interesting books have something contrarian that does surprise and delight," says Susan Weinberg, publisher of PublicAffairs.

TAKE the surprise of "Skinny Bitch," a diet book by Rory Freedman, a former modeling agent, and Kim Barnouin, a former model. "The voice is funny, tough love, no nonsense," the authors' agent, Talia Rosenblatt Cohen, said. But the authors were largely unknown and advocate a vegan lifestyle. "Everyone kept saying, 'No platform!' and 'Vegan!'" Ms. Rosenblatt Cohen said.

The book sold to Running Press in Philadelphia for barely over five figures and

THE GREATEST MYSTERY: MAKING A BEST SELLER

has not received much mainstream press since its publication 16 months ago. Word traveled among vegans and college students, however, and it became a Los Angeles Times best seller. More than 100,000 copies are now in print, and the authors have signed a deal for two more books with Running Press for “well into the six figures.”

Some experts wonder if book publishers might uncover more books like this if they tried harder to find out more about their buyers and what they want.

“The Newspaper Association of America has a staggering amount of data on people who read newspapers. The book business has, basically, nothing,” said Professor Greco. “They’re not going into the marketplace and doing mall intercepts and asking people, as they leave the bookstore, ‘What did you buy? Did you find what you’re looking for? What motivated you to choose that book?’ ”

An exception is the consumer research gathered by the Romance Writers of

America, a writers’ association that publishes a regular market study of romance readers. It reports survey information on, for example, demographics, what respondents are reading, where they are getting the books and how often, and what kind of covers attract them. Romance authors and publishers use the information to create promotional campaigns.

Most publishers, though, continue to gather data on sales and not much else, though past performance is certainly no guarantee of future results, even from the same author.

After “Prep” became a best seller, Random House signed a two-book deal with Ms. Sittenfeld for a multiple of her \$40,000 “Prep” advance that she would not reveal.

Her second coming-of-age novel, “The Man of My Dreams,” was published last May, and again the advance payment and sales haven’t matched up. According to Nielsen BookScan, “The Man of My Dreams” has sold 36,000 copies in hardcover

and 6,000 in paperback.

Ms. Sittenfeld says she is reminded of something she heard from an editor: “People think publishing is a business, but it’s a casino.”

Editors’ note: The editor of the Sunday Business section is under contract to Random House and did not edit this article.



REMINDERS

THE NEXT CRITIQUE SESSION IN THE COTTAGE, 12 Sandford St., Kensington Gdns, WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY JUNE 2nd at 2pm

THE NEXT MEETING AT CAFÉ BUONGIORNO, Rundle St., Adelaide in the SA Writers’ Centre 2nd Floor - WILL BE HELD ON FRIDAY, JUNE 15th AT 6.30 pm

And don’t forget the upcoming launch of

RAVENS OF RAVENSGATE

BY SIR ANTHONY BRAN

Please come and help celebrate the launch with Anthony, at 2pm on Sunday 3rd of June at the SAWC.



Writing Right

12 Sandford Street, Kensington Gardens S. Aust. 5068
08 8332 6085 dyoz@ozemail.com.au

Meetings: Third Friday of each month at 6.30pm
in the SA Writers' Centre. 187 Rundle Street, Adelaide 5000
(Upstairs above Buongiorno café lift to 2nd floor)

Critique groups: First Saturday of each month from 2 pm at 12 Sandford
Street, Kensington Gardens.

On Line Critiquing: Link through our webpage
<http://www.dream-craft.com/writingright/home.htm>

MEMBERSHIP application FORM

Writing Right, 12 Sandford St, Kensington Gardens SA 5068 8332 6085 dyoz@ozemail.com.au

ANNUAL FEES \$25 A YEAR DUE Jan

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Tel:.....Mobile.....email.....

PACING - KEEP THE EDITOR READING

Many good writers find pace is the stumbling block that prevents them from becoming published, and editors are often at a loss to explain what is wrong with a manuscript when everything the author is doing seems to be right, and yet the story fails to grab them.

A book that lacks a good pace becomes boring, even if things are happening all the time.

For beginning writers the most common fault is a too-slow, sludgy snail's pace. Usually this comes about because they are trying to tell too much too soon. They feel a need to set the scene, define the character and inform the reader about the background to the story before they start detailing events. This is often done through a flashback on page one or two – but the reader seldom cares enough at this stage to want to hear about things that happened six months or six years ago. It is almost always better to give minimal information in the first pages – we mainly want conflict and characters at first.

Other details can be filled in later, usually in small bits, not large chunks of narrative without dialogue or action. The pace of the first chapter is vital to ensure the reader will get far enough into your story to want to read on. In today's world life is too short and full to be bothered with books that readers find boring. You can't count on them persevering until it gets more interesting.

The pace of a story may be leisurely or fast – popular fiction tends to be generally fast-paced, but even some suspense stories may seem quite slow-

paced for much of the book, yet keep the tension ratcheting up.

Sometimes writers feel that if they have plenty of events in the story, following fast upon one another, the pace must be speedy. But events on their own, no matter how dramatic, don't make for a steady forward drive, keeping the reader turning the pages. And this is what writers aim for – we want them to be hooked on the first page and unable to put the book down until the last. Events that don't add to the development of the story, or events that are mere variations on what has happened before, no matter how exciting they are in themselves, will ultimately slow the pace, because they are not telling the reader anything new about the characters and what's happening in their lives.

Pace relates to movement, to change, to impetus – what keeps a reader reading is the desire to know What happens next? And if nothing happens she will put down the book in disgust.

Plotting is about what happens and why it happens; pace is keeping the balance to drive the plot along. The story moves forward, the protagonists advancing to their goals. Pace is can be fast or slow and it can alter, speed up and slacken in the course of the book, but it always moves. If the pace dawdles too often the reader loses interest. You must keep a sense of the story going forward to its conclusion. Don't let the reader feel you are marking time.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR WRITERS

** [Vignette Press](#) is offering \$500 and publication to one lucky writer in their annual short story competition. Entries close 30 May 2007.**

Flash fiction and short stories dripping with horror and fright are sought in the [AHWA Writing Competition](#). Entries close 31 May.

**Bush verse with an Australian theme will be awarded in the [Bush Lantern Award for Written Verse](#). Entries close 1 June.

aduki independent press is seeking submissions for a themed essay collection. Essays should be 5000 words in length and those published will receive \$200. See [aduki.net.au](#) for more details. Submissions close 1 June.

The Booranga Writers' Centre is currently accepting submissions for [four-Weighteen](#), their fantastic annual anthology. Closing date 30 June 2007.

Over \$12,000 is up for grabs in the annual [Newcastle Poetry Prize](#), including a local prize and new media section. Entries close 30 June 2007.

** The NSW Writers' Centre is presenting the [Coves Historical Writing Competition 2007](#), an award for unpublished pieces of historical fiction and non-fiction. Entries close 17th August.**

Vignette Press News

[Mini Shots](#) issue #003: Dragon Dust by Sarah Jansen is now available. If you like a bit of fantasy then you will love the heartbreakingly beautiful prose of Brisbane-based Sarah Jansen.

BOOK INDUSTRY STUDY GROUP

By Jim Milliot

Publishers Weekly, 11 May 2007

Although the two events were not officially linked, Thursday's Book Industry Study Group's Making Information Pay conference picked up two of the main themes of the International Digital Publishing Forum's day-long Wednesday seminar—the need for more standards in the industry and the eventual arrival of a tipping point when publishing's digital dreams turn into a real business. "The day is going to come when you'll say 'I should have done this yesterday,'" said Mike Shatzkin, founder of the Idea Logical Company about the need for publishers to step up their digital efforts.

Two panelists showed that they have made large strides in the digital world. Allen Noren, director of online marketing at O'Reilly Media, said the company's Safari Books Online Web site is now its third largest sales channel and gets three million unique visitors a month. In addition to selling books and subscription services online, the site sells PDFs of its titles, and when he revealed that 43% of PDF sales are made to the international market a murmur from the 250 attendees could be heard. O'Reilly also has recently started working with the Copyright Clearance Center to facilitate the sale of reprints of its material to schools, and is starting to sell book chapters online.

Testing different business models is one reason Random House has invested so much in technology, said Chris Hart, v-p of publishing and sales applications. Among the areas Random is exploring are subscription services, ad supported services, licensing deals, and digital sales of pages or chapters. Random's Insight initiative is designed to "help authors sell beyond the book," Hart said. To make that a reality, not only

does there need to be industry-wide standards, but publishers need to have the same in-house standards, Hart advised.

Random has built its own digital warehouse, not because it is anti-Google, Hart said, but because it gives the company more control over its content, and the demand for bits and pieces of Random's materials from customers has skyrocketed. Random supplies "hundreds" of different formats to vendors, but the effort is worth it because if books are to remain relevant in the culture they need to be talked about online, Hart said.

Shatzkin used his time to explore how different companies will participate in the digital supply chain. His focus was on DADS, digital asset distributors, which he defined as companies that will store, convert and deliver digital content. Currently, there are 10 DADS, Shatzkin said: Accenture, Bibliovault, codeMantra, CPI, Donnelley, HarperCollins/Libre Digital, Holtzbrinck/Macmillan Bookstore, Ingram Digital Ventures, Random House and VCI. These DADS will help publishers react to the changing dynamics in the marketplace which including shifting from large scale marketing to niche marketing, ad expenditures to investments in communities, and from "shout" to "interact." All these shifts need electronic capabilities, something's DADS can supply, Shatzkin said.

Just how seriously publishers are taking the need for standards was underscored during the meeting when it was (unofficially) announced that the AAP and the BISG will soon work together to develop a common standard for searching for online book content that is not entirely dependent on using Google. An official agreement could come during BEA.

HOOKS BY SHIRLEY MARTIN

How's this for the start of a novel? "Don't move. I've got a gun at your back."

Or this—The dragon breathed fire, thrashing its spike-tipped tail. Rowan moved back, back, back. He looked behind him. One more step and he'd fall off the mountain.

Now how about this? Judy roamed the streets of Miami, wondering how she would pay her bills. Could she ask Jason to lend her money? No, that wouldn't do; he'd dumped her for another woman, the rat. Maybe her father would lend her money, but she was on the outs with him, too. Well, then, what could she do? She'd have to cut back on her spending, for one thing. And what else could she do to save money? She could zzzzzzz

By this time, your reader has probably fallen asleep. Nowadays, readers want a hook to get them involved in a story. Between TV and computer games and our fast way of life, readers don't have the patience they formerly did.

Speaking just for me, I regret this change, but authors have to learn to adapt.

The days when you could spend the first 25 pages or so building your plot are long gone. Readers will no longer contend with the beginnings of novels that spend the first 25-50 or even 100 pages building the conflict.

As much as possible, you should begin and end every scene with a hook. I recall a book by Lois McMaster Bujold wherein a scene ended with one of the main characters saying to another, "How long have you been dead?"

That's the sort of scene that keeps your reader turning the pages.

Shirley Martin

PAN MACMILLAN SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Pan Macmillan Australia publishes books for the general market in the following categories:

- General Fiction
- Literary Fiction
- Thrillers
- Crime Fiction
- Current Affairs
- True Crime
- Health/Self Help
- Humour
- Memoirs
- Biography/Autobiography
- History
- Travel/Adventure
- Children's Picture Books

We are extremely selective in accepting works for publication and are currently cutting back on our publishing programme, so only works of the highest level of originality and market appeal can be considered. **We do not accept submissions for short story collections or poetry.**

All submissions should contain:

- Covering letter of no more than 1 or 2 pages, giving a brief account of the book's subject, why it was written, and details of the author's background and qualifications for writing it.

(A CV may also be useful.)

- (for non-fiction): a detailed chapter outline; or (for fiction): a brief (one page or less) synopsis of the plot.
- A note on the author's view of the potential market/readership of the book.
- The first 3 chapters (preferably) or several selected finished chapters.
- Photocopies of selected illustrations or photos (if applicable).

All material must be typed, double spaced, on one side only of A4 paper, with generous (1.5 inch/4cm) margins on the left and right. Please ensure all pages are numbered consecutively. No handwritten or single-spaced submissions will be considered.

We only accept hardcopy submissions - submissions on disk or via e-mail will not be accepted.

All of your contact details (ie. name, address, phone/fax number, e-mail address) should be clearly marked on the letter and on the front page of the manuscript.

Address to: **THE PUBLISHING DEPARTMENT** at the address below. We will post a letter containing our response, but if you also want your entire submission returned, please enclose a suitably-sized stamped self-addressed envelope

— **submissions will not be returned unless return postage is enclosed.** Assessment takes 10-12 weeks.

**The Publishing Department
Pan Macmillan Australia
Level 25
1 Market Street
Sydney, NSW 2000**

* * *

Flying Pen Press (<http://www.flyingpenpress.com>) is a new Denver-based small press looking for submissions in all fiction genres – children's, young adult, mystery, suspense, romance, fantasy, science fiction, – pretty much anything you can think of. Books are printed using Print on Demand basis and authors are paid royalties. The website contains a great deal of information about the company and their submission process. Check them out.

* * *

WORD HARVEST writers' workshops and Thomas Dunne books are sponsoring The Tony Hillerman prize for mystery fiction. The contest is open to any author, published or unpublished, as long as the author has never been published in mystery fiction. The work must be an original, unpublished manuscript of at least 60,000 words, with a murder or other serious crime at the heart of the story. In addition, the story must be set in Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas or Utah. The author of the winning entry will receive a contract with St. Martin's Press and a \$10,000 advance. There is no fee to enter. Entries must be submitted by July 1, 2007. Details and rules are available at

<http://www.hillermanconference.com/pdfhillermanprize.pdf>

WHO SAID RESEARCH WAS UNINTERESTING?

Research is so necessary to give historical writing authenticity – but as you can see by these facts provided by Christine Ostermann – research can be fun.

BACK IN THE 1500'S

The next time you are washing your hands and complain because the water temperature isn't just how you like it, think about how things used to be. Here are some facts about the 1500's:

Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May, and still smelled pretty good by June. However, they were starting to smell, so brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odor. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children. Last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it. Hence the saying, Don't throw the baby out with the bath water...

Houses had thatched roofs-thick straw-piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof. Hence the saying It's raining cats and dogs.

There was nothing to stop things from falling into the house.. This

posed a real problem in the bedroom where bugs and other droppings could mess up your nice clean bed. Hence, a bed with big posts and a sheet hung over the top afforded some protection. That's how canopy beds came into existence.

The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt. Hence the saying, Dirt poor. The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on, they added more thresh until, when you opened the door, it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entrance way. Hence the saying — a thresh hold...

In those old days, they cooked in the kitchen with a big kettle that always hung over the fire. Every day they lit the fire and added things to the pot. They ate mostly vegetables and did not get much meat. They would eat the stew for dinner, leaving leftovers in the pot to get cold overnight and then start over the next day. Sometimes stew had food in it that had been there for quite a while. Hence the rhyme, Peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold, peas porridge in the pot nine days old...

Sometimes they could obtain pork, which made them feel quite special. When visitors came over, they would hang up their bacon to show off. It was a sign of wealth that a man could bring home the bacon. They would cut off a little to share with guests and would all sit around and chew the fat.

Those with money had plates made of pewter. Food with high acid content caused some of the

lead to leach onto the food, causing lead poisoning death. This happened most often with tomatoes, so for the next 400 years or so, tomatoes were considered poisonous.

Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests got the top, or the upper crust.


Lead cups were used to drink ale or whiskey. The combination would sometimes knock the imbibers out for a couple of days. Someone walking along the road would take them for dead and prepare them for burial. They were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days and the family would gather around and eat and drink and wait and see if they would wake up. Hence the custom of holding a wake.

England is old and small and the local folks started running out of places to bury people. So they would dig up coffins and would take the bones to a bone-house, and reuse the grave. When re-opening these coffins, 1 out of 25 coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they realized they had been burying people alive. So they would tie a string on the wrist of the corpse, thread it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night (the graveyard shift.) to listen for the bell; thus, someone could be saved by the bell or was considered a dead ringer.

***And that's the truth...
Now, whoever said History was boring !!!***

Newsletter Editor: Kristi Savage
Published by Writing Right
12 Sandford Road
Kensington Gardens SA 5068

CONTACT US:
Phone: (08) 8332 6085
Email: dyo@ozemail.com.au
Email: kristisavage@optusnet.com.au



Writing Right Anthology
Now available! The 2007 Anthology 'Uncensored'
Only \$20.00 each or \$25.00 including postage.
For more information email kerrina23@bigpond.com

HELP US TO HELP YOU IN 2007

TELL US WHAT YOU NEED?

WHAT INFORMATION WOULD HELP YOU TO GET PUBLISHED?

DO YOU WANT MORE WORKSHOPS?

DO YOU WANT MORE SPEAKERS? – WHAT SUBJECTS?

SEND YOUR EMAILS TO dyo@ozemail.com.au



Ensure the book trade has the complete picture!

Ensure the book trade receives a full bibliographic record of your local releases by providing cover images directly to the Nielsen BookData/ James Bennett data collection team.

Simply email to images@bennett.com.au with your cover image in JPEG format, height 648 pixels, resolution 100 dpi, saved as ISBN.jpg. Dust jackets/books for scanning can also be sent to NBD/ JB Data Collection, Locked Bag 537, Frenchs Forest NSW 1640.

For more information please contact our helpful data collection staff on (02) 9986-7084.

**** REMINDER ****

**MEMBERSHIP FEES
DUE JANUARY 2007**

\$25 per annum

Send cheque or money order to:

**Writing Right
12 Sandford Road
Kensington Gardens
SA 5068**