

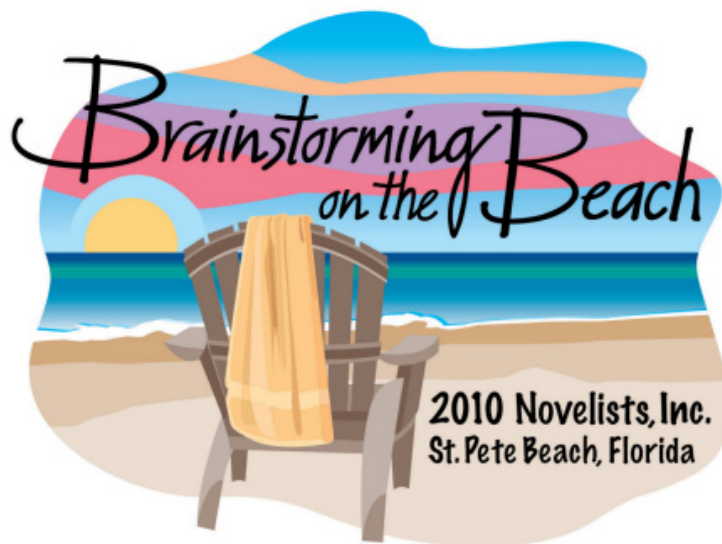


The international organization of multi-published novelists

presents

The Future of Publishing

Proceedings from a one-day conference
of publishing professionals and authors



ninc.com

The Future of Publishing ... and more!

INTRODUCTION

In October of 2010, Novelists, Inc. (NINC) invited all writers and industry guests to meet in St. Pete Beach, Florida, for an intense, one-day gathering: ***The Future of Publishing***. NINC then continued with the remainder of the conference, ***Brainstorming On The Beach***, where a wide variety of topics of concern to writers were discussed.

We reported on many of those one-day sessions and workshops in our member newsletter. Those articles are now contained in this e-book download made available to all writers, courtesy of NINC.

Multi-published authors of fiction who are not yet members of NINC, please see our website for information on this important organization.
http://ninc.com/join_ninc/index.asp

The 2011 conference, ***New Rules, New Tools: Writers In Charge***, and another intensive one-day program, ***The New Publishing: Welcome To Tomorrow***, will take place in St. Pete's Beach, October 19-23, 2011.
<http://ninc.com/conferences/2011/index.asp>

While attendance at the entire conference is limited to NINC members, all writers may attend the one-day program. Again, see the website for details.

Kasey Michaels
Chair 2010 NINC Conference

The 2010 Novelists Inc. conference gave me a new perspective on the ever-evolving business of publishing. More important, it gave me a new sense of myself as an artist and entrepreneur. I left the conference feeling enlightened, empowered, and energized. My only complaint: not enough beach time, because the workshops and discussions were too informative, too provocative, too utterly wonderful to miss. I can't wait for 2011's conference!

Author Barbara Keiler/Judith Arnold

Panelists and Speakers Included in This Compendium

Christopher Kenneally, Copyright Clearance Center and beyondthebook.com
Donna Hayes, Publisher and CEO, Harlequin Enterprises, Ltd.
Alan Kaufman, Literary Attorney
Al Zuckerman, Founder, Writers House LLC
Carolyn Pittis, Senior V.P., Global Marketing Strategy and Operations, HarperCollins
Eileen Fallon, Literary Agent
Brian O'Leary, Founder, Magellan Media Partners
J. A. Konrath, Author, Blogger
Kay Hooper, NYT Bestselling Author
Lou Aronica, publisher, The Story Plant
Brenda Hiatt, Author, compiler "Show Me The Money"
Joan Schulhafer, Publishing and Media Consulting
Angela James, Editor/Publisher, Carina Press
Barbara Keiler, Author
Lucienne Diver, The Knight Agency
Heather Graham, NYT Bestselling Author
Sue Lange, Publicity Coordinator, Book View Café
Linda Parks, Co-owner, Fireside Books and Gifts
Carly Phillips, NYT Bestselling Author
Deb Werksman, Editorial Manager, Sourcebooks, Inc.
Shannon Aviles, More Than Publicity
David Forrer, Literary Agent, InkWell Management
Loriana Sacilotto, Ex. V. P., Editorial & Global Strategy, Harlequin Enterprises, Ltd

Workshop Presenters:

Peter Novins, Senior Partner, VShift Consulting
Dr. D. P. Lyle, Author and Lecturer*
Ellen Tabor, Author
Angela James, Editor and Publisher, Carina Press

* While NINC is delighted to have these recaps of Dr. Lyle's fascinating workshops, there is nothing that can beat having your own seat right up front when he presents them, live. You can attend these workshops three or four times, and each time you are guaranteed to learn something new and helpful to your writing career.

CONTENTS

Future of Publishing One-day Sessions

Session One, Promotional Teamwork

Session Two: Contracts and Copyrights

Session Three: Flat Is The New Growth — Or is it?

Session Four: Digital Rights — Wow!

Brainstorming On The Beach

Beyond Just Money —Negotiating for Results

Autopsy Of A Thriller

The Psychology of Character Motivation

Getting Back Into The Game

Plotting The Perfect Murder

Carina Press Workshop

Brainstorming The Future of Publishing

Promotional Teamwork

Location: The Island Grand at the Tradewinds Resort in gorgeous St. Pete's Beach, Florida.

BY MEREDITH EFKEN

I have not had more than a passing glance at a palm tree since I arrived late last night. The name tents are set, the water glasses filled, and people are filtering into the room. Kelly McClymer shoves a paper into my hands. "Kasey says one of us has to introduce Peter Novins. I pick you because you look nice and have make-up on."

I glance down at the handwritten bio. "Uh..."

"You're okay with that, right?"

"Yeah." Lucky for her I don't have speaking anxiety. The room is filling up, and our panelists are at their seats in front: Eileen Fallon, Brian O'Leary, Joan Schulhafer, Kay Hooper, Carolyn Pittis, Linda Parks, and Loirana Sacilotto. Finally, after months of looking at their names, I now am seeing them in person. It feels good.

But there's an empty seat. "Where's Shannon Aviles?" I ask Kasey. She looks at the vacant chair, frowning. I am suddenly glad I am not that chair. She shakes her head and shrugs. Tells me to go ahead and get started.

Despite our mysteriously missing panelist, I bring the morning to order and introduce Peter. I even get a laugh from everyone when I explain that his incredibly impressive, biz-speak job title basically means he keeps CEOs from doing interesting but stupid stuff. So far, so good.

Here are some Panel 1 highlights:

Things we know, but are good reminders...

- * The publisher is not the enemy. We need to have a cooperative relationship, not an adversarial one.
- * One of the best things we can do with marketing as authors is to get the manuscript turned in **on time**.
- * We also need to consistently deliver a quality story — do what we do best.
- * Pick our battles — use our agents as a buffer when necessary.

- * Reputation matters — we need to be pleasant, professional, and helpful at book signings or bookstore events. No divas. First impressions count.
- * Be a good partner — don't pester our publishers.
- * Independent bookstores are an author's best friend. They will promote us if we connect with them
- * Don't expect the publisher to teach us marketing 101 — they're still trying to figure things out too, especially as everything changes. We have to all work together and try new things.

Things we maybe didn't know:

- * Sometimes publishers don't share marketing and production information about our books with us because they aren't sure if they'll reach the print run goals and would rather not raise our expectations. In order to position the book as best as possible, the details are inflated to create positive impressions. (Thank you, Joan Schulhafer, for that insight!)
- * Lorian Sacilotto from Harlequin adds that sometimes the information we want is actually not readily available, but that her company does try to get it for the author if possible. She says that it's important to them to build authors into brands and that means working closely with the author on promotion.
- * Brian O'Leary, founder of Magellan Media Partners, points out that many publishers are not good at looking at what is working or not when it comes to marketing. They just repeat what they did last time. For example, ads in *Publisher's Weekly* and newspapers don't sell books, and everyone knows it. But those ads keep happening.
- * For the publisher, marketing is event-driven. It's short-term for the first few weeks the book is out, and then they move on to the next book. For the author, promotion has to be ongoing. This is one reason why social media is such a good opportunity for the author. It has a cumulative effect over time, and, as such, should be the responsibility of the author.
- * Google Editions will enable independent bookstores to sell e-books competitively using the agency model. This means that a customer will no longer have an incentive to look at a book at the store and then buy it off of Amazon. Great news for indies, not so hot for the chain retailers.
- * A whopping 89% of searches for book piracy are outside the US. Countries that don't have a legal channel for distribution of English-language books are hungry for books and willing to download them illegally. The global market for English-language books is bigger than the North American market, and it's growing rapidly.
- * Most of what works in the North American market for promotion also works globally. It's important, though, to not delay the release of digital formats and to have the book available in as many places and in as many formats as possible.

* Anecdotally, it may be that people are getting tired of Walmart and starting to support local businesses again. Carolyn Pittis, from HarperCollins, becomes NINC's new head-over-heels crush within about 30 seconds of opening her mouth. The woman is crazy-smart and pro-author, and I find myself wishing I could write for HarperCollins just to be near such genius [note: Ms. Pittis will again be wowing us at the 2011 conference].

But I can't indulge that fantasy for long because I'm trying desperately to keep up with her in my note-taking. She is overflowing with information. No — not just overflowing. She's more like a fire hydrant at full blast.

She says that even though there is a lot of data that can and should be passed on to authors, the thing in short supply is context. What does all the data mean? At HarperCollins, she has built an internal toolset for the editorial team so they can see all the information they may need to answer questions from authors. When questions come in, the editor pulls from the internal and external data they've collected to see what drives book sales.

What she has found is that what sold books 50 years ago mostly still sells books today — with some small adjustments. For example, bloggers are the new reviewers, but reviews are still very integral to the bookselling system. They are trying to amass data to show the author everything that they and the author have done for the book. They also try to measure social currency on social media and measure it across authors to see what the larger cultural themes are.

She does admit that some things that used to work don't work so well anymore, and that authors don't always ask for things that make sense. I wish she could elaborate, but the moment flies by. She says that the data they are collecting is very "noisy" — meaning it's hard to tell what is significant and what is not. According to her, the publisher's job is definitely to market books, educate editorial teams, and help authors understand what is happening. She likes to see publishers set "stretch goals" as well as finding more realistic ways to promote.

She later explains that the important thing to consider in our marketing efforts is cost per thousand (CPM). We can always ask pubs what the CPM for marketing efforts is. Everything we do in marketing can be translated into CPM.

For example, ads in the *New York Times* have very high CPM. On the other hand, social media has low CPM. As authors, we have to know what our time is worth, and what is the cost in terms of CPM of our various efforts. This framework will help us understand what we're doing. It also helps us take the emotion out of it and just look at the numbers. This will appeal to the business people at the publisher, and the financial people will listen better if we can frame our marketing efforts in terms of CPM.

Wow. Is it any wonder we're all crushing on her?

Toward the end of the panel, a woman makes her way to the front of the room and takes her seat in the empty chair on the platform. It's our missing panelist, Shannon Aviles. She finds a break in the discussion to apologize for her absence. She was caught in a back-up due to an accident on the Interstate, she explains. Because there were fatalities, the police held up traffic to question people, and she was forced to sleep in her

car. She arrived at the Tradewinds around six in the morning and decided to take a shower. The showerhead fell. It struck her head and knocked her out.

And still she showed up, with several minutes left in the panel. That's dedication. We are very impressed and very glad she appears to be all right. She gets a well-deserved round of applause, and I hear Kasey slip out with a whispered explanation of looking for a doctor for her. There's a dentist convention going on. I don't suppose they're much help with concussions, but I'm sure, though, that they would have been happy to pull her teeth while she was unconscious.

With such a dramatic end to the first panel, it's been a solid beginning to the day, loose showerheads aside. I'm looking forward to the next panel — Contracts and Copyrights.

▲

Brainstorming The Future of Publishing

Contracts and Copyrights

Location: Same room as before, gorgeous beach resort (suffering for our art), yadda, yadda...

BY MEREDITH EFKEN

After a super-fast turn-around, we've reset the platform for the next panel. I've become sort of obsessed with making sure the panelists have fresh glasses and aren't accidentally drinking out of used ones from the last panel. I think the wait staff is eyeing the supply closet and wondering if anyone would miss me.

All the panelists (David Forrer, Alan Kaufman, Carly Phillips, Deb Werksman, Donna Hayes, Chris Kenneally, Al Zuckerman, and Brenda Hiatt) are in their seats, and I see no rogue showerheads lurking above them. I'm thinking this should be a snoozer of a panel—all the arcane details of contracts and copyright issues. We put it mid-morning hoping that would help everyone stay awake. I sit back and prepare to take notes on what should be our calmest panel of the day.

Moderator Peter Novins starts out by asking a tactfully worded question that I shall paraphrase thusly: Because we've got so much more sales info and data, what are publishers doing to change the way they pay authors? (i.e. We want our money faster and more often!)

Al Zuckerman is to the point. "Almost nothing."

Darn.

He goes on to explain that there is one publisher who is trying to move to a FOUR payment schedule for advances! (Collective gasp of outrage from audience.) He sees nothing to indicate they have any recognition of the fact that they even have the information. But on the other hand, he does admit that publishers send out thousands of royalty statements each period. Having to do that more frequently would be time consuming and expensive, so it's not a simple matter to deal with. There should be a better way to handle it, but he's not sure what that would be.

Alan Kaufman points out that publishers tend to be conservative and resist change, and they've had bi-annual accounting for years so there's not likely to be a shift any time soon. Also, publishers don't like to fully staff non-profit-making departments like the royalty department, so they're usually understaffed. It's also a matter of cash flow—publishers end up waiting a long time to get paid, too.

But a few areas concern him greatly:

* Publishers are not staffing up to be able to account for new digital sources of income or ad revenue surrounding future sales of e-books. By that, he is talking about the ads on Google or other sites that surround the books and are (or will be) a whole new source of revenue for the publisher. He wants authors to have a share in it as well.

* A major publisher has created a new boilerplate that says the first \$1,000 of income from e-books comes straight to the publisher. (Another outraged gasp from audience—I guess we're not going to be sleepy after all.) When he asked why, their excuse was that their royalty department was not equipped right now to deal with and measure ad revenue. His reply? "Well, you'd better *get ready*." He says not being ready is not a valid excuse.

* And by the way — reserves on the first two royalty periods are fine, but there's no reason for publishers to continue holding reserves past the first year.

We have two publishers on the panel — Donna Hayes, CEO of Harlequin, and Deb Werksman, the editorial manager of Sourcebooks. They both look like they have Things To Say, and Deb gets the first shot. "Since it appears the gloves are off," she begins, "let me just say I respectfully disagree from a publisher perspective."

Alan looks startled by that for a moment, and then laughs a little, but I can tell he's preparing not to budge. Things are definitely livening up now. These panelists really know how to make a discussion about contracts more exciting.

Deb explains that Sourcebooks is an indie house, not a conglomerate house. As such, they believe in back-listing books for very long time.

She has facts:

* Publishing is an industry where 50% sell-through on a book is considered success.

* This means we can assume that 40-50% return rates can be expected. This figure can be higher on "not successful" books.

* Many stores practice "refreshing payables"—which is when stores order books, then return them, then reorder a week later.

* Books can come back at any time, and many are affidavit returns—books that are destroyed instead of physically returned so they aren't available for resale.

* All this has a big impact on the publisher's cash flow, and not just in the first two royalty periods.

Al Zuckerman is unmoved by the plight of the publisher. "If you have a book that is performing well, with consistent sales, there is no need for a reserve, and yet publishers are still doing it."

Well then.

Donna Hayes finally jumps into the fray. She says that yes, we have some information in terms of point of sales, waiting for returns, affidavit points, etc. but it's not so different from what we had 10 years ago. However, at Harlequin, they try to give accurate sales information to the author.

The guys look like they're about to disagree with her again, so Peter hurriedly moves on

to the next question. This one is on piracy — how can we better protect the copyrights of the books?

Donna announces she recently joined the AP board, which is actively working on reducing piracy. Additionally, Harlequin has created a website specifically set up for their authors to report piracy. They have two people in their legal department whose sole job is to pursue those sites.

Deb offers the point that piracy might not be as hurtful to book sales as we might think because the people who pirate weren't likely to buy our books anyway. She is all but ignored (sorry, Deb!) and several of the other panelists offer up the following tidbits:

- * Education is key. In the future there will still be copyright because our Constitution ensures it. It is not going away.
- * Authors can address the issue on their websites.
- * We hear “Information wants to be free” and we think “not costing money” instead of “liberated.” But the rest of that quote actually goes on to say, “Information wants to be *expensive*.” Information wants to be freely available but **very valuable**.
- * Used bookstores could disappear.
- * A reasonable price point affects the amount of piracy, too.
- * Education goes both ways, not just to the reader. Authors need to know what they can do and what their publishers are doing.
- * Pat McLinn targeted the advertisers on these piracy sites. It was an effective tactic to combat the piracy sites. It might be a technique to try on a wider basis.
- * Most piracy happens from outside North America, from countries who don't have a legitimate distribution channel for English-language books.

Deb caps off the discussion by saying that even putting the piracy question aside for a moment, the part about information wanting to be free is crucial. One thing they're concerned about is that as the e-book industry grows, it will be very important for publishers, authors, and agents to frame the conversation and not let the tech folks set the agenda especially on price.

That point generates much more enthusiasm.

Suddenly, we notice that there is one panelist who hasn't yet said a single word — David Forrer, with InkWell Management. The soft-spoken (and apparently long-suffering but knowledgeable) agent grabs the microphone in the slight lull in conversation to play catch-up:

- * **On payment:** He would like to know how publishers can become more transparent on accounting and royalties. There needs to be more accountability.

- * **On Info for Payment:** some publishers say they can get numbers on weekly basis, some say it's a month or more.
- * **On that first-\$1k-to-the-publisher deal:** The publisher should have said, "It's a cash flow issue and we simply need that money first." It's that transparency thing again.
- * **On reserves:** Contracts seem to be always evolving. When he sees a reserve that doesn't appear justified, he usually is able to get that reserve released.

Peter turns the discussion to the tangled, messy Matter of the Out-of-Print Clause. (cue foreboding music); **Does contract language stating a book is considered to be in print if it's available in any format, combined with all this new technology, mean that no book will be out of print, ever?**

To no one's surprise, there are several strong opinions on the panel. Here's a quick run-through:

- * Alan's Rant: "Agents do a good job of battling the rights issues with publishers. But this is one area where I'm amazed at how ineffective and bad a job everyone has done." Ouch!
- * According to Alan, it is now practically industry standard and impossible to get the clause changed.
- * You can change it in some ways—restricting it to trade editions or to availability in the English language. **But the killer is that the book is deemed in print if they sell \$250 worth of the book in a two-royalty period.**
- * Alan feels this should be in units instead of dollars, and \$250 over two royalty periods is ludicrous. He's negotiating it with CEOs regularly. There should have been an outcry about it in the publishing community, but there wasn't, so it's now nearly a done deal. It *can* still be negotiated, and should be, but it has become part of the boilerplate so now it's more difficult to get it changed.
- * It's a huge trap because it allows publishers, in their concern about holding rights in the face of the digital transition, to hold rights forever.
- * Al Zuckerman agrees that there shouldn't be a dollar amount — it should be number of units instead. He has successfully negotiated with all major publishers that if they want to keep book in print, they have to sell 300 units in any format in a single royalty period, or the rights revert. Some of his authors with out-of-print books are making deals with Amazon or other places and selling them electronically.
- * Donna says that Harlequin looks at it as trying to do the best for their authors by converting their backlists as quickly as possible to e-books. Their intent is to do the best job they can to keep selling those books. The money put into marketing that has been quite valuable and effective for both the publisher and the author.

On the issue of subsidiary rights and author/agent attempts to reserve them: Will we see a move toward limited license terms for rights?

Alan says no — it's not going to happen. Major publishers are right now grabbing as many rights as they possibly can. They are running scared because the changes are happening so much quicker and with more force than anticipated. They are like large ocean liners trying to turn around and it's difficult. Their answer seems to be at this point to try to grab as many rights as possible and embed in contracts ways to keep authors from getting back rights. Publishers provide very necessary services, but have huge challenges facing them.

Al Zuckerman points out that there are two rights that are most valuable: foreign and film/TV.

Another contentious issue — E-Book Royalty Rates:

* Brenda says that as e-books become a larger part of the market, authors need to pay extreme attention to royalty rates when they are negotiating contracts. Publishers have not been willing to budge on rates. The 25% rate is not an industry standard yet, and she wants to encourage authors and agents to stay on top of that because it will affect author income substantially.

* Al agrees. "Currently, most major publishers pay 25% of net or 15% of list on e-books." He has negotiated for some of his clients the ability to take a second look at the royalty rate after three years. This allows them to potentially renegotiate the royalty rate at that time, with the right to pull the e-book if they can't agree on an acceptable rate.

Either Alan or Al has just pointed directly at Harlequin, criticizing their 6% royalty rate on e-books as being unacceptably low, even compared to other publishers.

Donna says, "Our position on e-books is that first, we pay off cover price and not net, and second, until the e-book market evolves further and we know what is happening with it, we won't pay differently or more than what we pay for print books because our expenses have not been greatly different for e-books than for print books." She also points out that paying on gross can be much better than paying on net.

Alan responds that he thinks there will be big push to increase author's share on e-book rights. I think the audience is hoping he is correct, but we are all wondering how Donna arrived at her numbers. She promises to provide that information for us.

And finally, now that our heads are spinning with numbers and clauses and terms and rights — Christopher Kenneally uses the quote, "If you're confused, you're beginning to understand the problem." And it seems apt to me — our final question for the panel is on the issue of the Moral Turpitude clauses that have begun popping up in major boilerplate contracts.

This clause basically says that the publisher can terminate the contract if the author behaves in an immoral way or does something that will damage the publisher's reputation. The room erupts in disgust over this. How can they get away with such a clause?

Alan has high compliments for HarperCollins in general, but he says they have a new boilerplate that is "positively Dickensian." It is trying to take back many of the gains that agents and attorneys have fought to achieve over the last fifty years. Agents and

attorneys have gotten back most of it, but the biggest surprise was this clause that immoral behavior of the author could warrant termination of the contract. It is possible to negotiate it out, but agents and authors should be aware of it.

From the back of the room, our NINC sweetheart, Carolyn Pittis, says she doesn't think that is actually in the Harper-Collins boilerplate. Alan looks sincerely regretful to have to tell her otherwise, and AI is nodding, too. A few emails to her legal department later, she is acknowledging that they are right — and she gives an emphatic, "That's terrible!" in response.

Carly Phillips says that this trend troubles her greatly. "I wouldn't sign a contract like that, and my behavior's pretty good!"

The problem is who determines what "immoral" means?

I will ponder that later as I'm enjoying a tropical drink at the bar. We naughty, naughty authors — good thing we have upstanding parental publishers to make sure we behave. Otherwise, who knows what we might get up to? But thankfully, we have publishers who are wise and full of integrity, who are themselves moral paragons of virtue, to define and control our behavior for us.

On that note, it's time to adjourn for lunch — and it's the most delicious crab bisque I've ever tasted. I have the pleasure of sitting with Kasey, Kelly, and several of the Harlequin contingent — including Donna Hayes. Contract disagreements and bizarre clauses aside, these are truly wonderful people, and I feel lucky to be part of this intriguing and diverse community. ▲

Why Do We Even Allow Returns From Bookstores?

(added discussion)

- * Because booksellers won't stock them without the right to return them. There have been recent publishing attempts to launch imprints that have no returns, and it hasn't worked. Penguin tried to offer a discount to booksellers based on how few returns they made, and it failed. Bookstores will cut orders to the bare minimum and not stock the titles.*
- * Booksellers never really know how many copies of a book will sell. Publishers want to encourage sellers to take large quantities of a title so the book is noticed more, but what if—despite the promotional efforts—the book just sits there? That's bad news for everyone.*
- * Compromises such as time limits on returns don't work well either. Booksellers will look for any excuse to pass on a book.*
- * Additionally, we don't want to force sellers to return a book by a certain time. We want to give the chance for the book to stay in the store as long as possible. ▲*

Brainstorming The Future of Publishing

Flat Is The New Growth...Or Is It? Publishing Professionals Discuss the Future of Publishing

Location: The Island Grand at the Tradewinds Resort in gorgeous St. Pete's Beach, Florida.

BY MEREDITH EFKEN

We were at the beautiful Trade Winds Resort in St. Petersburg, Florida, to listen to a panel of top minds in the publishing world discuss whether or not they would still be relevant in five years. Sometimes it seems that everything we've always known or associated with books is imploding, and it's easy to wonder what will be left—if anything—when the dust settles and we survey the wreckage that once was the publishing world.

But as I frantically tried to capture the essence of what our panelists were saying, the image that formed from their words was not one of apocalyptic doom, but of fresh opportunities and possibilities. No one denied that there is a shake-up coming, and already starting, and there were disagreements on what it would look like. But on one thing they all agreed—the future of publishing is as bright as we decide to make it.

What Will Be Different In Publishing Five Years From Now?

Here's a sampling of thoughts from our panelists—Lou Aronica, Heather Graham, Donna Hayes, Alan Kaufman, Al Zuckerman, Loriana Sacilotto, Carolyn Pittis, and Angela James:

We are moving rapidly toward a digital model because consumers finally want it—unlike circa 1998 when “a gazillion” dollars were invested in e-publishing and lost. This is a good thing for publishers because e-publishing solves many banes of publishing such as returns, distribution issues, and the expense of producing physical books.

There's huge growth opportunity with digitalization because it has the potential to make reading and books “cool” again with consumers.

It's good for authors because we now have the option of self-publishing at almost no cost—this gives us leverage with publishers and new opportunities and avenues for presenting our stories to consumers.

In five years, everyone will have a smartphone, and the discussion on publishing will be centered around mobile technology. (To which Heather Graham said she hopes she never has to read a book on her mobile phone, but Carolyn Pittis made the point that the younger readers who will drive the market don't know any different.)

By The Numbers

Donna Hayes mentioned that through the end of June, 2010, the total sales from the top twenty publishers were back to where they were in 2008. She said that publishing is a large and stable business but now has new growth opportunity which is exciting.

Lou agreed, adding that the AAP July 2010 numbers showed that ebook sales for the month were 67% the size of mass-market sales. They were 55% the size of hardcover sales for the same month.

Though mass-market sales are eroding, hardback sales are holding steady. That means that the e-book market, which really didn't exist a few years ago, has grown in just those few years to become half the size of the hardback market, which has existed for a few hundred years.

But What If All I Want To Do Is WRITE?

Sorry, folks—this is one area where the panelists all agreed. An author has to be active in promoting their work, whether or not they plan to be traditionally published or if they want to try self-publishing digitally.

Al Zuckerman explained why:

You can't expect your agent to be your publicist. That's not their job. They can recommend a publicist to you, perhaps, and they can pester your in-house publicist, or solicit blurbs from other clients to endorse your book. But that's about it.

You can't rely on your publisher. They are equipped to really promote maybe one or two of their titles per month, leaving about 90% of their books with little to no marketing support.

Fiction is difficult to promote regardless of who is doing it. Media outlets that would be interested in non-fiction usually aren't interested in fiction.

Lou agreed, and added that going forward, successful authors will be ones who connect personally with the readers.

According to Carolyn, it's not a blame game, though. "Think about TV in early 70's," she said. "How many channels were there? Three. What's happened since? Enormous fragmentation of channels. Same thing with the web—enormous fragmentation and niche channels. In publishing, we have yet to make that transition to a fragmented market."

She went on to explain that we are still in a time of learning how to merchandise well in this market, learning what works best. Right now, there is a tremendous amount of

“noise” in the system, so much change, that we have to experiment and try new business models to discover what will work.

We are searching for “scale”—where we can apply technology to get huge volume at marginal cost. So for author and publisher, it’s a matter of how to collaborate in this new system to find that scale and make it work.

Angela James commented that authors are small businesses. Publishers want authors to be partners in the business because authors are the ones with the most invested.

A member of the audience asked when publishers will start treating authors like a true partner—what about sharing 50% of the book profits?

There was a moment of anticipation as we waited to see which panelist would end up with that hot potato. Donna Hayes reached for the microphone.

“You will be treated like a true partner when you act like a true partner. This means no advances, and it means putting in equal investment into producing your book as the publisher does.”

Collective silence. I don’t know what other people thought at the moment, but I think she made a good point. It wasn’t a pleasant point to hear, but it was reasonable. I once heard someone say that publishers are the literary equivalent of venture capitalists—they make it possible to produce our books by taking 100% of the financial risk of publishing. It isn’t fair or good business sense to expect them to take all the financial risk and then share the financial reward 50-50.

Lou stepped into the stunned silence with an encouraging observation and a challenge for us. He said that fifteen years ago, everyone was dependent on maybe five or six conglomerates to get published. There was no realistic way for writer to do it themselves because even with money, booksellers wouldn’t take you seriously.

But now, the publishers have less leverage because they are not the only game in town anymore. The author has less chance of getting screwed than ever before. There are a huge number of taste-makers out there that will absolutely read and review your work—if you can convince them it’s worth reading. The challenge is that if you as the author don’t distinguish yourself from the pack, you lose.

Alan Kaufman said that to an extent, he respectfully disagreed. “I think we will go through a period of turmoil and change, but at the end, it will look remarkably similar to how it does today.”

He explained that we will have highly-entrepreneurial groups going into e-publishing, and the bigger publishers will not all be able to adapt. Since they can’t keep up in-house with e-publishing, they’ll acquire the new e-publishers who can. At some point in this process, the major publishing groups themselves will be acquired by the Googles and Amazons of the world. So at the end of the day, we will still have publishing groups still doing the same functions. It’s the name and ownerships that will change.

The Question Everyone Wanted to Ask:

So do authors still need publishers at all—electronic OR print?

Here were some reasons our panelists gave for why an author might still do better with a traditional publisher:

- * The security of an advance (in the case of print publishing)
- * Convenience
- * A publisher has an established platform and audience that can reach across all book formats and markets.
- * A publisher can market to the trade market.

Lou summarizes it this way:

The main reason to work with a publisher two to three years from now will be one-stop shopping. Some publishers will have to evolve in such a way as to become mega generalists—specializing in all kinds of blockbusters. Another level of publishers will specialize in certain segments of the market because it is important to have ongoing relationship with readers.

Everything else will become some form of self-publishing. The thing that is frustrating about Amazon (and Apple) is that they have the readers and know who they are, and could probably sell books to every single person interested in certain book, but they choose not to. They send emails to buyers of similar books, but there is no serious direct marketing effort. It's an enormous missed opportunity. Lou would never suggest people put books up only on Kindle. Amazon's market share is less than it was previously in terms of ebooks. Apple is just getting into game and will continue to take pieces of Amazon's market share. And Google, in his opinion, will be huge.

What Keeps You Up At Night?

Sort of a downer question to end the panel with, but we asked each person to say what future possibilities make them wake up in a sweat. Here are their answers:

Lou: Publishing House casualties—smaller houses for sure, and maybe larger houses. We are faced with having to set up a new infrastructure (digital) and maintain the old one as long as print remains dominant. Publishers have small margins—it doesn't take much to tip them over.

Donna: The great thing is that a lot of people really want to see a great story. We are producing something that customers really want. We have to figure out how to deliver it and make money. I wonder what happens to bricks and mortar shops. I hope there will be print books for a long time, but that's the one pressure point about what's going on in the business.

Alan: First, I worry that my author-clients and agent's clients will find themselves locked into publishers who no longer can produce what the public wants. And then that those publishers will go out of business. They really serve a purpose. There will be a lot of crap out there, so one of most important functions a publisher has is as a gatekeeper. I hope that there will continue being a publishing structure that will put books through editorial, and make sure they are properly sold, marketed and distributed.

Loriana: I worry for the brick-and-mortar store for sure. How are we in this era of transition managing author expectations that might come from a different world? How do we work more closely with authors to help us understand and keep up with new trends?

Carolyn: Consumer pricing. There is tremendous pressure, and consumers are in charge. There is a strong trend toward cost reduction in virtually all products and media. Second is a demographic issue—most of our readers are not younger readers. The people buying largest volume of books are baby boomers and they're aging. We have to go outside this country to where younger people are demanding books. Think about it—what are younger people interested in?

Heather: I'm terrified no one will ever want to read me again. Second, that Donna will say "I want her to be my partner and not pay me advances any more." (There is appreciative laughter from the audience at this.)

Angela: I fear in five years I will no longer be relevant.

I think we all wanted to reassure both Heather and Angela at this point, but their comments did make us all think and consider. We all hope we will have readers and be relevant in the future. But I think it's clear from this panel that the opportunities for that are there for anyone brave enough to go for it in spite of the uncertainties.

As a friend of mine is fond of saying—the future of publishing is bright. I am determined to do all I can to make sure he is proven correct. ▲

Brainstorming The Future of Publishing

Session Four: Digital Rights — Wow!

Knock-Down Drag-Out (Or “Who Knew A Panel On Digital Rights Could Be So Exciting?”)

Back to the same lovely room at the same lovely TradeWinds

It’s the last panel of the day. Digital Rights. This should be a snoozer, right?

One. Would. Think.

Our esteemed panelists are as follows:

Lucienne Diver
Angela James
Brian O’Leary
Sue Lange

Barbara Keiler
Chris Kenneally
Lou Aronica
J. A. Konrath

We begin by asking them a question that didn’t get answered in panel three:
Why DOES an author need publishers at all in this new digital paradigm?

It’s the question several of us were dying to ask for months.

The answers:

- Publishers offer an advance.
- Convenience—they produce the book, provide editing, cover design, distribution, (some) marketing, etc. at no cost to the author. One-stop shopping.
- Along with that, Lou believes that publishers will become generalists. The main houses will accept primarily best-selling blockbusters. A second category of publishers will focus on niche markets where they have an established relationship with readers. The rest of publishing will be self-publishing in some form.
- When it comes to Amazon and B&N and other e-book outlets, you have to watch what they are doing and fit yourself into their sales model.

- Publishers can market to trade, whereas e-book outlets are good at marketing directly to the consumer.

Lou goes on to say that the thing that is frustrating about Amazon (and Apple) is that they have the readers and know who they are, and could probably sell books to every single person interested in certain books. But they choose not to.

They send email to buyers of similar books, but there is no serious direct marketing effort. It's an enormous missed opportunity. Because of this, he would never suggest people just put books up on Kindle only. Amazon's market share is less than it was in terms of books. Apple is just getting into game and will continue to take pieces of Amazon's market share. And in Lou's opinion, Google will be huge.

(I must insert here that Lou left out Barnes and Noble, for some reason, despite the fact that the latest figure I've heard says they are up to 25% of the e-book market now, which puts them second behind Amazon in e-book sales. It's a distant second, but still more than Apple or Google.)

On Digital Rights Management (DRM)

Joe Konrath gives the opening salvo by declaring that DRM is **evil**. (Don't hold back, Joe—tell us how you **really** feel!) As writers, we want to make it as easy as possible for readers to enjoy our books. In an experiment he did, he released his ebook to various piracy sites himself, and as a result he saw e-book **sales** go up 900%. He says that intangible products do not carry the same value to the consumer as a tangible product. We don't necessarily own the e-books we buy—we might just be licensing them. The consumer senses this and so wants to pay less. The way to fight piracy, therefore, is through low cost and high convenience.

Brian points out that DRM itself is only tangentially linked to piracy. So I guess he means there's no need to make our books walk the plank if we prefer not to.

Should we handle digital rights differently than print rights?

Brian says yes. He would like to see shorter terms for digital rights, to preserve flexibility and maintain the opportunity to get those rights back.

Others agree. With an e-book, of course, there isn't a physical product to run out of, so a book can theoretically be "in print" forever. Barbara says, "The definition of 'out of print' will have to change. It needs to be finite."

Angela explains that some publishers are already experimenting with that very concept. Richard Nash is doing Cursor—a publisher for alternate fiction. His vision is to truly partner with the author and make the author **want** to stay with his

publishing company. Richard has discussed the idea of doing a three-year term of copyright. It's a real source of fear for publishers because on one hand, they want to invest in marketing and the author, but on the other hand, three years is not a long period of time to take advantage of rights.

So far, so good. Other than a couple more knocks on copyright from Konrath, things haven't been too contentious. But it's all about to heat up...

What Efforts Can Be Made To Educate Kids About Respecting Copyright?

A certain anti-copyright panelist who shall not be named retorts, "Yeah, because Say No To Drugs was soooo successful."

Angela is a bit less acerbic as she explains that the question is talking about a value shift. It's very difficult to impose a value shift on someone else's kids. But we do undergo a value shift as we get older. Things that we pay for have more value to us. If the book is not available, or it is under DRM, etc., our value still hasn't shifted there. So we need to work with the consumer—not to shift their values, but find their value point.

Well said, Angela!

Barbara agrees. "Look at the music industry. Napster disappeared because legal and cheap and easy means to download songs came around. That's a model we in publishing need to follow. Make it easy and cheap enough to shift those dynamics in the public."

Lucienne reminds us that it is actually not the young people doing most of the book piracy because they don't have the e-readers and the availability of teen books in e-format yet. Much of the piracy is being done by boomers.

Is Windowing a Good Idea or Not?

Windowing is the practice of not releasing the e-book until after the hardback has been out awhile. It seems a rather technical point, but our panelists had surprisingly passionate opinions about it...

Lucienne begins with a bit of explanation: Publishers have to make the e-books as accessible as possible or there will be more pirating. But publishers also **had** to take back control on pricing from Amazon, etc., who was dangerously close to having a monopoly before Apple and others got into the e-book business.

"The consequence of publishers taking back control was loss of money for authors!" This, from Joe.

Shouting erupts—panelists, audience, moderator! It's a brawl, folks. Big, messy, and this author can only sit back and wait for it to calm down because she has no idea what anyone is saying.

Windowing...who'd-a-thunk-it?

Okay, safe to come out from under the chairs now, I think. Brush yourselves off, straighten your shirts, and get on with the panel—the fun's over.

Angela clears her throat and says back to windowing: When windowing occurs, you have to market twice for a book because you lose momentum. The other time when windowing happens is when everyone in the US can buy a book, but the global release is spaced out later for foreign markets. The author has to hope that the buzz continues.

Everyone nods sagely. Calmly. Professionally.

We return briefly to the subject of education, and then our moderator (probably now in need of a stiff drink) offers up one last wrap-up question:

What is your one piece of advice about what every writer needs to do or know or change to stay relevant in digital age?

Joe: Don't write shit. Keep writing good books and you will find your audience one of many ways. Write more and as many and as quickly as you can. There is a cumulative effect in the digital market.

Sue: Don't let marketing overwhelm you. Don't do things you really don't like to do. Find things you enjoy doing.

Lou: He agrees with everybody. Spend some time selling your book. Work it into your calendar. If the choice is between writing your next book or selling your current book, don't necessarily choose the next book.

Brian: There is a lot of talk about how writers need to use social media, etc. Start small. There are good resources online on how to do it. You don't have to have an entire strategy today—just do one thing.

Chris: It's possible and important to reinvent yourself—and it's possible to do and not to be frightened of but to look forward to.

Angela: Go naked—not literally! But be transparent and be yourself. Let your audience see you for who you are.

Barbara: The best thing about the digital age is that we are no longer subjected to the blockbuster mentality of the major publisher. We will be able to publish to

smaller, devoted audiences. We can be like the indie film industry. We don't necessarily need to sell 100,000 copies to be a success. It will be artistically liberating for writers.

Lucienne: There is no one right path. No one-size-fits-all for all authors. Not every single thing you write will be a blockbuster. Keep an open mind. Keep track of what options are available and think innovatively in promoting it.

And on those very wise notes, our panel day is over. On a personal note, I would like to thank each of these panelists in particular for making this panel instructive, informative, and also surprisingly entertaining. As for the "brawl"—I may have slightly exaggerated it (wink) for entertainment value. But I did greatly appreciate the heated and open discussion, and I admire our very professional and knowledgeable panelists for being willing to jump in and give their opinions. We all benefitted from the discussion and came away with much to think about. You all ROCK! ▲

Negotiating: Beyond The Money

Peter Novins and Attorney Alan Kaufman

BY BARBARA MEYERS

I think we were all a bit confused about what to expect from a workshop entitled “Beyond Just Money – Negotiating for Results.”

Peter Novins began the discussion by saying that people think negotiating is just about dividing up the money. If you believe this, unless you’re a huge name, bestselling author, you lose.

- * Don’t make a negotiation only about the money.
- * Know your bottom line.
- * Do your homework.
- * Discover what’s cheap to you but valuable to a publisher and vice versa.
- * As much as you can, leave emotion out of the negotiation.

A few ideas were tossed around, things your publisher might have that they’d share with you, like access to their tax accountants or using their corporate travel discounts. These are not things that will be put in the fine print of your contract, however, and they might be things you’d be embarrassed to ask for.

After a few minutes we got to the nitty-gritty of what non-contractual results we might negotiate for. One author used her own experience with an example of offering to write a free short story featuring the characters in her book in exchange for her publisher giving her book more prominent placement on its web site, mailing list, and blog. Those are the kinds of “think outside the box” ideas we should all be considering.

Could you offer your personal presence at a publisher-sponsored event or at a personal/private event like a party, tea, or luncheon? Does your publisher subscribe to Web X? Perhaps you can use their facilities to create your own podcasts. It saves you money, gives you something of value, and costs them virtually nothing. You might be able to put something like that in your contract.

Peter encouraged us to think strategically, like a chess player. Three moves out, where do you want the pieces to be? Think where you want to be positioned three years from now and how this negotiation can get you there. What can you offer now to help get you there?

So what if they say “we’re not interested?” You’ve lost nothing by thinking creatively about your negotiation and asking.

Peter stressed, “Anything you can do to save them work is of value to them. Think of it as relationship negotiation.”

Attorney Alan Kaufman stepped in to discuss things you should negotiate and have spelled out in your contract. Pay close attention to the following three:

1) Grant of rights. Due to publisher fears, they now try to grab all e-book rights and make it non-negotiable. (But everything is negotiable.) Even granting right of first refusal for enhanced e-book rights can be problematic. Grant only “unenanced e-book rights.” (Enhanced allows the publisher to change the work and use all or part of it as they wish, even create derivative works from it.) Often a publisher won’t use these rights; they just want to tie them up.

2) Non-compete clause. VERY IMPORTANT! One of the most important clauses in the contract. Pay attention to the wording. Every word in your contract is loaded with meaning. If you retain certain rights, but they conflict with your non-compete clause, what have you gained?

3) Out-of-print clause. This clause is often unfair but negotiable. First of all, the publisher must have the work available in commercially feasible quantities. The best way to state when a work is considered out of print is in units not in dollars. For example, if fewer than 300 copies are sold in any format over two consecutive royalty periods the rights revert.

A few other tidbits:

* A bad economy is no excuse for a low advance. An advance should be based on that book and that author.

* Ask for escalators for electronic rights.

* Know in advance what you can’t accept in a deal and still live with yourself. You need to know the answer to this question before you start negotiating: “At what point do I walk away?”

* Know what your next-best alternative is. It might be sticking the book under the bed and waiting for an other opportunity. Or self-publishing it.

Finally these words of wisdom from Peter Novins regarding negotiation:

“It’s okay to be emotional; it’s not okay to be irrational.” ▲

AUTOPSY OF A THRILLER

Presented by Dr. D. P. Lyle

BY SYLVIE KURTZ

A good story happens when a writer can make the reader worry. A writer puts a character out of balance in the beginning, and the character spends the rest of the story trying to get back into balance. In a thriller, the personal stakes must be high — life and death. In most thrillers, the reader has superior knowledge compared to the main character, creating suspense. As the story evolves, the protagonist runs out of options. At the end, the good guy and the bad guy must fight directly.

Two good stories to take apart to understand the structure of a thriller that hooks and doesn't let go:

Red Dragon by Thomas Harris (1997) and the movie *The Terminator* (1984).

Robin Cook, an ophthalmologist, took 20 bestsellers apart and analyzed them to understand what made them work. He found that all of these successful novels had the same pattern. He used what he learned to create a new genre: medical thrillers. The rest is history.

The basic pattern is to drive the hero up a tree during the first act set-up. Throw rocks at him during Act 2 to amplify the problem. Then make him find a way to get down from that tree — with a twist — in Act 3.

There are two types of stories: someone or something comes into the main character's world and changes it; or something or somebody forces the main character into a different world. How the character reacts comes from who he is.

The movie *The Terminator* ramps up tension and leaves no room for a sagging middle.

How?

Every scene has a plus (things are good for the hero), minus (things are worse for the hero), or neutral value (things are neither good nor bad for the hero). The movie allowed for few scenes with plus or neutral values and loaded the story with scenes with minus values.

In the beginning, the Terminator appears out of a ball of light. He meets a punk and demands his clothes. When the punk laughs at him, the Terminator rips the

heart out of the punk and takes the clothes. This short scene establishes the genre and the toughness of the character. *The Terminator* is a bad guy after a good girl story. You have to show just how bad he is to foreshadow the fierceness of the end battle.

In the next scene, Reese appears out of a similar ball of light, takes a vagrant's clothes, steals a shotgun from a police car, and finds three Sarah Connors in a phone book. The viewer doesn't know who Sarah Connor is, but already he's worried about her.

The next scene shows Sarah at work at a diner. She's ditzzy and clumsy, but seems well liked. This shows her incompetence and makes the viewer worry a bit more.

When the Terminator kills Sarah Connor #1, the viewer's worry level cranks up. Sarah's date stands her up — a neutral scene — and Sarah heads out still clueless. When the police learn of a second Sarah Connor's murder, the viewer's worry really ramps up.

When Reese follows Sarah, the viewer worries because he has no idea if Reese is a good guy or a bad guy. When Sarah sees the news on TV about a second dead Sarah Connor, *she* starts to worry and tries to call the police, but the phone is out of order. This worry amplifies when she senses she's being followed.

Her world starts to quiver. She ducks into a disco and calls the police, but can't get through. The Terminator goes to Sarah's apartment, kills her roommate and the boyfriend. He overhears a call from Sarah who leaves a message about where she is. He sees a photo ID of Sarah and for the first time knows exactly who he's looking for. This hikes up the worry for the viewer, because this guy is bad news.

The Inciting Incident happens when the police, Reese, and the Terminator all converge onto the disco. Bullets hit the Terminator multiple times, but he gets up. This shows the reader that he's a powerful enemy and ramps up the worry another notch.

Sarah and Reese escape, which provides a small relief from the tension. But then the Terminator steals a police car and chases them, which cranks up the worry once again.

Reese explains who he is and what his goal is, but Sarah has a hard time believing anything he says — it sounds too much like science fiction. The viewer worries about Sarah, because now he understands that the Terminator, who he's seen in action, won't stop until Sarah is dead.

The chase resumes with a series of twists and reversals that rev up adrenaline

until the viewer sees the Terminator repair his injured forearm and remove his damaged eye, revealing that he's a cyborg. Now the viewer is really worried, because a cyborg can't be killed.

When a psychiatrist gives Sarah a logical explanation for what she's witnessed, she calms down, providing another moment of respite for the viewer. But again, this pause doesn't last long, because the Terminator attacks the police station, mowing down cops in his quest to reach Sarah (first turning point).

What Reese told her is the truth. He's an ally and, if she wants to live, she has no choice but to go with him.

The second act turns Sarah's world around. She's now completely terrified. She asks Reese if he can kill the Terminator and he says he's not sure he can with the weapons available. This once again cranks up the tension, because the Terminator's win seems a sure thing.

Her skills grow as she faces obstacles. Interlaced are a few scenes brief scenes with plus values — like when Sarah and Reese make love. These little victories have a way of making things worse for Sarah.

Options run out and things get worse and worse until Sarah and the Terminator end up face-to-face in a rundown industrial building.

A good thriller is like a trash compactor — it crushes choices until the hero runs out of time and space. Sarah starts as the perfect victim and ends as a warrior. As she survives each obstacle, the viewer sees her change and start to take charge. At the end, she has to outthink the Terminator and crawl through the jaws of death to lead him to his crushing end. The pregnant Sarah who leaves the country to prepare for a coming war is a completely different Sarah than at the beginning.

If you find you're having trouble with a scene, write a one-sentence blurb and assign it a plus, minus, or neutral value. If you have too many plusses or neutrals, create more minuses — things that will make things worse for your main character.

Make a reader ask himself questions and make him worry about what's going to happen next. Series characters don't necessarily change, but in each of the stories something about his belief system is challenged, creating a dilemma.

By creating a story with a great number of scenes with negative results, a writer can create tension and suspense and keep the reader worrying until the last page. ▲

The Psychology of Character Motivation

A summary of Dr. D.P. Lyle's workshop

BY SASHA WHITE

In order to create great characters and write compelling stories, we need to understand the psychology of our characters. It's easy to think Goal, Motivation, Conflict, but in reality we know that creating memorable characters is not so easy.

With that in mind I stepped into the conference room at the Tradewinds Island Grand and prepared for Dr. D.P. Lyle's workshop, *The Psychology of Character Motivation — Understanding the Whys of Character Thought, Action, and Dialogue*.

Admittedly, I was worried that taking a workshop from a doctor on the psychology of character motivation might be a bit too, oh I don't know... school-ish for me. You know what I mean? I've never been one to read textbooks and I don't have much love for big ten-dollar words. I like it when things are explained to me in a simple straightforward way.

Dr. Lyle did even better than that — he used examples that made things crystal clear. I'm going to jump right in with the recap here and start with his slide show. It looked a little like this....

Tough Guy	-----	Whiner
Team Guy	-----	Rebel
Artist	-----	Dreamer
Smarty	-----	Dummy
Blooming Rose	-----	Wallflower
Grinder	-----	Lazy Dog
Goody	-----	Baddy
Believer	-----	Doubter

For the workshop he used the character and story line of *Silence of the Lambs* for an example. First we went over each line asking which side of the board Hannibal was on at the start of the book. Then again at the end of the book. Then we did Clarice, start and end of the book. Sometimes the character fell in the middle, but often it was closer to one side than the other.

See an example of the Clarice chart below.

Tough Guy	-----	S	-----	Whiner
Team Guy	--	S	-----	Rebel
Artist	-----	S	-----	Dreamer
Smarty	-----	S	-----	Dummy
Blooming Rose	-----	S	---	Wallflower
Grinder	-----	S	-----	Lazy Dog
Goody	-----	S	-----	Baddy
Believer	--	S	-----	Doubter

Now keep in mind I can't remember exactly where Dr. Lyle put them, so these are my remembered interpretation. Basically, at the start of SOTL Clarice was a rookie FBI agent who followed all the rules, did her job, and didn't think much for herself or stand out from the crowd in any real way. But as the story changed, so did she. She learned, and grew, and changed, until at the end of the story she ignored procedure, and her own safety by going into the basement after Buffalo Bill (bad guy serial killer) to rescue the girl. At the end, her character was drastically different than it was at the beginning. Everything changed. Clarice, and her belief system, were changed forever by the choices she'd made in the course of the story.

Hannibal, however, changed very little throughout the story. The one thing about him that did change, however, was essential. At the beginning of the story Hannibal was simply the bad guy. Sure the way he killed was disgusting, and what he did (eating the victims) was gross, and we all knew he was evil, but that was pretty much the same at the end of the story. The change in him was brought on by Clarice. The change was that he grew to admire and care about her, and that added dimension not only made him human, it made him even more terrifying.

What we need to learn from these examples is that characters are people. People we create who grow and change as the story moves forward. And change is essential. Our characters come from our imagination; we give them names, jobs, desires and foibles. They have good traits and bad, they are not flat, or one dimensional — at least we don't want them to be! We want them to be three-dimensional. In order to accomplish that they have to grow and change, the same way we do.

"Let them live. Let them breathe," Dr. Lyle says when talking about character. "Then pressure them into changing."

Why should we pressure them into change? Because people don't change unless they have to. Pressure makes things move and people change. Not to mention pressure creates tension, and tension makes for great storytelling. So, how do we create this pressure?

Dr. Lyle's answer is, "No win creates pressure."

This is where we get into the nature of the conflict zone. Dr. Lyle says that when in the zone "characters have to choose A or B, and that choice will change them forever." We, as the authors, build tension and pressure by showing what the character wins and what they lose with choice A. Then show the same with choice B. And by doing that we show that there is a win for the character in both options, and a loss for the character in both options as well.

This is what makes the choice so difficult, and builds the pressure. That pressure can be stretched over months, or flash in seconds.

Again, Dr. Lyle gives us an example of it broken down into something simple so we can grasp the concept, and adapt it to our own stories. His example is that of a woman with three children, at home, and the house gets on fire. She manages to get two of her three children out of the house before it becomes clear that she might not succeed if she goes in after the third. This becomes the conflict zone with choice A or B.

A -- Go in after the third child.

B -- Stay with the 2 outside.

WIN: if she saves the child

WIN: she still has 2 children, and they have a mother

LOSE: if they both die and the 2 outside are orphaned

LOSE: she loses the third child.

Both choices have a win and a lose side to it. So which does she choose?

"We are all trapped by who we are," says Dr. Lyle. Meaning this is the type of pressure and conflict that changes your character. No matter what choice she makes, she will never be the same person she was.

These are the types of conflicts we need to think about. We need to understand who our characters are at the core, not just on the surface, in order to put them under pressure and create the changes in them that come with great characters and major storytelling.

Once you've put your character into the conflict zone, and you've made it clear what the win/lose options of both choices are, you need to decide what choice you can **use** best in your story.

There was also a bit of talk about how different it is when you're writing a series. Series characters don't need to, and really shouldn't change so massively in each book. If you're writing as series you can't have them change so drastically in each story because then you risk losing your readers. Readers follow a series because they like the character. They want to see the character challenged physically and intellectually, they want to see his belief system challenged, but they love the characters the way they are, and don't really want to see them change fundamentally in each story.

The final message of the workshop is that often we get too caught up in the writing. We need to take a step back, breathe, and *think*. List all the options your character has, then make the right choice for the story — which is not always the right choice for the character's well-being. Sometimes people do bad things for good reasons, and vice versa, and we need to think of our characters as people, or there's a chance they might become flat and one-dimensional.

This workshop was the second of the day for Dr. Lyle, and when it was over I was lucky enough to get a few minutes alone with him and my video camera for an on the spot interview. You can view it here on YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uqf0JukRXMI>) and see just how dynamic and adept a speaker Dr. Lyle is.

Please check out Dr D.P. Lyle's website at <http://www.dplylemd.com>. Not only is he a wonderfully dynamic speaker, but he is generous with his knowledge and thoughts on his blog as well. His **Writers Forensic Blog** (<http://writersforensicsblog.wordpress.com/>) is a highly recommended resource. ▲

My Muse Was Hiding out at the Beach: Getting Back into the Game

Brainstorming at the Beach Workshop report

BY ELAINE ISAAK

A few years ago, Ellen Tabor had published three historical romances, with another in the pipeline, and a brand new Novelists, Inc. membership. She was living the dream of being a published novelist. Then her line closed, leaving her next work in limbo. She opted to pursue another goal, returning to college and landing a position teaching composition — and selling her master's degree novel to a publisher. . .that unfortunately went under.

Is this starting to sound familiar? After that came a dry spell when it seemed she just couldn't sell a thing. Demoralized, Ellen began to lose interest in writing altogether. Then she recalled a conversation with her father at their Tybee Island, Georgia home: "If you don't write the story of Tybee, nobody will."

The story of Tybee, conceived as a resort for working-class people in the late 1800s, had always intrigued Ellen, but how did it relate to the fiction career she longed for? Still, she started paying attention to how a regional non-fiction book might be marketed. She visited local tourist destinations and found not only non-fiction titles, but also children's books, middle-grade, and adult fiction titles based on those same locations — and selling to the locals and tourists who visited there. Ellen started interviewing locals, thanks to her own island connections, and teamed up with an academic author, Polly Wylly Cooper, who was researching the same material.

Together, they created not only *Tybee Days: 100 Years on Georgia's Island Playground* but also *Sand Between our Toes: Tybee Island Family Photo Album*, thanks to the generosity of citizens sharing their historical photos. In December 2009, Kennesaw University Press took a chance on these non-academic titles, and soon found they had a couple of regional bestsellers on their hands. Ellen and her co-author promoted the books through local gift shops and tourist areas as well as bookstores, and Ellen found herself not only with hundreds of story ideas, but also a platform as an expert on local history from which to market and sell the fiction projects she has in mind.

She and her co-author were recently given the Georgia Author of the Year Award for 2010, and she returns home from the conference to a television interview about their work.

Ellen shared some of the Tybee stories she had collected, and also her thoughts about how to re-start a career.

She kept motivated during the five-year writing process because she had no deadline. "I could do this the way I want. If I had a deadline," Ellen said, "a lot of stories wouldn't have been told." She researched the potential for competing titles about the people of the area and found none, so she knew she had a promising niche. When the offer came in from the press, she had the contract reviewed by a literary attorney and was able to win higher royalties.

Before, she had been worried about ever publishing again, but this project got her out of the rut of rejection. “I’ve seen so many fiction ideas come out of this that I can’t wait to get back to the writing.” Ellen points to *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* as a title once thought so regional that it would not achieve wide success. However, readers remain hungry for stories of the South, the coast, and the type of history that brings nostalgia and good memories.

Ellen recommends using your off-time to research topics and other genres. Attending the BEA convention exposed her to the wide variety of books she might be writing, outside of her roots in historical romance. “I just think the muse hangs out at the bookstore, but not only in the romance section.”

Also, her non-fiction work has given her a built-in platform for selling other regional works, promoting these with the contacts she has made, and selling more books to an interested readership.

As Ellen’s talk broke out into general discussion, we generated all kinds of ideas about how to re-start a writing career, many of which dovetailed with other themes of the conference, like looking to small press or e-publishing as exciting alternatives to the traditional route. Other ideas you might try include:

- * look for something special about your town or area that people might be interested to know about
- * write something off-beat — take the chance on a work that may seem less commercial
- * working in a niche market allows you to maintain your skills, build your audience, and work toward a breakout
- * walk the dog or mow the lawn — physical activity and nature often rejuvenate the writer
- * choose an unfamiliar topic and research it, using it as a springboard for fiction
- * write short stories either about new ideas or tied to your previous work — sell them or give them away as teasers
- * use a regional voice and specialty to create a new or more defined author brand
- * look for ways to build your day job or other outside interests into a new career direction or platform for related writing
- * try an organized program like Julia Cameron’s *The Artist’s Way*
- * clean out the closets or drawers — freeing yourself from the accumulated history in more ways than one immerse yourself in hobbies or crafts — not only can these help you relax and enjoy yourself again, they may clear the mind and provide new ideas

Ellen’s muse might have gone to the beach, but her new start inspired a lot of brainstorming — a fun fulfillment of our conference theme. ▲

PLOTTING THE PERFECT MURDER

Presented by Dr. D.P. Lyle

BY PAT MCLAUGHLIN/PATRICIA MCLINN

“Scott Peterson had a problem. His problem was named Laci,” Dr. D.P. Lyle told NINC conference attendees to start his “Plotting the Perfect Murder” workshop.

Lyle began by taking us through the steps Scott Peterson must have followed to go from deciding he had a problem to committing a murder that Peterson intended to be perfect. That mental route starts with a nearly innocent step or two off the straight-and-narrow path, said Lyle, but ends up deep in the woods of planning and executing a murder with the intention of getting away with it.

“Killing her – that’s the easy part,” he said. But what to do with her body, how to create an alibi, how to cover up evidence, those were the elements Scott Peterson needed to consider.

Lyle took NINC conference attendees through Peterson’s likely thought processes in planning how to murder Laci and how to get away with it, reminding us that by extension this would be what our fictional murderers would do before the event.

All Peterson’s planning led to the moment when he called his mother-in-law and spoke the words that Lyle said would make a good opening for a novel: “Laci is missing.”

Ah, that was one of Peterson’s mistakes: An innocent person would ordinarily say, “Have you seen Laci? Is she over there?”

That reveals a pitfall for murderers (real-life and fictional): Knowing the end of the story, they anticipate. Both before and after the event, this affects the murderer.

“Planning will alter the perp’s behavior. They’re thinking about things. They’re going to different places. They will be preoccupied, edgy,” Lyle said. All elements writers can use. “Afterward might be even more apparent.”

Lyle pointed out the difficulty of being normal when you’re trying so hard to *act* normal. Murderers are “constantly trying to cover their tracks. Trying to insert themselves into the investigation. They want to know what’s going on. . . . They might want to lead the investigation in a certain direction.

“They’re constantly telling themselves not to say something. Trying so hard to *not* say something, that something else comes out. It’s a mind under stress,” Lyle said. “And in all this they give themselves away.”

And the detective is watching for exactly that, eager to add the pressure on that mind. “Once the detective grabs onto a frayed edge, the murderer has to make things up on the fly, and then the story starts to unravel.”

But Scott Peterson made two other fatal errors, errors that writers need to consider for their murderers, said Lyle.

"You are married for life to your alibi." For Peterson that was the "I was a hundred miles away fishing when she went missing" ploy, backed by evidence he so carefully shared with the police. When bodies showed up near that fishing spot, Lyle said, "Scott's lifelong commitment to his alibi no longer looked so good."

"Mother Nature will not save your sorry ass." Once he'd dumped Laci's body, Peterson had expected Mother Nature to take care of evidence against him. Instead Mother Nature brought the body ashore near where he'd told police he'd gone fishing. (See Fatal Error 1.)

Having taken us through Peterson's thought processes and errors, Lyle prepared us to plan a murder. But first he pointed out how vital this planning is. Too often writers and their killers "stumble through," when preparation would tighten the story. After all, preparing is what murderers do. "If you do all that," Lyle said, "your story will be richer and deeper. ... The better you are about being a murderer, the better the story will be."

Writers need to consider each step a murderer would consider – a murderer determined to get away with it. We need to think through and pin down "all the stuff before that opening line: 'Laci is missing.'"

So, he had the members of Novelists, Inc, become a murderer.

Who are we?

Pulling answers from the enthusiastic audience, Lyle created an "us" who was a 37-year old female high English teacher having an affair with a 16-year-old football-playing high school student. She decided to break it off – permanently.

Together, we thrashed out how, where and when this murder would take place. At each step we considered the obstacles we – the murderer – would face, sometimes discarding ideas because of the obstacles, other times overcoming them.

Asking ourselves questions each step of the way.

Questions about what method would be best and how to get the needed materials without anything being traced to us.

Questions about alibis that could be cracked, transportation that would point to us, GPS trackers, cell phones ("I can't tell you how many times cell phones and the Internet have been a murderer's undoing," Lyle said.)

Detectives look for variations in behavior pre- and post-crime, he reminded us. Perhaps an unusual trip to a hardware store, or a cell phone turned off uncharacteristically. And, of course, the police quiz the inevitable neighbor who could observe our actions. "A citizen will screw up the perfect crime every time," said Lyle.

Having addressed who, how, where and when, the big remaining question to be addressed in our rapidly dwindling time was why.

“Police start with motivation,” Lyle said. “*Why* is what gets everybody caught. It comes down to ‘Who else would kill this person?’”

In fact, Lyle said, the most basic formula for police is: How + Why = Who.

Before Lyle let his band of murderers loose, he urged us all to “sit down and say, ‘I am the bad guy. Why do I want to do this? How am I going to do it? Is this the best tool? How do I get this tool? What do I do with it after? Is there a better option? How do I best do this and get away with it?’”

The answers will help us all commit perfect – fictional – murders. ▲

Carina Press Workshop

with Angela James, Editor and Publisher

BY JOANN GROTE

No workshop was scheduled for Carina Press, but in response to the interest of conference attendees, Harlequin editor Marsha Zinberg graciously gave almost an hour of one of her scheduled workshops over to Angela James to discuss e-book publisher Carina Press.

They publish all genres and are very welcoming of new ideas. Although operating under Harlequin's (HQ's) umbrella, Carina does not publish books from the HQ romance lines. Publishing with Carina may be an opportunity to rejuvenate an author's career, and move to publishing with the regular HQ lines, Angela James said in response to a question from Kasey Michaels. Marsha Zinberg noted that Harlequin will be watching successful Carina authors. Since Carina's first publications in June, HQ has made two acquisitions for their Direct to Consumer mystery program from Carina.

Carina publishes novellas (up to 15,000 words) and novels. In romance, they accept very sweet romance to extreme erotica. Additionally, they are open to purchasing rights to back-list titles. Carina is currently publishing two books a week, and expects to publish three weekly beginning in January. Approximately 30-40% of their authors are previously unpublished, and 85% are unagented.

When submitting to Carina, a full manuscript is usually requested, though a proposal may, at Carina's discretion, be accepted from previously published authors. After signing one contract with Carina, subsequent books are usually sold on proposal. Books are priced from \$2.99 to \$5.99 based primarily on word count, with books up to 15K priced at \$2.99.

Royalties are 30% on direct-to-consumer purchases from Carina's website, 15% for books purchased through other retailers, and are paid quarterly. Carina asks for rights for the life of the copyright. There is usually no option clause, but Carina may ask for one in specific instances, such as when the book is one of a trilogy.

Rights revert if the book is out-of-print for seven years. Carina asks for all rights because they use HQ's resources for distribution.

Marketing is "just as aggressive for Carina as for other HQ lines," Ms. James said, "and we hope to announce foreign sales soon." As part of Carina's marketing plan, the author has the use of Carina's blog, Facebook and Twitter for the day of the book release.

HQ and Carina are happy with Carina's sales numbers so far, believing they are good numbers for the digital market. Carina's most popular book to date is Shannon Stacey's *Exclusively Yours*, a non-erotic, family reunion romance. [Note: Angela James will be returning to the beach for the 2011 conference] ▲