



WOMEN Writing the West

www.womenwritingthewest.org

Spring 2002

What we Write - How our Stories Find Us

By Margaret Coel

I'm often asked – as I'm sure all of you are – how do you get your ideas? And I always want to say, I don't. They get me.

The Arapahos, about whom I've been writing stories now for some time, have a similar explanation. They say that the universe is filled with stories. That from time to time, these stories allow themselves to be told. And when they allow themselves to be told, they select the storyteller.

We know this is absolutely true. Check the shelves of any bookstore or library, and you'll find titles for such stories as *The Economic Models for the New Millennium*, *The Spiritual Dimension of Computers*, *Tramping Through Sierra Leone*, *The Life of Richard Widmark*. What writer would go looking for those stories? The fact is, those stories came looking for the writers. And they found them.

How do our stories find us?

They come to us through our passions. We write the stories of the West because we love the West. We have a passion for the West. It's in our hearts. It's in our blood. We know the West. So the stories are able to find us because we've prepared ourselves. By reading. By living. By immersing ourselves in the people and places, history and culture of the West.

In my case, interest in the West came from listening to stories about the early days here.

Eventually a story about the Arapahos came and found me. It took hold of me and refused to let go. It was the story of one of the Arapaho leaders in the mid-1800s, a chief who was fluent in English. His name was Left Hand, which, in Arapaho, is Niwot.

I became obsessed with this story. Finally it hit me that this story was too big for an article: this story wanted to be a book. I did not want to write a book at that point. I didn't have time to write a book. But the story – this big, unwieldy, book story – had its hooks in me and – what can we do when a story gets its hooks in us? We write it, of course. So I wrote *Chief Left Hand*, and it was published in 1981 by the University of Oklahoma Press, and I'm happy to say, is still in print.

There is something else that happens when a story gets its hooks in you, and you know you have to write it or have no peace for the rest of your life. What happens is, people appear who try to discourage you.

They say things like: What makes you think you can write a book? You're never going to get that published.

I cannot tell you how many people told me I would never get a serious historical work published because I didn't have a doctorate in history. They said, forget it. You can't do it.

I learned to block out those voices.

But there are other voices – those of people who understand that you have this gift, and the story has found you, and you're obsessed. They understand. And they say, go for it. This is why a group like Women Writing the West is so important to all of us – because it is in such a group that we hear those good voices that say, Write your story!

I only listen to good voices.

I was a non-fiction writer, but a little voice inside me kept saying – Fiction. Of course, I'd never written any fiction. But I thought, I'm a writer, I've written lots of things. How hard can fiction be?

It was hard. I had to learn a new craft. I'd been riding bicycles, and now I had to drive a Ferrari. I started out by saying my little prayer that I always

...Continued on page 11

In This Issue...

2003 Catalog Entry Package

WILLA Awards Update

Conference Update

Trade Show Workers Needed

Member News

And much more!

SUSTAINING MEMBERS

These members have chosen to contribute dues beyond the regular annual dues to help WWW sustain its activities for the benefit of all members. We thank them for their generosity.

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Susan J. Tweit
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Advertising Policy and Rates

CATALOG:

Full page \$350
 Half page \$225
 Quarter page \$125

Contact Cynthia Leal Massey
 at 210-695-5328

NEWSLETTER:

Full page \$250
 Half page \$160
 Quarter page \$90

Contact Paige Ramsey-Palmer
 at 830-816-8638

Ad Sizes

W	x	H
7.5"	x	9.75"
7.5"	x	4.75"
3.625"	x	4.75"

All copy will be accepted only as a CAMERA-READY document. (No paste-ups, please) Electronic files preferred - 300 dpi resolution.

For all the latest
 WWW news:

www.womenwritingthewest.org

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Up and Coming Opportunities

WILLA Literary Awards Update

The judging has begun! Again this year we have an absolutely stunning group of entries. With so many fabulous books I can not imagine how our judge librarians are going to choose!

Finalists will be posted the first part of August, both on the Website (www.womenwritingthewest.org) and on our yahoo groups list, so keep an eye out for that.

Best of luck to all who entered.
All of these books are winners!
Paula Boyd
Past President/WILLA Chair

Catalog Update

By Cynthia Leal Massey

2002-2003 Catalog in the Works!

Heralded as "one of the greatest bargains in the publishing industry" Cynthia Leal Massey, catalog editor, is now accepting submissions for the 2002-2003 Women Writing the West catalog. The catalog, which is published in August of each year, allows the newest edition to be available for distribution at the all-important fall Bookseller Trade Shows.

This catalog is widely respected in the book publishing world. WWW distributes the catalog to all members and targeted companies, librarians and people in the publishing industry.

Members have three options to be included in the catalog:

- Book listing – Entry alphabetized by author's name in a specific category, with 30-word description.
- Display ad – boxed advertisement – 1/4, 1/2 or full page – to bring extra focus to your book.
- Member focus listing – member may feature herself, rather than her books, for contact.

What are the benefits of listing or advertising?

- Approximately 8,000 copies publicize your book for a full year.
- Advertising and listing rates are low, being one of the true marketing bargains in the book publishing industry.
- Any individual member's book, listed or advertised in the current catalog, is eligible to join the traveling book display at WWW-sponsored trade show booths and events.
- The catalog is posted on the WWW Web site, <http://www.womenwritingthewest.org>.

Deadline for entries in the 2002-2003 catalog is June 15, 2002.

Copies of the entry forms are inserted in this newsletter. They are also available for download on our Web site, www.womenwritingthewest.org. The forms contain ad submission format, mailing, and pricing information. For more information, contact Cynthia at CMass22@aol.com.

3

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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Conference Update

By Suzanne Lyon

A hearty THANK YOU to all the members who submitted proposals for presentations at our annual conference this October. As of this writing, Good Books Lately has received over forty submissions! The board is thrilled, if not surprised, at the enthusiastic response from members. GBL now has the Herculean task of reviewing these proposals and putting together a conference program. They expect to make a final decision by the second or third week in April. Check the WWW Web site and the YahooGroups listserv for the latest information.

You won't want to miss this spectacular line-up of WWW presenters, so mark your calendars now for October 25-27, 2002. Join us at the historic and elegant Brown Palace Hotel in Denver for an informative, fun-filled week-end. A detailed schedule of events and registration forms will be available online as soon as possible, as well as in the next newsletter.

We'll see you there!

Trade Shows Allow Legal Overdose

By Sherry Monahan

Query: Where can you OVERDOSE with the newest in published books (and sometimes even get review copies)?

Response: You can "WOMAN" a trade show booth with fellow WWTW members this fall!

Fall may seem like the farthest thing from anyone's thoughts, but it's just around the corner. WWTW will partici-

participate in three regional events during September and October,

but we CAN'T do it without your help! We must have workers to man the booth. WWTW pays for the entry fees, so all members have to do is be there for a few enjoyable hours!

Our trade show coordinators are busily preparing for some wonderful events (see details below).

What do we gain from participating at a trade show?
EXPOSURE, EXPOSURE, EXPOSURE

Our WWTW volunteers hand out hundreds of catalogs,

newsletters, and brochures. We collect hundreds of business cards of potential publishers, members, bookstore owners, and others interested in what we do.

Members who volunteer sometimes meet publisher representatives who are interested in their current project. Marketing chair Sherry Monahan says, "For the past few years I've heard stories of chance meetings bringing future

benefits to our members. When 500 to 1,000 booksellers come together, trade

shows draw book enthusiasts from all over their marketing area. Networking is the best way to expand your opportunities, and trade shows are designed promote just that."

Whether you have a book published, a book written and ready to go "on the street," or if you have an idea seed for writing, the trade show opportunity will be benefit you. Look for the show listed below that is near where you live or which draws those who would be interested in the stories you write.

Happy promoting!

"Networking is the best way to expand your opportunities, and trade shows are designed to promote just that."



From Left, Suzanne Lyon, Corinne Brown and Paula Boyd greet book enthusiasts at WWTW Trade Show booth. WWTW authors manning the booth at trade shows have their books featured under the sign "The Author Is In" while they work.

TRADE SHOW CONTACTS

PACIFIC NORTHWEST FALL BOOKSELLERS (PNBA) TRADE SHOW

September 13-15

Portland, OR

Workshops Friday; trade

exhibits Saturday and Sunday.

Contact Jane Kirkpatrick at
jkirk@skyride.net.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA INDEPENDENT BOOKSELLERS TRADE SHOW

October 5 & 6

Marriott Convention Center
Oakland, California.

More workshops, author lunches, and speakers this year; WWTW members who are working in the booth are eligible to attend all of the activities.

Contact Doris Eraldi,
(707) 743-1337 or
dyan@pacific.net.

MOUNTAINS & PLAINS BOOKSELLERS ASSN. TRADE SHOW

September 20 - 22

Denver, Colorado

Contact Michelle Black at

Michelle13@compuserve.com.

Face-to-Face Critique Groups

By Mary E. Trimble

When a writing friend approached me several years ago with the idea that we should start a critique group, I was reluctant. I didn't feel I could afford to take time away from my work.

"You can't afford not to," she countered. "We need to work with people who share our goals and aspirations." She was right, and I have never regretted my decision.

Our critique group has proven to be one of my most valuable writing tools and has helped me to produce gratifying, saleable work. Not only that, since I work at home in a solitary environment, my critique group brings me important social contacts with others who share my professional interests - people from whom I gain inspiration and confirmation that my work is important.

In building our critique group, it didn't take long to find other dedicated writers also looking for ways to improve their writing skills. We soon had a strong, workable group, meeting three intense hours three times a month at the local library, which offers a neutral, business-like environment. Several of us get together beforehand for lunch so that we can get the chatting out of our systems because once the meeting begins, we hold a fifteen-minute period for announcements then get right to business.

We have no permanent leader in our critique group but rotate that responsibility each month. That month's leader passes an attendance sheet around and each member indicates whether or not she has brought work to read. In eight years, I've never

passed up this opportunity to share my work. One of our members designed a matrix, a good tool to use to determine how much time each person has to read, based on the number of readers present.

Our critique group has proven to be one of my most valuable writing tools and has helped me to produce gratifying, saleable work.

Group membership is limited to ten so that everyone has a chance to share her work each time we meet. In our tightly knit group, potential new membership is taken very seriously. Newcomers must attend three meetings as invited guests and fully participate in the critiquing process. A unanimous vote is required before a new member is invited to join the group. Yes, unanimous. We've all heard horror stories about how one member can ruin a critique group. We make every effort to see that it doesn't happen to us.

If our membership is at the maximum ten writers, we place pre-approved members on a stand-by list to be called when a regular member is on vacation or leave-of-absence.

We take care to critique the work, not the author, subject matter or style of the work. In other words, if a member writes a piece on a sensitive topic, such as abortion, we do not discuss the issues of abortion per se, but rather, did the writer state her case clearly? We strive to point out the strengths along

with suggestions for what might make the writing clearer and more powerful.

Each January we hold a business meeting to discuss current or potential areas of concern which we feel may weaken the group's goals and to fine-tune our by-laws. Every member has an equal vote and the majority rules.

Although I prefer the face-to-face interaction of a critique group, where I not only hear verbal pats on the back but get to "feel" the reaction to my work, there is another increasingly popular approach: an online critique group.

Next issue: Online Critique Groups explored.

Mary E. Trimble is the author of Rosemount, (Atlantic Bridge Publishing) a young adult contemporary western novel. Her 300-plus published magazine and newspaper articles deal with travel and topics of interest to homeowners.



Research Roundup

By Gail L. Jenner

GIS and Historical Maps from the David Rumsey Collection

<http://www.davidrumsey.com/>
Presented by Cartography Associates, the David Rumsey Historical Map Collection focuses on rare 18th and 19th century North and South America cartographic history materials, with an inclusion of historical maps of the World, Europe, Asia, and Africa.

US Newspaper Links (USNPL)

<http://www.usnpl.com/>
USNPL provides a directory of links to newspapers, radio and television stations, and some magazines and college newspapers. Arranged by state, entries are divided by medium (newspaper, broadcast station), then alphabetically by city.

An Unfortunate Region

<http://www.igr.nl/users/vandenneuvel/>
"A website about the Great War (WWI) battlefields and individuals," with photographs of battle sites, cemeteries and graves, and debris (personal items, weapons, munitions). Information about individuals may include biographies, photographs, excerpts from letters and journals, and details of service (country, regiment, place of death, etc.).

AmDocs: Documents for the Study of American History

http://www.ukans.edu/carrie/docs/amdocs_index.html
A directory of primary documents available on the Web. Browse by time period, beginning with 1492 and continuing into current times. Includes inaugural addresses, diary extracts, treaties, letters, speeches. Maintained at the Anschutz Library, University of Kansas.

Confederate victory. What would have happened if the south had won the civil war?

<http://forums.about.com/n/mb/message.asp?webtag=ab-military-hist&msg=412.1>

To Save A Life: Stories of Jewish Rescue

<http://www.humboldt.edu/~rescuers/>

"True stories narrated by six rescuers accompanied by the narratives of thirteen people whom they rescued [from the World War II Holocaust]. . . Contemporary photographic portraits of the rescuers and people whom they helped were made by the author, while vintage photographs and other documents relating to the individual rescue stories were collected from the subjects' personal albums and historical archives."

Notable Women Adventurers

<http://www.infoplease.com/spot/whmbios13.html>

Brief profiles of over 30 journalists, explorers, aviators, astronauts, race car drivers, cowgirls, mountain climbers, and travelers. From the Learning Network.

Graphic Design from the 1920s and 1930s in Travel Ephemera

<http://www.travelbrochuregraphics.com/>

This online gallery displays an extensive personal collection of illustrated ephemera from European, Asian, and American "travel brochures, airline time-tables, ocean liner time-tables, auto road maps, luggage labels, advertising and graphic design publications."

America at Work, America at Leisure: Motion Pictures from 1894-1915

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/a/wlhtml/>

A collection of 150 motion pictures illustrating "work, school, and leisure activities in the United States." Includes films of "the United States Postal Service from 1903, cattle breeding, fire fighters, ice manufacturing, logging, calisthenic and gymnastic exercises in

schools, amusement parks, boxing, expositions, football, parades, swimming..."

American Cowgirl

<http://www.kodak.com/US/en/corp/features/cowgirl/>

Historical photographs, accompanied by text, bear witness to 120 years of women in rodeo. The competitive lives of two bullriders are documented in the sounds, words, and images of three short slide shows. Photographic tips are also provided. Originally published in the July/August 2001 issue of Kodak e-Magazine.

Veterans Day: Department of Veterans Affairs

<http://www.va.gov/vetsday/>
Fact sheets, events calendars, teachers' guides, and more. Includes the President's Veterans Day Proclamation and a gallery of annual commemorative posters.

The Journal of the Indian Wars is in its second volume of publication. Please visit the Journal at <http://www.indianwars.com> and click on the Journal link.

Our current publisher has been bought by another company and that company did not pick up the Journal to continue publication. At the moment, the Journal is the only scholarly publication dealing exclusively with the conflicts between Indian and non-Indian peoples in the North America. We are seeking individuals or groups who might be interested in helping to save the Journal.

Contact Rodney G. Thomas
CELL: 206-660-2158
FAX: 250-681-0131
paladin6@email.msn.com



2003 Women Writing the West Catalog



It's time to send your information
for Women Writing the West
2003 Catalog!

Deadline for Listings and Ads: June 15, 2002

Dear WWW Members,

The 2003 catalog will be released in August 2002, so take advantage of this dynamic publication, which will be available to book sellers, agents, publishers and librarians as a reference for a full year! Our rates are the same as for recent editions, so this is THE greatest bargain in marketing for your books! Women Writing the West catalogs are recognized for the quality of the books and the expertise of the writers involved in our organization. The copies of our catalog all but jump off the tables at bookseller conventions, signings, and book events, into the hands of influential folks in the writing and publishing world.

In the 2003 catalog:

- Rates for book listings and display ads are the same as for the previous catalog!
- As always, we are looking for ways to create new marketing opportunities and increase visibility for the organization and members. Do include your Web site address on the book listings page so that we may list it on our links page.
- You are welcome to link your personal Web site to the WWW homepage! Women Writing the West Web site address is: <http://www.womenwritingthewest.org>.

The catalog application forms are self-explanatory. Please note two items on the listing form, which are very important to our internal organization use:

- The author's home state. Booksellers request this information from WWW so they can schedule local events where authors live! This is definitely information we want them to have, so please be sure to complete that box.
 - Your e-mail address. I don't plan to follow-up on listings, but if a critical need arises, this is the most efficient way to contact you. Please also include your Web site address, if you have one.
- PLEASE fill in one application form for EACH BOOK, even a renewal. This will help us so much in getting the copy ready for the designer. Be sure to include book category, book name and author for each renewal listing.

June 15, 2002 is the absolute deadline for receiving any listings or advertising copy. Any listings received, even by fax after that date, will be held over for our 2004 issue.

Thank you for supporting Women Writing the West!

Cynthia Leal Massey



Women Writing the West 2003 Catalog Application

Please use one form for each book listing. Must be received by June 15, 2002.

Return completed applications and appropriate payments to:

Women Writing the West
c/o Cynthia Leal Massey
P.O. Box 294
Helotes, TX 78023

Phone: 210-695-5328/Fax: 210- 695-5227
E-mail: CMass22@aol.com

Note: Authors renewing same listing as in the latest catalog must supply category, name and title. **SAME LISTING means a listing with no changes from the latest catalog!** If it was not listed in the latest catalog (Fall 2001), it is a new listing, even if it has been in a previous catalog.

CIRCLE ONE: NEW Listing--\$30 SAME Listing as Fall '01--\$25

E-Mail Address: _____ Web site: _____

CATEGORY (Circle One)	Anthology, Biography, Children, Cookbooks, Fiction, Guide Books, Mystery, Non-Fiction, Poetry, Romance, Self-Help/Parenting, Specialty Non-Fiction, Young Adult, Audio, Video, Other _____
AUTHOR'S NAME (as it will appear) last name first	
TITLE	
ISBN #	
PUBLISHER	

DESCRIPTION 30 Words Maximum

(Please print clearly. No clarification calls will be made.)

HOME STATE (booksellers requested this for event scheduling)

Fee for this listing is \$ _____ and is included in my check # _____ which totals \$ _____.

Total number of listings paid for with this check: _____.

COPY FORM AS NEEDED FOR UP TO FIVE TOTAL CATALOG LISTINGS.

WWW Member Affiliate Listing

We have heard from many of you who have books out of print or write for media not categorized in this book catalog (such as magazines). Some of you are currently writing and are not recently published, but you speak publicly to audiences and want to be recognized as a “writing-but-not-currently-in-print” member. We have a new option for these members!

- This WWW Affiliate page will give another opportunity for members to feature themselves, rather than their books, for a nominal fee of \$15. The Affiliate page of this catalog will be reserved for our members who wish to be listed in the catalog but not for specific publications. Please do not list any book title; that can be done in the “book listings” section.
- A member can place a personal listing, which will be the equivalent of one line with a member’s name and brief contact information. For instance, you might choose to include some or all of the following items, depending on length:
 - Name
 - Address (snail or email or both)
 - Telephone number
 - Type of writing you do

The requirements for listing are as follows:

- Must fit on one line (or equivalent of one line) with no more than 140 characters including spaces. No book titles or specific publication information can be listed.

Example:

Jane Doe, Imagine Press, P. O. Box 2629, Timbuktu, CO 80400, (550)555-5555, janedoe@hotmail.com, fiction writer and publisher. (count: 133)

Listing:

(140 words maximum).

Please copy this page for your records, and then send the completed form with your check for \$15 made payable to: Women Writing the West. Mail the check and form to Cynthia Leal Massey, P.O. Box 294, Helotes, Texas 78023, (210) 695-5328. For questions, please e-mail CMass22@aol.com.





Catalog Advertising Policy and Rates for 2003 Catalog

Deadline for submissions is June 15, 2002.

Advertising copy needs to be provided as an electronic file. Please include the following:

- * A disk (standard or ZIP) with the ad in high-resolution electronic format (300 dpi) and all fonts used in the ad, if necessary. (Fonts must be Mac compatible, or if PC generated, converted to paths).
- * The type of file presented: Ie; TIFF, JPG, EPS.
- * A paper print of the ad (for comparison purposes)

Note: The designer prefers your ad submitted as an electronic file in file formats EPS, TIFF, or JPG, however if electronic files are not possible, she will accept a hard copy of the ad either as a high resolution laser or velox print (no magazine or newspaper clips, please; they do not scan or print well). The designer works on a PowerMac and will be using Quark 4 to design the catalog. A Mac disk is preferred. If a PC disk is sent, the file must be a tif, jpg or eps only. If sending a PC disk, the fonts must be converted to paths or imbedded in the file as the Mac will not read PC fonts.

Ads will be placed in the catalog as space allows. We will endeavor to place ads for a specific genre book within the requested category where possible; however this is solely dependent upon number of ads received and layout requirements.

Book cover, photos, etc. may be included in the camera-ready ads. It is the sole responsibility of the sender to check ad copy for correctness of information. WWW reserves the right to refuse any ads. Ads must be in good taste and in keeping with the mission of the organization, which is to promote the Women's West.

ADVERTISING COSTS:	Size (Width x Height)	Cost
FULL PAGE	(7-1/2" x 9-3/4")	\$350
HALF PAGE	(7-1/2" x 4-3/4")	\$225
QUARTER PAGE	(3-5/8" X 4-3/4")	\$125

CUT HERE-----CUT HERE

ADVERTISEMENT REQUEST (please send ad copy, form and payment to address on page 9)

Category _____

Author's Name _____

Ad Size 1 page 1/2 page 1/4 page

Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Submitted By _____

Contact Address _____

Have Questions? Contact Cynthia Leal Massey by e-mail if possible: CMass22@aol.com

What we Write - How our Stories Find Us

...Continued from page 1

say when starting a new story: Let me do this story justice. Let me not make this story dull.

But my attempts at fiction were so dull!

And there were those voices again saying, Oh, you can never make the switch from non-fiction to fiction. Even though just about every great American writer has done so.

There was a point in writing my first novel, *The Eagle Catcher*, where I finally caught on. It was as if a light went on in my head, and I said, Oh! I get it now. When the novel was published, several reviewers said that the story was a little slow getting started, but once it took off, it raced right along. And I know the exact page where that happened!

When I'd finally decided to try to write a mystery novel, the story was there, waiting. It had been in my head for a long time, searching for a way to get out. The plot for *The Eagle Catcher* came out of the research I had done for Chief Left Hand. I had unearthed a nugget of information on the period when Indian Peoples were placed on reservations in the West.

As one of my Arapaho friends said about her people when they went on the reservation, "We were a starving, defeated, pitiful bunch." These were the people cheated out of their reservation land. And that was the story that found me. I knew I would have to write it.

That story became the basis for the plot of *The Eagle Catcher*. In writing the novel, I discovered the wonderful thing about fiction. You can explore different aspects of a story – the way it affects different people and the way a past injustice reverberates down through the generations and must still be dealt with in the present. Fiction allows you to tell more of the story, to uncover more of the truth than the basic facts of non-fiction can ever tell.

After writing my first novel, I was hooked on using fiction to tell the stories. My seventh novel, *The Thunder Keeper*, just came out, and *The Shadow Dancer* is due in bookstores in September.

I haven't yet run out of stories. And I've learned to trust that the stories will come and find me. I've signed contracts for novels and short stories when I didn't have a clue what I would write about. But I knew the stories would come. And they always have.

I stay ready to receive the stories. I visit the reservation every year, visit with friends, listen to what's on their minds. I read novels and poetry and everything I can on the Arapahos and the Plains Indians.

The most gratifying aspect of telling these stories is the response of the Arapahos themselves. They come to my book

signings and talks. They buy my books and tell me that they like reading about their own place, the reservation. But the most gratifying has been the response from Arapaho women, who tell me how much they like my character, Vicky Holden, an Arapaho woman who is trying to hold onto the best of her traditions yet make her way in a fast-changing world.

It was hard. I had to learn a new craft. I'd been riding bicycles, and now I had to drive a Ferrari.

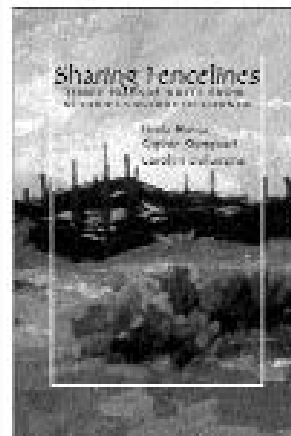
Through our stories, we tap into something universal that we all understand. As Susan Sontag said about writing stories: "There are so many stories

to tell, it's hard to say why it's one rather than another; it must be because with this story you feel you can tell many stories, that there will be a necessity in it."

So let us honor our gift and write the stories that come and find us.

Margaret Coel, non-fiction and fiction author, is winner of 2001 WILLA for contemporary fic-

11



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The Ultimate Guide to Booksense

By Vella Munn

In a nutshell, BookSense, affiliated with the American Booksellers' Association (ABA), is the independent booksellers' response to chain and/or online bookstores--and represents a united effort to remain competitive.

Where do writers come in?

It's worthy of a serious look by Women Writing the West members--particularly those who now link their web sites with Amazon, B&N, etc. because, the owners of the mama/papa bookstores were once all readers and/or writers. They provide a valuable link between authors and the reading public.

BookSense.com is VERY interested in getting authors to join the BookSense.com affiliate program. This way, authors can provide people visiting their web sites the opportunity to purchase books using BookSense.com as the back-end fulfillment. Any purchase originating at a participating author's web site will support Book Sense stores, further strengthening the bonds between writers and independent bookstores.

This marketing alternative provides competition and is another way for authors and independent booksellers to work together for benefit of everyone in the industry.

Background

Director Len Vlahos said that today, according to ABA figures, nearly half of the independent in business in 1994 no longer exist. The Northern California Independent Booksellers

Association broached the idea of having independents band together. In 1999, they formed a nonprofit, wholly-owned subsidiary, which is the e-commerce arm of ABA, designed to raise consumer awareness about the value of the independent bookseller.

The challenge was to provide retailers with the freedom to design individualized sites while ensuring a uniform and efficient shopping experience -- in other words, a personalized front end backed by a centralized database, search function, etc.

In Vlahos's words, BookSense isn't about head-to-head competition with the Amazons of the world but, rather, a tool to help independents provide round-the-clock service to existing customers. Of course, pulling in new customers wouldn't hurt either.

More than 200 ABA members have BookSense-affiliated web sites and that number is growing all the time. In addition, over 1,200 stores participate in the Book Sense marketing program, a collective voice.

The basic design

So what happens when someone goes online and types in www.Booksense.com, a.k.a. "the hub site?" The first step is to type in their zip code.

- This immediately directs them to the personalized site for the nearest BookSense affiliated independent store. That can be the next best thing to going into the neighborhood shop and having good reads recommended by knowledgeable staff. Depending on the personality, inclination, and time of a given owner, customers can learn about in-store events, reading group information, local author information, gossip, etc. Also, the target store's

staff handles shopper questions or problems.

- Even better, shopping isn't limited to that store's inventory. BookSense stores have a shared database of over one million titles. In addition, because all BookSense orders are directed to Baker & Taylor (B&T), customers are actually shopping from the distributor's vast inventory, thus bringing the total database to over 2.4 million titles.
- Purchases can either be picked up at the neighborhood store or delivered by mail and packaged as if they've come from the store where the customer "shopped." The handy-dandy Internet "shopping cart" is ready and waiting to take credit card information.
- They also offer services such as wrapping, personalized cards, and gift certificates.

Bells and whistles

Booksense is a cross between a megastore and a cooperative, with a single, high-profile Internet presence acting as an umbrella for hundreds of individual bookstores and their home pages.

What might make a writer contemplate whether or how to climb onboard are: "honest and insightful reviews on books of all genres," author news, and announcements about the latest new releases. Readers can participate by entering the monthly Reader's Review contest, and BookSense awards cover fiction, adult nonfiction, children's literature and children's illustrated books.

In addition, there are links to VERY INTERESTING PEOPLE, DAILY PICKS, STAFF PICKS, and an EXPERT'S CORNER in the READ UP! section. Readers can sign up at <http://www.BookSense.com/sweepstakes/>

The Ultimate Guide to Booksense

As Vlahos says, "The main thrust of our marketing effort is really an effort done on behalf of the whole Booksense brand. BookSense.com is just one facet of the overall branding campaign. It also includes

- a Weekly Bestseller List (based on sales from more than 350 stores across America) published in over 30 media outlet (P.W. Daily is one and includes exclusive On The Rise books),
- a book recommendation list called Book Sense 76, and
- a national gift certificate program through which people can purchase a gift certificate at any Book Sense store to redeem at any other."

The national branding effort has included ads in the New Yorker, Smithsonian, Atlantic Monthly, and a heavy flight of ads on National Public Radio. In addition, they've done direct-to-consumer e-mail marketing.

This isn't Amazon

BookSense doesn't offer blue light specials with used books, and there are

no toys, music, auctions, sales rankings, fewer publisher ads and no "personalized" suggestions offered repeat customers. However, searches can be made by author, title, or subject.

As to why reader reviews aren't proliferating the way they have at Amazon, Len says, "We're going to greatly expand the number of reviews we offer on many of our titles. We will not, however, offer the option to review a book. We feel that customer reviews, while interesting, lack credibility. We want our reviews to have the full weight and meaningfulness one would expect of a review endorsed by an independent bookseller."

Supporting local bookstores

There's been criticism that book prices don't match the discounts sometimes offered at Amazon, but shipping costs are nearly identical. Perhaps customers will discount the difference because they're committed to supporting their community's business. As Linda Stivala, owner of Gansovoort House Books in Little Falls, New York,

said, "Bookstores are the identity of the community. We feature local titles, promote local authors and contribute to the towns we live in. If you lose that, you lose a lot. If being online helps stores like mine increase business, then it's a very good thing."

Ready to sign up?

Sorry, I can't answer that. However, I encourage everyone to check out www.BookSense.com. The new kid on the block is doing some exciting things.

Vella Munn is author of more than 40 novels, including Soul of the Sacred Earth and Cheyenne Summer.

Nourishing Tips

Since one of the writer's basic rules is to work near her refrigerator, maybe an article gleaned from short metaphorical pieces by members would be nourishing, e.g. writing is like a hard-boiled egg because . . . or perhaps, writing is like jelly. Or maybe "beginning a new piece of writing is like. . .," or "finishing a book is like. . ."

Gwynne Spencer offers the idea for this as well as the first metaphorical contribution. Would any of you like to join the fun?

The Metaphorical Egg

By Gwynne Spencer

I've learned that writing is like a hard-boiled egg.

First comes the hot water, then plopping in of uncooked matter, the waiting, then the cooling down. But all that is just the beginning.

After you crack the shell, you still have to pick at the surface for a long time before you can get to the part you want. Even then, sometimes you have to use fingernails to peel off the tough membrane and even the most diligent peeler will have bits and shards of shell that have to be washed off before the egg can be used.

Sometimes huge chunks of the white peel off with the shell, prematurely exposing the little yellow core. Sometimes the whole process is just too much to mess with and you end up feeding it to the dog. But most of the time, you get to make egg salad or deviled eggs or sliced eggs into a chef salad and enjoy the white and yellow fruit of your labors.

By Vella Munn

Joyce Badgley Hunsaker performed living history vignettes from *Sacagawea Speaks, Beyond The Shining Mountains With Lewis & Clark* at the Opening Ceremonies of the Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City. Possible future projects — a documentary film and a children's book version. April 21 she will appear on TVW Channel 13's "Author's Hour," sponsored by the Washington State Historical Society. Texas Tech University Press will release *Seeing The Elephant, The Many Faces Of The Oregon Trail*, Spring 2003, with a teacher handbook and student workbook for classroom use. And she's a contributor to *Woven On The Wind*.

Founding member **Page Lambert** presented "Rivers, Romance, and Art" — part of her nonfiction work-in-progress, *Stories about Stories*. — at the Governor's Arts Award Banquet in Cheyenne. She is a contributing author to *Ranching West of the 100th Meridian* — February 2002 Island Press, one of the nation's leading environmental publishers. Member **Linda Hasselstrom** is also a contributor. Page will present workshops at the July Writing the West conference in Gunnison, Colorado, and the Ozark Creative Writers Conference, October in Eureka Springs. She plans to lead two more River Writing Journeys for women in August on the Colorado River.

Francell Lee Schrader, author of *Best Selling Lady of the Immortal Thirty Three*, will have *Man of Honor* out in Summer 2002. An idealistic Irish Catholic lawyer battles the Ku Klux Klan at its height in Denver in the

1920s. Full of exciting Colorado stories!

Michelle Black's *An Uncommon Enemy*, is an Oklahoma Book Award finalist.

Doris Eraldi's *Settler's Law* was assigned reading for the Creative Writing Class at the Santa Rosa (California) Junior College as a representation of the genre novel. The students wrote papers on plot and pacing, then Doris visited the class to discuss writing genre fiction and answer questions. "It was very different to be discussing the novel with a group who had already read and analyzed my work, rather than being in sales-mode," Doris commented. "I got as much out of it as they did!"

Sue Schrems' new book, *Across the Political Spectrum: Oklahoma Women in Politics in the Early Twentieth Century, 1900-1930*, is a 2002 release from Writer's Club Press.

No Other Place, third book in **Irene Bennett Brown's** "Women Of Paragon Springs" series, is a June 2002 release from Five Star. Irene and fellow WWW members **Charlotte Hinger** and **Karyn Cheatham** will participate on a panel, "Home On The Range" at the Western Writers Of America Convention in Wichita in June. They'll cover women's unique role in settling the west. Irene's Spur Award-winning young adult novel, *Before The Lark*, will be out in a hardcover library large print edition from Thorndike Press in June 2002. The novel, originally published by Atheneum, was a Junior Literary Guild selection in 1982, received a nomination for the Mark Twain Award in 1984 (as well as the Spur) and also appeared in a trade paperback edition.

Gold Rush Dogs by **Jane Haigh** and **Claire Murphy** has been selected

a Children's Book Council/Notable Social Studies Trade Book for Young People for 2002. The books will be listed in the May/June 2002 issue of *Social Education* published by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) and also be on display at the annual NCSS Conference in Arizona in November. Jane wants to let everyone know that she is officially working on her doctorate in U.S. History at the University of Arizona in Tucson, still maintaining summer residence in Alaska.

With little-known stories and vivid images, **Harriet Rochlin** previews her fifth book on the Jewish West, *A Mixed Chorus: Jewish Women in the American West 1849-1920*, now nearing completion. "Wherever I looked," Harriet says, "I found Jewish women of every stripe — renowned and obscure, stalwarts and suicides, homemakers and home-breakers, community leaders and renegades, moguls and madams, traditionalists and reformers. Individually, each voice is distinctive and real."

Margaret Benshoof-Holler's book *Burning of the Marriage Hat, A Novel of High Plains Women* published by Wind Women Press, is based, in part, on the author's own coming of age in Wyoming during the 1950s and '60s. It spans the lives of four generations of Wyoming women in the 20th century and provides an extraordinary view of societal attitudes that governed how they dealt with life and loss. Margaret lives in San Francisco where she writes and teaches at City College of San Francisco.

Claire Rudolf Murphy's first young adult novel in seven years comes out this month. *Free Radical* tells the story of Luke McHenry who discovers that his mother, Faith, com-

mitted an anti-war protest 31 years ago that sent her on the run to Alaska. "A well-written compelling story of guilt, justice, identity, forgiveness, coming of age and coming to terms. . . An excellent angle on the Vietnam War and its legacy." *Kirkus Review*.

Sandra Millett's latest book, *First Peoples: The Hmong of Southeast Asia*, was released internationally in September 2001 and in the U.S. in November 2001. A lush picture/text for 10-12 year olds, it covers everything from history to American Hmong. The Internet site (freelanceworkexchange.com), where she found the original query from Times Editions, Ltd. (Singapore) for the book, has hired her to write a 500-word article about the job offer and how she wrote the book.

Called by Larry McMurtry, "a vivid picture of the Rio Grande Valley as it was fifty years ago," and "a very good read," *The Caballeros of Ruby, Texas*, by **Cynthia Leal Massey**, will be released May 2002 by regional publisher Panther Creek Press. Cynthia was a featured author at the San Antonio College Bookfair April 1. Her *Fire Lilies* is a 2002 Eppie finalist for Historical Fiction.

Debbie Brockett's first novel is *Stained Glass Rose*, a Depression-era tale based on a true murder. She discovered Jeanette Morris' story on a cemetery tour, researched and solved a modern-day mystery surrounding her grave, found her family, discovered unsolved aspects of her murder, and presented plausible solutions to her tragic death. Then she fictionalized her story, added a coming-of-age plot with an abused Italian immigrant girl, friendship, a spiritual thread and life in the '30s in Grand Junction, Colorado. On March 12 and 13, the regional ABC affiliate did a news story on Debbie. March 17, she spoke to the Mesa County Historical Society on the murder. *Life and Times Magazine* (popular

local) will carry a review and article on her this spring. Although *Stained Glass Rose* is self published, *Western Reflections* (which edited, designed and printed it) will hold a full-treatment book signing at Barnes & Noble.

Anne Schroeder's memoir, *Branches on the Conejo: Leaving the Soil After Five Generations*, has been called the "Little House on the Prairie" of California. She is speaking to service groups and historical societies, doing booksignings and interviews, and loving every minute of it. Her agent has submitted her novel *Spirit Garden* to four publishing houses in New York and is currently reading her novel of the Oregon Trail.

Arcadia Publishing accepted *Western Siskiyou County: People Of The Mountains, Rivers, And Valleys* by **Gail Jenner** and her writing partner Monica Hall. The local history will be released December 2002. The publisher suggested they prepare a second book proposal on Eastern Siskiyou County. Gail had an incredible booksigning at Barnes & Noble in Chico on February 2, organized around the Women Writing the West theme. She "outsold" John Grisham for the month and the week; was #4 for the month in in-store sales; and #1 for the week! The assistant manager told her it was their most successful single-author signing ever — including BIG name authors! She's had a request from a small, independent film company for a "look see" at her screenplay, *Fool Moon*, a romantic drama that takes place during the Depression.

Nikki Tate's *Jo's Triumph*, a novel for young readers set in Utah Territory against the backdrop of the Pony Express, is out via Orca Book Publishers. In September, she will ride on horseback across Nevada to promote the book.

What a stellar year for one of our illustrious members! **Joan Lowery Nixon** has been recognized for her outstanding

contributions to young adult literature with the St. Katherine Drexel Award, given by the High School Libraries section of the Catholic Library Association. Joan also received the Kerlan Award, from the Kerlan Children's Literature Collection at the University of Minnesota, given each year to an author who has made an outstanding contribution to children's literature. Joan's newest book, *The Making of a Writer*, is currently being published by Random House/Delacorte available in May 2002.

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