



## DECEMBER 2007 NEWSLETTER

Volume 3 ~ Issue 12

Whether you are a published author or a writer-wanna-be, this e-zine is for you. Here, you will find articles, announcements, book reviews, poetry, and information about the craft and business of writing, publishing and book marketing written by our readers. Our goal is to connect the writing and publishing community through networking that benefits both.

You are receiving this because you signed up for it or someone thought you would enjoy the free information. If you do not wish to receive it, you may unsubscribe by clicking the link at the bottom of the newsletter. Please forward this ezine to anyone you know who needs information about writing, publishing, networking or book promotion.

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### AUTHOR'S CORNER BY YVONNE PERRY

Can you believe 2007 is nearly over? It's been a good year for me, but it has been a very busy one with the release of my book *[RIGHT TO RECOVER](#) Winning the Political and Religious Wars over Stem Cell Research in America*. I didn't know how time consuming book publicity could be. I've learned that how you PUBLISH a book is not nearly as important as how you PROMOTE a book. I've written an article to share my thoughts and experience on this. I've posted it [in this newsletter](#), but it is also available on [ezinearticles.com](#).

Nashville reporter Andy Humbles interviewed me about my freelance writing and editing business. The article ran in the Davidson AM section of the Tennessean Newspaper and I'd like to share it with you. Here is the link in case you would like to read the article online:

<http://www.tennessean.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2007711140341> .

I hope you enjoy our newsletter and will let others know how they may subscribe:

<https://app.quicksizzle.com/survey.aspx?sfid=13065>.

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## MISTAKES OF FIRST-TIME AUTHORS

Prior to being published, new authors frequently make mistakes that damage or even preclude their book's marketability. Commonly, these errors include:

- Poorly designed or stock cover art
- Unedited, under edited or unprofessionally edited text
- Under funding of or lack of a book marketing budget
- Invisible or inadequately visible online presence for author and title
- Absence of platform and clear audience for the material

**Book Covers** make or break your ability to obtain reviews and readers. You *can* judge a book by its cover. As James Cox, Editor of Midwest Book Review puts it:

“Stack #3 are those titles that are immediately rejected -- not for their subject matter; not for being written by a first time author; and not for their self-published, POD-published, or small press published status, but because they are poorly designed or defectively produced in terms of presenting substandard, inadequate, or otherwise unattractive covers.”

Appealing covers summon buyers. Whether these buyers actually read your book is another matter, but the most important element for *purchasing* a publication is its wrapper. It has been proven that people choose a book by what they see and read on the cover, *especially* if they don't know the author or the title.

Make sure your cover is designed by an award-winning book designer, not a general graphic designer. For different angles and musings on book covers, visit book design web sites and blogs.

**Editing** is also critical to your book's success. You want to interview several editors and hold their completed books in your hand. Choose a set of editors who are experienced with your genre. Among equally qualified candidates, hire those with whom you have some professional chemistry. For an explanation of the types of editing your work might benefit from, read Mindy Reed's short piece, "Types of Editing", on the blog at [www.authorsassistant.com](http://www.authorsassistant.com).

What is a reasonable **Marketing Budget** for a book launch? Plan to spend \$2.5 to \$12K before and during the first three months of your book's life. If you get an advance on your manuscript, I recommend spending the whole amount on marketing your book.

Line item expenses in a prep & launch budget might include research & fact checking, editing, indexing, illustrating, cover & interior design, web design, optimization, & maintenance, distribution, shipping, travel, publicity, and advertising. If you need media training or a public speaking coach, include that. If you are independently published, add in book fair and industry conference fees, book award submission fees, exhibitor costs, and presentation equipment.

An author's **Online Presence** is absolutely crucial in today's book market. Internet book sales have risen 18% year on year since 2002. For this reason, each author needs a web site that pulls incoming traffic from people who are searching on the book's issues, title, and author name.

The internet is so dynamic that each year the way to attract customers on the superhighway seems to morph. Right now it's social networking and backlinking. Perhaps 12 million Americans now keep a blog because they've learned that updating it every couple of weeks will maintain or lift their page rank. If you are facile with a computer, use search engine optimization (SEO) tools to discover high ranking keywords, and then repeat those throughout your web site, blog and press releases. Seek a web designer who is both imaginative and good at taking direction, while exhibiting a proficiency in English, design, programming, SEO, and business.

Finally, if you cannot define your book's **Audience and Platform**, your book will never get off the ground. To market your book, you must be able to distill its issues and know who and where your readers are and how they search for information. Create your log line to attract them and prioritize your first year plan so that you fully fund and lead with the strongest device in your platform.

Don't end up in the slush pile! Spend time and money with your editing team, a book designer, an SEO guru, and a publicist, so your book is more likely to remain competitive among the 200,000 titles released in America each year.

This article was originally published in Scribe, August/September 2007 by Writers' League of Texas.

*Stephanie Barko is an Independent Literary Publicist who markets Texas authors and authors touring Texas. She handles nonfiction and historical fiction, and has worked as Supplemental Publicist to Henry Holt and Penguin/Berkley. Click [www.authorsassistant.com](http://www.authorsassistant.com) for a full list of services and genres.*

## WRITERS IN THE SKY PODCAST

[Writers in the Sky Podcast](#) offers interviews with authors and writers, as well as the latest news about books on the market, publishing methods and marketing techniques. There are more than 35 informational shows already uploaded and a new program is added each week.

Occasionally, a teleclass may be longer, but most of our classes are recorded in 15- to 20-minute segments you may listen to while traveling, cleaning the house, waxing the car, exercising, etc. The best part is there is **no cost** to listen and it is a great way to learn more about writing and publishing. December shows include:

Taryn Simpson - Author of Mango Tree Cafe  
Janet Switzer – Author of Instant Income  
James Therrian – Author of Dance of the Heart  
Vitoria Moran – Author of Fat, Broke & Lonely No More!

To [sign up for the RSS feed](#) go to <http://www.yvonneperry.blogspot.com/> and put your email address in the “subscribe me” box on the right sidebar. You will get some great information about writing and publishing and you'll never have to worry about missing a podcast show you wanted to hear.

## COOLCATS TECHNO-QUESTION



Since many of us are writers who are technically challenged when it comes to the mechanical operation of our blogs and Web sites, Jerry McEwen of Coolcats has agreed to answer one question each month posed by a subscriber to WITS newsletter. If you have a technology question you would like answered, please send it to [writer@yvonneperry.net](mailto:writer@yvonneperry.net). Jerry's answer will appear in next month's issue. You may read all the WITS questions and answers at <http://www.coolcats.com/techno/>

### QUESTION:

I've heard that we can increase our rankings by putting a widget from Alexa on the site so that it tracks visitors. And then start accessing our site to get that ranking up. Is this true? And if so, how do we do it?

### ANSWER:

Alexa is never mentioned in the SEO/Webmaster discussions I've participate in for years, but there is evidence that it is worthy of our efforts, mainly if we (plan to) sell advertising on our sites.

All Alexa widgets are basically traffic meters which begs the question, *how can an Alexa counter on your site help your site rankings?* The answer is that you score points with Alexa when A) your page has an Alexa widget and B) someone visits that page and they have a toolbar installed that sends data to Alexa.

Since the major players — Google, YAHOO! and MSN — are known to regularly change their highly protected algorithms, no one can say for sure that Alexa rankings don't matter today or might matter tomorrow; and since improving your Alexa ranking costs just a little time, I say go for it.

Before I give you the lowdown on how to improve your Alexa ranking, let's discuss the Alexa Toolbar. I don't want you to install it and then get upset when you discover it tracks your browsing habits.

Any browser plugin is known technically as a *Browser Helper Object* (BHO) and most anti-spyware programs label all BHOs as spyware. Alexa could be considered as spyware *if* it reports your online activity to a central computer without your knowing about it.

The Alexa Toolbar download page says this:

*"Simply by using the Firefox and IE toolbars each member contributes valuable information about the web, how it is used, what is important and what is not. This information is returned to the community as Related Links, Traffic Rankings and more."*

In my opinion, that clearly states that the toolbar will send information back to Alexa about what sites I visit; and by the way, the [Google Toolbar](#) does the same exact thing if you have the PageRank button enabled.

I Googled and found several horror stories about the Alexa Toolbar causing browser problems and crashes, but that is not conclusive as Internet Explorer is so much a part of Windows that many software conflicts will manifest themselves in the browser. I can't remember ever having a computer with only one web browser, but if you do not already have Firefox, you might want to install it in case you install the Alexa Toolbar and Internet Explorer becomes unusable.

If the Toolbar causes weird problems in Internet Explorer, you can always go to *Tools > Internet Options > Programs > Manage Add-ons* and disable the toolbar. If Internet Explorer won't open, just switch to Classic Desktop (if you aren't already using it), then right-click on Internet Explorer, click on *Properties* and you can make those changes. I would also make sure **Windows System Restore Point** is enabled by going to *Control Panel > System > System Restore* and make sure that "Turn off System Restore" is not checked.

Personally, I don't use the Alexa Toolbar, but do use the [SEOquake](#) toolbar (available for both IE and Firefox), which shows Alexa rank and much more. Their Privacy Policy looks great and as far as I can tell, they do NOT send information back to Alexa if that matters to you.

On to your original question, we need to add a [widget](#) to our site. There are two buttons (Alexa Site Stats Button, Alexa Traffic Rank Button) on that page and both look like they do the same thing. I don't see any benefit to choosing the first widget (the graph) and it uses too much real estate for my taste.

In addition to adding an Alexa widget, I would encourage you to focus on Google, YAHOO! and MSN Search, as those are the major players.

I apologize for the long-winded answer, but browser toolbars can be dangerous things and I had to give you the facts. I hope this helps and good luck!

## THE BUSINESS OF PUBLISHING

Congratulations, you're published! But what exactly does it mean to be "published"? Besides the fact that your work is finally in print and your college alumni has asked to interview you for their newsletter it also means fame and fortune, right? Well, ok, maybe not on the level of J. K. Rowling, but at the very least you can expect a call from Oprah, right? I hate to be the one to break it to you but you're probably not even on her radar screen. The truth about publishing is really stranger than fiction and the truth is: getting published is only half the battle. The other half is to keep your reality check in balance so it doesn't bounce.

While publishing is all about creative expression, it's also about business and it's those business savvy authors who will succeed in the end. Now you don't have to be an MBA to be a keen business person, you simply have to understand that the choices you make relative to your book's future should be based on strategies that will enhance sales not just drain your pocketbook. So, how do you do this? First, take a long, hard look at your reader.

At Author Marketing Experts, we always create a reader profile for each book we promote. This reader profile will tell us where to find buyers for the books we represent. Taking this first step helps us sort through our choices when it comes to book promotion and make decisions on behalf of our authors that are sound and will help leverage sales. There are times when it's a waste of resources to do a nationwide radio or TV promotion. In fact, some of our programs don't include any outreach to broadcast media. Why? Because as alluring as it might seem to appear on the Today Show, what's the point if your audience doesn't watch morning TV? And, if your

audience isn't watching this show, the chances are slim they'll even consider you anyway. What? More rejection? Who needs it!

As you embark on or continue your campaign, ask yourself a few tough questions. First, what's your ultimate goal for this book? If it's just to give away at family reunions, that's great! But then you'll probably want to mix any marketing. If your book is an arm of your business and you have speaking engagements lined up through the end of the year. You probably don't need to spend a lot on marketing since most of your sales will come from your speaking engagements (i.e. back of the room sales). On the other hand, if you wrote this book to grow your business or to leverage your credibility then you will probably want to dial yourself into your industry through enhanced media exposure.

For fiction authors this area becomes a little tricky. First, you need to determine your long term goals. By long term we mean: do you want to stay in this business or was this book just "something you wanted to do." If it's a hobby, then treat it as such but if this is going to be your career, then you need to keep your message out there on a continual basis, through venues such as author events, talks, signings, print and broadcast media.

Make sure the choices you make, make sense for your book and aren't just made because you've always dreamt of being on Oprah. I've known authors lured into inappropriate marketing plans by big, flashy names and promises of stardom, wasting thousands of valuable marketing dollars and heading in a direction that wasn't right for them. If you're serious about your work, ready to let go of your muse and face the task at hand with some business savvy, then you're really ready to get published. Below are some guidelines that will help further your success!

1) Reader profile: create one of these at the beginning of your marketing campaign and keep refining it as you move through the process. Refine and redefine who and where your audience is and how to get to them.

2) Time commitment: determine what you can and can't reasonably do. If you have a full time job it probably doesn't make a lot of sense to commit yourself to forty hours of marketing a week unless your boss is on vacation.

3) Investment: how much are you willing to invest in your future? Are you willing to invest money without seeing much in return knowing that you are building a foundation or do you want to see immediate monetary results? Most authors don't see a return on their investment for a year or more. Are you committed enough to yourself or your project to keep this investment going?

4) Reality check: what's realistic for the industry you're in? Are you latching onto a fad or something with more longevity? Are you getting into a brand new market that will require lots of reader education? Or are you trying to go mainstream with a non-mainstream topic? While this is an admirable goal, it can be like swimming upstream.

5) Budget: while we encourage authors to invest in their future, we've also seen a number of people go into heavy debt, quit their jobs and even sell their homes just to promote their book. While that kind of dedication is certainly admirable, remember that although you have the potential to make a great deal of money it's not going to be overnight. The lure here is of course that "If I stick with it, this next sale will make me famous." Well, maybe or maybe not. If you've been plugging away for a while without any significant success get a professional to give you some honest, constructive feedback about your plan, your market, and your book. It might be that a poorly designed cover is the reason you're not making sales, or a topic that's fallen off of the public's radar screen. In the meantime as you're waiting to hit the big time you'll still need a place to sleep and Uncle Vinnie's couch will get old real quick.

6) Burnout: we hear this term often, even to the point of being overused. What we're really talking about here is author burnout. We've found that the average author only markets their book for ninety days. That means ninety days of day and night marketing, radio interviews at 3am and a book signing every weekend. On day ninety-one

they are so tired, so discouraged and so broke they quit. You can avoid this by giving yourself realistic goals and a realistic timeframe in which to complete them. There's nothing in the world like seeing your book in print. If approached realistically, objectively and with sound business sense, it can be one of the most exciting times in your life.

*Penny C. Sansevieri: The Cliffhanger was published in June of 2000. After a strategic marketing campaign it quickly climbed the ranks at Amazon.com to the #1 best selling book in San Diego. Her most recent book: From Book to Bestseller was released in 2005 to rave reviews and is being called the "roadmap to publishing success." Penny is a book marketing and media relations specialist. She also coaches authors on projects, manuscripts and marketing plans and instructs a variety of courses on publishing and promotion. To learn more about her books or her promotional services, you can visit her web site at Author Marketing Experts, Inc. Article Source: [http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Penny\\_C.\\_Sansevieri](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Penny_C._Sansevieri)*

## NETWORK WITH US

**Add your announcement or brag about your writing accomplishment. Tell us about your book or business. Share information and ideas or send articles or advertorial for the next issue to [writer@yvonneperry.net](mailto:writer@yvonneperry.net). Remember, you may post a comment on our blog <http://yvonneperry.blogspot.com> anytime. Here are some announcements from our readers this month:**

Nikki Leigh and Carolyn Howard Johnson will be talking about book promotion with Phil Harris on December 17th at 8pm EST. The call in number is 718-508-9893. All people are welcome and there will be a chance for questions and answers at the end of the call.

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Merry Love narrates the rags to riches story of Little Goody Two Shoes life. From humble beginnings the little orphan girl teaches children and adults to learn to read and write with wisdom. The inspirational tale follows Goody Two Shoes on many adventures that challenge her sanity and survival. The story was a favorite with children and adults since 1765 and now it has been restored and revitalized to its rightful place as one of the best children's books of all time. Web site: <http://www.pointoflife.com>

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[SPIT DOG, WHOSE RUMP ARE YOU ROASTING?](#) By Jamie Whitley is a great book for those who are looking to get off the corporate race rat and begin living life to the fullest. This book tells you step-by-step how to achieve your goals.

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Publishing Company Seeking Quality Christian Authors

Power Publishing is a Midwest publisher of books that make a positive difference in the lives of our readers. We are currently soliciting manuscripts for our Premier Publishing Program. We seek inspiring/motivating and/or instructional/reference manuscripts across a variety of genres including nonfiction, fiction, and textbooks. If you have a manuscript you would like to submit, please visit us at [www.powerpublishinginc.com](http://www.powerpublishinginc.com) and check out our easy submission guidelines and find more information about us.

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One of Ang DePriest's authors, Bonnie Brown, has been receiving a firestorm of publicity and attention lately for her book *GIIGLE: HOW I GOT LUCKY MASSAGING GOOGLE*. Her Web site is: [www.GiigleBook.com](http://www.GiigleBook.com) where she has some downloadable PDF excerpts of *Giigle* on her site. And there are media links to all the articles, blogs, and interviews.

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Billie A Williams just published a new book - *Spice Up Your Writing! Write to Entice*. Here's a short blurb: *SPICE UP YOUR WRITING! WRITE TO ENTICE* is a how to book relying on everyday spices to help writers add zest to their work and pull it from slush pile to acceptance.

Energetic writing will hook the reader; *Spice up Your Writing* will give *ginger snap* zip to the sentence and pepper verve to the writer's prose. Lavender essence will allow the writer to write relaxed and in the flow. Thyme shows the writer how to have more time to write, market and promote.

The compact, portable size of this book allows the novice writer to digest it in byte sized pieces while trying their hand at the exercises contained at the end of each chapter to re-enforce what they have learned.

It helps the seasoned writer gain that extra edge to their writing that will push their careers up a notch. ISBN 978-0-6151-7533-1. Available everywhere or from <http://www.lulu.com/content/1349866>  
Thanks so much for the opportunity. [www.billiewilliams.com](http://www.billiewilliams.com)

For a Free PDF Sampler of the first chapters of all Billie's current titles please email [billie@billiewilliams.com](mailto:billie@billiewilliams.com) with SAMPLER in the subject line.

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Hey friends, I went to Amazon today and it says my book [Wide Open Spaces](#) is stocked and ready for shipment. Yikes! Well, I guess that's just one of the laws of the publishing world: the author is the last one to find out. Anyway, a few things I'm asking you to consider if you plan on getting the book. If you can, get it either on Amazon or in a Barnes and Noble store. Barnes and Noble is doing a special in-store display the first 14 days of its release, and so it would help things all around by getting the book from them. Getting the book off Amazon is also helpful because it influences the Amazon ranking, which influences general perceptions about the book.

Let me share my heart on this. I really hope *Wide Open Spaces* breaks out into the wider awareness and conversation of the reading public. Since writing *Divine Nobodies*, I have interacted with an endless number of people for whom organized religion has been a barrier to their desire to know God. A lot of people get stuck at that point in this sort of anti-religion, anti-church, anti-God thing. It's easy to stall out in that phase where you are quite sure you know what it's not. But, this begs the question: then what is it? What is the alternative? Whereas *Divine Nobodies* was the "shedding religion" part of the journey, *Wide Open Spaces* is speaking to an alternative - the alternative of knowing God beyond the typical configurations and mentalities of religion. Freedom!

So, it would help me if you would consider:

- Reading the book and sharing your feedback and input with me. I really want this to be a conversation.
- Blog or email friends to give folks a head's up that the book is out.
- Take the initiative to get multiple copies of the book (Christmas gifts?) and give them out among the folks with whom you have this conversation. (if money is a barrier, contact me and I'll send you some copies).
- Leave me a review on Amazon.

Just to let you know, I respond to every email, never turn down a request to get together with folks face-to-face within a reasonable drive distance, and I'm game for traveling if groups of people want to sit down and have a conversation about this stuff. I'm doing a book tour from December 6-15, and in the process of writing the next book, but I will do every thing within my power to interact with folks about *Wide Open Spaces* (or *Divine Nobodies*). If you send along an email or blog about the book here are a few helpful links for people to explore it:

[Divine Nobodies on Amazon](#)

[Wide Open Spaces on Amazon](#)

[Publisher's Weekly Review of Wide Open Spaces](#)  
[Early Endorsements for Wide Open Spaces](#)  
[Wide Open Spaces excerpt in RELEVANT](#)  
[Wide Open Spaces/Jim Palmer interview on Next-Wave](#)

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## Krupin School of Publicity

A few years ago Paul J. Krupin published a book called Trash Proof News Releases (TPNR). Many hardcover books were sold and the PDF file eBook has been downloaded free thousands of times. He would like to share the newest edition (continuously updated online) of Trash Proof News Releases organized with live, hot links to articles on how to do publicity and various strategies and tactics, new PR Success Stories, free news release examples, publicity plans, a media search tool, and much more at my web site Direct Contact PR.

His Web site offers a structured education that will empower you with greater understanding so that you can make better decisions, spend your money wisely, and achieve greater PR and financial success with your products or services.

A list of free articles <http://www.directcontactpr.com/free-articles/>  
Free examples of news releases <http://www.directcontactpr.com/free-downloads/>  
Free eBook: <http://www.directcontactpr.com/free-ebook/>

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If you have a war story or service experience with any branch of the military, Ray would like to hear from you by email [submissions@ewarstory.com](mailto:submissions@ewarstory.com). You may share your experience about basic training, humor, letters, WWII or even a fictitious story with others online. Visit <http://www.ewarstory.com> for more details.

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The audio version of A CORPSE IN THE SOUP, the first cozy mystery in the Silver Sisters Mystery series, was voted 2007 Best Mystery Audio Book by USA Book News. Read by Stephanie Brush, this audio book is available from Amazon, [www.booksinmotion.com](http://www.booksinmotion.com) and various bookstores and libraries.

If they don't have it, ask your library or bookstore to order it by using ISBN#1-59607-857-X. It is not in Baker and Taylor's list but can be ordered from Baker and Taylor or Books in Motion direct. I know for sure it has been approved for several library collections such as the Las Vegas Clark County Library District; Beverly Hills, Redondo Beach, West Hollywood, Thousand Oaks and Pasadena California.

## MORGAN ST. JAMES

[www.silversistersmysteries.com](http://www.silversistersmysteries.com)  
[www.morganstjames-author.com](http://www.morganstjames-author.com)

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### Authors -- Get More Exposure!

Authors can have their book featured monthly on Author-Promotion.com for only \$25.00 a month. If you are looking for greater exposure and would like to find additional ways to promote your book, then advertise with us. Why feature your book on Author & Book Promotion?

- Get greater exposure
- Increase your book's publicity
- Increase your Internet presence
- Author-Promotion not only features books by authors but also aggressively promotes their authors by targeting the reading public!
- Your feature and Bio will be announced to all Author-Promotion subscribers
- Your book cover will be used in our ads

- Your book will be added to Shelfari bookshelf (although to do so it must already be on Amazon)

For more information see <http://www.author-promotion.com/>

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A listing of CONTESTS is available on Krista Barrett's site: <http://www.writergazette.com/contests.shtml>

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A general marketing rule is that a product must be seen seven times before it is purchased. That is just as true for books. Let people see that book cover image! So, you are invited to advertise as a site sponsor at [www.howtodoitfrugally.com](http://www.howtodoitfrugally.com) for a year at the same price many sites frequented by readers and writers charge in a year. Yep, the frugal way! Click on the Advertising tab at the top of the page or contact me personally at [hojonews@aol.com](mailto:hojonews@aol.com).

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Book Promo 101 - Learn the Basics of Book Promotion by Nikki Leigh now available in e-book format - for more information, visit [http://www.nikkileigh.com/book\\_promo\\_101.htm](http://www.nikkileigh.com/book_promo_101.htm) Nikki Leigh is holding a Book Sale just in time to fill your gift giving needs. If anyone on your list loves romantic suspense, cozy mysteries and stories set on the coast near lighthouses, there is something that will make them happy. To learn more - visit [http://www.nikkileigh.com/gift\\_2007.htm](http://www.nikkileigh.com/gift_2007.htm)

The latest edition of the Readers' Station Quarterly Newsletter is available at

[http://www.readersstation.com/nov\\_2007.htm](http://www.readersstation.com/nov_2007.htm)

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Louiza Patsis has written three books and self-published on Amazon. I wrote my children's book at 10. The other book is a poetry/story book. My latest is *POCKET GUIDE TO FITNESS* based on the blog <http://louizafitness.blogspot.com>. They are all great holiday gifts. I am also a screenplay writer and I am a medical editor and writer. You can see information on her books at [www.louizapatsis.com](http://www.louizapatsis.com) and by looking her up on Authorhouse.com.

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During the holiday season many of us consume a lot of unhealthy foods, drink more alcohol, get less rest and spend more money than we can afford. Beginning now and every other day through January 1st, Kate Garvey's pet care blog will feature short reminders on self-care and cruelty free living. Treat yourself, each other, as well as the animals and the planet with compassion. I hope you'll find the tips beneficial. If you have any friends who may be lonely or struggling, I hope you'll tell them about Kate's blog [www.PetCareRCA.com](http://www.PetCareRCA.com). Kate is the Founder and Director of the Pet Care Resource Center of America.

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Sheri Sinykin received a sweet surprise today from The Capital Times, a special feature from Heather Lee Schroeder about her recovery from writer's block and unresolved grief, that led to the publication of her book *GIVING UP THE GHOST*. You can read the article online at: <http://www.madison.com/tct/books/258242>. Listen to Sheri's WITS podcast interview here: <http://yvonneperry.blogspot.com/2007/11/tgif-november-9-2007-sheri-sinykin.html>.

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## STEM CELL BOOK FINALIST IN NATIONAL BEST BOOKS 2007 AWARDS

**Right to Recover Lands Number Two Sales Position on Amazon's Biomedical Engineering and Biotechnology Book List in November 2007.**

Nashville author, freelance writer and speaker Yvonne Perry's new book on stem cell research, *RIGHT TO RECOVER Winning the Political and Religious Wars over Stem Cell Research in America*, has been named a finalist in the Current Events: Political/Social category of the national Best Books 2007 Awards by U.S. Book News, an on-line magazine and review web site for mainstream and independent publishing houses. Winners and finalists include leading publishers such as Simon & Schuster, Penguin-Putnam, HarperCollins, Random House, McGraw-Hill, Houghton Mufflin Co., and John Wiley & Sons.

In related news, Perry recently learned that *RIGHT TO RECOVER* reached the number two sales position in the biomedical engineering and biotechnology category at Amazon.com. The book has reached an overall Amazon sales ranking of 51,426 out of the millions of titles listed.

The topic of stem cell research is making headlines in every country. According to Perry, *Right to Recover: Winning the Political and Religious Wars over Stem Cell Research in America* (ISBN 13: 978-1-933449-41-8) does not present "fairy tales about how stem cells can miraculously cure any disease, and it does not promote fear-based rumors people may have heard from the pulpit or on the news. The book presents scientific facts and challenges readers to think for themselves rather than accept the opinion of political or religious leaders."

Published by [Nightingale Press](#) in October 2007, the book brings light to the political and religious opinions regarding blastocystic (embryonic) stem cell biology. *RIGHT TO RECOVER* has been praised by doctors, researchers, and patient advocacy foundations. Mary Schneider, an advocate for stem cell research who successfully lobbied for the passage of Illinois Senate Bill 0019, says the book "offers the political arena and medical community the opportunity to avoid future mistakes made at the expense of those in need."

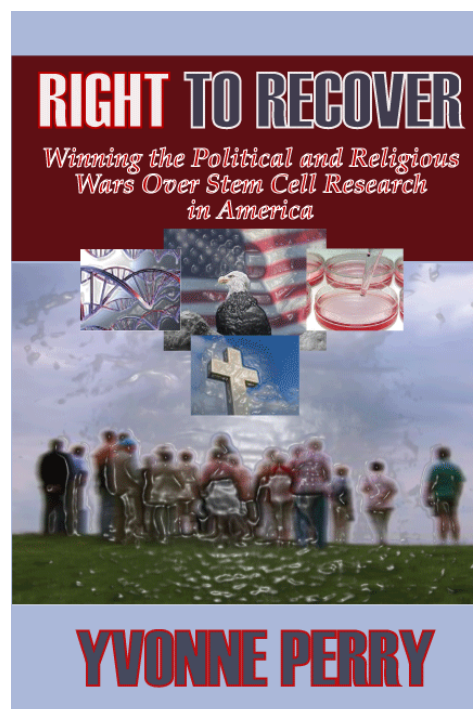
Throughout the writing of her book, Perry consulted with scientists and other knowledgeable people to make sure she got her facts straight. Don C. Reed (California Proposition 71), Shane Smith, Ph.D., Science Director of the Children's Neurobiological Solutions Foundation, and the renowned stem cell researcher Dr. Evan Snyder of Burnham Institute helped guide her.

"People have been exposed to too much misinformation, and the research has endured enough setbacks in legislation due to unfounded beliefs that simply play into political agendas," Dr. Snyder said. "I have found that when provided with correct data, the public responds in a logical manner and is typically supportive of this area of investigation. This book teaches the facts and hits on issues the average citizen would like to know in order to make

informed decisions regarding stem cell research. Yvonne has thoroughly covered each aspect from every angle and made a good case for why all types of stem cell research should be federally funded."

"The word 'embryonic' when referring to stem cell research is unfortunate," Perry noted. "It conjures one meaning for scientists and another thing for the lay public. The word is so imprecise that the lay public automatically thinks of 'babies'. Obviously, this is very far from reality.

"There are people who would like us to believe that the research is performed on a fish-like embryo," Perry continued. "This is not true. The research is conducted on a cluster of cells known as a blastocyst. These cells, leftover from in vitro fertilization, are slated for destruction. Scientists believe that these cells hold



amazing potential to reduce scarring and inflammation; they offer factors that can protect cells and stimulate growth, and can even be used to detoxify our bodies by soaking up poisons.”

The 340-page book, which retails for \$19.95, explores the research being done using stem cells derived from in vitro fertilized eggs on laboratory animals and presents findings to support its curative potential on humans. The book has been endorsed by organizations such as Cure Paralysis Now, the Christopher Reeve Foundation, and Parkinson’s foundations from several states, and offers a thought-provoking message aimed at helping people recover from life-threatening disabilities. More than half of the book is dedicated to better understanding, research findings, the significance of federal funding, possible cures, and testimonials.

## THE WRITING LIFE BY JJ MURPHY

Meeting Author Gary Lincoff

Ever since I bought Gary Lincoff’s *NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY FIELD GUIDE TO MUSHROOMS*, I’ve been looking for an opportunity to meet him. I finally got my chance.

Book signings are proof that it’s a thrill to have a signed copy of an author’s work. In my case, several of my field guides are signed – yes, I use them and get a thrill every time I see the author’s note.

Lincoff was the guest speaker at a recent Bedford (NY) Audubon Society meeting. This active group invites a wide range of naturalist experts to speak. The room was packed.

I was introduced to him by one of my mentors. As I handed him my field guide, I thought, “This is even better than going to a book signing. I got to chat with him, too.” He wrote a note and a drawing along with his signature in two places. I’m still on cloud nine.

Some readers may not find a field guide as exciting as a novel. It’s one thing to be knowledgeable. It’s another to be a talented speaker. Lincoff has the timing of a stand-up comic and the skill of a lead-singer. He knows his mushrooms so well that he can weave basic ID information, like where it grows, spore print color, and season into personal anecdotes, plays on words and recipes.

He has traveled the world. I nearly rolled off my chair as he described his trek to Kilimanjaro. “Why bother going to the summit? No mushrooms grow above the tree line.”

Anyone who can remain passionate and joyous during a 30-year study of fungi - or any aspect of nature - has my deepest respect. Lincoff blows me away, because he makes it look so simple.

*JJ Murphy is a nature writer, blogging hiker, curriculum creator, locavore and tree-hugger currently based in Harriman, NY. Visit <http://www.writerbynature.com> for more information on JJ's writing services and her favorite places for gear and supplies.*

## DECEMBER POEMS



### Weaving Through Traffic

Left lane

Right lane

Center lane

Storm drain

Hurry! Always hurrying  
In White Rabbit fashion.

In and out and in again  
Like a damned accordion,  
Caution tossed into the wind  
With multi-purple passion.

Cannot pause to meditate,  
Can't afford now to be late,  
No time to consider fate or  
Stop to smell the clover.

Cannot deal with hesitation,  
No time to truck agitation,  
Must belay this aggravation e'er  
Hatter's party's over.

Pray for Divine intervention,  
Even miracles are mentioned,  
Puritanical intention  
Offered as excuse.

Up ahead the traffic lessens,  
Dormouse offers his confessions,  
Thankful for such grand concessions,  
Sad for the abuse.

### **Centered**

In this blue funk  
Self-righteous world it is  
So easy to go off kilter,  
To skew to the left,  
Skid to the right,  
Slip, slide and sashay on  
Ice-covered pathways.

Every distraction demands  
Just a little attention as  
Everything multiplies and  
Next thing you know all  
Vision is lost and all that is left  
Are the tears in your eyes.

Lying alone in your midnight enclosure  
Lost as you contemplate  
What might have been.  
Looking for ways to get back to the center.  
It never hurts to  
Start over again.

### **Flair**

Such panache,  
Such flair,  
Such a gift of gab has he,  
Riding wave on wave of  
Billowy praise for  
Adoring eyes to see.

Love him, hate him or  
Despise him with his cooing  
Brooding eyes.  
Catch the tone of  
Innocence delivered in  
His scathing lies.

Do not, cannot,  
Will not fall  
To his contemptuous snare.  
For he is but a charlatan,  
Although...  
He does have flair.

Dennis Martin has written 13 plays –several of which have been presented as staged readings in the Baltimore Playwright’s Festival. He has written 800 poems and self-published a book of poems titled “Love and Passions” available at [www.iuniverse.com](http://www.iuniverse.com) and online bookstores. He has six poetry collections and three novels available at [www.lulu.com/dsmartin](http://www.lulu.com/dsmartin). Read more about Dennis at <http://www.iwritesome.com> or blog with him at <http://iwritesome.blogspot.com>

### **Are We Having Fun Yet?**

The Doctor says push just one more time,  
Your wife says she can’t ‘cause she’s losing her mind  
The nurse says a girl, do you want to bet,  
You look at your wife --- Are we having fun yet?

The doctor says yes, we’re having fun,  
Lookie here mister, you have a son,  
The hospital says, now pay your debt,  
You look at your wife --- Are we having fun yet?

You change that first diaper and man it smells,  
You wake up early morning to baby’s yells,  
You put him on your lap, now your lap is wet,  
You look at your wife --- Are we having fun yet?

Now baby is headed off to his first day of school,  
You turn you head away ‘cause you feel like a fool,  
He’s got his backpack and all his new stuff,  
And, in them blue jeans, he really looks tough.  
You wipe your cheek and your finger gets wet,  
You look at your wife --- Are we having fun yet?

Well, now he’s suited up for his first ball game,  
He is all set to play, but it’s called for rain,  
Why can’t we play, he says, why daddy why,  
You look at your wife as he starts to cry,  
You tell him, son, ‘cause the fields are wet,  
You look at your wife --- Are we having fun yet?

Now, he’s on a stage in a cap and gown,  
There are medals on his chest and trophies all around  
You wonder why time has to go so fast,  
You would give a million dollars to relive the past,  
You wipe you cheek and you finger gets wet,  
You look at your wife --- Are we having fun yet?

Then, you get a phone call in the middle of the night,  
Your wife takes the call with a look of fright,  
She covers her mouth as the tears hit her eyes,  
And her lips kind of quiver as she says, --- SURPRISE!  
Our baby boy has just had a son,  
You look at your wife --- Now, we’re going to have fun  
With Our Baby’s Son ----- Are we having fun yet?

Timothy Stewart is the author of a novel being published by Nightengale Press Positive Force—a book that offers teenagers a positive alternative to gang involvement. [www.reachforyoredreams.com](http://www.reachforyoredreams.com).

### **Replay Memory**

I see you caress me  
I feel your flesh against me  
I am without a doubt overwhelmed  
No, I am mostly dismayed  
A replay memory within my mind  
Could there be a replay of my heart?  
As the adrenaline flows, so does this love burning  
I confess that, I do not want this to end  
I want to feel your arms around me  
And to walk with replay memories of us together.

Feon Davis (<http://www.inthearmsofgod.com>) is an inspiring writer and resident of Morehead City, North Carolina. She loves writing compassionate poems, rather Christian, inspirational. She started writing when she was nine years old. Miss Davis has published poems online for all to read along with a series of books, and gift items available for purchase at her site.

### **Music Man**

Family Trance Uncles and Aunts  
Santa Wears Baggy Pants  
Holiday Wishes Energy Kisses  
Love's Our Music Man

Credit Card Stew  
Destiny's Flu  
Overboard Shuffle  
Candy Coated Truffles  
Life's Inner Brew  
Is Calling You

(Chorus)

Family Trance Uncle and Aunts  
Santa Wears Baggy Pants  
Holiday Wishes Energy Kisses  
Love's Our Music Man

Another Tree  
God Bless Thee  
In a Haze  
New Year's Rage  
Black Eyed Peas Power Seeds  
Harmony Bees Are Calling  
Please

(Chorus)

Family Trace Uncles And Aunts  
Santa Wears Baggy Pants  
Holiday Wishes Energy Kisses  
Love's Our Music Man

Mental Notes Hearts That Soak  
Physical Matter Overactive Bladder  
Glory Be Enlightened Me  
Native Skin and Silly Grins  
Now Is Mine Source Filled Mind  
Time Is Clear Change Wears Ears  
And Reindeer Gear

(Chorus)

Family Trance Uncle and Aunts  
Santa Wears Baggy Pants  
Holiday Wishes Energy Kisses  
Love's Our Music Man

Hal Manogue, Poet and Author of *SHORT SLEEVES A BOOK FOR FRIENDS AND SHORT SLEEVES INSIGHTS* shares his holiday poem, now turned song, with WITS community. For more information about Hal, visit <http://www.shortsleeves.net>. . To blog with him, see <http://halmanogue.blogspot.com>.

## BOOK PUBLISHING METHODS: WHICH IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

Writing a book is the easy part. The hard part begins when you attempt to publish and market the book. In this article, I'll share the publishing options available today. This will provide you with information needed to make a decision about how you will bring your book to the market.

**Option One:** You may find a mainstream publisher who is willing to take a look at your book, but if you've ever tried to pitch a book you realize that the probability of rejection is extremely high. Even if you do get lucky, you will still have to do a major portion of the marketing, so it helps to have some extra money to use for publicity. While mainstream commercial publishers and university presses have budgets for advertising and promotion, they tend to only use their resources to promote highly visible personalities whose books are easily sold by the power of that person's notoriety. These publishers will rarely risk a dime on an unknown author, and if they do, the window of time for the book to be deemed successful is roughly six to eight weeks. If your book doesn't justify its costs in that time period, it is back-listed and disappears from print. Unless the author wants to do his own publicity, he has little recourse other than to wait out the time period until he can purchase back the rights to his book.

**Option Two:** is to use a "publish on demand" service such as Lulu.com or iUniverse.com. Most of these companies will accept ANY quality of work from ANYONE, but you can expect to spend between \$100 and \$3,000 (shop for prices before you decide) and that price may not put any copies in your hand! Copies of the book will cost you about \$5-6 each. You may do all the design work yourself or you may choose a la carte services or packages that include editing, cover design, formatting the page layout to their specifications, fulfilling orders and marketing the book. The services will help you obtain an ISBN and list the book on Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble and other major chain bookstores, but remember whoever owns the ISBN, owns the copyright. You may think you are self-publishing, but unless you purchased the ISBN under your name, you may very well have given your publication rights to the publisher.

One good thing about these services is they do handle distribution and order fulfillment. When someone wants to purchase your book, they will print a copy, ship it, and pay you about 30% of the purchase price as a royalty. If you print the book using a POD company, you will still have to market the book, but you won't have to fulfill and ship orders.

The term "publish on demand" goes way back. When Monks got an order for a book, they would copy it by hand and deliver it to the client. They did not print extra copies and store them in the monastery. When printing presses were developed, we moved away from the monk's reproduction method. Large runs (called offset) were more economical so we printed thousands of copies and waited for orders to come in. Some publishers still pay to warehouse large quantities of books when they expect a high demand from the market. Many authors still have these books in their garages.

The more modern term "print on demand" is used to describe a technology called digital printing. Like the monks, a book is printed only when there is a request from a client, but today we use lightning fast printers to produce one copy at a time. Most conventional publishers use both offset and print on demand to make copies of a book.

**Option Three:** I checked into printing a book by using a local commercial printing company. The best price I found was three cents per black & white page. A 195-page book would cost about \$6.50 including the cover (which you design) and perfect binding. If you want the book in color, the price could easily make the book cost more than you can sell it for. The printer I used allowed me to print as many or as few as I wanted since they offer digital printing technology.

It is very important to have someone proofread your text before submitting your file because the printer will print exactly what you send without making an edits or doing any revisions. If you print the book in this manner, you will still have to market the book, fill and ship orders. If you only sell one book per day, this might not be a problem, but if you sell twenty books a day, you may have yourself a new full time job!

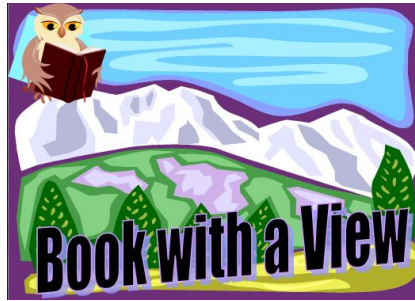
**Option Four:** Publish it as an eBook. This is the least expensive way to publish, and people do actually buy eBooks. I had a graphic designer create my cover image to use for promotion of the book on my Web site. I set up a business account with PayPal and added my ISBN to my product list. They created an html code that I copied to my Web site. When someone makes a purchase, I receive an email notification. I respond to the email by attaching the pdf of my book and sending it to the customer. It would be better to have an auto responder email the eBook to the customer upon purchase but Godaddy, the company who sends my permission-based newsletter, does not offer an auto responder. Other services may.

If you have a good quality alternatively published book, you can offer it for sale in bricks and mortar bookstores. You just have to pound the pavement and make the phone calls. The book must be returnable and wholesaled through Ingram or one of B&N's other suppliers. You may contact Barnes and Noble Small Press Department, 122 Fifth Ave., New York, NY, 10011, Phone (212) 633 - 3300. You will need to send an Advanced Reading Copy and a request for consideration for in-store placement.

You can't judge a book by its publisher or by its printing method. The type of printing an author uses doesn't make a good book bad or vice-versa. Content is what makes a good book. However, without good publicity no book will sell regardless of the quality the printing or how pretty the cover may be. Even spectacular content won't sell a book if no one knows it is available. Therefore, it's not how you bring a book to market that counts. It's how you bring the market to the book.

*Yvonne Perry is a freelance writer and the owner of Writers in the Sky Creative Writing Services based in Nashville, Tennessee. She and her team of ghostwriters service clients all over the globe by offering quality writing at an affordable price. If you need a brochure, web text, business document, résumé, bio, article or book, visit [www.yvonneperry.net](http://www.yvonneperry.net) .*

## DECEMBER BOOK REVIEWS



### Finding Father Christmas: A Novella

*Robin Jones Gunn*

FaithWords (2007)

ISBN 9780446526296

Reviewed by *Richard R. Blake* for Reader Views (10/07)

“Finding Father Christmas” is written with an undercurrent of suspense, is rich in drama, and is lyrical in beauty. Robin Jones Gunn has masterfully developed a character, so real and believable that her story takes on the authenticity of autobiographical writing. Although the timetable of the story covers a timeframe of only two days, Miranda Carson’s lifetime of events, emotions, and reactions are dramatically relived in this dramatic novella.

Miranda Carson experienced emptiness in her life. She knew nothing of her father. Her only clues to his existence were a photograph, a birth certificate, and a playbill for a theatre in Michigan featuring her mother as Miranda in the play “The Tempest.”

Almost on impulse, Miranda booked a flight to London, for a few days over the Christmas holidays to pursue a search for her father. She had the location of a photo studio stamped on the back of a photo presumed to be her father, with an address on Bexley Lane in Carlton Heath, near London.

As a result of a cup of tea, a warm conversation, an evening at the theatre, a community party, and a late evening snowstorm Miranda found herself on an unexpected course that would forever change her life’s direction.

A reenactment of the play “The Christmas Carol,” the warmth and acceptance of family, and a Christmas morning service at the local church all play a part in Miranda’s willingness to open herself to change.

Gunn’s introduction of a background of classical writing and theatre add a unique depth to the narrative. Her vivid word pictures are picturesque and rich in beauty. The warmth of her characters exudes love, concern, and acceptance.

Poignant and heartwarming, “Finding Father Christmas” will resonate with anyone who has gone through childhood without one or both of their birth parents, or for anyone who has longed to know more of their heritage. This is a story that will become a classical family Christmas reading favorite.

## **The Case for Christmas: A Journalist Investigates the Identity of the Child in the Manger**

*Les Strobel*

Zondervan (2007)

ISBN 9780310266297

Reviewed by *Richard R. Blake* for Reader Views (10/07)

Lee Strobel, award-winning author, journalist and investigative reporter, has written “The Case for Christmas.” Stroble presents a logical case to help the reader determine for themselves if the babe in the manger, Jesus, was the person He claimed to be, Son of Man, Son of God, and very God Himself.

From the first paragraph of the introduction to the last paragraph of the conclusion, Strobel’s writing is compelling, intellectually challenging, thought-provoking, and convincing. Using eyewitness accounts, archaeological confirmation, and profile evidence Strobel helps the reader to arrive at a conclusion, their own personal verdict.

Stroble’s own journey to discover the reality of Christmas led him to seek counsel. He used his experience as an investigative reporter and the tools of his trade in his to find answers. Strobel presents the results of interviews with leading scholars in areas of biographical evidence, and scientific evidence.

In presenting his case Stroble presented fingerprint evidence to answer the hard question, “Did Jesus, Jesus alone, match the identity of the promised Messiah.” I personally found this chapter on fingerprint evidence insightful. The fulfilling of Old Testament prophecies regarding the Messiah gave authenticity to Gospel accounts of Jesus as the Messiah.

Strobel also presented profile evidence to see if Jesus fulfilled the attributes of God. The incarnation, omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, eternity, and immutability all fit in the sketch and are found in the Christmas child. Reflecting on these attributes as a devotional reading offers a rich and rewarding experience.

The book is designed especially for the Christmas and Advent Season. Strobel gives a strong presentation of the Christmas message for anyone seeking understanding of the tenets of the Christian faith, and for thought provoking reflection and mediation for the Christian. The format and design of this compact, attractive, book – “The Case for Christmas” -- make it an excellent gift for those family members, friends, agnostics, or atheists, who are seeking answers to finding answers in their pursuit for finding personal meaning to the reality of the Christian message of Christmas.

### **More than Meets the Eye: True Stories about Death, Dying, and Afterlife**

Author: Yvonne Perry

Reviewed by [Sheri Sinykin](#) “sheries” on Amazon.com

Submitted 11.23.07

Readers looking to select a book about death, dying, and the afterlife come in two broad categories—those who have already found answers and are looking for books that reaffirm and don’t challenge their beliefs, and those who may have found answers, but are still open to hearing about others’ experiences. Readers of the second type—the seekers—will find much interest in Yvonne Perry’s collection of firsthand accounts, [\*More Than Meets the Eye: True Stories about Death, Dying and Afterlife\*](#).

Perry’s point of view is by no means dispassionate, but it is objective. She writes movingly about her own near death experiences and the spiritual journey that compelled her to study these subjects. No one religious ideology overlays the book. Rather, she shares views and experiences of many people, well-documented in her bibliography.

In “Souls and Ceremonies” (Chapter 4), Perry takes a fascinating look at the rituals of death from a historical perspective—from early Egyptian practices to modern embalming in the U.S. after the Civil War. Particularly interesting and comforting were the true stories of near-death experiences, out-of-body experiences, and spiritual visitation.

Perry’s honest, straight-forward style is not bogged down by a lot of jargon or diversions that wander from the subject at hand. Seekers will appreciate this book and be glad for the time they’ve invested in hearing others’ experiences with the Greatest Mystery on Earth.

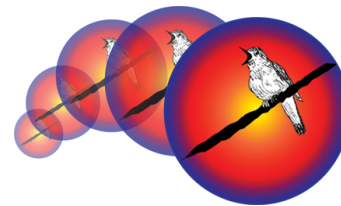
The PDF version of this book is available at no cost to new subscribers of WITS newsletter. An autographed paperback copy may be [obtained from the author](#) for \$10 plus shipping. The book is also available at [Amazon.com](#).

Note from a reader this month:

I was reading your article about death dying and the afterlife. We have a Web site [www.oursonbilly.com](http://www.oursonbilly.com) in honor of our son Billy who died on June 26, 2004. Anyone may visit and read our story, view a few pages of the amazing photographs taken since the loss of our son. My favorites are the photos of the moon, in which the moon comes out in the shape of a heart. We have taken over 25,000 spiritual photographs in the past two years. We also have a new book called *SIGNS FROM OUR LOVED ONES*.

## NEWSWORTHY NUGGETS FROM NIGHTENGALE PRESS

THE VALUE OF READING WHEN YOU ARE WRITING  
by Valerie Connelly



Writers are interminably busy people, especially when they are engrossed in a new manuscript, or article, or project. So many tell me they can’t find time to read. Not for even a minute a day because “There’s too much to do!” But, I wish to explain the value of reading, especially outside one’s own genre, to gain insight, entertainment and perspective on what one writes.

Yes, that means, reading things you might not otherwise pick up. I admit, reading everyday is a passion of mine, and usually I read just before going to bed, or should I say, just before I turn out the light. I read at least a chapter or two every night, and in this way I can plow through non-publishing business related books at a rate of two or so a month. Admittedly, some nights I can’t put the book down, and I read longer into the night than planned. Others, I just read one chapter. But, like any regular endeavor, the time is set aside, it is a calming way to end the day, and reading certainly can put the rigors of the daily grind to rest so actually getting some sleep is possible. To turn one’s attention so far from the concerns and events of the day is an escape in which everyone, not just writers, can indulge.

Of course, for me, the greatest pleasure is to get a whole block of time, usually on a trip or a vacation, when I can read entire books. I did this over the Thanksgiving weekend. I spent hours in airports and on planes, happily engrossed in Anita Shreve’s book *A Wedding in December*. Hers is a mainstream style that borders on self-indulgence, but, that’s the title which jumped at me from the airport shop shelves as I headed west to the Colorado Mountains.

But, even more wonderful — and I did put down Ms. Shreve’s book to read another found at the Tattered Cover bookstore in Denver— was the beckoning of Joanne Harris’ book *Sleep, Pale Sister*. I knew her only as the author of *Chocolat*, and thought it might be fun to see what else she had written. I typically am not a fan of fantasy and border-line occult titles, however, *Sleep, Pale Sister* is a compelling tale complete with sociopathic

insanity, out of body events, murder, and a generally spellbinding choreography of odd and wonderful characters. I was enthralled.

Could I write like that? No, that's really not my style, but then, when I consider the fact that both my novels contain layers where the characters exist in a state of magic realism, I have to admit I do in my own way lightly touch the same sort of genre. Hmm, and I didn't really connect this thought about my own work until reading *Sleep, Pale Sister*. I think the subject matter— the insane not-so-professional artist with seriously unhealthy issues from a clearly deficient childhood and life, devoid of love and filled with death, is beyond my realm. Still, I found the reading a delightful escape and educational in a completely unexpected way.

So, my advice to writers everywhere is simple: step outside your comfort zone, read something completely unlike anything you've read before and you will grow. Your perspectives on your own writing will change and become more interesting. And, it will be fun! Find the time and the will. There is always a way to read every day!

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Jessica Dockter with *L.E.E. Design* is the graphic designer for the Writers in the Sky Creative Writing Services team. As the designer of this newsletter, she is also available to assist you with your graphic design needs, such as:

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Brand Services • Advertising • Ad Series for Newspaper or Magazine • Magazine Cover Wrap  
Sales Letter • Magalog & Issuelog • E-Books • Postcard or Double Postcard • 2-Pocket Folder  
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Visit her Web site at [www.leedesign.org](http://www.leedesign.org). For questions or a quote, call Jessica at 615.681.4401 or email her at [leedesign@leedesign.org](mailto:leedesign@leedesign.org)

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