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NEWSLETTER OF WRITING
AND PUBLISHING TRENDS

CONTENTS

VOLUME 20
NUMBER 7

Profession

If Writing Is a Business,
Make a Plan
page 6

Word Magic

And So It Ends
page 8

Marketplace

ASK, *New Moon Girls, Fun
for Kidz*, Calkins Creek,
Balzer & Bray, Infobase,
Daily Science Fiction,
and more
page 9

Contest Announcement

Kindergarten Story
page 9

Craft

Help! I've Misplaced
My Modifier!
page 11



ChildrensWriter.com

Who Cares? Grandparents, Step-parents, & Other Caregivers

By Judy Bradbury

The ties that bind in contemporary children's lives are as deep, rich, and lasting as they ever have been, but they are arguably more varied and complex than they were a century, or even several decades ago.

Sarah Ketchersid, Senior Editor at Candlewick Press, explains, "Not every child lives in a traditional family structure. Many live in other caretaking arrangements, and it's important to show that so those readers can see themselves in books, and readers who come from traditional families can see the alternatives to their family settings."

Ties Beyond Parents

Take divorce, remarriage, and the resulting family structures, for instance. Although reconfigured families are not a new cultural phenomenon, their treatment in children's books has shifted, reflecting mainstream acceptance.

Dad and Pop: An Ode to Fathers and Stepfathers (Candlewick), written by Kelly Bennett and illustrated by Paul Meisel, has a main character with a dad and a stepdad. On first reading the picture book manuscript, Ketchersid recalls, "I loved the sense of fun in the story. Kelly was able to (To page 2) take a subject that's often

Celebrations in Ordinary Time Catholic Publishing for Children Expands

By Mary E. Furlong

Troubadours and storytellers have a greater impact on religious experience than do theologians, homilists, and bishops. So says Andrew Greeley, sociologist, novelist, journalist, and Roman Catholic priest. Greeley writes for adults, but his observation holds true for children and teens. Young Catholics develop their beliefs through the subtle influences of rituals, images, sounds, symbols—and stories.

Lisa Hendey, author of *The Handbook for Catholic Moms* (Ave Maria Press) and creator of CatholicMom.com, could not agree more. She sees "reliable, uplifting, and faith-filled" books as "great tools that can help parents create a bond in faith with their children." Her website's book club features current titles from both (To page 4) secular publishers and strictly Catholic publishing houses, several of

Care treated very seriously and make it sound like the most fun thing in the world.” Beyond the subject of the book, Ketchersid says, “I loved the choice of language and how Kelly used a turn of phrase to get the point across.”

For many children, grandparents figure large in their lives. According to Maryann Cusimano Love, author of *You Are My Wish* (Philomel), a tribute to the special relationship between a child and grandparent, six million grandparents live with their grandchildren. “Grandparents are the primary child care providers for nearly a quarter of all preschool children,” notes Love, “and are sec-

Submissions

❖ **Candlewick Press:** 99 Dover St., Somerville, MA 02144. www.candlewick.com. Accepts manuscripts via agents, or from writers who were in attendance at conferences at which a specific editor invited submissions.

❖ **Clarion Books:** 215 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10003. www.hmhbooks.com. Senior Editor Jennifer Greene says, “I am looking for picture books, especially quirky and original texts, as well as middle-grade and YA fiction and non-fiction for all ages. I prefer electronic submissions if possible. Send to jennifer.greene@hmhpub.com and please cite where you saw my name.”

❖ **Philomel Books:** 345 Hudson St., New York, NY 10014. <http://us.penguinigroup.com>. Accepts complete picture book manuscripts, or first chapter of a novel, with cover letter. Do not submit electronically. Do not include SASE. Philomel will contact an author only if interested.

The following publishers are open to nonfiction on families and other subjects.

❖ **Free Spirit:** 217 Fifth Ave. North, Suite 200, Minneapolis, MN 55401. www.freespirit.com. Specializes in non-fiction books on social and emotional needs for children. Mail a cover letter, résumé, outline, 2+ sample chapters, and a market analysis.

❖ **Albert Whitman:** 6340 Oakton St., Morton Grove, IL 60053. www.albertwhitman.com. Open to submissions by mail, including picture book manuscripts for ages 2 to 8, and nonfiction for ages 3 to YA.

ondary child care providers for many more.”

Michael Green, President and Publisher of Philomel Books, edited Love’s *You Are My Wish*. “Young children want to feel consistently loved, and a picture book portraying a loving relationship is warmly reassuring and constant, night after night—not unlike a good night hug,” he reflects. “With regard to grandparents, so many children do not live near them, so experiencing them through a book feels much like a visit. A book like *You Are My Wish* is a celebration of that relationship, a way to think and talk about someone we love who may not be available in person each day.”

You Are My Wish followed publication of Love’s blockbuster, *You Are My I Love You*. “The concept of *Wish* really grew organically from *You Are My I Love You*,” says Green. “Maryann had received countless requests since the original book’s publication for a companion featuring the grandparent/grandchild relationship. Grandparents are uniquely special in a child’s life, and of course, they represent a healthy portion of the picture book market,” notes Green. “Maryann, Satomi Ichikawa—the book’s illustrator—and I felt a real sense of responsibility that we do the subject matter justice without ever feeling derivative of the first book. Once we all felt comfortable that we had hit our mark, I knew the book was ready.”

Grandparents clearly represent an influential intergenerational tie. “Parents are very busy,” says Amy Ehrlich, former Editor at Large at Candlewick Press and the editor who acquired its *Kisses on the Wind*, by Lisa Moser and illustrated by Kathryn Brown. “They’re involved with their jobs, with getting along, with taking care of their kids. Grandparents can spend time with children in a way parents often can’t. They are involved in how their grandchildren are brought up, and the bond between grandparents and grandchildren is very strong.” For this reason, Ehrlich believes, “Stories of parting with grandparents are

very contemporary.”

Of *Kisses on the Wind*, set in the mid-1800s along the Oregon Trail, Ehrlich says, “The depth of feeling was what first captured me when I read this manuscript. This story could have been sentimental but wasn’t. The lovingness with which the grandmother helps the child to separate and yet retain the bond is very touching. Also, the story had this quality of real timelessness in terms of the

More Titles

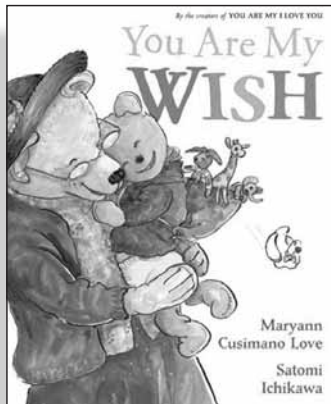
- ❖ *Families*, Susan Kuklin (Hyperion)
- ❖ *The Gardener*, Sarah Stewart; illus., David Small (Farrar, Straus & Giroux). Features an uncle.
- ❖ *Mr. George Baker*, Amy Hest; illus., Jon J. Muth (Walker). A 100-year-old neighbor and friend.
- ❖ *My Little Grandmother Often Forgets*, Reeve Lindbergh; illus., Kathryn Brown (Candlewick)
- ❖ *Peace, Locomotion*, Jacqueline Woodson (Puffin). Siblings and foster families.
- ❖ *Sleepover at Grandma’s House*, Barbara Joose; illus., Jan Jutte (Philomel)
- ❖ *So Much!* Trish Cooke; illus., Helen Oxenbury (Candlewick). A baby’s many family members.
- ❖ *Tia Isa Wants A Car*, Meg Medina; illus., Claudio Munoz (Candlewick). An aunt.
- ❖ *Watermelon Wishes*, Lisa Moser; illus., Stacey Schuett (Clarion). A grandfather.

emotional connection, though it’s set in the nineteenth century.”

Associate Editor Kaylan Adair, who continued to work on the project when Ehrlich retired, adds, “This book has a gentle, poetic nature. The pairing of the old-fashioned quality of Lisa’s text with the art gives the book the feeling of a classic story. It’s honest, age-appropriate, and offers a *curl-up-on-the-lap* opportunity.”

At Clarion Books, Senior Editor Jennifer Greene edited Katherine Applegate’s *The Buffalo Storm*, about a girl who travels west with a wagon train. “What appealed to me was the utterly beautiful writing, the imagery, and the deep emotional resonance. I found the idea of having to leave a beloved grandparent

behind—in all likelihood never to see that grandparent again—incredibly moving, something that young readers today generally don't experience in their lives. I also loved the idea of a symbolic object serving as a talisman to connect Hallie to her grandmother, and even to connect the new baby to the grandmother she will never meet."



Incidental to the Story

Many books that feature alternative caretakers do so in an incidental way. The adult is central in the child's life, but not necessarily to the story. The relationship adds depth, but the story is not about the relationship. Ketchersid points to *Little Chick*, by Amy Hest and illustrated by Anita Jeram. "In this collection of stories, it is Little Chick's Old Auntie, who helps her with wise advice." In *Those Shoes*, by Maribeth Boelts and illustrated by Noah Z. Jones, the central character lives with his grandmother. "She's his main caretaker," says Ketchersid, "but their relationship is secondary to the story." Due out in Spring 2012 from Candlewick is *Happy Like Soccer*, also by Boelts, in which the main character lives with her aunt. "The reason why she doesn't live with her parents is not mentioned. It's not pertinent to the story," says Ketchersid.

Greene points to *Chavela and the Magic Bubble* (Clarion), by Monica Brown and illustrated by Magaly Morales, in which a girl lives with her grandmother, although this is never explicitly stated. "They share a love for chewing gum, and through

Where Ideas Come from & How They Grow

"*Dad and Pop* is a celebration of fathers—all kinds of fathers," says author Kelly Bennett. "My children, Max and Alexis, have two fathers: a biological father and a stepfather, my husband. They also have Unk John, a great friend who is always there to cheer them on. One day I was thinking about how fortunate my kids are to have loving *fathers* and how it really doesn't matter how a man becomes a father. What matters is love. That's when the idea for *Dad and Pop* was born." Bennett continues, "It seems as though every book I write begins with memories of childhood—either mine, or that of my children. When creating *Your Daddy Was Just Like You* (Putnam), I imagined myself a grandmother telling my future grandchildren about their father. I had a delightful time recalling funny, silly, loving, and naughty moments from Max's youth. Alexis's turn is coming, when *Your Mommy Was Just Like You* debuts!"

Maryann Cusimano Love recalls how *You Are My Wish* came to be. "When our first baby was born six years ago, my mother-in-law said something very wise: Each child comes into the world as a unique person, and our jobs as grandparents and parents are to get to know who that person is, and then to help that child grow into the best person they can be. I was reflecting on this in church one Sunday morning when the beginnings of *You Are My Wish* came tumbling out of my imagination. Many children's books about grandparents deal with the problems of death and disease, but that's not a full picture. The average age of a first-time grandparent is 48. Grandparents today are more active and involved in their grandchildren's lives than ever before. I wanted to write a book reflecting this close relationship, and celebrating the simple joys they share with their grandchildren."

For author Lisa Moser, she says, "*Kisses on the Wind* is the book that is closest to my heart because it came directly from my own childhood. My Grandma Crockett was a true gift in my life. Even though I only saw her twice a year, we were very close. When it came time to go home after a visit, parting was agony for me. She knew that and she found ways to help me handle the separation. She told me that every night she would pray for me, and I could pray for her. We would know each night as we snuggled in our beds that we were thinking of each other and loving each other. Through the years, Grandma gave me other gifts that helped me carry her in my heart. Grandparents have so much to offer, life lessons that resonate. Hopefully we can pass those on to the people we touch in our lives, as I have tried to do with *Kisses on the Wind*. I wrote it for my daughter as a gift to her from my grandmother to stand through the generations. *Kisses on the Wind* was the book I was meant to write. It completed the circle that started so long ago."

her grandmother and a bit of magic, Chavela learns about her great-grandfather, who was a *chiclero*, a rainforest worker who harvests chicle to be made into gum. Chavela's relationship with her grandmother connects her to her family's past and to her Latino heritage," explains Greene. "Chavela's grandmother appears to be her primary caregiver, yet this is not the subject of the book."

Key, but not Whole

"I am wary of books that feel as though the author has set out to write a book about a *special relationship*," reveals Greene. "As in any genre, a good story is first and foremost the most important element of any book. In both *The Buffalo Storm*

and *Chavela*, the relationship of the characters to their grandmothers is a key element, but not the whole story. Both are about girls who take meaningful and exciting personal journeys—journeys in which their grandmothers are in their hearts and minds and influencing the story, but the relationships are the underpinnings to a grander adventure."

Ketchersid agrees. "The elements I look for in these types of stories are elements common to all stories. I look for a great story, an honest story with relationships that feels true when I read it." Adair sums up: "As with any text, it's authenticity of experience, a story a child can relate to. Stories that offer real emotion the child can connect with will be natural winners."

Celebrations which are expanding their children's literature offerings.

Traditionally, Pauline Books & Media has focused on nonfiction, but its new emphasis is on fiction. According to children's editor Sister Christine M. Wegendt and her associate editor, Jaymie Stuart Wolfe, current titles incorporate "elements of Catholic tradition, spirituality, values, worship, and belief" in fiction that offers children models of faith-filled living.

The goals for these books are lofty, but the stories themselves are refreshingly down-to-earth, with characters who face challenges with which today's kids can identify. Current offerings from Pauline Books include the colorful Stepping Stones books with their comic strip-style illustrations; *Anna Mei, Cartoon Girl*, a middle-grade novel by Carol A. Grund; and several collections of Catholic Quick Reads, such as *Friend 2 Friend*; *Now You're Cooking*, complete with recipes; *Goodness Graces*, stories about the sacraments; and *Celebrate the Seasons*, stories related to the liturgical calendar. This publisher actively embraces technology, seeing digital media devices as offering "more and more possibilities for delivering Gospel values in an interactive way." Each submission, whether for teens or younger readers, is evaluated for digital potential.

Publishers

♦ **Ambassador Books:** Paulist Press, 997 Macarthur Blvd., Mahwah, NJ 07430. www.paulistpress.com

♦ **CatholicMom.com:** <http://catholicmom.com>

♦ **Bezalel Books:** P.O. Box 300427, Waterford, MI 48330. www.bezalel-books.com

♦ **Face Up:** Redemptorist Communications, 75 Orwell Road, Rathgar, Dublin 6, Ireland. www.faceup.ie

♦ **Pauline Books & Media:** 50 St. Paul's Ave., Boston, MA 02130. www.pauline.org

♦ **Sophia Institute Press:** P.O. Box 5284, Manchester, NH 03108. www.sophiainstitute.com

No Hint of Didacticism

At Ambassador Books, the children's book imprint of Paulist Press, a major part of Editor Jennifer Conlan's mission is to "get them early." In other words, her goal is to give the youngest children a sense of friendship with and trust in Jesus that will sustain them throughout their lives.

Conlan sees recently published *Peek-a-boo Jesus!* and *A Peek-a-boo Christmas*, companion lift-the-flap books by Loretta Oakes, as potential classics. They join such enduring Ambassador Books titles as *The First Easter Bunny* and *Hurray! I'm Catholic*.

For older kids and young adults, Conlan would especially like to see sports-related stories with a spiritual component. Another longtime favorite Ambassador classic, *Men of Spirit, Men of Faith*, exemplifies what she is looking for: strong spiritual messages with not "the merest hint of didacticism." Unlike many publishers, Conlan welcomes illustration ideas from authors, even if they are not professional illustrators.

Editor and Publisher Cheryl Dickow describes Bezalel Books as a "hybrid" company—a Catholic niche publisher that offers self-publishing opportunities. Catholic fiction for children, says Dickow, includes characters with clear Catholic identities, and engages young readers "with real dilemmas and faith-based yet honest solutions."

Dickow cites *Dear God, I Don't Get It*, by best-selling author Patti Maguire Armstrong. Rosemary McDunn's historical novel, *The Green Coat: A Tale of the Dust Bowl Years*, deals with more serious problems, but with a similar emphasis on Catholic identity and Catholic Christian values. Many of Bezalel's books for teens and tweens are accompanied by reading and discussion guides, developed with input from the authors.

A Demand for Visuals

Gerard Mohoney, Editor of *Face Up*, a Catholic teen magazine, speaks of

the difficulty of reaching an audience that "questions the relevance or validity of religion" and of promoting Catholic values without taking an "in your face" approach.

Face Up is a publication of Redemptorist Communications, with editorial offices in Dublin, Ireland. Its readership includes young Catholics in all English-speaking countries, including the U.S. and Canada. Because modern technology has heightened the demand for visuals, says Mohoney, words are only "part of the package" at *Face Up*. The magazine is composed of at least 50 percent graphic material—photos and photo montages—accompanied by brief, punchy blocks of text, about half of it written by teen contributors.

Recent issues of *Face Up* have included an article on celebrity stalking superimposed on an array of intruding camera lenses; a report of the success of two teenage computer game entrepreneurs who have kept a Catholic perspective as they rake in their first millions; and a teenager's photo-illustrated report of her volunteer service with Operation Smile, an organization that provides plastic surgery for children with facial deformities.

Perhaps surprisingly, the lure of technology—television, iPods, video games—is not seen by most Catholic publishers as an obstacle to engaging kids' minds with literature. Instead, writers find themselves in competition with popular mainstream publications. As Sister Kathleen Glavich, a Sister of Notre Dame and author of many nonfiction books for both children and adults, views it, the real challenge is in "creating books that are as fascinating for children as the Harry Potter series or Twilight books."

In Sister Kathleen's opinion, lively, updated biographies of the saints fill the bill. Her accounts of the lives of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta and Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, both included in Pauline Books & Media's Encounter the Saints series, are cases in point.

Catholic Genre Fiction

Regina Doman, author and Children's Editor at Sophia Institute Press, agrees that popular mainstream literature poses a challenge to Catholic publishers. Her approach is to promote a new kind of book for today's young readers.

"We can't assume that brand loyalty will sell our books to Catholic teens," Doman says, adding that she applauds young adults' tendency to search out good stories, ignoring labels, religious or otherwise. In her own successful series of young adult novels, which she dubs "Catholic genre fiction," Doman combines subtle Catholic identity factors with exciting, fast-paced plots based on, of all things, archetypal fairy tales.

The very first page of Doman's latest mystery novel, *Alex O'Donnell and the Forty Cyber Thieves*, reveals in passing that the hero attends Mercy College, an obvious Catholic reference. Other teen novels published by Sophia Institute Press include the John Paul 2 High series, by Christian Frank, and Claudia Cangilla McAdam's Catholic science fiction novel, *Awakening*, the story of a modern Catholic girl transported back in time to the scene of Jesus's crucifixion.

McAdam, author of more than a dozen children's books, was drawn to the sci-fi genre for several reasons. It fulfilled a need for the kind of fiction that today's Catholic kids could relate to; it made good use of her extensive background in history and scriptures; and it spoke to her belief that "we should put ourselves in the scene when reading scriptures." As part of her preparation for writing the novel, McAdam gained an on-the-spot impression of the look and feel of biblical sites during a family trip to the Holy Land. In McAdam's experience, gleaned from holding discussion sessions with young readers, Catholic kids respond positively to the fact that the story characters are "just like them." She also found that those of other faiths enjoy learning about Catholicism.

McAdam also believes that many

Saints Alive

"I want to be in that number, when the saints go marching in."

So the anthem goes. But to Catholics, saints are not just numbers. They are true heroes with names and personalities. They are regarded as friends and intercessors, and they are celebrated in song and story.

Well, no, that's not quite true. Some are celebrated. Others—even very popular ones—are all but overlooked in the literary scheme of things. They may be mentioned in collections of saints' stories, but few stand-alone book titles chronicle their exemplary lives.

Here is a summary of some informal research on the topic of children's books about individual saints: St. Francis of Assisi leads the pack with 40 titles. St. Patrick follows with 24. Others may enjoy a tribute or two. But many saints have been entirely neglected, saints whose modern-day namesakes would love to read about them. Among the most popular names for girls last year were Emily, Olivia, Elizabeth, Lily, Anthony, Andrew, and James. The list goes on and on.

The list of ideas and opportunities for writers goes on in tandem. For younger readers, a legend or a single defining incident often makes a great introduction to a saint. For older kids, a focus on the three Cs—courage, character, and contributions—works well. Author Claudia Cangilla McAdam sees the lives of saints as great jumping-off points for fiction, not just biographies.

A righteous hero does not even have to be in the Roman Catholic litany to make a good subject for a Catholic children's book. Eerdmans Books for Young Readers recently published a biography of saintly, but so far uncanonized, Dorothy Day, activist for the poor and founder of the Catholic Worker movement. Paulist Press's *A Saint and His Lion* honors Tekla, a hero of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. It is time to sing new songs about the saints. To write new stories. Good sport that he is, St. Francis will welcome the competition.

publishers of Catholic literature for children and teens are still "unsure about how fictional works will fit into their lists" and that "the time is ripe . . . to address this overlooked niche."

Every Day a Holiday

Often overlooked as well is the celebratory nature of Catholicism. In the

Church, every day is a holiday (that is, a *holy day*—the feast day of a saint or a special day in honor of Mary, the Mother of God. The mass is *celebrated* and *attended*, in Catholic terminology, not merely *said*).

Nevertheless, editors and authors seek even more special days to cele-



brate in literature for Catholic kids. Several would like to see a Catholic take on Thanksgiving. Sister Kathleen would link it to the Eucharist, a believer's greatest prayer of thanksgiving. Independence Day offers another opportunity to give thanks for freedom of religious practice, as well as to honor Catholics who have made significant contributions to our nation. McAdam and Dickow see value in stories about celebrations that honor the Jewish roots of Catholic faith—Passover, in particular. More than one editor views Valentine's Day as an invitation to explore the true nature of love.

The editorial team at Pauline Media continues to plump for an emphasis on the liturgical seasons of the Church: Advent, the Christmas Octave, Lent, Eastertide (which includes Ascension Thursday and Pentecost Sunday), and the remaining days of the year, traditionally referred to as Ordinary Time. In the Pauline editorial view, every season offers opportunities to express "the richness of the Catholic faith." Hendeay agrees, but observes that there is nothing ordinary about any time in the church year. In her opinion, it is the task of writers for Catholic children to make Ordinary Time extraordinary.

If Writing Is a Business, Make a Plan

By Kelly McClymer

The first step for every aspiring writer is to write something. A poem. A story. A novel. A funny essay about the family dog. Usually, this is done in secret, and revealed to family and friends with a slight bit of trepidation. After all, writers don't make money. Except for J. K. Rowling (*Harry Potter*) and Dan Brown (*The DaVinci Code*), and Elizabeth Gilbert (*Eat, Pray, Love*), and . . . Okay, point made. Whether or not a beginning writer admits the awful truth to family and friends, a time comes to assess that drawer full of articles, essays, or short stories and ask, "Is my writing going to be a business or a hobby?"

Most writers have difficulty reconciling the harsh reality of a business's for-profit cash flow nature with the creativity of writing compelling prose. A business is about balance sheets and ledgers and selling widgets, while writing is about imaginings and technique and talent. Getting what is written profitably published, however, is a business proposition. If the goal is a writing career that provides adequate income, thinking like a business owner must prevail.

Dare to Dream in Words & Numbers

Business ledgers and financial forms can seem cold and judgmental to someone used to playing with

words. It can be easier to dream of lucking into Dave Barry's plum columnist job than to sit down and figure out how to begin to pay the bills with writing aimed at the low-paying break-in markets.

The simple, if frightening, first step to creating financial goals is to list the living expenses the writing business is intended to pay within one to three years. For some writers, this amount is equal to a full-time job, while for others it may be a part-time job to earn going-out-to-dinner money or college tuition for graduating teens.

Every business plan is unique because every business owner has different needs and expectations from a business. Do not be afraid to dream big, in words or numbers. Think of a business plan as an outline for a novel: It defines the steps to take to get to the (realistic) goal.

If the goal in the business plan is to cover day-to-day living expenses completely within one year, then the steps to that goal are going to include more than writing and selling one novel (a process that takes a minimum of two years in the most ideal of circumstances). The market research portion of the business plan will help a new writer, or one looking for new challenges and sources of income, to discover who is hiring writers, how much each type of writing pays, and what the competition looks like.

To decide what jobs would match a writer's particular skills, it is necessary to take stock of those skills and the skill level, from basic to expert. A writer who knows herself, and the target reader, will avoid becoming mired in a life of lucrative grant writing when what she really wants is to see her inspirational autobiography help others make a life change.

Plot a Path to the Future

Some would argue that selling a piece of writing is not like selling flowers, hair cuts, or widgets. There is no guarantee that any article or short story will ever sell. Plenty of florists and hair stylists and widget sellers have failed at business because of poor business planning.

A basic business plan answers six key questions:

- ◆ *What is the business mission statement?* Identify where the type of writing and writer strengths converge to create the most satisfying and profitable intersection.

- ◆ *What kind of business will be done?* List all the types of writing that will be done.

- ◆ *What is the market demand?* Who are the readers? What magazines, publishers, websites, and organizations reach them?

- ◆ *How will the business be managed and operated?* Is it a one-person operation? A home office, or rented space? Will it be incorporated?



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◆ *What is the business cash flow?*

This is where the number crunching comes into play, including the initial investment versus projected income.

◆ *Who is the owner of this business?* List writing strengths, expert knowledge, education, sense of humor, persuasiveness, analytical skills, and so on.

Writers will find questions four and six easiest to answer. The answers to the sixth change with every newly acquired skill and experience. Most writing businesses are sole proprietorships (owner does it all) with no employees, but writing partnerships should also have a written business plan to avoid confusion and problems in the future.

Some writers will find the first and second questions, about the the mission statement and business description, tricky. The mission statement should be brief and relatively general without being too broad. An example: "To do incisive and insightful writing on the subjects of parenting, marriage, and raising children with disabilities." The business description should include every type of writing and subject the writer aspires to write—factual articles, interviews, essays, columns, ad copy, grants, short stories, novels, ghost writing, etc.

Like all good writing, the business plan should allow for any needed reinvention. If a new writer dreams of writing about horses, and then discovers her true talents lie in writing about travel, then the plan can be rewritten to reflect the new focus.

The business plan should be reconsidered and revised on a regular basis, every one or two years. Businesses of all kinds change as they develop. A hair salon may add a tanning bed or scalp massage, adjust to the needs of the clientele, or move to a more appropriate location. A writer may discover the technical articles that were intended to pay the bills are more time-intensive and less lucrative than

travel pieces written about a family's annual vacation. Plans change. And profits rise when a business takes less time and effort to bring in more income.

Count Chickens Before & After

It may seem unrealistic to crunch numbers before any money comes in. But that is exactly what any new business owner has to do. The beginning of every business is called the *start-up phase*, and the financial documents of every business plan include places to account for start-up costs.

Funding from personal finances, loans, or a day job are the financial fuel to start a business, even a small writing business. The cost of paper, computer, printer, and babysitters count as start-up expenses for a writing business that has not yet begun to produce income. These amounts all belong on the business financial documents. So does a figure that is sometimes called *owner draw*—the monthly salary that the owner must make, based on the income the business is projected to produce within one to three years.

How can a business pay a writer before it makes money? After all, many famous writers did not make a sale for years. This is not a new question, and the business plan has a way to handle that. The business owes the owner (carries the owner draw *in the red*, so to speak) until income is sufficient to cover back pay. That pay is owed to repay the time and talent it took to build the business in the first place. Because writing is the kind of business where payment can occur months (or years, in the case of royalties) after delivery of the product, this accounting method keeps track of overall profitability. Knowing where the money is allows a business the flexibility to adjust the plan as needed.

Overall profitability is an important measure of success in any business. If a writer is paid \$500 for a travel article, but after expenses (including owner compensation

for time and talent) outlays \$650, the writer needs to consider whether to charge more, or find a way to reduce expenses. Ideally, a good business will provide the owner fair compensation and return a profit to the business. Remember, *owner time/talent compensation* and *profit* are two different figures. The profit return can be plowed back into the business to increase income through further education, professional memberships, key conferences, etc.

Can it be a business if you never make any money? The IRS would say (surprise!) yes, if you demonstrate the intent to make money. This means the paperwork, including a solid business plan, and perhaps a pile of rejection letters.

The idea of operating in the red for months can be a daunting reality—so daunting that fear of failure may interfere with creativity. Writers learn early to protect the creation process from unwelcome reality. And there is nothing more reality-based than a business plan that sets out goals, tots up start-up expenses, and projects cold hard income from creative passion poured out onto the pages.

Surprisingly, wrangling with reality to create a business plan can actually free up the creative spirit. A well-drawn plan may require no more than an hour a week to maintain. That leaves the rest of the time for writing, querying, and reading, the writer's best market research.

Fortunately, with the economy the way it is, there is help (often free) for anyone starting a *microbusiness*, a business with one to three workers. Visit the U.S. Small Business Administration online site (www.sba.gov) to find the forms and guidelines to help create a strong and flexible business plan. There are also online classes and workshops available, and many states provide free in-person workshops and counseling sessions to support small business owners, including aspiring writers.

And So It Ends

By Cindy Rogers

In a short work of nonfiction, the ending is key, a backdoor to the entire piece. How to conclude—some half-dozen options—is what this column is about.

The Surprise Ending

An editorial in the *Los Angeles Times* highlighted a new poll by the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life. Columnist Barry Goldman struck a serious tone as he touched on cited belief systems—Catholicism, New Age, bunnies, astrology, Eastern traditions—and lamented the fact that Americans no longer seek data or expert opinion for their beliefs. Goldman's ending paragraphs shifted in tone. He drew to a close with an abrupt and surprising blanket statement, resulting in a great laugh for the reader:

Today, if you have a question—say about whether your enthusiasm for vibrational healing gong baths is well-placed—you ask another gong bath enthusiast. There is no fringe so far out it doesn't have a website, and you can find it in milliseconds.

The next and final paragraph read: "We are becoming a nation of fruit-cakes." (*Los Angeles Times*, January 3, 2010)

The Dangler or Call to Action

A reviewer ended a book review with this dangler that motivates a reader to, well, get the book: "Describing his writing is rather like describing the taste of a rare and rich dish. The only way to really experience it is to sample it. Rest assured this reader will be seeking

out his other works after having discovered him in this one." Note how the author used a food analogy to get the final point across and then ends with a call to action. Dangers are also used in the chapter endings of mysteries and dramas—a call to action in the form of a page-turner.

The Summary or Wrap-Up

In a recent issue of *Children's Writer*, Veda Boyd Jones ended her column about "Record Keeping" with a two-line paragraph: "The goal of being organized and keeping good records is to run your business efficiently, keep track of your manuscripts, and always be aware of the state of your finances. As for me, I am headed to the office supply store." That final line references the column's first line in which Jones talks about the writer's delight in an office supply store. To good effect, she used two kinds of endings—the wrap-up and the wrap-around (full-circle effect).

Wrap-Up, Wrap-Around, & Amen

If You Find a Rock, by Peggy Christian (Sandpiper) is a terrific nonfiction picture book about the kinds of rocks kids can find. The book's last page is a one-sentence summary of the various rocks that the book

names: "If you find a rock . . . a rock that's not a skipping rock, or a chalk rock, or a resting rock, or a wishing rock . . ." The sentence ends with the rock that has yet to be named: ". . . then you have found a memory rock, and sometimes those are the best rocks of all."

The author has done a beautiful thing here, using multiple writing devices. She repeats the book's title and refrain (*if you find a rock*) for a full-circle ending. She lists the rocks in a *polysyndeton* way (using a conjunction over and over for emphasis). She also lists the rocks in the negative (*a rock that is not . . .*) that in fact underscores the affirmative, a rhetorical device called *litotes*. In a final *amen*, through specific word choice—*memory, best, of all*—she finally names the last rock and declares it the ultimate.

Inspiration

In a light tone, Anne Lamott ends each anecdotal chapter in her writing book *Bird by Bird* (Anchor) with a witty conclusion about a particular topic. The chapter "Broccoli" uses broccoli as a metaphor for intuition, the still small voice inside each of us. Her word choice and inspiration is no accident in this chapter's final paragraph: "If you don't know which way to go, keep it simple. Listen to your broccoli. Maybe it will know what to do. Then, if you've worked in good faith for a couple of hours but cannot hear it today, have some lunch."

When it comes to the end of your short nonfiction, listen to your broccoli. Which form would best serve your work? If your broccoli isn't talking, go eat some, then come back and try again. Give your work the ending—the insight—it deserves.

Resource

If you need more examples and ideas of how to end your work (whether you write short or long, fiction or nonfiction), Cindy Rogers's *Word Magic*, a Writer's Institute resource, will help. The title of the book's final chapter suggests what we're all after in our endings: "Leave a Lasting Impression." The book is available at <http://writersbookstore.com>.

Marketplace

FEBRUARY 2011 SECTION 2



ASK

Cricket Magazine Group, 70 East Lake St., Suite 300, Chicago, IL 60601. www.cricketmag.com

A nonfiction magazine for ages 6 to 9, *ASK* is published nine times a year. Its readers have questions and ideas about the world in which they live.

The subjects of articles have to do with the natural, physical, or social sciences; math; technology; history; or the arts. The editors look for new perspectives and “unexpected connections.” The style should be lively and engaging.

Themes in the coming year include kingdom of the fungi (queries due March 1), and the new world of robots (April 15).

Check the website for updated needs.

Query by mail with topics related to upcoming themes. Articles, 1,200 to 1,600 words, with sidebars. Photo-essays, 400 to 600 words. Humor, 200 to 400 words. Profiles of people, events, inventions, the arts, 200 to 400 words. Authors are responsible for accuracy. Rights and payment vary.



Fun for Kidz

P.O. Box 227, Bluffton, OH 45817. www.funforkidz.com

The audience of *Fun for Kidz* is children 6 to 13, primarily the 8 to 10 age group. It is published bimonthly, alternating with the publisher's other magazines, *Hopscotch*, for girls, and *Boys' Quest*. *Fun for Kidz* provides its readers with activities, stories, and articles. All three publications are theme-based.

Upcoming themes that are still open for *Fun for Kidz* are fun with friends (July 2011); how things are made (November 2012); friends with disabilities (July 2013); and breaking the code (September 2013). Activities should be wholesome and not run-of-the-mill.

Articles, 500 words. Projects, puzzles, crafts, jokes, games, and riddles should reflect the theme. Photos increase the likelihood of publication. Buys first North American serial rights. Pays at least 5¢ a word on publication, more with photos or art. Pays at least \$10 for a poem or puzzle. Email submissions to submissions@funforkidz.com. Include the theme/issue being targeted in the subject line and body of the message.

New Moon Girls

P.O. Box 161287, Duluth, MN 55816.
www.newmoon.com

New Moon Girls is a magazine “by girls, for girls” and accepts submissions only from girls and women. It targets ages 8 and up. All stories and articles must portray girls and women as capable, active, powerful, and in charge of their own lives. The bimonthly's mission is to help girls be resilient, strong, resistant to “destructive societal messages,” and to have dreams—dreams that they can make come true.

Upcoming themes that are still open are do-it-yourself (deadline, March 1), and eat to save the Earth (deadline, May 1). All materials must focus on girls, women, and their issues and concerns.

E-mail submissions to submissions@newmoon.com, in the body of the message; no attachments. Include your name, address, phone number, and age. Indicate if you have been published previously, with title, publication, and date. Articles, 300 to 600 words. Fiction, 900 to 1,200 words. All rights. No payment.

KINDERGARTEN STORY CONTEST

Specifications: Fiction or nonfiction about family life or school for ages 5 to 6, up to 150 words. The story should be appropriate to kindergarteners learning to read on their own. It should be fun, use vocabulary and syntax well, and have high interest for the age group. Take great care not to write too high for this readership. Know what a five- or six-year-old can and cannot read. Originality and the overall quality of writing will also be considered. Publishability is the ultimate criterion.

Submissions: Entries must be postmarked by February 28, 2011. Current subscribers to *Children's Writer* enter free. All others, entry fee is \$15, which includes an 8-month subscription. Winners will be announced in the July 2011 issue.

Prize: \$500 for first place plus publication in *Children's Writer*; \$250 for second place; and \$100 for third, fourth, and fifth places.

Send to: *Children's Writer*, Kindergarten Story, 93 Long Ridge Road, West Redding, CT 06896. Entries may also be submitted online at www.childrenswriter.com.



Koenisha Publications

3196 53rd St., Hamilton, MI 49419.
www.koenisha.com

Koenisha Publications is a small press that has published trade paperbacks for a decade. It publishes children's and YA fiction, and some adult titles. Koenisha specializes in mysteries, but also publishes inspirational, historical, fantasy, and seasonal fiction. It also publishes autobiographies, cookbooks, gardening books, inspirational nonfiction, and youth education books. It does not publish picture books.

The company has a Christian underpinning but does not direct its books specifically to a Christian readership. Founder, President, and Publisher Sharolett Koenig looks primarily for books written with passion and from the heart.

Submissions are accepted from June to December by mail. Query with SASE. Submit a proposal package consisting of a one-page overview or synopsis and two to three sample chapters. Indicate the word count and title, and tell why you were inspired or are qualified to write the book. Send to the attention of Acquisitions Editor Earl Leon. No e-mail. Royalty; no advance.

KRBY Creations

P.O. Box 327, Bay Head, NJ 08742.
www.krbycreations.com

KRBY Creations is a small children's press that specializes in books that "carry a special lesson or moral that parents can be pleased to share with their children." A recent representative title is the picture book, *The Snowman in the Moon*, a story about believing all things are possible.

Writers are asked to request the submission guidelines by e-mail to info@krbycreations.com. Founder Kevin Burton believes that illustrators are undervalued, and pays them on a royalty basis rather than work-for-hire.

Rainbow Rumpus

P.O. Box 6881, Minneapolis, MN 55406. www.rainbowrumpus.org

This online monthly is directed at children being raised in families that are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered (LGBT). It is open to fiction in most genres, to serialization, and to poetry. Nonfiction is written by staff.

Write from the perspective of children or teens. Do *not* make the focus of the story the family structure or children being teased because of their families. Be sure the stories celebrate diversity and the LGBT community. The editors are particularly interested in stories that feature families of color, bisexual parents, transgender parents, family members with disabilities, and mixed-race families.

Stories for ages 4 to 12 should be 800 to 2,500 words, and for teens, as long as 5,000 words. Most genres are accepted. Poetry may be any length. Send submissions via the website's contact page, to the attention of Editor in Chief Beth Wallace. Buys first North American electronic and anthology rights. Fiction, \$75; poetry, rates vary. Pays on publication.

Writing About Animals

Animals are a perennial favorite subject for children, and children's writers. Here are some of the magazines that look for fiction or nonfiction about animals.

- ❖ **AppleSeeds:** www.cobblestonepub.com. Nonfiction. Ages 8-10.
- ❖ **Blaze:** www.blazekids.com. Nonfiction, horses. 8-14.
- ❖ **Bonbon:** www.bonbonkids.com. Fiction and nonfiction. Kids 6-14 in the Turkish community.
- ❖ **Boys' Life:** www.boyslife.org. Nonfiction. Boy Scouts, 6-18.
- ❖ **Boys' Quest:** www.boysquest.org. Fiction and nonfiction. 6-13.
- ❖ **Bumples:** www.bumples.com. E-zine. Illustrated fiction. 4-10.
- ❖ **Click:** www.cricketmag.com. Fiction and nonfiction. 3-7.
- ❖ **Dig:** www.digonsite.com. Fiction and nonfiction. 8-14. Magazine about archaeology.
- ❖ **Equine Journal:** www.equinejournal.com. Nonfiction, horses. 14+.
- ❖ **FLW Outdoors:** www.flwoutdoors.com. Niche magazine on fishing; has a pull-out section for children. Nonfiction.
- ❖ **Horsepower:** www.horse-canada.com. Nonfiction, horses. 8-15.
- ❖ **Humpty Dumpty:** www.uskidsmags.com. Nonfiction. 4-6. Focus on healthy living.
- ❖ **Imagination-Café:** www.imagination-cafe.com. E-zine. Nonfiction. 7-12.
- ❖ **Irish's Story Playhouse:** www.irishstoryplayhouse.com. 3-14.
- ❖ **National Geographic Little Kids:** http://littlekids.nationalgeographic.com. Fiction and nonfiction. 3-6.
- ❖ **Owl, Chickadee, Chirp:** www.owlkids.com. Specializes in animals and nature for ages 2-13.
- ❖ **Spider:** www.spidermagkids.com. Fiction and nonfiction. 6-9.
- ❖ **Young Bucks Outdoors:** www.buckmasters.com. E-zine on nature, including animal behavior.
- ❖ **Young Rider:** www.youngrider.com. Fiction and nonfiction, horses. 6-14.
- ❖ **Your Big Backyard:** www.nwf.org/yourbigbackyard. Fiction and nonfiction. 3-7. From the National Wildlife Federation.

Help! I've Misplaced My Modifier!

By Susan Sundwall

Whenever I give someone directions to my house I use words that modify the basic word *house*. It is an old, two-story white colonial with dark shutters. The person I am directing already knows I live in a house, but unless I modify, or restrict, her understanding of that house, she will not know what to look for. After all, I don't want her delivering that bouquet of pink roses to the eyebrow colonial with no shutters up the road. I also have to tell her I live on a county road and not in Road County—a modifier that would send her three towns away and might make the poor roses wilt. My modifying would be the villain. Now, as bad as it might be to have your roses go astray, it's even worse when straying modifiers affect your writing.

Juxtaposition

Modifiers out of place cause confusion. Too often our writing thoughts scurry randomly through our brains and, especially in the first draft, are written down that way. In rereading we may catch offending sentences, but correcting misleading sentence structure needs constant vigilance.

One crucial point to remember about modifiers is that they should be as close as possible to what is being modified. Do not structure a sentence like this: Little Bee chased Fox buzzing with rage. It is not clear who is buzzing here, the bee or the fox. Instead write: Buzzing with rage, Little Bee chased Fox. Now we know for certain who was buzzing with rage by the juxtaposition of the noun (bee) and its modifier (buzzing with rage). The fox is probably just scared.

Words expressing action, existence, or occurrence are verbs, and we love to modify them. But watch out; word

Unintended Hilarity

Here are examples of real misplaced modifiers I found that gave me a chuckle.

- ❖ For sale: 1965 Volkswagen Beetle by elderly gentleman recently re-bored and new battery installed.
- ❖ Years later Samantha was sorting through things in the attic from college and found his picture.
- ❖ For those of you who have children and don't know it, there's a nursery on the first floor.
- ❖ Pizza was given to the teenagers that had pepperoni and olives on them.
- ❖ Brandon stood knee-deep in the river and caught fish without waders.
- ❖ You are welcome to visit the cemetery where noted scientists and authors are buried daily, except on Fridays.

on the street is that modifiers sometimes attach themselves to the wrong verb or noun. Like this:

Ambiguous: Cassie promised to paint Grandma's fence last night.

Clear: Last night Cassie promised to paint Grandma's fence.

In the clear example, scooting the modifier *last night* back to Cassie's side makes a huge difference in what the writer meant in this sentence. In the ambiguous example we are left to wonder if Cassie will show up at Grandma's fence in the dead of night with paint brush in hand.

With prepositional phrases you can get into even more trouble. A misplaced modifier may not only refer to other nouns, but also instantly modify the verb. An example: *Poppy showed the old books to the customer from the cold attic*. Your first thought might be one of concern for that poor customer shivering in the attic, but perhaps the books are just cold from being stored

there. They could move away from the customer and closer to the attic. But maybe Poppy wanted the old books to see the customer. Who knows? It is impossible to tell from this silly sentence.

Squinting Modifiers

Sometimes modifiers seem to squint first this way and then that, trying to decide which part of the sentence to modify. In the following example, punctuation helps by separating the squinting modifier, *within a year*, but moving the modifier altogether serves the sentence better.

Ambiguous: The veterinarian said that if we didn't change Doggy's food within a year, he'd lose his teeth.

Clear: The veterinarian said that if we didn't change Doggy's food, he'd lose his teeth within a year.

The first example suggests that we have a year to change Doggy's food, but the second puts the *hurry up* into the scenario. Getting that dog's food changed soon is the clear intent of the second sentence. The poor critter's teeth are at stake.

For some common adverbs—*just, even, merely, only, almost*—the rules are less rigid. You could say, *Tommy only had two marbles to play with*, and there would be no confusion. But for a more formal structure you might say, *Tommy had only two marbles to play with*. Be careful here. *Rachel almost took all the balls* differs pronouncedly in meaning from *Rachel took almost all the balls*.

All writers befuddle meaning at times. Careful writers arrest and disarm the villainous modifiers before they let an editor see them.

Calkins Creek

815 Church St., Honesdale, PA 18431. www.calkins-creekbooks.com

Calkins Creek is the American history imprint of Boyds Mills Press, which welcomes unsolicited submissions from new and experienced writers for all its imprints. Calkins Creek publishes picture books for readers 8 and up, middle-grade and YA fiction, and nonfiction. The Editor is Carolyn Yoder.

Strong, accurate research is a hallmark of Calkins Creek books. Submissions should offer new takes on well-known topics in U.S. history. Recent titles include *Birmingham Sunday*, by Larry Dane Brimner; and *For Liberty*, by Timothy Decker.

For picture books, mail the entire manuscript. For older fiction, send the first three chapters and a plot summary. For nonfiction, query or send complete manuscript; an expert's review of the manuscript; a market report; and an indication of the photos or other graphic elements you will include, with a permissions budget. Include a cover letter and label the package Manuscript Submission. Royalty.

Balzer & Bray

HarperCollins, 1350 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10019. www.harpercollins.com

Balzer & Bray is a boutique imprint of HarperCollins started in 2008 by Co-publishers Alessandra Balzer and Donna Bray. It publishes groundbreaking picture books and fiction covering a broad range of topics. While it accepts agented material only, the imprint is looking for new voices. Most of its titles are fiction—about 10 picture books a year and 15 novels—but it publishes one or two nonfiction books annually.

Recent titles include *Quacky Baseball*, by Peter Abrahams; *Miss Dorothy and Her Bookmobile*, by Gloria Houston; and *RuneWarriors: Ship of the Dead*, by James Jennewein and Tom S. Parker.

Infobase Publishing

132 W. 31st St., New York, NY 10001. www.infobasepublishing.com

Infobase Publishing is the parent company of Chelsea House, Facts on File, and Ferguson Publishing, all of which publish reference and curriculum-based materials for young people, and their teachers and librarians. Chelsea House offers middle-grade and YA nonfiction, including biography, history, geography, science, and health. Chelsea Clubhouse publishes for grades 2 to 5. Facts on File publishes school and library reference titles. The specialty of Ferguson Publishing is career education for the middle grades, high school, and beyond. Infobase Publishing's other topics include American history, multicultural studies, women's history, world history, global issues, science, ecology, cultural studies, popular culture, literature, and the arts.

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Daily Science Fiction

<http://dailysciencefiction.com>

Started by a former editor at Clarion Books, *Daily Science Fiction* is a new online publication for speculative fiction. It publishes science fiction, fantasy, slipstream, and other subgenres. Editor Jonathan Laden is very interested in flash fiction, under 1,000 words. Character-driven stories are best for this market.

Stories, 100 to 10,000 words. Submit via the website. No multiple or simultaneous submissions. Buys first worldwide rights and anthology rights. Pays 8¢ a word; for anthology reprints, 5¢ a word.

Index

Ambassador Books 4
AppleSeeds 10
 ASK 9
 Balzer & Bray 12
 Bezalel Books 4
Blaze 10
Bonbon 10
 Boyds Mills Press 12
Boys' Life 10
Boys' Quest 10
Bumples 10

Calkins Creek 12
 Candlewick Press 1, 2, 3
 CatholicMom.com 1, 4
 Chelsea Clubhouse 12
 Chelsea House 12
Chickadee 10
Chirp 10
 Clarion Books 2, 3
Click 10
Daily Science Fiction 12
Dig 10
 Eerdmans Books 5
Equine Journal 10

Face Up 4
 Facts on File 12
 Ferguson Publishing 12
FLW Outdoors 10
 Free Spirit 2
Fun for Kidz 9
Horsepower 10
Humpty Dumpty 10
Imagination-Café 10
 Infobase Publishing 12
Irish's Story Playhouse 10
 Koenisha Publications 10
 KRBY Creations 10

Natl. Geographic Little Kids 10
New Moon Girls 9
Owl 10
 Pauline Books & Media 4, 5
 Paulist Press 4, 5
 Philomel Books 2
Rainbow Rumpus 10
 Sophia Institute Press 4, 5
Spider 10
 Albert Whitman 2
Young Bucks Outdoors 10
Young Rider 10
Your Big Backyard 10