

*Sisters
in
Crime*



Heart of Texas
Chapter
www.HoTXSinC.org

HOTSHOTS!

November 2009

2009 Officers

President

Sylvia Dickey Smith
sds@suddenlink.net

Vice President/President-elect

David Ciambone, Sc.D.,
FIOF
mysterywriter5@msn.com

Treasurer/Membership

Sarah Ann Robertson
hotxsinc@yahoo.com

Newsletter Editor

Micqui Miller
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Publicity Chair

Joyce Arquette
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Historian

Betsy Tyson
betsy.tyson@sbcglobal.net

Library Coordinator

Jennifer Old
jsmooth@austin.rr.com

Webmaven

Linda Bingham
linda@macrogirl.com

Sisters in Crime is an international organization of women and men whose purpose is to promote mysteries written by women and to combat discrimination against them. Speakers include published mystery authors and technical experts who help writers craft better mysteries, and readers enjoy what they read. Meetings are free and open to all.

For more information, check out the Sisters in Crime website at www.hotxsinc.org

Sunday, November 8, 2009

2:00 p.m.

James Bryant, Ph.D.

Presents

**Sherlock Holmes:
One of the Greatest Statisticians Who
Never Lived**

NEW MEETING LOCATION

Mangia's Chicago Stuffed Pizza

located in the Mesa Plaza shopping center

8012 Mesa Drive

(southwest corner of Mesa Drive and Spicewood Springs Road)

512.349.2126



Jim Bryant teaches immunology and statistics in the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Texas-Austin. He believes that the way Sherlock Holmes thinks is illustrative of statistical processes. He will show us the connection between mysteries and statistics according to Sherlock Holmes.

Please note: Because our regularly scheduled December meeting will be the docent-led tour of the Edgar Allen Poe exhibit at the University of Texas, we will elect the Chapter's 2010 officers at the November meeting.

Nominations will be taken from the floor. Please see the Call for Officer Nominations on Page 2 and consider serving in one of these positions.

*This meeting is free and open to anyone who enjoys writing or reading
Mysteries: Whodunits, Cozies, Thrillers, Suspense, True Crime.*



News and Announcements

Call for Officer Nominations for HoTxSinC for 2010

This year's election of officers will be held at the November meeting on Sunday, November 8. Below are job descriptions for each of the positions. We encourage you to consider volunteering for one, or nominating someone else. *If you plan to nominate someone for office, please be sure you have permission prior to submitting the nomination.*

Nominations will be taken from the floor.

President: (The Vice-President for Programs is also President-Elect and automatically moves up to this position.)

- * Contact person and spokesperson for HoTxSinC
- * Presides at meetings
- * Supports officers and committee chairs

Vice-President for Programs and President-Elect:

- * Plans, implements and provides follow-up for programs for the year – including monthly meetings, Annual Indoor Picnic, and Annual Holiday Party in December
- * Supports the President as needed
- * Moves up to the Presidency the next year

Treasurer/Membership:

- * Maintains checking account and pays bills
- * Maintains Membership Directory
- * Maintains inventory of cups/t-shirts/tote bags

Publicity:

- * Maintains publicity contact lists for monthly meetings and special events
- * Issues News Releases for monthly meetings and special events
- * Distributes **HOTSHOTS!** and other information of interest to members

Newsletter Editor of **HOTSHOTS!**

- * Solicits articles and items of interest for members
- * Works with officers to include announcements
- * Produces monthly newsletter

Library Coordinator

- * Houses and maintains the book collection and accepts new books as offered
- * Keeps the website updated as to contents of the collection
- * Provides reviews of the books for the membership

Historian

- * Maintains collection of items showing the history of HoTxSinC
- * Accepts new items
- * Presents reports as requested

Webmaven

- * Maintains the www.hotxsinc.org website
- * Adds and updates material as requested
- * Provides reports as requested

Texas Book Festival HoTxSinC Booth Coordinator:

- * Contacts National SinC, submits grant request to pay for TBF booth fee, writes report
- * Contacts Texas Book Festival and submits request for TBF booth
- * Contacts member authors and volunteers about participating and sets up schedules
- * Provides publicity info to Publicity Chair & Newsletter Editor
- * Sets up booth, coordinates author and volunteer participation, takes down booth
- * Forwards raffle/sign-up info to Membership

Texas Mystery Month Coordinator:

- * Presides at Texas Mystery Month meetings
- * Coordinates Committee Chairs for Authors, Venues, Publicity, Events, Barbara Burnett Smith Aspiring Writers Project
- * Provides reports as requested

Those nominated thus far are:

President:	Dave Ciambrone
Vice-President for Programs/President-elect:	Joan Upton Hall
Membership/Treasurer:	Sarah Ann Robertson
Publicity:	Joyce Arquette
Web Maven:	Linda Bingham
Library Coordinator:	Jennifer Old
Historian:	Dolores Sullivan
May Mystery Month Coordinator:	Sarah Ann Robertson
Mentor Co-coordinators:	Helen Ginger & Sylvia Dickey Smith
Newsletter Editor:	Micqui Miller
Texas Book Festival Booth Coordinator:	(Open)

Out and About with our Members

**DAVID CIAMBRONE, Sc.D.,
FIOF**

***Wednesdays - October 28-**

December 2:

Teaching writing at The University of Texas-Austin.



***Sunday, February 14 - 2:00 PM**

Marie Callender's (US183 near the Arboretum)

Speaking at the Austin, TX chapter of ASQC on the Effective Transition from Design to Production.

***Wednesday, February 10 - 5:30 PM**

Mystery panel, Sisters in Crime, Austin, TX chapter at the Barnes and Noble at Bee Caves.

***Sunday, June 13 - 2:00 PM**

Presentation on Sherlock Holmes, The Man. Sisters in Crime, Austin, TX chapter at the Barnes and Noble at Bee Caves.

RUSS HALL



***Friday, November 13 -**

11:00 AM

University of Texas Forum,
Thompson Conference Center
on campus, Austin

***Saturday, November 14**

Leader/Facilitator of the

HoTxSinC Workshop & Retreat

9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. - Georgetown, TX

MICQUI MILLER

***Mondays, January 4-February 8**

5:30-7:30 PM

Micqui Miller will conduct a 6-week workshop for first-time authors entitled, "Write the Book of Your Heart and Publish It--Now!" at the Bosque Arts Center, Clifton TX.



For further information, contact

Micqui at micquimiller@yahoo.com

SYLVIA DICKEY SMITH

***Saturday, December 5**

The Christmas Stroll

Hill Country Bookstore on the Square in Georgetown, Texas



***Wednesday, February 24**

**Hyde Park Reading Club,
Austin TX**

Luncheon: 11:30 AM

Holy Cross Lutheran Church

Upcoming Chapter Programs

(Continued on Page 11)

November 14 - 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM - Opening Doors In New York or How to Conquer the Giants! Workshop/Retreat led by award-winning author Russ Hall.

December 13 - Field Trip: Docent-led Tour of "From Out That Shadow: The Life and Legacy of Edgar Allen Poe" at the University of Texas - Harry Hunt Ransom Humanities Research Center

January 10, 2010 - Pat Ricks - History: The Greatest Mystery-Three Hours Research for Three Lines. Really.

February 14 - Love Them to Death: Mysteries with Romance Panel - Panelists: Dave Ciambrone, Russ Hall, Micqui Miller, Weslynn McCallister, Sylvia Dickey Smith

March 14 - Greg Lawson - The Media, GPS and Serial Killers

April 11 - Chief Art Acevedo - Update on Policing in Austin, Texas

2010 Texas Mystery Month

May 9 - T. B. A.

**May 23 - Barbara Burnett Smith
Aspiring Writers Event**

Location, Location: Where Characters Come to Life by Joan Upton Hall

On Sunday, September 13, 2009, HoTxSinC member **Joan Upton Hall** addressed our chapter in a presentation titled, *Location, Location: Where Characters Come to Life*. Joan has graciously provided us with the following text to share with members who were unable to attend the meeting, or as a refresher for those who did.

Writers hear a great deal about putting readers into the viewpoint (pov) character's *head* immediately. I prefer to make that the character's *skin*, where they not only think, but see, hear, feel, taste, and smell whatever the character does. Thus immersed first hand in the story's setting, readers don't just read what is happening, they experience it.

As important as dialogue and action are to establish character and conflict from the outset, you must also ground readers in time and place. If the writer gives no clues that it's day or night, hot or cold, 18th century or the present, your Faithful Reader, rather than floating in limbo, will assume something, perhaps strolling through the park on a sunny day. Imagine her surprise, on page two, when you have "headlights stab through the darkness and illuminate the driving snow." Can you think of a better way to remedy this than to give a quick picture of the setting as the character perceives it? Especially if the character has an *attitude* (favorable or un-) about the surroundings, Faithful Reader instantly knows what both character and setting feel, look, and sound like. Movie makers may have an advantage over writers in this respect. Next time you watch a movie, notice all the surroundings and happenings shown even while the credits roll.

Until movies add senses of taste and smell, we writers have the advantage, but do we use it? Unfortunately, those senses are the ones most often left out of a beginning writer's descriptions too, but oh how powerful they are. Mention the words "popcorn," "vanilla," or "gasoline," and people instantly recall the smell, perhaps even an incident and emotion from a memory.

Most of us find it easy to show visuals, but remember also to use the other senses too. It's not just "whose *head* we're in." We don't perceive our surroundings by our minds alone. Do you have to rely on a thermometer to know it's cold? Or test the chemical components in the air to know bread is baking nearby? Must you carry around equipment to measure tweeters, woofers, and decibels to know the car in the next lane has its stereo on loud?

Let's look at a few beginnings from published novels in various genres to see how the authors guided readers to experience the scene.

Death surrounded her. She faced it daily, dreamed of it nightly. Lived with it always.... Ten years as a cop hadn't hardened her toward it. A decade on the force hadn't made her accept it. When she looked death in the eye, it was with the cold steel of the warrior.

Eve Dallas looked at death now. And she looked at one of her own.

Frank Wojinski had been a good cop, solid.... He'd been on the pudgy side and had let his hair gray and thin naturally. It was a rare thing in 2058 for a man to bypass body sculpting and enhancements. Now, in his clear-side view casket with its single spray of mournful lilies, he resembled a peacefully sleeping monk from an earlier time.

J.D. Robb (aka Nora Roberts), *Ceremony in Death*, Eve Dallas detective series, futuristic mystery

...Gray Horse Running, one of the Comanche, trembled expectantly as first dawn touched the two mountains with fire. Up there, perhaps still sleeping, waited whatever spirit was to give him his medicine, his spiritual power for a life as a warrior and a man of the People.

He was in his eighteenth summer, and he had prepared a long time. Now he and the spirit would meet, face to face.

Elmer Kelton, *The Wolf and the Buffalo*, western historical

Location, Location: Where Characters Come to Life

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Their stories began with the day that my father appeared. Rachel came running into camp, knees flying, bellowing like a calf separated from its mother. But before anyone could scold her for acting like a wild boy, she launched into a breathless yarn about a stranger at the well, her words spilling out like water into sand.

A wild man without sandals. Matted hair. Dirty face. He kissed her on the mouth, a cousin, son of their aunt, who had watered sheep and goats for her and told off the ruffians at the well.

“What are you babbling?” demanded her father, Laban. “Who is come to the well? Who attends him? How many bags does he carry?”

“He is going to marry me,” said Rachel matter-of-factly, once she had caught her breath. “He says I am for him and that he would marry me tomorrow, if he could. He’s coming to ask you.”

Anita Diamant, *The Red Tent*, mainstream historical

Freedom lay within Gloria’s grasp. She stood tense before the window of her cell, moonlight framing her nude figure. She ignored the dank chill. Her flame-red hair, usually smoothed tight, fluffed out around her head and shoulders in an unhallowed halo. Well-toned muscles trembled under alabaster skin. The guard fumbled at the lock, dropped the key, and cursed under his breath....

The iron door squeaked open, and she waited for him, smelling his sweat. Waited like the black widow that lived in the corner of her cell. All these seven years, the dynasty of ruthless female spiders had schooled her to forge her secret hatred into the guise of patience, the model prisoner. Inspired her to keep herself fit and powerful as a wrestler but neat as a priestess.

Joan Upton Hall, *The Shadow of Excalibur*, Book 2 of the *Excalibur Regained* trilogy, urban fantasy

Consider how much you learn about each of the above characters and situations in less than a page each. Isn’t that more important than a physical description giving mere drivers’ license facts (color of skin, hair, eyes; height and weight; gender; age) that you get in some books? The former passages entice your Faithful Reader to begin forming her own mental picture of the scene, settle into the reading as an active participant, and keep turning pages.

It’s something like moving into a new living space (albeit temporary). Real estate agents aren’t obsessed with “Location, location!” for no reason. And the most talented of them appeal to senses when showing a house: sight, sound, feeling, and... Are those cookies baking in the oven? In school the salespeople who use the old cookie trick probably learned that our olfactory receptors are directly connected with the primitive limbic system of our brain, considered the seat of emotions.

Hurrah again for us writers! We don’t have to bake the cookies. We just mention the smell to tantalize our readers’ limbic systems and stir up emotions.

Next time you begin a story, remember that real estate agents aren’t the only ones concerned with location, and movie makers aren’t the only story tellers who can draw Faithful Readers into a scene.

Think cinematically – but with all five senses.

* * *

About the Author:

Former English teacher, Joan Upton Hall is now a freelance author and editor, writing instructor, and speaker. Her manual, *Rx for Your Writing Ills* and “Demystifying Writers’ Demons” column, carried by various writer newsletters, have helped countless writers. She has long been a newspaper columnist (travel and humor) and has published short stories and articles in magazines as diverse as *Texas Highways*, *American Jails*, *The Roswell Literary Review*, and writers’ magazines.



Kindle Numbers: Traditional Publishing Vs. Self Publishing

by J. A. Konrath

Posted October 13, 2009 on the *From A Newbie's Guide to Publishing*, blog owned by J. A. Konrath, a full-time thriller writer and acclaimed author of the Lt. Jacqueline "Jack" Daniels thriller series

I got quite a shock last week, when I got my bi-annual royalty statement. Hyperion publishes six titles in my Jack Daniels series. They gave me my ebook figures. Authors are usually quite secretive about their sales and their royalties. Me? I'm spilling the beans. Here are my ebook Kindle numbers from Jan 1 to June 31, 2009.

Whiskey Sour priced at \$3.96: 550 sales, \$341 earned.

Bloody Mary priced at \$7.99: 180 sales, \$381 earned.

Rusty Nail priced at \$7.99: 153 sales, \$341 earned.

Dirty Martini priced at \$6.39: 202 sales, \$604 earned.

Fuzzy Navel priced at \$7.59: 153 sales, \$341 earned.

That's 1,237 ebooks sold in six months. Total money in JA's pocket: \$2,008.

Why do these numbers vary so much?

I get 25% of the amount received by the publisher. Depending on the deal my publisher makes with Amazon, that can be anywhere from 62 cents to \$3 per ebook sold. We can draw a simple conclusion looking at these sales: **a \$4 ebook sells 3 times as many copies as an \$8 ebook.**

Now lets compare these to my self-published Kindle sales. I'll use my four novels for comparison. This is also for a six-month period.

The List priced at \$1.99: 5142 sales, \$3600 earned.

Origin priced at \$1.99: 2619 sales, \$1833 earned.

Disturb priced at \$1.99: 1139 sales, \$797 earned.

Shot of Tequila at \$1.99: 900 sales, \$630 earned.

That's 9,800 ebooks sold in six months. Total money in JA's pocket: \$6,860.

I get 35% of the price I set on Kindle, or 70 cents per ebook download. We can draw some simple conclusions looking at these numbers.

Ebooks priced at \$4 sell an average of 1,100 ebooks per year. Ebooks priced at \$8 sell an average of 342 ebooks per year. Ebooks priced at \$2 sell an average of 4,900 ebooks per year.

It doesn't take a math whiz to see that the biggest profit is with low priced ebooks

Now let's play the imagination game. My five Hyperion ebooks (the sixth one came out in July so no royalties yet) each earn an average of \$803 per year

on Kindle. My four self-pubbed Kindle novels each earn an average of \$3,430 per year. If I had the rights to all six of my Hyperion books, and sold them on Kindle for \$1.99, I'd be making \$20,580 per year off of them, total, rather than \$4,818 a year off of them, total. So, in other words, because Hyperion has my ebook rights, I'm losing \$15,762 per year.

Now Hyperion also has my print rights, and my Jack Daniels books are still selling in print. But they aren't selling enough to make up the \$15,762. Especially since all of them aren't regularly being stocked on bookstore shelves. According to my math, I'd be making more money if my books were out of print, and I had my rights back.

Of course, there are a lot of different factors at play here. Certain titles are more popular than others. Print sales may fuel ebook sales. Ebooks sales may wane (though mine haven't yet.) Branding and name recognition and past customers and fans all come into play, making this damn confusing and far from conclusive. That said, do I really want to keep signing deals with print publishers?

Royalties of \$3,430 per ebook per year isn't really a big number. I've certainly never been paid so small an advance for a novel. And yet, I'm 100% sure ebook sales are going to go up. I've signed deals with Smashwords to sell ebooks through Barnes and Noble; Apple to sell ebooks as iTunes apps for the iPhone and iPod Touch, and Sony to sell ebooks on their reader. Kindle was just released in 100 more countries. I predict more ebook sales in the near future. Let's say by the end of 2010 I can make \$5,000 per year per ebook title by self publishing. I can easily write four books per year. Again, \$20,000 per year isn't enough to live on. But things begin to accumulate. \$20k per year for 4 new books, plus \$20k per year for the books I'm already selling, is \$40k per year.

But I'm selling more than novels on Kindle. I also have 6 collaborations and short story collections. This year I'm also going to put *The Newbie's Guide to Publishing* ebook on Kindle. So now we're looking at 14 ebooks, each making \$5k per year. That's \$70,000 a year.

Kindle Numbers: Traditional Publishing Vs. Self Publishing

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And as more people buy ereaders and ebooks, that number can go up. Plus, I publish on my schedule, I keep the profits, and best of all, the rights are 100% mine. So if I want to do a limited print edition, I can. If I want to sell the mass market paperback rights, I can.

Ebook rights began as gravy. I can picture a day when the print rights are the gravy, and authors make their living with ebooks.

Yes, it's still far off. And yes, print publishing is in no danger of going away anytime soon. But I don't think I'll ever take a print contract for less than \$30,000 per book, because I'm confident I could make more money on it over the course of six years than I could with a publisher over six years. Isn't that bizarre?

For the bestselling author, this is all still very trivial. These numbers are chump change compared to the advances they get. But for the midlist author, I'm beginning to think it's possible to make a living without print contracts. I've struggled mightily to break into print. And I've made a nice chunk of change on my print novels. Now I'm hoping those novels go out of print, so I can get my rights back. I never would have guessed my mindset would change so dramatically in so short a time.

DISCLAIMER: YOUR MILEAGE MAY VARY

If you're a new author, reading this and thinking about the fame and fortune you'll make on ebooks, I urge you to try the traditional route first. Find an agent. Land a deal with a big NY house. Ebooks aren't there yet.

I'd hate to think some writer gave up on their print aspirations because of something I've said on my blog. I suggest you keep up the agent search, and hold out for that major deal. While I have no doubt others will be able to sell as many ebooks as I have, and probably many more, I still haven't made anywhere near the money I've made by being in print. Plus, everyone's situation is unique, and no writer should compare themselves to any other writer.

Most of all, don't change the future of your career based on one man's ideas. Learn as much as you can about all of your options, do research, get other opinions.

You can visit J. A. Konrath at: <http://jakonrath.blogspot.com/>

A New ... Free ... Research Tool!

The Oregonian (Portland, OR) newspaper has helped spread the word about a pilot program called **My Info Quest**. Anyone can send a question using a cell phone via text messaging and, within 10 minutes, a research librarian will respond via text messaging. The service is staffed by librarians from across the country. Any random question of no particular genre will be answered.

To use the service, send a text message with the code WCC before the question to (309) 222-7740 weekdays from 6:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M., and Saturday from 7:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. More details are available at: <http://www.myinfoquest.info/>

On a related topic, if you call or email any question, the Multnomah County, WA Library's research will get back to you within a day or two. More for information, visit: <http://www.multcolib.org/contact/>

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 26 is the deadline for News, Reviews, Announcements and Articles for the **DECEMBER 2009** edition of **HOTSHOTS!**

Send info to Micqui Miller at
micquim@yahoo.com

Small Press: What It Can Do For You

by Patricia Wynn Ricks

HOTxSinC member **Patricia Wynn Ricks** was a featured speaker at the annual **Novelists, Inc.** convention in St. Louis, MO, September 30-October 4. Below is a summary of her presentation on Small Press. Pat will be our January 2010 speaker and will discuss *History: The Greatest Mystery-Three Hours Research for Three Lines. Really.*

Anyone can get a book printed. The hard part for small presses, as it is for every publisher, even those in New York, is getting books noticed and getting readers to buy them.

The common wisdom has always been that small presses should not publish fiction, and there is, or was, a lot of wisdom in that. Formerly, NY publishers produced so much fiction of every kind, and did it so cheaply, there was no way for a small press to compete in the bookstores. Now, the major publishers have considerably narrowed their publishing lists, making it feasible for small presses to enter the genre fiction market with good books New York houses can't afford to publish under the bestseller model they all pursue.

It wasn't until the mid-twentieth century that the invention of the truck and the production of gasoline, the expansion of the road system, and the introduction of cheap mass market books came together to make it possible to distribute many books all over the country. Many older mystery authors came along at a time when every new mass market title was carried on newsstands in the grocery stores, drug stores, chain bookstores, and airports, and a great many authors consequently could make a living off their writing and hope with perseverance to make it big. All of that changed in the early 1990s when the stock jobbers found they could make more sales by carrying bestsellers only. Since that time, the space devoted to books at neighborhood stores has shrunk to almost nothing, and independent stores have all but disappeared. The NY publishers found they could no longer sell very many mid-list books. As their outlets narrowed, the publishing houses consolidated, giving authors fewer places to sell fewer genres, a shorter time to breakout before being dumped, and little chance of making a living as a novelist. Some sub-genres all but disappeared because the sales of them – like Regency romances, Westerns, traditional whodunits – did not sell in the big numbers required to support their portion of a big publisher's overhead.

At about the same time, the digital revolution lowered the bar for entry to the publishing business. Authors envisioned a time very near when they could connect directly with their readers through the internet, make their own books in their studios, and sell them directly to fans. The warning about fiction seemed no longer to apply. Some small publishers thought we could fill in a niche that had been abandoned by the NY houses.

Nothing is ever that simple. We certainly didn't see how hard it would be to start a publishing business in the middle of the greatest sea of change in the industry not only since the invention of mass market but since Gutenberg's invention of movable type. We still find ourselves caught between the twentieth century model of doing business and the almost exclusively digital

model that now seems just around the corner. The NY publishers are caught there, too, and they are scared. Last year, at Book Expo America, the editor-in-chief of Publishers Weekly told a group of small publishers that she thought the NY houses would implode under their own weight and that small publishers would be the future of the book industry. I believe that, too.

Authors are understandably confused about their options, and how small presses differ from the major publishers. Here are some basics about small press from an author's vantage point. As you read them, remember, distribution is key.

What can a small press do for you?

That depends, in part, on which small press you contract with:

1) *iUniverse, Ex-Libris, and the like are not small presses.* They are publishing services companies. They provide good value for the money, but they are not publishers. Only use them if you want to get a book in print, and are willing to hand-sell each copy yourself



Small Press: What It Can Do For You

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Publishers have their own block of ISBN numbers and can distribute to the book trade via relationships with wholesalers. They selectively accept manuscripts because they are gambling their resources on the success of a book. Authors do not pay for their services, but instead have a contractual arrangement, spelling out who will do what and how much the author will receive for each copy sold.

2) Small presses may use offset printing or print-on-demand or both, depending on how quickly a title is likely to sell a quantity of copies that make a print run profitable. If a book moves slowly out of the warehouse, the profit from sales might not be enough to cover storage costs. It's that simple. When a book begins to sell slowly, it has to be gotten rid of or it bleeds the company in storage costs. As far as an author is concerned, print-on-demand is nothing but a printing method. Nearly every publisher uses it for some books, even Random House, and Harlequin. Now, POD books are virtually indistinguishable from many offset books, certainly of the popular fiction variety. In fact, POD books are typically printed on acid-free paper, which mass market books are not.

3) Publishers come in various sizes and usually restrict themselves to a very narrow niche - for instance, the niche for my company, Pemberley Press, is traditional whodunits with a well-developed setting that is critical to the plot. It's a waste of time and money to send a manuscript to any house that doesn't publish your kind of material. It is always a good idea to read some books from the publishing houses or lines you want to submit to, to get a better feel for what they want.

4) Small presses do not publish in mass market format. They do not have the guaranteed distribution or capital to supply the mass market. Even if they did, mass market outlets are disappearing, and, except for a few products like toothpaste and toilet paper, the mass market for everything is vanishing, too. Ten years ago, it made no sense to publish even a 100,000 word whodunit in trade paper because there were so many available in mass market for lower prices, but since that time, trade paper sales have increased relative to mass market sales. Many libraries now prefer to buy trade paper editions, too.

5) Small presses do not all distribute the same way.

a) Some have exclusive contracts with a distributor to handle all their sales to the book trade. The book trade means wholesalers, retailers, and libraries. This is what I have with Independent Publishers Group. This means IPG stores my books and handles almost all sales, puts my books in their catalogs, and sends their sales force out to hawk them. Does this mean all my books are carried by retailers? No. But it does mean that any retailer who wants them can get them easily. This is the same position, believe it or not, that a NY publisher is in these days with its mid-list books.

b) Some presses have non-exclusive arrangements with a distributor, so they can get their books into Ingram. Ingram is the hardest wholesaler to deal with. I had my own account with Ingram and they never forced me into a distributor

contract, but they did insist on a 60% discount which made my sales through them unprofitable. Now Pemberley Press gets the IPG discount rate. Another way around this is to set up a book as POD through Ingram's subsidiary Lightning Source, which will distribute to the entire book trade. Most major publishers have accounts with Lightning Source for their backlist titles.

c) Some presses act as their own distributors. This means they have to establish relationships with every wholesaler, the chain stores, Amazon.com, and any libraries and independent booksellers that prefer to buy directly from the publisher. They must take every book order and fulfill it - either shipping books themselves or coordinating with a fulfillment house. The advantage of this is better profits, but since orders come in daily, someone must be in the office every day to fill them.

6) Small presses cannot pay big advances, but given the higher prices of their books, authors can sell half as many copies or fewer and make the same royalties.

7) If a small press uses a distributor, the distributor can fail, as Publishers Group West did last year. That can leave authors in a temporary mess. If you go with a small press, be sure to ask



Small Press: What It Can Do For You

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who distributes their books and do some due diligence on them. If they distribute their own books, that may be safer. Contact the authors they already publish and ask if they pay royalties on time. The information may not be available, but try to find out how financially sound their distributor is.

8) Small press contracts will read very much like the contracts you get in N.Y. The value or equity of a publishing house is in the authors' rights it holds, so most will take all your rights in case they want to sell their company eventually. All you can do is negotiate terms.

9) The advantages of small press:

a) I used to say your book would stay in print longer than with a NY house, and this is still true if the NY press doesn't put your book into POD. Typically a small press will keep a book in print much longer and give it time to find its audience. If the book is printed POD, it can stay in print as long as sales cover an annual digital storage fee, which is quite small.

10) How does a small press book get into Barnes & Noble or other stores? It must at minimum have cover treatment and production values that are competitive with NY books. There are lists of design elements that must be met – such as the title must be readable from 6 ft. away. The interior must look professionally designed. Do not go with a small press that doesn't create a professional-looking product. Check out their existing books before signing. Still, if you've been noticing book covers lately, they are all being designed more cheaply. Much more photography and computer design than the original art they used to have. With fewer books selling, expensive covers are no longer feasible.

The book must be returnable with an established, easy way to return them. I hope this will change in the next couple of years, if only to save the environment, but mostly to save me from paying restocking fees. Still, until the major publishers stop accepting returns, make sure your small publisher does.

Reviews from major sources and blurbs are helpful, but the author's track record in terms of sell-through and total sales is the most important automatic factor. If you have a bad record or no record, you have to get out and sell your books. Introduce it to the booksellers. Schedule as many book signings at Barnes & Noble stores as you can. They are very small press friendly. Depending on how widely you schedule signings and repeat them

with subsequent books, you may be able to get your later books stocked in that geographic area. The important thing is to build a sales record.

11) What can a small press do for its authors and what must they do for themselves?

The most important thing I've learned the past ten years is that there is only so much I can do as a publisher. It's my job to give the book a good editing, good blurbs, good cover and title, as many reviews as I can get, ARC's, and try to get its reviews to librarians and readers. My distribution makes the books available to any bookstore or library or reader that wants them. But ultimately the sales depend mostly on the author's efforts.

b) Your dealings with a small press will be much closer and more immediate. You may have more input on things like cover design, title, and treatment of the book, but ultimately it is up to the party paying for it all to make the final decisions.

Whether you are able to get out in the real world to sell your books or not, make all possible use of the internet. Join online book discussion groups. Tell people about your book, post free samples of your writing, try to create demand for the book before it is released. Find like-minded readers.

The vision of authors connecting directly with their readers has been realized. The trick is to find those people yourself and let your publisher supply them.

* * *

About the Author:

Patricia Wynn is the author of the award-winning Blue Satan mystery series, and the owner of Pemberley Press.



When Pat's at home, she occupies an empty nest in Newport Beach, California, with her husband and a spoiled little mutt named Puppet.

Her proudest achievement is founding the [Texas Lyme Disease Association](#), which she still serves long distance as a member of the Board of Directors.

Visit Pat at: www.pemberleypress.com.

Upcoming Chapter Programs

(Continued from Page 3)

June 13 - Dave Ciambrone - *Sherlock Holmes, the Man: Who Is He?*

July 11 - Jerry Hurst - *The Evolving Science of Fire Investigation and the Role of Personal Bias*

August 8 - Sylvia Dickey Smith, Jessica Fletcher: *Why America Loves Her*

September 12 - Ed Martin - *An Update on the Case of Madelyn Murray O’Hair*

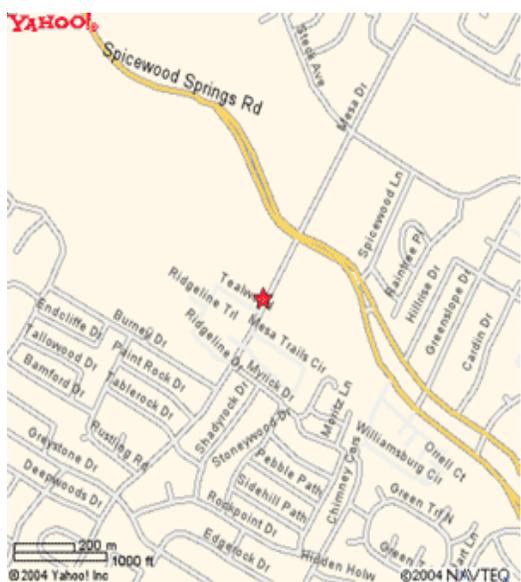
Map to New Meeting Location

Below is a map posted on the website of the Mangia’s Chicago Stuff Pizza Restaurant.

They are located at 8012 Mesa Drive in the Mesa Plaza shopping center at the south-west corner of Mesa Drive and Spicewood Springs Road.

The telephone number is 512.349.2126, and their website address is: mesa@mangiapizza.com

See you on the November 8!



Map to Opening the Doors in New York or How to Conquer the Giants Workshop on November 14

Below are directions and a map to the Workshop, which will be held at Oaks at Wildwood Clubhouse - 30 Wildwood Drive - Georgetown, TX.

From Austin

Take I-35 North to Exit 261A (FM 2338/Lake Georgetown). At stop light, turn left onto Williams Dr. and go 3.5 miles. After passing through Shell Rd. intersection, take right at blinking light onto Wildwood Dr. We are on the left.

From Waco

Take I-35 South to Exit 262 (FM 2338/Lake Georgetown). At stop light, turn right onto Williams Dr. and go 3.4 miles. After passing through Shell Rd. intersection, take right at blinking light onto Wildwood Dr. We are on the left.

