

BIBLIOPHILE

News for and about publishing for our publishers.

Published Bi-Monthly by Biblio Distribution, Inc. Volume 3, Issue 5 September/October 2004

Contents of This Issue:

- "Featured Backlist" Thanks
- Notes From the Field (Phrases To Avoid)
- Judging A Book By It's Cover
- More on ISBN-13
- Interview with Ingram Book Company President
- Miriam Bass Award Call for Nominations
- Award, Review, and Other General Information

At the beginning of October, I attended the Frankfurt Book Fair—the largest book trade show in the world—for the first time. While many industry professionals out there will tell you that the show is too long, too big, and too much work, as a first-timer I can tell you that it's just an amazing experience. Take Book Expo, multiply it by five, add in a very long plane ride, much beer and some heavy German food and you get "Frankfurter Buchmesse." It's humbling how many people speak English fluently, given that I couldn't make it through more than two years of Spanish, French, Italian...or Latin.

The eight (yes, 8!) convention halls are divided by language. You travel between halls on moving walkways or on very crowded shuttles. English-language publishers (U.S., U.K., Australia, and assorted others) were in Hall 8.0; but the German hall was by far the most crowded and festive. The public is let in on the last three days and, as you would expect, they're keen on picking up free stuff from the German publishers. Imagine if the public was allowed into BEA! Yikes.

The atmosphere at the show is more similar to the London Book Fair than to Book Expo—I've always thought of BEA as more of a carnival 'o' books while the London and Frankfurt fairs are strictly business. Conversations are by appointment and at night you're too exhausted to do anything but eat dinner and go to bed. (Of course, if you're me-or one of my colleagues-then there are two nights that you're getting up at 3am to watch the U.S. presidential debates on CNN.)

If you're a U.S. publisher and you're only going to attend one book fair, then Book Expo America is the easy choice. However, as your publishing company grows and you begin to get into the rights business, then Frankfurt is one show to put on your "wish list."

"FEATURED BACKLIST" THANKS

Thanks to everyone who participated in the "featured backlist" section of our first complete backlist catalog. Thanks to Davida and the NBN production department, the catalog was sent off to the printer last week. We're expecting final copies by Thanksgiving, just in time for our December sales conference. Those of you who participated can expect to receive your copy before Christmas.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD: Phrases For Publishers To Avoid

There are a few phrases we hear all the time that make our sales reps cringe. When authors or publishers use these phrases, we know that selling their book may be a challenge—

"This book sells itself!" ~ If only this were true. The only books that sell themselves say "John Grisham," "Harry Potter," or "Danielle Steele" on the cover. OK, yes, there are quite a few authors out there whose books will sell without promotion—but we still see them promoted, don't we? Even the large houses know that they can't take anything for granted. And the key to the above is that these are famous authors (or characters, like everyone's favorite boy wizard), but none of them got to where they are without serious efforts by their publishers. Please know that no matter how brilliant your book is—the buyers at our accounts won't be reading it and what they care about is the publisher's ability to promote.

"There's no other book like it!" ~There's always another book like it and if there's not one by now, there's probably no interest in the topic. Now, to be fair, someone has to be the first one to write a book about the Internet, low-carb dieting or John Kerry, but it's unlikely that first book on the topic did well. And, yes, you may be approaching the topic in a way that no one has before--that's expected. (For example, the *South Beach Diet* is just a new approach to *Dr. Atkins*, but it came along at a perfect time—as Atkins was at the height of its popularity. And now South Beach books sell better than Atkins.) What's really helpful to reps and buyers is to know about other, similar books on the topic, how they compared, and how they sold (and it's good for your book if they sold well).

"The audience is anyone who reads." ~In order to market effectively, you will need to define a specific audience. If you cannot, then you may want to reconsider publishing the book. Even if you honestly think your book is for absolutely everyone, the rep needs to be able to tell the buyer who the target audience is—who is your core reader? Once you answer that question then planning your promotional campaign will become much simpler—and we'll have something to tell our buyers.

"It's ranking on Amazon went from 30,987 to 4,234." ~Amazon rankings are one of the unsolved mysteries in the publishing industry. They're the result of a variety of different metrics, none of which Amazon explains very well, and may have only some distant relationship to overall sales. Unless your book is in the Top 25 then the rankings going up or down is virtually meaningless. Unfortunately, most authors are so hungry for information, and Amazon is easily accessible, so they live and die by these rankings. It's fine to watch your ratings and be happy when they go up, as long as you know that the fluctuations are normal and that nothing significant can be deduced from them.

"I'm promoting it aggressively on my website." ~That's great, but it won't sell books through bookstores. Online marketing still hasn't been accepted in the publishing industry as an effective way

of selling books. There are a few exceptions to that, however, because doing promotions through online bookstores like Amazon.com can be very successful. Keep in mind that people will only go to your website if they know about your book and are already interested—in which case they're going to buy it anyway. The goal is to reach those people who don't already know about you or your book.

JUDGING A BOOK BY ITS COVER by Davida Breier

As a publisher there comes a time when you must reject the lessons drummed into your head by your mother and high school guidance counselor and face the fact that books are indeed judged by their covers. There's no point in debating that fact in the ten-second window your book has to make its first impression.

Your first hurdle is convincing the retail and wholesale buyers that your book is worthy of placing in their stock. The second hurdle is grabbing consumer attention, and very often that cover is the only reason a person will pick up the book or walk past.

Here are a few issues related to cover design:

- **Pixelated or unintentionally blurry images.** Make sure the images you are using are high resolution (usually between 300-600 dpi). If you've downloaded some free stock photos or scanned your images, check the resolution.
- **"Cheap" looking fonts.** There are basic fonts installed on most computers and using them for your cover design will be an immediate tip-off that the cover was not professionally designed. Display fonts can convey not only the text, but can also set the tone visually. Finding the right font for your book jacket doesn't have to be expensive. There are many free fonts or inexpensive fonts available on the Internet. (Check the usage agreements. Many are free for personal use, but have a small charge for commercial use.) Here are a few sites to check out.

<http://www.maryforrest.com/fonts/fonts.html>

<http://www.girlswhowearglasses.com>

<http://www.free-typewriter-fonts.com>

<http://www.chank.com/freefonts.html>

<http://www.disturbed.com/fonts.html>

<http://www.astigmatic.com>

<http://www.fontfreak.com>

<http://www.pcfonts.com>

<http://www.fontface.com>

- **Overused clip art.** For example, Microsoft Office includes cutesy clip art. Using this type of clip art is death for your book. Copyright-free images and clip art images can work well, but the images must be high-resolution, unusual, and contribute to your overall design. Dover Publications offers a whole series of inexpensive clip art and copyright-free images on CD-Rom (www.doverpublications.com).
- **Style that has nothing to do with content.** Go into a bookstore and take a look at the horror and mystery sections. You should notice that black and red covers dominate. Now go into the children's section. Primary colors and bright or soft hues are everywhere. That is because these styles are immediately associated with their genres. Now go into the section where you would like to see your book shelved - does your title look like it would belong?

- **Covers that are too generic.** Food that comes with a black and white label is generally perceived as inexpensive and often of inferior quality. A bland cover with boring text and little else will be perceived the same way. The only reason The Beatles could get away with "The White Album" was because they were *The Beatles*.
- **Color over design.** Just because you've spent the money to print in 4-color doesn't mean you have to use every single color in the crayon box. Use color wisely. I've seen wonderful, well-designed 2-color covers, as well as awful, expensive, embossed 4-color covers.
- **Too much text.** Have you crowded your cover with a lengthy subtitle, description, author bio, highlights, awards, and endorsements? There should be a natural flow for the reader's eyes and if the cover is too busy, the flow is disrupted.
- **Too little text.** Don't make your audience try and guess what the book is about. An inscrutable cover isn't likely to win an audience.
- **Old-fashioned looking.** Yep, it's true, like clothing and interior decoration, graphic design is bound by the same style prejudices. If your title is cutting edge or timely, make sure your cover is too.
- **A title that is difficult to read.** If someone has to squint at and scrutinize the cover to figure out the title, you've probably already lost your audience. A consumer in a store is likely to be at least 4-10 feet away from your title when he or she first sees it. A simple test while you are working on the cover is to place the mock-up across the room and attempt to read the title.
- **Spine that is difficult to read.** If your title is one of the lucky few chosen for shelf space, consider that your spine is fighting for attention in a store filled with thousands of other books. Make the spine stand out and consider including a small, but visually catchy thumbnail image.
- **Proofread.** This is common sense, but I've seen some finished copies with typos on the front and back covers. Make sure at least 2-3 other people proofread the cover.

Don't forget the back cover:

Author photos. Unless the author is famous or somehow likely to help as a sales tool, put the author photos and bio at the end of the text on the back cover. That space could be better used for description, endorsements, or just part of the design.

Illegible text. Make sure the text describing the book is in a clear, easy to read font. If the font is too small or illegible, the reader will give up and walk away.

Boring text. You spent hundreds of hours writing the book. At the very least, a few hours should be spent developing the description on the dustjacket. It is essential that the content be condensed to

an utterly fascinating 100-200 words. Remember, your "pitch" to your audience is only going to last for a matter of seconds.

Meaningless endorsements. Good reviews hearten an author's soul, but unless the reviews are from a recognized source they aren't likely to convince a book buyer or consumer and may even turn him or her off.

A few simple tips:

1. Ask your distributor's opinion on your cover before you go to print. We are happy to provide feedback and may catch a few things that would help the design.
2. Go to your local bookstore and compare your cover art to similar titles. These are the books that were deemed worthy of shelf space, so they should provide the best model for what buyers are looking for.
3. If you can't afford the services of a professional designer, but don't feel you can produce a cover on your own, contact a local university or art school and see if they can recommend a student willing to take the commission.
4. Get as many opinions and as much feedback as possible. Consider doing a test market to your audience. For example, if your book is geared toward older adults and retirees, you could visit a local senior center.
5. Create a few different covers so you can get a feel for what works and what doesn't.
6. Read the back cover copy aloud. Read it aloud to other people. You have 45 seconds or so to grab your reader. Writing 50,000 words is often easier than the three sentence summation of your book.

Other Resources:

Front Cover: Great Book Jacket and Cover Design
by Alan Powers/ ISBN: 1840006935

Children's Book Covers: Great Book Jacket and Cover Design
by Alan Powers/1840006935

Desktop Publishing: Book Covers and Jackets:
<http://desktoppub.about.com/od/bookcovers/>

MORE ON ISBN-13

(Published as "Brave New EDI World; BISG Finds Consensus" in *PW Daily*, 10/1/04)

"Editors' note: The mention of uniform bar codes and longer ISBNs may lull many book world people into a state of semi-consciousness, but the subject is like plumbing or electricity: it's easy to take for granted but without it, we're lost. If all else fails, try scanning the following.

In what several participants called a "historic" vote, at its annual meeting last week, the Book Industry Study Group unanimously approved three recommendations that assure the book industry will stay in conformity with changing standards and technology in the wider commercial world. Among the many benefits: there will be more ISBNs available, ISBNs and bar codes will be compatible with trading partners around the globe, and all books will be easily scannable at most store checkout registers.

The group endorsed the move from the current 10-digit ISBN to a 13-digit ISBN, which will be the sole form of ISBNs as of January 1, 2007. Beginning January 1, 2005, the use of both types of ISBNs is highly recommended. (Current 10-digit ISBNs can become 13-digit ISBNs by adding 978 as a prefix. These 13-digit ISBNs are identical to the numbers encoded in current Bookland EANs. Eventually ISBN-13s will also be created with a 979 prefix.)

The group also endorsed the use of the item-specific Bookland EAN bar code as the only bar code to be printed on books and book-related products. It will appear on the back of all books as well as the inside cover of strippable paperbacks. (Price-point UPC bar codes, currently used on the back cover of most mass markets, will no longer appear.)

The task force recommended that the single-bar code approach go into effect on frontlist titles as of the third quarter of 2005. For backlist titles, the approach should be phased in and completed by the third quarter of 2007.

Incidentally a BISG task force on bar codes found that by next July 85% of all affected retailers will be able to receive, store and scan products with EAN bar codes. The remaining 15% will either be capable of processing EAN by December of next year, continue using their own proprietary barcoding, continue not to need barcoding or over-sticker the EAN bar code with UPC bar codes.

As if this all weren't enough to wade through, the group also adopted recommendations that companies become compliant with the Global Trade Item Number or GTIN, an "umbrella number" of EAN/UCC numbers that identifies both products and services and converts all such numbers into 14-digit numbers. (The 13-digit ISBN adds a prefix of zero to become a GTIN-14 number.) For the book industry, the group wants to use a 14-digit GTIN number that could be used to identify the contents of shipping containers and case packs." --John Mutter, *PW Daily*, 10/1/04

NOTE FROM BIBLIO: Karen Mattscheck, Inventory Manager, and Al Patterson, Vice-President of Distribution, are members of BISG and are in attendance at these meetings. As we learn more, we will continue to share it with you. For now, if you already have printed books, don't worry about it. It's something to be considered only if you have new books coming out or plan to reprint backlist in the middle of next year or later.

"INGRAM TURNS ITSELF UPSIDE DOWN TO MEET NEW DEMANDS"

(NOTE FROM BIBLIO: This week an interview with Jim Chandler, Ingram Book Company's new President, was published in *The Tennessean*. We've included it here because it provides some excellent insight into Ingram's operations—as well as the industry overall. As most of you know, Biblio does a

significant amount of business with Ingram and it's important to us that you understand their business as much as possible.)

"The most recent book that Ingram Book Group President and CEO Jim Chandler read was a mystery set in Venice. He can't recall the exact title. But who can blame him? Chandler's got about a million book titles to keep up with across the street from his headquarters in La Vergne, TN.

Chandler, who got hooked in the industry years ago with a summer job in a mall bookstore, sat down recently with *The Tennessean* Assistant Managing Editor Deborah W. Fisher to talk about the massive business.

Choosing the 1 million titles you're going to have in your four warehouses around the country, how do you do that?

We used to select books. Today we basically buy everything. And it's a question of the quantity that we buy. It's a really different mindset. Today, our buyers don't make a decision as to whether to buy or not buy. They make a decision as to how much to buy.

Do they read the books?

They read books. They certainly don't read them all. That's certainly one of the misconceptions of this industry that you get to sit around and read. It doesn't happen.

So how do they choose the quantities to buy from publishers?

Book buying has always been a bit of an analogous activity where this book will sell like this book because they are similar, serving a comparable market. The author's reputation and strength all goes into those decisions.

Talk to me about Ingram's global business. Which parts of the world have you developed the business most rapidly?

Canada has always been our largest market as an export market. The English-language markets were where we really developed first.

A lot of our growth over the last decade has really been a result of the vitality of the U.S. publishing scene. One of (the United States') largest exports today is intellectual property related to entertainment, information. We've basically ridden that along — the computer phenomenon of the late '80s and '90s was a driving force where every computer book published was published in the U.S. in English.

Over the last three years, it's been the advent of Internet retailers and the expansion of people like Amazon in the global markets, U.K., France, Germany, Japan. Once you make English-language books available, it really opens the market up and the expectation that they are readily available.

You mentioned the Internet. What portion of your business has moved to fulfilling Internet orders compared with fulfilling land-based retailer orders?

The Internet represents somewhere between 12% and 15% of the overall marketplace of book sales. That would probably be where we're at.

You said you've ridden the appeal of U.S. content in a global marketplace. Are anti-American sentiments out there affecting sales in any way?

There is no evidence of that. (The number of) new book titles published in the U.S. each year is 175,000. There is something for everybody. And it's not just about entertainment. It's information; it's scientific, professional, reference publishing.

What about bootlegging and copyright infringement, which is a big problem for the music and film industry?

It's more difficult to zap a book through the wires than anything else. Certainly e-books have not found their consumer yet. We're keeping an eye on that and anticipate that that will happen, especially in reference materials and journals. We're as concerned as the U.S. publishers are by the lax copyright enforcement in certain parts of the world.

Generally, you're finding that in markets where there is a huge price differential. For a U.S. book that's published at \$30, and the average price of a book in China today is less than \$2. India, probably less than \$3. It's about making books affordable enough in those markets to prevent the infringement from happening in the first place. It's a big issue.

How do the aging baby boomers play out in your business?

The baby boomers are the best educated, the heaviest book buyers and book readers. We're extremely hopeful that as the baby boomer generation gets to the point that they've got some time to read that they're going to return to their earlier behavior. Time is probably the single biggest limitation affecting reading behavior.

We're seeing that baby boomers are really what created the book industry, as we know it today. You can trace the growth of mall book outlets, the superstore outlets really moved with the baby boom group through the cycle.

Have you seen any innovations among the publishers to try to accommodate the baby boomers as they age ... larger print, lighter books?

The one thing that we have seen is books-on-tape. Spoken-word audio continues to grow. We're in that business, as are most of the publishers we do business with.

Most of the publishers are in New York. How does being in Nashville affect your business?

Most of the commercial publishers are in New York, but there are publishers all over the country. Nashville is probably the third largest (home for publishers) if you think of the book industry in total. The largest of the Christian publishers are in Nashville. Believe it or not, Nashville is one of the hot spots for publishers. It's Christian publishing, but actually beyond Christian. There have been new startups in more mainstream publishing areas.

Are you seeing a lot of new publishers pop up across the country?

In the past 10 years, there has been a significant amount of mergers and acquisitions among publishers. What happened was, as those merged together, we saw more startups happen. Oftentimes they were founded by people who were displaced as a result of the mergers, people with a lot of expertise. There's been a lot of investment money available to finance startups in the publishing marketplace. And they've been very successful.

Where else is your business growing?

Our business internationally is continuing to grow. Our business into the library market, we've added significant capabilities in terms of everything a library needs to be provided with shelf-ready book product. Whether it's Mylar wrap, security strips, cataloging, processing, the cards inside the book, the property stamps. We've actually got a little workshop across the street. Our Christian marketplace is having a very, very good strong run. And our magazine distribution, Ingram Periodicals, has a decade-long string of solid growth into the bookstore and specialty retail markets.

How did you get into this business?

Quite by accident as a summer job before graduate school. It was with B. Dalton, a mall bookstore. Great summer job. I got hooked, and I never looked back.

James E. Chandler bio:

Named president and CEO of Ingram Book Group in September 2004; President of Ingram International Inc., a part of Ingram Book, since 1997; Other positions in the book industry: Vice-president and director of sales for HarperCollins Publishers; Similar positions with Bantam Doubleday Dell and Barnes & Noble; Personal: Wife, Kathy; two grown children.

Ingram Book Group includes: Ingram Book Co., Ingram Periodicals Inc., Ingram International Inc., Ingram Library Services Inc., Spring Arbor Distributors Inc., Tennessee Book Co., Ingram Fulfillment Services Inc., Ingram Customer Systems Inc.

In La Vergne:

Headquarters and distribution center employs about 1,700 people. About 8 million books in La Vergne inventory, encompassing 1 million titles." Other facilities are located in Oregon, Indiana, and Pennsylvania.

Copyrighted by *The Tennessean*. Reprinted with permission. For the full article see:

http://tennessean.com/business/qanda/archives/04/09/60244191.shtml?Element_ID=60244191

MIRIAM BASS AWARD NOMINATIONS (Letter from AAP President & CEO, Pat Schroeder)

This is a call for nominations for the second annual Miriam Bass Award for Creativity in Independent Publishing. The deadline for submissions is *Tuesday, November 30, 2004*.

Any individual in the book publishing industry is invited to submit nominations on the [official nomination form](#). Nominations may be made for a living individual in any type of publishing company, provided it is an independent house, in recognition of extraordinary creativity in 2004. Such creativity may have been demonstrated in any area of the business, including back end operations, publicity, marketing, sales, or another area. In 2004, Alexander G. Skutt, President of McBooks Press Inc., received the award in recognition of his extraordinary creativity in dealing with a crisis that might have crippled his publishing house, when his distributor went bankrupt.

The award, given annually, was created in 2004 to honor the memory of the many contributions that Miriam Bass made to the book publishing community. It is co-sponsored by AAP, Rowman & Littlefield

Publishing Group, and National Book Network (NBN) and carries a \$5,000 cash prize, which will be fully funded by Rowman & Littlefield and NBN. A committee representing a variety of segments of the book publishing industry will select the winner.

If you have any questions, please contact Kathryn Blough at kblough@publishers.org or 212-255-0200, Ext. 263.

PW CALLS FOR INFORMATION

Feature: Spring/Summer First Fiction

Issue: January 24, 2005

Send info to: Daisy Maryles

Deadline: November 15, 2004

NEEDED: Information on first novels (adult only, hardcover or trade paper) to be published between March and August. We may do a sidebar on first story collections; please send info on those also. Send book's description, author bio, marketing plans, first printing, etc., and include editor's name/phone. Also, tell us why your author candidates would make a perfect interview for this feature. Also send galleys, when available. Mark packages "First Fiction" and send to:

Daisy Maryles
Publishers Weekly
360 Park Avenue South
New York, N.Y. 10010

Please do not respond via e-mail.

If you want to submit your new book to PW for their regular review section called "Forecasts" (as all publishers should!), here's the link to instructions on how to submit properly:
<http://publishersweekly.reviewsnews.com/index.asp?layout=submissions&publication=publishersweekly>

****Please note that the "Beyond the Bookstore" column will return in our next issue!****

INFORMATION THAT BEARS REPEATING

To Correct Online Retailer/Database Errors AND to Add Reviews:

<http://www.bibliodistribution.com/publishers/passwordprotect/datacorrections.shtml>
(Username: bibliopublisher ; Password: bigsales)

Publicity Updates: If you have an update about your publicity and you want the sales reps and our buyers to know about it, please put it into our preferred publicity update format. The format can be found on our website at: <http://www.bibliodistribution.com/publishers/marketing.shtml>

A Plea From the Biblio Staff: Please identify yourself in your e-mails to us. We have quite a few publishers now and we need you to include your name, publishing company, title and ISBN when you contact us. Not including that information will delay response to your request.

Here are a couple of ideas for getting all-important industry information and for networking opportunities:

SUBSCRIBE TO *PUBLISHERS WEEKLY*: www.publishersweekly.com

JOIN PMA: <https://pma-online.org/membappl.cfm>

SUBSCRIBE TO THE *SPAN NEWSLETTER*: email Lurina@SPANnet.org and type in "SUBSCRIBE."

Attention Publishers: Back issues of "Bibliophile" are now available on our website at:

<http://www.bibliodistribution.com/publishers/bibliophile.shtml>

If there is anything you would like to read about in an upcoming issue of *Bibliophile*, please e-mail your idea to me at jlinck@bibliodistribution.com. Thank you! -Jen

biblio
DISTRIBUTION