



SelfPublisher News

Volume 1, Number 2

September 2005

The Industry Source for the Next Hot Property in Publishing

www.selfpublishernews.com

Authors' Articles Find a Home on the Web

An exclusive interview with Dr. Robert J. Lahm,
founder of ArticlesontheWeb.com

By Milton Stern

Dr. Robert J. Lahm began his professional career by honing an array of corporate marketing management skills in advertising, public relations, and research related positions. He previously founded several entrepreneurial businesses, including a career service and a management consulting firm to service the strategic planning and marketing communications needs of business-to-business, consumer and public sector clients.

Lahm taught at both the MBA and undergraduate levels, addressing subjects such as organizational change, innovation, strategy, and entrepreneurship. He earned his doctorate degree at Georgia State University's Andrew Young School of Policy Studies.

Presently, besides public speaking, his primary interest is in developing books, information products, and web-based services. Lahm's consulting practice area involves helping organizations



stimulate creativity and innovation in order to proactively manage change in challenging times. He suggests that we were all much more capable and creative as children, and his interventions serve to "reverse the constraints on thinking new thoughts" that years of cultural conditioning tend to reinforce.

Lahm founded entrepreneurial ventures such as Lahm & Associates, Inc., a mar-

keting firm he started from scratch in 1988 — beginning with no capital, clients, or creative portfolio. Despite the obstacles he faced, he went on to successfully win and deliver projects for numerous clients in higher education, banking, real estate, magazine and specialty publishing, technology products, retailing, consumer, and business-to-business markets.

[See Lahm on Page 14](#)

Next Month in *SelfPublisher News* —

**Exclusive interviews with Bryan Reilly
of *Unpublished Underground* and
Francine Silverman of *Book
Promotion Newsletter & Ask the Experts***

The Editor's Desk

Good or Bad, Reviews Are Reviews

By Milton Stern, Executive Editor

About twelve years ago, while working for a legal publisher in West Palm Beach, I decided I wanted a snack, so I walked to the convenience store across the street. I purchased a large bag of fat-free potato chips, figuring I would have less guilt munching on a low calorie snack even if it was a two-pound bag. On my way back to the office, I opened the bag, took out a chip, put it in my mouth, started to chew, and immediately spit it out. It was awful. I decided not to throw away the bag of chips, for when I returned to the office, I wanted to conduct an experiment.

I walked around the office with the open bag of potato chips and said to everyone as I walked up to his or her desk, "These are the worst potato chips I have ever tasted. You have to try one." And everyone reached into the bag, took out a chip, tasted it, and had the same reaction I did.

My experiment, although less than perfect by scientific standards, proved my point. If you tell people something is the worst, they have to find out for themselves. Had I walked around the office and said, "Try these chips, they are wonderful," I am not sure everyone would have tasted them. They would have thought it was a joke.

My scientific findings came back to haunt me when I wrote a scathing review of a book on Amazon.com. I read *I Love the Illusion*, by Charles Tranberg (© 2005, ISBN 1593930291, Bearmanor Media Publications). The book is an extensive and thoroughly researched biography of Agnes Moorehead, who played Endora on *Bewitched*. The author obviously did his homework and put a great deal of effort into writing this book. As a huge *Bewitched* fan with a toy parti-poodle named Serena Rose Elizabeth Montgomery, I was looking forward to reading this book, and I purchased it for my own collection, not to review it.

Unfortunately, I did not like the book at all, so I posted a review from *SelfPublisher News* that was titled, "Dreadful and Impossible to Finish." I went on to say, "... What a waste of money. It reads like a poorly written encyclopedia ... It needs to be trimmed by about 100 pages...." I rarely filter anything as my friends will tell you, and I was not kind.

That evening, I received an email from Charles Tranberg thanking me for my review and for purchasing the book.

I felt horrible, but he was happy. I apologized and even offered to remove the review, but he told me not to because if people only write glowing wonderful reviews of a book, no one is going to believe them. We continued to have a nice email exchange, and Mr. Tranberg will be a highlighted author in a future issue of *SelfPublisher News*.

What Mr. Tranberg said about only having glowing reviews was absolutely correct. I checked his book ranking on Amazon the next day, and it had jumped by over 300,000 points — and stayed there for weeks. I was amazed. I talked to Sharon Grove Gillespie, Managing Editor of *SelfPublisher News*, about my exchange with Mr. Tranberg, and she relayed to me how she was reluctant to go and see the new *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* because the critics were falling all over each other praising it as the greatest film since *Citizen Kane*. That reminded me that the only reason I went to see *Bewitched* was because the reviews were so scathing. I loved the movie.

Now, I am not telling all of you to go out there and have someone write a horrible review of your book because I do not want to be blamed when your sales tank as a result of bad publicity. However, since it is so hard to get self-published books reviewed, we should be thankful for every review we get. And, if the reviews are all bad, we can do what they do in Hollywood — replace all the bad comments with an ellipse. Do not give up, and keep writing your ... books!

September 2005

Subscribe to SelfPublisher News

SelfPublisher News is the industry source for discovering the next hot selling author. No more reading query after query, proposal after proposal or listening to pitch after pitch.

SelfPublisher News is your link to the latest undiscovered writers, who will shape the book publishing business for years to come.

SelfPublisher News is published monthly for only \$10 for one year (12 issues). Conveniently delivered to your email box once a month in PDF format. Subscriptions are available by clicking on the "PayPal" button at www.selfpublishernews.com.

Spotlight on Lulu

Putting the Creator In Control

An Exclusive Interview with Stephen Fraser,
Lulu Communications Director

By Milton Stern

The word “lulu” is an old-fashioned term for a remarkable idea, person, place or thing, as in “that’s a lulu of an idea!”

Founded in 2002, by Bob Young, Lulu promotes itself as the “web’s premier independent publishing marketplace for digital do-it-yourselfers.” It is the only place on the web where one can publish, sell and buy any and all things digital — books, music, comics, photographs, movies, or software. They simply provide the tools that leave control of content in the hands of the people who created it in the first place.

Lulu Communications Director, Stephen Fraser, who is described on the Lulu website as a man who likes “running looooooong distances” and dislikes “sans-serif fonts and warm weather — anything over 40 degrees,” recently sat down for an exclusive interview with *SelfPublisher News* Executive Editor, Milton Stern, who prefers walking “looooooong” distances and hates temperatures below 89 degrees.

“The underlying idea for Lulu is that it is a marketplace for digital content,” Fraser says. “Much the same way eBay allows you to sell physical content, Lulu allows you to sell intellectual property.” That is why Lulu describes itself as a technology company and not a publisher.

On the Lulu website, they say one “can use Lulu to publish and sell any kind of digital content, and no one here is going to ask you to change anything. Ever. Your vision is entirely yours.”

When Lulu was founded, the focus was mainly on books, and they have since expanded into music, digital images, and even software. “We are now offering burn on-demand DVDs and CDs, so creators can sell short films,

documentaries or even software,” Fraser tells *SelfPublisher News*. “This will allow [our creators] to tie a book to a film or other materials [like photo albums for example],” Fraser says.



The whole concept is an organic outgrowth of Internet content into Lulu content, according to Fraser. The Internet has allowed creators to find their niche audience, however small it may be. Traditional publishers do not want to spend money on someone who may only have an audience of 10 or even 1,000, but Lulu allows that audience to be reached. For example, “We have someone who has published several books written in the Cheyenne language,” Fraser says. “No traditional publisher would touch this, but for someone who reads the Cheyenne language, this is great.”

'More content is available than publishers can publish or have an economic interest in publishing, which for them is a bottleneck and for Lulu is an opportunity'

“The best part of my job is looking at content on the website,” Fraser says. “The other day I saw a book on Civil War crochet patterns. Where else would you find something like that?”

The Internet has proven that there is an audience for just about any kind of content. “The Internet is very democratic,” Fraser tells *SelfPublisher News*. “People find their own audience, and Lulu reflects that same principal — democratically published media.”

Fraser tells *SelfPublisher News* that publishers do a great job, but they get it wrong a lot of the time. “Publishers put out more books that flop than make it,” Fraser says. “More content is available than publishers can publish or have an economic interest in publishing, which for them is a bottleneck and for Lulu is an opportunity.”

Going back to the eBay example, Fraser says that before eBay, auction houses were expensive and exclusive. eBay proved that auctions are something that everyone can engage in, and eBay discovered new fertile ground. But eBay has not hurt the traditional auction houses; they created a new market. The same can be said for Lulu. “Lulu does not replace Random House,”

Fraser says. “Lulu created a new market where there was no market before.”

Creators are given their own storefronts, which enables them to offer all of their content in one location and develop their own following. This has allowed people to sell to a small audience and allowed that audience to find everything they can on a particular subject. “We have a storefront dedicated to books on Havanese dogs [by Joanne Baldwin, DVM]. Where else can a lover of Havanese dogs find these books?” Fraser asks. However, the majority of Lulu creators have their own websites apart from Lulu, which they use to drive customers to their Lulu content rather than the other way around.

There is no set-up fee and no minimum order to publish and sell on Lulu. Lulu manages the online business, including printing, delivery and customer service. Creators set their own royalty for each piece of content, and they can set no royalty if their only purpose is producing content. Someone can create a photo-album book just for his or her family.

Another advantage that Lulu offers is the ability to take down, revise, replace or add content. “We’ve had lots of folks take their books down for a number of reasons,” Fraser says. “Some have even been picked up

by a traditional publisher.” This is an attractive feature for those who have signed with a POD publisher who requires one to give up publishing rights — sometimes for as long as seven years. Lulu creators retain the publishing rights to their content.

Fraser wants people to understand that being published does not mean one will have a bestseller. Being published does not automatically equal sales, and that is Lulu’s message. “You can have a sense of your market, you can test your market, and you can even see if there actually is a market,” Fraser says. “Publishers [will] pay attention to any book that is selling.”

A big part of Lulu is the forums. “That is why we emphasize community and feedback forums so much as a company. We speak directly to our customers every day,” Fraser tells *SelfPublisher News*. Lulu has made changes to their website and offerings based on that customer feedback. “Each time we change the site, we make it easier to use, which is one of our greatest strengths. [Since all of our business comes through the website], we are constantly working to make it better,” Fraser says.

Note: Milton Stern, Executive Editor of SelfPublisher News, is also a Lulu creator.



SelfPublisher News

Executive Editor: Milton Stern
Managing Editor: Sharon Grove Gillespie

To contact SelfPublisher News, email editor@selfpublishernews.com

Copyright © 2005 SelfPublisher News

All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction in whole or in part in any form.
SelfPublisher News may not be reproduced or quoted in whole or in part by any means whatsoever
without the written permission of
Milton Stern, Executive Editor, SelfPublisher News, 1733 B Newton ST NW, Washington, DC, 20010.

SelfPublisher News is published 12 times a year and delivered exclusively in electronic format.

editor@selfpublishernews.com • www.selfpublishernews.com • 202-247-1149

Authors in the Spotlight—

Writing Is Easier in High School

Look toward the back of the university classroom. If you see Sarah Champion with a pen, she is most probably not taking notes.

Champion, a full time university student residing in Sydney, Australia, writes whenever she has a moment. “In classes that are boring, in breaks, while waiting for buses, during lunch, [I write],” Champion tells *SelfPublisher News*. “I was able to write a lot more in high school classes though, [since] most of my university classes are too interesting!” she says.

Champion started writing her first novel when she was eleven years old, and she says she has written fourteen books, taking a year to write each one. Be kind and do not try to calculate her age.

Untouchable is her first attempt at science fiction. “[It’s a] view of our world centuries in the future after we have destroyed it and [how this has affected] the humans who still have to live in it” Champion says. What makes Champion’s book unique is her main characters are mostly female. “I’m trying to showcase women in life or death situations who need no male protection,” she tells *SelfPublisher News*.

Champion made the decision to self-publish because “[she] was sick of getting rejection letters.”

“When I finally did get an offer from a company, signing their contract was basically signing ALL my rights away,” Champion says. “I wouldn’t have even been al-



lowed a say of the final edit or the cover.” Champion feels that if she has “put all that work and time and effort into her book and her name is on the cover, [she] should at least be able to give the final approval.” She feels that self-publishing has allowed her to “do things on her own terms.”

Champion’s aunt helped her edit and her “mum” assisted

with the typesetting and formatting, but she is handling the marketing solo. She has spent “several hundred dollars,” and if she were “not a full time student, obviously it would be much more,” she tells *SelfPublisher News*.

“I think trying to get books in physical bookstores is the hardest thing [for self-published authors], especially with POD publishers not accepting returns and trying to compete with the large-scale marketing campaigns,” Champion says.

Champion was once told, “Shut up and write. Don’t worry about how it’s going to turn out and don’t worry what anyone’s going to say, just get it down and worry about the rest when you’re finished,” and she has followed this advice ever since.

However, she did not listen when told to quit because she was too young, which she heard more often than she would care to admit. “I thank all these people because a lot of my motivation comes from proving people wrong,” Champion tells *SelfPublisher News*. “You’re never too young, and you’re never too old. If you tell me I can’t do something, it’s pretty likely that I’m going to go out and do it just to prove that I can.”

Untouchable © 2004, ISBN 1411610067, Sarah Champion, Lulu Press, Science Fiction, www.lulu.com/sarah-champion

Teacher’s Self-help Book Achieves Success

Warren, Mich., school teacher, Michelle Rossi sets a good example by doing her homework, writing for at least one hour every night.

Rossi’s latest book, *All About Me*, “provides a wonderful way for young people to build self-esteem by learning more about who they are,” she tells *SelfPublisher News*.

Rossi’s books have achieved commercial success, and she has done book signings at Barnes and Noble, Waldenbooks, and Borders. And, she has achieved her success with an investment of only \$100.





The secret to Rossi's success is that she does "at least three things a day to promote [her] book," she tells *SelfPublisher News*. She has made good use of email marketing, and Rossi says that nothing has failed. "All marketing is good marketing."

Rossi says, "I love for people to feel inspired and empowered. My writing will spark emotions and interest."

All About me © 2005, ISBN 1411631471, Michelle Rossi, Lulu Press, Young Adult/Self-Improvement, www.lulu.com/allaboutme

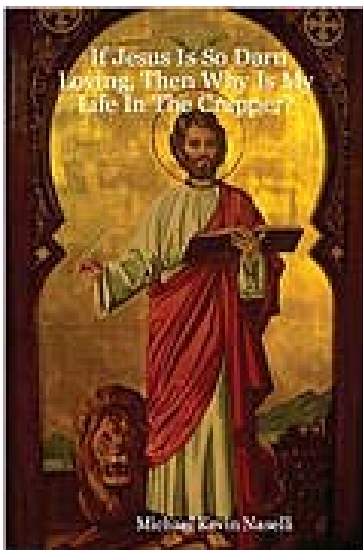
Don't Let the Title Fool You

Michael Naselli's latest book asks, *If Jesus Is So Darn Loving, Then Why Is My Life In The Crapper?* But, his life is as far from a crapper as one can get.

Naselli works at the Rescue Mission in Syracuse, N.Y., a charity that helps the homeless, and being a single guy, he finds plenty of time to write books about spirituality and happiness.

One of his books, *The Little Guide To Happiness*, made it to B&N's top 100 list.

Naselli discovered the Catch 22 of trying to get an agent. "For a new writer it's almost impossible to find a publisher. The publishers usually don't accept unsolicited material unless it's from an agent. Potential agents don't usually talk to anyone unless they have been published with a traditional publisher," he tells *SelfPublisher News*.



The reader for Zondervan rejected his proposal for *If Jesus Is So Darn Loving, Then Why Is My Life In The Crapper?* Naselli says Zondervan is the largest publisher of best selling spiritual books like *A Purpose Driven Life*. "I think it was a dumb move on the reader's part. Heck, the title alone would get people to check out my book, don't

you think?" he asks *SelfPublisher News*. (Please note that the Executive Editor of *SelfPublisher News* contacted Naselli only after seeing the title.)

"I saved the rejection letter so that when I am on Oprah and the NY Times Best Seller list, [the Zondervan reader] can eat crow," Naselli says.

He was told to change the title of his book, for it was too controversial, but Naselli asks, "Controversy sells, right?"

Naselli says, "I have [no good marketing ideas.] If you have any, let me know."

"Everybody asks the question: Why does a loving God allow suffering? We all want to know. I searched the Torah and Gospels for the answers, and I believe I came up with great insights. I used biblical examples and everything. How can Zondervan say my book isn't marketable? Who hasn't asked those questions?" Naselli inquires in closing.

From the book's description on Amazon.com: Have you ever flushed a bug down the toilet? Sometimes it feels like we are the bug, and God has his hand on the flusher.

If Jesus Is So Darn Loving, Then Why Is My Life In The Crapper? © 2005, ISBN 1411631137, Michael Naselli, Lulu Press, Inspirational, www.lulu.com/God

She Is Looking to Build A Loyal Following

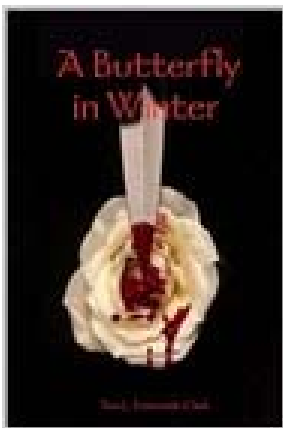
High School English teacher, Tara L. Entwistle-Clark has been writing for twenty-five years, and her hope is to build a loyal following and eventually catch the attention of a traditional publisher.

Entwistle-Clark, a Massachusetts resident, writes about teenage girls struggling to fit in, the agony of transitioning into adulthood and the effects of the seasons on the memory, just to name a few of her chosen topics.

She does not have the time to write and query agents, so her hope "is to build a small audience [herself]." "Hopefully, once I have developed an audience, finding a traditional publisher for the second novel will be easier," Entwistle-Clark tells *SelfPublisher News*.

Entwistle-Clark spent a "few hundred dollars" on marketing, but several people edited her books free of charge.

She finds it frustrating that "no one knows about [her] books." Entwistle-Clark says that setting up book signings is "nearly impossible, due to the fact that the books can't be returned."



However, Entwistle-Clark joined Myspace, which allows her to communicate with teens, her target audience.

Entwistle-Clark tells *SelfPublisher News* that her target audience understands her writing, but the difficulty comes when people who are far removed from high school read her work.

She says, "I believe I am talented, especially in my poetry, and [discovering] me now will make someone very successful. I will also work harder than most people to achieve the highest success, so I will not give up."

Her advice to authors out there everywhere: "Don't take criticism personally."

Appearance Schedule: Barnes and Noble, Millbury, Mass. August (TBD)

A Butterfly in Winter © 2005, ISBN1411626583 (YA Fiction); *August's Daughter* © 2005, ISBN 1411626575 (Poetry); *Agony of Strawberries* © 2005, ISBN 1411631587 (Poetry), Tara L. Entwistle-Clark, Lulu Press, www.taralclark.com

His Thriller Is Worth Watching

Little Rock, Arkansas, gave us a popular president and many predict the next best-selling political fiction-thriller writer. Stephan Zimmermann's latest book, *The Christmas Strike*, is getting the attention of Wall Street investors and politicians everywhere. Zimmermann is also the author of *The Sonja Factor*.

As we reported last month (see SPN, Aug. 2005, Page 10), Joe Shea, Editor-in-Chief of *The American Reporter* wrote, "Stephan Zimmermann ... has written a novel that ... investors will find so uncomfortable they might want to ask Congress to send in the U.S. Army to stop its publication. Its driving momentum and constant surprises will carry even the most illiterate Raging Bull poster swiftly along to the terrifying climax. No American who remembers September 11 will find it the least bit implausible, I warn you."



Self-Published Artists' Network Newsletter

*SPANNing The Gap In The Publishing Industry
By Uniting Self-Published Artists*

*By Supporting Each Other We Help Ourselves
And Promote A Publishing Revolution*

You are invited to access a collection of self-published artists and their works via the SPANN through email. At present, this service is **free** to self-published artists and other subscribers. It is our endeavor to promote the self-published artist and her/his works. If you are a self-published artist, or know someone who is, please feel free to pass along this notice to other interested parties. The newsletter will include some of the following:

- ◆ A list of artists and their works
- ◆ Interviews with self-published artists
- ◆ Comments and suggestions from other artists
- ◆ More

We already have subscribers from across the globe. If you would like to subscribe to this revolutionary newsletter, please send an email to: ladyfogg@twcny.rr.com. Please indicate whether you wish to subscribe as a fan, an artist, or an advertiser.

Even though Zimmermann, a professor of international management and economics has authored two novels, numerous newspaper columns, nonfiction articles and research papers, the critical acclaim that his latest book is achieving is still quite a pleasant surprise.

Zimmermann tells *SelfPublisher News* that his characters are caught-up in “political intrigue set in the recent past, present, or immediate speculative future.” He self-publishes in order to produce a quality product in a short period. He has spent close to \$1,500 to promote his books, and he finds these costs to be the most frustrating aspect of taking matters into his own hands.

He has also found great venues for book signings — bars, pubs and restaurants.

If there is one thing people do not understand about Zimmermann, it is how he can find time to write, and how he can prefer writing to watching football. “[I write] for their ultimate enjoyment,” he tells *SelfPublisher News*.

“Writing is the most satisfying and long-lasting method of self-expression, hopefully extending beyond my own lifespan thoughts and ideas, which I can share with people of future generations.” Zimmermann says. “My daughter may not appreciate what I do, but her children eventually might, as might untold numbers of people who are yet to come. Why do we still read Shakespeare, Plato, and the other greats? Like music that lasts, Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, and the other great masters, writing can contribute to knowledge or pure enjoyment to many future generations, if it’s done well enough and receives enough exposure,” Zimmerman tells *SelfPublisher News*.

The Christmas Strike © 2004, ISBN 1411611632, Stephan Zimmermann, Lulu Press, Political Fiction/Thriller, www.lulu.com/sonja

The Author Who Highlights the Absurd

“I’ve written about one armed cello players, retired cat burglars and polygamous communities,” Mountain View, Calif., author Mike Vogel tells *SelfPublisher News*.

Vogel’s latest novel, *Isn’t That Bigamy* (see SPN, Aug. 2005, Page 11) tells of a man in the witness protection program, who is taken to the wrong town and must marry two women because it is the law.

“It may sound simple, but I enjoy writing about people dealing with the crisis at hand,” Vogel says.

He is employed as a technologist, but he does not view a “normal” job as an obstacle to writing. “My job takes care of mortgage payments, health insurance, car repairs — not to mention groceries. So when I sit down to write, I don’t have to worry if the topic I choose is going to appeal to enough people to sell enough copies in order to take care of those basic necessities,” Vogel tells *SelfPublisher News*.



“I’m a night owl anyway, so I’ll stay up late to get in a few hours of writing each night. If I’m at a really big point in a book, I might also get up early and write for an hour or so before going to work,” Vogel says.

Vogel remembers one of his first writing assignments in the fourth grade. He was to take ten vocabulary words and write a sentence for each one. He handed in a three page story that used all the words and told of a hero escaping from cannibals (*SelfPublisher News* staff would like to read that one).

Vogel wrote four novels while in his twenties that were “sensitive coming-of-age stories full of literary experimentation.” He soon left that genre behind and wrote *Memoir of a Retired Cat Burglar*.

Asked if he has had literary success, Vogel takes it into perspective. “After the literary blogger *POD-dy Mouth* ran a review of my book, I sold books for six days straight. Knowing I reached some new readers made me feel pretty successful,” he tells *SelfPublisher News*.

Vogel sees a “perfect storm brewing” with self-publishing because of “free POD vendors like CafePress and Lulu and the rapidly growing and constantly refining blogosphere, which allows a self-published author to find his audience.” He also says there is a “midlist” that is disappearing. Vogel tells us that a “midlist” consists of authors who fall between the blockbuster sellers and the celebrity or known authors who have a loyal following and are guaranteed to sell X number of books.

“Major publishers are like the Hollywood studios of the book world,” Vogel tells *SelfPublisher News*. “I wanted to go the Sundance route. It’s an uphill battle because many critics still label POD publishers as ‘vanity

presses,' but that will change. Fortunately, readers don't care about those distinctions, only critics do. Readers just want someone they trust to tell them the book is good before they buy it. I know I do."

Vogel asks friends to help him with proofreading "because that's one thing a writer shouldn't attempt alone." However, he is his own book cover designer and marketing maven.

Vogel tells *SelfPublisher News* that someone at William Morris read his query at one point. But he says the title, *Isn't That Bigamy?* is an easy rejection for an agent. "Who's gonna buy a book about polygamy (even though that's not really what it's about)?" Vogel asks.

"Agents have a difficult job trying to predict what will sell to a mass audience. They are essentially content filters," Vogel says. "POD helps authors print and distribute their work, but there still needs to be some content filtering done to help a reader make a purchase. The difference is an agent filters for a publisher, but a literary blogger filters directly for the reader."

Vogel tells *SelfPublisher News*, "Independent newspapers like to think of themselves as an alternative to traditional media outlets, yet they're reviewing the same books by the same conglomerate-owned publishers." He continues, "Reviewers love independent movies and independent music, they just haven't warmed to independent authors."

Blogs have proven a successful marketing tool for Vogel. "If you can get one blogger with a readership of 50 to mention your book and another blogger with a readership of 500 links to that story, you just marketed to 550 people," Vogel tells *SelfPublisher News*. "Now if any of those 550 link to it, you can have exponential growth in awareness. The potential to reach a mass audience by word of mouth is not so out of reach as it might have been even five years ago."

Vogel has maintained his sense of humor. "Since my book is called *Isn't That Bigamy?*, one of my ideas was to stage a fake polygamous wedding. But then I realized that even if I could pull something like that off, people might think my book is somehow advocating a polygamous lifestyle."

"I have a 'Royalty Refund Guarantee,' so if someone buys my book and doesn't like it, I'll refund the money I personally made off the book. Just so you know, it's only ninety cents. I've made it a mission to keep my books under \$10," Vogel says.

Isn't That Bigamy? © 2005, ISBN 1411634241, Mike Vogel, Lulu Press, Crime/Comedy, www.IsntThatBigamy.com

Forget the Surgery, Transitioning Is Difficult

How To Change Your Sex — A Lighthearted Look at the Hardest Thing You'll Ever Do is an amusing and practical guide to everything you need to know for your sex change, according to the author, Lannie Rose, a technical writer based in San Jose (see Review on Page 16).

Unlike many self-published authors who chose to go solo when they could not get the attention of traditional publishers, Rose feels the audience for this book is too small to interest a mainstream publisher.

"Only about two thousand Americans change their sex every year," Rose tells *SelfPublisher News*. "Also, I wanted to make the information available as quickly as possible to those who need it. By self-publishing, I was able to start distributing the books only a few weeks after I finished writing it, instead of waiting years to see it published."



Rose wrote *How To Change Your Sex* using OpenOffice, a totally free office suite available at www.openoffice.org. "OpenOffice has the ability to output Adobe Acrobat (PDF) files, so I designed the book, prepared it exactly the way I wanted it, and sent it to Lulu as a PDF," Rose says. "I designed the cover myself using PaintShop Pro, but I have since learned Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator, and I'm contemplating doing another, better cover."

According to Rose, she spent a few hundred dollars on complimentary copies to seed the market. "Mostly I sent them (signed with a personal note) to surgeons and therapists who deal with transsexual patients."

Although she did not query agents, two did contact her, and Rose is waiting to hear back from one who specializes in gay literature.

Rose proclaims self-publishing and especially working with Lulu "a delightful experience — and absolutely free, besides!"

SelfPublisher News asked Rose what if any of her marketing plans bombed. "When I posted advertisements about the book on Yahoo groups for transgender people, I offered to send the e-book for free to anyone who emailed me and asked for it," she said. Rose thought

that her generosity would encourage those who received the e-books to buy the paperback versions, but after sending out quite a few e-books, she realized they were not generating sales.

“Although my writing style is lighthearted and even humorous, I treat the subject matter quite seriously and respectfully,” Rose tells *SelfPublisher News*. “The thing my readers seem to like most about the book is that it presents a lot of important, practical information in an easy, amusing read, quite unlike other solemn and weighty tomes in the area.”

Rose says that she was told never to end a sentence with a preposition, but she counters, “Prepositions are fine words to end sentences with!”

Lannie Rose lives with her calico cat, Calpurnia in San Jose, Calif. She had her own sex change on Feb. 17, 2003, with Dr. Annette Cholon in Menlo Park. The surgery went fine, and she is delighted to be living as a woman. She would like to find a boyfriend, but that has not happened for her yet. She is, however, thinking about adopting a little girl.

Over sixty of her essays and stories have appeared in the e-zine *Transgender Forum* (www.tgforum.com). Two of her essays were incorporated into the Dennis Johnston Award-winning play *The Naked I: Monologues from Beyond the Binary* by Tobias K. Davis. Her memoir *Dirty Panties and Other Thrilling Tales of My Sex Change* is currently being represented by an agent who is seeking a publisher.

How To Change Your Sex — A Lighthearted Look at the Hardest Thing You'll Ever Do © 2004, ISBN 1411639561, Lannie Rose, Lulu Press, Self-help, www.elainerose.com

Australian Minister Tells A Disturbing Tale

Christian Minister Ian Krishna Claridge, who hails from Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, finds being a terrible insomniac conducive to moonlighting as a writer if you will pardon the pun. His lack of sleep has enabled him to write seven novels and one anthology of short stories about drama, horror, romance, new age and weird love. Claridge has won three literary awards for his writing.

His latest book, *Day of Rest* is a first person narrative of one man's uneasy childhood, raised by a drug addicted mother and an abusive and alcoholic father. *Day of Rest* recounts his troubled youth, his own drug addiction and his life on the mean streets. It speaks of murder and prison. It also reveals the woman who loved him through it all, thereby saving his soul.

“I am a self-motivated kind of guy that doesn't like putting control of my destiny in others' fickle hands,” Claridge tells *SelfPublisher News*, which explains his decision to self-publish and edit, design and market his books.

He may have won awards, but no agents are willing to take him on as a client. *SelfPublisher News* thinks that a Christian minister who writes horror stories would be a marvelous hook.

Claridge has published one book through an Aussie Publisher, www.smilingpolitely.com.au. “They are a great bunch of guys, and they are still keeping in contact with me and helping me in my self-publishing ventures,” Claridge says. “My book can be bought in a book chain in Oz.”

“I don't write for an audience, but for myself. If I stay true to myself, I have done what I set out to do. If I write to please a mass audience, I have lost part of my soul and self-respect,” Claridge tells *SelfPublisher News*.

“As a Christian minister, I am now also writing books on the Christian faith and what I have learned helping others,” Claridge adds.

Day of Rest © 2005, ISBN 1411639610, Ian Krishna Claridge, Lulu Press, Drama, www.lulu.com/ian-claridge

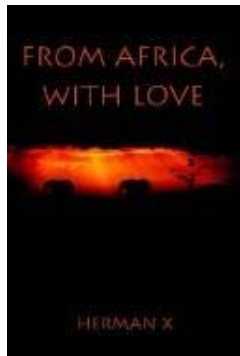


Achieving the American Dream Through Words

Born in the African Savanah, Herman Yenwo, tells his own story of emerging from an impoverished childhood and achieving the American dream in *From Africa With Love*.

From Africa With Love chronicles the biography of an illegitimate young boy, who is deeply affected by the death of his beloved Grandpa Michael. He is moved abroad to live with a hopeless stepfather, and he rejects this new environment, which tortures his conscience as he transfers from one school to another. He struggles hard and is rescued by his favorite Uncle Ivo, who sends him overseas where he focuses on education and excels.

Yenwo, who writes under the pseudonym, Herman X, now lives in Orlando, Fla., and works as a webmaster.



He has written five books including *From Africa With Love*, exploring the genres of autobiography, education, humanities, children's stories and humor

"I write from the heart, like a story teller," Yenwo tells *SelfPublisher News*. "I was trained by British missionaries to write a bit in the Queen's English."

From Africa With Love: The Autobiography of Herman X ©

2004, ISBN 1413718698, Herman Yenwo, Lulu Press, Autobiography, www.lulu.com/LaughTillUCry

Tale Takes 1,236 Hours and Assists Charities

Emel Kay is a software engineer in La Jolla, Calif., who has written around five letters to get out of parking or speeding tickets — all of which worked! Kay has also written and illustrated two children's books, which she used to teach her daughters to read and write before the age of two.

Her latest book *KeAloha — The Keeper* tells the story of a young girl who is hurled into the dark, exciting world of Hawaii's gods. Here, she learns what it means to be and live like a Hawaiian, by participating in exciting interactive displays of their history, beliefs and social customs. In the end, she learns the most valuable lesson of all — how to love.

Kay tells *SelfPublisher News* that *KeAloha — The Keeper* took her "exactly 1,236 hours to write and revise three times."

She considers her books to be "fun tools for learning."

Although Kay has managed the impossible by getting her books stocked in brick-and-mortar bookstores in La Jolla and San Diego, Kay says her books have not achieved true financial success. "If you take the amount of money earned on the book and divide it by the number of hours invested, I'm working for a fraction of a cent per hour," Kay tells *SelfPublisher News*. "However, if you focus on the book's exposure (given that it is self-published and I am working on a \$5 budget), one would say, [it has achieved financial success] since it is already being stocked in major bookstores and likely to have an endorsement or two before the end of summer [2005]," Kay says.

Amazingly, Kay has spent less than \$5 to promote her book, and that was used to purchase card stock paper at Walmart for bookmarks and stamps to send out press releases.

KeAloha also generates revenue for various charities in San Diego.

Waimea Williams, Senior Editor at Kamehameha Schools Press encouraged Kay to self-publish after reading one of her submitted manuscripts, she tells *SelfPublisher News*. "She suggested that by self-publishing, I could generate interest in my topic at the same time I am shopping around for the right publisher, or while I wait for Kamehameha Schools Press to consider my manuscript," she says.



"Being a successful software engineer, my motivation is not fame, money or recognition as a writer. It is simply to generate American interest in the Hawaiian people, and thus help full-blooded Hawaiians avoid predicted extinction," Kay says.

"Friends and family think I will succeed because I'm friendly and I never give up," Kay says.

Appearances: All of the book signings listed below are charitable events at which Kay will host a hula show and donate all book proceeds to the designated charity.

Sept. 3 & 4, 11:00 am – 4:00 pm, E Hula Mau at the Long Beach Convention Center, 300 East Ocean Boulevard, Long Beach, CA 90802. Books will be available for a 25% discount and proceeds will be donated to Na Mamo — The Young Hawaiians of California.

Nov. 5, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm, Borders Bookstore, Paradise Valley, 4555 East Cactus Road., Phoenix, AZ 85032.

Nov. 6, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm, Borders Books & Café, Park Place Mall, 5870 East Broadway, Tucson, AZ 85749.

KeAloha — The Keeper © 2005, ISBN 1411626753, Emel Kay, Lulu Press, YA Action/Fantasy, <http://kealoha-hi.tripod.com/>

Trends

Women Double Their Share According to Study

Bestselling novels by male authors like Dan Brown and Stephen King are heading for extinction, according to a new study which reveals that writers like J.K. Rowling and Danielle Steel have helped women double their share of number one bestsellers over the last 20 years.

The study was conducted by Lulu as part of a drive to boost the share of books by women, which make up its own list of bestsellers. “Only 22 of our own 100 bestsellers have women as the only or main author,” confesses Bob Young, CEO of Lulu, www.lulu.com, (see Lulu Profile on Page 3). “We’d like to see that figure grow.”

The study examined the 354 novels to have topped the hardback fiction section of the world-famous New York Times Bestseller List during the 50 years from 1955–2004.

The female share of number one bestsellers over the first decade of the study (1955–1964) was 17.8%, and still just 23.8% as recently as the 1980s — compared to 46% over the last decade (1995–2004), and 50% so far this year. Books by women fill four of the five top places in the current New York Times Hardback Fiction Bestseller List.

Thanks to classic writers like Jane Austen and the Bronte sisters, the novel itself is sometimes considered a female literary form. Yet, barely 50 years ago, according to the Lulu study, women novelists went four straight years (1958–61) without a single number one bestseller. There were twelve individual years within the study, when women writers were nowhere to be found. However, in 1999, the same year that J.K. Rowling first made the list, women writers published nine out of twelve of that year’s number one bestsellers. This was a record 67% share. In fact, the first three *Harry Potter* books each topped the list between June and September 1999.

The New York Times responded to this unprecedented feat by restructuring the classification system. Just before the publication of the fourth *Harry Potter* book in 2002, the Times established a separate children’s fiction list, for the apparent purpose of excluding Rowling from the main, adult list, even though many realized that most of her readers were adults. The fourth and fifth *Harry Potter* books topped the children’s list, as the recently released sixth one is expected to do.

The year 2002 saw the largest number of women writers, nine in all, top the list, although their books still

comprised just 43% of the year’s top bestsellers. This year has seen 10 number ones so far, of which five have been by women, putting women on course to claim a 50% share of the list.

If the present trend continues, bestsellers by women will imminently overtake those by men, before going on to make male bestsellers extinct, say some.

“Once women writers took on male pen names, like George Eliot, whose real name was Mary Ann Evans,” says Young. “Before long, male writers may have to adopt female pen-names. The Dan Brown of the future will become Danielle while the Stephen King will be Stephanie.”

A woman topped the first New York Times Bestseller List (Aug. 9, 1942) with *And Now Tomorrow* by Rachel Field. The current number one bestseller is *Eleven On Top* by Janet Evanovich.

Both the youngest and oldest writers to have topped the list during the 50 year-period of the study were female. Françoise Sagan was only 20 when *Bonjour Tristesse* reached number one in 1955 and just 19 when it first appeared in French. Rowling was the youngest solo author to hit number one in the latter 25 years (1980–2004) when she first hit number one in 1999 at age 34.

Agatha Christie was the oldest author to top the list. She would have been 86 when her novel, *Sleeping Murderer*, reached number one in 1976. Too bad she died earlier that year.

The woman to have written the most number one bestsellers during the period studied is Danielle Steel with 26 on the list. Although Stephen King has managed 27, Steel has a better bestseller-per-year average of 1.24, since first topping the list in 1984 with her novel, *Full Circle*, compared to a 1.04 average by King, since publishing his first number one bestseller in 1979 — *Carrie*, which his wife pulled out of the trash and sent to five publishers. For more information about the study: www.lulu.com.

Do you want *SelfPublisher News* to consider reviewing your book? Send a printed copy to:

**Milton Stern, Executive Editor
SelfPublisher News
1733 B Newton ST NW
Washington DC 20010**

Go to www.selfpublishernews.com for book submission guidelines.

In Brief

Submissions for Fantasy Short Stories

Heliand Publishing Corporation is interested in promoting the literary aspect of fantasy writing. Christopher Anderson, President of Heliand Publishing, said, "Fantasy is such an amazing genre and deserves to be respected with other literary genres." Heliand Publishing will be posting original work of authors on their website. Readers will be able to make comments and review submissions, and each author will be given a Heliand Publishing email address. In 2006, Heliand will publish the best of the stories in an anthology. For more information: www.heliandpublishing.com

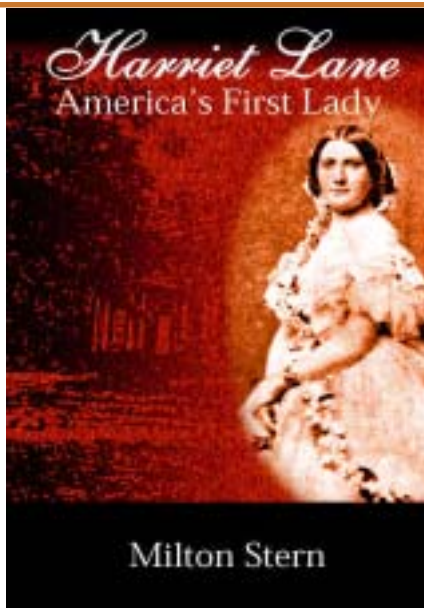
Unpublished Underground's Latest Weapon

A new gallery has joined the artistic community of Williamsburg, Brooklyn, with a unique vision — help the unpublished writer. Unpublished Underground, LLC, opened its doors in May 2005 to writers of all genres seeking another avenue in which to attain invaluable exposure. Located on 65 Hope St., the gallery binds and displays unpublished material, complete with a cover-page synopsis and author biography. The gallery also offers seating to those who wish to relax while discovering unknown talent. Unpublished Underground's monthly showcases are free to the general public and special invitations are extended to members of the NYC literary community, including newspapers, magazines, e-Zines, publishers and agents — all in an effort to get its unpublished writers closer to publication. Unpublished Underground is operated by Bryan Reilly, a writer who understands

the trials and tribulations of his fellow scribes. "There are many obstacles in the path of the unpublished writer," Reilly said. "Many publishers won't read a submission if it's not represented by an agent while others either have a full docket of authors or haven't the time to read through the submissions in their backlog. Unpublished Underground's intention is to level the playing field." Mr. Reilly proposes to level the playing field by offering a brick-and-mortar space in which unpublished material can speak to members of the literary community in a more intimate manner. His catered monthly showcases celebrate the art of writing while offering complimentary copies of the gallery's bound material to any would-be publisher. For more information: www.unpublishedunderground.com. *NOTE: Look for an exclusive interview with Bryan Reilly in the October issue of SelfPublisher News.*

Harry Potter Flattens Forests

According to CNN, 9,000,000 copies of the latest *Harry Potter* book were sold in the first 24 hours of its release. Considering it takes approximately 24 trees to make one ton of uncoated virgin paper, that means that more than 300,000 trees were needed just to print the number of the latest *Harry Potter* book sold in 24 hours. Publishers are able to use 100% recycled paper in the book making process, and Canadian publisher Raincoast Books did use recycled paper in its printing of *Harry Potter Order of the Phoenix*. There is reluctance in the industry to take this step because of the higher costs, which they would have to absorb according to many publishers.



The First Biography of the Most Fabulous First Lady

Harriet Lane was the first White House Hostess to be called "First Lady," and she was the most admired and powerful woman of her time.

Harriet Lane, America's First Lady is the only biography of the most fabulous First Lady, who set fashion trends, pushed legislation through Congress, and established the first pediatric teaching hospital in the country. And her taste in decorating and art was not bad either! Just ask the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Harriet Lane, America's First Lady © 2005, ISBN 1-4116-2608-7, by Milton Stern, is available at all online book-sellers. www.harriettlane.net

Lahm continued from Page 1

He previously worked within the media as a Director of Market Research with a top-50 metro area newspaper, where he was responsible for fostering economic development initiatives and disseminating information to a variety of business and community organizations, including major retailers such as Circuit City, WalMart and Macy's. Previously, he was Director of Account Service with a full-service advertising agency in servicing high technology markets; a product specialist representing General Electric's Lexan Line; and Marketing Manager for a Los Angeles-based computer peripherals manufacturer and distributor.

While attending graduate school, he provided consulting services for the very faculty members who, on other days, were his professors. He also served as a management consultant and change agent, assisting the Continuing Education Division to "reinvent" its corporate training business. Lahm's work was honored when he received the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies 2000 Award for Distinguished Contribution to Research for his doctoral dissertation on the role of interpersonal "chemistry" in hiring.

Among other sources, he has been previously recognized in several *Who's Who* publications, including *Who's Who in Advertising*, *Who's Who in the South and Southwest*, *Who's Who Among Young American Professionals*, and *Who's Who Worldwide*.

About ArticlesontheWeb.com

Lahm is the founder of ArticlesontheWeb.com (www.ArticlesontheWeb.com), a general interest site aimed at readers and writers. It accepts published material on any topic, including personal finance, prosperity, careers, business opportunities, and contemporary issues such as fashion, travel, entertainment, and office communications. ArticlesontheWeb also seeks out and shares resources that may be helpful to both their readers and contributors.

"I started [ArticlesontheWeb] to serve as a publishing outlet for things I may want to write myself, and recognizing content is king; I also wanted to collect and publish the writings of other authors," Lahm tells

SelfPublisher News. "I felt it was important to create a way for me as a Web-developer to collect as much content as possible."

"We [actually] look at submissions, and if the article fits our mission we are certainly glad to have it," he says. "We are not looking to be censors. We are mainly concerned about the fact that some people will submit content that is junk [spam] or porn or whatever. This is why we don't allow automatic submissions. This is not a place for 'advatorials,' where it looks like editorial copy but is just a masked advertisement. [We have] no problem with how-to articles, no problem with someone telling people to go to their websites for more information. Most of these [article publication] sites have a similar philosophy. This is not advertising space; this is editorial space," Lahm tells *SelfPublisher News*.

There is no cost for posting articles, and downloading of articles is de-

pendent on the rights as they are submitted by the authors. "The site uses a standard authors' box — if you want to use this, here are the rules, and this is the license for reproduction," Lahm says. "Someone can come to my site and take that same license [if it is given by the author] and publish it elsewhere."

Lahm says his site and others like it enable writers to establish names for themselves. "Publishing on the Internet 'democratizes' the process, so that any author who has anything to say has an outlet," he says.

Music and video have also embraced digital technology for distribution even though "it has not happened to the degree that print content has accomplished this, and now [mainstream traditional] publishing is getting into the fray," Lahm continues. "Now you can say go to my site, hear my music, see my product, hear my commentary and now read [all about] it also." Lahm says the Internet has allowed everyone who has something to say artistically, graphically or musically or literally to express himself.

ArticlesontheWeb (and in general, web-based publishing), according to Lahm, gives authors the fastest way to establish a presence and reach a worldwide audience, by enabling authors "to publish content and enabling people to read that content."

'Quit begging — being rejected — and start blogging, uploading, submitting to other sites, speaking, and otherwise developing your own platform for the distribution of your own thoughts as well as those of others with whom you might choose to collaborate.'

“Fortunately or unfortunately publishing is a for-profit industry, which has caused the players within it to become bureaucratic,” Lahm says. “When you start a business, you only have rules you have to live with, and you answer to yourself. Once you take on an employee and add more and more [staff], you need new rules, and on and on,” with manuals and rulebooks. The rulebooks become gigantic — “volumes of personnel, operations, and policy manuals as well as cultural expectations evolve.” Lahm says that this is what has happened with the large publishing houses as they make decisions by committee, and they need a large number of sales to support their large overhead. Selling hundreds of copies of a title will not pay the bills. “They cannot afford this,” Lahm says.

Lahm goes on to say that many authors have been rejected many times only to go on and sell millions of copies of their books, when they are finally picked up. He does not fault the large publishing houses. “Publishing houses must have those processes. They cannot manage a complex global business environment without rules to govern the process, and this has made them [appear] insensitive, cold-hearted and ineffective, [but] this is the nature of a large business,” Lahm says.

“The author [whose intention is to write for a living] has to recognize that his or her personal goal is to make money. Having your own control over your own content and your own distribution channels [is key],” Lahm

says. “This does not work for everyone, and authors need to recognize their markets. Thinking ‘outside-the-box’ can be helpful, they can develop an audience through blogs, websites, articles, posting their own content, short stories, essays, monographs, songs, cartoons, etc.,” he tells *SelfPublisher News*.

If there happens to be an audience, an author will develop a following, and eventually the author will be noticed — possibly by a traditional publisher. “And, digital content has enabled people to eliminate the costs of printing. [Content] is created on a desktop computer — not like self-published authors in the past,” Lahm says. “Constraints of space, how many pages will fit on a press sheet, binding and finishing, an economical print quantity, these all vanish — ‘poof,’ they’re gone.”

Lahm says, “Articles are reviewed on our end, and we copy-edit. I outsource work, and I [presently] have eight different websites.”

Every author should have his or her own website or even multiple sites. “Quit begging — being rejected — and start blogging, uploading, submitting to other sites, speaking, and otherwise developing your own platform for the distribution of your own thoughts as well as those of others with whom you might choose to collaborate.” This is the “evolution of helpless author to empowered publisher!” Lahm tells *SelfPublisher News*.

In Brief

Authors Share Free Marketing Expertise

The book industry reports that 78% of the titles published come from small/self-publishers. With combined annual revenues of less than \$50 million. These publishers have limited publicity budgets and their authors are expected to do their own promotion. Now authors with books to promote may ask questions of nearly 150 author experts whose specialties run the gamut from romance to foot surgery. Assembled from the thousands of subscribers to *Book Promotion Newsletter*, the experts include authors, editors, book reviewers, book coaches, ghostwriters, publicists and publishers. This free service is hosted by Maureen McMahon (www.maureenmcmahon.com), author of romantic suspense novels, *Return of the Gulls*, *Shadows in the Mists* and others, and Francine Silverman, author of *Book Marketing from A-Z*, a compilation of the best marketing strategies of 325 authors. For more information: www.bookpromotionnewsletter.com or

www.maureenmcmahon.com. *NOTE: Look for an exclusive interview with Francine Silverman in the October issue of SelfPublisher News.*

Self-published Author and Journalist Dies

Al Aronowitz, a rock journalist, who introduced Bob Dylan to the Beatles, died Monday, August 1, 2005. He was 77. In 1959, while working at the New York Post, Aronowitz wrote a 12-part series on the “beat” movement. In reporting the series, he befriended Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac. The pieces have been described as early examples of participatory journalism. In 1964, Aronowitz was covering the Beatles for the *Saturday Evening Post* and introduced Dylan to them after claiming the songwriter wrote “Mr. Tambourine Man” in the journalist’s kitchen. Aronowitz self-published two books, *Bob Dylan and the Beatles* and *Bobby Darin Was a Friend of Mine*. He was writing, *Mick and Miles*, about Mick Jagger and Miles Davis, when he died.

Book Reviews

From Alistair to Zelda and Everything in the Middle

By Milton Stern

How to Change Your Sex — A Light-hearted Look at the Hardest Thing You'll Ever Do © 2004, ISBN 1411639561, Lannie Rose, Lulu Press, Self-Help, www.elainerose.com

“So you want to change your sex? It’s a good idea — if you happen to have been born transsexual; that is, if the sex between your legs doesn’t match the gender in your heart.” That is how Lannie Rose begins in *How to Change Your Sex — A Light-hearted Look at the Hardest Thing You’ll Ever Do*.

Most people who know of someone who is transsexual want to learn all about the Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS). But after reading Rose’s book, one realizes that there is much more to changing one’s sex than SRS. Rose, who underwent SRS in 2003, covers it all from making the decision to making the transition to making it work. The reader soon learns that oftentimes, transsexual people elect not to have the surgery at all, and the surgery is the final step in a long, difficult and exciting process.

In *How to Change Your Sex*, the reader takes the journey from changing one’s wardrobe to changing one’s name. Rose gives a first-hand account of every aspect of changing one’s sex. She deals with finding the right therapist, telling family and friends, relations with co-workers, which bathroom to use, finding a network of friends, where to go out, getting healthy, sex, the surgery and follow-up, and old age. There is a glossary of terms and a helpful list of recommended reading materials, too. Each issue is covered extensively, and Rose reminds the reader that no two situations are ever alike.

Refreshingly, Rose also empathizes with the families of transsexual people. She reminds transsexual individuals that the people in their lives are also dealing with this life altering issue and that they need to be patient with their friends and loved ones as this will affect everyone. Rose is also a realist, reminding her audience that some people may never be able to handle knowing a loved-one is transsexual. As a result, the transsexual person learns to look both inwardly and outwardly when making the transition.

Rose makes good use of humor to convey her message about being healthy and going through the process in a

careful and considerate fashion, and her style is easy to read. One will be laughing at Rose’s jokes one minute and wide-eyed at Rose’s revelations the next. The book is quite informative and fascinating and it has been passed along to his friends.

However, there is one piece of advice that is disturbing and out of place considering Rose’s entire section devoted to getting healthy by overcoming addictions and other unhealthy habits, such as overeating and lack of exercise. She advocates the use of alcohol and drugs (presumably legal drugs) to loosen one’s inhibitions in the section in the first half of the book titled, *Sex, Part 1*:

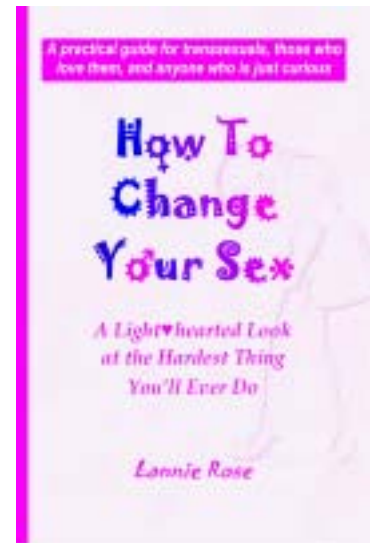
“The possibilities of what may turn you on sexually are endless ... How do you know where your true sexual interests lie? My advice is to experiment. Try as many things as possible; see what works for you and what doesn’t. Alcohol and drugs (not that I would ever advocate illegal narcotics, mind you!) can be very useful in helping you loosen your inhibitions during your experimental phase.”

Later in the book, in the section titled, *Getting Healthy*, she says:

“You can stop smoking. You can stop drinking. You can stop taking drugs. It may be very difficult for you to do, but the process is straight-forward ... Decide that today will be the last day that you smoke, drink and take drugs. Have a binge today if you like. Just don’t kill yourself.”

One should not be encouraged to “have a binge,” and the advice in both sections is questionable and somewhat contradictory. Rose does tell the reader in the beginning that she is not a licensed therapist, and it becomes painfully obvious in the above-mentioned quotes.

Anyone reading this book should be made aware of the dangers of drugs and alcohol when it comes to any issues dealing with sex, gender and personal safety. Transsexual people are often the target of violence, as



Rose reminds the reader, and drugs and alcohol can make one even more vulnerable.

How to Change Your Sex is a thorough and thought-provoking narrative on the hardest thing anyone would ever consider doing. Rose's book is not only suggested reading for transsexuals, it should be on the night stand of anyone who loves someone who is considering changing his or her sex or who is just curious.

SelfPublisher News recommends *How to Change Your Sex – A Light-hearted Look at the Hardest Thing You'll Ever Do* for open-minded adults and as a gift for anyone who is dealing with gender issues whether personally or with a loved one.



SelfPublisher News gives it 4 pens.

Advice: Revise or lose the section on drugs and binges, and it will get five pens!

Meerkats Rule!

By Sharon Grove Gillespie

Meerkat's Safari © 2004, ISBN 1413466524, Claudia Graziano (Author), Michelle Barbera (Illustrator), Children, Xlibris

Claudia Graziano's story, *Meerkat's Safari*, illustrated by the marvelous artwork of Michelle Barbera, makes for a short read that is long on appeal. Dedicated to "the animals of the world," *Safari* is an escorted "photo" safari of a variety of animals, hosted by a meerkat.

First, I need to say: I love this book! Second, as a disclaimer, I need to tell you that I regard meerkats as second only to otters as the most cute, playful, lovable critters in the animal realm.

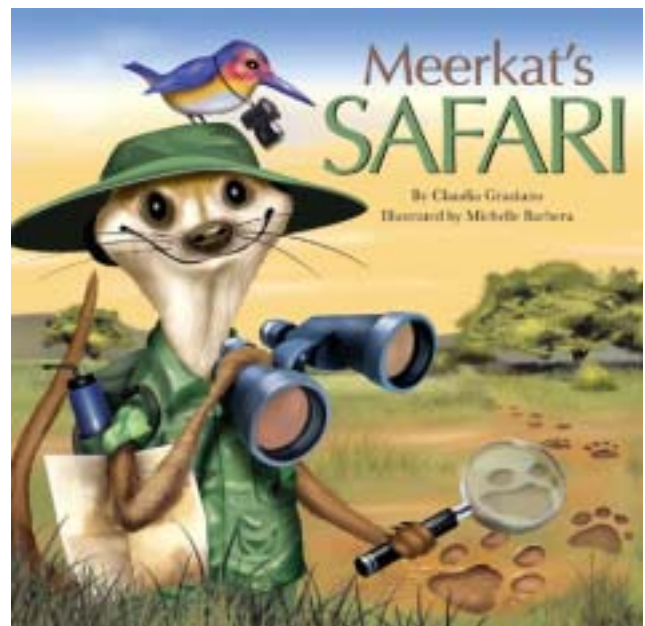
You don't know what a meerkat is? This is from the book's website at www.meerkatsadventures.com/WhatsaMeerkat.html:

Meerkats are small furry creatures that live mostly in South Africa. Although the name 'meerkat' means 'lake cat' in Afrikaans, a language spoken in South Africa, meerkats aren't really cats at all. Meerkats are more like mongooses, only much craftier and cuter.

In fact, meerkats are known for their smarts. Not only can we stand on our hind legs to get a good look around when we need to, but we know how to dig underground tunnels with lots of entrances and exits. We also know how to warn our friends and family when predators are near, and we're good at teaching younger meerkats how to dig and hunt.

We're social, playful animals and we work well as a team. The black fur around our eyes is like a pair of sunglasses — it helps us see better on bright, sunny days.

Before each animal is introduced, a clue is given with words and footprints, offering a chance to guess the guest. Young meerkats — I mean children — will be enchanted by the colorful and innovative artwork. Imagine a giraffe with a clothespin on its nose, or elephants in party hats. Beginning to intermediate read-



ers will find much of the text easy to read, with a little help in sounding out some of the animal names and more complex words such as "feisty" and "colonies." Young learners and those of all ages who appreciate creative artwork will enjoy this book.

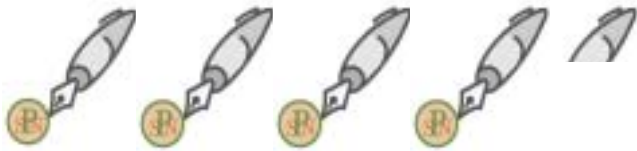
The illustrator, Michelle Barbera, has quite a talent for rendering the fanciful side of the animal kingdom. A trip to her website at www.barberaillustration.com confirms that she is no one-trick pony. (Pardon the animal pun!). From a pensive cello, to frightened bowling pins, her work reflects an appealing style that provided just the right touch to Meerkat's Safari.

WHAT WORKED: The combination of the simple text with the elaborate illustrations is a great idea. Having the animals sporting sunglasses, party hats, etc., makes the book even more joyful to read. Adults reading this

book to their child will have a number of opportunities to discuss the animal facts as well as the fantasies. Why would a giraffe wear a clothespin on its nose? Why to keep the sand and dirt out, of course!

WHAT DIDN'T: The two-page spread on the footprints/tracks of the animals seemed a bit "long" and might need a bit of rethinking or reformatting. My biggest criticism? The book is too short! More animals, please!

IN THE END: Both the author's and the illustrator's affection for animals comes shining through in this book. I hope that they continue to work together and create a series of books as fun for kids as this one is.



SelfPublisher News gives it 4.5 pens.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Claudia Graziano is a freelance writer and editor living in San Francisco. This is her first children's book.

Subscribe to SelfPublisher News

SelfPublisher News is the industry source for discovering the next hot selling author. No more reading query after query, proposal after proposal or listening to pitch after pitch.

SelfPublisher News is your link to the latest undiscovered writers, who will shape the book publishing business for years to come.

SelfPublisher News is published monthly for only \$10 for one year (12 issues). Conveniently delivered to your email box once a month in PDF format. Subscriptions are available by clicking on the "PayPal" button at www.selfpublishernews.com.

Next Month, SelfPublisher News reviews:

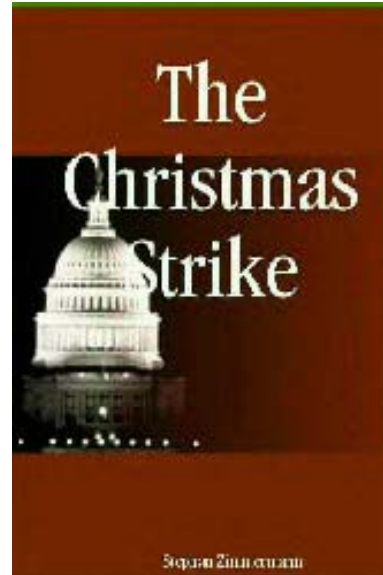
The Christmas Strike

© 2004, ISBN 1411611632

Stephan Zimmermann

Lulu Press, Political Fiction/Thriller

www.lulu.com/sonja



Phoenix Tales: Stories of Death & Life

© 2005, ISBN 1411620356

Gregory Bernard Banks

Dark Fantasy/Science Fiction

Young Adult

www.wheelmansplace.com/

