

The Free Lancer

October 2010

The Newsletter of the Seattle Free Lances Professional Writers Association
since 1921

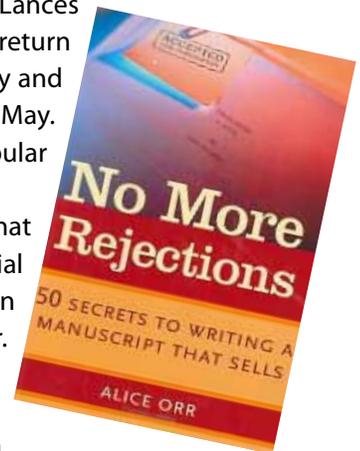
October Program

Main Character Momentum: How to Create a Protagonist with Agent-Editor Appeal



Please join us Tuesday, October 4 as Seattle Free Lances welcomes publishing industry expert **Alice Orr** for a return engagement. Many of you will remember Alice's lively and informative presentation at our dinner meeting last May. Alice will be back again to conduct one of her popular writing workshops.

Literary agents and book editors search for stories that will satisfy a wide readership. Successful commercial novels have one very important quality in common—an exceptionally strong and well written main character. In this seminar, long-time publishing professional Alice Orr will guide you toward creating such a character in your work. This is a presentation you won't want to miss!



To learn more about Alice, visit www.aliceorrseminars.net.

Upcoming Speakers:

- ➔ November 2: **Panel Discussion** — Distribution & Marketing
- ➔ December 7: **Ray Pfortner**, photographer and writer
- ➔ January 4: **The Interfaith Amigos**, *New York Times* Best-Selling authors

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The President's Corner

The Times They are A-changin'

By Jennifer McCord

Thirty years ago this month, I began my work in the bookselling world. I always take a moment to look back and think about my first days of work. I remember the feelings of anxiety as I started my new job as bookstore manager--I felt young to be doing a manager job and wondered how the employees would feel. I still think of that first day on the job and working in the store. Instead of feeling absolutely exhausted by the experience, though I was tired, I knew I had come home to something. In those days, keeping track of books sold required me to memorize the store layout, the publishers, the authors, the covers, and then to write down every book we sold and make a decision the next day about what to order. There were no computers then, so my visual memory was put to use in short order.

The book retail and publishing world has changed. Technology for the printed word has arrived. The computer in most retail bookstores now captures the inventory. Books are ordered in over the computer. Readers order their books through their own computer to be delivered directly to their place of business or home. Reading books can be a different experience. Books are recorded to be listened through audio cd's or smart phones or iphones. The books themselves can down loaded into a specially designed hand held computer called an e-reader. It is amazing to me as I think about hauling up boxes of books to unpack and shelve.

Writing too has changed from typewriter to computer. Nowadays more and more material is submitted online and finished manuscripts often are uploaded to a publisher site to be downloaded into an editor's computer. Who writes has changed too. Years ago, executives relied on a team of assistants to type up letters, inventory spreadsheets etc. Today everyone has

to be able to type somewhere either on a computer or text message on a cell phone. Who would have believed it if someone had told me in high school that I would be typing on a phone.

Regardless of all of the evolution in the book business and publishing world, I was reminded again about what still matters. I was looking through some old SFL files

the other day and ran across two information flyers. In one of the flyers, the SFL purpose was defined as: to expand members' productivity; improve craftsmanship and style; and increase sales; to encourage professionals to find new ways to work with agents, self-publish and handle contract negotiations. The next flyer said: to learn about the latest writing trends and markets, improve skills, increase sales and offer support to members. The introduction in both of the flyers also mentioned that our monthly meetings are times to just "talk shop" with other writers. Talking shop to other writer's still makes the world go around.

See you soon!



September Program

Three of the Seattle7Writers Connect with SFL

By Leslie A. Engel

The Seattle Free Lances had a great start to the 2010-11 season! During the September presentation, three members of the Seattle7Writers group, Jennie Shortridge, Kit Bakke, and Erica Bauermeister took turns and spoke about their own writing lives as well as their collective outreach to the local literary community. They all spoke with great enthusiasm for the Seattle7Writers and its two-fold mission: to support local writers and readers and do good works for the literary community, but the group didn't start out that way.

Jeanie Shortridge began the presentation by explaining how the Seattle7Writers started. When she and other founding member Garth Stein got together once a week to meet for coffee and discuss topics relevant to published writers, the discussions usually turned into complaints about the business side of writing, like the typical disagreements with editors or marketing obstacles. Soon other authors were invited to join and the beverage of choice changed from coffee to wine. Shortridge discussed her own leap into the world of writing. She was writing freelance magazine articles when she decided to try and write a novel, which was rejected, but through perseverance and an internship with a literary agent, she was offered representation for her second attempt. She credits her success to her desire to learn everything she could about the world of publishing during this time. She emphasized, "It sounds easy, but it was a lot of hard work." Shortridge has published four novels and the most recent one, *When She Flew*, is now a National Bestseller.

Kit Bakke is no stranger to SFL. She last spoke at the September 2008 SFL meeting about her book *Miss Alcott's E-mail*. During this presentation, Kit Bakke, explained how the Seattle7Writers got its name. Even though there are at times more than seven members, the name Seattle7Writers is an intentional reference to the Seattle Liberation Front (known as the Seattle Seven), the antiwar group of the Vietnam era. Bakke, having ties to the Vietnam antiwar movement herself, explained that the "Seattle7Writers has a clear mission. After getting together for about a year and complaining we actually started to talk about ways in which we could do good for the literary community and raise money for literacy, specifically programs that center on education, reading and writing."

Bakke talked about one of the programs that the Seattle7Writers helps to support, which is the Seattle Arts and Lectures' Writers in the Schools program (WITS). This program puts local published writers into Seattle area schools to ignite interest and develop skills in reading and writing for students from elementary to high school.

Erica Bauermeister joined the Seattle7Writers a year after it was formed and joked that she missed out on the year of complaining and got right to work. Shortridge invited her to join the group and admits when she joined she knew nothing about the publishing business. She just had boxes and boxes of rejection letters and a desire to gain enough distance from them so that she could move forward. While her book, *The School of Essential Ingredients*, was the easiest delivery of a book, she explained that what follows is really an ordeal

that she was unprepared for. She emphasized that it is important to have support in your writing life. She added, while the community outreach is essential to the our group, they have back tracked and have implemented traditional writing group practices into their routine and write for part of the time they spend together as a group.

Bauermeister talked about another program that the Seattle7Writers likes to support, Pocket Libraries, which provides free access to books in programs such as, Treehouse for Kids (for children in foster care), ROOTS (a shelter for homeless young adults) and the Pat Graney Organization (for the women's release program). Seattle7Writers has donated over 1,500 books to these and other programs so far in 2010 and hopes to donate a total of 2000 books by the end of the year. For more information or to donate books: info@seattle7writers.org

During the presentation, Shortridge, Bakke, and Bauermeister spoke about the benefit for literacy that the Seattle7Writers are spearheading in October for the Arts Crush fall festival. The Novel Live! will be presented at the Richard Hugo House October 11-16, 2010. For the first time ever, 36 Pacific Northwest authors will collectively write a novel in front of a live audience in just six days. Upon completion of the novel on Saturday, October 16, it will be published and available for purchase as an e-book in all formats. Proceeds will be donated to Writers in the School via Seattle7Writers. For more information: <http://thenovellive.org>

Which E-Book Reader for Christmas?

By Mark Hennon

First of a three-part series.

Nook, Kindle, iPad, or Reader? Which of the Big Four e-book readers to get for Christmas? Wait, there's the \$129 Kobo from Borders, too – rumored to be headed for \$99 by Christmas.

But they're all different, and some can't use each other's books, so they each have different sets of available titles, and they connect to the electronic bookstore in different ways, and some use electronic ink and others are backlit – and what's this I hear about the iPhone being the most popular e-book reader, anyway? It's a *cellphone!*

You say the Nook runs on my PC – the Kindle, too? Are you sure they can run on my Mac? Hold on, those are computers! How do I use ADE to transfer my DRM? Isn't there a price war, too?

It's all so confusing. . . maybe I should just wait for Easter!

LOL. It is *crazy* out there. What was going to be a simple review has ballooned into a great mass o' data that only a lighthearted approach can master. So this month, we look at the Barnes & Noble Nook and the Apple iPad, next month the Amazon Kindle and Sony Reader, and for December an overall roundup and recommendations.

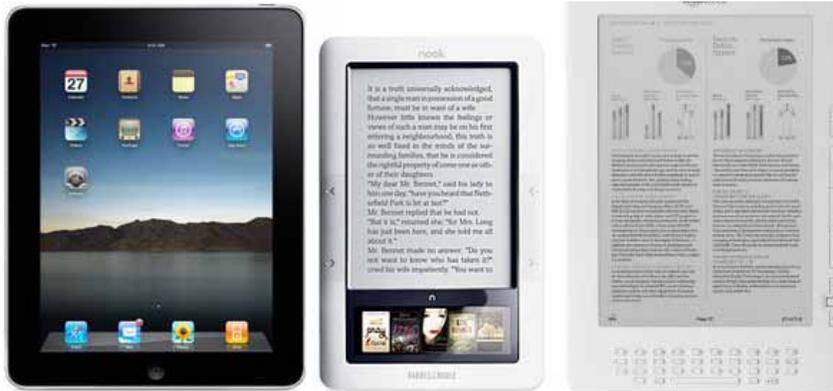
Library and reading ease are important

The Nook and Kindle use "electronic ink," which requires external lighting, just like printed books. The iPad and the new Sony Readers have internal backlighting so they can be read in the dark. The

trade-off is power usage and glare on the eyes, as it can be more of a strain to read backlit text than the electronic ink.

Since they are from booksellers, the Kindle and Nook have large libraries of books available.

My first hands-on was with the Nook. It seemed simple enough to control once I figured out that I needed to press the chrome ridges below the symbols, not the symbols



themselves. Reading was easy, although some of the commands seemed slow – but I'm used to the speed of my very fast personal Apple server, which boots in 15 seconds.

Although someone came to help me very quickly, I have every confidence that I could have worked out how to use the Nook by myself. Very user-friendly.

iPad proves more complex

I could not (gulp) say the same for the iPad. I finally got a book open, but it was frustrating, as the iPad has many more functions, of which its iBooks program is a minor one. I had to (blush) resort to the Help menu.

I could almost smell the ozone in the Apple Store, as dozens of machines lay out on the tables, free for the fondling. After fifteen minutes, I was past the sales sizzle of the iPad operating system and into its iBooks reader.

The science-fiction category I called up showed bestsellers for sale on one side of the huge display, free books on the right. I could have figured out how to search for a book, or I could have asked one of the literally dozens of blue-shirted sales assistants, but I could see the iPad would do the job well, and deliver a host of other applications and uses. Price and backlighting will decide its purchase. When

turned, it displays in either portrait or landscape, which shows two pages like an opened printed book. Vertically, the screen is about the size of a page of a hardcover book. A magnificent machine.

Nook wins on price and selection

The Nook has more books available (over a million, plus almost a million others free of charge) and costs at least \$350 less. It also comes with face-to-face support at more than 700 stores – all focused on books and books alone.

And although I can't read myself to sleep with the \$149 Nook unless I use a book light, two iPad owners (who also own e-book readers, so their advice is golden) said "long-term" reading on a backlit machine does cause eyestrain.

The decision is clear: Round One goes to the Nook.

Next Month: Amazon's Kindle and Sony's Reader

Mark Hennon is an editor and former reporter. He writes science-fiction and fixes Mac & Windows computers. His email is macfixers@gmail.com; phone is 206-567-3877 or 425-825-9244.

Shop Talk & Updates

■ Dues are Due

Annual membership fees (\$35) are due by October 31st. Dues may be paid in person at the check-in desk at the monthly dinner meeting in October, or mailed to our president, **Jennifer McCord, 3700 NE 178th St, Lake Forest Park, WA 98155-5433.**

A special thank you to our renewing members (dues paid as of 9/7/10): Bill Chandler, Bruce Dodson, Claire Gebben, Tiffany Doerr Guerzon, Richard Gibbons, Roberta Gregory, Sid Johnston, Linda Hope Lee, Jennifer McCord, Jacquie Miller, Lensey Namioka, Dennis Newton, Dean Pederson, Helen Szablya, and Jean Wharton.

■ Wanted!

Are you interested in contributing to the Seattle Free Lances newsletter? We need volunteers to write the past speaker profile each month. If you are interested in writing this article or contributing in any way, please email the editor at theseattlefreelances@gmail.com. Thank you.

■ Member News

- **Shawn Underwood will be signing copies of her book, *Mommy Are We French Yet?*, on October 8, 2010 at the Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association**

and October 22, 2010 at Auntie's Books in Spokane, Washington.

- **Lensey Namioka's book, *Chaos in America*, is being published in China by Commercial Press. The title comes from her family name, Chao, and the book is about her family's experiences living in America.**
- **Barbara Kindness** will have her new website up by the end of September; HOUSE OF KINDNESS, Promoting Authors, Speakers and Entertainers. Members are welcome to contact her to have their books on the website.
- **Carol Wissmann** had a profile appear in *The National Networker* and an article on gardening appears in *Northwest Prime Time*.

■ New Members

This month Seattle Free Lances welcomes:

- **Tiffany Doerr Guerzon.** Tiffany has had articles published in *Seattle's Child* magazine and *The Christian Science Monitor*. She also had a biweekly column run in *The Maple Valley Reporter* with topics related to parenting, home economics and consumer issues (April 2008 - January 2009).

■ Conferences & Events

- **Seattle7Writers Holiday Book Signing** will take place on Saturday, November 20th, 2010 (3-6 pm) at the Phinney

Neighborhood Center (6532 Phinney Ave North). There will be readings by various authors as well as a book signing. An independent bookstore, Santoro's, has graciously agreed to donate 10 percent of the proceeds to the Writers in the Schools program.

Authors include Kathleen Alcalá, Kit Bakke, Erica Bauermeister, Sean Boudoin, Carol Cassella, Randy Sue Coburn, Bob Dugoni, Elizabeth George, Maria Dahvana Headley, Stephanie Kallos, Erik Larsen, Jim Lynch, Kevin O'Brien, Suzanne Selfors, Jennie Shortridge, Garth Stein and Susan Wiggs.

- **Seattle Bookfest 2010**, originally scheduled for November 20–21, has been canceled.
- **Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association** Fall show will be held in Portland at the Airport Holiday Inn. The show is open only to book industry professionals. For more information, check out PNBA's website: www.PNBA.org/show.

■ **Got news?** Share your success with the SFL membership in the newsletter! Send all of your news to the editor at theseattlefreelances@gmail.com.

Memorials and Tributes

A tribute can show appreciation, gratitude, congratulations or admiration. In fact, in any situation where you might think of sending a greeting card, you can send an SFL tribute. Our newsletter will list the tributes that were sent in the previous month.

This is a new program for our organization, although you may be familiar with it from other groups. As we test it out, donations should be sent to our president, **Jennifer McCord, 3700 NE 178th St, Lake Forest Park, WA 98155-5433. Be sure to include the address of the person who is to receive acknowledgement.**



Newsletter

Deadline for the October newsletter is noon, **October 10th**. Send articles and news items to the editor at TheSeattleFreeLances@gmail.com.

Submission guidelines:

All submitted items must include the author's name and contact information. Anonymous submissions are not accepted. Every effort will be made to include all member submissions; however, publication is on a space available basis and is not guaranteed.

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TheSeattleFreeLances@gmail.com.

Seattle Free Lances

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This Month's General Meeting

Note: Because the Elks Club has increased our dinner costs, beginning with the October dinner meeting, the cost for dinner will increase to \$20.

- **When:**
Tuesday, October 5, 2010
- **Where:**
Lake City Elks Club
(directions )
- **Time:**
Social Hour 5:15 p.m.,
Dinner 6:00 p.m.
- **Entrée:**
Buffet, Salad, and Dessert
- **Cost:**
\$20, members and guests
Please make checks payable to the Elks Club
- **RSVP: Friday, October 1st, to Roberta Trahan at (206) 491-0147 or TheSeattleFreeLances@gmail.com**

ADVANCE RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED

Please be sure to make your reservations by the posted deadline so that we can give the caterer an accurate count. Last minute cancellations and no-shows are a hardship and result in a penalty charged to SFL. We are required to guarantee our reservations to the caterer and will be billed for any reserved meals that are not used. You will be expected to reimburse SFL for the full cost of your meal if you make a reservation and do not attend.

Directions to the Elks Club 14540 Bothell Way NE, Seattle

- **From North:** I-5 to NE 145th Exit. Turn left, cross overpass and continue about a mile to Lake City Way. Cross LCW before turning left into the Elks Club parking lot.
- **From South:** I-5 expressway to NE 145th, turn right and proceed about 1 mile to Lake City Way. Cross LCW before turning left into the Elks Club parking lot.
Cross LCW before turning left into the Elks Club parking lot.

Next Month's Meeting: *Tuesday, November 2nd*

