

FPA *Sell More Books!* Newsletter

November 2005

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**PMA-University
Scholarship
Opportunity!**

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Ten Questions an Editor Wants Answered in Your Query Letter

By Frances Keiser, Sagaponack Books

[Editor's Note: This is the fourth in a series of articles by FPA member Frances Keiser, who was selected to receive a scholarship from PMA, the independent book publishers association, and a stipend from both PMA and FPA to attend PMA University in June 2005.]

Conferences offer many opportunities to learn in locations other than rooms where workshops and seminars are conducted. While attending PMA University this year, one of those unexpected places turned out to be my hotel room.

My roommate, a lovely woman from North Carolina, is an acquisitions and substantive editor for a small publishing house. Judy Geary, senior editor for High Country Publishers/Ingalls Publishing Group, Inc., is responsible for reading query letters and manuscripts to decide in which authors she and the publisher may be interested.

Recognizing an opening to learn more about the publishing business, I asked what details pique her interest in a query letter. What information attracts an editor and publisher to a particular author and his or her book? A candid conversation with my roommate revealed some surprising answers.

Below are ten questions an editor wants answered in your query letter.

1. Who are you?

The first thing an editor wants to know is if you are someone with whom they feel they might want to work. Introduce yourself. Be professional and succinct.

2. Have you written the type of book we publish?

If you can, find out which topics the publisher is currently looking for to include in their list of titles. Do your homework first. Don't query a history-book house for your business title.

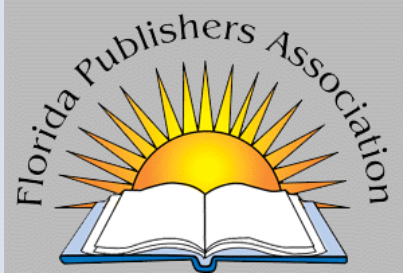
3. Who is your target audience?

Publishers and editors are more interested in the book's audience than the book's topic.

4. What have you written?

Tell the editor your book's genre and give a very brief description. A query letter is not the place for a synopsis.

continued on the next page



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FPA is not responsible for typographical errors, nor does it warrant or guarantee any information or offers from vendors, media or others who contribute items to the newsletter.

Submission Guidelines

When submitting items for future newsletters, please follow these guidelines:

1. Send email submissions by the 15th of the month prior to publication to FPAnewsletter@QoLpublishing.com.
2. Trim the submission content and try to follow the newsletter's editorial style.
3. Using the following list, identify in which section of the newsletter your item might belong and include that in the subject line of your email submission:

Events Calendar • Member News
Online • Awards/Contests • Library
Regional Reports • News
Affiliations (PMA, SPAN, AAP)
Wanted • Production • Helpful Hints
Publications • Media • Other

Query Letter, continued from page 1

5. Why are you qualified?

List your unique qualifications for writing on this particular topic.

6. What is your experience?

Let the editor know what experience you have as a writer, your experience relative to the intended audience, and your experience relevant to the book's topic.

7. What contacts do you have?

Your professional, celebrity, association, and organization contacts—along with your qualifications and experience—make up your platform. The larger an author's platform, the more opportunities there are for marketing your book and increasing success.

8. Can you write?

Along with your query, send the first three pages of your manuscript. An editor will be able to get an idea of your writing ability from this sample.

9. Do you have an email address?

Some editors and publishers prefer to have a query sent by email. Check the publishing company website for their preferences.

10. Do you have a website?

Your emailed query letter can include links to a website containing a synopsis of your book, a chapter (rather than the first three pages you would send via snail mail), and your photo.

Answer the questions an editor wants to know, and you may be on your way to that elusive publishing contract.

Production

Book Industry Study Group

The Book Industry Study Group (BISG) continually implements stan-

dards and initiatives intended to facilitate communication between publishing industry trading partners. For instance, in September 2005 BISG finalized its second version of *Guidelines for Shipping Container Labeling*. The document recommends standards for simplifying and capturing of data at all stages of shipping warehousing, and receiving between publishers, distributors, and booksellers. Learn more about this and other standards by visiting:

www.bisg.org/standards/index.html

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www.cdfx.com

Scholarship Opportunity

Call for Entries for PMA-University Scholarship

Each year, FPA issues a call for entries for a scholarship to the PMA Publishing University for the following year. The scholarship program was instituted in 1997 to foster interest in PMA's Publishing University and to afford opportunity for individuals from the affiliate groups to participate in the Publishing University. This year, the PMA Pub-U is scheduled for May 16–18, 2006, in Washington, DC.

The scholarship allows one person from an affiliate to attend, at no charge, all seminars over the three-day program prior to BookExpo America in the same city as BEA. PMA will also provide a \$500 stipend to partially cover the cost of travel and/or accommodations for this event. FPA assists the attendee, as well, by offering an additional \$200 stipend. Both stipends are paid after attendance at the event and upon the submission of three or more reports and the agreement to make a presentation at the next Ed-U-Conference.

The following are the selection criteria for the scholarship:

1. The applicant must be a member in good standing of both FPA and PMA on December 31, 2005.
2. The applicant must be a publisher or about to be a publisher (e.g., manuscript finished, production process started).
3. Applicant must provide the following information:
 - a. Background in publishing (briefly)
 - b. Personal expectations of the Publishing University experience

- c. How information learned at the University will be shared with others at FPA. (See above for what FPA requires of its applicants.)

Download the application from the PMA website at www.pma-online.org/affiliat.cfm#grant

Mail or fax completed application to arrive at FPA no later than **December 31, 2005**. [Note: Do **not** send to PMA!]

Mail to FPA:

Florida Publishers Association
P.O. Box 430
Highland City, FL 33846-0430

Fax to FPA:

(863) 647-5951

Media/Reviews

Book-Friendly Editors

The following editors will speak to the Florida Library Association:

Suzy Leonard, Features Editor,
Florida Today

Susan Rife, Book Editor, *Sarasota Herald Tribune*

Karl Burkhardt, Editor and Publisher,
Lake City Journal.com

David Moore, Features Editor, *Ocala Star Banner*

Robyn Tomlin, Executive Editor,
Ocala Star Banner

Newspaper Columnists

Learn who's who in the National Society of Newspaper Columnists.

www.columnists.com

Five-Star Reviews

Check out this online consumer reviews publication:

www.fivestarreviews.com

bernieE-zine Book Reviews

This online book review site will accept press releases and announcements only. If its reviewers are interested in your book, they will contact you for a review copy. Email:

berniezine@yahoo.com

Mystery Reviews

The bookstore Murder on the Beach in Delray Beach has an e-publication featuring new books and book reviews. Visit:

www.murderonthebeach.com

International News Group

This news wire service is based out of Dallas and has a primary focus on features.

www.internationalnewsgroup.com

Publications

Chicago Manual of Style

The University of Chicago Press, publisher of the *Chicago Manual of Style* (CMS), seeks your help as it develops and launches an electronic version of the CMS to help writers, editors, and publishers.

Please take a few minutes to go online and fill out a questionnaire about how you and your organization might use an online version of CMS. Go to:

www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=124751446611

In other news, the CMS website now offers a monthly question-and-answer page. Find answers to questions such as: "Are poets allowed poetic license to do practically anything with punctuation?" by visiting:

www.chicagomanualofstyle.org

President's Message

November seems to be the appropriate time to give thanks for everything that has happened during the year. Even the challenging and not-so-positive events can be included in the thanksgiving because they have contributed to making us stronger and more focused.

This year has been very rewarding for FPA and its members. Take a peek at the list below. In 2005, FPA has:

- Conducted two exciting educational conferences, a Mini-College in St. Petersburg and an Ed-U-Conference in Fort Lauderdale
- Created a great relationship with the Florida Center for the Book and, through the largesse of FPA vendor-member Central Plains Book Manufacturing, made 10,000 bookmarks available for state libraries
- Displayed member and non-member books at FLA, SEBA, and FAME
- Created the handouts, *Authors in Libraries*, *Authors in Bookstores* and *Authors in Schools*, for distribution at FLA, SEBA and FAME, and for posting to our website
- Reached out to other publishing organizations, including PMA affiliates, to gain new ideas and to offer support
- Conducted informal get-togethers with authors and publishers
- Created an FPA Media file to retain copies of newspaper, magazine and electronic media features about FPA and its members

- Revised and improved the online *FPA Sell More Books! Newsletter*
- Recruited an outstanding member for the newsletter editor position: Karla Wheeler of Quality of Life Publishing Co. in Naples
- Expanded membership
- Donated \$1,000 to the American Red Cross for Hurricane Katrina relief aid
- Conducted the President's Book Awards to recognize wonderful books in eight categories and displayed winners, free of charge, at the display events of FAME and SEBA
- Provided a \$200 cash stipend to assist the recipient of the PMA Publishing University Scholarship recipient, Frances Keiser of Sagaponack Books in St. Augustine
- Provided speakers for writers groups across the state
- Provided membership materials for attendee packets at the annual Florida Writers Association conference

These are powerful accomplishments for any organization, but I am especially grateful because we are an organization of volunteers. It is obvious that many members recognized the importance of being actively involved in their association. As we move toward more exciting goals, we need more members to step forward to take responsibility for our future.

As you reflect on your personal and business year, I ask that you decide to take a more active role in FPA. Look for a way to add to the dynamic nature of our association and step forward. If each member gave back the equivalent of just one day a year, FPA would be blessed immensely. With that one day commitment, we can achieve all of our goals and so much more.

May your Thanksgiving holiday be filled with health, success, love, and prosperity.

Best,
Frank Gromling

Note: Next issue, FPA President Frank Gromling will share his insider's view of traveling to and attending a Board of Directors meeting of PMA, the independent book publishers association. Gromling was elected to the PMA board earlier this year.

Member News

JERRY COWLING's new alternate historical novel has been published by American Book Publishing in Salt Lake City. Cowling says of his book, *Lincoln in the Basement* (ISBN 1-58982-268-4), "Political intrigue, fueled by arrogance and lust for power, propel a Civil War nightmare in which the Lincolns are captive in the White House basement . . ." The book can be ordered at www.american-book.com or www.amazon.com.

MARJORY DIANE LYONS, owner of Telling Your Story, Inc., and member of the FPA board of directors, was a featured speaker November 5 at the Broward Community College/North Regional Library. Lyons's presentation was titled, "What Every Writer Needs to Know about Publishing and Writing."

DINAH ARNETTE, past president of the FPA and member since 1997, has signed on with the *Ocala Star Banner* as a freelance writer. She is responsible for North Marion County, which includes the area in which she lives—Ft. McCoy—plus news from the Ocala State Forest, which covers over 300,000 acres of land. Arnette will have a weekly byline appearing on Tuesdays. Her email address is DMarieNews@aol.com.

FPA in the News

Self-Publishing Round-Up

The *Orlando Sentinel* published a feature article October 30, 2005, titled, "When the Big Guys Say No, Authors Take Printing Into Their Own Hands," with a subhead of "Area Writers Take Advantage as Self-Publishing Sheds Both Its Stigma and Its Costs."

Representing traditional publishers in the round-up article is Frank Gromling, President of the FPA and owner of Ocean Publishing in Flagler Beach. Gromling notes that traditional presses will sometimes pick up a self-published book but that publishers "consider a book worthy of consideration if you sell about 3,700 of them."

Visit www.orlandosentinel.com to read the entire article.

Awards/Contests

The following is a very short list of the available book awards competitions. For a more complete list, visit LiteraryMarketPlace.com (sign up for only the freebie version) or view a hard copy of Literary Market Place (RR Bowker) in the reference section of your local library. Note: Many competitions have an end-of-year submission deadline, so act today to enter your books in competitions before the holidays distract you.

Benjamin Franklin Awards

PMA, the independent book publishers association, invites you to submit entries for the 18th Annual Benjamin Franklin Awards® competition, which recognizes excellence in publishing through the year 2005. Deadline is December 31, 2005. Learn more at:

www.pma-online/bfa2006/2.html

Fresh Voices 2006

The Writer's Marketing Association invites submissions for its Fresh Voices

2006 Book Awards. Awards are open to non-published, POD, self-published, and small press work only. Deadline is November 30, 2005. Download an entry form and process your entry fee at:

www.wmacconnect.com/pages/3/index.htm

Miriam Bass Award

The Association of American Publishers is calling for nominations for the third annual Miriam Bass Award for Creativity in Independent Publishing. Deadline for submissions is November 30, 2005. Go to:

www.publishers.org/about/bass.cfm

Writers Notes

Writers Notes Magazine's 2006 Book Awards will accept submissions until January 15, 2006. For detailed information visit:

www.WritersNotes.com and click on "Book Awards"

Webby Awards

December 16, 2005, is the final deadline for submitting entries for the 10th Annual Webby Awards. Learn more and submit entries online at:

www.webbyawards.com

Independent Publisher Book Awards

April 1, 2006, is the deadline for these awards known as "The IPPYs," with discounts on early entry fees. Go to:

www.independentpublisher.com/ipland/v4/IPAwards.htm

ForeWord Magazine's Book of the Year

Deadline for titles published in 2005 is January 15, 2006. To learn more, visit:

www.forewordmagazine.com

Library Wise

Important Links

American Library Association
www.ala.org

Florida Library Association
www.fla.org

Wrath of Wilma

Hurricane Wilma took its toll on libraries in some of the hardest-hit counties in Florida. These counties include Broward, Collier, Hendry, Lee, Osceola, Palm Beach, and St. Lucie. Be sure to call your local library to see if it has resumed its regular hours of operation.

Online Links

Links to Florida libraries (co-ops, school media centers, academic, public, and special):

http://dilis.dos.state.fl.us/fgils/fl_lib.html

Annual Conference

Florida Library Association Annual Conference (and trade show) is Tuesday, April 18, through Friday, April 21, 2006, Wyndham Palace Resort & Spa, Lake Buena Vista, FL. Display details:

www.flalib.org/2006_theme.pdf

Volusia Sunday Hours

Volusia County Library Services reports that the following libraries are now open Sundays from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.:

- Daytona Beach Regional
- DeLand Regional
- Deltona Regional
- New Smyrna Beach Regional
- Ormond Beach Regional
- Port Orange Regional

Events Calendar

Many display opportunity events, such as book fairs, offer booth space for publishers and authors. However, booth space is usually booked at a deadline far in advance of the event, so be sure to check listings on events that will happen 2–3 months from now. FPA has tentatively planned to feature its Publishing Mini-College in February 2006.

SHOWS

Regional booksellers events

www.bookweb.org/orgs/286.html

List of trade shows is available at www.expocentral.com

NOVEMBER 2005

November 14–16, It's Act Two of the Web. Is Your Site Ready? Stanford University, Stanford, CA. <http://publishingcourses.stanford.edu/pow/>

November 14–20, Children's Book Week, sponsored by the Children's Book Council (CBC), with numerous events. www.cbcbooks.org/cbw/

November 17–19, National Council on Family Relations 67th Annual Conference, Phoenix, AZ. Participate via Association Book Exhibit. info@bookexhibit.com

November 18–21, Gerontological Society of America 58th Annual Scientific Meeting, Orlando, FL. Participate via Association Book Exhibit. info@bookexhibit.com

November 19–21, PubWest's National Publishing Conference and Book Industry Trade Show, DoubleTree Hotel Lloyd Center, Portland, OR. kalen@pubwest.org. www.pubwest.org

November 30, E-seminar by the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association. <http://web.memberclicks.com/mc/page.do?sitePageid=22629&orgid=ecpa>

DECEMBER 2005

December 3–4, Second Annual Tampa Book Fair (in conjunction with the Lutz Arts & Crafts Festival). More info: Joe, Hillsborough County Parks, Recreation and Conservation Department. (813) 554-5064

December 3–4, 18th Independent and Small Press Book Fair, Small Press Center, Manhattan. www.smallpress.org

December 18–20, Association for Jewish Studies 37th Annual Meeting. Participate via Association Book Exhibit. info@bookexhibit.com

JANUARY 2006

January 20–23, American Library Association's Midwinter Meetings & Exhibits, San Antonio, TX, at Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. ala@heexpo.com

January 27–29, PAS Winter Conclave, Savannah, GA, at Inn at Ellis Square. www.pubsouth.org

FEBRUARY 2006

February 6–8, AAP's Professional and Scholarly Publishing Division 2006 Annual Conference, Washington, DC, Mayflower Hotel. www.pspcentral.org

February 16–19, Writing for the Soul Conference, Christian Writers Guild, Broadmoore, Colorado Springs, CO. www.ChristianWritersGuild.com

February 26, Hispanic Book Festival of Houston, Hotal Hilton Houston Southwest. www.milleniumpress.us/bookfestival.htm

MARCH 2006

March 11, Ventura Book Festival, Unitarian Universalist Church of Ventura, Ventura, CA. Email: maryembree@sbcglocal.net

March 14–15, AAP General Meeting and Small and Independent Publishers Meeting, New York, NY. www.publishers.org

March 20–22, BookTech, New York Hilton. www.booktechexpo.com/

March 22–24, Public Library Association Show, John B. Hynes Convention Center, Boston. www.pla.org/ala/pla/pla.htm

March 22–26, VABook! the Virginia Festival of the Book, Charlottesville, VA. www.vabook.org

March 31–April 1, North Carolina Black Book Festival, Winston Salem, NC. www.NCBookFest.com

APRIL 2006

April 19–21, Florida Library Association Conference, Lake Buena Vista, FL. www.flalib.org/2006_theme.pdf

MAY 2006

May 16–18, PMA University, Washington, DC. www.pma-online.org

May 19–21, Book Expo America, Washington, DC. www.BookExpoAmerica.com

SEPTEMBER 2006

September 7–8, Publishers Association of the South Annual Conference, Orlando, FL (location TBA). www.PubSouth.org

September 8–10, Southeast Booksellers Association Annual Trade Show, Gaylord Palms Resort & Convention Center, Orlando, FL. www.SEBAweb.org

OCTOBER 2006

October 4–9, Frankfurt Book Fair. www.frankfurt-bookfair.com

continued on page 7

Events Calendar, continued from page 6

October 27–29, CIROBE (remainder books show). www.cirobe.com

JUNE 2007

June 1–3, Bookexpo America, New York, Jacob Javits Convention Center. www.bookexpoamerica.com

MAY 2008

May 30–June 1, Bookexpo America, Los Angeles, Los Angeles Convention Center. www.bookexpoamerica.com

Submit events to Karla Wheeler:
FPAnewsletter@QoLpublishing.com

See masthead (page 2) for guidelines on submission of all items.

Member Updates

Renewal date coming up? Watch for a renewal notice from the FPA. Renewals can be sent to:

*Betty Wright, Treasurer
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P. O. Box 430
Highland City, FL 33846-0430*

New Members

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Affiliates

PMA, The Independent Book Publishers Association

www.pma-online.org

NUMBERS: Jan Nathan, Executive Director of PMA writes: “Did you know that during the year 2004, there were 375,000 new titles published in English-speaking countries? According to a new press release by the RR Bowker Company, Anglo-American publishers published 80% of all new English-language books in 2004, while the U.S. accounted for 52% of the total. Now this is just new books, remember, not counting any of the evergreen backlist that many of our member publishers count as their active backlist.

“Adult fiction, poetry, drama and literary criticism accounted for 18% of the new and children’s/young adult had a 12% share of the new titles; and science and technology a 9% share. Continuing their downward spiral were computer books, showing a 14% decrease from 2003. Both religion and travel saw a double-digit increase, while history, sociology, economics and education experienced declines.”

Join PMA to learn more about statistics affecting *your* business.

Small Publishers Association of North America (SPAN)

www.spannet.org

Highlights from SPAN include:

HOLIDAYS: Support Independent Publishers by buying books from the SPAN Members Bookstore at www.spannet.org/bookstore.htm

MEMBERSHIP: When you join SPAN, you will have access to 31 member benefits. Visit www.spannet.org/join.htm

SMALL PRESS BOOK FAIR: The 18th Independent and Small Press Book Fair happens December 3–4, 2005, at the Small Press Center in Manhattan. Details: www.smallpress.org

Association of American Publishers (AAP) www.publishers.org

Check out the Authors @ Your Library website, a free online service linking publishers and librarians to expedite the process of scheduling library events.

To register your publishing house or library, simply enter your information into the system. Use the site’s search page to pinpoint information about publishers and their authors and libraries and their needs.

The website was created by AAP’s Trade Libraries Committee, in partnership with the American Library Association, Friends of Libraries U.S.A., and *Library Journal*. Go to www.authorsatyourlibrary.com