



Welcome, and THANK YOU!

JULY 2005 -- You made my day when you signed up for this newsletter. Thank you so much! I've been fascinated by the comments people are sending when they sign up. Some of you are writers, eager for writing tips. Others are "stealth writers" -- you write, but you're afraid to show it to anyone, much less send it to an editor for publishing consideration. And there are those of you on the list who just like something amusing in your inbox now and then. I hope to touch on all those needs, and more as this newsletter evolves.

In this inaugural issue, I'd like to give you a window into the process of getting a novel published. My first novel, *The Gathering Place*, will be on the shelves in August of 2006 (believe me, you aren't nearly as impatient as I am!)

Here's a timeline of how a nightmare became a dream, and then a dream-come-true.



- **1993** (no, that's not a typo) -- I decided to take a painful experience of spiritual deception in my life and see if something good couldn't come from it for someone else. (You know, sometimes your troubles are for no other reason than to serve as a horrible example for someone else!) I began writing feverishly.
- **1994-1999** -- I wrote in fits and starts (far more fits than starts) while working a very intense corporate job, squeezing in a writing session every few months.
- **2000** -- I quit my corporate job (hurrah!) to go freelance with my writing. I thought that NOW I'd finally have time to finish the book. (Yeah, right.)
- **2000-2002** -- I bogged down, and then created an Excel spreadsheet to help me plot out the rest of the book. In months, I finished the first draft. Putting those magical words, "The End" on a page was a tremendous boost, but at nearly 170,000 words the book was far too long. I began on a series of rewrites.

- **May 2003** -- I attended the Colorado Christian Writers Conference in glorious Estes Park. I intended to shop the book to anybody who would listen, and went prepared with packets containing the first 3 chapters, a synopsis, and complete outline of the book. I paid \$30 for a one-on-one critique session with an acquisitions editor. He liked the book! He asked me to rewrite some of it and send it to him. I don't remember a minute of the 1300-mile drive back home to East Texas.
- **June 2003** -- I had spent 30 days reworking the book as the editor suggested, cutting out some things I felt really needed to stay in, but adhering to his guidelines. With shaking hands, I hit the Send button and e-mailed the 124,000-word manuscript to him.
- **December 2003** -- The editor finally found time to read it! He liked it and said he'd be taking it to the Editorial Board (decide if they like the content) and the Publishing Board (marketing people who decide if it will actually SELL.) I believe I screamed when I read that e-mail. Of course, it's now framed on my wall!
- **January 2004** -- The book passed the Editorial Board.
- **February 2004** -- The book passed the Publishing Board. I KNOW I screamed then. A contract was sent to me. I had no idea if it was good or bad. I just signed it. Fortunately, it was fair.
- **April 2004** -- A check representing an "Advance on Royalties" arrived. I was officially sighted walking on clouds and deemed to be a UFO. I got an official photo taken (See photo above. The photographer did all she could with what she had to work with.)



- **May 2004** -- The editor told me to go back and rewrite the book and make it the best it could possibly be. (This would make rewrite #6).
- **September 2004** -- Again hit that precious Send key to forward the rewritten book. I put back in a lot of what I'd taken out, but that made it a better book in my opinion.
- **March 2005** -- The publisher sent me an e-mail letting me know they were (at last!) ready to edit the book... but I needed to cut 22,000 words first!

After a major gulp, I realized this was

an opportunity to really tighten it up, and did the math. 22,000 words worked out to 50-60 words per page. I attacked the manuscript for 2 weeks, keyboarded all the changes, and hit Send yet again.

- **May 2005** -- The editors sent back an annotated file of the manuscript with 56 comments, questions, suggestions. Some I accepted immediately. Others didn't sit well and I fought for my original version. In the end, I hit Send for what I hoped was the last time.
- **May 2005** -- My book and 30 others were pushed back into next year for official release. Though at first dismayed, I realized I'd rather have the sales staff behind me and able to spend time promoting the book. I adjusted my attitude, and went to work on two more books.



So, by the time the book comes out, it will have been **13 YEARS** in the birthing. I'm trying to write faster on the two I've got going now.



Next issue: Taking an idea from serendipity to publication -- If I can do it, so can you!

This Issue's Fun Stuff

Are you an aspiring novelist but can't seem to get the book off the ground? Check out award-winning novelist **Randy Ingermanson's website**. Not only can you download a free copy of one of his masterpieces, he's very generous in sharing excellent plotting and writing methods you can put to work today.

Looking for something good to eat tonight? I regularly browse through recipe websites. In 22 years of marriage, I doubt I've cooked fish more than a half dozen times (don't like smelling it for days afterwards.) **Here's a recipe for Salmon that is absolutely outstanding!** Bob even asked for seconds -- and he's not a big fish eater. No smell lingered in the house, and we were eager for leftovers.

Quote for the week: (*How NOT to do descriptive writing*) -- **"The sun rose slowly, like a fiery furball coughed up uneasily onto a sky-blue carpet by a giant unseen cat."** -- *Michael McGarel*.

Got Questions? This newsletter should be an interactive experience. If you've got comments or questions that will be grist for the mill, **e-mail me**. I'd love to hear from you!

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