

TAA offers how-to session at meeting

About 40 mathematicians attended a January 9 authoring panel sponsored by TAA at a convention of four national academic math associations.

Michael Sullivan, TAA vice president, himself a leading math author, discussed dealing with favorable and unfavorable manuscript reviews from the pre-contract point through developmental, peer, and post-publication reviewing.

Geography author Robert Christopherson talked about setting up a writing studio, market analysis, permission tracking logs, and research and writing techniques. He emphasized being proactive with the publisher on book design, color palette, preparing front and back matter, ancillaries and marketing.

Michael Lennie, an authoring agent and attorney, discussed "selling" a book concept to an acquisition editor. He covered critical contract items, including standard boilerplate contract paragraphs that can be negotiated.

With a skit that brought down the house, Sullivan blindfolded Lennie while Christopherson pretended to be offering commentary at the 18th hole of some publishers' golf tournament. Sullivan handed Lennie a book contract to see if he could improve it, blindfolded. Lennie swept the felt tip across page after page as Christopherson expressed wonder that "he can make the shot" blindfolded. Finally, the metaphorical ball goes in the hole, the shot made, the blindfold is ripped off. Eureka: The blinded man did it! He improved the standard contract with random strikes of the pen.

Interest at TAA's booth was high, said TAA Executive Director Ron Pynn. "Lots of brochures went," he said. Candy stapled to each individual brochure received attention, Pynn said: "Maybe they wanted the candy and the brochure came attached to it."

Ten mathematicians joined TAA at the association booth and four after the presentation by Sullivan, Christopherson and Lennie. "Others said they would think about it," said Pynn.

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NOTABLE AUTHOR: ALLAN TOBIN

Storytelling at the heart of textbook

By Kim Pawlak

The editorial process is much more important than most people realize, says Allan Tobin, coauthor of the award-winning introductory biology text, *Asking About Life*. Tobin learned this lesson the hard way. After toiling over the manuscript for *Asking About Life* for 12 years, his editor told him it wasn't ready for publication – that it needed work – and a coauthor. "I was pretty angry," he said. "I thought, 'How dare she make this judgment!'" But, said Tobin, with the editor's help and addition of Jennie Dusheck as coauthor, the book is now much better than that first draft. It didn't take long after he and Dusheck began working that Tobin said he realized what she and the review process brought to the project. The first edition of *Asking About Life* was published in 1998, the second in 2001.

Tobin's sensitivity about the first manuscript extended partly from the passion that led him to write it. He loves seeing students learn. How much does Tobin love teaching? Now, as director of the Brain Research Institute at the University of California Los Angeles, he no longer is obligated to teach but insists on taking on an introductory biology course anyway. The course, Tobin said, gives him a chance to introduce students to basic science concepts. Writing *Asking About Life* allowed him to do that for a much larger audience.

Tobin picked up his love of teaching from watching one of his professors at Harvard. "He would engage students by telling stories," he said. "It was inspiring to see how the stories of science would engage them. He felt that students needed to become interested in science first – that they could always learn the technical side later." Part of the reason why Tobin says he wrote *Asking About Life*, was because he thought he could do better than his professor in engaging students – that he could tell better stories. "I liked the idea of being a guide to students," he said. "I felt I could help them get excited about the process of science."

Tobin said he knew that it was possible to explore sophisticated concepts in a



Biology author Allan Tobin says the art of writing textbooks is rooted in stories that excite students.

way so that anyone could understand them. He felt the trick was making students understand the scientist's motivations. So each chapter in *Asking About Life* begins with a story about a scientist and how he or she came to make a particular scientific discovery. The stories, the brainchild of coauthor Jennie Dusheck, help students understand what it was like to do science for the individual doing it.

Asking About Life won a Textbook Excellence Award from TAA in 1999. "I was delighted to win the Texty," said Tobin. "It was most gratifying to get an award from my peers, who understand how much work it is to write a textbook. It is my favorite award."

Tobin's advice for others wanting to write a textbook: "Do everything you can to make yourself aware of who your audience is through feedback, reviews, student reactions and colleagues. Some people think knowing enough about the subject is all that's necessary to write a textbook. But it's also important to know how to communicate that knowledge on paper. You need feedback to learn how to do that."

Digested from a complete article at taa.winona.msus.edu/TAA/NOTABLE/tobin.html

NEWS BRIEFS

Kluwer purchase. Europe-based academic publisher Wolters Kluwer acquired the print and electronic accounting publishing products of Strafford Publications, which specializes in information services. Terms were not disclosed. The deal includes Strafford's Miller book series on compliance guidance in accounting. The Strafford products will become part of Kluwer's Aspen legal unit.

Ebrary clients. Ebrary, a provider of content distribution and retrieval services, signed agreements with academic and textbook publishers Wiley and Greenwood to distribute their titles through multiple online channels to libraries and other online customers. The deals brought ebrary's client list to more than 80.

2001 review. The new century began with authors making substantial strides in defining their rights to electronic spinoffs of their works, said John Vivian, TAA newsletter editor. "All in all, 2001 was a significant year for authors," he said. With analysis and commentary, TAA editor Vivian offers a year-end report on the status of text and academic authoring on the TAA web site.

taa.winona.msus.edu/taa/BRIEFS/02/01janAA.html#yearender

McGraw layoffs. Payroll cutbacks in the education and professional publishing divisions at McGraw-Hill involve mostly business training courseware products, the company said. The trimming, which involves 924 jobs, 5 percent of the McGraw staff, include consolidations in Europe, closing and el-hi operation in Colombia and also a local publishing initiative in Portugal. The company also is pulling back on some ventures in emerging technology. Spokesperson Steve Weiss said McGraw is confident about its educational products in 2002 despite this not being a heavy school book adoption year. He predicted growth in education sales.

Spanish e-editions. A deal was struck between Pearson Education and Rovia, a Spanish-language e-content distributor, to convert Pearson titles into Spanish. The converted learning materials will go first to online students of the Monterey Institute of Technology in Mexico City. Besides its online program the institute has 30 campuses in Mexico and 100,000 students. The agreement allows Pearson to offer Rovia products elsewhere in Latin America and the United States.

Wireless journals. The InterScience MobileEdition operated by Wiley added the content of *Arthritis & Rheumatism* and *Arthritis Care and Research*. The full-text

Harcourt patriarch dead at 81

The head of the publishing house Harcourt for 36 years, William Jovanovich, died of a heart attack at his retirement home on December 5 after a long illness. He was 81. Jovanovich worked his way up from textbook salesman to company president in seven years, turning Harcourt into a publishing powerhouse. Jovanovich revolutionized textbooks by adding full color images and introducing elaborate teacher editions. It was an \$8 million company when he took over in 1954. It was worth \$1.3 billion in 1990, when he resigned.

For years Jovanovich spurned letting Harcourt join the Association of American Publishers, a gaping membership hole for the trade group as Harcourt grew in importance. His independent streak contributed to the company's eventual undoing. To counter a hostile greenmail takeover by the British media magnate Robert Maxwell in 1987, Jovanovich borrowed nearly \$3 billion. Maxwell was thwarted, but Harcourt became mired in debt and Jovanovich had little choice but to leave three years later. In 1991 the company was sold. It was a dramatic and painful turn of events for Jovanovich, who was seen as so important by shareholders that they

eventually expanded the company name to Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Jovanovich was remembered by his son Peter for his competitive instincts. Peter Jovanovich, who worked under his father and now heads Pearson Education, recalled his father's seeing in a *Wall Street Journal* article that a rival was boasting that it was developing a high school history textbook to supplant a popular Harcourt series. As Peter Jovanovich tells what happened next: "My Dad called up the head of the school division. He said, 'Get the editor in chief and the designer in here.' Within the course of an hour, he had our high school history book entirely redesigned."

The president of TAA, Peggy Stanfield, expressed sympathy on behalf of the association at Jovanovich's death: "Many of our organization's authors have published with Harcourt. Because of the innovations under William Jovanovich, textbook publishing became a more educationally creative process and grew tremendously. TAA extends its heartfelt appreciation to the Jovanovich family and to Pearson Education for the remarkable career of William Jovanovich."

articles are readable on wireless devices.

Book news. For the first time since it was banned in the 1940s, *Mein Kampf* by Nazi leader Adolph Hitler, who rose to power in Germany in the 1930s and dominated Europe in World War II, has been published legally in Bulgaria. Publisher Zhar Puta included a legally required note identifying the book as anti-Semitic.

Digital books. The widely predicted death of the book as a print mass medium isn't happening according to S. David Mash, dean of information and resource services at Columbia International University. In the latest issue of the journal *Mars Hill*, Mash tells why. The doomsayers, writes Mash, miss the fact that, even though the rate of digital information is growing, digital media cannot overtake the print media, which are growing even faster. Another obstacle to e-books, he writes, is infrastructure. The vast majority of U.S. print media are in an ink-on-paper form that would be costly and labor-intensive to convert. Mash notes too that e-books are hardly the bargain that prognosticators foretold. Of the 0.0002 percent of books available in e-form, some are double the price of their printed counterparts, he said.

Instant book. In what may be the quickest "instant book" ever published, the University of Toronto Press produced the proceedings of a conference on an anti-terrorism bill to contribute to dialogue on the fast-track bill. Five days later, the university's Press publisher, George Meadows, drove copies hot off the press for delivery to government officials. Law Dean Ronald Daniels said the goal was to shape the debate on the bill, which was a response to the terror attacks of September 11 on the United States. Too often, Daniels said, scholars are after-the-fact commentators rather than participants in the debate. The book's title: *The Security of Freedom: Essays in Canada's Anti-Terrorism Bill*.

Genre survey. About 190 IAA members responded to an annual survey on the genres in which they write, said Ron Pynn, the association's executive director. Noting that roughly a quarter of the membership responded, Pynn said TAA does well compared to other authoring organizations in gathering the data. The data will help TAA qualify for its share of funds from the U.S. clearinghouse that distributes repatriated reprography collections. Pynn said a second round of questionnaires would go out in

December to members who didn't answer the first call.

Projector needed. Looking to trim costs of the annual TAA convention, the association's executive manager, Janet Tucker, issued a call for a TAA member to bring an LCD projector. Renting a projector on-site at last June's convention in San Antonio cost \$800 and contributed to a \$3,600 deficit. "If there is anyone who has access to one and would be able to bring it to our convention in San Diego, it would be such a help," Tucker said. She also said that presenters need to understand that they need to bring their own laptops if they are going to use the LCD projector.

Bookstore sales. Textbook sales increased 83 percent at college bookstores this fall compared to a year earlier, the National Association of College Stores said. In the survey of 238 college stores, a few stores called textbooks "hot sellers." Why the growing textbook sales? NACS speculated that it might reflect a "rebound" from students purchasing from discounters.

Web partners. The John Wiley publishing house will add computational tools and genomic and biological data from Celera Genomics to its InterScience web site. In a Wiley-Celera partnership, Celera gets access to Wiley journals, including *Cancer*, *Proteomics* and *Human Mutation*. Wiley gains access to Celera's human genome database, human gene index, drosophila, genome database, drosophila gene index, mouse genome reference database and SNP reference database.

Authors blacklisted. The New York *Times* has blacklisted the writers who won a U.S. Supreme Court e-rights case against the newspaper, said freelancer Jonathan Tasini. Tasini, the lead plaintiff in the case, said he obtained an internal *Times* memo recommending that the newspaper not "engage in any of the below-named plaintiffs." On the list was Tasini, his 10 co-plaintiffs, and two plaintiffs in a separate class action suit filed by the Authors Guild. The *Tasini* suit involved members of the National Writers Union, of which Tasini is president.

Sales stumble. The events of September 11 had a negative impact on John Wiley & Sons publishing house sales, said chief executive William Pesce. In many ways the company will never fully recoup, Pesce said. The effect on sales, however, will be "relatively short-term," he said. Net income rose 12 percent for the first half which ended October 12.

Executive committee. The TAA Council, which is TAA's governing board, voted tentatively to establish a permanent executive committee to conduct association business between semi-annual Council meetings. Because empowering the new committee needs a by-laws change, a final decision is pending a required parliamentary second-reading at the Council's next meeting in June. Once ensconced, the executive committee would meet once a month telephonically. On the committee would be the association's

Delay-plagued journal catching up

Five overdue issues of *American Anthropologist* are in production with the publication staff of the American Anthropological Association in high gear to catch up, said William Davis, the association's executive editor. Extra editors were brought with a special appropriation of \$108,000, he said. Also, a fairly recent practice of running galley proofs by book reviewers and authors has been streamlined, Davis said. The year 2002 will dawn with the journal back on its publication schedule, he said.

The former editor of the journal, Robert Sussman, resigned after issues fell more

and more behind schedule. The December 2000 issue came out in July. Sussman blamed the growing backlog of issues on the resignation of a key production editor. Another factor, some said, was that Sussman added layers to the proofing process with more opportunities for authors to revise their work. Sussman had been editor since 1998. In a new practice under Sussman, redline proofs were sent not only to article authors but also to book reviewers, which caused further delays, critics said. The journal is the main publication of the American Anthropological Association. In all, the association produces 10 journals.

president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, executive director, editor and an association member annually elected by the Council. Committee responsibilities would be to look after TAA affairs, conduct routine business, and study issues to make recommendations for action to the Council. The executive committee concept has had a trial run for six months but with proscribed limitations.

Minority authors. Textbook author Tara Gray drew 20 business profs to her "Publish, Don't Perish" authoring workshop at Quinnipiac University in Hamden, Connecticut, on December 11. An October 31 workshop at New Mexico State University drew 31 participants. Gray's workshops are co-sponsored by TAA. Gray said the Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate, which promoted the New Mexico State workshop, is exploring sessions in Puerto Rico and one other mainland campus.

TAA ballot. Two TAA leaders, secretary Mary Kay Switzer and TAA Council member Phil Halloran, asked to be on the association's spring ballot for re-election. Halloran and Switzer made the request at the semiannual TAA Council meeting. In all, said Executive Director Ron Pynn, five seats are open: Vice president: Incumbent Michael Sullivan moves up to president; Secretary: Mary Kay Switzer's term expires; Treasurer: John Wakefield was appointed to the position, which was vacated by Michael Sullivan when he was elected vice president; TAA Council: Donna Besser's term expires; TAA Council: Phil Halloran's term expires. Sullivan, who is chairing the nominations committee, invited suggestions from members. Contact: Michael Sullivan, m_sullivan@worldnet.att.net

TAA Foundation? The governing board of TAA agreed to begin a campaign to collect funds to set up a charitable foundation that would allow people to support TAA through tax-deductible contributions. The Council's executive committee was charged with raising funds to set up the Foundation. Estimates ranged from \$2,000 to \$5,000 for

legal fees. Because of an anticipated tight budget, the TAA Council decided to solicit members for the startup expenses rather than take the money from the budget. Said TAA Vice President Mike

New URL. The TAA web site will have a more intuitive address and a new home page. TAA Council member Chris Harris and association editor John Vivian agreed to work as a committee to renovate the site. The new address, TAAonline.net, has already been reserved, Harris said. The old address, now a bookmark for hundreds of TAA members, will also continue for access to the site. Mike Sullivan, TAA vice president, applauded the additional address: "People can't find us on search engines. A new URL will give us more visibility to people searching for author groups."

Editor stays. TAA editor John Vivian, who created the *Academic Author newsletter* in 1994 and later the TAA web site, agreed to continue overseeing the association's membership communication program. His decision, announced at a meeting of the TAA Council, was greeted with applause. Vivian had announced his resignation in June to spend more time on his textbooks. He changed his mind, he said, because the TAA Council's executive committee had been able to come up only with a scaled-down program that, in effect, scrapped the news site. Said Vivian: "I would like to see what has been built continue to grow."

Sales dented. Reed Elsevier's education sales and profit will be dented only slightly by the loss of California reading adoptions by its Harcourt subsidiary, analysts said. The \$150 million market instead is going to McGraw-Hill and Houghton Mifflin in 2002 sales. According to analysts, Harcourt's elimination can be expected to have a small impact on its education sales and profits but nothing material on the Harcourt's overall results.

Ebrary addition. The ebrary research database added several library clients, including Stanford University, Yale University Library, and the Peninsula Library System, a consortium of 34 academic libraries and public library systems. Ebrary said that Stanford will also contribute several thousands of titles to the system.

Contract alert for Pearson authors

A clause designed to gag authors is showing up in revised Pearson boilerplate. The language: "The author shall keep confidential and shall not disclose the terms of this agreement except to the author's authorized legal and financial representative with a need to know and then only for purposes of representing the author's interests hereunder."

An effect of the provision is to prevent the inter-author exchanges that TAA makes possible to help level the steeply tilted playing-field advantage that publishers have over authors.

Cross out the clause. Although other publishers have occasionally tried such clauses, no publisher has gone to the mat insisting on them. If you're pressed, say firmly that the clause is unacceptable and author-unfriendly. That usually will do it. If need be, express your shock that Pearson, a company committed to the exchange of information and knowledge, would seek to gag anyone, let alone authors. Pearson editors know that the clause is one-sided and won't counter your resistance. Let us know if they do: TAA headquarters (727) 553-1195. taa@bayflash.stpt.usf.edu, or Text and Academic Authors, USF St. Petersburg, 147th Ave S., St. Petersburg, FL 33701.

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