



Publishers, Editors, And Agents

By
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We have discussed many things in this series, including character, plot, pacing, dialogue, mistakes to avoid, and techniques to employ in your writing. The one part of writing on which I have yet to opine is the *business* of writing. And make no mistake about it! Writing *is* a business. A professional writer is in it for

the money.

This is not to say that we don't write for other reasons. Primarily, of course, writers are driven by ego. Deep down we are all elitists. We think we're better than other people and that those people should feel privileged to pay their hard-earned beer money to purchase something we have written. A writer's personality is something of an odd combination, a fact that has not gone unnoticed by the general public. We are introverts with delusions of grandeur, dictators of the universe who aren't comfortable confronting other people face-to-face. So we sit in our studies, bedrooms, or offices and issue our manifestos to the world, often bound up in colorful covers, and thinly disguised as fiction.

Writing isn't a profession; it's a disease! And it's terminal. Once you catch the bug, you are never rid of it. As a famous writer once said, "There are no ex-writers, only writers who have stopped selling." If you have caught the disease and are able to keep it in remission by writing little works to be read by your friends and family, then more power to you! You have adapted well to your handicap and it will probably only be a minor inconvenience in your life. If, on the other hand, you have a particularly virulent strain of the disease, if you insist that you will not be happy as a writer until you've actually gotten someone to pay money for your work, then you need to know something about the business end of the business.

So let us discuss the nature of writing and publishing from the standpoint of the way things really are, and not the way we would like them to be.

Editors

An editor is the most important person in the life of a professional writer. That is because the editor is the person who makes the decision whether or not to publish your work, and in all likelihood, is the one who begins the process that will eventually print a check with your name on it. Therefore, you should take great care not to unduly irritate this worthy. When you receive a rejection letter, don't sit down and immediately fire off an angry note questioning the editor's intelligence and ancestry. It not only won't sell your story, it's counterproductive. Even if the editor isn't interested in your current

work, he or she may buy something you write in the future. Why reduce your future prospects while not enhancing your present ones? If you make enough editors mad, you may find yourself permanently out of business. For instance, writers of science fiction short stories have approximately three places to sell their work in the United States. Once they have pissed off all three editors, they have no market left.

Publishers

There was a time when the “publisher” was a person with a face, a name, and an identifiable set of personal biases. However, modern publishers are usually institutions rather than individuals; that portion of some multinational conglomerate that specializes in book publishing. Once upon a time writers had personal relationships with their publishers. No longer. Instead of one or two staffers, publishers now have hundreds of employees, each of whom is striving to make money for the corporation’s stockholders. This is not unique to publishers, by the way. Making money for the stockholders is the mission of every corporation. It is their *raison d’être*, their reason for being.

Publishers no longer have feelings for writers for the simple reason that they no longer possess the necessary glands. Corporations substitute the bottom line for human emotion. You, the writer, are important to them. In their eyes you represent a valuable resource, essentially a gold nugget they can melt down, hammer into a pleasing shape, and then sell to the general public at a profit.

This is not to say that the publisher’s staff doesn’t care about their writers. Editors and writers still develop long lasting friendships with one another. They “do lunch” together, play poker or tennis, sometimes they even go on vacation together. But never forget, the editor isn’t the publisher. The editor is an employee of a corporation whose business is the manufacture, distribution, and sale of books; and no matter how much he likes you personally, what will drive his decisions are the needs of his employer.

The Publisher as Corporation

Writers are people who tend to think with their glands. If they weren’t, they would be accountants. As a result of their innate empathy, writers tend to anthropomorphize things. That is, they tend to ascribe human feelings to inanimate objects.

Publishing companies are one of the inanimate objects to which writers ascribe feelings. Most writers tend to equate their publishers with their fathers. Believing in a benevolent, omniscient person who watches over you and keeps you safe from harm is very comforting, but it isn’t reality. And when reality eventually intrudes on fantasy, when their publishers begin acting like the corporations they are, writers often develop hurt feelings.

In the last 30 years I have had many occasions to observe corporations in action, having been employed by one aerospace giant or another since graduating college. In 1996, I tried to explain corporate life to my eldest son, who graduated from engineering school in December of that year. As a newly minted engineer, he was looking for work, but had unrealistic expectations of what corporate life is like. Being a writer, I thought

about how I might explain reality to him. I was pondering the problem while watching *Sink the Bismarck* on television one night, when suddenly I had an inspiration:

A corporation is a battleship designed to do battle with other corporate battleships!

Think about it. A battleship is a large machine that has been carefully tuned for the sole purpose of fighting other large, finely tuned machines. In the battleship era nothing on the seas could stand up against a dreadnought except another dreadnought. And so it is with corporations. They, too, are optimized to do battle with their competitors. *Intel* is locked in a struggle with *Motorola*, *McDonald's* is fighting it out with *Wendy's*, and *Ford* is in a slugfest with *General Motors*. *Microsoft*, of course, is doing battle with just about everyone, although recently, having pounded the *Apple* battleship into scrap, they announced they were relenting and taking the sinking giant under tow.

The analogy is especially apt, I believe, because of the fate of the loser in any such battle. If your battleship is holed below the water line, it eventually slips beneath the waves, never to be seen again until Robert Ballard goes looking for it. If a corporation loses its fight with a competitor, it goes bankrupt. Any of you who have lost your jobs because your employer had to close its doors will testify that there isn't much difference between that experience and manning the lifeboats.

And just as a battleship must balance speed, fuel economy, firepower, range, and armor protection — it can't be good at everything at once — a corporation must also keep itself in fighting trim. It can't have too many employees, or lose money on too many projects, or keep a large stable of half-filled office buildings and half-utilized factories. To do so means that the corporation's costs will rise above those of its competitors and consumers will start buying that other company's products. In a competitive situation, all parties must strive to their utmost or else fall behind and eventually go out of business.

"But what has all of this talk about battleships and corporations have to do with me?" you ask. "I'm just a poor writer."

Yes, you *are* just a writer, and if you are like the rest of us, you are probably poor as well. But you are also a potentially valuable resource. It is the job of the publisher to figure out how to harvest your potential to the benefit of their corporate coffers. If they must pay you an obscene amount of money to obtain the rights to what you have written, then that is the strategy they will follow — assuming, of course, that they can figure out a way to get their money back. Other times they will give you a minimum advance because that is what they can get you for. Whatever strategy they follow, you can be sure that the corporation's primary interest is in maximizing its own profit and only incidentally in making you rich.

It is your job as a writer to help them make money off your efforts. After all, when they make money, you make money. More importantly, when they lose money, they start to think about how to cut their losses. Frequently this involves dropping you from their line so that they can free up resources to pursue other writers whom they suspect will bring them higher revenues.

When this happens to writers, they often become irate and start ranting about evil corporations not understanding the value of true art. Actually, it is the writers who don't

understand. Why they expect warmth from a soulless machine designed to do battle with other soulless machines is a mystery.

Many people at this point will suspect that I don't like corporations. Nothing could be further from the truth. As I said earlier, they have been my home for more than thirty years. No, where the misunderstanding comes is when people mistake the corporation's employees for the corporation itself. Just as a battleship has a crew, a corporation has personnel whose job it is to sail and fight the mammoth dreadnought.

The people who crew a battleship, or the employees of a corporation, are human beings just like the rest of us. They care for each other, send condolences when there is a death in the family, help out with each other's children, worry when their fellows get sick. And, in the case of publishers, the employees look out for the interests of the writers, but only insofar as those interests parallel those of their employers.

The important point to remember is that the needs of the crew didn't determine how a battleship was operated anymore than the personal wishes of the editors determine a publisher's business decisions. This is an important point that is best illustrated by an example.

When a battleship committed itself to a fight, it sealed all watertight doors as a precaution against enemy shellfire. Closing the doors trapped some 200 men in the magazines where the high explosives were kept. If during the battle the magazines caught fire, the captain would give the order to flood them with seawater. He had no choice in the matter. To let a fire burn among the high explosives could destroy the entire ship (as *H.M.S Hood* was destroyed, during its duel with *Bismarck*, killing all but 3 of the more than 1000 men aboard). Flooding the magazines would sometimes save the ship, but it would drown all 200 men who worked there ... *and the magazine crew both knew the risk and accepted it!*

Luckily for writers, a publisher generally doesn't have to kill people to keep itself afloat. But they sometimes sacrifice unproductive resources, including mid-list writers who aren't earning back their advances. So long as publishing a particular writer is profitable, harmony reigns. When the needs of the corporation are not met, however, changes are made. If you demand a huge advance and then don't "earn out," it won't be too many books before the publisher drops you from their publishing line.

To expect otherwise is unrealistic and naive. Unfortunately, unrealistic and naive is often the perfect definition for the word "writer."

Agents

An agent is someone who represents the writer's interests during the publication process, and who gets the writer the best deal that he can. This is not to say agents are altruists. Far from it. Agents, like everyone else in the process, are in it for the money. The agent looks out for the writer's interests because his own economic well being is tied to that of the writer. In fact, the relationship has been specifically designed to ensure that this is the case.

An agent, then, is someone who acts as an intermediary between the writer and the editor. An agent may be an individual entrepreneur, but is often employed by a company that specializes in performing services for writers. Such a company is called a "literary agency." The agent or agency acts as the writer's business representative,

negotiating on the writer's behalf, collecting the writer's earnings, and seeking out new markets in which to peddle ancillary rights. In exchange for this service, an agent typically deducts 10% from the writer's earnings (which the agent collects) before sending them on to the writer.

Ten percent! That seems very high.

Actually, I think it seems low. Your typical ambulance-chasing lawyer gets 30% or more of whatever he recovers for his client, and many movie stars get larger percentages of the gross receipts of a movie. As in all matters involving pricing, the going rate is whatever the traffic will bear. However, ten percent is a time-honored level for agent representation, and it is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future.

[Author's Note: It seems that the dawn of the 21st Century has brought a mark of "progress" in the writer-agent relationship. Many agents are now demanding 20%.]

In the publishing industry, the term for what an agent does is "add value to the product." In this case, "value" involves the number of "rights" a writer must surrender to the publisher in exchange for money received. Because it is an agent's job to know what the traffic will bear, a deal negotiated by an agent will typically be more lucrative than one the writer can negotiate for himself. If the difference is greater than 10-20%, then the agent has earned his money.

Writers also tend to misunderstand their relationship with their agents. If they see the publisher as a father figure, the agent is definitely the mother figure in the relationship. It is the agent's job to maximize your income through astute negotiation and to make sure you don't sign any papers that you will come to regret in later life — such as selling the rights to your intellectual property in perpetuity. That is really the only job an agent has.

The relationship often becomes more complicated than that, of course. For one thing, since he (or she) makes 10% of what you make, the agent has a strong financial incentive to keep you working. In this role he will often act as psychiatrist, confessor, and scold (which is why we get the idea that they are our mothers). However, the better analogy is that of a skilled operator manipulating a particularly balky machine. If the ore processor keeps stopping at inconvenient times, it's sometimes necessary to give it a kick to get it started again. After all, it wouldn't do to have an interruption in the supply of gold nuggets, now would it?

However, there are limits to what an agent will do for a writer. My first agent went to great lengths to make sure that I knew this when I signed on with him. Apparently one of his clients arrived unannounced in New York one day and expected the agent to put him up in his (the agent's) apartment for a week. That very definitely exceeds the level of service for a literary agent. If we expect them to run our lives for us, we should expect to pay them a larger percentage of our income.

One of the recurring themes among writers is how terrible their agents are. In fact, the long suffering ones in the relationship aren't the writers, but the agents. Imagine how you would feel if your paycheck depended on some prima donna of a writer finishing his book on time! How sympathetic would you be to his complaints of writer's block or some imagined slight by the publisher? I'm sure the universal desire among

agents is to tell their clients to stop whining and to get back to their writing. Unfortunately, if one upsets the pampered cow, one doesn't get any milk for the next couple of days. So agents spend an inordinate amount of time stroking the writers' egos, the better to increase the absolute value of their 10% share!

And then there are the things writers do that drive agents to drink.

When I decided to open up my own Internet bookstore and publishing company, there was one person who was decidedly unenthusiastic about the idea: my agent! The reason for this is simple. Agents act as intermediaries between writers and publishers. What, then, if the writer is also the publisher? Who does the agent have to negotiate with? In effect, he's out of a job. That undoubtedly colored his recommendation that I was "out of my mind!"

But, as any agent will tell you, it is hard to dissuade a writer from doing something once he has made up his mind. The best course is usually to go along with the idea and let the writer find out the hard way that it won't work.

So it was with my agent. After warning me that I would be foolish to put all of my works on the Internet where people could steal me blind, he acquiesced to my wishes and retrieved my rights from the publisher so that I could publish my own work. He is now confining himself to selling my books in various languages other than English (since I am using the English language rights myself). For the record, theft of my work on the Internet has not been a problem. In fact, getting people sufficiently interested to visit my site is the biggest problem I have.

How Do You Get an Agent?

By now all of the young, would-be writers are getting impatient with me. "He babbles on about agents, but he doesn't tell me what I really want to know: How does one go about getting an agent?"

Getting an agent is very much like getting a loan. First you have to prove that you don't need one! What I mean by this is that agents aren't in business as a public service. They are in business to make money. In order to be successful, they must represent enough writers with an aggregate income that reaping 10% will keep the agent's family fed, clothed, and housed. If the agent's client is Tom Clancy or Stephen King, then one client is sufficient to perform this function. If the agent's client is me, then he needs to have several dozen other clients to keep him afloat!

One thing an agent cannot afford is a client who doesn't make any money. Ten percent of nothing is nothing. So, before an agent will devote his time to your project, he needs to have some confidence that the effort expended will eventually come back in the form of cold, hard cash.

So how do you convince an agent that you are worth taking on? You need a track record of some kind. One of the best ways is to approach the agent with a letter of interest from a publisher. If you have suffered through the process of sending your book out to the publishers and have found one who is interested, then you can engage an agent to do your negotiating for you. The agent is assured of a return on his investment of time, and you will end up with a better deal than you would have otherwise negotiated. Everyone wins, and you now have an agent for your second book.

Another way to obtain an agent is to have published various shorter pieces in the magazines. This is the method I used. I published nearly a dozen short stories, novelettes, and novellas in the science fiction magazines before I thought about becoming a novelist. Having written three shorter works in chronological order and with the same protagonist, I decided that I would turn the novelettes into a novel. So I started out to find an agent.

I got out my copy of *Writer's Market* for that year and looked in the back under the section for Literary Agents. I read all of the descriptions and noted the ones who seemed to specialize in science fiction. I then went to my trusty *Science Fiction Writers of America* Directory and noted those agents whose clients wrote things like I wrote. I then chose three agencies and wrote them letters asking if they wanted to represent me. One agent sent back a letter stating that he wasn't accepting new clients. A second wrote a letter to the effect that he didn't usually sell warmed over short stories, but that if I wanted, I could send my work in and he would consider it. The third called me personally on the phone and told me that he loved my stuff and would be overjoyed to represent me.

Guess which one I chose?

The last option for a new writer is to pay an agent up front to represent your work. In other words, the agent charges you a fee (usually a few hundred dollars) and they take on one of your books and try to peddle it to a publisher. First, of course, they have to determine whether it is of professional quality. An agent represents many writers to only a few publishers. He or she isn't about to irritate the publisher by sending them junk and wasting their time. Your few hundred dollar fee isn't nearly enough to counterbalance the thousands of dollars of bad will such an action will cause.

So which agencies will represent you for a fee? I'm afraid I don't know. The one that would always consider representation-for-a-fee was the Scott Meredith Literary Agency (SMLA). That was the agency I was with for nearly ten years. Unfortunately, Scott Meredith died and his agency did not long survive him. So about the only thing you can do now is look in a literary reference work (*Writer's Market* or one of its competitors) under "Literary Agencies" and start reading the descriptions. An agency that will do representation-for-fee will advertise that fact. After that it's just a matter of sending in a query letter, receiving a reply, and trying again until you find an agent.

You Don't Really Need an Agent, You Know

It is an article of faith among new writers that you have to have an agent to sell anything. This is absolutely false! An agent can decrease the time it takes you to sell a book by a significant amount. The reason for this is simple. The agent has a better idea of where your manuscript will sell than you do. So instead of first sending it to the three publishers who aren't accepting manuscripts this month, he sends it directly to someone who is buying what you are selling.

Whether it sells or not, of course, is the writer's problem, not the agent's. He's done his best with what you have given him to sell. If the manuscript is good, some publisher will eventually accept it. If represented by an agent, it will probably sell to someone faster than if not. But Tom Clancy didn't have an agent when he sold *The Hunt For Red October* to the Institute for Naval Proceedings. All he had was a good

manuscript and a never-say-die attitude. The fact that he sold it where he did should tell you how many other publishers turned him down. In fact, to my knowledge, that was the first work of fiction the I.N.P. ever published. (They then repaid Clancy by claiming that they owned the character of Jack Ryan, and tying the book up in court for years. See the section on *The Publisher as Corporation* above if you don't understand how they could do such a thing.)

So you don't have to have an agent to sell! But if you are going to represent yourself, you need to learn something of the business end of writing. Toward that end, next month we will discuss the further business aspects of writing. Don't ever forget that writers are lambs in the wilderness, and publishers run a professional sheep shearing operation. The question isn't whether or not you are about to have all of your warm, soft wool clipped; but rather, how much you are going to receive in exchange.

Not a very comforting thought, I'll grant you, but an honest one.

The End

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Michael McCollum, Proprietor
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We have book length versions of both Writers' Workshop series, "The Art of Writing, Volumes I and II" and "The Art of Science Fiction, Volumes I and II" in both electronic and hard copy formats.

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NOVELS

1. Life Probe - ^{US}\$5.00

The Makers searched for the secret to faster-than-light travel for 100,000 years. Their chosen instruments were the Life Probes, which they launched in every direction to seek out advanced civilizations among the stars. One such machine searching for intelligent life encounters 21st century Earth. It isn't sure that it has found any...

2. Procyon's Promise - ^{US}\$5.00

Three hundred years after humanity made its deal with the Life Probe to search out the secret of faster-than-light travel, the descendants of the original expedition return to Earth in a starship. They find a world that has forgotten the ancient contract. No matter. The colonists have overcome far greater obstacles in their single-minded drive to redeem a promise made before any of them were born...

3. Antares Dawn - US\$5.00

When the super giant star Antares exploded in 2512, the human colony on Alta found their pathway to the stars gone, isolating them from the rest of human space for more than a century. Then one day, a powerful warship materialized in the system without warning. Alarmed by the sudden appearance of such a behemoth, the commanders of the Altan Space Navy dispatched one of their most powerful ships to investigate. What ASNS Discovery finds when they finally catch the intruder is a battered hulk manned by a dead crew.

That is disturbing news for the Altans. For the dead battleship could easily have defeated the whole of the Altan navy. If it could find Alta, then so could whomever it was that beat it. Something must be done...

4. Antares Passage - US\$5.00

After more than a century of isolation, the paths between stars are again open and the people of Alta in contact with their sister colony on Sandar. The opening of the foldlines has not been the unmixed blessing the Altans had supposed, however.

For the reestablishment of interstellar travel has brought with it news of the Ryall, an alien race whose goal is the extermination of humanity. If they are to avoid defeat at the hands of the aliens, Alta must seek out the military might of Earth. However, to reach Earth requires them to dive into the heart of a supernova.

5. Antares Victory – First Time in Print – US\$7.00

After a century of warfare, humanity finally discovered the Achilles heel of the Ryall, their xenophobic reptilian foe. Spica – Alpha Virginis – is the key star system in enemy space. It is the hub through which all Ryall starships must pass, and if humanity can only capture and hold it, they will strangle the Ryall war machine and end their threat to humankind forever.

It all seemed so simple in the computer simulations: Advance by stealth, attack without warning, strike swiftly with overwhelming power. Unfortunately, conquering the Ryall proves the easy part. With the key to victory in hand, Richard and Bethany Drake discover that they must also conquer human nature if they are to bring down the alien foe ...

6. Thunderstrike! - US\$6.00

The new comet found near Jupiter was an incredible treasure trove of water ice and rock. Immediately, the water-starved Luna Republic and the Sierra Corporation, a leader in asteroid mining, were squabbling over rights to the new resource. However, all thoughts of profit and fame were abandoned when a scientific expedition discovered that the comet's trajectory placed it on a collision course with Earth!

As scientists struggled to find a way to alter the comet's course, world leaders tried desperately to restrain mass panic, and two lovers quarreled over the direction the comet was to take, all Earth waited to see if humanity had any future at all...

7. The Clouds of Saturn - US\$5.00

When the sun flared out of control and boiled Earth's oceans, humanity took refuge in a place that few would have predicted. In the greatest migration in history, the entire human race took up residence among the towering clouds and deep clear-air canyons of Saturn's upper atmosphere. Having survived the traitor star, they returned to the all-too-human tradition of internecine strife. The new city-states of Saturn began to resemble those of ancient Greece, with one group of cities taking on the role of militaristic Sparta...

8. The Sails of Tau Ceti – US\$5.00

Starhopper was humanity's first interstellar probe. It was designed to search for intelligent life beyond the solar system. Before it could be launched, however, intelligent life found Earth. The discovery of an alien light sail inbound at the edge of the solar system generated considerable excitement in scientific circles. With the interstellar probe nearing completion, it gave scientists the opportunity to launch an expedition to meet the aliens while they were still in space. The second surprise came when *Starhopper's* crew boarded the alien craft. They found beings that, despite their alien physiques, were surprisingly compatible with humans. That two species so similar could have evolved a mere twelve light years from one another seemed too coincidental to be true.

One human being soon discovered that coincidence had nothing to do with it...

9. Gibraltar Earth – First Time in Print — \$6.00

It is the 24th Century and humanity is just gaining a toehold out among the stars. Stellar Survey Starship *Magellan* is exploring the New Eden system when they encounter two alien spacecraft. When the encounter is over, the score is one human scout ship and one alien aggressor destroyed. In exploring the wreck of the second alien ship, spacers discover a survivor with a fantastic story.

The alien comes from a million-star Galactic Empire ruled over by a mysterious race known as the Broa. These overlords are the masters of this region of the galaxy and they allow no competitors. This news presents Earth's rulers with a problem. As yet, the Broa are ignorant of humanity's existence. Does the human race retreat to its one small world, quaking in fear that the Broa will eventually discover Earth? Or do they take a more aggressive approach?

Whatever they do, they must do it quickly! Time is running out for the human race...

10. Gibraltar Sun – First Time in Print — \$7.00

The expedition to the Crab Nebula has returned to Earth and the news is not good. Out among the stars, a million systems have fallen under Broan domination, the fate awaiting Earth should the Broa ever learn of its existence. The problem would seem to allow but three responses: submit meekly to slavery, fight and risk extermination, or hide and pray the Broa remain ignorant of humankind for at least a few more generations. Are the hairless apes of Sol III finally faced with a problem for which there is no acceptable solution?

While politicians argue, Mark Rykand and Lisa Arden risk everything to spy on the all-powerful enemy that is beginning to wonder at the appearance of mysterious bipeds in their midst...

11. Gridlock and Other Stories - US\$5.00

Where would you visit if you invented a time machine, but could not steer it? What if you went out for a six-pack of beer and never came back? If you think nuclear power is dangerous, you should try black holes as an energy source — or even scarier, solar energy! Visit the many worlds of Michael McCollum. I guarantee that you will be surprised!

Non-Fiction Books

12. The Art of Writing, Volume I - US\$10.00

Have you missed any of the articles in the Art of Writing Series? No problem. The first sixteen articles (October, 1996-December, 1997) have been collected into a book-length work of more than 72,000 words. Now you can learn about character, conflict, plot, pacing, dialogue, and the business of writing, all in one document.

13. The Art of Writing, Volume II - US\$10.00

This collection covers the Art of Writing articles published during 1998. The book is 62,000 words in length and builds on the foundation of knowledge provided by Volume I of this popular series.

14. The Art of Science Fiction, Volume I - US\$10.00

Have you missed any of the articles in the Art of Science Fiction Series? No problem. The first sixteen articles (October, 1996-December, 1997) have been collected into a book-length work of more than 70,000 words. Learn about science fiction techniques and technologies, including starships, time machines, and rocket propulsion. Tour the Solar System and learn astronomy from the science fiction writer's viewpoint. We don't care where the stars appear in the terrestrial sky. We want to know their true positions in space. If you are planning to write an interstellar romance, brushing up on your astronomy may be just what you need.

15. The Art of Science Fiction, Volume II - US\$10.00

This collection covers the *Art of Science Fiction* articles published during 1998. The book is 67,000 words in length and builds on the foundation of knowledge provided by Volume I of this popular series.

16. The Astrogator's Handbook – Expanded Edition and Deluxe Editions

The Astrogator's Handbook has been very popular on Sci Fi – Arizona. The handbook has star maps that show science fiction writers where the stars are located in space rather than where they are located in Earth's sky. Because of the popularity, we are expanding the handbook to show nine times as much space and more than ten times as many stars. The expanded handbook includes the positions of 3500 stars as viewed from Polaris on 63 maps. This handbook is a useful resource for every science fiction writer and will appeal to anyone with an interest in astronomy.