



The Publication Process

By
Michael McCollum



We are all familiar with the mystique that accompanies the profession of writing. We all know the stories of writers who, in the throes of the creative process, live alone in a garret and shun all contact with their fellow human beings. Writers aren't like other people we have heard. They can't be expected to deal with mundane things like the need to put bread on the table or to pay for their daughter's braces. They must devote their lives to their art, foregoing all else lest it dilute their creative juices. To be a great writer, we have been told, requires one to pursue their muse wherever it leads, even if that means into the deepest, darkest corners of their own psyche. How do we know these things? Because that is what writers have told us!

There is probably too much mystique involved with the profession of writing. In truth, it is harder work than digging ditches, but not necessarily more valuable to society. If you believe otherwise, then you have never encountered a city with open sewers! For this reason, we have spent the last two chapters taking a hard-eyed look at the business of writing. In *Editor's, Publishers, and Agents*, we faced the disagreeable concept that publishing is a business like any other, a fact most writers refuse to accept. In our journals and trade magazines you see an endless parade of articles decrying the fact that publishers are mostly large corporations whose main concern is not the quality of writing they publish, but rather the income stream that any given book will add to their corporate coffers. We denounce the coarsening effect this "bottom line" mentality has on the creative process; but accept our million dollar advances (those of us lucky enough to get them) without protest.

Nor are writers the only ones who complain about corporate money grubbing. The whole idea that the creative process is subordinate to commercial considerations is anathema to the "creative community," those who believe their own sensibilities have evolved to a higher plane than people whose recreational activities include bowling. To many writers, artists, musicians, and their patrons, the words "commercial success" are pejorative, worthy only of contempt by the cognoscenti who deem themselves the arbiters of taste. Understand that these worthies have no objection to tapping the common tax fund so long as the taxpayers make no attempt to control the output of the artistic process.

They just don't think the creative arts (in which I include writing) should have to bow to the base concerns of the "money men."

As we learned in *Literary Rights*, "art" is not the glorious, solid gold abstraction that the arbiters of taste would like it to be. "Art" belongs to someone, either the artist who created it or the person who paid money to obtain the rights to the artist's creation. This inconvenient fact of life demonstrates that whatever the merits of the art community's protests as rhetoric, these appeals to snobbery are, at their heart, delusional. For to expect a corporation not to worry about the bottom line is to ignore the very nature of the beast. A corporation's *only* function is to make money for its stockholders, and any corporate manager who forgets this is committing stock fraud. The corporation for which I work manufactures airplane components, while a publishing corporation manufactures books. There is no difference, either of kind or degree, between the two.

This dichotomy between the creative temperament and the way the world really works was best illustrated several years ago when computers reached the level of sophistication that made it possible to add color to old black and white movies. Suddenly the airwaves were alive with learned professors explaining that this was sacrilege, that the work product of great directors and producers was sacrosanct and must never be altered without their permission, and especially for any reason as crass as making them more popular on television! At the height of the debate, I happened to see a news program in which the moderator put the question to Ted Turner, founder of *CNN*, self professed patron of the arts, and the man who had just purchased the *MGM* film library to add to his broadcast empire. A Hollywood director had just finished opining that the colorization of old movies was debasement and that it shouldn't be allowed. Turner responded (to the best of my recollection) with, "Those are my movies! I just paid \$300 million to own them, and I'll do with them as I like!"

That is the artistic/commercial debate in a nutshell. Writers and artists are arrogating to themselves rights that do not exist, claiming that they should control what is done with property that others have purchased for cold, hard cash. While we make ourselves feel more important than we really are with that talk, it does us no good in the long run. For just as Freedom of the Press is reserved to the man who actually owns one; intellectual property belongs to the person who has purchased the rights.

So, having warned you against the sin of arrogance (a sin that most writers' personalities guarantee they will commit), let us get to the subject of this chapter. You have worked a year or more writing a book, you have spent another year marketing it, and finally, you are about to be published. What happens between the time when you receive that wonderful letter announcing that the publisher will buy your book, and that glorious day when your book appears on the shelves in your local bookstore?

Publication happens, that's what. And publication can sometimes be a more trying ordeal than making the sale in the first place.

The Editing Process

Like most aspects of writing, technological change has been quickly transforming the ways in which books are published, and the rate of change is accelerating. Because of the rapid computerization of the industry, it is nearly impossible to give you an accurate view of the precise steps your particular publisher will use to publish your book. Still,

there are certain things that must be done, steps your book will likely go through during its transformation from manuscript to published work. One of these steps is editing.

When your manuscript first arrives at the publisher's, it is assigned an editor. Unless you are Tom Clancy or Stephen King, this is usually a junior editor. The first thing an editor does after being assigned to the project is to read your manuscript all the way through. This first reading allows the editor to familiarize himself (or herself) with your story and also to bring to light any passages that might need improvement.

Usually this first reading results in a letter being composed to the writer, a letter that says things like, "The heroine is a blonde on page 67 and a redhead on page 112. Which is it?" or "I don't like that dose of bravado in the ending. Don't you think the story would be more effective if you changed it to...?" or "You can't have someone else solve the hero's problem for him. He has to solve it himself! Please revise and resubmit."

After getting this letter following the submission of each of my books, I would immediately get out my copy of the manuscript and read feverishly. Usually I found that the editor was right and that the book would be significantly improved if I followed his or her suggestion. So I would work for anywhere from a day to a week making corrections which I would submit to the editor. Usually, this involved printing out substitute pages to be inserted in the original manuscript with the note "Revision A" in the header to keep straight which pages were improved and which the originals.

Frequently this revision process involves more than one cycle, in which case you can end up with "Rev. A," "Rev. B," and "Rev. C" pages in your manuscript. For this reason it is very important to keep both the editor's copy and your own copy synchronized and up to date. Nothing can be more confusing than if the two of you are working from manuscripts with different words in them. In the aerospace business we call this "configuration management," and it's just as important for an author as it is for an engineer.

After the editor received the corrections and we negotiated how the various changes would be incorporated until we were both satisfied, then the editor began *line editing* the book. Line editing is the process where the editor looks at every single sentence in the manuscript to determine whether it is in proper English, can be said more concisely, or is just plain redundant. If you have a good editor, they can make you look great during line editing. All of those dangling participles that you failed to catch, those extra dozen paragraphs at the end of Chapter 3 where you rambled on far too long about the history of English crockery, the convoluted sentence on Page 127 that requires a post-doctoral degree to understand what you are talking about — all of these are corrected in line editing.

Of course, if you don't have the right editor, line editing can be a disaster. One of the reasons you sold your book was because of your distinctive narrative style, those little language quirks that give your writing flavor. If your editor homogenizes your work too much, it may lose the flavor that tells people it is your work. In such a case, you would have been better off not being edited at all.

And then there is the occasional blooper that the editor sticks in, the seemingly insignificant change that in reality revises the whole meaning of a passage. I had that happen to me in a book where I was discussing the asteroid *Icarus*, which occasionally passes very near the Earth. I had written, "Icarus is an Earth approaching asteroid," and my editor, in an attempt to make the sentence read more smoothly, rewrote it as "Icarus is

an asteroid approaching Earth." When I got the galley proofs (more on that later), I came across this change, I scrawled the following note in the margin: *"Please change back. While Icarus is an Earth-approaching asteroid, it is not always approaching Earth!"* By this I meant that there is an entire class of asteroids known as the "Earth approaching asteroids" because their orbits cross that of Earth, but they may be quite distant from us during a large portion of their orbits.

Following line editing comes *copy editing*. Copy editing is usually done by someone other than the editor who is in charge of your book. A copy editor is someone very skilled in grammar and proper usage, and who has the style manual of the particular publishing house memorized. Copy editors look at every word and every punctuation mark and make the manuscript conform to the style manual. Their job is to make sure that every instance where the writer has written, "grey" is turned into "gray," or vice versa. They also double check for misspelled words.

With the advent of computers and spell checkers, you don't see many misspelled words in books. What you do see are properly spelled words that don't belong in the sentence where they are located. Copy editors are especially good at ferreting out these invisible typos.

Finally, the copy editor puts in all the marks required by the typesetter. They make sure that the space between sentences is actually a double space, and remove extra spaces everywhere else. They mark the paragraphs, insert commas and quotation marks, change hyphens to m-dashes, or take punctuation out, as needed.

Which brings us to the importance of manuscript format. A manuscript has one-inch margins all around, is double spaced, with good indentations at the beginning of each paragraph. The font is a fixed space (10 or 12 point) typewriter font, the left margin is aligned, and the right margin is "ragged right" (not aligned).

Now personally I think a manuscript looks much better when it is printed in a proportionally spaced font and fully justified (both left and right margins aligned). After all, that is the format the book will be in when it is published. The problem is that your word processor adjusts everything to look good when you use a proportionally spaced font or choose "justified" for your line format. The copy editor must then undo everything the computer has done in order that the typesetter can properly prepare your book for publication! This is one case where "ugly" wins out. Send your manuscripts in double spaced, with a fixed width font and ragged right margins, and stop making excess work for the copy editors.

As I noted above, a good editor can either make or break a book, and you would think that authors would treasure editors above all else. You would be wrong. Many authors hate their editors, either because they had the temerity to suggest that the author's golden words can somehow be improved, or because they took a blue pencil to the author's favorite passage in the manuscript. ("Blue pencil" is a publishing colloquialism. It means to remove words or otherwise correct a manuscript. The term comes from the light blue pencils editors use to make corrections.)

One of the recurring themes you hear from authors regarding editors is summed up in the saying, "The editor isn't happy with the taste of the stew until he's had a chance to piss in it himself!" This saying betrays a certain value judgement regarding the usefulness of the changes an editor makes in a manuscript. Generally speaking,

comments like this are both unkind and unwarranted. Remember that the editor is making you look good and has a strong personal interest in making your book a success.

Galley Proofs

When the manuscript has been fully edited and annotated, then it is sent off to the typesetter. It is the typesetter's job to convert your marked up manuscript into "camera ready" copy. Time was that typesetting involved assembling thousands of little reversed letters cast from lead into a frame and then using that frame to print a single page of your book. The build up of individual letters and symbols into a complete assemblage is known as "setting type."

More recently, a machine called a "linotype" was invented which cast an entire line of text from molten lead. I actually saw a linotype machine when I toured the offices of *The Arizona Republic* with the Boy Scouts in approximately 1960. Shortly thereafter, lead type was totally replaced by offset printing methods which involved photographic film, and of course, modern typesetting involves the use of computers, laser printers with up to 2400 dots per inch (DPI) resolution, and downloadable fonts.

The typesetter takes your manuscript and types it into a computer while following the editor's exact instructions on how the output must look. This includes changes in font size and type, paragraph marks, where to end the page, the removal or addition of spaces, the capitalization (or non-capitalization) of various words, and a myriad of other details. Once the "typeset" manuscript is finished, the typesetter then prints a full copy of your book and sends it to the editor for review. This copy is called a "galley" and its purpose is to act as a quality control check before the publisher goes to the expense of printing up 50,000 copies of your book.

Galley format varies from publisher to publisher. Some galleys I have received were printed in a continuous stream on oversize paper. Others had two book pages printed side by side (landscape) on American standard 8.5 X 11 paper. Whichever format I used, the galleys always had large areas of white space in the margins and gutters. This space is important in that it provides space for handwritten comments.

When the editor receives the galleys from the typesetter, he or she reviews them against the marked up manuscript, making sure the typesetter followed all instructions properly. More importantly, however, the editor also sends a copy to the author along with a request that they proofread the book and get any corrections or changes back to the editor by a specific date. Typically, I received my galleys about 10 weeks before the publication date of my books and my editor gave me three weeks to respond. Occasionally, I would receive a note of apology, and a request that I get my changes back within one week. Such requests are always accompanied by a polite note stating that if you miss your deadline the publisher will go to press without your input. Needless to say, I always moved Heaven and Earth to make sure that I got my changes in before the book went to press!

When I say "changes," I'm not talking about revising the motivation of the characters, or improving the battle scenes that run from Chapters 5 through 10, or adding a secondary plot to the novel. By the time you see the galleys, it is far too late for such wholesale tinkering. Proofing galleys is intended to catch small typographical errors, or to take out a few unnecessary sentences, or to correct things the copy editor screwed up.

If you try to make massive changes once the book is typeset, you will have three effects on the publication process: 1) You will irritate the hell out of your editor, 2) you will delay the publication date of your book, possibly by a year or more, and 3) you may receive a bill from your publisher for all of the editing and typesetting efforts that your wholesale changes have nullified.

Personally, I always enjoyed reading my books in galley. If you are like me, by the time you finish a manuscript you are royally sick of it. This is inevitable since you've spent as much as a year in writing, reading, rereading, and editing the work. By the time you finish, you can barely see the story for the words. Even the most magical writing turns stale through excessive repetition.

Once the publisher has the manuscript, however, you won't see it again for several months. Presumably, you are working on your new novel and have largely forgotten the work that is being prepared for publication. Then one day, a large manila envelope arrives in your mailbox. Inside are all the pages of your book bound together with a large rubber band. You review the letter asking for your comments, then turn to Page 1 and begin to read.

It hardly seems the same book that you sent in. The intervening months have allowed the story to cool in your brain, the words have been typeset, and all of the professional touches used by publishing companies have been applied. It's as though you were reading the work of someone else. As my wife will attest, I have often been heard to chuckle while proofreading my galleys, and then exclaiming, "Damn, this guy is good!"

While proofreading, however, it is important that you not get too caught up in the story. Proofreading the galleys is the last chance you will ever have to affect your book before it hits the shelves. The importance of this phase of the publication process is best illustrated by a story:

In *Procyon's Promise*, I have a race of aliens called The Makers. My problem was that I needed to describe their physical form and for reasons of plot, that wasn't easy to do. I solved my problem by having the protagonists tour the Makers' abandoned planet in Chapter 27. One of the things they discover during that tour is a statue of some unnamed Maker. By describing the statue, I describe the aliens who have gone undescribed for two full books. In a later chapter, I make a passing reference to the statue.

Just before the galleys were due, my editor called me and said, "You talk about a statue on page 215 of the manuscript. What statue?"

"What do you mean, 'What statue?'" I asked, incredulous. "Finding the statue is one of my biggest scenes in the whole book."

"I didn't see any statue," my editor replied.

This caused me to run to my manuscript and start looking. Sure enough, not only was the statue missing, all of Chapter 27 was missing! Chapter 26 ended and Chapter 28 began with no interruption in the page numbers. After thinking about how such a major omission could have occurred, I realized that I had inadvertently dropped the chapter when I printed the manuscript.

In those days I was working with an old DEC Rainbow computer using a daisy wheel printer. The computer would take approximately 3 chapters in its memory before becoming overloaded. When it came time to load Chapter 27, the words I was attempting

to print overflowed memory and wouldn't fit. Unfortunately, I had already checked the chapter off my list and became sufficiently distracted that I didn't erase my check mark. The result was that Chapter 26 flowed directly into Chapter 28, and except for my passing reference to the statue, I might have had a book published with one entire chapter missing!

That experience made me very sensitive to the importance of scrutinizing every single word in the galley proofs to make sure my book is whole and intact. There are stories told (possibly apocryphal) about one of William Faulkner's books being published with a chapter misplaced due to a publication error. Over the years, several Ph.D. theses were written about his symbolic purpose in writing such a convoluted passage!

How Long Does It Take To Publish A Book?

Once you have sold a book, you are naturally interested in getting it to the stores as quickly as possible. It can't take that long to edit, typeset, publish, and then distribute a book, right? Yeah, right!

I'm afraid I have some bad news for you.

About the fastest my publishers could get a book in print was nine months, the same as the human gestation period. And that was the *fastest* they were able to do it. Typically, they took one year from the time the manuscript was accepted to when it reached the bookstores. One of my books took 18 months, and I have heard of publishers where two years is the norm.

That statistic is important because it tells you something about the time it takes to become established as a writer. Typically, it takes a year to write a book (you may be able to do it faster, but I can't). After that, it takes a year to publish the book, and then you must wait through two royalty cycles to see how well your book is selling. Since royalties are mailed every six months, this means that you have wait a year to know whether your book is a success or failure. So, if you made a mistake in your choice of subjects, you don't find out about it for three long years, by which time you are facing another three years to make a correction.

This is why it is important to have one or two books in the pipeline at all times. With 36 months required to complete one full publication cycle, the average writer can't afford to wait to see how successful he or she has been before launching a new book. Three years is a non-trivial portion of your whole writing career! You should start your new book the day after you put your manuscript in the mail to your agent or editor.

The multi-year length of the publication cycle has a profound effect on the lives of writers. For one thing, it determines how long it takes to become established. While some writers (Tom Clancy comes to mind) have been successful much faster than is the norm, most professional writers will tell you that becoming truly established in your chosen field will take you approximately 15 years. I can testify that in my own case, the estimate was pretty accurate.

What this means is that when you have embarked on a writing career, you are facing a decade and a half of struggle before you can truly say that you have arrived – and that's *after* the 2-3 years it may take you to break into print. It also says that you cannot change genres too often in your career. I am a science fiction writer who has written two dozen short stories and ten novels over approximately three decades. And

since renown in one field of writing does not necessarily transfer to another field, if I were to decide to become a romance writer, it would take me 15 years to establish myself in that genre. Then were I to try my hand at Military Adventure, followed by Mainstream novels ... Well, I think you see the point. Before you have changed careers too many times, you find yourself at the biblical three-score-and-ten! Or, as one of my favorite commercials says, "It isn't that life is so short, only that you are dead for a very, VERY long time!"

The Future of Publishing

The process I have been describing is the traditional publication process used by the company that published eight of my novels. It may not be the same at your publisher. Computerization has taken its toll on publishers' traditional methods of working just as it is taking its toll on everything else.

Despite the fact that both I and my editor used word processing software on personal computers, the entire editing process at the time continued to be centered on paper manuscripts. When I asked them why they didn't use the electronic files, my editor explained that working with paper allowed them to read the book one time, and then concentrate on editing the changes. An electronic file, on the other hand, was suspect whenever anyone touched their keyboard. Who was to say that the junior copy editor didn't erase half the novel while making her last corrections to the bibliography?

That was the old-fashioned way of doing things. Modern publishing houses now work exclusively on the electronic files, thereby saving both time and money in the publication process. The magazines especially work off disks the authors send them and sometimes what the author wrote is what gets published. Unfortunately, since most authors are weak in their editing skills, this direct approach can sometimes produce an inferior product.

Computerization has had a much more profound effect on publishing than merely whether the editor works off paper or a computer screen. For one thing, it is now possible for individual authors to do everything that a publishing house does, even to the point of distributing his or her books to customers around the world. That, in fact, is the reason I established Sci Fi – Arizona and its companion site, Third Millennium Publishing.

No longer do I have to spend a year or more circulating my manuscripts among publishers, looking for one who will publish a book from them. No longer do I have to run a gauntlet of editors who will decide what I can publish. I now have the ability to write, edit, publish, distribute, and sell directly to the public.

Of course, there are negatives to my decision to strike out on my own into uncharted territory. For one, I have no editor to fix my mistakes. When you purchase a book from Sci Fi - Arizona, you are getting a work that was created from the original manuscript. The words are mine, the editorial choices are mine, and the typographical errors are mine. No longer will I have someone to impose external discipline upon me. If I choose to publish schlock, there will be no one to stop me — no one, that is, save the book buying public.

Have I ever regretted the decision to go into business for myself? Not for a moment. Building my own bookstore and publishing company has been the most fun I've had in years. And shortly, *this* will be the way all books are published.

By the way...

Welcome to the Revolution!

The End

Copyright 2009, All Rights Reserved

This article is the property of the author and of Sci Fi - Arizona. It may not be sold, or used for any commercial purpose whatsoever, without the written permission of the author.

Sci Fi - Arizona

A Virtual Science Fiction Bookstore and Writer's Workshop

Michael McCollum, Proprietor
WWW.SCIFI-AZ.COM

If you enjoy technologically sophisticated science fiction or have an interest in writing, you will probably find something to interest you at Sci Fi - Arizona. We have short stories and articles on writing— all for free! If you like what you find, we have full length, professionally written science fiction novels in both electronic form and as hard copy books, and at prices lower than you will find in your local bookstore.

Moreover, if you like space art, you can visit our Art Gallery, where we feature the works of Don Dixon, one of the best astronomical and science fiction artists at work today. Don is the Art Director of the Griffith Observatory. Pick up one or more of his spacescapes for computer wallpaper, or order a high quality print direct from the artist.

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.

So if you are looking for a fondly remembered novel, or facing six hours strapped into an airplane seat with nothing to read, check out our offerings. We think you will like what you find.

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.