

## Author and Illustrator Marketing Guidance from Publisher Lee German

We really welcome, appreciate and need your help in making the book a success. When I talk to Baker & Taylor and Ingram buyers, they always ask about book signings and the media coverage surrounding new releases. They specifically want to know what author/illustrator events are planned (i.e., how serious is our marketing commitment) and then they stock their nearest warehouses to support anticipated demand from these events. I mention this because your involvement in the process is a critical marketing component. As publisher, we can push great books all day long, but the industry “scuttlebutt” is “*no author involvement, no future.*” We can see that in the sales of books—straight down the line.

Our objective is to sell our books nationwide and soon, internationally, but to get started we absolutely depend on the local interest around author, illustrator, and publisher. The term is **local buzz**, and without that, it is very difficult to get momentum for a new release. Think of any classic children’s book—association with the author and illustrator is tight because they were engaged with their publisher and committed to helping the book sell.

I know that this is children’s book promotion, and we all need to have fun! I find it personally rewarding to get involved in the publicity effort, and I hope that you will too. Several years ago, I had a 1st grade teacher ask to see one of our books at the ALA conference in Chicago. When she had finished reading it, her eyes were moist. She hugged us and said, “This is the sweetest, most beautiful children’s book I’ve ever seen. My 1st graders are going to love it.”

Sylvan Dell is about contributing to children’s literature and education. Your manuscript was chosen and art portfolios are carefully matched with the intent of raising the bar in this genre. While we are serious about our mission, we also want the entire experience to be fun, exciting, and profitable for all of us.

I know that you have a set amount of time and energy to put in to the book’s promotion, so I want to lay out a simple plan you can easily follow. This will contribute to the cause and compliment our national sales efforts. I hope that this is helpful—especially if you are a first-time author or illustrator. I don’t want you to feel pressured to do these things; in fact, I think you will really enjoy going out and meeting people, and hearing everyone’s reactions to your book!

We will send each of you a **Promotional Kit** containing:

- 40 Books (15 contract copies plus 25 additional marketing copies)
- Promotional Packages can be downloaded from the website: (pitch letter, annotation, biographies and endorsements)
- Catalogs
- Order Forms\*
- Database Information (what we have for your area/subject)

\* Also, available for download through the website.

There are a number of sources to learn how to market a book or more about the industry in general. A few that we have found helpful are:

- *The Savvy Author’s Guide To Book Publicity*, by Lisa Warren, Carrol & Graf Publishers
- *The Complete Guide To Book Publicity*, by Jodee Blanco, Allworth Press

- *Publishing For Profit*, by Thomas Wolf, Chicago Review Press
- *1001 Ways to Market Your Books*, 5th Ed., by John Kremer, Open Horizons
- John Kremer's Website: <http://www.bookmarket.com/tipsconfirm.html>
- Publishers Marketing Association Website: <http://www.pma-online.org/>
- *Cooperative Children's Book Center Listserv*  
<http://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/mailman/listinfo/ccbc-net>
- *Society of Children's Book Writers & Illustrators (SCBWI)* <http://www.scbwi.org/>
- *Children's Book Insider* <http://www.write4kids.com/>
- *Children's Writer Newsletter* <http://www.childrenswriter.com/>
- *Children's Writers and Illustrators Market* [www.writersdigest.com](http://www.writersdigest.com)
- *Children's Book Council* <http://www.cbcbooks.org/>
- *Publisher's Weekly online* <http://www.publishersweekly.com/>
- *Children's Literature Database* <http://www.childrenslit.com/>
- *Susan Raab* <http://www.raabassociates.com/tomarket/tomarket.htm>
- *Anastasia Suen* <http://childrensbookblogtours.blogspot.com/>
- *Google alerts\** <http://www.google.com/alerts>\*

\*You can set up a Google alert for your name and/or your book's name once published. Any time you or the book is mentioned on the internet, you will receive notification and a link to the site.

One last general comment before I get into specifics: there is a marketing phenomenon called the **Rule of Seven** that says "on average, we have to contact a potential buyer seven times before they will buy our books." We will be blanket e-mailing, advertising, phone calling and sending press releases, but if you can also communicate with as many local buyers as possible, it will help create the buzz and meet the "Rule of Seven" threshold.

### **What You Can Do?**

It is amazing how the personal contacts can help, but we don't want you to feel uncomfortable asking for their help or asking them to go buy a copy. We suggest you not sell books to friends and family, but rather encourage them to go to their nearest bookstore or go online to Amazon.com—it makes the bookstores realize that there is a demand for your product, and they will begin to stock it. In fact, some bookstore buyers even check how well the book sells on Amazon before they buy the book. The extra copies of your book are for marketing/promotional materials. However, if a friend or family member is in a position to help market, or is willing to help with the marketing, feel free to give them a marketing copy.

- **Family, Friends and Associates:** The first thing we recommend you do is organize your list of friends, family, church and business associates and contacts in organizations that you are a member. We have found that most of the people we know want to help and are great in spreading the word. We suggest that you ask some of your supportive friends and family to go into bookstores and order your book

If you are uncomfortable imposing on some friendships, try giving them a book and asking them to please spread the word if they like it. Giving them the book with flyer and promotional material folded inside makes the process easy and not abusive. E-mail friends and ask them to forward information to all of their friends and family. Teacher and library friends are also helpful at spreading the word in that community.

- **Website & Blog:** More and more authors have their own websites and blogs that are very helpful in marketing both you and your books. We consider this a necessity in this day and age. If you don't already have a website, please set one up.

- **Introduce Yourself to the Community:** Look at your local area—**25-50 miles** around your home and anywhere else you regularly visit—and lay out a plan to pitch your book, yourself and Sylvan Dell to as many of customer groups as you can. You should start planning your pitches now, and then start going out to stores, libraries, schools, etc. as soon as you get your advance review copy (ARC). *ARCs arrive about 6 weeks before the main shipment of books.*

Keep a promotional kit in your car at all times so that you are ready. We will provide contact information that we have in your area but you can also use the yellow pages online to identify all the book stores and gift shops in your area. Government websites list libraries and schools—it can be very quick and easy! We use Mapquest and a good map to find each place's exact location. Before visiting, we check websites to eliminate stores that do not carry children's books.

We know that it can be frightening to walk into a store to pitch yourself and the book. You can be low-key, introduce yourself and say that you just want to let them see the book. You can then leave a catalog or card with Sylvan Dell's contact information and "How to Purchase" information if they are interested. It's important to let the book sell itself—not to "hard sell" the information. It may be to your advantage to make it clear that your book is being published by Sylvan Dell; that will distinguish you from the crowd of self-published authors. You can suggest they contact us if they like the book and would like to purchase and/or arrange a book signing. Some bookstores are approached by self-published authors all the time and may only want to talk to us. Simply get the contact's name, phone number, and e-mail for us and we'll follow up!

If you have a teacher store in your area, give the owner/manager a copy of your book with information about your school visits. Make sure they know you are local!

If your book can be viewed as "vacation-related," i.e., marine-related animals at the beach, consider approaching resort gift shops with a marketing copy and ordering information.

Where to find some information:

- Chambers of commerce
- Travel sites for your area
- Business links from town websites
- Bookstores: <http://www.biblio.com/booksellers.php>
- [http://www.stuartjmurphy.com/teachers\\_buy.html](http://www.stuartjmurphy.com/teachers_buy.html)
- <http://www.teachingbooks.net/vl.cgi?type=bookseller>
- National Parks: [http://www.appl.org/Members\\_New/member\\_directory.htm](http://www.appl.org/Members_New/member_directory.htm)\*
- State or county parks with educational programs and visitor center gift shops\*

National Park and many State or County parks do not buy their own merchandise but use wholesalers. We routinely send review copies to National Park-related buyers.

### **Support the bookstores—they support you!**

This is a tricky one. You have a brand new book and all your friends and family want an autographed copy of it—whether they want it for free or they are willing to buy. There is a fine line regarding how many free copies you give away. As I mentioned earlier, there are *two kinds of friends and family*:

- those who will get out there and help you market your book by showing it to other people who can help

- and those who would otherwise be willing to walk into a store and order it.

By all means, you should give a promotional copy to the first type of friend. But I caution you to carefully consider giving copies to the second type. If you explain to them that you need them to go buy a copy of your book to help launch your career, they should be willing to help.

**Here is the reason for asking people to purchase your book:** sales numbers of various bookstores, including Amazon.com, are watched very closely by national book buyers. The National Book Buyer of Barnes and Noble told a group of publishers at the Book Expo that she routinely checks the sales figures on Amazon, especially for new and unknown authors. She bases some of her buy/no buy decisions on those numbers alone!

If you have a chain store in your area, that chain will consider that particular store to be your **home store**. The national buyers of chains like Barnes & Noble and Borders will closely watch the sales of your book(s) there, and the Community Relations Manager (CRM) at your home Barnes & Noble will help you out with signings. They do have a little flexibility when it comes to stocking local books. If your book sells extremely well, both the Regional buyer and the National buyer will know and may consider “picking it up.” But if you can’t drum up sales through your home store, they will assume that the book won’t sell. This means that if you have just bought a carton of books from us and sold them to your friends, you have just cut the reportable sales at your home store by that amount.

**A personal success story of this strategy:** As some of you know, Donna was/is a very successful cookbook author. In fact, she has four *New York Times* bestsellers and has sold over 3 million copies. Her books can still be found as a “stock” item (that means that at least one book is stocked at all times – if it sells, it is immediately reordered) book in many stores. When her first cookbook came out, Donna asked to buy books so she could give them to her family. The publisher refused and explained what we are sharing with you now. Our family members and many military friends went into their local bookstores and ordered the book by its ISBN. We were really helped by the fact that the book was the first bread machine cookbook and there was a pent-up demand. Word spread fast and more and more people started ordering the book (this was way before Amazon)! Up to that time, Ingram (*the* largest book wholesaler—and, yes they stock Sylvan Dell books) would not stock the publisher’s books because they considered the publisher to be too small. However, after several weeks of people going in and ordering books, Ingram called the publisher and asked to stock the book. If Donna had sold her own copies and not sent friends and family members into the stores, her book could have been one of the many books that die on the vine.

Remember that bookstores need you, too. Without books, they wouldn’t survive—and books need authors and illustrators! Local bookstores will want to help your book succeed because it’s in their interest. If you have a good relationship with local bookstores, they promote your book through book signings, hanging posters, having the sales staff “push it,” arranging school visits, and including you in educator programs. But if you can’t help drum up business for them, they won’t drum up business for you. If they think that you are undercutting their business by selling your own books, you can’t plan on receiving much support from them.

Again, this is a very fine line. Some school visits may be set up through bookstores or some schools may prefer that you provide the books (many of our authors make quite a bit of \$ by selling their own books at school visits). If you are involved in a fund-raising event (for your church, synagogue, school, local non-profit or conferences where you are a speaker) you may want to provide the books or allow them to buy from us. Just make sure that your efforts don’t take business away from the real bread and butter of your business and livelihood.

## Scheduling Events!

- **The Book Launch.** For planning purposes, a *minimal number of events* during the first month should include:
  - 6 book store signings
  - 2 Science Center, Zoo, Aquarium, signings (if appropriate to book theme)
  - 4 public library talks
  - 5 school visits
  - 1 local TV spot
  - 2 radio shows
  - 3 author podcasts

- School media specialists generally book school visits 6-8 months in advance, and schools will pay between \$200 and \$600 for a visit. You can definitely help us here by making the local connections and committing to events.

It is important to know that many children's book authors make more money out of the school visits than they do on their book sales! Make yourself an expert in the subject your book addresses and let the local media and media specialists know that you are available. Illustrators can talk about how they researched the project, show their sketches and discuss how the book is put together.

- **Book signings** are very important for the success of your book. Keep in mind, though, that a successful book signing may or may not have many people. If you forge a good working relationship with the owner/employees of the bookstores, they will be more likely to “push” your book long after the event has come or gone. *Always* offer to sign the remaining copies of the books—autographed books sell better and are non-returnable.
  - **So, how do you set book signings up?** Some bookstores, especially **chain stores**, really do not like working with authors. Instead, they prefer to speak with the publisher or public relations person. But it *is* helpful if you go in and give them a marketing copy of your book as an introduction. Get the name of the person who would be setting up the event, an e-mail address and phone number. For Barnes & Noble, the person's job title is “Community Resource Manager” (or CRM for short). Then send that information to The Public Relations person and she'll take it from there.
  - **Independent bookstores**, on the other hand, tend to be much more open to working with local authors on setting up events. They can order books directly from Sylvan Dell or through any of the major wholesalers (Ingram or Baker & Taylor are the biggest).
  - As soon as you have something set up, let The Public Relations person know. We'll get it on the website and start trying to get local media coverage for you.
  - Don't rely on the book store to do all the **promotion for your event**. Send e-mails to everyone you know telling them about it and ask them to let their friends know! If your book has “a local audience,” ask them to e-blast their members or let them know about the signing. For example, if you have an astronomy-related book, contact a local astronomy club about your signing. Or, if you have a book about birds, contact your local Audubon or bird-watching groups. Even if most members of the group are older, they may be interested in your book for their children or grandchildren.
  - Once you have a good working relationship with your local bookstore, offer to be available for any **educator programs** they may have. Bookstores often invite teachers

for various events and they love having authors involved. Authors help to draw people into the store!

- **How to make sure they have enough copies of your book before a signing.** There is nothing worse than driving 30 miles to a signing and finding out that there are no books for you to sign. It is a painful waste of your time and a lost opportunity that you can prevent with two measures:

- **Communicate with the CRM/store buyer two weeks in advance** to make sure they have ordered books and if they are having difficulty, let us know.
- keep a **minimum stock of 20 hardcover and 20 paperback books** in your garage at all times ready to throw in your car for every signing

If you are out there doing signings, sooner or later a store is going to fail you by forgetting to order, or not ordering the books in time, or not ordering enough books. Also, the store buyers and event organizers have little idea how many books to order so they usually over order and just send back the leftovers. We find the damage rate and quantity of returns from store signings almost negates the value of any one marginal event. A successful event from our perspective is one in which

- You, the author, are able to draw a large enough crowd to the store, and
- that crowd buys books, and
- the crowd become fans who tell their friends across the country, and
- that the CRM reports positively to corporate
- which generates future buy orders
- and regional interest from other CRMs, and, we get
- minimal returns and damage of leftover books.

Bookstores usually buy from distributors but can also buy direct from publishers. Distributors stock based on anticipated sales and after the initial surge is over, which happens quickly, they go down to a small number at each warehouse and hold. We supply through many different distributors so we can't push any one distributor to be carrying more books because we have no idea which distributor your particular store deals with. The distributors have their forecasting algorithms that generally work well until you suddenly need 30-40 books on short notice. Bookstores often wait until the last minute, and when the distributor does not have enough on-hand, the good ones know they can always call publishers direct and we will make sure you have enough books for your signing. We get calls all the time from bookstores in a panic needing books air shipped because they have waited until the last minute. When they do this, we pass through the exorbitant freight charges and I can guarantee you the store is not making money that way and therefore, not happy with the signing. If they ever tell you the publisher is at fault or does not have inventory, they are lying.

Bookstores will not let you sell your own books and often will not buy them from you as an author. If that is the case and you are in a pinch, one option to offer the store is to consider the books a direct purchase from publisher ... not from you as the author. You give them 20-30 books to start and the store sells them. At the end of the event, you take what is leftover with you and the publisher will send an invoice for the books sold. We do ask that you do the count before and after with your store contact and get a signature on those numbers. Fax or email us the pertinent info and we'll take it from there.

- **Library Events:** Introduce yourself to the children’s book buyer for your town and county libraries, give or show him/her a book, and ask them to order more. Some public libraries have stores for people to buy books, most have children’s story times. *A word of caution:* whether you give or show a book to a buyer like this is really your judgment call. If you think the library will order multiple copies of the book, it is worth giving them a copy. If you think they’ll put your copy on the shelf and not order one, you will do best to only show it to them. As always, do what you think is best.
- Librarians are often involved in award nominations and book reviews—they are good friends to have!

To find Public libraries: <http://www.librarybug.org/index.php>  
<http://my.execpc.com/~himmel/associations.html>  
<http://www.externalharddrive.com/libraries/state-libraries.html>

- Forging a relationship with the **local teachers and media specialists** is extremely helpful to the success of your book. All Sylvan Dell books fit into elementary school curriculums—e-mail Donna if you are unsure about your book. Introduce yourself to the media specialist of your local elementary school and give him/her a marketing copy of your book with our promotional material. Ask for his/her help in spreading word about you and your book. While most authors/illustrators charge a fee for school visits, you may think about offering a “free” school visit day in exchange for his/her help in getting the word out. Here are some things that he/she may be able to help you with:
  - He/she can post an announcement on a *state-wide school library listserve* or website
  - He/she can let all the teachers in the school know about you and your book
  - He/she may be able to arrange for you to become a speaker at the *State School Library Association Conference* or the *State’s International Reading Association Conference*, and both are great opportunities for you to get exposure and sell copies of your books.
  - Ask him/her if there is a *statewide teacher resource center* or *library resource center* and get the name of the coordinator and mailing address. Get your book to this person and let them know you are local (please give us this information too so we can add to our database)! For example, in SC the State Library and University of South Carolina College of Library Services support a library resource center that is only open to school librarians. The coordinator does weekly e-mails to all media specialists across the state with new book recommendations. The University of Madison (WI) has a similar center that is housed in their Education Department, but their book announcements are national! They are on the list to receive each of our books as it comes out.
  - He/she can help nominate your book for *state awards*. If he/she is not on the nominating committee, ask for a name and address of who is and send them a book or let us know about them. **Some state awards are only open to authors/illustrators from or born in certain states, so please be sure to give The Public Relations person a brief, complete history of where you have lived.**
  - He/she may be able to help you become a speaker at a school district-level media specialist conference. While you would only have about 10 or 15 minutes, it would be long enough for media specialist to get a feel for your book and to know about your being a local author/illustrator and your school visits.

- **School Visits:** As I said, some authors and illustrators make more money off school visit fees than they do the actual book! This is one area where your new best friend, the local media specialist, may be able to give you guidance. As far as I can tell, a good starting fee for school visits is \$250 per day for four one-hour sessions—this may be higher in larger cities like Washington D.C., San Francisco, Atlanta, etc. Each session may include speaking time, signing time and question time. If you become well sought after, you can increase your fees annually, and that keeps your book alive!

**How to do it:** A phone call to the office of a few schools in the district may give you a feel for how it's done—at least in that district. You can “google” your local school district to find links to all schools. *School visits can be set up through a variety of ways:*

- By contacting the president of the school PTA or PTSO. <http://www.pta.org/>
- A local independent bookstore may set one up as a method of adding to their sales' opportunities. (Remember that friend you made at the book signing or initial contact?)
- By using media specialists—this is probably how most school visits are set up. They'll share information on the “good” authors and illustrators to have in schools! If you are brand new, it may be worth “donating a day” to see how it goes. Your new media specialist friend will probably help spread the word and help you get more business.
- Some schools may use a school visit event as a fundraiser—they can buy books through a local bookstore, directly through you or from Sylvan Dell. Even without a school visit, this is a great fundraiser for a school. Contractually, you can buy your book from us at a 55% discount. You can turn around and sell it to the PTA for a 30% discount, you make money and they make money. The PTA can send home information, take orders, and ask for autograph information. They can order only what they need, have you sign the books at your convenience and then collect all money. The split between the purchase discount and retail price is their profit.

It helps if you have a **website** that you can steer people to. There is no doubt that school visits are time consuming to get going. Yet, when all is said and done, it could really help your overall career. Cover art can be downloaded from the website for promotional purposes.

If you let us know if you are traveling for school visits, we can try to arrange media coverage. We are, unfortunately, unable to help you schedule school visits, but we are more than happy to help give any information, support that we can. One hint we can give you is that it's better to let the PTA handle any book sales—you'll be busy enough doing your job at the event!

Two more tips:

- Don't overlook home schooling associations in your area (google homeschooling association and “your state.”)
  - One author found this site: [www.authorvisits.com](http://www.authorvisits.com). Another author works closely with someone in her area who sets up school visits on a local level.
- **E-mailings:** This is pretty easy after you master mail merges. As you build a local database of contacts, you may want to periodically send them friendly information on your upcoming events.
    - *Local friends, neighbors, church members, civic association members:* Sometimes you don't even need to e-mail everyone—you can get the organization to forward e-mails!

- For example, an astronomy club or a bird-watching club may have a newsletter editor or membership chairman that can forward e-mails.
- *Increase sales by contacting related interest groups:* One of the things we try to do is to drive customers into the bookstores to buy the books. This means that we are e-mailing these types of groups: astronomy clubs, Audubon societies, turtle patrols, etc. Any group that might have interest in your book is a great source. We are trying to build this information as part of our data-base. However, if you know of a local group, please let us know.
  - *Elementary school teachers:* Depending on how much time you have on your hands, you could build your own e-mail database for elementary school teachers in your area. (We'd love a copy!) One simple e-mail can reach a lot of people and can be forwarded! Get the information by searching the various school district websites with links to local schools. Lots of initial work but once you have the list, you have easy contacts with mass e-mailing capability. This would be helpful to you for making announcements (new books, school visits, book signings, I'll be in your area...etc.)
  - *Teachers Associations for a certain subject:* Most states have associations for teachers involved in science, math or history. See if you can get these associations to spread word about your book and school visits. Or, better yet, see if you can speak at a related conference. By the way, they'll also have one person that can forward an e-mail blast about book signings, etc.
- **Phone call follow-ups:** Any time you send a book, postcard or emailing, we recommend you contact the recipient to make sure they received whatever you sent and just chat looking for their thoughts.
  - **More thoughts and ideas for contacts:**
    - State international reading association  
<http://www.reading.org/association/meetings/state.html>
    - Organizations and Institutions
      - Ex: Astronomy clubs [http://www.astronomyclubs.com/1/190/0/0/select\\_state.aspx](http://www.astronomyclubs.com/1/190/0/0/select_state.aspx)
      - Ex: Bird watching groups <http://www.audubon.org/states/>
      - State Department of Natural Resource homepage – look for contacts
    - State, county, town book festivals (Google your state & book festivals) – see if you can get set up as a conference speaker and then you can sell your books!

### **Sylvan Dell General Marketing and Promotional Plan**

Sylvan Dell Publishing generally will:

- budget 500 books for marketing purposes. This includes:
  - advance review copies to key reviewers
  - advance review copies to Wholesalers and Distributors
  - advance review copies to selected stores, gift shops etc.
  - copies to sales representatives for bookstores, giftshops, and libraries (school & public)
  - review copies to Accelerated Reader, Junior Library Guild, Amazon Search-Inside-the-Book, and Google In Print
  - send promotional copies and title information sheets to key customers and additional reviewers

- Distribute review copies to award committees
- E-blast to appropriate organizations and elementary teachers (we routinely send 32,000 e-mails every day).
- Conduct follow-up phone calls
- Send quarterly newsletters to announce each new book, new awards and reviews and to provide an update on events
- Maintain approximately 15 databases like Amazon.com and Ingram I-Page with cover images, annotations, author and illustrator biographies and reviews and awards
- Attend trade shows like BEA, ALA and MSA at the national level; SEBA, NCIBA, GLBA and NEBA at the regional level; and the International Reading Association, Association of School Librarians at the national, regional and/or state level.
- Send display advertising and newsletter annotations to Ingram, Baker & Taylor, ABC Best Books Catalog, the Children's Book Council and regional newsletters for SEBA, NCIBA, GLBA, NEBA, etc.
- Request media (newspapers, magazines, TV and radio) coverage surrounding author tours and signings coordinated through Angie.
- Send press releases to your local media and national media whenever awards and reviews come in.
- Align the book to national and state science & math standards
- Provide 30 to 80 pages of free on-line teaching activities to support the book at home and in the classroom.

Sylvan Dell will target:

- Book Stores:
  - ABA / Booksense Stores
  - Assoc of Booksellers for Children
  - Barnes & Noble
  - Borders / Waldenbooks
  - Books-A-Million
  - Regional IBA Stores
  - PMA: Bookstore Mailing
- Gift Shops
  - Zoos, Aquariums, Children's Museums, Science Museums, Planetariums
  - National and State Parks
  - organization specific
  - location or vacation-related if appropriate
- Public Libraries
- Elementary Schools & Libraries
  - teachers & school media specialists
  - private Book Fairs (including Scholastic)
  - curriculum advisors
- Homeschoolers
- Early Literacy Groups

- Title specific Organizations and Institutions
  - Examples: Audubon, Marine Research Centers, Meteor Watchers, Turtle Watchers, Cardinal Groups, Loon Groups, State by State DNRs
- National Media
  - Radio Networks and the top 10 individual stations in the top 25 markets as well as the top 5 stations in the top 100 markets
  - The top 5 newspapers in each state
  - Major television networks
  - Major parenting, teacher/librarian, book trade and children's magazines

**A general idea and rough timeline of what's to come:**

- Upon final selection, a contract is issued and sent with an advance royalty check.
- When Donna has received notice that you have signed the contract, she and Heather (our graphic artist) will select the illustrator.
- During illustrator contract negotiations, the subject and the illustrator's schedule will be taken into account in order to determine the publication (pub) date of the book.
- Donna will work with each author with any editing that is necessary.
- Heather sets a tentative font & type for illustrator to judge how much text room is necessary. Illustrator, Donna, and Heather discuss layout, etc.
- Donna works on the For Creative Minds while illustrator is sketching.
- Sketches may take between 4 to 8 months and may or may not require revisions. Donna will generally send a PDF sneak peak to author once the sketches are approved.
- Text and sketches are forwarded to scientific vetters to ensure that all information is correct.
- Manuscript & sketches are sent to library catalogers for publication data entry.
- One month after sketches are due, the final cover art is due. Heather will put the cover together and we will use it for advance marketing purposes while the inside art is being painted.
- Depending on illustrator's schedule and pub date, the final art could take several months.
- Marketing and pre-pub promotion are on-going during this phase. For example, titles are pitched to Barnes & Noble buyers twice a year at whatever stage they are in...
- Final art is approved, scanned and digitized.
- Heather puts book together, final tweaking and editing takes place.
- Donna will send the author a PDF of the book once it is put together for a final edit. PDFs should not be forwarded or shared as they are essentially e-Books.
- The day the digital files are sent to the printer, we send computer print-outs to the advance reviewers who require a three or four month lead time. We follow up with ARCs.
- It generally takes three or four months from the time we send the disk to the printer until we have books in our warehouse!
- We receive ozalids (computer generated copy to approve book layout) and wetproofs (actual pre-press run to approve color). We approve or have printer make adjustments/corrections.
- Once approval is given, the printer goes to print. We receive two F&Gs (folded & gathered) that are the first two "books" from the print-run.

- About two weeks later, we receive our advance review copies (ARC). We'll send one ARC each to author and illustrator to start their promotional activities.
- Books are printed in mainland China and are usually shipped directly from Hong Kong to Charleston (that takes about three weeks).
- Now the marketing REALLY begins!