

AAUP THE Exchange

THE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY PRESSES

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For a complete list of awards and prizes won by AAUP members, please see the AAUP website at aaupnet.org.

Interview with William Germano

by Derek Krissoff

Younger scholars hoping to publish a book have generally relied on informal, anecdotal bits of wisdom to guide them through the process; in practice this often amounts to little more than talking to a dissertation advisor. With the recent publication of William Germano's *Getting it Published* from the University of Chicago Press, things will be forever altered. The book is a guide to scholarly publishing aimed at prospective authors, and—like the man from whom it issued—it is unfailingly smart, funny, and helpful. Bill is currently Vice President and Publishing Director at Routledge, and has been editor in chief at Columbia University Press. He was kind enough to take some time to correspond with me about *Getting it Published*.

Derek Krissoff: *I read Getting it Published as an attempt—and a very successful attempt—to communicate across the editorial divide, to give authors and prospective authors a peek at the inner workings of scholarly publishing. What do you think the book has to offer folks on our side of the divide—that is to say, scholarly publishers?*

William Germano: From the business perspective, it's useful to see the range of publishers that scholars depend on—not just university presses and not-for-profits—as part of a larger entity that serves the academic community.

Writing it, I was struck by just how much we expect authors to know and to be prepared to handle. At the same time, most of us in the business are all too aware how poorly a scholar's training will prepare her for getting the book out. I finished *Getting it Published* with greater sympathy for the author than when I began it. Of course, it's my hope that the book will help authors along, and so make all of our jobs as publishers a little bit easier.

DK: *A related question: What do you think scholarly publishers can do to make the process better—more transparent, less cumbersome, however you care to define the term—for authors?*

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Halfway to the Moon: *PMA Wants to Help You Cut Down on Returns*

According to a study recently released by the Publishers Marketing Association (PMA), since the advent of mass market publishing retailers have returned enough books to fill the Empire State Building ten times; stacked on top of one another, volumes returned to publishers would stretch halfway to the moon. Phrased in less colorful though perhaps more meaningful terms, the story is still grim. Thirty-one percent of adult hardcover titles are returned, compared with twenty-three percent just ten years ago. Overall, returns account for \$7.1 billion annually in a \$25 billion industry.

It cannot have escaped any publisher that a problem exists, but little has been done, in any sort of a systematic fashion, to craft a solution. Mindful of this

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William Germano (continued from page 1)

WG: That's the big Communication question. As hard as we try, there are always gaps where an author doesn't find out about the schedule (or the author's alterations, or the cover, or the copy) until it's too late. Few of us have the luxury of working on a handful of books a year, and the pressure to produce means there are many places for us to stumble. What happens when new staff come on, or a vacant position is babysat for six months? It's hard to remember that the author only cares about one book, even if we're fielding thirty at once. Early warnings for authors, clearly laying out what the press won't do. There are always places where we can be clearer. Contracts in English. Royalties reports that are easy to read. We're sometimes fearful that authors will never stop calling and emailing us if we give them too much information. But if we fail to strike the right balance we all suffer.

DK: *We hear so much about the changing nature of university life, especially as it's experienced by younger scholars in the humanities and social sciences. A tighter job market, higher expectations for tenure, and the like—some say these developments have given rise to greater professionalism among advanced Ph.D. candidates and untenured faculty. Have you noticed a change, and if so has it been manifested in the way these folks interact with publishers? If this dynamic is indeed present, how does your book fit in?*

WG: I think there's more curiosity about the process, and that curiosity is born from necessity. We've been seeing a lot of proposals from graduate students, and some of them quite good (though a graduate student isn't necessarily ready to take on a book before the dissertation). I wonder if other houses are sensing the same rush to early professionalization?

One of the groups I hope might find the book of use is the eager bea-

vers out there, still finishing Ph.D. course work but brimming with book ideas. I try to be candid about what the pitfalls are, and what might be expected if the young scholar decides to go forward.

Truth, beauty, and the bottom line—a motto for scholarly publishers.

DK: *You talk a lot about series. What's your take on them, over all, especially in light of Lindsay Waters' recent piece in the Chronicle of Higher Education? ("Are University Presses Producing Too Many Series for Their Own Good?" October 27, 2000) Do publishers rely on them overly these days? Are scholarly presses ceding too much authority to series editors?*

WG: I think Lindsay's right to say that there are too many books published of indifferent quality. But I'm not sure that the series structure is the culprit. There's a register of books that make important scholarly contributions but that are only possible financially because they're marketed together, manufactured in a standard format, held to a specified length. As long as the scholarly community needs specialized books we'll be deploying series and series editors, yapping at their heels like border collies.

Most editors have to be concerned about productivity and balancing a work load, or what I think of as a portfolio. Having a good, quality series in place may well free up just enough acquiring time so that the house editor can lavish care on a special, high-maintenance project—a translation, for example—that other-

wise might not happen.

Do we cede too much authority to series editors? Not if we're doing our jobs right. I'm big on the idea of complementary expertise—the professor editing the series knows the material, or should, but in the house the editor and the marketing team will know which books will likely work and which not. Both sides have to trust one another enough so that a series editor can accept "no" from time to time.

DK: *Collections, anthologies, doorstops—another hotly debated topic these days. At one point you list ten reasons not to undertake an edited collection. Do you think there are too many of these volumes out there? What separates the good ones from the less good?*

WG: It was easier to put together a doorstop anthology five or ten years ago. Permissions fees make these books harder to do now, and bookstores seem less willing to cede three inches of shelf space for the ultimate scholarly anthology on a smaller slice of a big subject. What separates the good ones from the less good? The great ones are put together by someone who knows the market cold or has an uncanny feel for where the market is going to be in a year. Street smarts plus charisma is a nice combination.

DK: *Let's talk about scholarly commercial publishers versus not-for-profit university presses. At several points in the book you compare them (in a very even-handed manner, I might add), discussing things like what the presence or absence of a faculty review board means to a potential author. Having worked at both, what do you think are the most important differences? What can they learn from each other?*

WG: A university press has the resources of a university behind it, around it, sometimes reading over its shoulder. At a commercial house

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William Germano (continued)

you're unmoored from such support (and interference?). There's no Big Library to pop into, no department lounge for chatting with the faculty. Of course, the most important difference is the mission of the two organizations: one exists to advance knowledge, the other to make money. That sounds embarrassingly crude, yes? But that doesn't mean that the one can't be happy about a surplus or the other about winning the Bancroft Prize. "Truth, beauty, and the bottom line" is probably the text for the removable tattoo.

The cultural differences of not-for-profit and commercial houses have been mixed up in productive ways by the movement of editors,

designers, marketers, and so on from one environment to another. Bill Strachan, Marlie Wasserman, Liz Maguire, Jennifer Crewe, Karen Wolny, Will Murphy, Tim Bartlett, Bob Oppedisano—it would be a long roll call of people who have moved from university press to commercial, or vice versa, or cha-cha'd from one to the other and back. These moves are interesting, I think, in part because they bring into our business environments new techniques and solutions to problems. It helps that these people are smart and love books.

Editors at commercial houses have already learned that some of the books they'd love to publish will be grabbed by enterprising university presses with

forward-looking marketing departments and patient finance directors. Watching what university presses have been doing in the past several years, it looks as if they're already dealing with many of the issues commercial houses live with daily. Confronting the nasty numbers questions, thinking harder about how permissions costs influence acquisitions choices, how length/cost/pricing ratios play out in signing and marketing decisions. As we all find ourselves reminding authors from time to time, there are for-profit publishers and not-for-profit publishers, but there aren't any for-loss publishers. Let's all stay in business, any way we can, and keep publishing good books.

AAUP Communications Update

by Brenna McLaughlin

Over the last two weeks the building site across from AAUP's offices has undergone gradual but noticeable change. I've watched new stories rise, a wooden scaffold or brace built around the 19th floor, and brick facing being added to the ground levels. I feel an affinity for the building, on the surface so chaotic just now, in my first weeks as Communications Manager at AAUP.

The plan and the structure of AAUP's communications activities are well in place, it is now a matter for me to learn the blueprint and oversee the completion and continuation of many projects. And now I think I need to abandon that overbearing analogy, and simply update all of you on where various projects stand. (I could easily have gone on to the detailing work, furnishing, and so on!)

As you may have noticed, the Spring Exchange has been a little late in coming, but it is—obviously—out

now and is planned to continue in its present print and electronic formats on a quarterly basis. As with the last few issues, there may be some content included in the electronic edition that did not appear in the print Exchange. For example, you can read in the web edition of the Winter 2001 Exchange Derek Krissoff's report from the Southern Presses meeting held in February at Duke.

Another regular Exchange feature, Kudos, will be housed on AAUP's web site, separately from the Exchange. Those "kudos" collected for the recent Exchange issues will appear at the launch of AAUP's new site (which I'll get to soon!) Please continue to send announcements of prizes and awards either to Matthew Brand or myself, and they will be regularly posted online.

And now we come to the web site. After many years of being housed and maintained admirably by the University of Chicago Press, the site will be

brought in-house to give us greater flexibility to post new content and imagine new features. The content preparation and design of the new site are in their final stages, and we hope to launch the site by mid-June, around the time of the annual meeting. The site will be found at the same URL.

And, over the course of the next few months, I will be exploring ways to increase the public profile of AAUP and our programs and members. But my first interest will always be communicating with AAUP's members. I welcome any questions and ideas about the communications projects we have under way, and those that may be developed. Please contact me at bmaaup@winstarmail.com, or at 212-989-1010, ext. 24. I'll spare you a return to the construction analogy, and simply say that I have great enthusiasm and optimism about the work to be done here at AAUP, and even more about the people I now have the privilege of working with and for.

Welcoming the Next Generation

Inspired by the success of the Junior College held in conjunction with last fall's Midwest Presses meeting, AAUP will offer a one-day Introduction to Scholarly Publishing this summer. The course was organized by Jennifer Crewe at Columbia, Catherine Freidl of Cambridge, AAUP's Peter Givler, and Oxford's Niko Pfund. It will be held on July 16 at the offices of Oxford University Press in New York City.

The day-long seminar is open to staff of AAUP member presses in the first two years of their employment in the field, and will be taught by senior staff from a number of area presses. The curriculum will cover all the

basics: editorial, rights and contracts, design and production, marketing, sales and publicity, e-publishing and journals, and the business side of university presses.

The original Junior College not only educated staff new to the field on the basics of publishing, but also served the purposes of reaching out to the next generation of scholarly publishers and creating an opportunity for newer staff to form professional connections in the field. These elements are of unquestioned value to the participants and of immeasurable value to the field.

AAUP hopes that such seminars

will become a regular affair, reaching staff at presses around the country. Aside from encouraging regional meetings to hold such seminars concurrent to their regular programs, AAUP may consider putting a package of curriculum materials together to facilitate the development of seminars by interested presses.

"Introduction to Scholarly Publishing" will be limited to 50 participants. Registration forms are available from the AAUP Central Office. Contact Linda McCall at 212-989-1010, ext. 30, or at aaupny@aol.com.

Returns (continued from page 1)

failure, the PMA "Report on Book Industry Returns" also proposes remedies to the returns crisis. Tom Wall, President of Cross River Publishing Consultants and author of the report, used PMA's New York City press conference on March 15 as an opportunity to discuss the report's recommendations. Wall spread the blame for the current situation throughout the book industry, sketching a familiar story of unrealistic expectations, poor market research, and overpricing on the part of publishers, made worse by overbuying and poor inventory control by retailers.

Drawing comparisons with other industries that have managed to steer clear of what he described as "essentially a consignment system," Wall stressed in particular the need to build greater flexibility into the mechanism for establishing books' prices. Most industries use net pricing; to cite Wall's example, Levi's sends its jeans to Sears without a price stitched into the waist, and as a result the various links in the sales chain can set the consumer's price to reflect specific circumstances. In

contrast, books usually go out with a fixed price, so retailers have less room to customize their sales strategies. The result, according to the PMA report, is lower profitability and more returns.

Similarly, Wall recommended greater use of markdowns in place, which would allow bookstores to lower prices on individual titles rather than returning them to the publisher and then waiting for them to come back again as remainders. Though common in many industries, these strategies are not likely to be accepted in the book trade without due consideration of the pros and cons. (For example, independent booksellers may fear that use of markdown in place could give the large chains another advantage in local competition.)

In a perhaps less controversial recommendation, Wall also called on both individual publishers and the industry as a whole to step up efforts to track and measure the business. As Wall pointed out, there is no real equivalent to the recording industry's Soundscan system, which collects point-of-sale data at large and me-

dium-scale retailers for use in both market research and album promotion. Refining market research, monitoring sales, and doing a better job detecting trends among returned books are recommended to make it less likely that publishers will overprint titles in the first place.

New publishing technologies, while hardly a magical antidote to the problem of returns, also offer some promise in this regard. Print-on-demand is premised on the idea of creating a one-to-one ratio between books produced and books sold, though as Wall pointed out it's most immediate impact should be on backlist titles. And because e-books are sold and distributed as electronic files, they too help to break the cycle of returns.

In the words of the PMA report, POD and e-books will be "the primary methods of reducing the costs of returns in the next five years." Wall's final proposal to publishers is simple: "Embrace new technology."

"Book Industry Returns" is available for \$25 online at www.pma-online.org.

Mapping the E-Publishing World

Anyone who has ever tried to make sense of electronic publishing knows that the field is sprawling and protean. At a certain level, any attempt to grapple with the emerging industry is necessarily spatial; on February 28 representatives of R2 Consulting unveiled a map intended to help ebook explorers navigate this space. The map can now be viewed at eBookMap.net.

R2 is run by Rick Lugg and Ruth Fischer, both formerly of Yankee Book Peddler, and is dedicated to exploring the application of new media to the academic publishing and the library markets. Lugg and Fischer were in New York to hold one of a series of seminars aimed at conveying, as thoroughly as possible, who's who among e-publishers.

Lugg walked conferees through a single eBook purchase—an electronic

version of James Gleick's *Faster* from Amazon.com. Fairly straightforward, it would seem, but even the most mundane eBook transaction involves a dizzying array of participants. First there's the retailer, of course, and because Amazon only sells books in Microsoft format, Lugg needed to download MS Reader as well. *Faster* was published as a "pBook" by Pantheon, so in one sense they're the source of the content, but iPublish did the digital version. And the customer's download link—the "delivery" of the eBook itself—was handled by Lightning Source. That's five companies involved in an \$8.95 sale. Consider as well that because *Faster* is a Random House book, the author should receive half the profit.

The picture only becomes more complicated when you realize how

many companies are vying to perform each task in this process. The distributor might have been Versaware rather than Lightning Source; the format a "dedicated reader" like RocketBook; and so on.

And that's where R2's map comes in. "Content" sits at the center of the diagram, and the map works outward to enumerate, first, the various things that need to be done to content before it reaches its audience, and then, the many companies offering each of these services. All told the map currently contains 250 nodes; given the rate of change in the fledgling industry, it's likely to have many more before long. While it doesn't say much about any of the players it catalogs, the map is a useful resource all the same.

2000 Week-in-Residence Program a Success

One called it a "master class," another "boot camp." But whatever metaphor they used to describe the experience, the recipients of this year's Week-in-Residence grants, funded by the Mrs. Giles Whiting Foundation, were united in their praise for the program.

The Whiting program sends selected employees of AAUP member presses to observe colleagues at another member press. Recipients of the 2000 grants shared a few characteristics—they tended to go from smaller presses to larger and from colder climates to warmer—but were drawn from the full range of university press staff. Martin Johnson of Northern Illinois and Prasenjit Gupta of Iowa traveled to the presses at North Carolina and Texas respectively to meet and learn from the acquisitions staff. Karyn McIntire, the University of Michigan Press's accountant, spent her week at

California. Berkeley also hosted Janice Wheeler, Design Manager at Smithsonian, who evaluated a new cover proofing system. Jane Kobres went from Georgia to Harvard to meet with fellow subsidiary rights specialists. And Margaret Harrelson, a database administrator at Duke, spent her week with the IT staff at Chicago.

While these press staffers naturally concentrated on issues specific to their individual fields, a few common themes cut across areas of specialization. Intra-press communication is clearly one hot topic, whether it's conducted by way of newfangled IT systems or old-fashioned face-to-face communication. This is often quotidian stuff, to be sure: Whiting grantees talked about launch meetings, design memos, database fields, even a press-wide "clean-up day" at UNC. And every visitor commented on the gen-

erous welcome that was extended by the host presses. Good communication is the basis for all university publishing, and from the reports on this year's program it's clear that AAUP members not only have a lot to share with each other, but a great willingness to do so.

Finally, the participants agreed that the opportunity to take a step back from hectic day-to-day duties was enormously rewarding. As one put it, "I hadn't counted on the value of being in an atmosphere so similar to my work, but one that would allow me to be sufficiently removed from the intensity of daily responsibilities to reflect upon it." Cooperation giving rise to reflection—it isn't a formula you're likely to find in the for-profit sector, and that's part of what makes the world of university publishing exceptional.

This is Not Your Beautiful Site:

A University Press Marketing Director in the Digital Age

by Mark H. Saunders

You are the marketing director at a small university press, with a department of three-and-a-half people. Seventeen years ago you headed off to college with one of the first 128K Macs, now an antique, leaving a childhood home that did not yet have cable (read MTV). You exist in a demographic trough—young enough to be expected to deal with the digital age, yet too old to have had the formative experience that will purportedly one day make your children comfortable with reading more than a paragraph on screen.

You aren't a luddite. You read Salon, buy clothes and cds (but never books) online, have broken up with your travel agent for travelocity.com. In fact, you are one of the most technologically proficient people at your press, although when you meet a true techie, you know you are not one—you don't dream in code. As a reward for your willingness and relative ability to learn new software, four years ago you were given responsibility for the press "web site," which at that point was virtual in the old-fashioned sense of the word. You learned HTML, bought an off-the-shelf webauthoring program that promised to interact well with a Filemaker database. This has yet to happen, but thanks to a technically inclined designer in your production department, your site now looks better than it has any right to, yet still you feel a sense of unreality when someone uses the term "electronic marketing." Only last week you discovered to your utter delight that you could cosmetically alter your author's promotional photos in Photoshop.

Sound familiar? In the past few years, as the Internet has grown exponentially in size and scope, marketing departments have faced entirely new

avenues of sales and promotion, while the more traditional areas of direct mail, print advertising and the old distribution channels have not gone away. We may still be devoted to independent booksellers, subject catalogues, and the *New York Review of Books*, but must also recognize and exploit the opportunities offered by Amazon.com, electronic direct marketing, and . . . for the sake of parallelism I was going to say banner ads, but even I know they don't work, so how about link campaigns, viral marketing, microsites, listservs, even chat? All of these are possible ways to

*A book with an
enthusiast audience
can be well served
by a web marketing
campaign, and
perhaps a devoted
"microsite".*

promote university press titles online. Some we have tried at university Press of Virginia, others not, mostly dependent on our limited resources—staff time, money, tech support.

To simplify—oh, to simplify!—I will break electronic marketing into two general categories here—web marketing and electronic direct marketing. The first step in this new world doesn't differ much from the old one—you need to evaluate what kind of

strategy is appropriate for a particular book. You wouldn't put a monograph in a mall store and it makes just as little sense to market a book on the web that appeals to an audience that isn't wired. Lisa Dellwo, formerly of University of North Carolina Press and now the owner of Dellwo Marketing Services, which specializes in web marketing campaigns, characterizes the kind of titles that do well on the web as "enthusiast books." If you define this label broadly as Lisa does, it's a good place to start. Not only can cookbooks or woodworking manuals, few of which appear in our catalogues, be classified in this way; the Civil War certainly has inspired its share of enthusiasts and more than its share of books. Historically underrepresented or marginalized groups also tend to have online communities. Books that serve those communities are good candidates for web marketing.

Web marketing can mean many different things, but it starts with the web site. While the e-commerce function of our sites may separate the techies from the mere web designers among us, most of the university press community has come to agree that the primary function of our sites is publicity, followed by bibliographic information and information for authors, course adopters, and other customers.

For a book with an enthusiast audience, a web marketing campaign, and perhaps a devoted microsite, can work well. Our first experiment with this has been a site for a new book by Charles Dew, *Apostles of Disunion: Southern Secession Commissioners and the Causes of the Civil War*. Dew's book has the benefit of being about the Civil War, of course, with a controversial

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Web Marketing for University Presses (continued)

argument about slavery at its core and a news hook in the recent flag referendum in Mississippi. It is also based on a series of archives—letters and speeches by the secession commissioners who were dispatched by the Deep South states to convince wavering border states to secede—that are dispersed across the region. We published a few of these in an appendix to the book, but were able to put more up on the web, which adds a scholarly resource to the mere marketing goals of the site.

Unlike Las Vegas, if you build a microsite, people won't necessarily come. There are a lot of lonely web sites out there in cyberspace, and you need to mount a link campaign to drive traffic to yours. We are now in the process of identifying between forty and fifty appropriate sites through Google searches that might agree to reciprocal links. This is where the unfortunate buzzword "viral marketing" rears its mutant head. Some search engines rank results according to the number of links that lead to a given site; short of directly reviewing each site this is viewed as a measure of a site's worth. True or not, more links (and good metadata embedded in your web pages) will bring more browsers to your microsite. Contests and prizes

may work too, although we've not tried them.

Back in the dark ages of the Internet primitive beings had already begun communicating by e-mail and listservs. It's good to remember the genesis of digital communication when venturing into electronic direct marketing. Some users, God bless them, still believe that the highways and byways of the net should not be contaminated by commercial content. Nevertheless, many of us don't mind a targeted e-mail informing us of a new product.

There are two general ways of doing electronic direct marketing—e-mail notifications to individuals, and listserv postings. Both start with a well-crafted short e-mail about the book with a click-through so that the customer can find out more information and maybe even purchase the book. The click-through should lead to a shadow page on your site—an identical book page with a slightly different URL, with a code designating the e-mail campaign—that you can use to track response. List brokers will soon make e-mail addresses available for rent in our disciplines; in the meantime, we have begun collecting e-mail lists in-house in various categories, and sending out messages to them.

We haven't yet mated this process to a database, which makes it difficult to maintain more than 300-500 addresses per list. The returned mail can swamp you.

The other way to do electronic direct marketing is by sending a message to an appropriate listserv. Whether or not a given list accepts postings with any perceived commercial content is often up to the list moderator. Netiquette is important here, to respect the noncommercial culture of the list. However, an author or series editor who is a member of a list may feel comfortable posting information about a book if the list moderator is unwilling to accept a post directly from a press.

I'll never forget the day two years ago that atomz.com made me look like a genius by adding a search function to my site in half a day for free. Treasure those days. On the others, remember that electronic marketing is supposed to be interactive. If you have received these thoughts in error, please send an e-mail to mhs5u@virginia.edu and I will be happy to remove you from the list.

Mark H. Saunders is Interim Director, Director of Marketing, and Webmaster at the University Press of Virginia.

Meeting Organizers Can Apply for Whiting Foundation Grants

The AAUP has received a grant from the Mrs. Giles Whiting Foundation to enhance training opportunities for staff at AAUP member presses. Organizers of regional meetings, workshops, and managers meetings to be held prior to June 30, 2002 are encouraged to apply for the \$2,500 grants. AAUP's Professional Development Committee will evaluate all applications. Organizers must be affiliated with an AAUP member press.

Applications can be downloaded at aaupnet.org. Contact Susan Patton at srpaaup@aol.com or (212) 989-1010 ext. 25 with any questions.

News from the Cooperative Exhibits Programs

AAUP will host a Wine and Cheese tasting at BookExpo America 2001 in Booths 3775 and 3776 on Friday, June 1, from 4:00-5:00pm. Advance invitations were sent to key editorial and publicity contacts at various publications, news services, and associations.

This year, AAUP will occupy an entire stand within the American Collective Stand section at the Frankfurt Book Fair. The stand will enable books to be displayed more prominently, and will be staffed by an AAUP representative.

Calendar

Introduction to Scholarly Publishing

July 16, 2001
New York, New York
Contact: Linda McCall
aaupny@aol.com

2001 Midwest Presses Meeting

September 21-23, 2001
Madison, Wisconsin
Contact: Vivian Smith,
vcsmith@facstaff.wisc.edu

Frankfurt Bookfair

October 10-14, 2001
Frankfurt, Germany

2002 London Book Fair

March 17-19, 2002
London, England

BEA 2002

May 5-7, 2002
New York, New York

2002 Annual Meeting

June 27-30, 2002
St. Petersburg, Florida

2002 Pre-meeting Workshops

Preliminary Schedule
The Business of Publishing
June 26-27, 2002
Fundraising
June 26-27, 2002
St. Petersburg, Florida

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