

# The Author's ADVOCATE



## Special Newsletter

May 2006

Published exclusively for the authors and associates of  
Infinity Publishing and Buy Books on the web.com

## How do You Measure the Success of Your Book???

What is success? Posing that question to different people will result in different answers. It's an achievement, certainly, but achievements are subjective; to a published author, "success" may be defined as selling a single book; to another, "success" may be getting their name on the bestseller list. Everyone has an idea about what success looks like for them. But the "looks" of success are as fleeting as fashion trends. Milestones marking the accomplishments of others are often imposed as a solid mark of successes. But those markers should only serve as guidelines, for success varies from person to person.

Authors frequently ask how many books have to sell to be considered a *bestseller*. *Aunt Emma's Family Cookbook of All-time Favorite Recipes of Good Eating* isn't likely to make the *New York Times* Best Seller list. However, members of her family ordered a few dozen copies and a few dozen more went to members of the volunteer fire department where Emma helps with cooking fund-raising banquet meals. The ladies in the quilting circle at her church ordered a couple dozen copies. After the local paper did a story about the publishing success of the new cookbook author, the local bookstores ordered a few dozen more. Orders continued to come in as word of Emma's cookbook spread to friends and distant relatives. In a few months, over 360 copies of her cookbook sold – unfortunately, not even close to a bestseller. Earned royalties paid on the selling price of the book were just under a thousand dollars – but the affirmation and sincere appreciation from her family and friends remains priceless!

Emma's book became a financial success when the accumulated total of her royalties surpassed the cost of the setup fee. If you define success as receiving a

return on your investment, then when you cross the breakeven-point you've succeeded in earning a profit. Emma's advantage was having a network of friends who supported her efforts with word-of-mouth advertising which helped to generate several hundred orders in a few months. Nothing is more successful than a personal endorsement – "Yes, Emma's recipe for yummy wet-bottom shoo-fly pie is in her cookbook!!!"

Emma would be the first to tell you that she felt publishing success the instant she held the proof copy of her book in her hand. She could reflect on the long months of carefully selecting and assembling generations of family recipes that had been passed on to her and smile. She had created a family keepsake of treasured recipes for future generations – and to Emma, that's a lasting success.

Lasting success can come from informative books that were written to improve the quality of life with practical insight focused on helping to fix real world problems. There's a special sense of satisfaction in knowing that your book provides the potential to make a positive difference in the lives of your readers. Aunt Emma isn't a real person. She only serves as an example of what typically happens when an author has their family and friends spread the word about a newly published book.

**Ariane Goodwin** is the author of *Writing the Artist Statement: Revealing the True Spirit of Your Work*, published by Infinity. Ariane's book guides artists of all genres on smoking out the relevant in order to effectively present their work with clarity, confidence and credibility. The book helped to establish Ariane as a professional coach with a growing list of creative clients she has consulted with in order to help them gain

greater benefits from their application of the creative process. Ariane was listed on Infinity's resource page as an editor-for-hire. However, her success with coaching clients leaves no time for editing and she has asked to have her name removed from the list.

Success in publishing isn't always measured by numbers of books sold. **Judith Trustone** founded **SageWriters.org** in 2000 after a stint teaching creative writing in prison. *Celling America's Soul: Torture and Transformation in Our Prisons*, is proclaimed by prisoners and their families to be "the best book that describes prison from most every perspective". Though it hasn't sold huge numbers, the impact of the book has been growing nationally. One prisoner wrote, "For nine years I lived fighting my appeals in court, believing the system would correct my false conviction. When my conviction was upheld and gave me no hope, I slipped into a dark void for a long time. I lived and breathed revenge. I wanted my pound of flesh. Judith gave me hope again, taught me through letters the right way to put my energies to work. She stood by me and educated me. The dream of revenge and anger left my body. Now she holds my finished manuscript on my case. I've been published in several magazines and newspapers. It is her hand that guided me. I do not know if I will ever get justice, but I am a productive citizen again thanks to her program and the people she put me in touch with."

In 2005, Judith received a grant from the **Leeway Foundation** to adapt *Celling America's Soul* into a screenplay, which she is now shopping around. Judith joins the ranks of several other Infinity authors who have attracted the attention of Hollywood and are taking the first steps toward having their books adapted to a major motion picture.

Her passion for giving voice to the voiceless has earned her national recognition. On May 1st, SageWriters will be featured in a segment on *New Morning* from 7:00-8:00 am on the **Hallmark Channel**. On May 23<sup>rd</sup> she will be receiving the **Peacekeeper of the Year Award** from the **Quaker Peace Center** near Philadelphia, PA. This dynamic woman, determined to wake up Americans to the abuses, injustices, expenses, and ineffectiveness of our broken criminal justice system, says, "I'm just getting started!" SageWriters has three more books in the pipeline, and is always looking for volunteers.

The most important thing about success is that it is defined as you need *your success* to be. The touchstones of your successes are more omnipotent than the worn milestones marking the past achievements of others. For some authors, having their books selling consistently month-after-month is more important than

having a brief moment as a bestseller. Other authors are happy with the success of selling a few hundred copies to family and friends. Some authors feel successful when their published book is the springboard that propels them into a lucrative contract with a mainstream publishing house. Others know the security of a different kind of success when their book goes out-of-print with a traditional publisher and the author is able to continue to benefit from their efforts by re-releasing the book through Infinity Publishing.

Everyone has a different notion of what sweet success tastes like to them. Your publishing accomplishments depend entirely on how *you* envision success and your ability to do the ongoing work in order to bring your success to fruition. Sometimes the very best measurement of success comes with that warm feeling deep inside when you know you've *done good!!!*

## **Authors' Wine and Cheese Gathering Hilton Suites Hotel – Phoenix, AZ**

If you're going to be in the Phoenix area on **Friday, May 12th**, please plan on attending our wine and cheese get-together from 6pm to 9pm at the Hilton Suites Hotel, 10 East Thomas Road. This will be an evening for networking with other authors and publishing professionals on the eve of the **Women Writers of the Desert Love in Bloom** 1-day writer's conference on Saturday, May 13th. Many of the presenters at the conference will be attending our Friday evening social event at the Hilton.

We sincerely hope you'll be able to attend our complimentary gathering for our authors. Please be assured that this isn't an infomercial for Infinity – there will be no sales pitches!!! This is just our way of showing our sincere appreciation for publishing your book with us. We welcome the opportunity to meet our authors socially. Please extend our invitation to your spouse and/or any writer friends.

There's no charge for attending the wine and cheese get-together; however, please RSVP to Michelle or Amanda at 877-BUY-BOOK (toll free) on or before Tuesday, May 9<sup>th</sup> if you'll be able to join us on Friday evening. For more information about the Women Writers of the Desert Love in Bloom writer's conference on Saturday, call **Cathy Marley** at 602-788-3083.

One of the most gratifying things I get to do on behalf of Infinity Publishing is to meet with our authors. I hope I have the opportunity to meet many of you as I travel about to various events.

Take care and enjoy often...John