



# LAUGHING BEAR 111 NEWSLETTER

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## The Surviving Small Press: Consultants

There's an ad I've heard several times on the radio that says you can make big bucks starting your own business as an internet consultant. You don't need to have any experience, education, or even a computer, just send us money and we'll get you set up. I have a feeling some of the publishing consultants I've received flyers from have heard the same ad.

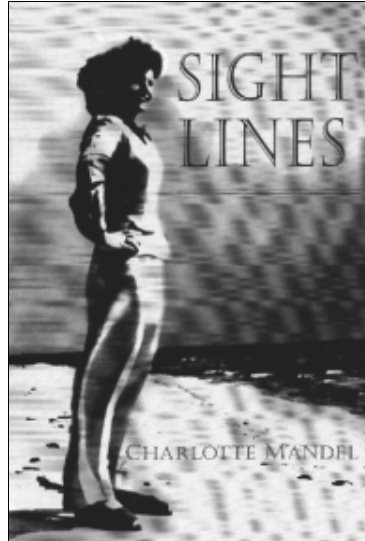
I've worked for several companies that have hired consultants for various reasons, and the results have ranged from total satisfaction and it was money well spent, to the consultant causing more problems than they solved and charging an arm and a leg to do it.

If you are going to hire a consultant, first have a clear notion of what you want them to do. And ask them exactly what they will do for you. Do they just show the way, or will they use their contacts to help find distributors, work with designers and printers, etc. Let them know your expectations up front. Then do some research.

Ask prospective consultants for references, articles, their areas of expertise, and how long they have been in business. Most reputable firms will send you all that and more. They should want you to make an informed decision.

Read the materials they send. A good consultant will give you material that is informative and

*(Continued on page 3.)*



## Sight Lines

By Charlotte Mandel  
Midmarch Arts Press, 300 Riverside Dr., New York, NY 10025;  
108 pp, 6" x 9", perfect, \$12.00 + \$1.24 p&h

I've been a fan Charlotte Mandel's poetry for over 20 years, since I published her poems in *Laughing Bear* magazine, and *Sight Lines* has taken its place as one of my favorites of her books.

Mandel's poems come alive through sensory images. The poems bristle with sights, sounds, smells, touch, and taste that make her work at once personal and still crackling an energy that takes you far beyond the commonplace.

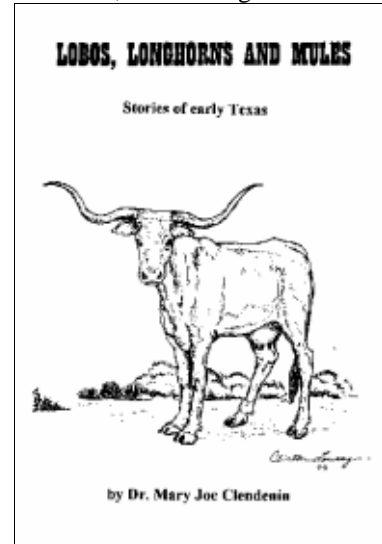
*Sight Lines*, as the title suggests, is about perspective. She writes about family, births, passions, frailty, and strengths we assimilate as we mature to find the connection between ourselves and those around us.

## Lobos, Longhorns and Mules

### Stories of Early Texas

By Dr. Mary Joe Clendenin  
Clendenin Books, 2140 Crestridge, Stephenville, TX 76401; 140 pp, 5.5" x 8.5", perfect, \$8.00

Texas is a state with a rich history and many heroes in its fight for independence from Mexico, the Civil War, and settling the frontier.



Dr. Clendenin, a retired teacher who writes columns for two papers and has written other books on Texas history, uses this collection to focus on the stories of ordinary Texans and rural life in early Texas, often with humor.

Many of the stories come from her own family. Her father was born to a farming family in Central Texas in 1876. The stories tell about the day to day life of farmers and cowboys through harsh times and good.

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## 422 Tax Deductions For Businesses & Self-Employed Individuals

By Bernard B. Kamoroff, CPA  
Bell Springs Publishing, PO Box 1240, Willits, CA 95490; 216 pp, 6" x 9", perfect, \$16.95

Whether you're like me, and haven't even looked at your taxes yet, or you filed long ago and are already planning for next year, you'll want this great little guide that lists deductions from Accountants to Zoning in plain English.

Kamoroff wrote *the* book on small business accounting, *Small Time Operator*, now in its 22<sup>nd</sup> edition and one of the best selling small press books of all time.

In *422 Tax Deductions*, he covers the deductions you've probably overlooked and makes sense of the common ones.

The book is peppered with cartoons and quotes from politicians, tax officials, humorists, businesspeople and even me, to bring home the fact that taxes are inevitable and absurd, but we're all in the same boat.

So, don't be timid, and don't be foolhardy. Let Kamoroff take you by the hand and show you how to find the tax savings you've got coming without attracting an audit.



## More Postcards from Paradise

By June Keith  
Palm Island Press, 411 Truman Ave, Key West, FL 33040; 256 pp, 5.5" x 8.5", perfect, \$19.95

I've wanted to go to Key West ever since I read June Keith's original *Postcards from Paradise* in 1994. I haven't made it yet, but I'm thankful to get another dose of tropical sun in this latest collection of her *Miami Herald* columns on the people and life in Key West.

True to the book's title, Keith's columns are like postcards from a friend on perpetual vacation describing the people she meets along the way.



Some of the tales are heroic, some tragic, some funny, some touching, but they all simmer together into a rich gumbo of personalities. This is the land of Hemmingway and drag queens, eccentrics and angels.

Aside from the locale, the stories of the people Keith has met and known are always fascinating. She is a gifted storyteller. It is hard to fit the essence of a person into a couple pages of print, but she makes each one memorable, a gem you won't soon forget. And more importantly, a real person.

## Coffee and Coffeehouses

*A Local and International History*

Gary Michael Smith

## Coffee and Coffeehouses A Local and International History

By Gary Michael Smith  
Chatgris Press, PO Box 15092, New Orleans, LA 70175-5092; 62 pp, 5.5" x 8.25", perfect, \$7.95 + \$1.24 p&h

I love coffee. I grew up in Seattle and bought coffee beans from Starbucks before they even thought of the cappuccino grande. I've read about coffee, ground it, brewed it, and have had shaking hands for most of my life, but still found out a lot of new coffee lore from this little book.

As obsessed and hyperactive as java has made me, it's nothing next to Gary Smith, who spent 10 years researching coffee. He has traced the history of coffee drinking and the coffeehouse from the 6<sup>th</sup> century and around the world.

He explains the different kinds of beans and roasts and where all the exotic names came from and the different methods of brewing and the machines used to do it.

I was a little put out that he sees New Orleans as the U.S. coffee capital instead of Seattle, but this is still a delightful book. And great with a cup of coffee.

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## Spies, Black Ties, & Mango Pies Stories and Recipes from CIA Families all over the World

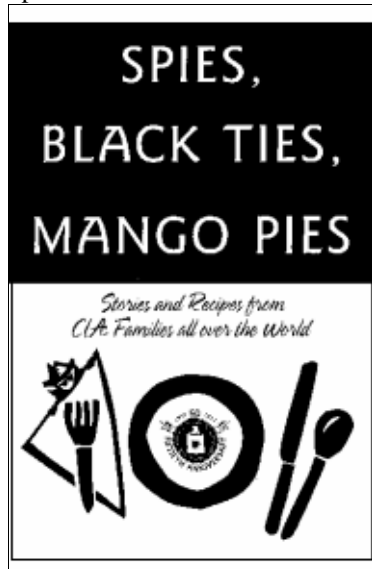
Community Communications, Inc.,  
4520 Executive Park Dr., Mont-  
gomery, AL 36116; <http://www.gotocommunity.com>; 224 pp, 6" x 9.25", cloth, 19.95

You come upon some strange stuff reviewing small press books, but this one is really a delight. It was published for the CIA Family Advisory Board to raise funds for scholarships for CIA children.

Oddly enough, one of my early small press friends is a CIA wife. I used to love visiting them and hearing her husband's stories.

The recipes here include wonderful stuff like moussaka and ceviche, easy family fare for the spy on the run like no-bake cherry cheesecake and late lasagna, and fun stuff like elephant stew – "Cut elephant into bite-sized pieces; cover with gravy and cook over fire at 465° for four weeks."

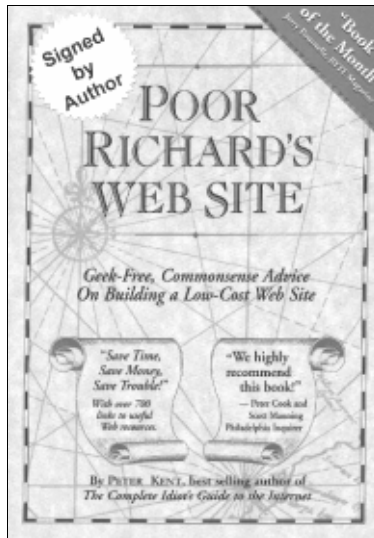
Each recipe has a story, and while there is little here for John le Carré to be jealous of, just try entertaining a party of 60 foreign diplomats at the last minute.



## Poor Richard's Web Site Geek-Free, Commonsense Advice On Building a Low- Cost Web Site

By Peter Kent  
Top Floor Publishing, PO Box  
260072, Lakewood, CO 80026;  
<http://www.poorrichard.com/brv/>;  
448 pp, 7" x 10" perfect, \$37.95

There are many books that claim to be all you need to know to set up your own web site. There are none I have seen that come as close to that claim as this one.



Kent actually does start from the ground up where others shy away from tough questions like how to choose a web host, how can you take orders online, and do you really need a web site. Right there the book can pay for itself.

It is refreshing to find someone who shows step by step how to set up a web presence without treating you like a dummy.

*Poor Richard's Web Site* covers everything from selecting an HTML editor to making your site interactive to promoting the site, with plenty of examples and resources.

I wish I had this book when I got started on my site, but I'm glad to have it now as it is showing me how to grow and maintain it.

## Consultants (continued)

useful. From the introductory materials they send, you may find some of the solutions you're looking for. Or they may offer books or reports as an alternative to personal consulting that could be all you need.

If you still feel you need help, then the consultant will take you on as a client and work with you. A good consulting firm doesn't take on clients who don't need them. It is better business to turn away someone than take them on and have them be disappointed.

If the material they send consists of little more than teasers to entice you to sign with them based on how much money they've made for other publishers, all the great stuff they will do for you and how successful they are – go somewhere else. They may indeed be able to live up to their claims, but the expense is too much to justify on a sales pitch alone.

If you have the opportunity, take one of the consultant's workshops. You may find that all you really need is some feedback in that kind of environment. If nothing else, it'll give you a personal glimpse of the consultant's style and an idea of what they have to offer you.

Once you decide to hire a consultant, specify your expectations, budget, and any other details you need to be comfortable with in writing. Oral agreements can lead to expensive misunderstandings.

If possible, come up with a checklist of key items you want addressed so you can easily see the progress that is made as you work with the consultant, and so you can ensure all your questions get answers.

And finally, as with an accountant or publicist or any professional you hire, once you've paid for the consultant's advice, heed it.

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## Announcements

### • **New Toll Free Numbers**

Now that the toll-free prefix 800 is no longer available and 888 is expanding rapidly, new publishers who want memorable numbers or letters may think their phones and faxes are forever doomed to meaningless numerals.

Few are aware of the many prefixes continuing to be made available, or the fact that dialing an extra digit or two beyond the obligatory 11 has no effect on the tele-connection.

Recently, when freelance book editor Chris Roerden moved her offices for the first time in 13 years, she set up a toll-free line that would travel with her, enabling her publishing clients to contact her at the same number no matter where, or when, she settled in her permanent address.

Insisting on the spelling she wanted, she succeeded in getting the new 877 exchange. Now her lifetime toll-free number is: 1-877-BookEdit.

Chris also sent a bit of humor: "All through my past-presidency of MidAmerica Publishers Association (MAPA), whenever I prepared an article about book distributors, my spell checker balked at certain names, and – with the wit and wisdom only a computer spell checker can exhibit – always suggested replacing 'Ingram' with 'Ingrate'."

• **Farming Uncle** (Louis Toro, ed.; Box 580118, Bronx, NY 10458; \$5/4 issues, sample for 4 first class stamps) is a quarterly "periodical for natural people and Mother Nature lovers" in its 21<sup>st</sup> year. Packed with little bits of wisdom, pictures, recipes, ads for farming supplies and holistic living.

• **The Multicultural Publishing & Education Council** (Rennie Mau, president) has a new address: 1215 W. Kihei Rd, Ste. 625, PO Box 959, Kihei HI 96753.

• **Scavenger's Newsletter** (Janet Fox, ed.; 519 Ellinwood, Osage City, KS 66523-1329; <http://www.cza.com/scav/>; \$18/12 issues) is a monthly market letter for science fiction, fantasy, horror, and mystery writers. Each issue has detailed listings for dozens of magazines looking for fiction.

• **A Directory of American Poets and Fiction Writers** (Poets & Writers, Inc., 72 Spring St., New York, NY 10012; <http://www.pw.org>; \$29.95 for individuals, \$34.95 for institutions) has just been updated in its Millennial Edition (1999-2000). This is the first place to look if you are trying to contact any American author. The directory has been published biannually by Poets & Writers for 26 years.

• **The Poor House Courier Soup Kitchen Cookbooklet** (Bill Mason, pub.; The Homeless Gazette Newsletter, PO Box 1053, Dallas, TX 75221; \$5 + \$1 p&h) contains soup and bread recipes as well as poetry by homeless poets. Proceeds from sales go to benefit *The Homeless Gazette Newsletter*, which strives to address and work to remedy some of the root causes of homelessness.

• **Bleeding Hearts** (C.D. Wofford and Christopher Leibers, eds.; 640 Veteran Ave., Ste. 307, Los Angeles, CA 90024; \$3.95 per issue) is a new large format (8.5" x 11") literary zine. Uses poetry, fiction, photos, artwork.

• **The Self-Publishing Manual** by Dan Poynter (Para Publishing, PO Box 8206, Santa Barbara, CA 93118-8206; <http://www.ParaPublishing.com>; \$19.95) is now in its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition. This essential textbook of independent publishing is in its 11<sup>th</sup> completely revised edition.

• **The Bess Press** (3565 Harding Ave., Honolulu, HI 96816; <http://www.besspress.com>) publishes books that combine bilingual education with a study of the culture the language comes from. New titles are *Chamorro Word Book*, on the culture and original language of Guam and the Marianas Islands, and the *Samoan Word Book*.

• **American Self-Publisher** (Bobbie Christensen, owner; PO Box 232233, Sacramento, CA 95823; <http://members.aol.com/ASPublish>; \$45/year) provides support for self-publishers with a monthly newsletter, workshops, and free consulting by e-mail.

• **Kit 'Zine** (James D. Harvey, exec. pub.; 27 E. Central Ave. R5, Paoli, PA 19301; \$2/issue) is a Christian oriented zine with stories, music reviews, and comics.

• **Squaw Valley Community of Writers** (10626 Banner Lava Cap, Nevada City, CA 95959; 530-274-8551, [svcw@oro.net](mailto:svcw@oro.net)) will be holding its 1999 workshops for fiction, poetry, and screenwriting from July 9, 1999 to August 14. Included this year is a workshop on "Art of the Wild". Write for a brochure describing the different workshops available.

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