



LAUGHING BEAR 142

NEWSLETTER

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The Surviving Small Press: Determination

You can discuss self-publishing in seminars, attend workshops, read books, earn degrees, meditate and offer up sacrifices, but the most important thing you need to be a publisher, and the one thing you cannot do without, is determination.

I know what I am talking about here. I am a great procrastinator, as you know, and a substantial supporter of the publishing community. Whenever I start a new project I go out and buy books and lots of them. Sometimes I buy books I don't even read because I may need them later. Then I print out reams of web pages, I go to events, I study, delve and digest. This distraction phase is inspiring and entertaining, but hardly productive.

Inevitably, when I finally get down to business – be it writing a book or installing a faucet – I toss the books aside and just do it the best I can. The “research” period is useful in moderation, but really if I had been trying to make progress on the project while I was reading, it would have gotten done much faster. This I know, but the next time a project comes up I'll do the same thing.

In the Publishing Forum on the laughingbear.com web site, I hear often from publishers starting out. The majority of them seem to approach publishing the way I approach a project. They should be planning budgets and schedules,

interviewing vendors, designing their magazine and soliciting writers, but instead they are bogged down worrying about whether someone will steal their concept or the magazine's title, or they get overwhelmed with the myriad of details that go into a magazine without knowing what they want to say in the magazine or who it is for. These are the kind of concerns that will keep them from ever publishing their magazine, but will enable them to fantasize for months about how great it will be.

Many would-be publishers and writers can entertain themselves endlessly dreaming about success. What makes some people actually go out and write that novel or publish their book is determination. They define a goal, they are willing to learn, and they commit to do whatever it takes to accomplish their goal. Then they do it.

The person who will actually be a success at publishing is the one who dives right in. They still ask questions and use resources as needed, but they don't let a lack of validation or empowerment (to use a couple of zippy self-help buzzwords) slow them down.

If you are going to do anything that requires a skill, from skiing to learning foreign languages, you can read a library of books and take all the classes you want, but until you shush down a mountain or try to check into a hotel or order a meal in Italian you won't really learn your new skill.

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Thomson-Shore Joins Green Press Initiative

By Keith Mitchell

Thomson-Shore Inc., recognized as a leader in quality short run book manufacturing, is now striving to be noted as the most environmentally responsible book manufacturer in the country.

Recently, Thomson-Shore became the first book manufacturer to join the Green Press Initiative (GPI), a non-profit program of social and environmental entrepreneurs dedicated to increasing the use of recycled paper within the book industry.

Located in Dexter, Michigan, a small town known for its pristine Metro Parks, Thomson-Shore reflects the values of its local environment. It is aware that paper is a core part of its business and that policies are needed that will facilitate the conservation of ancient and other endangered forests globally.

By way of an internal study done earlier this year, Thomson-Shore learned that standing orders limited its use of recycled paper fiber to 5.7 percent of its total production. As good stewards of the environment, it quickly committed itself to an initiative that will see at least 25 percent of its total annual paper volume comprised of 100 percent recycled fiber by 2006. With book orders that can exceed 20,000 copies at 1,200 pages each, the impact on forest preservation will be considerable.

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Determination *(continued)*

If you are going to write a book, you can spend months reading about plot, characterization, themes, research, and all kinds of details. But during the time you are reading those how-to and self-help books, you are not writing. There is nothing wrong with having resources at hand, so long as your priority is to write.

Writing takes a great deal of determination and discipline to get done. On the other hand it is very easy to get distracted by stumbling blocks that seem insurmountable. Of course you can't finish writing about the Mongolian murderer until you take a trip to Mongolia, and you can't do that until summer, so the book is set aside.

The same goes for publishing. Someone decides to start a magazine, but there is a never-ending list of things that need to be in place first. "I can't start until I have an advertiser, a distributor, a printer, a really cool title, an ISSN, a new computer or the right software."

Those things may be necessary at some point, but there is plenty to do in the meantime. Dive in and you'll find that some of your problems will solve themselves just by working through them.

As you work on a project you get a better idea of what you need and what you can do without. Also, just making headway and having something to show for your effort will do more to validate and empower you than any workshop or book.

I have come across a book that shows what it really takes to conceive of and follow through on a creative project. "If Chins Could Kill" by Bruce Campbell is about building a career in film from scratch. The book is about show business, but it is a good example for any creative small business.

In the early 1970's Campbell, Sam Raimi, and some friends in a

Detroit high school made short movies with a Super 8 camera for fun. As time went by these short films became more elaborate and more expensive. Finally, in their early twenties, the friends decided to make a real motion picture.

Because of their experience making amateur films, they made a rough but realistic estimate of the money to would take to shoot the film, pay the crew, and live on the set while the movie was shot.

They knew enough about the expenses of filmmaking to realize that they would need to raise a substantial amount of money. Conversely, they would have to make a film with the commercial potential to repay loans and satisfy investors.

In the months that ensued, they raised money from friends and family. When that wasn't enough they sought out investors – friends of their parents, a family dentist, and then they even made cold calls to the well-to-do in the Detroit area.

To sell their idea, they used the first of the investment money they raised to shoot a 10 minute film to demonstrate to potential investors that they had the talent and experience to pull off the project.

Approaching investors was a practical introduction to the value of looking and acting like professionals, which was tough considering they had no commercial film experience, college degrees, or training outside of the Super 8 films. But their enthusiasm and determination did the trick.

As they were raising the money, they were also contacting state film boards to find a location to shoot the film and gathering a crew and equipment.

Through their network of family, friends and investors, they found resources. They then researched everything that goes into a low budget movie produc-

tion. It was a tremendous undertaking for a handful of young people who knew little of the business of feature filmmaking before starting. They realized the odds were virtually insurmountable against a feature film shot on a shoestring budget in Detroit ever appearing in local theaters, much less nationwide.

Still, they had youth, ingenuity, and determination in their favor. They looked at the market for low budget films and decided ones most likely to succeed were horror films. From there they built a script, found a location in Tennessee, and shot the film.

Along the way they learned all aspects of making a film: Cinematography, lighting, sound, props, special effects, makeup, set design, directing, and even acting.

Once the film was completed, they marketed it and found an agent who took the film to the Cannes Film Festival where they found a distributor.

That film was cult favorite "The Evil Dead", which was followed by "Evil Dead II" and "Army of Darkness".

All of the friends stayed in the business in some form or another, from commercials to industrial films. Bruce Campbell became a successful character actor in TV and movies, and he's directed TV series including "Hercules" and "Xena". Sam Raimi directed "Dark Man", "The Quick and the Dead", and more recently "Spider-Man 2".

The message I take from "If Chins Could Kill" is that you can get from Detroit to Hollywood, or from chapbooks to the New York Times Best Seller list, but only through determination and hard work. There are no shortcuts to success. That is because what it takes to achieve success is a combination of all the experiences, failures, insights and hard lessons it takes to get there. 🐻

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Thomson-Shore

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To achieve its goal, Thomson-Shore needs the cooperation of those it serves.

Some of their most prolific patrons are members of the Association of American University Presses, including Michigan State University, the University of North Carolina, the University of California and other institutions of higher learning. Thomson-Shore is happy to have these, and other, institutions as fellow members with it on the Green Press Initiative.

Thomson-Shore supplies another of their accounts within this coalition, the Cornell University Press, with about 97 tons of paper annually to meet its needs. Together, they have been working for many years on testing a variety of recycled and totally chlorine-free papers. The success of this experimentation will go far in achieving the publishing titan's goal to have 88 percent of this output on recycled paper.

"I am thrilled that Thomson-Shore is the first printer to sign on with the Green Press Initiative," said Deborah Bruner, Design & Production Manager for Cornell University Press. "Our collaboration on this matter is heightening the awareness of other publishers about their Eco-friendly paper stock. It also sends out an important message to mills that there is indeed a market for recycled product."

Bruner added that Thomson-Shore's commitment to globally facilitate the conservation of endangered forests by stocking recycled paper and demanding accountability on the source of its virgin paper is an example of stellar leadership and a conscientious and committed staff.


Thomson-Shore also caters to organizations affiliated with such subjects as general education,

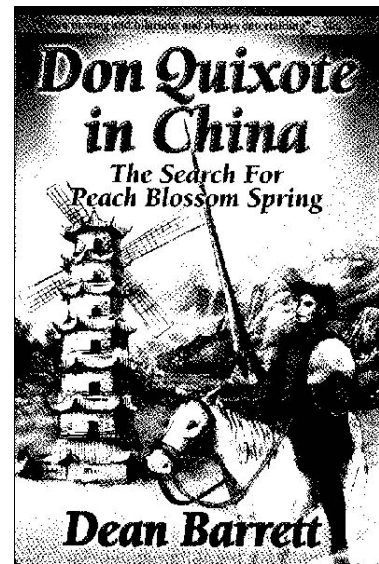
religion and medicine who do not have the same opportunity to learn of the benefits and cost efficiency of recycled paper. Its sales representatives will dedicate themselves in enjoining these clients to reassess their needs. Tyson Miller founded the GPI in 2001 as an expansion of his San Diego-based Recycled Products Purchasing Cooperative. He now acts as the program director for, both, the older local enterprise and the newer national program.

"Thomson-Shore is a true leader," Miller said. "So far, it has been small and mid-sized universities who have given this movement its momentum. With Thomson-Shore in active partnership with these institutions, we should see an industry-wide transformation at all levels by the end of the year."

Thomson-Shore is no stranger to environmentally friendly policies. In fact, its latest initiative can be seen as a continuation of its efforts, begun during the spring of 2003, when it became the first U.S. book manufacturer to stock a 100% post consumer recycled paper. This was in addition to recycled papers of a lower post consumer percentage it already made available.

Ned Thomson and Harry Shore founded Thomson-Shore in 1972 on the belief that that the only real asset the company has in the long run is the people who make up the organization. After retiring in 1998, Ned and Harry transferred the ownership to the employees to assure that these values remained in place. Today it is nearly 100% employee owned. When you talk with its employees, keep in mind that it is they who are behind the company's efforts to preserve endangered forests.

To assist in reducing the use of virgin paper, contact Thomson-Shore, Inc., 7300 W. Joy Road, Dexter, MI 48130; Phone: 734-426-3939; www.tshore.com. 



Don Quixote in China: The Search for Peach Blossom Spring

By Dean Barrett

Village East Books, Countryside,
#520, 8775 20th St., Vero Beach,
FL 32966; 260 pp, 6" x 9" trade
paperback, \$14.00

Dean Barrett has written five novels set in Asia, but in this non-fiction departure he is on a quest himself.

Peach Blossom Spring is a sort of Shangri-La from a poem by the Chinese poet, T'ao Yuan-ming. A fisherman who is lost happens upon a beautiful peach orchard where he finds a lost realm, a paradise. He is told by the inhabitants that if he leaves and tells anyone about Peach Blossom Spring he will never be able to return. Naturally, he tells and tries to lead others there, but he cannot find it again.

Barrett, who speaks Chinese, believes in Peach Blossom Spring, that it is a real place, so he sets out on a rollicking trip through China searching for it.

He describes the people, places and customs of interior China. Through his adventures he takes us through a China Westerners seldom see and finds his own Peach Blossom Spring in the land he loves.

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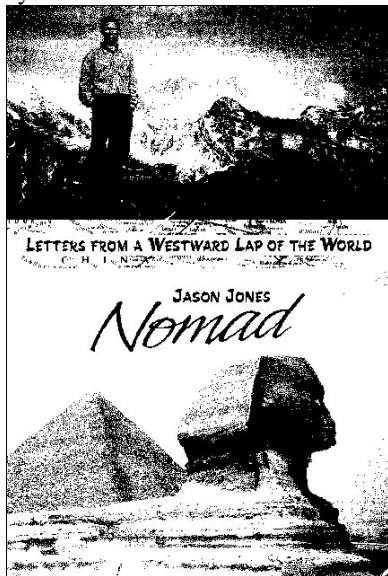
Nomad: Letters from a Westward Lap of the World

By Jason Jones

Palm Island Press, 411 Truman Ave., Key West FL 33040; 270 pp, 6" x 9", trade paperback, \$12.00

Jason Jones was recently out of the Air Force, 30 years old, had just earned his MBA, and was in a dead end job. A friend suggested he take a long vacation. That was the seed for a plan that would take him around the world.

Nomad is an entertaining and fascinating account of his 15 month backpacking journey around the world. It is taken mostly from his e-mail correspondence home from cyber cafes.



Jones set himself a budget of \$40 a day and traveled from Phoenix, Arizona to Japan, China, Southeast Asia, India, all the way down Africa, then to Mexico, down and up South America, and finally to Atlanta, Georgia.

Along the way he immersed himself in the people and cultures, art, history and politics. He made friends along the way and had a true adventure. He writes with humor, enthusiasm, and a great eye for the details of everyday life.

Announcements

- **Paris Book Fair** (www.salondulivreparis.com). The 25th edition of the Paris Book Fair will take place March 18 to 23, 2005. For hotels in Paris and throughout Europe, go to Venere.com.

- **The Book Standard** (www.thebookstandard.com) is an online book magazine for publishers, authors, agents, and other professionals who need to keep up with the publishing business. Partners in The Book Standard include Kirkus Reviews, Billboard, The Bookseller and Nielson BookScan.

- **AnyBook Professional** (www.ronwatters.com/RonSoft5.htm). AnyBook Professional Level IV is now available. This is the most inclusive, least expensive, and easiest to use software I have ever found for book publishers. It helps you maintain control over every aspect of your business from accounting to inventory to royalties. Also available are AnyPO (purchase orders), AnyCard (credit card processing) and AnyOrder (order processing).

- **Infoswell** (33688-B Winston Way, Temecula CA 92592; 1-951-304-4062; www.infoswell.com) provides an all-inclusive platform for magazine web site content management and marketing.

- **Corporate Imagination** (www.corpimagination.com) is offers graphics, web design, and magazine and newsletter design services.

- **Monument Information Resource** (www.mirdata.com) provides marketing research and demographics for magazine publishers.

- **The Publishing Business Group** (www.publishingbiz.com) is an alliance of independent publishing consultants. They can help with editing, design, market research, circulation, advertising sales, planning, and business management.

- **MagazineLaunch.com** (www.magazinelaunch.com) is a dynamic new web site for startup magazine publishers. It features articles, forums, and resources that will prove invaluable to new and experienced magazine publishers.

- **International Titles** (Loris Essary and Harry Smith, directors; www.internationaltitles.com) exhibits their client publishers' books and sells foreign rights at the major book fairs around the world.

- **American Magazine Conference** (Magazine Publishers of America; www.magazine.org; www.magazine.org/Events_and_Seminars/Conferences/American_Magazine_Conference) will be held October 16-19, 2005 at the Wnydham El Conquistador Resort & Club in Puerto Rico.

- **Simba Information** (www.simbanet.com) publishes marketing newsletters and reports for magazine publishers.

- **Book Bridge Consulting** (Anne Marquess, CEO; www.bookbridgeconsulting.com) is a British consulting firm with more than 10 years experience in publishing in a broad range of sectors and international markets.

- **Patron Saint Productions** (Steve O'Keefe, exec. director; www.PatronSaintPR.com). The internet publicity firm has a new address: Patron Saint Productions, Inc., Bywater Tech Center, 538 Louisa St., New Orleans, LA 70117.

- **e-BookServices.com** is a professional outsourcing partner in India for all book and journal-related work, including typesetting, editing, translation, pre-press, e-Books creation, and other services.

- **View-Pod Image Reviewer** (www.view-pod.com) is an online subscription service for reviewing, proofing, and correcting text and graphics that replaces fax, overnight mail, and e-mail.