



## Promotion – pre-publication

by Julie H. Ferguson

*Author and professional speaker, Julie H. Ferguson leads live and tele-workshops that provide aspiring authors with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to approach publishers and succeed. Her workshops are available as downloadable booklets and as fully-narrated CD-ROMs through Beacon Literary Services at [www.beaconlit.com](http://www.beaconlit.com), then click on Writers' Tools.*

Consuming though it is, writing your manuscript should not be the only task that you undertake during the long journey to publication. Aspiring authors must have an eye on promotion early in the writing process and work on it in parallel with the manuscript. Pre-publication book promotion is important, not only for future sales, but also to heighten your chances of getting published in the first place.

**Getting published in targeted magazines**, both print and electronic, is the number one way to gain pre-publication promotion for both novelists and non-fiction writers. Make sure that you are writing articles on your subject or short stories in your fiction category. If you succeed in getting them published, you will enhance your visibility, credibility, and name recognition. Publishers love it when they see an unpublished author has systematically gone about a campaign like this. I aimed to get into print four times a year while I was writing my two books on naval history and I found it easy because I had lots of material ready to hand – I summarized chapters, I enlarged vignettes, and I used sections that had hit the cutting room floor. Ensure that the periodical publisher includes your by-line at the end of your piece – this is the promotion of your forthcoming book. Here is an example of one of mine: *Julie H. Ferguson is writing the history of the Canadian Submarine Service, due for publication in 1995, and can be reached at.....*

Another good route is **the radio interview**, especially if you write non-fiction. True, you have to be comfortable at the mic or it could back-fire but, if you are, you become known to the media as an 'available' expert. Radio show hosts are very good about mentioning your book-in-progress at the end of the interview. I shamelessly plugged myself to the media throughout the manuscript phase whenever I had an excuse to do so – Remembrance Day, for example. Local and national radio provided me many interviews over several years and, just after my first book was published, Vickie Gabereau had me

back on her CBC national radio show as one of her five *Guests of the Year*. I think I can safely say that my promotional efforts worked well. And, the phone still rings...!

Novelists also should be **entering contests** as regularly as possible. Your aim is to win or get placed so that you can use the success when pitching your books to editors and/or agents verbally or in query letters. E.g. *I won the fiction prize in the Pacific North-west Writers' 2001 contest for my short story "Down Under."* If you win a major award, send out a press release to your national and local radio and TV stations – on a slow news day, they'll probably use your story and even have you in for an interview.

So work on pre-publication pro-motion steadily as you write your masterpiece and watch as the success develops. With luck, you'll also get paid for it....

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