

BOOKSELLING THIS Week

AMERICAN BOOKSELLERS ASSOCIATION

December 22, 2009

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January Indie Notables Fliers & Shelf-Talkers Now Available

December 22, 2009 -- Booksellers can now download the January Indie Next List Notable title recommendations in a flier ¹ and shelf-talkers ² on BookWeb.org ³. Each month, the Indie Next List Notables showcase outstanding writing -- selections that have all been recommended by indie booksellers nationwide.

The January Notables nonfiction list features an intriguing departure from fiction standout Jonathan Safran Foer on the perils of industrial agriculture (*Eating Animals* , Little, Brown), Pulitzer Prize-winner Rick Bragg's account of the inspiring lives of workers in a cotton mill in Jacksonville, Alabama (*The Most They Ever Had* , MacAdam/Cage), and a blend of memoir and recipes from Suzan Colón (*Cherries in Winter* , Doubleday).

This month's fiction selections for the Notables includes new novels from Joyce Carol Oates (*A Fair Maiden* , Houghton Mifflin Harcourt) and Gail Godwin (*Unfinished Desires* , Random House), as well as a quirky, handselling favorite with an Irish setting, (*The Pig Did It* , Delphinium). In the Mystery/Suspense category, the list features the introduction of a compelling new protagonist in *The Disappeared* by M.R. Hall and the latest from acclaimed writer Stephen Hunter (*I, Sniper*), both from Simon & Schuster.

Booksellers with comments, questions, and suggestions for the Next List are encouraged to contact Dan Cullen, ABA senior

director of editorial content, via e-mail ⁴.

The Indie Next List Great Reads are also available in PDF format ⁵ on Bookweb.org, and stores that need more copies of the Indie Next List fliers should e-mail ABA's Linda Ford ⁶.

Almost 62 percent of booksellers who responded to a recent ABA survey create an Indie Next List display using a mix of Great Reads and Notables titles, and, going into the holiday season, the December Notables titles expand the range of books available for creating your Next store display.

ABA Member Store Openings October - December

December 22, 2009 -- Ten ABA member storefront locations and one online-only bookstore opened for business from October through December 2009:

Backlist Books 39 Lincoln Way East Massillon, OH 44646-6631 (330) 880-0334	Old Towne Books and Tea 61 S. Madison Street # 63 Oswego, IL 60543-8598 (630) 636-9236
Books Inc. 1760 4th Street Berkeley, CA 94710-1711 (510) 525-7777 www.booksinc.net ⁷ (branch store)	Open Books 213 W. Institute Place, Suite 207 Chicago, IL 60610-3195 (312) 475-1355 www.open-books.org ¹⁰
Coral Reef Bookstore Little Harbour P.O. Box 966 The Valley, AI-2640 Anguilla, B.W.I. (264) 235-8084	Play by Play Theatre Bookstore 1771 Selby Avenue Saint Paul, MN 55104-6031 (651) 330-2219 www.playbyplaybooks.com ¹¹
Dulce Bread & Book Shop 1081 Hidden Hills Drive Dripping Springs, TX 78620-3936 (512) 633-4327	Read Booksellers 3630 Blackhawk Plaza Circle Danville, CA 94506-4623 (925) 736-9090 www.readbooksellers.com ¹²
Flyleaf Books 752 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard Chapel Hill, NC 27514-5700 (919) 942-7373 www.flyleafbooks.com ⁸	Reading Frenzy BookShop 27737 104th Street, NW Zimmerman, MN 55398-9488 (763) 389-0667 www.readingfrenzymn.com ¹³ (storefront to open in 2010)
Greenlight Bookstore 686 Fulton Street Brooklyn, NY 11217-1699 (718) 399-2093 www.greenlightbookstore.com ⁹	

Eleven additional stores, which opened from July through September, were announced last month.

Holiday Helpers: ABA Staffers Become Weekend Booksellers

December 22, 2009 -- Continuing a holiday tradition, ABA senior staff members were encouraged by CEO Oren Teicher and COO Len Vlahos to spend time working at member stores during the crucial rundown to the New Year. With the intent of helping member stores in any way they could, and to learn more about the challenges facing store owners and staff, over the last several weeks ABA staffers drove to stores within a few hours of the association's Tarrytown, New York, offices or combined their stints as bookstore helpers with previously planned business trips and vacations in locales across the country.

Jill Perlstein, ABA's director of member services, traveled with her family to Shelburne, Vermont, in the middle of December to work for two days at The Flying Pig Bookstore ¹⁶, alongside store owners Josie Leavitt and Elizabeth Bluemle.

As is ABA custom, Perlstein offered to do whatever needed to be done (with the exception of handling money) and was promptly put to work. She dusted, straightened out the picture and activity book areas, organized stacks of special orders, and wrapped... a lot. Many were books purchased by customers for children in need, as part of Flying Pig's Book Angel program.

"Elizabeth and Josie are handselling pros," said Perlstein. "They, and their staff, give each customer special attention. For the Book Angel program, they often knew the child for whom a particular book was donated. It was very satisfying to have even such a small part in their efforts." And, she added lightheartedly, "My favorite gifts were the ones where I could use bendy pencils as decorations!"

In addition to working on the sales floor, Perlstein, who oversees the ABA Gift Card Program, was able to give Leavitt and Bluemle some tips about using the Givex portal to better manage gift cards. "This was invaluable and will make my holidays go a lot more smoothly," wrote Leavitt on Shelftalker, A Children's Bookseller's Blog ¹⁷.

While the photo to the right was staged, courtesy of SCIBA's Guinevere Platt, ABA COO Len Vlahos did actually sweep each day at Mrs. Nelson's Toy & Book Shop ¹⁹ in La Verne, California. Over the course of the first weekend in December, he also helped shelve, neaten inventory, and handle customer service inquiries.

Vlahos who has a special interest in all things technical (he's a former director of ABA IndieCommerce), also worked on Mrs. Nelson's "Merchandising Opportunity Report," an Above the Treeline ²⁰ report that shows which books Mrs. Nelson's has in quantity that haven't been selling, but that are selling well in other stores.

"The store was jumping my first morning there, with customers buying large quantities of books," said Vlahos. "The staff is incredibly knowledgeable, and Mrs. Nelson's is both large and beautifully merchandised. Andrea Vuleta, the manager, is an extraordinarily talented children's bookseller, and was a very gracious host."

Business was brisk at Boulder Book Store ²⁴ last week, when ABA Chief Marketing Officer Meg Smith donned a red apron and nametag and took to the floor for a few days. "Store GM and buyer Arsen Kashkashian and floor manager Scott Foley were thoughtful hosts and teachers," said Smith. "I shelved books (my favorite section was 'Recently Acquired Used Books'); answered questions (and found out that bookselling is much like detective work, with store staff trying to decipher titles customers want from very few clues); met with the in-store marketing team (and was pleased to see the use of the IndieBound wish lists and other DIY designs in

various store pieces); and picked up a bit of rudimentary Computac-speak ('Find' is an invaluable short-cut)." Her proudest moments were "pointing out the Bananagrams ²⁵ faster than a 'real' bookseller, and putting a copy of a just-shelved *I Hope They Serve Beers in Hell* ²⁶ by Max Tucker (Citadel) in the hands of a young woman who wondered if we had a copy in stock."

Boulder Bookstore owner David Bolduc, a pioneer in the Shop Local movement introduced Smith to many of the shops and shopkeepers on Pearl Street during her stay. And, while there was sad news that an indie music store was closing in this "dream of an indie retail town," said Smith, "the movement seems alive and well in Boulder Books -- home to 90 book groups, three floors of beautifully arranged and thoughtfully chosen titles, a smart and friendly staff, and perhaps the only bookseller in America who knows the right answer to the question 'Do you have a book with "The" in the title?' (Arsen Kashkashian)."

Arriving in Manchester Center, Vermont, last Friday, Dan Cullen, ABA's senior director of editorial content, got right to work at the Northshire Bookstore ³¹, under the direction of Chris Morrow and Erik Barnum. "I began by helping with shelving, which is probably the best way to learn the layout of the store and start to get a sense of the inventory in the sections," said Cullen. "Northshire makes sure that all titles have been shelved before the end of work day on Friday, which, I saw, made an amazing difference on Saturday morning, when the store opened for what was to be a very busy day."

In addition to shelving, Cullen wrapped a lot of books, including a number of gifts that were part of Northshire's Book Angel program, straightened sections throughout the day, and even did a little handselling. "Northshire has an amazing team of booksellers, and all of them were incredibly patient and generous with their time, helping me contribute and feel part of an outstanding bookstore," said Cullen.

ABA CEO Oren Teicher was in Winnetka, Illinois, this past weekend to work with owner Roberta Rubin and the staff of The Book Stall At Chestnut Court ³⁴. Teicher reported that the store was busy, and "for once it seems that the weather in the Midwest was more retail friendly than it was back East.

"Three days of talking about books with the store's staff and customers was both fun and invigorating," said Teicher, adding "I'm always blown away by the book knowledge of so many booksellers." Of special note, he said, were the relationships that Book Stall staff members have developed over the years with the store's customers. "At least one person on staff knows each customer."

Teicher was put to work on the sales floor, where he handsold several titles, including *City of Thieves* ³⁵, *Wolf Hall* ³⁶, and *The Help* ³⁷. He also made more than 75 phone calls to inform customers that their special orders had arrived.

"The trust between customers and the staff at the Book Stall is amazing," said Teicher, noting that Rubin's selection of *Cutting for Stone* as her favorite pick of 2009 resulted in the bookstore having already sold 546 copies thus far, and the title keeps selling out. --Rosemary Hawkins ³⁸

Sales Tax Revenue Crisis Remains a Hot Media Topic

December 22, 2009 -- The issue of sales tax revenue declines has become a top priority for many states. Just this past week, there

were a number of news articles and editorials about how states are looking to stave off these declines, as well as a report from California on how out-of-state online retailers' ability to sell items without collecting sales tax helped put one bookstore out of business.

In effort to recoup lost sales tax revenue, Colorado Gov. Bill Ritter wants the 2010 legislature to pass an e-fairness provision, and in Maine, a state legislator called for e-fairness to be a top priority.

Here's a closer look at these stories:

- On Monday, December 21, the *Bangor Daily News*³⁹ noted that, on Cyber Monday, Americans spent about \$900 million shopping online. "Many of those sales should have been subject to sales taxes," the article noted, "but those taxes in many cases were never collected. With this Christmas season expected to set records for online sales, Maine is one of the states losing revenue."

State Sen. Joe Perry (D-Bangor), co-chairman of the Maine Legislature's Taxation Committee, told the *Bangor Daily News* that estimates of sales tax revenue losses are significant, and that dealing with the issue should be a "top priority" of his committee. "This problem, a loss of revenue for the state, is just going to grow, and we need to address it," Perry said. "We understand the problems an Amazon faces with some 7,000 or so tax jurisdictions across the country, but they still should be collecting tax for the states."

- On Sunday, December 20, the *Denver Post*⁴⁰ reported that "by one estimate, Colorado lost \$117 million last year from Internet purchases on which no sales tax was paid." As a result, Gov. Bill Ritter has called for a bill in the 2010 legislative session to tighten collection requirements for online sales.

The *Denver Post* explained that "many retailers support such a provision because it would address" an unfair advantage held by online retailers. Christopher Howes, president of the Colorado Retail Council, told the *Post*, "By circumventing sales-tax collection on purchases, online merchants are able to undercut the total price of identical products and profit through an unfair advantage over local brick-and-mortar retailers."

- In an editorial, "Stop 'legal' cheating," the *Palm Beach Post*⁴¹ noted how almost 70 percent of the state's recurring revenue is derived from sales tax. Florida is currently faced with a \$2.5 billion budget gap for next year, and, according to the Bureau of Economic and Business Research at the University of Florida, state and local governments missed out on between \$1.5 billion and \$2.35 billion in 2008.

Stressing that "legally, buyers in Florida owe sales tax on all purchases," the *Post* stated, "For several years, the Florida Retail Federation and Florida TaxWatch have urged the Legislature and the Constitution Revision Commission to get Florida more involved in the effort to crack down on what amounts to massive tax cheating. They will try again in 2010, and this time they must succeed.

"One knee-jerk objection among some legislators and by Gov. Crist has been that the change would represent a 'new' tax. As noted, however, the tax exists. The new part would be collecting it."

The *Palm Beach Post* editorial continued: "Online retailers

Amazon.com and eBay have their well-connected lobbyists in Tallahassee. Shouldn't Florida and Florida taxpaying companies matter more to the Florida Legislature?"

- In its Saturday, December 19, editorial, "The Web gets a pass: Online shoppers should pay the same sales tax, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*⁴² noted, "While legislators tried to plug a deficit that came with the dour economy, \$300 million in sales taxes on Internet purchases go uncollected annually," according to the state Department of Revenue." The newspaper called for a national solution to e-fairness and said, "The reason Internet sales taxes go uncollected is another absurdity....

"That may have made sense prior to the Internet age, but it does not reflect the reality of commerce today. The Internet is everywhere -- that is the whole point. It is its own nexus. To heap absurdity upon absurdity, a retail Internet company can have warehouses in a state if it is owned by a subsidiary, which is what Amazon.com does in Pennsylvania."

- In California, the *Los Angeles Daily News*⁴³ reported that the Valley Book and Bible Store in Van Nuys will close on Christmas Eve after 57 years in business. Bookstore president David Wilke told the *Daily News* that business had not been good since "the Internet and Amazon.com slowly began chipping away at their profits in the early 2000s. And it's only been getting worse."

Co-owner Heather Wilke told the *News*, "We can no longer compete with Amazon's no sales tax or shipping cost advantage." Wilke added: "The most stressful thing is having to tell our oldest customers we're closing."

Read more about recent media coverage of the e-fairness issue in *BTW*'s December 9 roundup. --David Grogan⁴⁴

Senate Health Care Bill Includes Small Business Provisions

December 22, 2009 -- As the Senate gets set to pass its health care reform bill, "The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act," the small business community remains divided over some aspects of the complex legislation. Early Monday morning, the Senate voted 60 - 40 for cloture, which clears the way for final passage of the bill. Most experts believe the Senate bill will pass by Christmas. Once the Senate bill is passed, it will be reconciled with the House of Representatives health care reform bill in conference committee.

This past weekend, several provisions authored and promoted by U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship Chair Mary L. Landrieu (D-LA) were included in the Senate compromise amendment to the bill.

Sen. Landrieu noted that, while the underlying legislation already lowers costs and increases choices for small businesses, her amendments⁴⁵ expand the tax credit to more small businesses, make the credits available immediately, and give entrepreneurs a greater voice in the reform efforts. The Landrieu initiatives provide \$13 billion more in tax credits for small businesses that want to offer affordable, quality health care coverage to their employees.

"Throughout this debate, small business owners and advocates have remained at the negotiating table and the Senate compromise announced today is a direct result of their input and support," Sen. Landrieu said. "By working together we have added an infusion of about \$13 billion to the small business tax credits in the underlying

bill to help small businesses struggling to provide their employees with affordable health care. Expanding the tax credits to more small businesses and making the 'bridge' credit available immediately will ensure that health insurance is even more accessible for small business owners and workers. Additionally, the programs created by the bill will be better targeted to make the health insurance process more accessible and user-friendly. Together, these changes will help small business owners can get back to what they do best -- running their businesses."

Meanwhile, some in the small business community expressed disappointment over the bill.

In a letter to Sen. Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV), John Arensmeyer, founder and CEO of the Small Business Majority ⁴⁶ (SBM), stressed the group's support of the health care reform bill and said the status quo is "unacceptable." He explained that while the "necessary compromises" have been disappointing to some, "it's clear that you and your fellow senators have heard the voices of small business owners, who so desperately need relief from an unfair, overly expensive health insurance system. Many of the recently proposed amendments contribute to an overall bill that will be even more helpful to small business owners and the self-employed."

Arensmeyer noted specific provisions in the health care reform bill that are essential to small businesses, including:

- Stringent insurance reforms, such as the elimination of preexisting condition rules and discrimination based on gender or health status;
- Cost-control measures that will reduce the rate of healthcare inflation and ultimately result in more affordable health plan choices for small business owners and their employees;
- Strong tax credits to help the smallest businesses afford to provide insurance to their employees; and
- A system of exchanges that will enable small business owners to join a pool that will give them more options and greater clout when negotiating for coverage.

"Our economic research shows that without reform, \$52.1 billion in small business profits and \$834 million in wages will be lost by 2018," Arensmeyer wrote.

Last week, the Small Business Majority and Small Business California ⁴⁷ hosted a conference call with California businesses to provide information about the Senate health care bill and to answer questions from small businesses. The call, which was moderated by John Karatzas, state outreach director for the Small Business Majority, featured Terry Gardiner, the group's national policy director, and Scott Hauge, president of Small Business California.

Gardiner told conference call participants he believes that if health care reform gets derailed, there would be no starting over and it would mean the end of health care reform for some time.

Gardiner also discussed some of the key differences in the House and Senate health care bills. For example, he said, the Senate has no public option, and instead of a national health insurance exchange, it has created 50 state insurance exchanges. Each state can set up a public plan, however. "In the coming years, additional legislation will build on [the health care bill]," Gardiner added.

Another small business group, the Main Street Alliance ⁴⁸, expressed its disappointment that the Senate bill does not include a public option, though it held out hope that a public option would be added back into the bill during conference committee. On Sunday, December 20, in the hours leading up to the cloture vote, the Main

Street Alliance told its members, via e-mail: "[W]e know a public option that gives small businesses a real alternative would be the best way to bring new competition to the insurance marketplace and force insurance companies to give small businesses a fairer shake."

The Main Street Alliance said that after the bill passes the Senate "there will be one more round of this fight, one more opportunity to make changes to strengthen and improve the final package. Our 'Round 12' is the conference committee, where the stronger House bill and weaker Senate bill will be combined into one final package."

As *BTW* ⁴⁹ reported earlier this month ⁵⁰, the Senate Committee on Small Business has released two documents to help small businesses learn more about the health care reform bill and how it will affect their business:

- A fact sheet on the small business amendment package ⁵¹, and
- A rundown of the small business provisions in the Senate health care bill ⁵². --David Grogan ⁵³

Sign-Up for Select Wi5 Sessions Filling Fast

December 22, 2009 -- Winter Institute programming ⁵⁴ is open to all registered booksellers, and the majority of sessions do not require sign up. There are nine sessions where space is limited, however, so ABA is asking interested booksellers to sign up for these sessions in advance. Spaces are being filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Sign-up details for eight of the nine sessions follow. Watch for more information on sign up for the Consultation Station in *BTW* in January. For the complete Wi5 schedule ⁵⁵ and more, visit BookWeb.org ⁵⁶. And, remember, if you're registered for Wi5 but no longer plan to attend, contact ABA as soon as possible at Wi5@bookweb.org ⁵⁷, so a waiting bookseller can fill your space.

Thursday, February 4

- 10:15 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

Small and Mid-Size Store Roundtable Large Store Roundtable

A veteran bookseller will moderate each of these roundtable discussions for owners and managers. Space is limited to 50 booksellers per session and will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Those interested in attending should e-mail ABA's marketing coordinator, Sarah Rettger ⁵⁸, with either "Small Store Roundtable" or "Large Store Roundtable" in the subject line.

- 3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Buyers Roundtable

If you are a buyer, this is your chance to spend some uninterrupted time in conversation with other buyers. Come discover new tactics, share some of your own, and enjoy a conversation with your colleagues. Space is limited to 50 booksellers and will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Those interested in attending should e-mail ABA's marketing coordinator, Sarah Rettger ⁵⁹, with "Buyers Roundtable" in the subject line.

- 3:00 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.

Consultation Station

This new Winter Institute feature will afford you the opportunity

to schedule one-on-one conversations with a wide variety of service providers, including the American Specialty Toy Retailers Association (ASTRA), Ingram, IndieCommerce, LIBRIS (business insurance), National Association of College Stores (NACS), PartnerShip, Paz & Associates, Shelf Awareness, and the following POS Vendors -- Anthology, BookLog, Computac/iMerchant, and IBID. Watch your e-mail and *Bookselling This Week* for details on the Consultation Station, coming after the New Year.

- 4:45 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.
ABA's Gift Card Users Group: Preparing for the Transition

The ABA Gift Card Program Users Group, led by ABA's director of member services, Jill Perlstein, will review the process for winding down the national program to a more cost-effective, in-store program. Learn about the importance of reconciliation and other procedures for a smooth transition. Space is limited to 50 booksellers and will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Contact Perlstein via e-mail ⁶⁰ to reserve your space.

Friday, February 5

- 10:15 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.
IndieBound Design Workshop
How do you tell your customers why shopping at locally owned, independent businesses is different?... And, specifically, *your* locally owned, independent business? IndieBound is tailor-made to communicate that message. Bring your questions, your problems -- and your laptop. Participants will brainstorm projects designed to promote your independence and will work with graphic design programs for hands-on experience customizing items from the Bookseller DIY ⁶¹. Space is limited to 50 attendees, and all attendees are required to bring a laptop. To RSVP, and for further details, send an e-mail to ABA's IndieBound outreach liaison, Paige Poe ⁶², with "IB Workshop" in the subject line.
- 1:45 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.
The Fundamentals of Security & Loss Control
Linda James, president of Loss Prevention Resources, Inc., has over 38 years of law enforcement and loss prevention experience. Her career includes positions as deputy sheriff and as director of loss prevention and risk management for major corporations, including Nordstrom. James teaches loss prevention classes and seminars for Washington State Crime Prevention. Her professional experience will help you identify and control loss in order to keep your store profitable. This session is open to owners, managers, and their designated employees only. RSVP via e-mail to ABA's education coordinator, Lisa Winn ⁶³.
- 1:45 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.
"It's a Wrap" Video Lab
Small businesses are increasingly relying on video to communicate with their customers, and indie bookstores are no different. In this space-limited, hands-on lab, you'll learn how to shoot a short video, get that video from the camera to your computer, and get the clip from your computer to your blog, website, or Facebook page. This session, which is open to 20 booksellers only, is currently filled; for more information about sitting in as an observer, e-mail ABA's IndieBound outreach liaison, Paige Poe ⁶⁴. All registrants must bring their own

laptops. ABA staff will communicate with registrants prior to the event to discuss session requirements.

- 3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Hicklebee's Store Tour

Reprising his role as last year's merchandising tour guide extraordinaire, Book Inc.'s Calvin Crosby will lead a group of booksellers to the world-famous Hicklebee's children's bookstore in San Jose. The tour bus will leave the hotel at 3:30 p.m. and return by approximately 5:00 p.m. The tour is limited to 30 booksellers on a first-come, first-served basis. Space is filling up fast and not many places are left! To reserve your spot, contact ABA's education coordinator, Lisa Winn ⁶⁵.

Frank Bruni on Consuming Fusilli and Content

December 22, 2009 -- During his five years as the *New York Times* restaurant critic, Frank Bruni was the most well-known and religiously followed food writer in New York City and, possibly, the country. Most readers were also probably familiar with his previous work as a *Times* reporter in D.C., his coverage of George Bush's 2000 presidential campaign, and his features in the *Sunday Magazine*. But one detail most didn't know was that he had serious struggles with his weight. Bruni writes about this in *Born Round: The Secret History of a Full-Time Eater* ⁶⁶ (Penguin Press). *BTW* recently spoke with him about his memoir and what he thinks, as an author (*Ambling into History* ⁶⁷, HarperCollins; *A Gospel of Shame* ⁶⁸, Viking) and a journalist, of the changing ways information is perceived.

With any restaurant critic or chef, you would expect to find an early interest in food. But Bruni went way beyond this. He consumed massive quantities of Reese's Peanut Butter Cups, homemade pasta, *frits* (fried dough). And if he didn't get a third helping "up came the remnants" of the first and second. At Halloween, he was always "furtively shuttling some of the contents of a sibling's trick-or-treat bag" into his own.

When he hit his early twenties, Bruni, not unpredictably, went from being an involuntary "baby bulimic" to a fully intentioned adult one. Constant attempts to hide his weight made dates awkward when he would refuse to take off his coat. He tried an early Atkins diet and when that didn't work, Mexican speed. But when Bruni became the *Times* lead correspondent for Bush's 2000 presidential campaign, he hit NFL-linebacker weight, thanks, in part, to the seven fatty, carbohydrate-laden meals provided each day by the campaign to keep reporters fed and happy. Bruni topped out at 268 pounds, and the coat stayed on.

It was pretty ironic, then, that the *Times* offered him the restaurant gig. The subtitle of his memoir, "The Secret History of a Full-Time Eater," points to how much he kept his eating issues to himself. Bruni has long been openly gay and it was never news, but revealing that he had such psychological issues with food seems a far more personal coming out. For his book, however, anything other than full disclosure wasn't an option.

"I feel very, very strongly that if you're going to write a memoir, and you're going to ask someone to spend money and time on your life, then you can't pretty it up and deny them full candor," he told *BTW*. As a journalist who has written about David Foster Wallace, Vanessa Redgrave, and others, Bruni noted that the best profiles require honesty and facts. "In telling your own story you have access to the most details and candor, and it is incumbent on you to

go there and use that."

⁶⁹ While he is, of course, serious about his work, writing *Born Round* was "more fun than chore," he said, although he acknowledged the difficulty of completing a book. "Writing a book is the writer's equivalent of running a marathon. You have to stick with it for a while because it takes a lot of patience."

In his memoir, Bruni reveals how he learned patience -- as a teenager on an Outward Bound-like trip. He had had enough of hiking with a 50-pound pack and camping in sub-freezing temperatures, and he wanted out. The trip leader told him, "There are some things you enjoy doing, and there are other things you enjoy having done. And that second kind of enjoyment lasts longer." Bruni said he still sometimes counts on this as motivation to get up from his desk and go running, something he had to do a lot of while eating the thousands of calories required for his job.

During his tenure as the *Times* bureau chief in Rome, between 2002 and 2004, Bruni figured out how to apply that discipline to food, and by the time he became the restaurant critic had his eating under control. He did have second thoughts about exposing himself to that epic temptation, however. For Bruni, staying thin boiled down to exercise and portion control. He often tasted just a few bites of the many dishes he had to sample as a restaurant critic. "It was an enforced grazing. It was fantastic because you get to really sample a lot of flavors and ideas at a restaurant."

Restaurant-going these days is far less demanding (although he's still in the habit of beginning to compose the review in his head). He no longer has to eat his way through as much of the menu as possible. "Now I dwell on an appetizer and entre instead of trying it all," Bruni said. "It can be as much fun to kind of hunker down on one thing that catches your eye."

Some dishes worth concentrating on are the fusilli with braised octopus and bone marrow at Marea in New York City. "A lot of people have written about it, and rightly so," Bruni said. "It's kind of unusual sounding, but it's a fantastic dish." The Red Wattle Country Chop at Vinegar Hill House in Brooklyn got a mention, and so did the country pate at Joseph Leonard, which Bruni said was "a fun restaurant in the Village."

Bruni also offered some thoughts on another kind of heavy consumption these days -- that of information. He doesn't own an e-reader, and he didn't waver on his preferred format -- the traditional book. "I'm 45, so most of my reading was pre-Internet, pre-computer. But I like reading the printed page. I love holding a book in my hand. I love the aesthetic. I love looking at a book cover. And I love the typeface of a book."

Bruni sees two developments in how content is consumed that could pose a problem for the future of the book. One is the availability of so much free information.

"I worry sometimes that the culture of the Internet, which is that reading material is free, is hurting newspapers, magazines, books," said Bruni. "There are now generations of consumers and readers who have done and will do most of their reading on a computer screen, which is fine. It's not a complaint, just an observation. But along with doing most of their reading on a computer screen, they are used to free information and free reading material.

"What I wonder about in an era where more people grow up reading for free is: Will it be difficult to get them to pay for reading formats that cost money? If they're reading on a computer screen, and reading lots of good intelligent material without ever tendering a penny for payment, are they less likely than their forebears to pay

\$25 for a hardcover?"

Bruni's other concern is the constant stream of bursts of information. He's not opposed to social media like Twitter (you can follow him @FrankBruni ⁷⁰), he just questions a steady diet of it. "This is the era of staccato bursts of information," he said. "The era of text messaging and Twitter. The question I have is will all this tweeting and texting and short blog posts orient people towards staccato reading and hurt long-form books? Or will it in fact burnish the appeal of long-form reading as a lovely, lyrical, languorously-paced alternative to the boom boom boom and tweet tweet tweet."

With all of the changes facing the publishing industry, one shift that doesn't faze Bruni is e-books. As an author, he is all for them. "I like any form of reading that keeps people reading and *paying* for book-length material and thus reading books," he said. "I think e-books are an inevitable and fine convenience. They're not the aesthetic form I prefer, but if someone says, 'I just bought your book,' I'm just happy they consider it worth their reading time. Some see the e-book as a bogeyman. If we as a world of book-loving people can find a way to translate books into formats that keep people reading and paying, that's great." -- *Karen Schechner* ⁷¹

BTW News Briefs

December 22, 2009 --

West Bend Library Receives Intellectual Freedom Award

The Office for Intellectual Freedom recognized the West Bend Community Memorial Library in West Bend, Wisconsin, as the recipient of the 2009 Robert B. Downs Intellectual Freedom Award. The West Bend Library was acknowledged for its steadfast advocacy on behalf of intellectual freedom in the face of an attempt to remove LGBT titles from its YA section ⁷² that garnered national attention. While the library did not remove any of the challenged titles, subsequent to that decision the West Bend (Wisconsin) Common Council dismissed four members of the West Bend Library Board, one of whom was a part-time bookseller for Fireside Books & Gifts in West Bend. The award is given by the faculty of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

A reception to honor the West Bend Library will take place during the midwinter meeting of the American Library Association in the Arlington Room of the Boston Park Plaza Hotel on January 16, from 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. The ABC-CLIO publishing company provides the honorarium to the recipient of the Downs Intellectual Freedom Award and also co-sponsors the reception.

National Book Foundation Offers Prizes for Inspiring Reading

The National Book Foundation will award a number of prizes of up to \$2,500 each to individuals and institutions -- or partnerships between the two -- that have developed innovative means of creating and sustaining a lifelong love of reading.

Full details and an application can be found on the NBF website ⁷³. The deadline for all materials is February 17, 2010.

Book Sales Up in October, E-Book Year-to-Date Sales Reach \$130 Million

Book sales tracked by the Association of American Publishers

(AAP) for the month of October totaled \$725.8 million, an increase of 10.2 percent, and were up by 4.1 percent for the year. The Adult Hardcover category rose 6.3 percent for the month, with sales of \$259.9 million; year-to-date sales were up by 3.9 percent. Adult Paperback sales jumped 37.5 percent (totaling \$130.4 million) but were down by 4.8 percent for the year. The Adult Mass Market category was down 1.8 percent for October, with sales totaling \$61.2 million; sales were down by 0.4 percent year-to-date. The Children's/YA Hardcover category declined by 0.5 percent, with sales of \$87.9 million, but sales for year-to-date in the category increased 4.4 percent. The Children's/YA Paperback category was up by 20.2 percent in October, with sales totaling \$52.7 million, reflecting a 4.1 percent increase for the year.

Publishers' net sales for e-books reached \$18.5 million for the month of October, compared to \$5.2 million in 2008. Year-to-date sales in aggregate for the period of January-October 2009, reached \$130.7 million, compared to \$46.6 million for the same period in 2008, a 180.7 percent increase. Currently, trade market e-books account for 3 percent of total trade sales, according to AAP.

Audio Book sales posted a decrease of 1.8 percent in October, with sales totaling \$19.7 million; sales to-date decreased by 18.8 percent. Religious Books saw a decrease of 8.5 percent for the month, with sales totaling \$60.3 million; sales were down by 10.7 percent for the year.

New Owner for North Carolina's City Lights Books

Joyce and Allen Moore, co-owners of City Lights Books ⁷⁴, Sylva, North Carolina, have announced in a store e-mail that they are selling the bookstore to long-time employee Chris Wilcox. Joyce Moore noted in the update that "I cannot imagine anyone more suited to navigating the future of bookselling than Chris," adding "as I begin my 66th year and a new decade, I feel the need to slow and simplify my own life, but I believe that I am leaving the store in capable hands, well suited to dealing with the evolving complexities of the bookselling world."

The Indie Healthy Living Bestseller List

December 22, 2009 --

Just in time for those New Year's resolutions...

For the eight-week period ending December 15, 2009, and based on sales at hundreds of independent bookstores nationwide.

1.	Younger Next Year: Live Strong, Fit, and Sexy -- Until You're 80 and Beyond Chris Crowley, Henry S. Lodge, Workman, \$12.95, 9780761147732
2.	Younger Next Year for Women: Live Strong, Fit, and Sexy -- Until You're 80 and Beyond Chris Crowley, Henry S. Lodge, Workman, \$12.95, 9780761147749
3.	The China Study: The Most Comprehensive Study of Nutrition Ever Conducted and the Startling Implications for Diet, Weight Loss, and Long-Term Health Thomas M. Campbell, II, T.Colin Campbell, Benbella, \$16.95, 9781932100662
4.	Breakthrough: Eight Steps to Wellness; Life-Altering Secrets From Today's Cutting-Edge Doctors Suzanne Somers, Three Rivers, \$15, 9781400053285
5.	The Blue Zones: Lessons for Living Longer From the People Who've

	Lived the Longest Dan Buettner, National Geographic, \$14.95, 9781426204005
6.	Food Matters Mark Bittman, S&S, \$25, 9781416575641
7.	The G Free Diet: A Gluten-Free Survival Guide Elisabeth Hasselbeck, Center Street, \$24.99, 9781599951881
8.	The Intellectual Devotional Health: Revive Your Mind, Complete Your Education, and Digest a Daily Dose of Wellness Wisdom David S. Kidder, et al., Rodale, \$24, 9781605299495
9.	You: The Owner's Manual: An Insider's Guide to the Body That Will Make You Healthier and Younger Michael F. Roizen, Mehmet C. Oz, Collins, \$26.95, 9780061473678
10.	Why Our Health Matters: A Vision of Medicine That Can Transform Our Future Andrew Weil, M.D., Hudson Street, \$25.95, 9781594630668
11.	You: Staying Young Michael F. Roizen, Mehmet C. Oz, Free Press, \$26, 9780743292566
12.	The Vaccine Book: Making the Right Decision for Your Child Robert Sears, Little Brown, \$13.99, 9780316017503
13.	The Ultramind Solution Mark Hyman, Scribner, \$27.5, 9781416549710
14.	Light on Yoga: Yoga Dipika B.K.S. Iyengar, Schocken, \$18.95, 9780805210316
15.	Prescription for Nutritional Healing, 4th Edition: A Practical A-to-Z Reference to Drug-Free Remedies Using Vitamins, Minerals, Herbs & Food Supplements Phyllis A. Balch, Avery, \$29.95, 9781583332368
16.	Healing Back Pain: The Mind-Body Connection John E.Sarno, M.D., Warner, \$13.99, 9780446392303
17.	I Can Make You Sleep: Overcome Insomnia Forever and Get the Best Rest of Your Life Paul McKenna, Sterling, \$22.95, 9781402765742
18.	Clean: The Revolutionary Program to Restore the Body's Natural Ability to Heal Itself Alejandro Junger, HarperOne, \$25.99, 9780061735325
19.	The Biggest Loser Simple Swaps: 100 Easy Changes to Start Living a Healthier Lifestyle Cheryl Forberg, Rodale, \$21.99, 9781605295350
20.	French Women Don't Get Fat Mireille Guiliano, Vintage, \$12.95, 9780375710513
21.	Yoga Anatomy Leslie Kaminoff, Sharon Ellis (Illus.), Human Kinetics, \$19.95, 9780736062787
22.	Heal Your Body: The Mental Causes for Physical Illness and the Metaphysical Way to Overcome Them Louise L. Hay, Hay House, \$6.95, 9780937611357
23.	Healing With Whole Foods: Asian Traditions and Modern Nutrition Paul Pitchford, North Atlantic, \$35, 9781556434303
24.	The Spectrum: A Scientifically Proven Program to Feel Better, Live Longer, Lose Weight, and Gain Health Dean Ornish, Ballantine, \$16, 9780345496317

25.	Natural Healing Wisdom & Know-How: Useful Practices, Recipes, and Formulas for a Lifetime of Health Amy Rost, Black Dog & Leventhal, \$19.95, 9781579128005
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