



Cygnature

J U N E / J U L Y

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Mary Jane Clark Tells Her Story

by Janet McDonough

While one might think that the road to a published novel was an easy one for Mary Jane Clark because of her famous last name, that was hardly the case.

In a S.W.A.N. presentation to a good crowd April 29 at the Bergen County Community Services Building, the author of first novel *“Do You Want to Know a Secret?”* described the difficult events that led to creating and producing the book. Her second child’s diagnosis of Fragile X Syndrome—a chromosomal disorder that causes mental retardation—followed by deterioration of her marriage and then divorce, was the impetus for her novel. She was determined to provide financial security to ensure that her handicapped son would be taken care of in the future. “It was a manic focus that kept me going,” Clark said. “Life can give you tough circumstances, but they can lead you to do things that you never would have imagined.”

A working mother, Clark was a producer at a television network that writes national and international news for CBS affiliates and foreign clients. She remarked that the unpredictable nature of news provides a steam stream of ideas that she was able to incorporate into her novel. Her writing style is “clean and speedy” as a result of having written television news for many years.

With a busy work schedule, she wrote her novel whenever she found time—after her children went to bed and before they got up in the morning. “I do not write on a daily basis—I write when I can,” she said, noting that writing often came at the expense of any leisure time she might have had. While writing the book, Clark didn’t take vacations: during school breaks when the children were with their father, she wrote.

How did she make the leap from TV news producer to novelist? “During that period of my life I was very depressed, and writing TV news every day was difficult. I

needed to do something that was fiction—a fantasy,” she said.

It took two years to write the book and two years to rewrite it following comments from her editor and agent. When it still didn’t sell, it sat on the shelf for two years while she questioned her ability, until she signed with a different agent who sold the book in two weeks. When asked about “the Clark connection,” referring to her famous ex-mother-in-law Mary Higgins Clark, she explained that she didn’t even tell the mystery writer that she was writing a novel, and didn’t initially tell her agents about her prominent relative. When the book was signed, her publisher wanted to capitalize on the Clark name, and she had mixed emotions about it. The well-known name could prove beneficial, but “if the book stinks people aren’t going to buy another one,” she said.

Her recommendations for would-be novelists: “Look into the world around you to get inspiration. Write about what you know. When you’re ready to sell your book, get an agent that represents your type of work.” She suggested reading the book, *“How to Get Happily Published.”*

“Do You Want to Know a Secret?” is in its third printing, and will be produced in paperback this summer. Her second novel, due out later this year, involves intrigue surrounding a Faberge egg. ♦

UPCOMING MEETINGS

June 14 ➔ Bergen Museum
Pricing Game • Networking @ 7:30pm,
Meeting @ 7:50pm.

[Watch for upcoming meeting and events here](#)





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You Can't Afford to Miss the Pricing Game

By Jill Vitiello

"I've discovered that money is the most important thing in the world, and I intend never to be without it again."

— Scarlett O'Hara

NJ is the richest state in the union. Garden Staters earn more per capita than any other group on the planet earth. Scores of Fortune 500 corporations (our client base) have chosen to make their headquarters here – for the excellent quality of life, for the highly educated workforce, for the wealth of natural resources.

So why do SWAN members worry and fret about negotiating fees, sending invoices and raising prices?

In fact, when was the last time, you raised your prices?

Isn't it about time to find out what the

going rate is in the Great Garden State, and then bump up your fees to ride this wonderful wave of economic prosperity? Ladies and gentlemen, we are sitting on top of a gold mine and we're too shy to wield our pick axes to grab any of the good stuff for ourselves.

If you've made the conscious decision to make your living by selling the fruits of your creative talents for greenbacks, then you owe it to yourself to find out how much you could be making. ☛

Wanted...

Writer/instructional designer is looking for space to share or sublet.

Contact Robert Bilotti at (908) 233-7919 or email RCBilotti@att.net

If you treat Email any different than the Telephone you are making a serious error in your business judgement.

The business world is wired. Wired to phone, fax (what's a fax), television, Intranet and Internet. Business is doing business electronically (electronic purchase orders, electronic data exchange, electronic document exchange, electronic brochure display [oh, a website], electronic information exchange etc.). And yes, they are indeed all different, not in technology, but in usage and application.

Email should get the same attention a phone call gets.

kudos...

SWAN member Writer-Producer Ray Chimileski was honored with the annual Award of Excellence for marketing communications produced by his company Virtual Learning Network for the Center for International Business and Education of Raritan Valley Community College (Somerset County). This distinction is given in recognition of efforts supporting the Center's promotion and development of global trade. ☛

SWAN member Marcia Ringel proudly announces the publication of her first book, "All About Birth Control: The Complete Guide" (comprehensive enough for you?), from Planned Parenthood. The publisher is Three Rivers Press/ Crown/Random House. Find it on Amazon.com! Marcia is listed as coauthor with a patient education writer at Planned Parenthood's New York City office. ☛

Only difference is you have to know Email is waiting for you. That means you MUST logon more often and check your MailBag, or the IN basket. Yes, I know I am the exception since my modem is On most of the day, sometime night. What does it do for me? Gives me responsiveness, attentiveness, awareness. You cannot act, respond, revise, edit, quote etc. on a request if you fail to be business-like, and know what is waiting for you. What could be waiting is too important to be ignored. My business depends upon reliable phone service as well as reliable Internet service in equal proportions. If you business doesn't today, it will tomorrow. **Think about it.** ☛

Web news

by Stan Cohen

How do you treat your Email everyday?

Do you check your Email once a month?

Do you check your Email once a week?

Do you check your Email once a day?

Think again!

The world has changed. Yes, I use the past tense. Wake up and smell the electronic, computer, information and interactive World.



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The SWAN newsletter

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