

From the EDITOR

## A Little Soul Searching

Those of you who have been here since the early days know that LadybugPress was begun to give a group of poets who had worked hard and achieved some excellence with their words a chance to be heard. That first book *Women on a Wire* had been reject by a long list of existing publishing houses and LadybugPress was conceived to right that wrong.

After that, it seemed obvious to go on, to continue to give a voice to women (in particular but not exclusively) who might not otherwise be heard. The first book, and all of the subsequent ones, based its payment on a significant donation to a non-profit as part of the much more generous than average royalty structure.

Publishing books led naturally into the monthly forum here and to the audio stations, which were the first of their kind on the Internet, and are still among the few that do not charge either end of participants: writer/audio host or reader/listener, and do not inundate anyone with advertising. They are meant to be a forum where talent and expertise can develop and have a public airing. Those efforts have been eclipsed in most people's minds by other, more recent efforts by people who advertise harder, sell better, and make more *money*... I hate to bring up that topic since this isn't about money, not foremost.

Partners in Publishing developed from the needs of some authors for a publisher whose involvement ended when the book was complete. These are often professional women. And PinP is a plan for the many new writers who need that first experience in order to become the marketable authors they aren't as yet. I worked hard to get into a position to offer this service at the lowest price possible, because such an effort should not bankrupt the hopeful author—or the publisher. Anyone should know that! I worked hard to offer a wide range of separate services, anticipating the needs of this widely diverse population. I never push any writer to accept or to purchase any service other than those they have approached me about, but I feel it is important to offer whatever a writer needs, and at the most reasonable price possible—thus the separation of some services from the package.

I do get help in helping women be heard. But it is also true that LadybugPress does not demand a specific editorial perspective before I help anyone (including a feminist or world peace bent—my own concerns). I have made the unforgivable business error of not only **not** taking advantage of people but not being narrow or judgmental about the people I help.

Much of my time (probably the time that most people would say should be used for selling) is spent helping writers who write to me for advice and suggestions—some have even come to my home or office, and I set time aside when they do. One recent comment from a new author sums it up nicely "I really enjoy the way you have pointed the path best to take but have allowed me to do the walking."

I don't do this alone. I couldn't. Many of you have seen the value of this kind of business and have given help and support over the years; and I like to think I have returned your help in kind. I have certainly never used it to any personal advantage, not even now that the scope of the product has necessitated becoming a corporation—a group I would never have chosen to join!

I do these things because they are who I am, not things I think will get me ahead. ... But now I must remember that incorporated, I am a *we* in the most non-literal sense as well as the one that includes all of those who support and help.

I find as I am writing this that I don't care to justify my life, my motives, my choices or my finances, not even to you readers to whom I feel responsible. I find that I don't have anything to say to critics who may make judgments from their singular perspectives of driving profits, but I do still have a couple of words to say to you. You have all heard them before: Thank you.

Most of you really do get it and I value that and value you. Can we all get back to work now?

*Georgia Jones, Editor*