



HAROLD DREHMANS/SUNDAY JOURNAL-STAR

Jerry Kromberg, president of Media Productions & Marketing, demonstrates how desktop publishing equipment has cut production costs drastically.

Writer's road to publication is paved with rejection slips

By Tom Ineck
An aspiring writer can choose several avenues to success, but without preparation and perseverance, any one of them may lead down a blind alley.

"Getting published is really a very difficult thing to do for a first-time author," said Jerry Kromberg of Media Productions and Marketing. "Publishers get inundated with manuscripts, and the selection process is a very subjective one and a very problematic one. The odds of a publisher selecting your particular manuscript out of the hundreds they receive daily make it an odds-on bet that you're not even going to get considered."

Major publishing houses won't even open a manuscript unless it is submitted by an agent or an established author, but smaller firms will look at everything that comes in, Kromberg said. To increase their chances, he said, writers should send their work to publishers who specialize in the style and subject that interest them, such as Western fiction, romance, history or cooking.

"An aspiring author has to keep sending a manuscript to publisher after publisher until somebody reads it, likes it and decides to publish it," he said. "The chances of that happening are better with what we call the small press, as opposed to the big publishers."

The manuscript should follow accepted formats: typewritten and double-spaced on white 8½-by-11-inch paper.

A response may be more likely if the writer sends a synopsis briefly describing the book and the writer's resume, credentials and previous publications, Kromberg said. The synopsis should include a couple of sample chapters.

A flurry of rejection slips

undoubtedly will greet the aspiring author's first attempt to be published, but determination is the key to continued sanity and eventual success, Kromberg said.

"If a book is rejected now, it might not be rejected next year or six months from now," he said. "I can only publish so many books a year. I may get the hottest manuscript in the world in today, but I really can't do it for a year. Well, I'm not going to keep

the manuscript and tell you to hang around for a year until I can get around to publishing it."

Large publishing companies have staffs of readers with widely divergent opinions and a different division for every style of writing. One way to get a foot in the door of such a complex system is to hire an agent. "It's a Catch-22," Kromberg said.

See ROAD on page 6C

Two established writers offer beginners advice

Lacota authors David Kubicek and Susan Roosevelt are two of the talented few Capital City writers who have been published, and both have words of wisdom for would-be authors.

Kubicek sold his first article to the honey, nationally distributed Grit newspaper in 1977. The piece earned him \$50, and he followed that success with four more articles in the same publication.

"I'd been working for several years trying to get some fiction published," Kubicek said. "I was primarily a fiction writer, and I thought that it might be interesting to try doing a feature story, that non-fiction might be easier to break in with."

By tailoring his writing to suit the publication, Kubicek eventually won acceptance. Editors are more subjective about publishing fiction, he said, and non-fiction articles are easier to market.

"I didn't sell my first piece of fiction until 1983," Kubicek said. Of the 170 short stories he has written in the last 20 years, only four have been pub-



David Kubicek



Susan Roosevelt

lished, bringing in a total of \$32. "I've got a file full of rejection slips," he said, but he advises beginners not to let rejection deter them.

"Don't take it personally," he said. "Probably the best thing to do is to set a timer and spend 10 minutes cursing the publisher, then put (the rejection slip) in the file and go back to the typewriter or the word processor. If you're too thin-skinned about it, you'll never get published. You just have to keep sending it out."

There are more publications for non-fiction and it pays better than fiction, Kubicek said. He never seriously

See WRITERS on page 6C