



# SelfPublisher News

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## Bahiyah Offers a Positive Voice and Publishing Services

An exclusive interview with Bridgett Hollingsworth

*By Milton Stern*

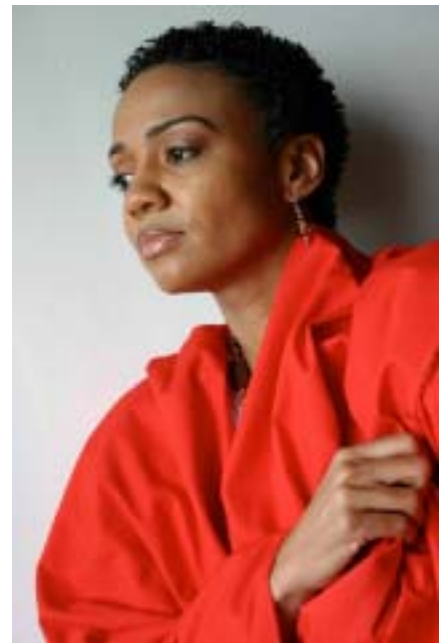
Bridgett Hollingsworth launched *Bahiyah Woman Magazine* four years ago with the intent of offering a positive voice for a black audience, “which was starving — dying because of a lack of positive, editorial content.”

Recently, Bridgett Hollingsworth, Publisher and Editorial Director of *Bahiyah Woman Magazine* ([www.bwmmag.com](http://www.bwmmag.com)), an online self-published magazine, described on its website as “the premier weekly lifestyle magazine for the spiritually conscious professional black man and woman,” sat down with *SelfPublisher News* Executive Editor Milton Stern for an exclusive interview.

“*Bahiyah Woman Magazine* is a reader-supported publication,” Hollingsworth writes on her website. “Yes, that’s a fact. We are able to keep the pages of *Bahiyah* turning because I financially underwrite *Bahiyah* in a large way. The truth remains, however, that not nearly enough readers support the mission financially. We have a database of well over 5,000 black men and women, and not five percent of our readership supports our publication financially. Not one percent of our readership has made a one-time donation to *Bahiyah*. Why do I say our, because *Bahiyah* is about us, by us and for us.”

Hollingsworth started *Bahiyah* without seeking an advertising revenue stream from corporate sponsors. “Many told me to seek liquor and cigarette advertisements — you know, just in the beginning,” Hollingsworth says. “I stayed committed to my mission and did this contrary to the opinions of many who said I was committing publishing suicide.”

She wanted to offer a publication to her audience without compromise. “I never want to choose between an advertiser and a great story, which is often the case in the world of media. It’s the reason we are fed ‘gangsta-



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out new writers and favors established writers. They want to retain the power of deciding whom to publish, but there is really no need for them to have that exclusive power now. Technology has made it easier for new writers to bypass the old publishing houses and publish themselves. The market should decide what is good and what isn't, not a handful of people in New York."

Arnold has been marketing her business for the last four years, so this gave her ideas for marketing her book. "It required me to expand my view of Silver Messages — we no longer sell just jewelry and gifts, now we sell romance. It may be in the form of jewelry, or a romance novel, or other products we haven't thought up yet," she says.

She gave her Silver Messages customer base a 40% discount on Sterling Silver Jewelry when they bought her book from Amazon.com. She says direct mail is too expensive and too time consuming.

Arnold says that people who have read *The Fastest Ship* "are asking 'What is your next book going to be? When do you think it will be available?' as if it were the easiest thing in the world to invent a world, invent characters to people the world, and invent a story about what these people do with their lives."

"This was a labor of heart, mind and soul, and it felt like giving birth! Quite frankly, I don't want to do that again just yet," Arnold tells *SelfPublisher News*. "Let's get the baby weaned and walking first. Writing a book is hard work, and it involves opening your mind, heart and soul, and letting all the people of the world go in there and have a look. It's risky! It's certainly not for

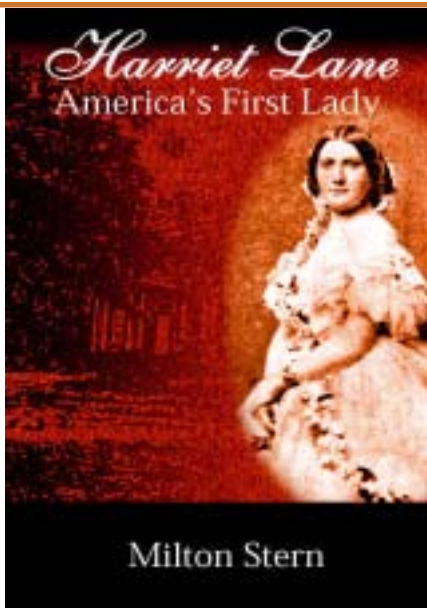
the faint-hearted, those easily discouraged or easily heartbroken over what other people say."

*The Fastest Ship* © 2005, Larita Arnold, ISBN 1411639502, Lulu, Historical Fiction, Romance, Adult, [www.silvermessages.com](http://www.silvermessages.com)

## Latchkey Kids Solve Mysteries Adults Covet

Who did not love the *Hardy Boys* and *Nancy Drew* mysteries? Omaha, Neb., elementary school teacher, Dante Salvatierra, certainly did, and his *Latchkey Kids* are carrying on the tradition of the clever children who solve adult-like mysteries. And, his first book comes with a teacher's guide!

*The Latchkey Kids and the Search for the Sacred Statue* is about a sailor during World War II who purchases a statue as a souvenir from his travels to a Pacific island. It brings him luck until he accidentally breaks it. Soon afterward, he dies in a vacant lot. His soul is condemned to haunt the lot because of an ancient curse. In the present day, a classroom is



### *The First Biography of the Most Fabulous First Lady*

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*Harriet Lane, America's First Lady* © 2005, ISBN 1-4116-2608-7, by Milton Stern, is available at all online book-sellers. [www.harriettlane.net](http://www.harriettlane.net)

placed over the lot, and the Latchkey Kids discover that it is haunted. They are able to communicate with the ghost and find out that it is up to them to free his soul. They must find the pieces of the statue and reassemble it or the spirit will forever haunt the fourth grade classroom.



In *The Latchkey Kids and the Trip Through the Mysterious Portal*, the group stumbles upon a portal to an alternate universe. At first, they discover that the society on the other side is almost like a paradise. There's no crime, no pollution and cures for deadly diseases. However, they uncover a terrible secret and realize that they have entered a world where order is more important than freedom. Unfortunately, one of them is captured, and it is up to the remaining Latchkey Kids to rescue their friend from the clutches of the dictatorial government.

*The Executive Editor of SelfPublisher News wants to read both books because he is a kid at heart!*

Salvatierra participates in *National Novel Writing Month* in November and writes during the school year after work. He has only considered himself a writer since 2003. "National Novel Writing Month has inspired me to finish the rough draft of a novel in 17 days," Salvatierra tells *SelfPublisher News*. "The rough draft of the *Mysterious Portal* was finished in 22 days. I then spent a year editing and revising."

Salvateirra initially wrote his first novel only for his fourth grade students, and he never planned on publishing it. "The children loved the novel so much that they demanded a copy for themselves," Salvatierra says. "So, I first used Café Press.com to simply make copies for them. Eventually, teachers wanted copies and so on. Family members encouraged me to try and get it published, but I worried that no one would publish it because it had already been printed through Café Press and later Lulu. So I just stuck with self-publishing."

"Children love the story but are often confused because I also refer to historical events that they haven't studied yet," Salvatierra says. "Adults who have read it love that aspect of it. On another level, readers are surprised that my characters break rules and laws in order to get things done. Many want there to be clear cases of good and evil, and they think children need that. I think they need to be given opportunities to question and see that there are gray areas."

The first novel's cover was designed for free by his friend Nikki Coffman. "I hired her to make the second one since she was in need of art supplies," he says.

"The stigma that comes with [self-publishing makes] people assume that since you are self-published, it must mean your work is not up to par with traditional publishers," Salvateirra tells *SelfPublisher News*.

He says the worst piece of advice he ever received was from his seventh grade teacher: "Every sentence requires a subject and a predicate, and we must diagram them correctly."

*The Executive Editor of SelfPublisher News demurs as he was an English teacher for seven years and loved sentence diagramming.*

"I don't write 'down' for children. I assume that they understand that the world is a complicated place and that good and evil aren't very clear," Salvatierra tells *SelfPublisher News*. "I also write for my students who are working class kids who aren't orphans or magical or rich, yet they have drama in their lives and don't have a lot of books that they can fully identify with."

"I love writing for writing's sake," Salvateirra says in closing. "Self-publishing and POD have given me the chance to simply write without the pressure of pleasing an editor or publisher. It's that intrinsic motivation that has made this such a rewarding experience. The icing on the cake is when I find out that people have read my book, loved it and want more."

*The Latchkey Kids and the Search for the Sacred Statue* © 2003 ISBN 1411620143 and *The Latchkey Kids and the Trip Through the Mysterious Portal* © 2005, Dante Salvatierra, ISBN 141163814X, Lulu, Children's Fiction/Fantasy, [www.dantesalvatierra.org](http://www.dantesalvatierra.org)

## This Big Girl Won't Cry

Sit back, relax and enjoy her words. Kiesha Gayles of Jenison, Mich., a fashion designer, massage therapist and writer, is the author of *Black & White (Big Girls Don't Cry)*, which is about how many people cause problems in their lives that can seem quite difficult, yet tears and pain can strengthen one's heart, mind and soul.

