

Pitching a Book Ain't Easy

By Mildred Norman

After we'd finished publishing my memoir, *Henry's Daughter*, Linda Radke at Five Star Publications, Inc. told me I needed to help promote it--- she calls it "pitching it". I told her I would try but inwardly I had a lot of misgivings. Selling isn't my thing. I couldn't picture myself going around saying, "I wrote a good book and I want you to buy it." On the other hand, I spent a lot of time and effort on this thing. Because I'm 87 years old, I've had the time to experience all kinds of excitement. In fact, almost anything you mention, I've been there, done that.

Then I got early feedback which really convinced me that I had written a fantastic book and everyone in the world needed to read it. They wouldn't be able to function properly without it.

So on that optimistic note I began my campaign. I started by giving copies of *Henry's Daughter* to each of the fifteen children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren to whom the book was dedicated. From that point, I expect all of them (except for little William, who's only two years old) to go out and buy at least ten copies for their friends. It will be like a *Henry's Daughter* chain letter—and it'll sweep the globe in no time flat.

I also sent copies to a relative in Holland and a friend in Austria, which will allow the *Henry's Daughter* chain letter to take root in several foreign countries—especially since I also have a granddaughter in New Zealand. I've also included a short description of *Henry's Daughter* in all of my Christmas cards, so it shouldn't take long before requests for copies are pouring in from all over the world.

But I haven't limited my pitching to relatives and friends. I've spoken to two book clubs, and they both loved it, so I'm sure they're out there spreading the word to everyone they know. With publicity like that, who knows? I might even end up on Oprah in the near future! Just in case the tidal wave of publicity hasn't reached your town, though, I'll give you a brief rundown. The first chapter of *Henry's Daughter* is devoted to my childhood in the thriving metropolis of Parkersburg, Iowa. My book has made me so famous in Parkersburg that I was invited to speak at their annual all-school reunion. It doesn't get much better than that! I sold twenty-five books from that engagement alone.

To top that, I recently was invited to be part of the Book Corner at the national convention of the American Association of University Women in Phoenix. I had been invited because of the role AAUW played in helping resolve the integration crisis at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, many years ago. For three days, I manned a small display of *Henry's Daughter* books in the Exhibit Hall of the Convention Center—and sold lots of copies! It was almost as great as my success in Parkersburg. I even began wondering if I was a better salesman than I'd given myself credit for.

I did learn something from all those experiences, however. Pitching a book ain't easy, but it can sometimes be downright fun. Each night when I go to bed, I dream about having thousands of people buy my book. I watch them as they read and take delight in seeing them laugh and slap their thighs in response to my escapades.

Of course, I haven't received my first royalty check yet—but I can't help wondering what I'll do with all that money!

