Hello Monday Archive
September 2020 to Present

Updated April 5, 2021

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Hours:
Monday through Friday, 2pm to 9pm

Hello Monday: September 2020

Watch this episode here: https://youtu.be/VD-8iq00F8c

Topics Covered This Month:
Feast of Words Ends
The Blue Spot
Blue Kiosks
Marketing Seminar
Not Answering Email
New Board Members

Welcome to Hello Monday, the monthly, company-wide show for the volunteer-run 501(c)3 nonprofit, Blue Legacy. We were founded in 1989 to empower underrepresented storytellers, bring diverse people together, and make storytelling accessible across all mediums.

The first Monday of every month we share all the announcements, casting calls, job openings and news for our four divisions that each focus on a different medium: Blue Forge Films, Blue Forge Press, Blue Forge Gaming, and Blue Forge Records.

If you are one of the artisans who work with us – an author, musician, game designer, filmmaker or actor – keeping up with Hello Monday keeps you in the loop. And you don't have to watch: You can just listen to the episode or you can read the transcript at the www.MyBlueLegacy.org (just click Blog).

My name is Jennifer DiMarco and I'm primarily a director and author at Blue Legacy and also the CFO. I'm also your host for today's episode.

We have six topics today:

Feast of Words Ends

Thank you to all the artisans who participated in the weekly Feast of Words events. September is the last month we'll be hosting Feast of Words because it's an outdoor event and October through February in Washington State are a bit too cold and unpredictable. We'll be returning to outdoor, weekly Feast of Words events in March 2021. If you'd like to reserve a Saturday in March, please email blueforgegroup@gmail.com.

We are currently in talks with two of the Washington malls about indoor events this year. These will be limited to one artisan per table and only four artisans at a time. We do not have additional details right now, but if you're interested in this type of event, please reach out to blueforgegroup@gmail.com and I'll share information directly with you as it's finalized.

The bottom line is: The outdoor Feast of Words events made artisans $531 over two months and cost Blue Forge Press $1000 in venue fees, posters, stuffers for the store, and local ads. An additional $500 will be spent in September.

Until March 2021, we'll be concentrating our efforts on establishing other means for artisans to make sales. Which leads to our next three topics:

The Blue Spot

If you've ever gone to Etsy.com you know that it's a unique website that presents similar to a street fair with thousands of different artisans selling everything from handmade jewelry to artwork, handmade crafts, customized signs, etc. The common factor is most everything is handmade.

Our artisans are rarely just one type of artist. And this is why we'll be launching The Blue Spot – an Etsy-like online store front where our artisans can sell custom and handmade items. There will be categories of items and artisans will pay nothing to list items. Blue Legacy can store and ship for you or we can help you get set up to do so yourself. Either way, you'll be paid for every item before you ship it.

One of the especially unique elements of The Blue Spot will be custom stories. These are monthly story subscriptions where authors can offer to craft a short story in a subscribers chosen genre and with a main character selected by the buyer as well. Personally, my fans have been asking for something like this for literally ten years and I'm thrilled to offer it.

If you're interested in selling through The Blue Spot, please write to blueforgegroup@gmail.com and tell us what items you would want to sell. We'll be launching in November.

Blue Kiosks

We spoke several months ago about the Blue Kiosks but we're finally able to move on this idea in October with our fleet of kiosks being built this month.

Blue Kiosks come in two sizes: Counter Top Displays and Floor Displays. They are brilliant blue shelves with a gear-shaped topper that sit in a store, cafe, community center or pretty much anywhere else where people can buy books, dvds, games or albums. Every kiosk is sponsored by a business or individual so there are ads on both sides of the display that feature specific products or services. I sponsored four kiosks personally. To sponsor a kiosk costs $100 for one year of having two ads on a display. We can design the ad or you can.

So far we have nine venues willing to host a kiosk in and around Port Orchard. We'll be building a fleet of thirty kiosks in total. Though we may add more in the future. If you're interested in sponsoring a kiosk, please write to me at blueforgegroup@gmail.com. I've mentioned this program in passing to a number of artisans so please be aware that ten kiosks are already sponsored for the first two years.

You're probably wondering: How can I get my books, games, dvd or albums in a kiosk so they're in stores? And what cut would I get on those sales?

The venue makes 30% of sales. Artisans make 70%. So that's a 20% profit. We do not take a portion of sales. To have your products sold in a Blue Kiosk, all you have to do is write to me at blueforgegroup@gmail.com and schedule a time to drop off inventory. We suggest dropping off no more than two to four copies per title and all of them must be autographed. We will service the kiosks at no charge and collect funds.

In October's episode of Hello Monday we'll show off the two types of kiosks and have a downloadable flyer that you can show venues in your area so we can grow the fleet's distribution.

Marketing Seminar

At the request of our artisans, we'll be creating a seminar on promotion and marketing with twelve focused topics. These will be videos and they will be free to access. Here's our list to far:
Promoting, Building a Fan Base and Brand-Building on:

Facebook
Instagram
Twitter
Amazon
Other Social Media Platforms
How and Why to Write a Blogs
ARCs and Review Copies
Care Packages
Press Packages
Contests and Grants
Side Jobs for Artisans (with Blue Legacy)
Side Jobs for Artisans (with Third Parties)

What specific topics would you like us to cover? Email me at blueforgegroup@gmail.com.

Not Answering Email

We mentioned this last month but I'm going to keep repeating it until everyone has caught on: If you send us an email to any division and have not heard back within 24 hours, text 360-550-2071 and make sure the email was received! In the last three weeks, eight different artisans found emails they'd sent us were still sitting in their email outboxes! And sometimes, your emails are sent... but wind up in our spam folder. Don't wait. It's isn't rude to text and check in. We're asking you to do so if you haven't heard from a division in 24 hours.

New Board Members

This month we announce the new Board members for the year of 2021. Board members are going to be assigned one year at a time so many artisans have a chance to help guide the company.
I hoped to announce our choices today... but in the last week certain issues have come to light and I now know some of the specific problems that the 2021 Board will face. This changed some of our feelings about who should sit on the Board so we'll be announcing in October's Hello Monday

instead. But I can share this:

Brianne and Faith will be stepping down from the Board in 2021. They will both continue to work for the company but only Maxwell and I will sit on the Board in 2021. With us will be three other people. We are only considering artisans who already work with us. If you'd like to submit an application and haven't already, you can reach the application at www.MyBlueLegacy.org. Just click About for the application link.

That's all the news for this month. If you have questions or would like us to cover something next month, please post a comment below.

As these unprecedented months continue, please keep in mind that everyone manages long-term stress in a different way. Some of us need to slow down and hibernate. Some of us need to work extra hours and create as much as possible. Don't attack each other for what your peers are doing or not doing. Compassion is a priceless virtue.

And, as always, remember: Monday doesn't have to be a day you dread. Let September be a month we all spend... apart... but together in all the ways that matter most.

Hello Monday: October 2020

Watch this episode here: https://youtu.be/pKwjmgjBEEE

Topics Covered This Month:
Indoor Mall Events
Teatro di Freak
Wolfe Retellings
Kiosks & Flyers

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My name is Jennifer DiMarco and I'm primarily a director and author at Blue Legacy and also the CFO. I'm also your host for today's episode.

We have four topics today:

Indoor Mall Events

Let's jump right in with some honesty: The number of new cases of COVID-19 are rising right now across the country. I have my own feelings about why this is happening. But I'm not a policy-maker, I'm just the CFO of a tiny company. But being in that position, I have a unique quandary to consider: How do I best serve my artisans and still make sure they have revenue-generating opportunities?

Part of my answer is to provide optional events and venues that you can attend ONLY IF YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE DOING SO. You are adults. You must make your own decisions. You know what your risk factors are. No DiMarco will attend an indoor event. We know our risk factors. And I also have an established fan base that I can sell to directly. But that took decades to build!
Many malls have reopened. I am back in talks with the Kitsap Mall in Silverdale and with the Westfield Center Mall to schedule indoor events for the cold months. I have a list of the artisans who are interested in these types of events. I will email those artisans directly once I hear the final details from the malls.

Email me at blueforgegroup@gmail.com if you haven't already and you want to be on the contact

list for indoor events in malls. It will be required that you run your own credit cards. So you need a card reader from PayPal or from Square. Go to their website, poke around, request or order a reader, then find and download their app from your phone's app store. Once the reader comes in, follow the instructions to get it up and running.

* * *

Teatro di Freak Call for Writers

If you follow Blue Forge Films you already know that we have a very successful property called Teatro di Freak. This is an ultra low-budget web series (episodes are under ten minutes) set in a dystopian future where a vaccine went horribly wrong and caused a mutation in 10% of the population.

The series is moving into its third season (it also has dvds and a graphic novel and a card game) and to celebrate that third season, we're publishing a Teatro di Freak omnibus collection – a massive collection of novellas, short stories and artwork.

If you are interested in writing for the omnibus, please email me at blueforgefilms@gmail.com (since it's a book tied onto a film project) but only AFTER you have watched the entire series (Seasons 1 and 2) at www.tiny.cc/teatrodifreak.

When you email me, tell me what character or characters you'd like to write about. We are not looking for any stories about original characters right now – only characters that appear in the series. And some characters are already spoken for so let me know two or three characters that interest you.

* * *

Wolfe Retellings

Many of you know about the novels of Chris Anne Wolfe. Chris Anne is a much beloved lesbian feminist science fiction and fantasy writer. She died more than twenty years ago and named me as her literary executor and I, in turn, named Blue Forge Press. She is one of only two authors who sell books every single month without fail. There is no active social media presence, no dedicated website, no brand building efforts. She believed in "organic sales" as much as I believe in "created sales."

She was also a planner. Like... she makes me (the Queen of all Virgos) look like a slacker in the outline department! Chris Anne left behind dozens of outlines for novels. Many of these are in the retold fairytale genre.

If you are looking for a writing side-project and would like to "co-write" a retold fairytale by working from one of Chris Anne's outlines, please email blueforgepress@gmail.com and we'll send you a list of the fairytales she outlined. You can be a ghost writer and not have your name on the book at all (just collect your royalty) or you can co-write and have your name appear on the

book with Chris Anne's. We will also send you one of her books as a pdf file to read and get a sense of her style and pacing.

Like me, Chris Anne believed in empowering all different shapes, sizes, and colors of people but her focus and her passion was normalizing the lesbian feminist experience. It should go without saying but I'll say it: These are books intended solely for a lesbian feminist audience. They do not male-bash (you guys know I wouldn't allow that) but they are not books read by a wide variety of readers. If you don't want to write for that audience, this is not the project for you.

The books average R ratings in that they always have two to four explicit sex scenes and often deal with big topics like self-hatred, homophobia, body dysphoria, etc.

* * *

Kiosks & Flyers

Just when I thought I was going to get to break out my power tools and have fun building this month... we got twenty more requests for these counter top kiosks. These smallest of the kiosks are easy to display and easy to stock and restock. They sit on the counters at cafes, bookstores, or any other venue.

Venues make 30% of the revenue from books sold and artisans make 70%. Blue Forge Press makes and supplies the kiosks, collects funds, and even restocks. We have four themes right now:

Picture books for kids.
Novels for early-teen readers.
Science fiction for adults.
Urban fantasy/romance for adults.

Venues pick the theme that they feel will sell best to their customers and then they can buy the books outright for 70% off the retail price or they can sell the books on commission and pay nothing up front.

I have been personally walking these kiosks into venues through Kitsap county. If you want a flyer describing the kiosks (with pictures), please find a pdf in the video description that you can print and show to a venue in your area. My number and email are on the flyer for them to contact me.

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That's all the news for this month. If you have questions or would like us to cover something next month, please post a comment below.

And, as always, remember: Monday doesn't have to be a day you dread. Monday, today, any day, can be the first day in the best creative month of your life.

Hello Monday: November 2020

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Topics Covered This Month:
Who is Blue Legacy?
How Blue Legacy is Funded
Blue Legacy Youth Outreach
How & When Royalties are Paid
What Albums Cost to Produce
What Books Cost to Publish
What Games Cost to Produce
What Films Cost to Produce
The 2021 Board of Directors is You

Welcome to Hello Monday, the monthly, company-wide update for the volunteer-run 501(c)3 nonprofit, Blue Legacy. My name is Jennifer DiMarco. I'm a director and author at Blue Legacy and also the CFO. I'm honored to host today's episode.

Who is Blue Legacy?

Blue Legacy was founded in 1989 to empower underrepresented storytellers, bring diverse people together, and make storytelling accessible across all mediums.

This mission was fueled after a New York publishing house bought the rights to my tenth novel, a Seattle Times bestseller that beat out Jurassic Park for the #1 spot. That publishing house put a white woman on the cover of my novel starring a black woman, and then they treated me like property for two years of national touring. I want to give artisans the voice I was never given. Blue Legacy has four divisions that each focuses on a different medium: Blue Forge Films, Blue Forge Press, Blue Forge Gaming, and Blue Forge Records. Go to MyBlueLegacy.org to find out more or jump right to BlueForgeFilms.com, BlueForgePress.com, BlueForgeGaming.com, or BlueForgeRecords.com to find information specific to each division.

If you are one of the 800+ artisans who work with us – an author, musician, game designer, filmmaker or actor – watching Hello Monday keeps you in the loop. But you don't have to watch: You can listen to the episode or you can read the transcript at the MyBlueLegacy.org (click Blog). A new episode of Hello Monday, sharing all the events and open calls, posts the first Monday of every month. Want to perform at a concert? Star in a film? Joining a game development team or write for an anthology? This is where we announce projects exactly like that.

In a rush? The topics being covered in each episode are shown in the episode's thumbnail icon.

How Blue Legacy is Funded

For the past several months, we've been engaged in the complicated process of interviewing and selecting artisans to sit on our Board of Directors in 2021. The process is finally complete and we'll announce our decision at the end of this episode but at the urging of those dedicated and

passionate applicants, we'll be sharing some bottom line numbers today.

Blue Legacy and all its four divisions are funded almost entirely by grants. Grants are not awarded to companies automatically. We must find grants that support our very specific mission, apply for those grants with applications that range from ten to forty pages, and then be skilled enough at those applications – and yes, lucky enough – to be awarded a grant. As CFO, this is huge part of what I do.

No staff member here is paid. Not an hourly wage. Not a flat salary. Not a percentage of what any artisan makes when they sell a book, game, album or film on Amazon or when they buy inventory at 50% off. We're paid a royalty on our own books, games, albums or films – just like you.

We have worked this way for thirty-one years. To survive, we do things differently: We work with both traditional printers and manufacturers like McNaughton & Gunn and Cushing-Malloy and print-on-demand companies like Lightning Source and Amazon. We source inventory from wherever is fastest, highest quality, and guaranteed to be 100% made in the USA.

We don't pay for a fancy office space. The company owns and has converted a one-acre property into the Blue Forge Campus with studio spaces, office space and living quarters for the four DiMarcos who volunteer full-time.

Artisans do not pay to publish with us. We are a traditional publisher not a print service. We only publish work that speaks to our overall mission.

Blue Legacy Youth Outreach

Blue Legacy isn't only about empowering artisans who exist outside the mainstream in terms of economics, gender, race, ability, size or age – though those are the marginalized artisans we focus on. But for the last two years we've also hosted and supported young adults who live with disabilities and chronic medical conditions.

Many of these 13 to 25 year olds lapse in and out of group homes and homelessness and during this year – especially during the pandemic – the DiMarco family has worked extra hours and side jobs to supply groceries, OTC medical supplies, warm clothing, and other essential supplies to these at-risk individuals.

In total over the last ten months, $14815 was raised without anyone in the Blue Legacy community opening their wallets. (Though we did receive two $10 bags of bologna, bread and cheese from an artisan who asked to be anonymous.)

Our hope, in 2021, is to build the Purple Door Studio to handle all filming and set-building needs (including relocating the chroma shell) and then convert the Green Door Studio into temporary housing. This would allow us to offer short term safety from the elements for the youth we work with as well as allow us to host out of state and other traveling artisans as needed.

If you'd like to set up a monthly reoccurring donation or just make a one time donation to help this

endeavor, please go to www.tiny.cc/donate2blue.

How & When Royalties are Paid

We were asked to answer this question again: When someone buys your book, album, game or film from one of our websites, they pay immediately. We then pay you your royalty on that revenue at the end of that month.

When someone buys your book, album, game or film from Amazon or another distributor or a store, they pay us in 90 days. So if a friend buys your book in January, we get paid for that January sale in April and we pay you in April.

What Albums Cost to Produce

When an artisan sends us music samples and we feel it fits with our mission to empower new voices, we will offer a contract. We print 1000 copies of the album on CD for the first print run. Paying for the album to be manufactured costs, on average, $3800. Then the inventory must be stored and insured against theft or damage for about $250/year.

The CD will be available at Amazon and at BlueForgeRecords.com. You make more than three-time as much when someone buys an album through BlueForgeRecords.com because Amazon is a distributor and they take 60% of revenue earned. BlueForgeRecords.com will also sell the digital edition of your album with instant delivery.

Normally, we wait until an artisan has sold 1000 CDs or a combination of CDs and digital editions before we add them to Pandora, Spotify, and the fifty or so streaming services we work with. We may change this policy in 2021 and have streaming services added immediately but that will be something the 2021 Board of Directors decides.

Once the first 1000 CDs are sold, we print either 1000 more or, if sales we very fast (as they were for my album, The Prodigal Songs) we double our re-order.

You guys have been asking me how I handle my albums. As a musician with Blue Forge Records, I make the majority of my revenue selling albums directly to my fans. All Blue Legacy artisans are allowed to buy inventory of their own products at 50% off and then resell the products and keep all revenue. Making 50% profit is higher than any standard royalty so I make enough to actually pay my bills. I also hold concerts where I play live and stream the concerts to my fans. Blue Forge Records hosts these events at BlueFlix Cinema, sells tickets for me, etc. and I make 50% of all ticket sales.

Don’t have fans yet? Check out past episodes of Hello Monday about how to build your brand. Don’t want to have copies of your album with you in a backpack at all times? Why not? Ani DeFranco, Mary Lambert, Ed Sheeran. Musicians work their asses off to promote their work. But if having that backpack of albums doesn’t work for you, then build your brand and link people to BlueForgeRecords.com. No financial investment is required from you.

When there isn't a pandemic going on, we also pay for concert venues to be rented, music videos to be made and promoted, and events to be hosted in malls and other venues where you can meet the public and perform. All those opportunities are shared here in Hello Monday – so if you don't watch, you don't know how to join. You pay nothing so the only investment is the time you take to stay informed.

What Books Cost to Publish

The average 300-page 5.5x8.5 inch trade paperback costs $5159 for 1000 copies to be printed, and $300/year to store and insure.

If your book is a 6x9 inch trade paperback, the average cost is $7890 and $350/year to store and insure.

I apply for grants to promote specific types of books or specific types of authors. That's how any book we've published in the last five years has been funded.

Once a book sells out its print run of 1000, we'll either automatically print another 1000 or, if sales were fast, as they were for pre-orders of my collection Body of Work, we'll re-order 2500 for the second print run. Re-orders are always paid for by sales of the previous print run. Additional grants are not needed to keep a book in print.

Right now, authors make the same royalty whether someone buys from Amazon or BlueForgePress.com. However, in 2021, the Board of Directors may vote to change this and have inventory stored and shipped directly from us which will triple your revenue earned.

Even throughout the pandemic, we set up outdoor, open air Feast of Words events every single weekend where authors could met the public and sell their books. Now that it's too cold to be outside, we have custom kiosks of books in stores and cafes. We've waiting on four Washington malls to open up to independent events again and have helped set up authors to sell books at McChord, street fairs, and other third party events. Want to participate? Make sure to watch Hello Monday so you know when the next event is and can sign up while there's still space.

Want to stay home and promote online? Start building your brand now.

What Games Cost to Produce

We only produce 100 copies of card games for their first runs and 500 copies of role-playing games and PC games. Average cost of a card game with packaging is $890 with $90/year in storage and insurance. Role-playing games usually cost $3890 for a first print run due to their large format size and PC games can cost anywhere from $9000 to $14,000 for the first run. Storage and insurance is $250/year and $325/year respectively.

Tournaments and gaming events are our primary means for selling games but, once more, I have games published by Blue Forge Gaming and find that posting about my games in online forums or helping fans host their own mini tournaments is the way I move most of my inventory.

What Films Cost to Produce

Blue Forge Films is the one division where I can't really average the cost of a film. The range is simply too board. However, I do know the average time investment. I was actually asked by the 2020 Board of Directors to log all hours I, personally, worked on various films in 2018 through this year. Imagine if you're an actor working long days on a film and you log 100 hours – ten ten-hour days!

Writing and revising a script, managing the actors, securing the locations, securing the props, shooting the film, editing the audio, editing the film, creating any effects, composing the soundtrack, creating the cover and promotional images, preparing the digital edition, promoting the premiere, captioning the film, and managing ticket sales averages 1574 hours per film.
And while our producing partners often pay for location rentals and props, no one is paying me for those 1574 hours. I make a royalty. Just like any other artisan.

We print 500 dvds of every applicable film. This costs, on average, $3500 for the print run, $190/year storage and insurance, and $150 for a premiere online or off-line.

The 2021 Board of Directors is You

Philanthropy. What does it mean to you? To me, it means the selfless effort a person makes to improve the lives of others. Especially when those "others" are very, very different from you. These efforts shouldn't benefit you personally or earn you kudos. You may see philanthropy differently. That's fine.

Our Board of Directors is made up of two of the four DiMarcos who volunteer here full-time plus three to five artisans who believe in everyone's right to be heard – as long as those voices don't promote hate. We have already reached out and have a Board of philanthropists ready to meet four times a year in 2021... but we're going to change thing up a bit.

Starting in January 2021, Hello Monday will include all the topics the Board of Directors will discuss at their next meeting. All artisans will be encouraged to vote using an anonymous, online ballot. The results of every vote will count toward the final decisions made on every single topic. In this way, every artisan who stays informed will have an active voice in the company itself.

Yes. This will be extra work for us. But personally I feel this is an incredible step. Especially since the ballots will also have space for in-depth comments if artisans have more to say. I fight every single day to ensure that none of my artisans are silenced. I know what that feels like and I'd bet so do you.

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That's all the news for this month. If you have questions or would like us to cover something next month, please post a comment below or write to BlueForgeGroup@gmail.com.

And, as always, remember: Monday doesn't have to be a day you dread. Monday, today, can be the first day in the best creative month of your life.

Hello Monday – December 2020

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Topics Covered This Month:
Who We Are and How We Do It All
Festival Winners Now Listed
Now Hiring: Blue Pencil Editors
Now Hiring: Short Story Writers
Introducing Arts Ex Machina 3.0 Magazine
What Should You Write Next?
Blue Forge Press Audio Editions
Independent Audio Editions
Increasing Royalties & Direct Shipping
Premium Websites

Welcome to Hello Monday, the monthly, company-wide update for the volunteer-run 501(c)3 nonprofit, Blue Legacy. My name is Jennifer DiMarco. I'm a director, author, musician, and game programmer at Blue Legacy and also the CFO. It was a pleasure to write today's episode.

Who We Are and How We Do It All

The incredible story of who we are and how we fund everything we do – including the average costs we cover to produce a book, album, game or film – can be found in detail in the November episode of Hello Monday here: https://youtu.be/wFohbMgWae8

Festival Winners Now Listed

Your wish is our command. At the request of our artisans, the winners of all of our past festivals are now listed at www.BlueForgeFilms.com. Just click festivals and scroll down. Every official award is listed for:

Take 8 Film Festival
Take 8 Film Festival: Forest
Take 8 Film Festival: White Room
Take 8 Film Festival: Catacombs
Spark Forge Film Festival
Forge Flashpoint Film Festival
Forge Flashpoint Film Festival 2
Forge Flashpoint Film Festival 3
Forge Flashpoint Film Festival 4
Forge Flashpoint Film Festival 5
Blackwood Film Anthology
Saint August Chapel Film Anthology
Wonderland Film Anthology

IMDb appears to have changed how studios can add awards to actor's pages so we're working with them to figure our that next step. In the mean time, I will personally keep the festival page at Blue Forge Films updated with each new festival.

Now Hiring: Blue Pencil Editors

Some of you are already aware of our efforts to hire blue pencil editors over the last five years and how horrible those experiences have been. I can't swing a stick without hitting someone telling me what a great editor they are and sending us books marked up with red pen that ignore an author's individual voice and style and completely homogenize the work.

But despite the fact that – so far – I trust only Brianne not to obliterate an author's voice (which is why I hired her as Senior Editor of Blue Forge Press), there is another truth that can't be denied: She needs help. So this coming year, we're going to try a different approach.

We have forty 10,000-word stories that need to be edited. Not red pencil edited. Blue pencil edited. Let's quickly define those terms for folks who don't know:

Blue pencil editing is spelling, grammar, formatting, and punctuation use. It's also making sure a story fits with Blue Legacy's ideals. This mean no sexual violence (that means non-consensual sex of any kind as well as obvious acts of violence); no violence against children; no sex involving minors; no animal cruelty; no unexamined phobias or isms within the narrative outside a purposeful character trait.

Red pencil editing is about content, pacing, and overall theme. I have Brianne for red pencil and I can say in all honesty and with complete confidence: She can vote differently from an author, she can think, feel and live differently from an author and she will still respect and preserve their voice as long as they are promoting bringing people together – not pushing us all further apart.

We're looking for blue pencil editors only.

Throughout this last month of 2020 and throughout all of 2021, I'm going to be testing out various blue pencil editors and trying to find a team for Brianne. The team members who work out best I'll ask to join us in 2022 as paid blue pencil editors who will receive a 5% royalty on every book they edit.

If you'd like to be considered for one of these positions in 2022 or if you'd just like to help Brianne and move Blue Forge Press forward faster and cleaner, please email me today at blueforgegroup@gmail.com. You must have the phrase "Blue Pencil Editors" in the subject of your email. Please follow that very basic direction if you're serious about being considered.

I'll be looking for people who are excellent proof readers, who understand how to format a manuscript, and who can give me a seven-day turnaround on 10,000 words. This is not an easy job.

Now Hiring: Short Story & Serial Writers

In February of 2021 you'll see Blue Forge Press launch a new kind of book: Blue Flash books. Blue Flash books are digest sized: 5x8 inches. And they're skinny: About 10,000 words. These smaller sized books are perfect lunch break reading material. At $7.99 they're less than the cost of most mass market paperbacks and they introduce readers to new writers.
Writers can create 10,000 to 20,000 stand-alone stories to be published by this imprint, or they can publish longer, serialized work divided into 10,000-word segments.

However, we won't publish just anything. We covered this in November's Hello Monday and we'll touch on it again later in this episode but we don't publish everything our authors send us. This is a misconception that we're gently trying to clarify.

We welcome our authors to write for this new imprint. To pitch an idea, send an email to Blue Forge Press with the subject heading: Blue Flash Books. Don't forget that subject heading or your email will go to the wrong person and your response will be delayed by weeks.

In your email, tell us your genre, the basic idea, and whether or not this would be a 10,000-word stand-alone or a serialized work. If it's a serialized work, how many volumes of 10,000 words each do you anticipate? Also let us know when you'll be turning volumes in... and then keep those deadlines.

If you send us a stand-alone and we accept it, it will be published in thirty days.

If you send us a serialized longer work, we'll collect your 10,000-word documents until we have five and then we'll publish the all five within thirty days of turning in your fifth file.

Authors receive the full 20% royalty on Blue Flash books and can still pick up copies for resale at 50% off the $7.99 retail.

Introducing Arts Ex Machina 3.0 Magazine

We tried to keep this under wraps but loose lips launch ships apparently ;) In 2021, I'll be launching the third incarnation of its magazine Arts Ex Machina. Instead of trying to manage a team of writers who have to meet deadlines, this version of AXM will be a literary magazine that showcases some of the best short stories we've published over the years.

You may have noticed I said that I, Jennifer, will be launching the magazine. That's because that I pitched the idea to Blue Forge Press as a blind submission and it was accepted. This is not a project that can submitted to. I will publish stories of merit and interviews with authors. I will also invite authors to be columnists and write honestly and authentically about their life experiences. The magazine will center on the writer's life and how people from all walks of life come to walk the writer's path.

There is no way to apply for a position at the magazine or to ask that a story be included. This is why we weren't going to announce the magazine. But apparently some of my secret author accounts on social media have been found out and someone saw me talking to my fans and told other authors. Okay then!

But yes. The rumors are true. I am launching a literary magazine on my own and it will be published by Blue Forge Press. If your story is selected for inclusion, you will receive free copies of the magazines for free that you can give away to friends or that you can sell for some mad money. Up to you.

What Should You Write Next?

As the year draws to a close, a great many artisans are reaching out to me and Brianne and asking what they should publish next. We've realized during some of these email exchanges that there's been a pretty fundamental misunderstanding between us and artisans and that is: We won't publish everything you send us.

Go back, if you have time, to November's Hello Monday. I spoke extensively about how we pay for print runs of books—which runs in the thousands of dollars for every title. I secure grants along a certain theme—a type of book, game, film or album or a type of artisan. So every year, we're looking for different things... and unless we have an open call for a specific anthology (which we would announce here in Hello Monday) we don't request specific themes from our artisans.

You are not our pens-for-hire nor do we want you to be.

Now don't get me wrong. If you publish a series with us? Then yes, unless your next book in your series blatantly clashes with Blue Legacy's ideals, then we're going to publish it. As a matter of fact, contractually, you can't take a new book in an existing series to another press without ending your contract with us and buying out your print runs as described in your contract. Yikes!

But let's say you want to pitch an all-new book idea to us. Or even an all-new album, film, web series, television show or game. How should you go about doing that?

Write to the appropriate manager of the division at blueforgefilms@gmail.com, blueforgepress@gmail.com, blueforgegaming@gmail.com, or blueforgerecords@gmail.com and tell us about your idea and why it excites you. Tell us about how long it will be. Tell us when it will be done. Is it the first in a new series? When would you write the next one? Be clear and concise. Don't attach a sample. If the entire book is done, attach a Word or Open Office document but still write the same pitch I just explained. That's it.

You may think that we're going to look at your sales record to decide whether or not we want to bankroll the publication or production of your new work but we don't. Sales records are not available to Board members or editors of any division. As CFO of Blue Legacy, only I have access to that information.

But here's what we do look at:
Your behavior at our online and public events.
Whether or not you watch Hello Monday and stay informed.
What promotional activities do you engage in with us?
What promotional activities do you engage in on your own?

Are you growing as an artisan? Are your skills increasing? Are you striving to do better?

And last but perhaps most importantly, we ask: How passionate are you about this new work?

So instead of asking us what you should be writing or creating, ask yourself what it is that would excite you the most.

Blue Forge Press Audio Editions

A fast update on our progress through the backlog of audio editions. We're down to only two! The Oak of Weeping and Shadow Canyon will be added to the Blue Forge Press website before the end of January. Buyers will be able to pay and instantly download the set of mp3 files for the books—just as they can do right now for Beyond the Great Compromise and Uncertain Journey.

If you're interested in narrating an audio edition of your book for Blue Forge Press to publish, please write to Brianne at blueforgepress@gmail.com. We have equipment you can rent and use in your own home or we can talk to you about using your own equipment.

If you're editing out all your own flubs and mistakes, then turnaround time in 2021 will be thirty days from receipt of files. We'll just convert the files, add music, and create a cover image.

If we're editing out your mistakes and cleaning up the audio files, then turnaround time in 2021 will be six months.

Either way, there is no charge for publishing the audio editions if your book has already been published been Blue Forge Press.

Independent Audio Editions

We've now had half a dozen artisans ask us about publishing audio editions for their books that are not published by Blue Forge Press. Yes. We do this but only if you're editing out your own mistakes and the files come to us clean and clear.

We can add music to the start of chapters, prepare the files for download and host them indefinitely. We'll supply you with a link that you can post on your website so that when people buy you audio edition, they'll pay and be instantly taken to the download. You set your price.

Blue Legacy charges nothing upfront for this but, starting in 2021, we will take a 20% royalty. We pay you 80% within 24 hours of receipt of the funds.

Increasing Royalties & Direct Shipping

In the November episode of Hello Monday, I mentioned considering bringing inventory into the office and filling some orders directly from here. This would allow for faster turnaround on small orders—like autographed copies for instance—but more importantly it would greatly increase the

royalty on albums, books, games and dvds.

An example:

A $12 album that sells at an online bookstore will pay the artisan a 65¢ royalty on average. A $12 album sold directly would pay the artisan more than $2.00.

A $10 book that sells at an online bookstore will pay the artisan a 56¢ royalty on average. A $10 book sold directly would pay the artisan more than $1.40.

By ordering many titles at a time in bulk, Blue Legacy would ship from the office and store in the office so that no storage fees or additional insurance would be needed for these in-house copies. The artisans pay nothing but whenever sales are made through a company website, the royalty would be higher than elsewhere.

We were asked how much capital would be needed to launch this effort. To order stock of enough titles to receive the steepest discount, install the shelves, and order the packing and shipping supplies, we're looking at $4400 to launch and after that the system is self-perpetuating.

If you'd like to aid in those efforts with a donation, please write to me at blueforgegroup@gmail.com.

Premium Websites

We were also asked how much it would cost to remove the Wix ad banners from the top of every Blue Legacy website. I actually loved this question because—personally—I think the cost is ridiculously high but I'm a bit of a penny pincher. Probably because I collect pennies ;)

It would cost $110 a month to remove the ads from Blue Legacy, Blue Forge Films, Blue Forge Press, Blue Forge Gaming, Blue Forge Records, and Seriously Cereal.

If you'd like to aid in that effort with a one-time donation or a re-occurring monthly donation, of any amount, please write to be at blueforgegroup@gmail.com.

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That's all the news for this month. If you have questions or would like us to cover something next month, please post a comment below or write to BlueForgeGroup@gmail.com.

And, as always, remember: Monday doesn't have to be a day you dread. Monday, today, can be the first day in the best creative month of your life.

Hello Monday – February 2021

Watch or listen to this episode here: https://youtu.be/EUFKsz45Y3w

Topics Covered This Month:
First Quarter Proposal Results
Community Proposal Results
Job Opening at Blue Cinema
Studios for Artisans
Lumber Donations
Premium Editions Get New ISBNs
Open Call for Authors
Download the Style Guide

Welcome to Hello Monday, the monthly, company-wide update for the volunteer-run 501(c)3 nonprofit, Blue Legacy. Blue Legacy was founded in 1989 to empower artisans who have been marginalized due to their age, race, gender, ability, size, sexuality or class. Find out more about Blue Legacy at www.MyBlueLegacy.org.

The incredible story of who we are and how we fund everything we do – including the average costs we cover to produce a book, album, game or film – can be found in the November 2020 episode of Hello Monday here: https://youtu.be/wFohbMgWae8

I've been encouraged to share a little more each month about altruism. I wasn't really aware until recently that many of our artisans believe the in-house volunteers are paid – either a salary, a stipend, a cut of everyone else's work, or an hourly wage. None of these things are true nor have they ever been.

In his book, "On Tyranny," Timothy Snyder writes that a vital action we must all take to ensure or at least provide the possibility of integrity in social systems, is to pick an organization that we believe in and support it to the best of our abilities. The four DiMarcos choose Blue Legacy. Consciously. Purposefully. Former director of the Peace Corp, Carrie Hessler-Radelet recently said, "One of the most important elements of service is humility on the part of the person who is serving. We don't enter the community to save people; if anything, we are saved ourselves through service."

Blue Legacy and all its divisions are service providers for artisans marginalized due to race, economics, age, size, sexuality, religion, ability, or gender. We are not a commercial company. We are not driven by revenue. We are and will continue to be for as long as I am installed here, a volunteer-run, 501(c)3 nonprofit — which is unheard of and constitutes 1% of all functioning 501(c)3; we are, in many ways, the antithesis of that other 1% in America.

My name is Jennifer DiMarco. I'm a filmmaker at Blue Forge Films; an author at Blue Forge Press; a musician at Blue Forge Records, and game developer at Blue Forge Gaming. I am the CFO of Blue Legacy and honored to host today's episode.

First Quarter Proposal Results

Last month in Hello Monday, we welcomed all artisans to vote on several proposals in a free, anonymous, online ballot during the month of January. In total, 392 artisans voted. Thank you. Truly. The artisans spoke clearly and the Board supported all of you unanimously. The results were:

1. Should Jennifer create a free, online marketing seminar for artisans? 72% of you voted no. The proposal did not pass.

2. Should in-house volunteers be allowed to work more than forty hours per week? 85% of you voted no. The proposal did not pass.

3. Should a shopping cart be added across all four divisions of Blue Legacy? 70% of you voted no. The proposal did not pass.

4. Should partner companies be added to the Blue Legacy website? 94% of you voted yes. The proposal passed. Partner companies who donate regularly to Blue Legacy – who help make printing your books and manufacturing your albums possible – will be added to the Blue Legacy website in a special "Our Partners" section where the community can choose to support them in turn.

There was a fifth topic on the ballot that asked voting artisans if they had any counter-proposals or brand new proposals. Four of these were considered by the Board and we'll cover the results in a moment.

If you'd like to submit a new proposal to be voted on at the Second Quarter Board meeting in April, please go to www.tiny.cc/blueproposal before March 25, 2021.

Community Proposal Results

Artisans proposed these ideas which the Board voted on:

Community Proposal 1. That in-house volunteers put together a list of links for promotional videos and marketing resources and share it one month as the episode of Hello Monday. This community proposal passed. The March Hello Monday will have a large section dedicated to sharing books, videos, services, and service providers who we recommend. (The rest of the March Hello Monday will be job openings and open calls for musicians and authors.)

Community Proposal 2. That the office and campus completely close on the weekends with the exception of studios being rented. Any free use of studios would have to happen on weekdays. This community proposal passed. Because of zoning, we will always be by-appointment-only but starting in March 2021, the campus will reopen Monday through Friday, from 2pm to midnight Pacific Time. We will also have phone hours from 3pm to 6pm Pacific Time every day and we'll have a special direct number just for contracted artisans. That number will be shared in the March Hello Monday.

Community Proposal 3. That in-house volunteers report hours for the previous month in Hello Monday for further transparency. This proposal was revised and passed. If you'd like to know the cumulative hours worked by in-house volunteers in the previous month, write to blueforgegroup@gmail.com with a request. You'll be answered within one business day.

Community Proposal 4. That specific task lists be shared as a downloadable log monthly in Hello Monday. This proposal was not passed due to privacy and security concerns shared by the Board. However, we may revisit this proposal or one like it at the Second Quarter meeting because this information does exist – every task completed every day is documented by our COO and our in-house volunteers. So we may be talking about this again.

Job Opening at Blue Cinema

Blue Cinema, as most of you know, is our online movie theater for streaming and showcasing films, festivals, workshops, recitals – anything people might want to watch together. Attached to the "screening room" is a lobby chat room where audience members can socialize. Blue Cinema can be accessed from www.BlueForgeFilms.com or at www.tiny.cc/bluecinema. There's even an option to have whatever you're screening available as a digital download or dvd. In 2021, Blue Cinema is now ad-free and we're looking to hire a manager to put in charge of soliciting and booking renters. You will be provided with a starting flyer design; a video commercial; a rates and services sheet, and a dedicated company email account. Please write to blueforgegroup@gmail.com if interested.

Studios for Artisans

We covered this in the January Hello Monday but we got a lot of questions about it last month as well so let me touch on it again: Starting March 1, 2021, the campus will reopen and the Black Door Studio and the Green Door Studio will be available. Both can be used (with our equipment or yours) to record audio. Both can be used (with your own equipment) to film in. Both must be reserved ahead of time at www.MyBlueLegacy.org.

Lumber Donations

We are currently engaged in the final repairs of the property and in the building of a new outdoor meeting and performance space for our artisans. We are accepting donations of 4"x4"x8' or longer pressure-treated posts, 2"x4"x8' or longer pressure-treated sticks, or six- to eight-inch cedar planks of any length.

Donations are tax deductible and we welcome all help – literal deliveries of any of this lumber or gift cards to Lowes or Home Depot (our local big box hardware stores) or any local lumberyard in Kitsap County. Thank you, everyone, for asking. You always make my week.

Premium Editions Get New ISBNs

Senior Editor of Blue Forge Press and Chief Operations Officer of Blue Legacy, Brianne DiMarco will be launching a "Featured" line of Blue Forge Press titles that she feels best illustrate what we

do and what we're looking for. She will focus on books in lengthy, on-going series first. (Just having a series with us does not guarantee inclusion in the imprint and some stand-alone books will be considered.)

These "Editor's Choice" editions of previously released books will feature new ISBNs and will be pre-pubbed to critics. (All books are sent to reviewers but they are not pre-pubbed which delays the public release of a book six to ten months.) They will ship from the standard vendors and distributors and directly from Blue Forge Press for a higher return (just like autographed titles). Brianne will select titles throughout 2021 and will notify authors if and when they're impacted.

I, personally, applaud Brianne for taking this step to fully claim the vision she has for the press and to remind all of us that Blue Forge Press is not a "dumping ground." I hope this choice will help stem the tide of us receiving rough drafts and will encourage authors to care more deeply about the messages and characters they're putting out into the world.

Open Call for Authors

Once again, we're opening up the call for co-authors for the Chris Anne Wolfe fairytale/mythology retelling series. Chris Anne was one of our first authors more than twenty years ago who left us with a legacy of her work – a dozen finished novels and several dozen summaries of other novels. Chris Anne was one of the bestselling lesbian feminist authors of all time and continues to sell hundreds of copies of her works every single month.

We have a list of the retellings she wrote summaries for and if you feel passionately about any of them, we can talk to you about the process of co-authoring. Not only does it pay a royalty but it also pays in a ton of exposure to all of Chris Anne's readers out there.

If you're interested, please write to blueforgegroup@gmail.com with the words: Wolfe Retellings in the subject field of your email. Chris Anne stipulated that she would like these retellings written by women writers (of any sexuality, race or age) so, for this legacy open call, we'll respect that – just like we would respect a legacy stipulation you made on your own brand.

Download the Style Guide

If you're part of one of our active projects like writing for An Anarchy of Angels, you should have already received the new Blue Forge Press Style Guide. This guide gives examples of the Blue Forge Press in-house style and also universal guidelines from the Chicago Manual of Style. Everything in the style guide is done by your editor... but it shouldn't be. It should be done by you.

Imagine if you're in my shoes: Blessed to be educated at a school focused on the arts, I was taught that you NEVER turn in your first draft (do you really think we can't tell?) and you ALWAYS make sure your manuscript is as clean as possible. I took classes with authors who worked out their entire novel in their head as well as ones who wrote forty to sixty page outlines scene by scene... but none of them ever typed it all out once and then turned it in. So I have an assumption of professionalism when it comes to authors.

Let's keep imagining: So now we have this person (me, I'm the person) who considers being an author a real career. A full-time career. I take my work very, very seriously. And then I see my Senior Editor utterly slammed editing someone's "Best Stories of the Year" that are turned in late, barely meet the word count requirement and yet are still so riddled with elementary errors that it's taking multiple editors, multiple reads to even understand what the author is trying to say – let alone catch all their grammar, capitalization, tense and word use errors.

Now what if that Senior Editor was also your wife? Would it break your heart? Would you want to fire these authors who "phone in" stories?

One of our new blue pencil editors said to me recently after finishing a particularly rough manuscript, "I knew it was bad but I had no idea how bad." And that manuscript? She was the THIRD blue pencil editor to tackle it. So she got the manuscript after three other editors had tried to make sense of it and still felt so strongly.

Instead of relying on others to make our work professional and high quality, let's all download the Style Guide and be better. We'll add to the Style Guide and let you know when it's been updated so you can download it again.

Blue Forge Press is growing fast so we're raising the bar. Download the Style Guide from www.tiny.cc/BFPstyleguide

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That's all the news for this month. If you have questions or would like us to cover something next month, please post a comment below or write to BlueForgeGroup@gmail.com. And, as always, remember: Monday doesn't have to be a day you dread. Monday can be the first day in the best creative month of your life.

Hello Monday – January 2021

Watch or listen to this episode here: https://youtu.be/-AhAcfkbxno

Topics Covered This Month:
Welcome New Board Members
Time to Vote: First Quarter
How to Place an Order
Reserve a Studio
Wholesale Orders
Autographed Editions
Preview Editions

Welcome to Hello Monday, the monthly, company-wide update for the volunteer-run 501(c)3 nonprofit, Blue Legacy. Blue Legacy was founded in 1989 to empower artisans who have been marginalized due to their age, race, gender, ability, size, sexuality or class. Find out more about Blue Legacy at www.MyBlueLegacy.org.

The story of who we are and how we fund everything we do – including the average costs we cover to produce a book, album, game or film – can be found in the November 2020 episode of Hello Monday here: https://youtu.be/wFohbMgWae8

My name is Jennifer DiMarco. I'm a filmmaker, author, musician, and game developer at Blue Legacy... and the CFO. I have worked for this company since I was sixteen years old and I'm honored to host today's episode.

Welcome New Board Members

The DiMarco family – my son, Maxwell; my daughter, Faith; my wife, Brianne, and myself – run Blue Legacy on a day-to-day basis. However, the policies and growth of the company is guided by a Board of Directors that revolves so that diverse voices are heard across the four creative industries will serve.

Starting in 2021, all Directors will hold part-time positions at Blue Legacy, growing the company in various ways to benefit all divisions and all artisans, while they also weigh the votes of the artisans on the most important topics. We'll talk more about artisan votes in a moment.

Welcome, new Directors. I applaud your dedication, humility and passion for the arts and for Blue Legacy. Thank you.

If you're interested in sitting on the Board of Directors in 2022, write to blueforgegroup@gmail.com and request an application. Directors meet online with one of the DiMarcos (only one DiMarco sits on the Board at a time) four times a year and have monthly growth milestones for their part-time positions. If you cannot dedicate a minimum of ten hours a month to the position, please do not ask for an application.

Time to Vote: First Quarter

Speaking of artisans voting: The voices of our artisans have always factored heavily in everything we do and every policy we set. Sometimes this results in a "one bad apple spoils the bunch" situation but most times this assures our community that we're listening to them and recognizing their opinions.

There will be four times this year – right now, in April, in July, and in October – when we'll ask you to vote on issues that the Board is discussing. The Board can't make decisions without hearing from the artisans we serve so please take a few minutes to vote; voting is online, anonymous, free, and you don't even have to sign in.

These topics were proposed at the end of 2020 by the out-going Board of Directors. This quarter's topics are:

"Should Jennifer create a free, online marketing seminar for artisans?"

Argument For: This series of videos would cover both traditional and guerrilla marketing methods that Jennifer has personally used to land her books on best-seller lists, grow a massive fan mailing list, and garner publicity. Jennifer will open the seminar with the true story of how one of our artisans, in November 2020, worked with her to increase the artisan's royalty check from $0.15 to $4017.11 – by following Jennifer's step-by-step advice.

Argument Against: It will take Jennifer and entire month to research, write, film, and edit this seminar. This means she will not be able to work on any other projects. Expect this to dramatically impact every film project and delay response time across all divisions as in-house volunteers are shorthanded without her. Furthermore, Jennifer has done marketing videos for artisans in the past and less than thirty artisans watched them or followed their advice. There are thousands of free videos and (not free but worth it) books about marketing available to everyone already. Jennifer shouldn't have to teach adult artisans. She taught herself, so can we.

"Should in-house volunteers be allowed to work more than forty hours per week?"

Argument For: Log books showing hours worked have been kept for the last five years. The average work week is sixty hours. For Blue Legacy to make any progress or even just survive in an incredibly volatile economy, we should allow in-house volunteers to work as many hours as they are willing to work.

Argument Against: No one is super human. Mental health and physical health can be threatened by too many sustained hours of high-stress work. None of the DiMarcos are paid. They have to be given the time to pursue other work if their own royalties come up short. Additionally, patience is at its best when someone has time away from points of stress.

"Should a shopping cart be added across all four division websites?"

Argument For: To share customers across divisions and help them find new music, books, games and films that they may otherwise not know about. To allow for easier and smoother shopping and check out. Once we secure a grant to ship all books, dvds, albums and games from the office instead of through a vendor or distributor (for higher royalties and faster order fulfillment) we'll be completely ready for cross-division shopping.

Argument Against: Right now, 80% of our products for sale on the division websites are purchased through Amazon. Adding an integrated shopping cart to our websites at this time would be a week's worth of work that would only serve 20% of our products. This is not an efficient use of time nor is it a need that serves the majority at this time.

"Should partner companies be added to the Blue Legacy website?"

Argument For: There are several independent companies and a few corporate companies that support Blue Legacy by granting Blue Legacy a portion of their sales. We should share these companies and talk a little about each one so that our community knows about them and can choose to support them if they want to. It will take only two days to create and add this information to the website.

Argument Against: We are a long-lived company (thirty-two years this year) but we've still very small in the grand scheme of things. It will take two days to make these changes to the website and that time can be spent elsewhere. These partners support us because they believe in us, not for free publicity.

You can vote on these proposals through January 15, 2021, at 9am. Access the ballot at: www.tiny.cc/blueballot

Also at that link are instructions how to submit a counter-proposal to any of these topics and instructions on how to submit a brand new proposal for the second quarter vote.

I cannot stress enough: Please do not email about the ballot. Do not email counter-proposals or new proposals. Please follow the instructions found at www.tiny.cc/blueballot.

How to Place an Order

For the last two years we've tried to find the most efficient way to handle artisan orders. Unfortunately, we're still facing two frequent issues: Artisans sending orders to the wrong email address and artisans sending incomplete orders. Starting today, all artisan orders should be placed at www.tiny.cc/blueorders. There's a form there for artisans to fill out that will make sure we have all the information we need before we start calling around to get shipping quotes.

Reserve a Studio

Many artisans have been reaching out about when the campus will open again and what studios will be available when. Our goal is to have the newly renovated Green Door Studio and the Black Door Studio open for business – following all safe and sanitary protocols – on March 1, 2021.

If you need a space to record or film, please reserve in advance as we expect the spaces to be booked quickly. Go to www.MyBlueLegacy.org and click "reserve a studio" right on the main page.

Remember: Artisans under contract with Blue Legacy do not pay for studio space.

Wholesale Orders

A wholesale page for bookstores and other venues was added to www.BlueForgePress.com a year ago. You can direct venues to the website's wholesale link for information about how they can order directly from us or book an event with you.

Autographed Editions

Over 2020, three artisans tested out having autographed editions available of their books at the Blue Forge Press website. These editions sell for the same retail price as a normal edition but shipping is $5 for USPS First Class mail because autographed editions are stored and shipped from

the Blue Legacy office. We were pleasantly surprised that these editions sold incredibly well moving hundreds of copies in 2020.

If you're interested in having autographed editions of your books sold this way, write to blueforgegroup@gmail.com with the words Autographed Editions in the subject heading of your email. Authors make a 50% royalty on all autographed copies because they come from your inventory.

Preview Editions

There are times when I, as an author, want to sell a series into a discount store or a corporate store that requires a 50% discount. I can always direct them to the wholesale page on the Blue Forge Press website but what if I like getting a bigger royalty and selling my own inventory? (Because I do.)

In 2020 I designed "Preview Editions." Preview Editions are 10,000-word excerpts from the first book in a series. They sell for $7.99 and end with a complete list of titles, prices, and ordering information for every book in the series. This proved to be an exceptional way to get series in front of new readers and allow them a low-risk way to check out something new to them. We also price the ebook of the Preview Edition at just $0.99.

Not only is this a low-cost entry point to gain readers, I wound up selling my Preview Editions into the corporate discount stores. I don't make money off the Preview Editions that I sell into the big box stores, but I do break even. This is how I did that:

1. I politely asked Brianne to make me a Preview Edition.

2. One month later, it was ready.

3. I placed my normal annual order for inventory and added in sixty Preview Edition copies. The shipping barely changed because I was already ordering a LOT of books. I simply rolled the total cost of shipping into the cost of the other books I ordered. (I order only once a year in bulk to save on shipping.) Like all other artisans, I paid 50% of retail plus shipping, no tax.

4. I then turned around and sold my Preview Editions to every store that would take them at 50% off. They paid me the 50% I'd paid for the copies so I broke even.

5. By the time the sixty Preview Editions were sold, I had already seen forty-nine sales of other books in that series – above and beyond normal sales I expected to see from my other promotional efforts.

I consider that a success so I'm sharing the news with all of you. If you'd like a Preview Edition you must have at least two books in a series published with us. If that's the case, simply write to Brianne at blueforgepress@gmail.com with the words Preview Edition in the subject heading of your email and tell her you're interested in a Preview Edition. Please note that Preview Editions cannot be illustrated or choose-your-own-adventure books.

* * *

That's all the news for this month. If you have questions or would like us to cover something next month, please post a comment below or write to BlueForgeGroup@gmail.com. And, as always, remember: Monday doesn't have to be a day you dread. Monday, today, can be the first day in the best creative month of your life.

Hello Monday – March 2021

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Topics Covered This Month:
Who We Are & Aren't
Book Trailers
Blue Village Acting Troupe
Job Opening: Blue Pencil Editors
Sign Up for Book Fairs
What are Pre-Pubs?
What are Care Packages?
What Have Critics Said?
Resources for Publicity
Story Time: First Right of Refusal

Welcome to Hello Monday, the monthly, company-wide update for the volunteer-run 501(c)3 nonprofit, Blue Legacy. Blue Legacy was founded in 1989 to empower artisans who have been marginalized due to their age, race, gender, ability, size, sexuality or class. Find out more about Blue Legacy at www.MyBlueLegacy.org.

The incredible story of who we are and how we fund everything we do – including the average costs we cover to produce a book, album, game or film – can be found in the November 2020 episode of Hello Monday here: https://youtu.be/wFohbMgWae8

My name is Jennifer DiMarco. I'm a filmmaker, author, musician, and game developer at Blue Legacy... and the CFO. I'm honored to host today's episode.

Who We Are & Aren't

Common sense means something different to each of us. Sometimes I share something here in Hello Monday and artisans write to me and say, "Duh! We knew that." But if three or more people were asking about a topic in the previous month? That means it isn't common knowledge to everyone.

Blue Legacy is the parent company of the films, press, gaming and records divisions here. Blue Legacy is run by a revolving Board of Directors and the four DiMarcos – Brianne, Faith, Maxwell and myself. My parents, sister, grandmother, uncles, aunts and cousins have nothing to do with Blue Legacy or any of its divisions. They never have and they never will. My extended family has nothing to do with Blue Legacy and we have nothing to do with their various businesses. Never talk to another DiMarco – or even a random artisan signed with us – if you want accurate information about Blue Legacy.

Always go to the source.

Book Trailers

Many years ago when we were just a book and game publisher, we often created trailers for our books that resulted in a few hundred copies in sales. These videos were created with symbolic, powerful imagery and the author reading one two-minute selection from their book. We're starting to do this again this month and we'll also be promoting every trailer so its seen by 500 "avid readers" at minimum.

If you'd like us to create a trailer for your book, here's what you need to do:

1. Select which book. If you publish a series with us, it needs to be the first book in the series.
2. Carefully select a one-and-a-half- to two-minute selection from the book that will really grab readers. Know your work. Know what's good. Know your own brand. Do not ask us to select the section for you.
3. Practice reading your selection. Practice more. Emote. Be expressive.
4. Press record on your phone and record a video or audio file of you reading.
5. Send the recording to Brianne at blueforgepress@gmail.com and she'll create the trailer for you within fourteen days.

Blue Village Acting Troupe

Blue Forge Films will no longer be working with producers to make films or series. All film, web and television projects will now be produced through Blue Village. If you're interested in us producing a series for you – filming it, editing it, scoring it, promoting it, etc. – then please write to blueforgefilms@gmail.com and we can talk details and get you signed up to the Blue Village acting troupe. The cost is $24/year for actors and $100/month for producers and actors who want a monthly royalty.

Job Opening: Blue Pencil Editors

We have an opening for two more Blue Pencil editors. These are editors who check a manuscript for spelling, grammar, formatting and word-use errors. You are provided with a style guide to follow and sent one 10,000-word story per week. We ask that Blue Pencil editors commit to four stories per month. You will receive a 5% royalty on any story you proof accurately. Write to blueforgepress@gmail.com if you're interested.

Sign Up for Book Fairs

The Feast of Words is returning in March. Since Washington is in Phase 2 of reopening safely, we will have events Saturday and Sunday, two artisans per day, plus a table run by a DiMarco featuring children's books and games for all ages. Right now, we're hosting events outside Book 'Em Bookstore in Port Orchard, Washington. If you haven't signed up already and are interested, please write to blueforgegroup@gmail.com. All artisans who work with any division are welcome but you must have your own inventory and be able to run your own credit cards.

What are Pre-Pubs?

Many of you asked what pre-publication editions were after I mentioned them last month. A pre-pub is an edited copy of your book that's laid out and usually bound with a blank or plain cover. It is clearly marked on the cover that the copy is for review purposes only. These editions are printed and sent to reviewers at magazines, literary journals, book blogs, and newspapers four to eight months prior to release. The editions are sent with a press release that talk about why the book is relevant to readers and why readers might want to hear about it.

Should a reviewer like the book and run a review, they run the review close to when the book will be released – a date included on the press release.

Literally thousands of books are pre-pubbed every month. The competition is fierce and the vast majority of books do not garner reviews or only get small mentions. However, pre-pubbing is something we do for about 60% of our books. If you turned in your manuscript on time and we're not immediately publishing it? This is because we've pre-pubbed it to help drum up interest.

What are Care Packages?

Care packages got a lot of questions last month as well. Care packages are when we take five to ten books in the same genre and mail them to a bookstore for free. We encourage them to sell the books to their customers to test if our books sell well at their venue. Like pre-pubbing, this is something we do to promote our titles. If you have a venue interested in a care package, please have them reach out to blueforgepress@gmail.com. We do not give artisans care packages. We work directly with stores only.

What Have Critics Said?

I mentioned reviewers earlier today and last month. Several of you wrote and asked if you could hear the positive reviews you've received for your book, film, album or game. If you've received a positive review, I have sent it to you. If you want to hear any of your critical reviews, please write to me at blueforgegroup@gmail.com.

Resources for Publicity

We have seven links for authors this month about promoting their books and building their brand. Go to www.MyBlueLegacy.org and click Hello Monday to see the transcript of this episode. The links to promotional resources are clickable in the transcript. Ignore any article that tells you to pay someone. Ignore parts of articles that talk about what to do prior to publication. There are articles from years ago and brand new ones but they all have value. Take the gems. Throw out the rest.

Some of you are sure to notice that all of this is just taller, older people telling you what I've been saying for more than thirty-two years in this business. But maybe some of you need to hear these things from men or from someone you see as an authority figure. That's fine. I will keep sharing this information until I see everyone building their brands appropriately.

10 Low- or No-Budget Ways to Promote Your Book
https://www.draft2digital.com/blog/10-low-or-no-budget-ways-to-promote-your-book/

19 Ways To Promote A Book (By A 4x NY Times Bestseller)
https://scribemedia.com/how-to-promote-book/

How to Promote a Book: 8 Lessons from Bestsellers
https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2017/05/18/how-to-promote-a-book

How to Promote a Book: 8 Lessons from Bestsellers
https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2017/05/18/how-to-promote-a-book

How to Market Your First Book: 9 Tips You Need to Know
https://nybookeditors.com/2018/05/9-tips-for-marketing-your-first-book/

5 Ways to Get Your Book More Visibility on Amazon
https://nonfictionauthorsassociation.com/5-ways-to-get-your-book-more-visibility-on-amazon/

How to Promote Your Book: 8 Budget-Friendly Steps to Boost Sales
https://blog.reedsy.com/how-to-promote-your-book/

* * *

That's all the news for this month. If you have questions or would like us to cover something next month, please post a comment below or write to BlueForgeGroup@gmail.com. And, as always, remember: Monday doesn't have to be a day you dread. Monday, today, can be the first day in the best creative month of your life.

* * *

Story Time: First Right of Refusal

Seventeen of you asked to hear the story I mentioned last month but that story isn't required knowledge for artisans so I'll share it here as a type of post script. Every paragraph in our contract is there for a reason. Most of those reasons are because of my experiences with corporate publishers.

When my first nationally published novel was contracted by a New York press, they also secured first right of refusal on any other novels I wrote in any genre. This means they got to see anything I wrote that was novel length before I was allowed to send it to any other publisher. I had to wait for them to accept the book or reject it, actually, before I could even send it to someone else.

But it didn't stop there. If they passed on the book and I sent it elsewhere and got an offer, they were allowed to match that offer and change their minds and publish the book.

Talk about burning a bridge with that second publisher, right? They want the book but you have to

tell them another publisher wants it after all... now that someone else wants it. Sounds like something right out of high school.

So in our contracts, if you're writing an on-going series with us, you have to send us new books in that series. If we pass on any of them, you can take them elsewhere and we're out of the picture. And if you write a book in a new series or a stand-alone book? You don't even have to send that to us.

Can you choose to send us anything you write? Absolutely. But you don't have to. I'm very big on artisans having the choices I never had.

Hello Monday – April 2021

Watch or listen to this episode here: https://youtu.be/H6tI5llFsYI

Topics Covered This Month:
Before You Email
Blue Flash Launched
Phone Hours
Office Hours
High-Traffic Events
Housing on Campus
Second Quarter Voting
- Division Catalogs
- Hardback Books
- Publicity Campaigns
- Websites

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My name is Jennifer DiMarco. I'm a filmmaker, author, musician, and game developer at Blue Legacy... and the CFO. I'm honored to host today's episode.

Before You Email

Fourth gentle reminder, everyone: Please do not write to anyone other than Brianne when writing to blueforgepress@gmail.com. You cannot reach any other DiMarco at that email address. When you add extra names at the top of an email, your message is filtered into spam.

If you need to place an order, email blueforgegroup@gmail.com. No other email account can process an order.

If you have an film issue, write to blueforgefilms@gmail.com.

If you have a book issue, write to blueforgepress@gmail.com.

If you have a game issue, write to blueforgegaming@gmail.com.

If you have an album issue, write to blueforgerecords@gmail.com.

The divisions are essentially their own companies. Do not send emails that span more than one division.

Company-wide, we receive forty to sixty emails daily. Please help us answer you in a faster and more efficient manner. Thank you.

Blue Flash Launched

Congratulations to the twenty-two authors who took a chance and participated in the launch of the Blue Flash imprint of pocket-size books. These titles are no more than 10,000-words in length and are designed to hook readers in a flash. Michelle? I bought this for myself – one of the first times purchased one of our own books for pleasure. Your stories are action-packed, emotionally charged, sexy and funny as heck. Thrilled to have four I S.P.I. volumes already out.

Blue Flash books build your shelf presence. If you're new to Hello Monday, "shelf presence" doesn't just mean a shelf in a bookstore or having lots of books on that shelf so readers can find you more easily. Shelf presence means building your presence as an author to show you're actively creating and readers can count on you for regular installments. You are an established voice – not a one-hit wonder ;)

If you're interested in joining Blue Flash, write to Brianne at blueforgepress@gmail.com for more information. Put the words Blue Flash in the subject heading of the email if you really want to impress us.

EDIT: Sometimes, I try to record Hello Monday a few days ahead because my schedule is that hectic. But this month, that proved unwise! We'll have three "breaking news" updates; this is the first one :)

This is the standing display we'll have at every Feast of Words event to display Blue Flash titles. Authors don't have to participate at a Feast of Words to have their Blue Flash inventory sold from the display and to make the full profit they'd make if they were there. Just get us your Blue Flash inventory and we'll sell them for you and send you your revenue the same day.

Phone Hours

Effective immediately, you can speak with a staff person on the phone. Text 360-550-2071 or email blueforgegroup@gmail.com and tell us everything you want to discuss so staff will have the answers you need. Let us know when you'll be free in the next 48 hours and give us the number to call. We'll schedule a time with you via text or email and the appropriate staff member will call you.

Office Hours

One of the First Quarter votes was to limit staff to forty hours a week. This passed into policy. However, I don't think artisans were completely clear on what that means for them so I'm going to clarify now:

I was averaging sixty hours a week and regularly worked eighty. Now that I'm limited to forty hours, please understand that, starting today, no texts or emails will be answered on the weekends and no texts or emails will be answered after midnight.

The only exception here is we host the Feast of Words on Saturdays and any correspondence directly related to the event will still be addressed.

Official office hours are 2pm to midnight Pacific Time with different staff working at different times.

EDIT: Time for our second breaking news segment! On April 1, 2021, we secured a new high-traffic, premium location for Feast of Words events that will allow us to serve hundreds of customers and host events on Saturday and Sunday. This means that staff will now work weekends. So our adjusted office hours, April through September, will be Wednesday through Friday, 2pm to midnight Pacific Time, and Saturday and Sunday at the Feast of Words from noon to 7pm.

High-Traffic Events

We are currently working with high-traffic, big box locations (such as Walmart) to reserve space to host large scale Feast of Words events in highly visible blue canopies – much like people sell fireworks in these huge parking lots. The corporate stores are not currently allowing events of this size until Washington is fully open – not in phased opening. The same is true for the mall management companies. We are filling out all paperwork to be set up as a vendor with these venues but we cannot force their hand on when they allow events to resume. This is a just a heads up for everyone that we are actively engaged in location procurement.

EDIT: Our third and final breaking news segment. We have secured a new location for Feast of Words in Port Orchard. We'll have an entire open field right off a major thoroughfare with dedicated parking, room for up to six individual author canopies, private bathroom, nearby food and drinks, and a safe, outdoor, open-air venue that's accessible to all.

The rules for participating are: You must wear a mask. (Not a face shield.) You must bring a chair. You cannot leave the grassy area or walk up to the drive-through coffee stand next to us. If you walk up to the coffee stand or loiter on the concrete driveway, you must be banned from the location. Brianne and I will arrive at 11am on event days. Do not arrive until 11:30 so we can tell you where to park and have signs up already. If you like to be early, 11:30 means you'll still be early. Let's follow the rules set by the owner and put safety first.

If you are an artisan with us and you want a free table at a Feast of Words event, we're booking about a month in advance. Write to blueforgegroup@gmail.com to reserve a table and get more details.

Housing on Campus

We're adding two "tiny home" artisan retreat cabins on campus. These rustic, private cabins will each have built-in desks, beds and sitting areas with basic cooking amenities. The cabins will share

bathroom and shower facilities (one person use at a time – not stalls or group showers). Garbage, water, electricity, and Internet are all included. Cabins will be rented month-to-month for $550 or $500/month for year-long leases. Cabins are rated for one occupant each.

We currently have a waiting list for the cabins. They are only available to active, contracted artisans. If you'd like your name added to the waiting list, please write to blueforgegroup@gmail.com with the words Blue Retreat in the subject heading.

Second Quarter Voting

The year is passing quickly and it's time for artisans to weigh in once again on policies the Board of Directors will be addressing later this month at our second quarter meeting. We need to hear from you so we know how you want us to move forward.

We've made voting easier this quarter since more than a dozen artisans struggled with the online ballot. Now, just send your votes to blueforgegroup@gmail.com with the words Second Quarter Vote in the subject heading.

Second Quarter voting is open until midnight Pacific Time on April 15, 2021. Votes received after then cannot be counted.

If you're watching or listening to this episode of Hello Monday, now might be a good time to go to www.MyBlueLegacy.org and click Hello Monday so you can copy and paste from the transcript.

2Q Topic 1: Division Catalogs. If we released division-wide catalogs with ordering information for individuals and wholesale vendors and made them available as a PDFs (free) and in print ($3), would you find this helpful? We would have one catalog for each division and a fifth catalog for just children's products (for audience ages 5 to 17).
--Yes.
--No.

2Q Topic 2: Hardback Books. Should Blue Forge Press start publishing hardbacks? An average hardback (around 200 pages) would retail for $24.99 and wholesale for $12.49. The hardbacks would be available through online vendors like Amazon and through distributors. We would print in ultra short runs of 100 copies.
--Yes.
--No.

2Q Topic 3: Publicity Campaigns. We recently received a grant to bring in a publicity consultant. The consultant is actually a fantastic firm that thoroughly reviews a product and then creates a plan to market that product. They do one plan for the publisher and one plan for the artisan. We did something similar to this about twenty years ago and I was pleased with most of the campaigns. Artisans would pay nothing for this but the firm can only create two plans per month and each plan costs Blue Legacy $250... so I don't want plans created for artisans who won't actively use the campaigns. Campaigns are created for a series (if there is one) or a single stand-alone book. How should we decide which artisans receive campaigns and when?

--Let the firm look at all the titles and decide which ones are the most viable and prioritize which titles they design campaigns for.
--Gather names of interested artisans then hold a lottery in the next Hello Monday.
--Look at which artisans are already actively engaged in promotion and offer them campaigns first.
--Grant campaigns to artisans with the most titles.
--Grant campaigns to artisans with the highest sales.
--Grant campaigns to the artisans with the lowest sales.
--Give artisans the opportunity to pay for their own campaign ($250) and skip the queue.
--Other. (Please explain in detail when you email your vote.)

2Q Topic 4: Websites. For the last several years, we've maintained websites for all our divisions plus a site for Blue Legacy as the parent company and Seriously Cereal as our leading children's property. Every artisan has a dedicated page where all their products can be ordered. As an artisan, how often do you visit or recommend that others visit any of the websites?
--Daily.
--Weekly.
--Monthly.
--A few times a year.
--Never. I should start doing that.
--Never. I see no need for websites.
--I didn't even know there were websites.

For anyone answering "I didn't even know there were websites." the URLs for the websites are:

www.MyBlueLegacy.org
www.SeriouslyCereal.org
www.BlueForgePress.com
www.BlueForgeFilms.com
www.BlueForgeRecords.com
www.BlueForgeGaming.com