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Q: I was surprised and disappointed to learn that the publisher of a recent non-fiction title that I illustrated never submitted it to the traditional reviewers—Publisher's Weekly, the Horn Book, School Library Journal, etc. When I questioned them about it, they said that they never do but prefer to go after the consumer magazines and radio interviews. They did in fact book many radio interviews for the author but only received a small mention in one magazine on parenting. Therefore there are no reviews to use for publicity. What can be done at this point to let bookstores, libraries and schools know about the book?

I am also very surprised at what your publisher told you. Most children's book publishers consider sending to the trade and review journals a standard part of publicity. The reviews generated by these key publications are very important in the school and library market. There are cases where a publisher would opt not to send books, such as original paperbacks published specifically for the mass market, series titles that follow the original launch and books the publisher feels might not get a favorable review; but this is not the case for most individual books, particularly those published first in hardcover. My suggestion, if you plan to work with this publisher in the future, is to ask them to reconsider. If they still choose not to send books to these journals directly, you may want to consider working with another house.

As for your current book, you can consider the direct mail options of mailing postcards to booksellers and library and school buyers. A mailing list of children's booksellers is available to members of the Association of Booksellers for Children www.abfc.com. Authors and illustrators can join for \$50/year. There is a list of members with partial addresses and email information on their website if you want to query bookstores in your area. School and library contact mailing lists can be ordered from Market Data Retrieval www.schooldata.com or Quality Education Data (QED) www.qeddata.com.

Submitting for awards and getting involved with state conferences and activities is another option. You can get state information from the American Library Association website <http://www.ala.org/ala/ourassociation/chapters/chapters.htm>. On the site, link to "State & Regional Chapters," then you can contact the state's Executive Director and ask for the person in charge of youth services. That person should be able to tell you about the awards submission process and other activities. Awards generally apply to the year in which the book was published. Some awards are voted on by committee and others are voted on by children in the state. For educators, you can find a similar list on the International Reading Association website at <http://www.ira.org/dir/councils/counusa.html>. For a good listing describing state awards, you can go to <http://www.cynthialeitichsmith.com/newreadingd.htm>, a section of Cynthia Letch Smith's site.

A marketing director I spoke with said she planned to suggest her publisher send to fewer award committees in the future, rather than blanketing all 50 states, since the process can be costly, time-consuming and doesn't translate directly into sales, except for bigger state and national awards. She did feel that focusing on state awards where the author and illustrator live and where the book is set, makes a lot of sense. There are also topical awards that can be beneficial in specific niches. 3:4/04