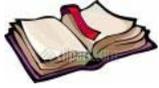


# BOOKMARK



*Fiction and Nonfiction News from Janet Litherland*

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## Out-of-Genre Books

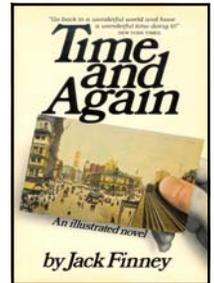
The time-travel article (opposite) refers briefly to James Patterson's *The Lake House*. This is an "out-of-genre" novel—one with a completely different kind of story than the "thriller" books Patterson's established readership might expect. John Grisham wrote out of genre with *A Painted House*, a far cry from his courtroom dramas. David Baldacci's *Wish You Well* is not his usual action-adventure novel. It's natural for a writer to want to expand his or her arena, not to mention readership. I did it by moving from 20 years and 10 books of nonfiction projects to novels. However, there's a distinct difference between fiction and nonfiction and a different base of readers. In the past, novelists who changed genre used pseudonyms to distinguish their different styles. Those who use the same name in a variety of genres ignore the expectations of their readers. They also do themselves no favors. A reader who had never read a gripping Baldacci novel referred to *Wish You Well* on [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com): "I don't think I'll be rushing out to read more by this author." That reader might have enjoyed Baldacci's action novels ... but he'll never know.

**All of Janet's books  
are available at:**

Amazon.com  
BarnesAndNoble.com  
BooksAMillion.com

## Let's Talk Time Travel

Plots involving time travel fascinate me, not that I'll ever write one. I won't. I do confess, though, to having "dabbled" with time—my novel, *Discovery In Time*, flirts with two different eras, as does my upcoming book, *The Lost Years*. However, my eras do not cross; my characters do not travel through time. A recent film, *The Lake House* (not to be confused with James Patterson's novel by the same name) was a pleasant, romantic dabbling in time, reminding me of my favorite time-travel novel, *Time and Again*, by Jack Finney. Finney's book, ©1970, could be considered a "new classic." It will survive through time (pardon the pun). It is dubbed "An Illustrated Novel," and it is the book that gave me the idea to have my first two novels illustrated. Finney's book is laced with old photographs, which add immeasurably to the enjoyment of the story. Simon Morley, an artist, is enlisted in a secret government project that involves time travel and is sent back to 1880s New York to investigate a mystery. If he solves the mystery, will it change history? Why is the government interested in such a project? Still, this book is not an action/thriller; it is a soft, leisurely look at a by-gone era and it includes, of course, romance, as Simon falls in love with a girl from the 1800s. The writing—enhanced with old photos—is so good, so believable, that I wondered, just briefly, if the writer had actually traveled back in time to create this wonderful novel.



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The "Outlander" books (six, so far) by Diana Gabaldon comprise a current popular series of time-travel novels. They're BIG and keep getting bigger—the first (trade edition) at 627 pages, the fifth at 979 pages. I haven't gotten to the sixth yet and may not. Gabaldon's research is impeccable, the historical detail fascinating; and, though I thoroughly enjoyed the first four books, the fifth is proving to be a chore. Unlike the others, it has no plot, and I prefer plot-driven fiction. The series follows Claire Randall, a former World War II combat nurse through some standing stones to 18<sup>th</sup> century Scotland, where she falls in love with Jamie Fraser, a Highlander. Her problem is reconciling her 18<sup>th</sup> century love with her 20<sup>th</sup> century husband. And, oh yes, a daughter is born. To which man, in which century? Thereafter, the plot begins to dwindle.

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In my opinion, the best time-travel movie ever made is *Somewhere In Time*, with Christopher Reeve and Jane Seymour. I like it so much that I own it on video; also, its theme song is so hauntingly beautiful that I had it played at my wedding—yes, I was married last month, traveling back in time to the 1950s, when I first met my new husband!

## Preparing to Write Your Memoirs

FICTION AND NONFICTION NEWS FROM  
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I love to hear from my readers!

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In the last issue, I promised to help you organize your memories and turn them into memoirs. Start now, and you will have a treasure to give to family members this Christmas. In the next issue I'll help you put the finishing touches on your project.

1. **Build a framework.** Make a list of important years (not specific dates) and a brief note for each year. For example: 1972—I moved to Ohio. This framework will include many years of your life, but not all.
2. **Sort your documents.** Gather your letters, photos, certificates, etc., and put them in eight labeled boxes: Ancestors, Childhood, Teen Years, Middle Years, Career/Work, Young Adult/Early Marriage, Empty Nest Years, Retirement (actual or planned). Caution: Don't get caught up in "remembering" and allow the sorting to distract you from your goal. Plenty of time for that later.
3. **Write stand-alone stories.** You're not aiming for perfection at this point. Just write simple descriptions of special memories such as "My Best Friend" or "Why I Love to Dance." Don't worry about a chronological order. Place each story in the appropriate category box you created in Step 2 above.

**Janet Litherland** is the author of 10 nonfiction books and two novels, *Chain of Deception* and *Discovery In Time*. She is the former owner of Write-Choice Services, Inc., a book-development company, which aspiring authors can find at [www.writechoiceservices.com](http://www.writechoiceservices.com).

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