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Writing a Self-Publishing Query Letter

Ron Kurtus

NWPA is dedicated to encouraging networking and team building among authors, publishers, and all those involved in our changing industry.

Meetings 2nd Tuesday each month

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The first step in trying to convince agents or publishers your book project is worthwhile pursuing is to send a query letter with a short synopsis of the book to pique their interest. Then you send a proposal with a detailed book outline, your credentials, perceived demand for the topic, perhaps some sample chapters, and how you will promote the book.

However, if you decide to bypass the traditional route and plan to self-publish, you will need to convince yourself that it is a worthwhile venture, which can be done by writing a self-publishing query letter to make sure your story or topic idea stands out and inspires you. Your idea should be a book you as well as others would want to read. Then you need a plan of action for promoting your book. These steps give you motivation to proceed.

The query letter consists of a hook to get interest, outline or synopsis, and marketing and promotion plans.

Get interest

The first part of your query letter should answer this question: "What is your book about and why should I be interested in it?" This is a hook to get you as the self-publisher or someone else interested in the book idea and want to know more. You can include a tentative title and target audience for the book. It can also be used as your "elevator speech" when telling others about your book.

Fiction examples:

In the second Nic & Nora Mystery, *Puzzled by the Clues*, while Nic and Nora investigate the mysterious death of a friend they uncover high level corruption and leaders with deep ties to the Third Reich's sinister agenda. (Written and self-published by Jean Sheldon)

Marty is a romantic drama that shows there is hope for all of us, provided we follow our instincts. The main

(continued on page 2)

In This Issue...

Writing a Self-Pub Query Letter	1	Links to Articles & News.....	12
Book Tips by Jennifer Omner.....	4	Meet NWPA Members	13
PROWL	5	Book Events in the Northwest	14
It's a Jungle Out There.....	7	Independent Bookstores	15
NWPA Guest Speakers	10		

character is a homely bachelor who meets the girl of his dreams despite criticism and resistance from his friends. (Television play by Paddy Chayefsky and Academy Award-winning movie in 1955)

Nonfiction examples:

Angels Among Us is the fourth book in the diary series of Veronica Esagu, taking her through the darkest days of her life and showing the influence of angels along her path. (Written and self-published by Veronica Esagui)

Tricks for Good Grades: Strategies to Succeed in School lists different ways students can do well and overcome obstacles in school. (Written and self-published by Ron Kurtus)

Unbroken is the inspiring true story of Louie Zamperini, who lived through a series of catastrophes almost too incredible to be believed, from being a juvenile delinquent to an Olympic runner to being captured and imprisoned by the Japanese during World War II. It is a tale of daring, defiance, persistence, ingenuity, and the ferocious will of a man who refused to be broken. (Laura Hillenbrand wrote this best-seller after meeting Zamperini. It was later made into a movie.)

Synopsis

Next, you provide a synopsis of your story or topic—a two- to-four paragraph outline. It should be exciting or interesting and make someone want to read your book, including yourself. The purpose is also to make sure you have thought things out about your book.

Fiction

Puzzled by the Clues

When longtime friend Professor Charles Bohn is found dead supposedly by his own hand, Anna Owen suspects foul play. The Owen gang investigation heads to the professor's home but stalls when a mysterious prowler runs into Anna as he tries to escape through the back door.

The search uncovers a single clue, a discarded crossword puzzle that at first appears to reveal nothing. Nic deciphers the professor's message and discovers a trail of corruption involving high-profile leaders from private industry to police and city and state officials, a discovery that puts the group in grave danger.

While the investigation continues, news from Nuremberg brings to light the death and destruction

caused by the Third Reich's sinister agenda. Word of the atrocities spread, appalling many and wearing on the protective layer of innocence preserved by a few; but not all citizens are disgusted or surprised. When the case takes two of our heroines undercover, they learn that efforts to create a superior race did not end in a bunker in Berlin.

Marty

Many of his butcher-shop customers ask Marty when he will get married. On Saturday night he goes to the usual dance with his friend Angie. While they are there, some guy offers to pay Marty to take this "dog" off his hands.

Marty agrees and ends up having a great time with the girl. He makes a date to see her again. The next day everyone tells him how homely she was, so Marty changes his mind about calling her. But then he goes through the same old routine with Angie about what to do that night. Marty realizes he is wasting his time with these guys and gives the girl a call.

Nonfiction

Angels Among Us

Readers go deep into Veronica's world as she leaves school to get married and returns to Portugal to care for her aged father. Her visit to Portugal extends into a three-month honeymoon when she and her new husband careen through fifteen countries in a series of harrowing feats and near-catastrophes.

By the end of her journey, she has come to believe that life is nothing but the culmination of many desperate choices, which—if not chosen carefully—can have seriously adverse effects.

Experiencing the darkest days of her life, Veronica is thankful for the angels along her path, some still exorcising their ghostly past as they strive to earn their wings.

Tricks for Good Grades

The book is broken into the following sections:

1. Seeking Good Grades
2. Absorbing Information
3. Dealing with Teachers
4. Doing Your Homework
5. Using Important Skills
6. Knowing How to Take Tests
7. Having Champion Attitudes

(continued on page 3)

Market and promotion

The final part of your query letter is to give a summary of the market for your book, why it is unique, and how you plan to promote it.

Quantity of titles available

One way to get an indication of the market for your book is to check how many books in a similar genre are available on Amazon.com. You can then fine-tune your search to narrow a specific niche. The quantity of titles available gives you an idea of the popularity of the subject as well as the competition. An Amazon.com search shows this quantity of similar books:

- WWII mystery novels - 126
- Romantic drama - 6500
- Autobiographies and memoirs - 107,000
- Getting good grades in school - 1500
- WWII biographies - 7400

How will you promote the book?

Then you should also consider how you plan to promote your book. Although you can hire a book publicist, most self-publishers do the promotion themselves. You need to plan how you will let the world know about your book through activities such as book reviews, social media, and books signings.

You also need a platform, which is your visibility and reach to your intended audience or market. It includes your

online efforts, speaking engagements, website or blog, social media presence and media mentions. It encompasses relationships, networks, and the influence you have in your topic field.

Summary

Before you self-publish your book, write material similar to the type of query letter you would send an agent or publisher. Your hook can be used to clarify your topic and to quickly explain to others what you are writing. Your outline or synopsis will guide you as you develop your story or subject. Marketing and promotion summaries will help you prepare for those topics down the road. In all, a self-publishing query letter can motivate you and help in organizing your writing.

Ron Kurtus has written two books: *Tricks for Good Grades* and *Gravity and Gravitation* and published them through SFC Publishing Co. He also owns the educational School for Champions website at www.school-for-champions.com.

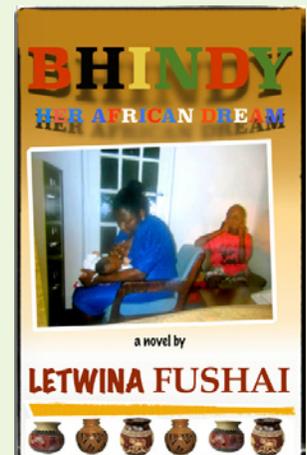


Why NWPB member Letwina Fushai is publishing her story.

I am a 52-year-old African woman from Southern Africa who settled in Portland, Oregon in 2010. I am a research economist by profession but now pursuing my passion as an artist, mostly as a writer, social commentator, life-coach, and performing artist in my traditional music. Just as some people decide to donate their bodies after they pass on for medical study and use, I have decided to donate myself and my biography for social research purposes for the benefit of others who have been or might find themselves in similar situations like what I went through.

My story cuts across two continents with experiences from as long as I can remember. I became tired of people here in everyday interactions and conversations writing my story for me so I decided to write my own story for them. It is also a way for me to examine and understand my achievements—how someone who underwent my ordeals is alive to tell her own story. My book covers many issues that include, gender, race, tradition and culture, history and politics, immigration and health issues.

Letty is establishing a crowd funding site to publish Bhindy—Her African Dream. We will post further information as it becomes available.



Book Tip

As a book designer, my clients often ask me about all phases of publishing including publishing numbers. One very important number is the International Standard Book Number (ISBN). It is the tracking number through the publishing world so each edition (paperback, hardcover, ePub e-book file, etc.) requires its own number. I recommend establishing a publishing company and buying ISBNs directly from [Bowker](#). That way your book will show your company as the publisher, not a third party as the publisher. [Here's an article](#) explaining more about ISBNs.

Book Marketing Tip

"I've been astounded by how some authors keep flinging their books out in tweets over and over," said one of my clients. Yes, we've likely all seen it on Twitter and other social media platforms, and the constant promotion gets tiring for followers. Consider posting with this ratio in mind: 30% promotion; 30% sharing personal information (pet pictures come in handy here!); and 40% sharing other people's tweets, quotes, articles, and other news your followers might find valuable. Sharing and acknowledging other people helps

build community and social media is about building relationships, not just selling.

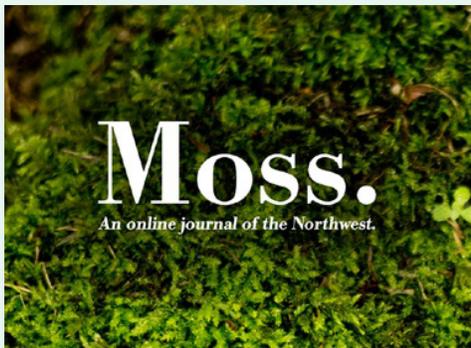
Tidbit

Amazon's VP of Kindle Content Russ Grandinetti and Apple iBookstore's Keith Moerer spoke at the 2015 Digital Book World conference. Amazon still dominates e-book sales (industry guesses are around 70%) but Apple appears to be making inroads. To cover the market for my clients, I generally create Amazon Kindle's proprietary format and the standard ePub format that works for Apple, Barnes & Noble, Kobo, and others. I'd suggest asking your e-book designer to test files on Kindle and Apple e-readers, at a minimum, to ensure they display properly.

Jennifer Omner is an award-winning book designer who designs interior pages, covers, and e-book files for publishers. Sign up at www.allpublications.com to receive free book and marketing tips.



Seeking Submissions



Moss is an online journal of Northwest writing. We are now accepting fiction and nonfiction submissions for our third issue, to be published this Spring. To learn more about the publication, you can read our first two issues online now at <http://mosslit.com>.

Moss pays up to \$125 for each accepted piece, and there is no fee to submit. Though we will consider pieces of any length, we prefer submissions of at least 1,800 words; shorter pieces may be paid at a reduced rate. We are not accepting poetry at this time.

Submissions are limited to current residents of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and British Columbia and those with a substantial connection to the region. Simultaneous submissions are acceptable, with the condition that you notify us immediately if your piece is accepted for publication elsewhere. Please send only one submission, attached as a Word document, to mosslit@gmail.com.

Thanks for your interest!

PROWL (or How to Write when You're Not Writing)

Ken Coomes

If you're like most authors, including the many who plan to write 50,000 words in November for NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month) and fail, you have a life. And sometimes things in your real world life interfere with your writing life. What do you do to keep the writing going? I suggest P.R.O.W.L. ing around, no matter whether you write mysteries, young adult fiction, non-fiction or any other genre. (Although I must admit, even though I have written some poetry, published and not, some of these suggestions are probably less relevant for the poet.)

P Plot, plan, ponder. I, too, have a life. Sometimes I need to be outside raking leaves; or doing some house cleaning; or engaging in some other mindless, mundane chores rather than pound keys. I find these are great opportunities to think about a plot or a plot twist. Or maybe I will plan my next writing project, or chapter, or even the theme of a poem; for non-fiction an article or a book, plan or outline, the presentation of facts, or how to make them engaging to a reader who may not share your passion for your field. Perhaps I ponder the development of one of my characters: challenges, growth, even mannerisms.

R Research, read, review. Of course you already do research, especially if you write non-fiction. But

even for fiction research is key. Are you writing science fiction? Look into current technologies and their trends for the future. Fantasy, set in a medieval-type world? Investigate what life was like in a feudal society. Read history. Working on a poem? Read other poets; see how they treat your topic or which literary devices they use to good effect. Read other authors in your field or genre. Review what others, or even you, have written and how it was reviewed and received.

O Observe, ogle, open. Note how different people behave in certain circumstances. If I have shopping to do, such as Christmas shopping recently or grocery shopping, I love to engage in people-watching. If you write fiction, it gives you fodder for your characters, ways to bring them to life, to make them relatable. If you write non-fiction, it can provide insight into how your readers react and behave. For poets, you may move from Observation to Ogling, taking note of particularly beautiful people, looking for grace and beauty to bring to your poems; or looking for dignity in age, brashness in youth, or anything else that gives you food for poetic pondering. Open your mind along with your eyes. Do you tend to believe that most women are careful shoppers? Observe to validate or refine your opinion. If a man is a master of good taste in clothing and design,

do you assume he's gay? See if you can find support for that opinion, or more important, counter examples to help you avoid strict stereotyping.

W Wander, wonder, while. Wander to some new territory. It may provide you with ideas for your next fictional setting or a way to breathe more life into the fantasy world you create. Perhaps your trek will bring you new insights into how the Normans conquered or Native Americans lived and thought. Wonder about whatever you see, wherever you go. What if a different history unfolded? How would the newly explored area differ? Wonder about the people you see wherever you wander. What if they had not won the lottery? What if they had? Why do they drink too much? What family ties bind them? While away some time trying something new. If it is a game, perhaps it will inspire you to write a game into your fictional world. Or, the mechanics may provide insight for your mathematical treatise. Many poets excel at this.

L Live, listen, learn. All of life provides fodder for whatever you write. We all write from our own experiences. Experience life to the fullest, not as an interruption of your writing but as a hopper full of things to write about. Listen to those around you. If you write fiction, take note of how people speak. Use your notes

(continued on page 6)

to develop dialogue for your characters. Even non-fiction often has people. Write their dialogue true to life to breathe even more life into your subject. Pick up on rhyme and meter in speech for your poetry, for colorful phrasing, for new ways to use words. Learn all you can about life, places, people, events. Whatever you write, the lessons you learn will enliven your prose and your poetry.

These are just a few well-intentioned tips, probably codifying what you already know and do. I just wanted to share how I “write” when I’m not actually sitting at the keyboard writing. I hope it helps you in your endeavors, and I look forward to seeing you on the prowl!



Ken Coomes is a retired Navy geek (worked at Intel and Ricoh Americas), businessman (mergers & acquisitions, self-employed), fun guy (game store manager, board game designer), speaker (Toastmasters, independent speaker), golfer (duffer, really), family man (four children, six

grandchildren) and writer (poems, short stories, and now a pair of novels (the first two in an intertwined pair of trilogies). After bouncing around the globe for the first 43 years of his life, now he lives in Portland, Oregon with his wife of 31 years and near two of his grown sons.

www.kencoomes.com



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Veronica's Diary IV *Angels Among Us*

Dr. Veronica Esagui

Angels Among Us continues the true story of Veronica Esagui, through her diary series, *The Journey of Innocence*, *Braving a New World*, and *Awakening the Woman Within*. *Angels Among Us* takes the reader deep into Veronica's world as she leaves school to get married, and returns to Portugal to care for her aged father. Her

visit to Portugal extends into a three month honeymoon where she and her new husband careen through fifteen countries in a series of harrowing feats and near-catastrophes. By the end of her journey, she has come to believe that life is nothing but the culmination of many disparate choices which-if not chosen carefully-can have seriously adverse effects. Experiencing the darkest days of her life, Veronica is thankful for the angels along her path, some of who were still exorcising their ghostly past as they strive to earn their wings.



Available on Amazon.com

In the Beginning

For those who do not remember writing and publishing before the dawn of personal computers, here is a look back.

It's a Jungle Out There

Sue Mann

(This article was originally written in 1989, information in brackets added.)

It all started in 1985, when my 25-year-old pre-Selectric typewriter died. It had been a faithful friend: first in my husband's office, then to me as part of the divorce settlement, then to my office to replace the Underwood (a manual typewriter with a motor), and then, finally, home.

What to do? I needed something to type on, and I was just starting my editing business.

"Buy a computer!" everyone said. OK—but which one? I was computer illiterate, and I didn't know if a computer was necessary in my business. I edited on paper, not on screen.

"You can't do any editing unless it's on a computer," said one person. It turned out she was wrong, but I didn't know it at the time.

"You've got to buy a Mac!" said one husband-and-wife writing team. "It's the greatest thing for writers. Come over and you can see how easy it is to use." The Mac was easy to use once I mastered hand-eye coordination and the strange feeling of leaving the keyboard to use the mouse.

But I'm not a writer; I'm an editor. Do I really need a computer?

"The Mac is great for graphics. But for business use and word processing, you need an IBM [PC]," said a computer consultant. Don't consultants know everything there is to know about computers? I thought so. I took his advice to heart.

"We have a friend who bought an IBM and regretted it almost immediately," said my Mac couple.

I believed them. Back to square one.

But new Macs are expensive. I scoured the newspapers to find used equipment in my price range. Nothing. Sleepless nights. To Mac or not to Mac. What to do if I could find a Mac but didn't want a dot matrix printer, no matter how "near letter quality"? And I had hardened my heart against IBMs.

One morning I awoke with the solution: I didn't need a computer! I was not engaged in word processing; I was editing on paper. Why do I need a computer?

Such relief! Now I scoured the ads for a good used typewriter. One day I saw an ad for a used Selectric. It wasn't worth the \$300 price tag, but I did see a new electronic beauty for \$299. Portable electronic typewriters were new to me back in 1985, and this one even had 4K of memory and the ability to center, bold, right justify—the works. Letters looked great; I even did my own press release on it. I was happy.

Two weeks later I took a technical editing class. The teacher devoted one class to computers, and that's when I learned about operating systems. I was about to enter the computer age.

"Beg, borrow, or steal a computer if you want to be in the technical field," she said. "You can buy a used CPM computer for around \$500. You can get a dot matrix printer for very little money, or you can spend more money and get a letter-quality printer. You can be set up with a good computer system for less than \$1000."

A computer for \$500? I was amazed. Now my loyalties became divided. I really liked the electronic typewriter, but for \$200 more I could have a computer!

Back to the ads. And there it was: Morrow MD2, 2 disk drives, Televideo screen, WordStar [word processing program], and CorrectIt, \$600. Welcome to the computer age.

(continued on page 8)

One drawback (and I didn't know about drawbacks): It took a serial printer. No problem to buy one; problem was to hook it up. The technician took a few hours of his own time and hooked the thing up for me.

I'm in business! My letter-quality printer bolds, underlines, sub- and superscripts, prints bi-directionally—all at 16 cps [characters per second]. Slow but sure.

Two years passed. I'm proficient on WordStar 3.3, and I'm happy with the Morrow. Then I was introduced to WordStar 4 and a hard disk. What a difference! WordStar 4 could execute so many more commands with just one keystroke—it was heaven! And I could update my CPM WordStar for only \$89.

But was updating WordStar enough? Suddenly I wanted to be IBM-compatible and have a hard disk, even though I knew I'd never use all that space. Speed was the thing. I bought another hard disk and thought I was on the cutting edge of computer technology. As I paid for my purchase I said, "Oh I have a serial printer to hook up to the computer."

The salesman turned pale. "Serial printer? You have a serial printer? Why? They're terrible! I don't want to have anything to do with them. Here. Here's a serial cable. If you have trouble, call Service."

Trouble? Why should I have trouble? All I have to do is follow the instructions in my newly purchased DOS [operating system] book and the manual that came with the printer. Why trouble?

Time has blurred the ensuing events. I do remember many phone calls to MicroPro, the printer people, and the electronics people who service the computer:

"It's not our fault your printer won't work. Call MicroPro."

"It's not our fault your printer won't work. Call the printer people."

"It's not our fault your printer won't work. Call MicroPro. They should support this printer. Tell WordStar to emulate the Diablo 630. Change the dipswitches. Call your technician."

Finally, I brought the computer to the electronics people. There the techs made a cable that let DOS talk to the printer. I thought everything was fine.

At home I still couldn't get WordStar to print. More phone calls. Once when I called the printer people I got a production person instead of a serviceperson. By chance I found out the correct printer to emulate. One problem solved. The printer worked, but it couldn't do

all the things it had done before. But after using that old system of trial and error, I finally hit the right combination for changing WordStar. The printer worked.

More than a year passed. By chance I saw the HP Deskjet printer for so little money plus a rebate that I couldn't resist. But the Deskjet wasn't listed in MicroPro's printer information brochure. I called MicroPro.

"No, it doesn't support the Deskjet. I suggest you upgrade to WordStar 5."

Well, I didn't want to upgrade to 5, and I had the feeling the customer service person was trying to sell 5 more than work with me and my 4. I called HP.

"It's not on the printer disks that come with the Deskjet manual. But the manual gives instructions on how to change WordStar so that it will emulate a laser-jet."

Great! I bought the Deskjet.

First hurdle: Put everything together so the printer self-test works. It did.

Second hurdle: Follow directions so the printscreen from DOS works with the printer.

It didn't. I followed each step faithfully, even took out the statements for the old serial printer. Nothing. Nada.

Back on the phone with the computer techs. Just getting through to them was an effort. Finally, a patient guy talked me through the steps.

Nothing.

"It must be a bum cable. Take your cable back. Have them test the new one they give you or take one that's already working with their floor models."

The salesperson said, "I'm going to check your cable first."

Guess what. The cable worked.

"Bring in your computer on Monday when our tech person is here. Perhaps something was done to disable the parallel port when the serial printer was installed." It could be.

In I came with my computer. The tech person was long overdue. Luckily, the floor person was a computer whiz. He set up my system and, using my cable, quickly got my computer to talk to their Deskjet model.

"What did I do wrong?" I asked.

"Nothing. Printscreen often doesn't work with the Deskjet, and HP doesn't know why," said the tech.

Second hurdle passed.

(continued on page 9)

Third hurdle: Make WordStar support the Deskjet. "I hate WordStar," said the tech. "It's not very user-friendly."

"Can I sit here and make the changes the Deskjet manual says to do?" I asked. I had visions of carting everything home and then back again.

"Sure. But you won't get it to run. I hate WordStar!"

Unfortunately, he was right. I reconfigured everything as the Deskjet manual stated. Nothing. Rats.

Home again with my computer. I called MicroPro.

"No. WordStar 4 will not support Deskjet and you can't use another printer for emulation."

"Do you have a later version of 4 that does support it?"

"No. You need WordStar 5."

End of conversation. End of Deskjet.

I hooked up my good old serial printer again, and it works just fine . . . a little slow, but just fine. Welcome back.

Epilogue: I continued to edit on hard copy (new words for paper) for several years. In 1992 my husband and I moved to Beaverton from the Bay Area. While speaking with the managing editor of the small press in San Rafael I had worked for, I was told that editing would now be done on computer. I looked at my 11-inch screen and couldn't figure out how I could possibly edit on such a tiny surface, and a new-old chapter began: computer shopping, especially for a large screen. Editing on computer became my norm in the early '90s.

Sue Mann has been a substantive editor, copyeditor, and proofreader since 1985. She has edited numerous manuscripts, including cookbooks, memoirs, self-help, and spiritual, as well as training manuals, newsletters, and business plans. She is a member of the Northwest Independent Editors Guild and the Northwest Publishers and Writers Association. Contact Sue at editor@zzz.com or 503-644-4317.



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Persistent

Jean Sheldon

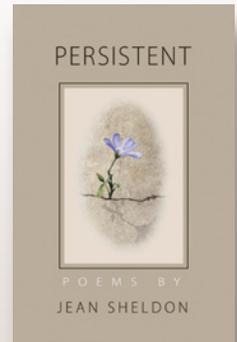
In *Persistent*, accomplished mystery writer Jean Sheldon turns her considerable talents to the poetic form, condensing personal experience into the exquisite expression of thought, emotion and revelatory

moment. There is no artifice or pretension in the construction of her verse, but rather refreshingly direct and honest musings on the great questions with which all inquisitive minds and yearning hearts will ultimately grapple and seek to untangle. ...Jean Sheldon's own journey is, as the title suggests, one of persistence, finding light in the midst of shadow and stretching, as she says, "to tap the heavens." No doubt her journey, one of open-minded and compassionate possibility, will inspire you to consider your own.

~Laurence Overmire, poet and author of *The One Idea That Saves The World: A Call to Conscience and A Call to Action*.

Available on Amazon.com

Release date April 21, 2015



NWPA Guest Speakers

More information on [NWPA website](#)

Tuesday, April 14, 2015

Seven Critical Steps to Building Platform, Capturing Media Attention, and Selling Books!

Joanne McCall

Here's the problem, authors are simply not prepared to get visible through media and sell books in today's world. Why? They don't know how to build an effective platform. When they do build a platform, they think people will magically find them. They attend tons of freebies, lectures, webinars, etc. but don't know how to discern what is right for them and what they should ignore. They lack strategies for platform building, social media, traditional media, and selling books. Lack of understanding how all of these different pieces need to come together in order to create something that works!



Joanne McCall

The truth: The world has changed. What used to work no longer does. Lots of advice out there. Much of it not appropriate. In this presentation, Joanne will cover the top seven steps to creating a platform that works to generate visibility, media attention, and ultimately to sell more books.

The Big Idea: I will share how I layered the power of collaboration with cutting edge social media expertise and added skill set trainings for strategic action plans and found ways for authors to individually apply this process to their own particular assets

What's in it for you? You will be able to attract more attention, save yourself frustration, save time, save money, stay out of overwhelm, and feel like you have the power to do this.

Tuesday, May 12, 2015

The Hidden Secrets of Powerful Videos and Photography **Angie DeRouchie and Levi Simoanne**



More and more, the work of selling books falls on the author's shoulders. Angie DeRouchie and Levi Simoanne can help. Learn how to use simple tools you already own to make simple, powerful videos to market directly to the public and help you solicit publishers as well. You'll learn what to say and how to be great on camera, and you can do it with tools as simple as your smart phone.



NWPA Guest Speakers

Continued

Tuesday, June 9, 2015

“The Advertising Recipe” for Book Promotions

Barbara Grover



The key advertising concept of “TOMA,” is a mystery to almost everyone, even business owners, but it is the critical ingredient when it comes to finding clients through advertising. It makes all the difference when it comes to wasting money and using money efficiently.

Tuesday, July 14, 2015

Screw the Rules and Let’s Have Some Fun

R. H. Sheldon

Every time we pick up our pens, we’re haunted by our teachers and editors and colleagues and supposed friends, regaling us with countless rules designed to keep our writing in check and prose on the straight and narrow. But literature is chock-full of examples that subvert the laws of writing to bring the printed word to life and in the process force those ghosts to eat their thesaurus-thumping words. Join author and editor R. H. Sheldon as he takes us down the forbidden path to discover why writers break the rules when they do and what they hope to achieve by doing so.



Links to Articles & News

Video link... Margaret Atwood

Peter Mansbridge sits down with Margaret Atwood to discuss her latest book, the art of writing and the pieces she won't publish.

<http://www.cbc.ca/player/News/TV+Shows/The+National/ID/2406199498/>

Welcome to 9 Bridges Portland (Formerly Coffee House Writers Group PDX)

<http://www.meetup.com/9BridgesPDX>

5 Tips for Writing to Change the World

<http://www.writersdigest.com/online-editor/5-tips-for-writing-to-change-the-world>

4 Ways to Write More in 2015

<http://thewritepractice.com/write-more-2015/>

PR Pro Offers Indie Authors Excellent Book Promotion Tips + Ways to Better Navigate the High Publicity Seas

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/indiereader/pr-pro-offers-indie-autho_b_6877444.html

For the Indie Writers of Amazon, It's Publish or Perish

<http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/01/04/for-indie-writers-its-publish-or-perish/>

The New Landscape

<http://russellblake.com/the-new-landscape/>

Indie Authors and the Question of Kindle Unlimited

<http://janefriedman.com/2014/12/02/indie-authors-kindle-unlimited/>

Business Musings: Things Indie Writers Learned in 2014

<http://kriswrites.com/2014/12/23/business-musings-things-indie-writers-learned-in-2014/#sthash.YmgvNAWb.dpbs>

Top 5 Marketing Mistakes Indie Authors Make (And How to Do Better)

http://blogs.houstonpress.com/artattack/2014/05/five_marketing_mistakes_indie.php

10 Inspiring Statistics About Self-Publishing probably much higher than that?

<http://www.wiseinkblog.com/self-publishing-2/10-inspiring-statistics-about-self-publishing/>

ISBNs: The Blame Game

<http://www.theindependentpublishingmagazine.com/2015/02/isbns-the-blame-game.html>

Fast-Growing Independent Publishers, 2015

<http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/publisher-news/article/65795-finding-their-own-paths.html>

Rise of the indie publishers

<http://www.develop-online.net/analysis/rise-of-the-indie-publishers/0204199>

Daily Writing Tips

<http://www.dailywritingtips.com/>

Vanity/Subsidy Publishers

<http://www.sfga.org/other-resources/for-authors/writer-beware/vanity/#Vanity>

Do you have links to share?

Send them to jeansheldon23@gmail.com

Meet Some of Our Members



Letwina Fushai from Southern Africa settled in the United States of America, Portland, Oregon in 2010. She is a Research Economist by profession but pursuing her passion as an artist, mostly as a writer, social commentator, life-coach and as a performing artist in her traditional music. fushailet@gmail.com

Barry L. Becker served as the vice-president of global sales for Eyedentify, a company specializing in eye retinal technology for positive identification. In 1987 his article entitled “Eyedentify counters security threat” appeared in *the Journal of Defense & Diplomacy*. His first published novel, *The Ericksen Connection* is available [here on Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



Donna Reynolds is an editor who finds joy in helping writers produce their best work possible. Reveling in the details, but with an appreciation of a good story, Donna can spot an easily overlooked typo as well as a major plot inconsistency. If you need a second set of eyes so your manuscript really shines, contact Donna at reynolds@hevanet.com



Ron Kurtus writes educational and personal and professional development material. He is the author of two books: *Tricks for Good Grades—Strategies to Succeed in School* and a physics textbook: *Gravity and Gravitation*. Sfc Publishing Co. www.sfcpublishing.com



Sue Mann has been a substantive editor, copyeditor, and proofreader since 1985. She has edited numerous manuscripts, including cookbooks, memoirs, self-help, and spiritual, as well as training manuals, newsletters, and business plans. editor@zzz.com



Our thanks to Sue for editing this newsletter!



With a B.A. in English from San Francisco State College **J. Wandres** began to write professionally in the 70s. He has sold hundreds of features to national, regional and corporate publications. His two nonfiction books are: *TravelSmart Pennsylvania and New Jersey* and *The Ablest Navigator* available [here at Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). He is at work on a travel guide to a little-seen aspect of Oregon.

Sylvia Malagamba spent five years as a feature writer and assistant food editor for the Rochester, New York award-winning Brighton Pittsford Post newspaper, was an essayist for the Lake Oswego Jottings column, the West Linn Tidings, and the Portland Tribune.



Ken Coomes in a nutshell is a retired Navy, geek, businessman, game store manager (and board game designer), speaker, golfer, family man and writer (poems, short stories, and now a novel. After bouncing around the globe for the first 43 years of his life, now he lives in Portland, Oregon with his wife of 31 years and his Bichon Frise, Fluffy. www.kencoomes.com

Book Events in the Northwest



Norwescon 38

April 2-5, 2015

DoubleTree by Hilton Seattle Airport, SeaTac
Norwescon is the Pacific Northwest's Premiere Science Fiction and Fantasy Convention and one of the largest regional Science Fiction and Fantasy conventions in the United States.

We hope you can join us! www.norwescon.org



Willamette Writers Conference

August 7-9, 2015

Doubletree Portland, OR

willamettewriters.com



CSWS Northwest Women Writers Symposium

"Our Daily Bread: Women's Stories of Food & Resilience"

The fourth CSWS Northwest Women Writers Symposium
Thursday May 7, 2015, through Saturday May 9, 2015

[More Information](#)



Northwest Comic Fest

Salem, Oregon

August 15th and 16th, 2015

This isn't a "Con"; This is a celebration.



PNWA 2015 Conference

July 16-19, 2015

SeaTac Hilton Hotel and Conference Center.

www.pnwa.org



Gay Romance Northwest Meet-Up

The LGBTQ Romance Fiction Conference
of the Pacific Northwest

September 26, 2015 Seattle, WA

We hope you can join us!



Northwest Book Festival

7th Annual NW Book Festival
at Pioneer Courthouse Square
Saturday, July 25, 2015 11:00 am - 5:00 pm

www.nwbookfestival.com.

Literary Arts presents
Wordstock: Portland's Annual Book Festival



Literary Arts presents Wordstock

The Festival will re-launch as a one-day event on Saturday, November 7, 2015 at the Portland Art Museum in Downtown Portland. Wordstock joins thousands of readers and writers with hundreds of small presses, independent publishers, booksellers, and authors.

[Learn more!](#)

Oregon Independent Bookstores

Click on [store name](#) to navigate to their website.

Aloha Jan's Paperbacks	Hillsboro Jacobsen's Books & More	Murder by the Book New Renaissance Bookshop
Ashland Bloomsbury Books	Hood River Waucoma Bookstore	Powell's at PDX Powell's City of Books Powell's On Hawthorne
Ashland Bookwagon	Lake Oswego Graham's Books & Stationery	River Run Books Serenity Shop St. Johns Bookseller Wallace Books
Astoria Castlemere Children's Books	Lincoln City Bob's Beach Books	Redmond Paulina Springs Books
Astoria Godfather's Books Lucy's Books	McMinnville Third Street Books	Salem Reader's Guide
Baker City Betty's Books	Mapleton Alpha-Bit	Seaside Beach Books
Bandon Winter River Books	Newport Canyon Way Bookstore	Sisters Paulina Springs Books
Beaverton Powell's Cedar Hills Crossing	North Bend Books By the Bay	Sunriver Sunriver Books & Music
Corvallis The Book Bin Grass Roots Books & Music	Pendleton Armchair Books	The Dalles Klindt's Booksellers & Stationers
Cottage Grove Books on Main	Portland A Children's Place Annie Bloom's Books Another Read Through Broadway Books, Inc Future Dreams Books Green Bean Books	Tualatin VJ Books
Enterprise Bookloft	Healing Waters & Sacred Spaces In Other Words Mother Foucault's	Warren Pastiche Inc.
Gleneden Beach Allegory Books & Music Crystal Wizard		Yachats Mari's Books Toad Hall
Grants Pass Oregon Books & Games		