



News & Views

▶ Empowering authors and publishers to create and market books

AUGUST 2009

AUGUST 12 MEMBERSHIP MEETING: SLPA Road Trip

Ever wanted to know how words get transformed into a beautiful, saleable book? The St. Louis Publishers Association is taking the show on the road in August with a behind-the-scenes tour of Mira Digital Publishing. During your walk-through of this printing facility, you'll learn all about the production process, what it means to be a "digital printer" and gain a better understanding of your printing, binding and finishing options. Following the tour, the professionals at Mira will lead a publishing discussion as you enjoy a boxed dinner courtesy of SLPA.



Reservations are required

E-mail MemberChair@stlouispublishers.org
or call (314) 205-2679 to reserve your space.

Join us at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, August 12, at Mira Digital Publishing, 3800 Park Avenue, St. Louis, 63116. For driving directions, call (314) 776-6666.


About Mira Digital Publishing

Mira Digital Publishing is a St. Louis-based company founded in April 1990. Mira specializes in helping independent publishers publish a professionally-produced book while staying within budget. Project managers work closely with clients to assist them

during every stage of the production process.



Mira prides itself on being a one-stop print shop. Its

state of the art in-house digital printing facility provides full color printing, black and white printing, binding (including perfect binding, saddle stitch, and spiral binding), large format printing, lamination, and finishing. Flatwork such as business cards, postcards, flyers, brochures, full-color posters, CD packaging, and variable data printing are also available. In addition, Mira offers in-house graphic design services such as book cover design, page layout, Web site graphics, and copyediting. 

Publishing fact of the month

U.S. commercial printing shipments were down 9.4% this past May, compared to figures from a year earlier. "The tough year for commercial printers continues, as they're hit with decreases in corporate communications budgets, increased postal costs, and further shifts to digital media," said Dr. Joe Webb, director of WhatTheyThink's Economics and Research Center. "Our surveys show that there really has been no place to hide from an aggregate perspective. Printers large, small, and mid-size are all experiencing tough times, no matter what their print product specialties are. Many print businesses are focusing on adding additional services and are becoming active in digital media production, servicing a broader range of communications deployment functions," explained Webb.

Source: "North American Monthly Printing Shipments, Issue #44." What They Think Economic and Research Center, July 13, 2009. www.whattheythink.com

In This Issue

- 1 SLPA Road Trip
- 1 Publishing fact of the month
- 2 President's Corner by Lynette Schuepbach
- 2 SLPA can help you to get ready and get published
- 2 Small press authors banned from National Book Festival
- 3 5 ideas for a successful book launch by Terri Rains
- 3 Helping new authors who wish to get published; some things to consider by Lance Winslow
- 3 Don't miss SLPA learning modules
- 4 Pub Legal: understanding libel: how words alone can have an impact by Laurie A. Washington
- 4 Recommended Reading
- 5 2009 DIY Book Festival call for entries
- 5 Behind the scenes with the board: Susan L. Whinnery, SLPA Treasurer
- 5 What's Ahead?
- 6 Member Spotlight: Ed Steinmann
- 6 Book review: *Publicize Your Book!* is no-nonsense guide to marketing success by Peggy Nehmen

President's Corner by Lynette Schuepbach Road Trip!



What do you expect to encounter on a road trip? Meeting new people. Learning about new locations along the way. Experiencing things that you'd like to do again. Just like a vacation road trip, these things can happen at SLPA's August road trip to Mira Digital Publishing.

I'm leaving soon on a road trip with my granddaughter, so I have recent experience in preparing for one of these. Adrianna has her driver's license permit and can practice driving as long as I'm with her. She has the perfect attitude for road trips: I don't care where we go as long as I'm driving. I, on the other hand, have been researching the areas we plan to pass through. I want to have something there to offer a teenager.

Mira Publishing has done the research for our road trip in August. All we need to do is show up and learn. Here's how our road trip will fulfill our three expectations:

Meet new people. This one doesn't worry me at all. I haven't noticed it about myself, but my granddaughter says, "You talk to everyone and anyone—all the time! How do you do that?" I realize that not everyone I talk to will be my best friend, but you never know what interesting and profitable relationship you might build from meeting a new friend. Mira Publishing could be your next new friend who can offer a profitable relationship for your company.

Learn about new locations. I LOVE learning and there is so much I don't know. This road trip with Adrianna has required me to do research through magazines and the Internet to find locations, information, facts and history that will make the trip worthwhile. How wonderful that SLPA's road trip to Mira Publishing will give me all of this without research on my part! There will be several speakers there, and we will see a publishing operation which may be a great asset for future business.

Experience things that you'd like to repeat. If you participated in our last road trip to a printing facility, you will remember it as a very informative experience. Many of us do not have the ability to print our own titles, so learning about the process is important. Mira Publishing will give us facts, figures, and information that will enable us to make intelligent decisions in the future. We may find out that this is a place to return to for the publishing of our next titles.

So make two fists, raise your arms above your head, and scream, "ROAD TRIP!!!" Meet you at Mira! 📖

—Lynette Schuepbach, President
President@stlouispublishers.org

SLPA can help you to get ready and get published

How close are you to getting published? The SLPA "Get Ready/Get Published" contest is open to all SLPA members (18 years or older), whether published or unpublished. Manuscripts, however, cannot be previously published.



The winning author will see his manuscript transformed from raw words into saleable product. The grand prize, valued at \$8,900, includes editing, proofing, design and other production services, ten copies printed by Lightning Source, a reading by industry professionals, layout of sales and marketing promotional materials,

a one-year SLPA membership, and much more! Complete details and downloadable entry form are available at www.stlpublishers.org.

Deadline for submission is January 20, 2010. 📖

Small press authors banned from National Book Festival

In March of 2008, the *SPAN Connection* newsletter pointed out the dirth of small press books at the National Book Festival held each year on the National Mall in Washington, DC. Edward Allan Faine, author of the article and publisher at IM Press in Tacoma Park, Maryland noted that "Library of Congress guidelines effectively exclude these books and their authors from the festival."

Faine proposed that the oversight be remedied by the addition of a tent devoted to small press titles. "The selection function, it is recommended, could best be handled by State literary organizations (rotated on a year-by-year basis)."

This spring, Faine sent a letter and copy of his article to First Lady Obama and to his state congressman and senator, requesting their support to help the festival become even more diverse and inclusive, and thereby live up to the event's name as a national book festival.

Faine has requested that others from the small press community take similar action by sending letters of support to their state congressperson and senator. Faine can be reached at efaine@yahoo.com. 📖

5 ideas for a successful book launch

By Terri Rains

After spending weeks and months slaving away at a book, getting the finished product in your hands is one of the most gratifying events in a writer's life. However, getting published is only a step in the book-writing process. There is even more work involved in promoting the book and getting it to sell. Here are a few great ideas for having a successful book launch.

- **Host a launch event:** When your book comes off the presses, having a launch party is a great way to get the word out, as well as celebrate your success. Offer free copies to those who attend and ask them to spread the word that your new book is available.
- **Inform the media:** Press releases, interviews, and other media coverage can draw a lot of attention to your newly published book. While national media attention is wonderful, local media outlets often jump on the opportunity to promote local author book launches.
- **Use social media platforms:** The power of Internet social media is amazing when it comes to word-of-mouth promotion. Online parties, fan pages, and blog tours are some great ways to draw national, and even international, attention to the launching of your book.
- **Plan book signings:** People enjoy the chance to interact with the author of a book, whenever possible. Both small and large bookstores are usually very open to hosting an event where an author comes in to sign their latest release.
- **Book speaking engagements:** Topic related speaking engagements are a wonderful way to promote your book and its message to the general public. In some cases, sales are also allowed at these events, giving you an extra opportunity for promotion.

A carefully planned book launch is a perfect way to get the word out about your latest literary creation. With a well-written book and a strategic marketing plan, any author can make the launch of his book a huge success. Whether you work with or without a publicist, creating a buzz about your book is possible, if you try to explore all of the options available for getting the word out.

Learning how to tell a story is a powerful skill. Get some of the best information and perspective on conducting a book launch right away. And for an inspiring, eye-opening lesson in action and focus, I wholeheartedly recommend this site:

<http://blindmentor.com> 

© 2009 by Terri Rains.

Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Terri_Rains

Helping new authors who wish to get published; some things to consider


By Lance Winslow

If you are a published writer or an author, you will find other writers contacting you who also would like to have their works published. There are a number of things you can do for them and yet, many of them don't know where to start or what to ask you for, although they know they could use some assistance.

Many new writers or authors just need encouragement, others need contacts; names of publishers, writing groups, and they need information and know-how. Not long ago, I talked to just such a new writer who was trying to break into the industry and was writing a novel. She put a couple of the chapters of her novel online and it was very good. Indeed, I think she could someday be a famous author.

If you know people like this, please help them to move it forward. If they don't know what kind of assistance they need, perhaps you can ask them a few questions or offer a few suggestions of how you can help them. Below are three questions that I recently asked a young, up-and-coming writer;


- 1) Would you like me to invite you to Author Groups Online, so you can network with published or soon-to-be published authors?
- 2) Would you like me to send you a sample form, which I use for book proposals?
- 3) Would you like me to send you e-Book templates to help you format your work? (If you have Microsoft Word)

Indeed this young, up-and-coming writer was very excited with the prospect of getting these tools to them. Maybe you can do the same for someone else? Please think on this. 

© 2009 by Lance Winslow.

Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Lance_Winslow

Don't miss SLPA learning modules

The SLPA continues to offer publishing ten-minute learning modules at the start of each monthly meeting. Don't miss these upcoming presentations: marketing development (September), book proposals (October), editing and illustrations (November), and how to use feedback, reviews, and testimonials (December). It could be the most beneficial ten minutes of your day! 

PUB LEGAL

Understanding libel: how words alone can have an impact



By Laurie A. Washington for the St. Louis Volunteer Lawyers and Accountants for the Arts

Although the U.S. Constitution affords individuals freedom of speech and press, there are some limits: when abuse of these rights transgresses into defamation of one's character, reputation and livelihood. Libel is one example. It is the legal term for defamatory words that are written, printed, or otherwise permanently represented. Slander is the verbal counterpart, causing injury to one's character through spoken word, or transitory (non-fixed) means. In the case of libel, it is beneficial for authors and book publishers to be aware of how even artistic expression can ruffle feathers. Most importantly, if there is no truth behind inflammatory or accusatory expressions, legal action may ensue. Even world-renowned author John Grisham was not impervious to a libelous lawsuit, having been summoned in 2007. In his non-fiction work *The Innocent Man*, Grisham explored the criminal background of two convicted felons being brought to justice for the death of a waitress. The criminals' defense attorney brought suit against Grisham and his publishing company, claiming Grisham and another author conspired to portray the men in a false light. In 2008, however the court dismissed the case finding that Grisham had a right to critique the criminal justice system.

Following the instance of cases such as Grisham's, it is important for any book publisher to delve deeper into how libel affects an individual, and how to decipher libelous material from mere opinion. According to Damien McHugh in his work, *Libel Law: A Journalist's Handbook*, "the tort of defamation protects interests in reputation. It is the publication to a third person of matter 'containing an untrue imputation against the reputation of another. . .'" Libelous statements are essentially false representations of an individual aimed at lowering the perception of that person in the eyes of the greater society. The statements can cause ridicule, contempt or even hatred of that person. Thus, it is apparent why tort law, which rectifies civil wrongs, seeks to protect citizens from such statements. Because the printed word is essentially permanent, there can be debilitating effects on one's personal life—presently or in the future.

Thus, before a book goes to print, or perhaps even before an author puts pen to paper, cautionary steps must be taken to ensure that what will be read is not libelous. The following

categories are what to be wary of: a) allegations that an unmarried person is unchaste; b) words imputing a contagious disease of a person; c) allegations that a person has committed a criminal offense. In most cases, if any expression falls within this range, the individual targeted would have legal cause—whether or not the writer has "supposed" evidence of truth, or was "merely insinuating"—no matter what!

So, when does the First Amendment come into consideration? Freedom of speech is still alive and well when what is stated is just an opinion. Opinions are generally not actionable unless they are taken a step further, and damage a person in the eyes of the community. McHugh gives insight stating, "What matters is whether a reasonable person, reading the article... would tend to think less of the individual referred to in the alleged defamatory material." It is also important to remember that opinions, while in a somewhat safe zone, are by definition not supported by evidence; they are simply strong convictions. And under the protection of defamation law, private individuals have more leeway to be sensitive to statements and accusations. To the contrary, for public individuals or politicians, less sensitivity is granted to them as plaintiffs in a legal cause of action.

So, whether or not an author or publishing company is dealing with a private individual or a public official, it is important to evaluate what type of material is going to be published for the public eye. Many academic and corporate institutions provide guidelines as reference. The University of Texas Systems online Intellectual Property Web site gives insightful evaluation form.

Continued on page 5


Recommended Reading

Need more info? Check out these resources recommended specifically for SLPA members by the St. Louis Volunteer Lawyers and Accountants for the Arts!



Larson, Aaron. "Defamation, Libel and Slander Law." August 2003. http://www.expertlaw.com/library/personal_injury/defamation.html. June 9, 2009.


McHugh, Damian. *Libel Law: A Journalist's Handbook*. Four Courts Press: Oregon. 2001.

University of Texas Systems Online. "Copyright Law." February 12, 2007. <http://www.utsystem.edu.ogc/intellectualproperty/libelfrm.htm>. 

Publishing Contracts ... Continued

These steps are to help review a few concepts to determine libelous material:

1. Look for material that identifies a person or entity.
2. Is any identified person deceased? If yes, you may end your query. So long as the material is not reflective of other individuals, there is little reason to be concerned. The law does not give a case cause of action in this case. If no, continue to step 3.
3. Is the person identified in the statement a private or public individual? Remember the highly sensitive component attached to private individuals.
4. Does the material reflect badly on character and/or harm reputation? If yes, it would be wise to edit your material.

Yet, remember that only truth is an absolute defense to libel. Before writing on a whim, whether out of discontent or jest, it is of great benefit to recognize the permanence of the written word, and that taking such actions in print, or even on the Web, could be of legal consequence. 

Laurie A. Washington is a summer associate at St. Louis Volunteer Lawyers and Accountants for the Arts. © VLAA. All Rights Reserved. This article was written for educational and informational purposes only and is not legal advice or a legal opinion. Only your attorney can advise you about which laws are applicable to your specific situation. For more information, visit www.vlaa.org.


2009 DIY Book Festival Call for Entries

The 2009 DIY Book Festival has issued a call for entries for its eighth annual program celebrating the success of independent authors and publishers.

The DIY Book Festival will consider self-published or independent publisher non-fiction, fiction, biography/autobiography, children's books, teenage, how-to, cookbooks, science fiction, audio/spoken word, photography, art, comics, 'zines, fan fiction, poetry, and e-books published on or after Jan. 1, 2006. All entries must be in English and have been self-published or issued by an independent publishing house.

The grand prize for the 2009 DIYBF Book of the Year is \$1,500 cash and a flight to the awards ceremony, held in February 2009 as part of the annual DIY Convention in Los Angeles.

Submissions must be postmarked by the close of business on November 25, 2009. For more information and downloadable entry form, visit www.diyconvention.com or call 323-665-8080.

The 2009 DIY Book Festival is part of the DIY Convention: Do It Yourself in Film, Music & Books, which also produces the DIY Film Festival and the DIY Music Festival. The 2009 DIY Book Festival is sponsored by the Larimar St. Croix Writer's Retreat, eDivvy, Shopanista, Westside Websites and The DIY Reporter.com. 


Behind the scenes with the board

Susan L. Whinnery, SLPA Treasurer


As SLPA treasurer, Susan Whinnery is responsible for maintaining the organization's funds and reconciling bank statements. Budgets and SLPA expenditures are reviewed by the Board and maintained monthly by Susan. Other treasurer functions include the annual Missouri State registration, co-op book booth sales recordkeeping, PayPal and credit card processing transactions.



Susan joined SLPA in 2004 after publishing *Luke Carter and the Sword of Kings*, authored by A.J. Ensor, originally from St. Louis. You may have seen her in the co-op book booth at the Big Read, along with Barb Davis. They've paired up to work the various SLPA co-op book booths for SLPA members since 2005.

Susan is a banker by day, publisher by night. Now in the thirtieth year of her banking career, which she began as an operations clerk at Mercantile Bank, Susan is Assistant Vice President of Operations at Superior Bank, Hazelwood. Currently serving her third term as treasurer for SLPA, Susan welcomes questions from members for establishing small business checking accounts and proper documentation that banks will require. Contact Susan at Treasurer@stlouispublishers.org. 

What's Ahead?

Who reads press releases anymore? At our September member meeting, editor-writer and SLPA communications manager Ligaya Figueras will discuss what works and what doesn't, and how to get your information into the hands of the right people at the right time. This is a hands-on meeting, so bring your releases, headlines, story pitches—and your red pen! The meeting will open with a ten-minute learning module on the importance of developing a marketing plan for your book while still in the writing stage. **Mark your calendar for Wednesday, September 9!** 

Member Spotlight: Ed Steinmann

After having worked, as time permitted, on a spiritual memoir titled *The Gospel according to Dad* since 1985, Ed Steinmann is



almost ready to call himself a published author. "I thought I was almost done with the book four years ago, but I gave the manuscript to a theologian-friend and he had so many questions that I then realized I needed to write it much more simply."

Ed, a retired attorney, has been a member of the St. Louis Publishers Association since 2006. He discovered the organization through a friend's referral. Despite living in Jefferson City at the time, Ed came to a meeting and was hooked.

These days, Ed still drives 200 miles round trip from his home near St. James to attend monthly meetings. He finds SLPA to be invaluable to his publishing endeavors. "I'm serious about publishing this book. It's turned into a vocation. There is so much that I have learned at SLPA. I now know the people to contact when the time comes," he commented.

"The book I am writing is a spiritual memoir. What I am attempting to create is art, literary nonfiction—no easy thing, for me anyway." Written in the form of a letter to his son, Ed explicates one mystical experience and twelve dreams that occurred over a period of five years, and "what it all means spiritually, psychologically, religiously."

Ed is hoping to enter his manuscript in the SLPA "Get Ready/Get Published" contest. "I can't tell you how happy the thought makes me of having the manuscript finished by January. It's been a very, very long haul. This has to end, or I'm going to die before the book is published!" he laughed. 📖

Editor's note: Do you want to be profiled in the *SLPA News* Member Spotlight column? How has the SLPA helped you? What inspiring story and publishing accomplishments can you share with the rest of us? To be considered for the Member Spotlight, contact SLPA communications manager and newsletter editor Ligaya Figueras via e-mail at Editor@stlouispublishers.org

BOOK REVIEW

Publicize Your Book! is no-nonsense guide to marketing success

By Peggy Nehmen

Publicize Your Book! is a pro-active, no-nonsense guide that puts the responsibility of a book's success in the author's hands. Jacqueline Deval's book is packed with marketing ideas, publicity tips, and information. It is well written and easy to understand, and will help authors understand the publishing process and how to work better with publicists, editors, and marketing people.

Jacqueline Deval, an experienced book publishing professional, explains in practical detail: how to market your book, how to work with a publicist, how to work with your publisher (unless you self-publish), what to expect from your publisher, how to network and how to SELL more books!

Whether you are a brand-new author or a much-published author, add this book to your arsenal of ideas and plans. Although Deval's book is aimed primarily at the author who is with a traditional publisher, it applies equally well to the self-published. The author addresses the proper way to approach print markets, radio, and television.

The book underscores the realization that these days, authors need to be in charge of their own destiny. Even if an author is signed with a large publishing firm, he still needs to be active in marketing and promoting his book. This book is instrumental in teaching authors how and why they need to become their own best advocates and how to successfully engage in the business side of their craft. Fiction or non-fiction, following the suggestions in this book can only help bottom-line sales.

The "Book Marketing Basics" and "How to Write a Marketing Plan" sections alone are worth the price of this book. They lay the foundation for understanding the publishing industry and describe how to effectively work with your publishing team—information you need to know, but no one will tell you.

Being a SLPA member has taught me that publishing is much more than just writing your book—the real job comes afterward! It takes perseverance and hard work to sell your book. To be successful, you need to know how to identify your audience and think like a marketer. Grab your Post-its and highlighter when you read this book! 📖

SSLPA News & Views is edited by SLPA communications manager Ligaya Figueras and designed by SLPA member Peggy Nehmen. Contact info:

Ligaya Figueras: figuerasl@sbcglobal.net

Peggy Nehmen: pnehen@n-kcreative.com

Next Deadline ▶ August 21

Don't be late – no kidding!

Send us news on your new releases or upcoming appearances or anything else you wish to share.

Get your news and articles in EARLY! Send your information, articles and announcements to Editor@stlouispublishers.org.