

Publishers & Writers Monthly

THE NEWSLETTER OF PUBLISHERS & WRITERS OF SAN DIEGO

July 2010

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**Publishers & Writers of San Diego (PWSD)** is a professional association of the San Diego publishing community. PWSD educates business-minded self-publishers and authors through networking, guest experts, open discussions, and field trips. Regular meetings are held 10 a.m. to 12 noon on the last Saturday of each month (except November and December), usually at the Encinitas Library, 540 Cornish Dr., Encinitas.

## Membership

\$37/year plus \$10/meeting for members. Non-member meeting fee is \$15. Visit us online at [www.PublishersWriters.org](http://www.PublishersWriters.org) for information and to RSVP for meetings.

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Closing date for newsletter contributions is the **last day of each month**. Send contributions to newsletter@publisherswriters.org.

If you would like to sign up for a **member profile**, contact Lynette Smith at lynette@allmybest.net.

Next Meeting

Date: Saturday, July 31, 2010

Time: 10 a.m. to 12 noon

Location: Encinitas Community Center, 1140 Oakcrest Park Drive (NOT AT THE LIBRARY THIS MONTH!)

Topic: The Power of Book Design

Speakers: Tamara Dever of TLC Graphics and Monica Thomas of Narrow Gate Books

Learn why some cover and interior designs help books sell, while others drive buyers to the competition. Learn what makes design so important to a book's sales and how to do it right the first time and every time. Tips, tricks, and pitfalls will be discussed, whether you're designing it yourself or hiring a professional. Get your books noticed for the right reasons and into the hands of sellers, distributors, and reviewers! Includes Q&A, a slide show of sample covers including before-and-after samples, and critiques of attendees' books.

Tamara Dever is the owner and founder of TLC Graphics (www.TLCGraphics.com), a book design firm providing full-service support to small publishers and their clients. Begun in 1997, the business has grown from design studio to a complete publishing development firm, winning numerous national and regional awards including two *ForeWord* magazine's Top Ten Book of the Year awards. She has a BFA in Graphic Communications from UW Oshkosh and began her career designing magazines and books for several publishing companies.

News/Announcements

8th Annual Southern California Writers' Conference September 24–26, 2010

Hyatt Regency Newport Beach, 1107 Jamboree Road

1. Agents, authors, and editors attending
2. Dru Campbell's NovelCram returns
3. Two more conferees find publication success
4. Workshop topic suggestions

With more yet to be announced, many authors and other industry pros are already confirmed, including agents and editors from Foundry Literary & Media, Behler Publications, N. S. Bienstock, William Morris Endeavor, Sandra Dijkstra Literary, Martin Literary, New World Books, and van Haitsma Literary. Full details at www.WritersConference.com.

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**LOOKING FOR NEW
CONTENT COORDINATOR!
WILL YOU HELP?**

BRANDING AND MARKETING YOU AND YOUR WORK

Presented by Anthony F. Vianna

Recap by Deborah Parker

Tony Vianna, author of 16 books and PWSD's Treasurer, presented key elements that drive how authors can brand themselves and their work to successfully market their books. Every one of these elements leads back to *marketing, marketing, marketing*.

It is important for authors to take charge of their branding. People are going to brand you anyway, so do everything you can to make sure the "buzz" created about you or your book is all that you want it to be.

Brand images result from a combination of forms: words and phrases, visual images, reputation, characters in your books, themes you write about, genres, your public persona, other things you do that have nothing to do with your writing, and what other people say about you.

Branding should begin before the book is written and should begin with a marketing plan. What will your book do? Will it inform, entertain, persuade? Who is the target audience, and what are the angles both you and your book can use to connect with them? Is this audience sufficient to make your book an economic success? However you decide to shape it, your book needs to be valuable not just to someone but to a lot of someones. A resulting brand image bundles the attributes of you, your work, and your projected readers into a solid marketing plan to reach your readers.

There is a delicate balance in how narrowly or broadly authors brand themselves and their books. In attempts to expand their markets, authors may be tempted to expand their branding, but this can result in diluting their direct appeal to their target readers. Tony advised that a better way to expand your market is to consistently increase exposure to the audience you already focus on.

As a writer who a few months ago became an author, I particularly appreciated his many descriptions of how he personally applied the templates he presented to develop and refine his own branding that resulted in book sales. I especially liked how he used the four P's of marketing—Product, Place, Price, and Promotion—and all the descriptors under each category. I printed a copy of that graphic, which now has a prominent place in my workspace as I work on my marketing and branding.

A copy of the Tony's PowerPoint presentation can be viewed on the PWSD website at www.PublishersWriters.org.

The Top Ten Publishing Pitfalls

*At our July meeting, we'll be hearing from Tamara Dever on "The Power of Book Design."
In the meantime, she's provided us with the following article.*

Every author has a different definition of success, but each one strives for it. For many reasons, a stigma remains around self-published books. By avoiding these far-too-common errors, you can triumph in this crazy and rewarding vocation.

The first four points all reflect upon you, the author. If you want to be taken seriously and build a good reputation, you must first take your book seriously. Any one of these issues can forever lock you out of the running as a legitimate publisher. Book buyers, readers, reviewers, and distributors are inundated with new books each day. If you don't care enough to produce a book that rivals those from the big publishing houses, why should they care about your book?

1. Poor cover and/or interior design

A book cover serves as its billboard and sets the tone for what's inside. If you don't attract the right kind of attention, your writing may never be discovered. The interior actually drives most sales. If the type seems hard to read, the layout is disorganized, the design doesn't match the cover (creating a cohesive and well-thought-out product), your potential reader will likely move on to the next option.

2. Poor editing/proofreading

The editor's job is to make your writing better. Sentences and paragraphs that have been poorly put together will inhibit easy reading. Typos, improper word and punctuation usage, or errors in the table of contents instantly discredit you as a writer. Most people don't get second chances, so don't mess up on this one!

3. Poor-quality printing

We could get into a whole diatribe on digital vs. offset printing here, but this comes down to offering a quality product. While perfection is rare in any field, the following problems are unacceptable (and we've seen them all!): binding that falls apart, scuffs all over the cover, bent pages, extremely crooked trimming, poor ink coverage (faded colors), upside-down sections of pages (signatures). The bottom line? Choose a reputable company, regardless of the printing method, and be sure their specialty is BOOK printing.

4. Not owning your ISBNs

When you hire a "self-publishing company" or vanity press to publish your book, they generally provide and own the ISBN. The owner of that number is considered the publisher of your book. When this happens, you are no longer the publisher. This may or may not be a problem, but be aware of this, as it can have implications if you want to produce future, revised editions.

5. Improper pricing of your book

Standing out in the crowd can be a good thing, but not when it comes to pricing. If your book's list price is too low, readers may wonder if it's even good enough to purchase. If it's too overpriced, they'll likely purchase a similar book with a more standard price. Pay attention to the price of books with similar page counts and binding in your book's genre.

6. Missing the non-bookstore market

Bookstores are a lousy place to sell books. Why? Look at the thousands of choices on those shelves. Unless your budget includes a huge marketing campaign and payment for up-front placement on those shelves, your book will likely get lost in the masses. Corporations often purchase books for their managers or as gifts to employees. Schools and universities need textbooks and supplemental reading. Government and non-profit organizations also purchase books in bulk. Some of these companies also prefer to order, in bulk, editions of your book customized with their logo. Don't forget libraries, either.

7. Lack of Companion Media™

In most cases, your book will not make you rich. Selling additional items related to your book can. When people love a book, they're often very willing to buy more from that author and on that topic. Continue to share your information with devoted readers and increase your profits at the same time. Examples: eBooks, audio books, DVDs, training programs, dolls and toys, workbook systems, etc.

8. Failing to continue to reach your readers

Writing your book is just the beginning of your publishing saga. By building a relationship with your readers, you can become their primary source of information on your specific topic. Start with a professional-looking website that includes your blog, a simple shopping cart, autoresponders to capture email addresses, and links to your social media networks. Don't neglect the importance of search engine optimization (SEO), as it keeps your site relevant to the search engines.

9. No marketing/PR plan

Publishing a book makes it a product. Paramount wouldn't dream of releasing a new movie without having complete publicity and marketing plans in place. Your book may be geared toward a much smaller audience, but PR and marketing are everything and should not be ignored or treated as an afterthought. Nobody knows how great your book is until they read it, but they have to know it's available and that they need it, first!

10. Unrealistic expectations

You will likely never be a guest on Oprah. Having big goals is great, but be realistic with most of them or you'll be disappointed time and again. Your book's first run will ideally be set up to help you break even on the production costs. You'll likely not get rich quickly in this business. Working with a publishing development company can help you set proper goals and ensure your success.

If you truly do it right, the hard work you put into writing can shine through!

www.TLCGraphics.com



Is Your Cover Selling Your Book?

Adapted from Dan Poynter's ParaPublishing.com

Book covers matter. Everyone knows you shouldn't judge a book by its cover, but everyone does. Most readers look at the front cover and the back cover and then make a buying decision. No one reads the book first.

Bookstores buy from the cover too. Sales reps do not lug books around. Wholesalers make buys without seeing the text. They want you to submit just the cover. They don't judge the content because they don't see it.

As for cover content, a great many covers either miss the point of the book or fail to relate to its intended market—or both! You have to remember that from a sales standpoint the cover is the most important part of the book. The wrapper outside should reflect the message inside.

A well-thought-out cover design will take into consideration who the competition is, who the target market is, and where the book will be distributed. A strong book cover acts as a marketing tool. It is an advertisement for your book. You therefore want to create a cover that can survive "the glance test."

To be sure you get it right, start with a visit to a bookstore. Check your section, then look into other sections. Select a book you really like on any subject. Consider its binding, layout, feel, margins, type style, everything. Then buy it.

Use this book for a model. Tell your typesetter (or do it yourself) and printer you want your manuscript to look like this book. Using an appealing cover to communicate the significance of your book in this way greatly increases the likelihood that your work will go from hand to home, more often than not.

Member Profile

Chérie De Sues

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www.cheriedesues.com

www.cheriedesues2.com

www.facebook.com/cheriedesuesnovels

www.twitter.com/writtenbycherie



PWM: In what aspect of publishing or writing are you involved or interested?

Chérie: I'm a published author with Noble Romance Publishing and The Wild Rose Press for suspense and paranormal romances in various heat levels. Recently, I've written a medical biohazard thriller I'm rather proud of, and my works in progress have all been contracted. You can find spicy excerpts of all my work on two websites: one (www.cheriedesues.com) is my main author website, and the other (www.cheriedesues2.com) is for paranormal.

PWM: What first attracted you to the writing life?

Chérie: I've been writing since I was a kid. Poems, journals, writing classes—I could never get enough of expressing myself with words. When I had the opportunity to become a full-time writer just over a year ago, I took it. In less than a year, I had a novel, a novella, and two short stories published, with four more novels under contract. I think I'm going in the right direction.

PWM: Did you previously have related experience in writing?

Chérie: I wrote for a couple of weekly rural newspapers and wrote short stories for magazines.

PWM: How long have you been a member of PWSD, and what role has the organization played in your success?

Chérie: I've been a member for over six months. I joined to stay connected to my community and fellow writers. I became part of the NaNoWriMo, representing a San Diego group of writers last year, and hope to do the same again this year. That novel, *The Seduction of Simone*, is contracted, and I start the editing process for a July 28 release this year. Writing can be a lonely business, and I think the PWSD YahooGroups! message board is a great way to stay in touch with San Diego writers.

PWM: What are you working on now?

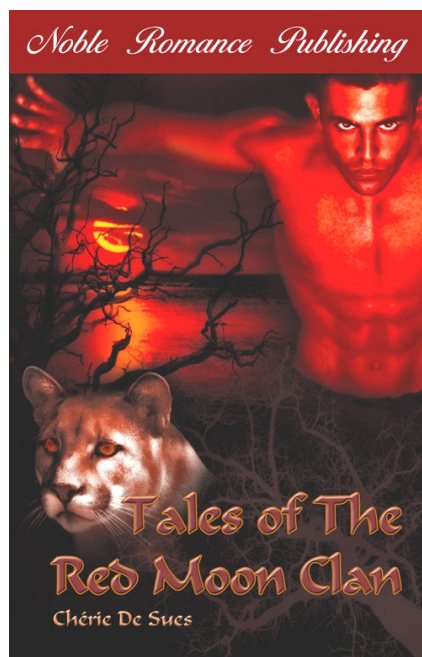
Chérie: I always have five to seven projects running at the same time. I've started a series for Noble Romance Publishing's new line of Bad Girl Romances. *Lacy: A Bad Girl's Revenge* was released recently, and the follow-up novel is contracted for a release before the end of 2010 at www.nobleromance.com; you can get a short excerpt teaser at my author's website. Also, I am currently choosing a new name for a series of fun, paranormal young-adult novels.

PWM: What guidance or lessons learned can you offer the members?

Chérie: Writing well is a personal evolution a writer must persevere alone. No one can choose your voice; you must develop that tone in your work by yourself over time. Get a critique partner who writes in a similar genre and tells you the gritty truth about your work. *Don't give up!* I was lucky and Noble Romance published my second novel six months after I became a full-time author.

One of the most important author necessities is to promote your work. I can't stress enough how important Twitter, Facebook, author websites, and blogs are to new and established writers. If you Google my name, you'll see I belong to at least 20 different websites that help to promote my work.

The last thing is to write every day. I usually have a manuscript published every two or three months by different publishers. Recently, I've begun stretching myself as an author with a new paranormal series for a young adult audience.



PWSD Member Events & Announcements

Read Local San Diego author opportunity: The Mojalet Dance Company is featuring bkSOUL and Collective Purpose on August 15, in two performances at The Vine and the Rancho Bernardo Winery. Mojalet would like to feature an author with a book with thematic connections during the break between the two performances (3 to 6 p.m., approximately). Here's a company description: www.bkSOUL.com. If you have a book with thematic connections and are available for presentations and signing on August 15, please send Karla Olson a description of your project to Karla@sandiego.readlocal.org. She will pass them on to the coordinator of this event. There is no charge for this program.

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PWSD member Andrea Glass was interviewed by Karen Murdock, owner and trainer of Lukas, the world's smartest horse. The interview was part of a documentary created to enter Lukas into the Guinness Book of Records. Andrea was the copyeditor for Karen's book, *Playing With Lukas*. The video is at www.YouTube.com/watch?v=1dp348vq8SU

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Thorn Sulley of *A Word with You Press* is proud to announce the birth of *KidXpress*, and invites you to its first BIG EVENT, a fundraiser to be held at the hacienda of best-selling author Victor Villaseñor (*Rain of Gold*) on Saturday, August 7, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. at 1302 Stewart Street, Oceanside, California. *KidXpress* is the non-profit wing of *A Word with You Press* that will pair kids with a desire to express themselves in the arts with an adult mentor who will convert a shy kid into a *published author!* Graduates will be published in an anthology with a book signing at the new writers' clubhouse in Oceanside. Volunteers are gratefully appreciated. Visit <http://www.awordwithyoupress.com/2010/07/09/we-need-your-body-par> for more information.

Events & Resources for the Publishing & Writing Community

21st Century Book Marketing, www.21stCenturyBookMarketing.com; September 25–26, San Diego. Learn from publishing industry's most renowned book marketing experts and meet with the world's top professionals. Register early for best pricing.

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Monday, July 26, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. The **San Diego Writers/Editors Guild** will have its monthly meeting with program speaker John Forester, whose topic will be **Success in Writing and Publishing**. John helped his father, C. S. Forester, in correcting the page proofs of the first Hornblower novel, *The Happy Return*, in 1937. John has written three technical books, several articles, and a biography of his father. John will consider the meaning of success in the worlds of writing and publishing, and even living, as he has indirectly and directly experienced them. John's website is www.JohnForester.com. All meetings are held on the 4th Monday of the month at the **County Health Facility** located at 3851 Rosecrans Street, San Diego, in the Sports Arena area. See the website for directions. www.SDWritersGuild.org.

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Thursdays, August 5–19, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (3 meetings). **Creative Approaches to Overcoming Writer's Block**. It has happened to every writer: You sit and stare at the blank page, desperate to write, but the ideas won't come. All hope seems lost. The good news is that there are key ways to focus on the process of writing, which is often just as important as the product of your efforts. Learn a variety of helpful ways to break through each writing block, including interviewing, dictionary games, and the "whatever will you do" exercise, among others, and make the words flow. Open to writers of all levels of experience. For more information, contact ahl@ucsd.edu. Register at www.extension.ucsd.edu/writing or call 858-534-3400.

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Carolyn Howard-Johnson, multi award-winning author of more than a dozen books, will teach a one-day seminar on **Book Marketing for Writers** at UCLA Extension Writers' Program this summer quarter. The world-renowned program offers writers classes from the craft of writing to promoting one's writing at several different venues and online.

Carolyn's seminar, **Creating a Promotion Package for Your Fiction or Nonfiction Book**, will be taught **Saturday, August 7** on the UCLA campus. The class is based on the content of her book, *The Frugal Book Promoter: How to Do What Your Publisher Won't*, winner of the USA Book News award for business books and the Irwin award, given by Book Publicists of Southern California for marketing campaigns.

The author has been an instructor for the Writers' Program since 2004. She has served as a publicist for all her own books (including her poetry chapbooks—the most difficult of all genres to promote), and has worked in the publishing industry for *Good Housekeeping Magazine* and a variety of newspapers and trade publications.

For more information on UCLA's Writers' Program or to request its quarterly extension catalog, call 310-825-9415. You may sign up online at www.uclaextension.edu. The registration number for the English 735.1 class is 76941. Carolyn may be reached at HoJoNews@aol.com. Information is also available at <http://carolynhoward-johnson.com> and www.howtodoitfrugally.com.

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PLEASE NOTE:

The Balancing Act TV show tip in a previous newsletter had been discovered to be a scam by one of our readers. She says, "They contacted us for an appointment and it's only late in the process that you learn that they are looking for the authors to pay the [steep] production costs (as well as paying your own way to Florida)." John Kremer published the same notice in his newsletter; then he retracted it and apologized in the subsequent edition, noting it was a scam and admonishing readers not to follow up on it.

Resources

Learn how authors get corporate sponsors: www.lifsgoldenticket.com/cmd.php?af=685350

Authorsource gets corporate sponsors to give you money: www.sponsorshipmarketing.biz

Make money as a speaker: www.amazingpublicspeaking.com/index.cfm?affID=gospeak

Free author website: www.filedby.com

Source: Rick Frishman

*If you hear of an event or discover a valuable resource for publishers or writers,
please send it to newsletter@publisherswriters.org.*

From the Editor, Andrea Glass

If you're a self-publisher, independent publisher, consultant, author, editor, proofreader, ghostwriter, book designer, marketing specialist, Web designer or professional coach, **consider joining PWSD**. Visit the FAQ page of www.PublishersWriters.org for membership information and the home page to sign up for this newsletter.

The closing date for newsletter contributions is the **last day of each month**. Send your contributions to newsletter@publisherswriters.org.

Would you like to appear in a **member profile**? If so, contact Lynette Smith at lynette@allmybest.net. Lynette is taking signups for the last issue of 2010 and the first three issues of 2011.

Would you like to help out by taking **notes at our monthly meeting** and writing up the meeting recap for this newsletter? If so, contact Lauren Castle at lauren@impress-express.com. She's accepting signups for 2010. We're looking for one volunteer a month so we can have each meeting covered.

Thank you for pitching in to help Publishers & Writers Monthly become a more valuable newsletter for everyone in the San Diego Writing and Publishing community!

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