

Publishers & Writers Monthly

NEWSLETTER OF THE PUBLISHERS & WRITERS OF SAN DIEGO

June, 2009

In this Issue

Next Meeting
News/Announcements
From the Treas
Feature Article
Member Profile
PWSD Member Events
Events & Resources
From the Editor
Newsletter Team

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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 the last Saturday of each month (except November and December) at the Encinitas Library, 540 Cornish Avenue, Encinitas, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

## **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 allmybest@earthlnk.net.

Next Meeting

Date: June 27, 2009

Time: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Location: Encinitas Library

Topic: “How to Succeed in Self-Promotion Using Low-Cost Marketing Techniques Online and Off.”

Meet guerrilla marketing expert and author Bob Baker, an independent publisher who served for several years as the president of the St. Louis Publishers Association (a PWSD-IBPA affiliate). He is based in the St. Louis area but regularly speaks on publishing topics throughout the U.S.

News/Announcements

BEA 2009

Rick Frishman, Publisher of the Author 101 newsletter, says:

I just got back from Book Expo America. It was great - but it felt a lot “lighter” to me this year. Many publishers did *not* have booths. St. Martins Press had a room, and many others just a room, no booth. Random House had one small booth. Maybe a third of what they usually have. Sign of the times. Where is BEA heading? I think it will get smaller and smaller every year.

PWSD Member Releases New Book with Pirate Book Signing

Leucadia author John O'Melveny Woods will be celebrating the worldwide launch of his book, *Return to Treasure Island*, with a pirate-themed book signing on **Saturday, June 27**, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at Book Tales, 603 S. Coast Highway 101. Woods, a board member of Read Local San Diego and a member of Publishers & Writers of San Diego, has penned this sequel to the original *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson. The story picks up three years after the original book ends, as Jim Hawkins sets off on another adventure with Long John Silver back to Treasure Island. The book is also being developed as a one-hour weekly TV show to be produced by John Woods and LeVar Burton, former star of *Roots*, *Star Trek: Next Generation*, and the PBS series, *Reading Rainbow*. LeVar Burton will also direct the series. For more information, contact johnwoods7@hotmail.com or call 760-452-7224.

Grab a quick lunch after the PWSD meeting and drive one block down the hill to meet with John!

Got Some Change?

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When I first started attending meetings of PWSD immediately upon moving to San Diego in the mid-90s, everything was different. The name of the group was different. Different people were leading and attending. And my company and point of view were completely different. As a non-traditional publisher, I felt many of the meeting topics were irrelevant to my business, so I didn't attend those sessions. After all, why would I waste time doing that? Or so I thought.

Then things changed, on all counts. Different people carried the leadership for the next part of the journey, building on the solid foundation established by previous leadership. Different folks started showing up as members as the word got out about who and what this group was. Different topics, speakers, and events were introduced. The publishing industry, on the whole, was changing. And my company and point of view shifted as well.

Attending more meetings was one thing. Jumping into leadership was something else. It seems the more I've contributed, the more I've been given in return. Funny how that works, isn't it? It's had nothing to do with the topic of a meeting or special event, since some pearl always comes from every single session, bar none. It's also been about the people. This is some fabulous group of human beings, each with a unique and often unpredictable contribution to make.

A number of members have stepped up to the plate to make huge contributions to the current reality of Publishers & Writers of San Diego. They truly have become Major Contributors in their own right. Change is in the air. ***It is now time for everyone to do something.*** Whether you attend meetings, know much about publishing, live two hours away, or are just getting started, there's something you can do to help maintain the health and viability of this group.

Is there some particular task you've had your eye on? It's your turn to make some changes. Do that through this link, today.

<http://publishersgroup.wufoo.com/forms/pwpsd-tasks-signup-sheet>

The New Rules of Publishing

In an age of new media where the rules are changing faster than we can write them, it would make sense that publishing rules are changing too, wouldn't it? Does it still make sense to query an agent, go to conferences and network with other writers? Or should you just sit home and blog and hope someone finds you online? Truth be told, it's a combination of all of it. Sites like Twitter have really leveled the playing field. If used effectively, Twitter can really help you to leverage your market. You don't have to be a superstar when you start on Twitter, but you can certainly become one by being on it. Then of course there's blogging, and social networking, video and on and on. So what should a budding author do to get noticed? Or, perhaps you have self-published a book and want to get a mainstream house to pick it up. The key here is to first identify your goals, then find ways to go after them both online and off.

Queries, do they make sense?

Yes they do. Publishing still lives by a few standards, and this is one of them. There is a process and you should still respect it. This doesn't mean that you won't wake up someday to an email from a publisher or agent who has read your blog and wants to publish it (yes, some publishers will publish blogs); but until that happens, the submission process is a sacred, old world tradition that isn't likely to go away anytime soon.

Does networking matter?

Yes but here's the good news. You don't have to fly around the country to every conference to do this. You can network right from your own home. The key is to find a network that works, and stay connected. That network could be on Twitter, Facebook, Squidoo—it could even be through your blog, other blogs you follow, or an old fashioned email connection. Whatever it is, it's easier than ever these days to stay in touch with people without having to hop a plane to do so.

Facebook strategies, what will get you noticed?

Social networking is a great way to get noticed, but if you're using the page as your own personal go-to site for friends and family, then you're not using it to its full potential. Design your Facebook page to support your work: Make sure your blog is feeding to Facebook, keep the site updated with current projects [and] events; you can even use it to become a filter if necessary. The key is, use Facebook as your professional résumé. You should also consider "friending" people who are in similar industries. You can even go in and friend a publisher or two; you never know where this Facebook friendship could lead.

What's considered a "good" online presence?

A good online presence is one that helps build your platform. So a website and blog, a social networking page and, if you're really ready to push yourself online, maybe even a Twitter account. You should also consider a newsletter sign-up on your home page or an RSS feed to your blog. Publishers like to see when authors are building their tribe, and once you start adding subscribers, you can also mention this to the publishers you're pitching.

What are the key pieces that publishers find attractive in a new author?

Your book is your résumé: if you decide to self-publish as a means to get the book out there and/or find a publisher, remember that your book really is your résumé. You would never send a résumé to a potential employer that was full of typos, right? You should never send a book out into the world that isn't letter perfect. The quickest way to get noticed is by publishing quality work; the quickest way to get dismissed is by producing junk. Second, they want an author who knows his or her market and, if you're connected to it online, all the better.

Do publishers really care about all of this stuff?

You bet they do. When a publisher is considering an author, they will often look at the author's "reach" or platform; you can start pulling this together by working your Internet base, building your followers and getting buzz going on your book or topic even before it's published.

So what can I do right now to get started?

- 1) Get a web site
- 2) Start a blog
- 3) Get to know your online community—where do they hang out, what blogs do they read. You should be reading and commenting on those blogs. Get to know your virtual neighbors.
- 4) Find out how you can be of service. This is particularly true of nonfiction authors: find out what the need is and figure out how to fill that need. There's no quicker way to becoming a trusted resource than by becoming a trusted source.

The Internet has really leveled the playing field when it comes to getting published, getting noticed, and building a platform. With some marketing and careful effort, you can build your platform/audience base, and gain some much needed attention for your work. The years of [your manuscript's] sitting in some publisher's slush pile are gone. Now, thanks to sites like Facebook, Squidoo and Twitter, you can cultivate a voice, audience and, if you're lucky, even a publisher!

Reprinted from *The Book Marketing Expert Newsletter*, a free ezine offering book promotion and publicity tips and techniques. <http://www.amarketingexpert.com>

Member Profile



Annette Fix

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www.thebreak-updiet.com; www.wow-womenonwriting.com

PWM: What aspect of publishing or writing are you involved or interested in?

Annette: I'd have a shorter answer if you asked what I'm *not* involved in! I began freelancing professionally in 1997 and screenwriting in '98. I took an unexpected detour into narrative writing in 2002. My debut book, *The Break-Up Diet: A Memoir*, was released on Valentine's Day 2008.

For the last two years, I've been the senior editor of the online women's writing magazine *WOW! Women On Writing.com*. *Writer's Digest* has twice selected *WOW!* for its annual list of the 101 Best Websites for Writers. I'll be going to the doctor next week to have my cast removed—now that I've recovered from breaking my arm patting myself on the back. :-) In addition to my personal writing projects, I enjoy providing comprehensive editing and book manuscript analysis for clients. I also conduct online and in-person workshops: *Online Author & Book Promotion*, *How to Find the Right Agent for Your Manuscript*, and *Memoir Writing: Create a Story with Universal Appeal*. I have two programs scheduled for this summer. The online promotion workshop is June 8 through July 20. The agent workshop is July 27 through August 24.

PWM: What first attracted you to this career?

Annette: I've been a voracious reader for as long as I can remember. When I'm pulled into a story, I cease to see words on the page—they become pictures in my mind. I began writing stories in elementary school and continued through junior/high school and college. But, I never seriously considered pursuing writing as a career until I turned 30.

PWM: Did you previously have related experience in this area?

Annette: Throughout high school and college, I edited and wrote for the campus newspapers. I graduated from University of La Verne, Magna Cum Laude with Departmental Honors in English, and membership in Sigma Tau Delta and Alpha Chi honor societies. My writing craft knowledge comes from 15 years of attending classes, seminars, workshops, and conferences, and from reading a truckload of how-to books. My editing knowledge is experiential—and something that comes naturally—but I also refer to my well-thumbed copy of *The Chicago Manual of Style*, my editing bible. My website partner calls me a walking CMS. Over the last seven years, I've immersed myself in the publishing industry—both traditional and independent. Two years ago, I established Orange Curtain Publishing, my micro press.

PWM: How long have you been a member of PWSD, and what role has the organization played in your success (or your company's success)?

Annette: I've been a member of PWSD for a little more than a year. In that short time, I've found the organization to be a wonderful source of information about a wide variety of topics. And I've really enjoyed the opportunity to network with other writers.

PWM: What are you working on now?

Annette: Always a full plate. My memoir has just been optioned to be adapted to a television series, so I'm excited to see where that goes. The book is also a finalist in the memoir category for *ForeWord Magazine's* Book of the Year Award. I'll find out at Book Expo America if it has placed in the IPPYs, Benjamin Franklin, or BOTY. My digits and piggies are crossed!

I've recently started speaking at writer's conferences. I really enjoy that environment and the opportunity to share what I've learned about the writing and marketing process and the publishing industry. I'm looking forward to booking more speaking engagements this year. As for my writing, I'm in the outline stage for a new book project: a memoir of my '80s wild-child misadventures growing up in a desert ghetto. I maintain a writing blog at www.annettefix.com and a book blog at www.thebreak-updiet.com. And, of course, I accept freelance queries and submissions for www.wow-womenonwriting.com. WOW! is a paying market. I welcome submissions from PWSD members, but please read the submission guidelines and become familiar with the site's current and archived content before submitting.

PWM: What guidance, lessons learned, etc., can you offer the members?

Annette: Remember that publishing is a marathon, not a sprint. Make a plan for every phase of your journey: writing your book, pursuing publication, building your Internet presence, expanding your social/business network—keep doing something every day toward reaching your goals. Make sure you invest in the process; there is a lot to learn and it's always changing. Most importantly, enjoy the ride.

Hither and Yahn Recognized

Setting themselves up for conflict, the Partners-In-Rhyme (Robert Lundy and Elizabeth Yahn Williams, aka *Hither & Yahn*) both sent in separate manuscripts to the San Diego Book Awards this year. Both PWSD members were selected as two of the three finalists in the "Unpublished Poetry Chapbook" category. Mayhem at the breakfast table was narrowly averted when the third finalist got the award. Sporting their near-victorious about-to-be-published books (Lundy's *Ten Holidays that Shook the World* and Williams' *Seasonal Reflections*) both continue to be seen at North County Authors and Poets (NCAP) events as well as PWSD's Read Local Initiative meetings. Around San Diego they perform at libraries, colleges, clubs, churches, and any other place where the audience will sit still long enough for them to finish. (Retirement homes are especially good due to the limited mobility of many of their residents.) The authors can be contacted at JoyInPoetry@yahoo.com.

WolfWriters

PWSD member Steve Pantazis recommends participation in a group called WolfWriters for those working with fiction. The group, led by Michael Wolf, focuses on making their writing marketable. Michael may be contacted at wolfwriters@gmail.com for information regarding his group and the services he provides.

Author Talk

Danalee Buhler, author of *Running from Coyote: A White Family among the Navajo*, will speak about her life in Shiprock, New Mexico, living among the Navajo on **Wednesday, June 17, 2009** at 6:30 pm at the Encinitas Library, 540 Cornish Drive. No fee to attend.

Book Participants Needed

Carol Sveilich, PWSD member and author of the critically acclaimed book, *Just Fine: Unmasking Concealed Chronic Illness and Pain*, is recruiting participants for a new manuscript—a resource that will focus specifically on the challenges of living with depression, anxiety, and other mood disorders. If you are a mental health professional and work with the population who live with clinical depression, anxiety, panic attacks, OCD, post-traumatic stress disorder or other mood disorders, or if you are person who lives with a mood disorder and would like to be profiled in this new book and share your story, challenges and coping tools, please contact Carol at writefaceforward@yahoo.com. If you know someone who fits one of these categories, please feel free to refer them to the author. To familiarize yourself with the format of this new publication, see previous book at www.writefaceforward.com.

Agent Workshop

PWSD member Annette Fix will be holding a three-week intensive workshop called *The Hungry Writer's Guide To Tracking & Capturing a Literary Agent: How to Get the RIGHT Agent for Your Manuscript*. The class will take you step-by-step through the process of finding the best agent for your manuscript. By the end of this class, you will have a list of agents who are signing and selling in your genre, a polished pitch, and a succinct and professional query letter that you can begin sending out immediately.

Mondays, July 27 – August 17; sign up at www.AnnetteFix.com.

PWSD Membership Renewals

Tom Leech
Carol Sveilich
Elizabeth Yahn Williams
Lois Winsen

New Members

Geraldine Strong

Fiction Flyer Contest

TRI Studio, owner of the free ezine, *The Fiction Flyer*, announces a flash fiction contest. Winners will receive certificates and cash prizes and have their stories published in the July/August issue of *The Flash Flyer*. The contest will be judged on the basis of character strength and credibility, dialogue and short story development. The deadline for entries is June 30, 2009. Contests details may be viewed at:

<http://tri-studio.com/contestguidelines.html>.

Corporate Sponsors

Information on obtaining corporate sponsors is available via Brendan Burchard's Partnership Seminar at:

www.lifegoldenticket.com/cmd.php?af=685350.

Media Tip

Alex Carroll suggests the following fill-in-the-blank formula for pitching an idea to the producer of a radio show:

"_____ ways to avoid _____ and how you can too!"

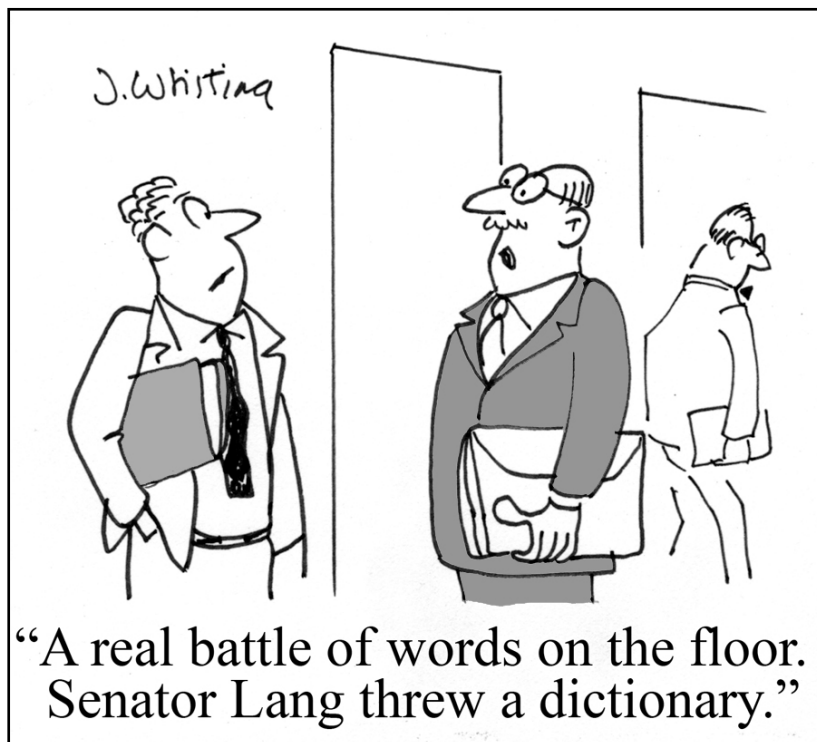
Example 1: "Five perfectly legal ways the super wealthy avoid paying double digit taxes, and how you can too!"

Example 2: "Seven clever ways politicians avoid answering tricky questions, and how you can too!"

A whole program on how to get on radio is available on Alex's website at <http://www.publicityvault.com>.

"If there's a book you really want to read but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it."

~ Toni Morrison



From the Editor, Andrea Glass

If you are a self-publisher, independent publisher, consultant, author, editor, proofreader, ghostwriter, book designer, marketing specialist, Web designer or professional coach, consider joining PWSD. Visit www.PublishersWriters.org.

Closing date

Newsletter contributions: **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 allmybest@earthlink.net

If you attended BEA 2009 and would like to share your experiences with other PWSD members, please send your submission to newsletter@publisherswriters.org.

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