

Publishers & Writers Monthly

THE NEWSLETTER OF PUBLISHERS & WRITERS OF SAN DIEGO

July 2009

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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, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Membership

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

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: August 1, 2009

(Note: one week later than usual due to venue availability)

Time: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Location: Encinitas Library

Topic: “Building Self-Published Historical Novel Sales from the Ground Up.”

Speaker: Successful novelist Maggie Anton, author of the trilogy, *Rashi's Daughters*, will share her recipe for success, including how to determine and find your audience and how to choose the best ways to promote your book. (www.rashisdaughters.com)

News/Announcements

Book Extravaganza: North County Authors and Poets (NCAP) will present the 5th annual Book Extravaganza from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. **Saturday, July 25**, in the Turrentine Room at the Escondido Public Library, 239 S. Kalmia St., Escondido. Signed books by local authors will be available for purchase. Admission is free.

Many NCAP members are retired military, and a portion of this year's July event will celebrate their dedication and sacrifice to our country. During the day excerpts from novels, poetry and prose will be read in their honor. Iraq veteran Tyler Jones (Escondido) will discuss his upcoming comic books titled *Land of Confusion*.

Different authors speak every 15 minutes. For further information, contact Mary Quigley at (760) 510-9587 or mary@Q2Ink.com.

For a complete listing of news, events, resources, etc. in the San Diego writing and publishing community, visit www.sdwriteaway.org.

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If you attended our June 27 meeting, you know we had record-shattering attendance—81 people to be exact. (Our previous high was 68, set in April.) I can't begin to tell you how amazing it has been to watch our association grow over the past few years. It was only two years ago that we had attendances of fewer than 20 people, and we had at least one single-digit attendance in 2006.

But all this hasn't been an accident either. While building PWSD has been a bumpy path at times, and it's felt serendipitous at others, our soaring growth can be attributed to some key things we all can learn from.

1. Play with pricing. Over the 15 years of PWSD's existence, our membership fee has ranged from \$25 to \$67 per year, with meeting fees varying as well. It wasn't until a few years ago that we finally settled on the current \$37 plus \$10/\$15. This became our "sweet spot"—the price that was low enough to attract more people but high enough to help us grow and offer better programming. As you look at your own businesses and books, be open to experimentation in your pricing. Constantly try new ways to attract more buyers and fans. Sometimes, it may not be the price itself; with PWSD, last year we went to a 12-month membership instead of calendar-year membership, which effectively offered more value without changing the price.

2. Understand your target audience. Although PWSD started as the San Diego Publishers Alliance, over the years we've gained more and more non-publisher members and followers (hence the "Writers" part of our name). This transformation required us to adjust our programming, paying more attention to topics that appeal to authors and other publishing professionals. Are you putting out your services and products based on what you have in mind or what your potential customers have in mind? Take the time to get to know your constituency as much as possible.

Understand what their frustrations and needs are, and then seek to solve and fulfill those. As Bob Baker said in his presentation last month, you can push your stuff onto your followers or you can have them pull it from you—generally, the pull method works better. At this point in PWSD's existence, we do very little marketing; instead, we are discovered through word of mouth and the Internet. In other words, we don't "push."

3. Continually refine your services and products. PWSD has changed venues, meeting formats, membership structure, pricing, programming, and other aspects of what we do, many times. What has worked, we've kept doing; what hasn't, we've dropped. It's a never-ending process, as it should be with your business. As you grow and get feedback and learn (following #2 above), you have the opportunity to improve what you're offering. Yes, it can be a lot of work at times. It hasn't been fun for us to find a new venue each time we have, but it's (almost) always led us to a better location.

4. Know your mission. The adage "You can't be all things to all people" has never been truer in business than today. While Wal-Mart and Costco can survive and thrive on their models, the vast majority of businesses need to be highly focused. Because there are many groups and classes in the San Diego area that support the craft and art of writing, we made the specific choice to focus on the business side of publishing. You won't find a writers' critique session in our programming or lessons on developing reader-grabbing characters. But conversely, you will have a hard time finding elsewhere in the county the

education we offer. This is our mission. This makes us unique and attractive. What's your mission? Is it clearly communicated in your promotions and work?

5. Embrace consistent and persistent publicity. Perhaps the single biggest contributor to our success over the past couple years has been Andrea Glass's monthly announcements to the local media (which usually appear in the calendar sections). Chances are your first experience of PWSD was the result of this. While each individual calendar announcement may add only a handful of people at each meeting, there is a cumulative and exponential effect. Those who attend tell others, and they tell others and so on. In other words, while word of mouth is the best form of marketing, publicity (in many ways) is what cranks up the word of mouth. Think how you can incorporate more publicity into your business. Become known to your local media editors and producers as the expert in your topic; make yourself imminently available to them. Provide a wealth of information on your website, both for the media and general public. Write articles that demonstrate your expertise. And above all else, make sure to send notices to the local media on every newsworthy aspect of what you're doing—book event, presentation, workshop, etc.

While the above tips are good examples of what has led to PWSD's success, the most important element has been you. By reading and contributing to this newsletter, attending meetings, networking with others, telling people about the group, posting your listing on our member directory, and contributing in other ways, you have been a big part of how we've grown. And this leads to my closing tip—**none of us can go it alone**. As you look for ways to improve your own business efforts, whether as an author, publisher or publishing professional, remember that it takes a village. Seek help from others, pay for professional help when needed, and allow others to help you. Tap into the human desire we all share to be a part of someone's success. The publishing community is wonderfully generous in this way, more so than many other fields. Use this to your advantage. Wherever you are in your publishing journey, someone else has been there — and chances are they're willing to give you a hand or share some advice.



“You might think of me before
you start a 750 page book!”

June 27, 2009 Meeting:

**“Guerrilla Marketing for Authors, Publishers,
and Publishing Professionals”**

Presented by Bob Baker

Recap by Anna Kelso, PWSD Member

Speaking to a near capacity crowd, Bob Baker, (not related to the local car dealership) entertained the group with his wit and high energy. A musician since his teens, he has been a full-time writer for the last five years, developing his niche in music marketing. His strategies cross over into other genres, providing the perfect platform for the morning’s presentation.

Baker wrote his first book, *Guerrilla Music Marketing Handbook*, in 1992; it was originally published by a small publishing company that has since closed its doors. Today, most of his other books are self-published. *Guerrilla Music Marketing Handbook* emphasizes the importance of alternative promotion versus traditional marketing avenues. Marketing strategies don’t have to be big, wacky or crazy. They can be simple and at low or no cost. Baker considers his customers his fans and markets specifically to them.

So what is guerrilla marketing? It’s non-traditional and an alternative to mainstream marketing. It’s creative and utilizes time, energy and enthusiasm rather than money. It serves a niche market where cross promotion becomes a personal relationship with clients and fans, considered by Baker to be one and the same. Existing sales are leveraged to increase future sales. Guerrilla marketing is fun and playful instead of the serious and stressful experience that traditional marketing can be. It’s more like “drop by drop” marketing than the “big splash” approach.

Baker encourages marketing to be in the product itself. Tracking sales results and market feedback indicates how the public is responding to the product. When considering your own guerrilla marketing approach, here are some important questions to ask yourself:

- Who is my target audience?
- How is my product being perceived by the public?
- Are the sales of my product on course?
- Are the image, slogan and look of my website consistent with my product?
- Can I give a quick 20-second “elevator speech” about my product that presents a clear message of what I’m offering?
- Can I build repeat sales from existing clients?

Bob Baker encourages everyone to live their “right livelihood” by knowing and living their passion. His extensive website offers books, an ezine, a blog, podcasts, videos and articles about how to maximize marketing strategies for greater financial potential. For more information, go to www.Bob-Baker.com, www.Bob-Baker.blogspot.com and www.TheBuzzFactor.com.

My Education at Publishing University

By David Patrick, PWSD Webmaster

In late May, I traveled to New York City to attend the IBPA's 25th annual Publishing University. (As an aside, if you're not already a member of the IBPA—Independent Book Publishers Association—then I highly recommend joining. IBPA has lots of member benefits, and as a PWSD member you are eligible for a discounted membership. Visit www.ibpa-online.org for more information.)

Publishing University brings together hundreds of people, novices and experts alike, from the independent publishing world. A total of 58 different sessions were offered; and although one can only attend a fraction of the sessions in two-and-a-half days, all participants received an inch-thick booklet with the handouts from nearly all the sessions. I attended the three “group” sessions on the first half-day, then five more sessions on each of the two full days of the University. To give you some idea of the scope of the offerings, here is a partial list of the sessions I attended:

- Speed-Dating Your Distributor
- Libraries: The Untapped Opportunity
- Book Trailers and Beyond: How to Use Online Video to Boost Your Book Sales
- How You Slice It: Special Sales Will Open Doors to Greater Profits
- Expertizing for Greater Publicity
- Selling Children's and YA: Expanding Opportunities in Schools and Bookstores
- Using Advanced Social Media Tools for Book Web 2.0 Exposure
- The Power of Book Design

As you can see, sessions covered virtually every aspect of the publishing business. As an attendee you have a lot of flexibility to attend the sessions that most interest you. Also, there are sessions designed for all levels: some are aimed at the true beginner, whereas others are targeted to the experts. And if you're unsure how to get the most out of Publishing University, the excellent IBPA staff is on hand to help you tailor a “curriculum” perfect for you.

I picked up a lot while at PubU: at the end, I had 10 pages of typed notes on my laptop, and about two dozen specific ideas to implement in my publishing business. Also, I met many other small publishers from all over the country. A special treat was meeting the representatives from many of the other IBPA-affiliate groups (like PWSD) scattered throughout the US. I came home with a stack of business cards, a couple of important professional leads, and several potential new clients. Finally, I came away with renewed energy and a sense that, despite all the challenges facing our industry (the state of the economy, the decline of independent bookstores, the surge in digital distribution channels, etc.), there is a “we're all in this together” spirit that Publishing University (and, for that matter, IBPA and PWSD) helps foster.

David Patrick is Vice-President of AoPS Incorporated, a publisher of math books and resources for middle and high school students. David is also the webmaster of PWSD's website, www.publisherswriters.org. Reach David at patrick@artofproblemsolving.com.

Member Profile



David Knop

Coronado, California

miningsacredground@mac.com

<http://davideknop.net>

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

David: My main interest is fiction writing. I'm working on my third novel. I'm not published yet, but working hard towards it.

PWM: What first attracted you to fiction writing?

David: I've always taken to writing, and somewhere along the line one of my mentors said I could write. Sometimes I wonder if that's a blessing or a curse, for writing can become an obsession, especially when you're writing in a world of your own invention.

PWM: Did you have previous related writing experience?

David: I was a Marine staff officer and spent most of that time writing papers, reports, and orders for logistics operations. After I retired from the Marines, I spent years as a technical writer in the defense industry working for Science Applications International Corporation, Computer Sciences Corporation, and ViaSat. While on active duty, I had some technical articles published, and one of my SAIC manuals won an award. Interestingly enough, the similarities between technical writing and fiction writing are greater than the differences.

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)?

David: I have been a member for only three months, but enjoy the various email discussions, particularly as they relate to alternative publishing options.

PWM: What are you working on now?

David: I am working on a Southwestern adventure novel, the third of a series. My main character, Peter Romero, is a Native American police officer who calls on his ancestors' spiritual power to solve crimes. He's a tough guy who approaches his work in way I describe as "Rambo meets (Tony Hillerman's Navajo Policeman) Jim Chee." Romero's driving characteristic is that he never gives up.

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

David: Never give up.

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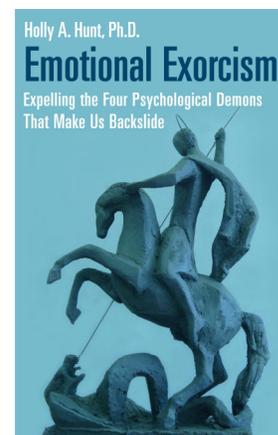
*"You must write every single day of your life...
you must lurk in libraries and climb the stacks like ladders
to sniff books like perfumes and wear books like hats upon your crazy heads...
may you be in love every day for the next 20,000 days.
And out of that love, remake a world."*

~ Ray Bradbury

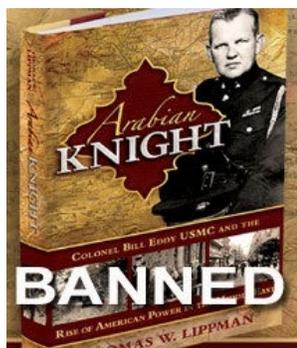
Nesta Aharoni, author of *My Goodness, My Kids*, has been busy. She recently appeared on Sallie Felton Radio Seattle (www.salliefeltonlifecoach.com). Her interview may be heard by downloading the June 11 show. Her book was also reviewed on Book Visions (www.bookvisions.blogspot.com), and she will speak at the La Leche League Convention in Dayton, Florida, in September.



Dr. Holly A. Hunt's groundbreaking work, *Emotional Exorcism: Expelling the Four Psychological Demons That Make Us Backslide*, new from Praeger, offers all those in emotional distress a new way to face their demons and banish them once and for all. For anyone unable to pull themselves out of sadness, anxiety, anger or addictive behaviors, it is a potent and practical strategy for expelling psychological demons and stopping the feeling of failure. Drawing on years of experience in private practice with clients of all backgrounds, Dr. Hunt shows how earlier life experiences can create a core of negative belief she calls the "Master Demon," as well as self-sabotaging thoughts and behavior patterns called the "Four Soldier Demons." These generate emotional negativity within us, providing a power source for the demons. Dr. Hunt then provides a practical, user-friendly, research-grounded model to change those self-sabotaging thoughts, behaviors and feelings without the self-defeating burden of battling ourselves. Through a variety of tools, she empowers readers to separate from, stop feeding and effectively exorcize their psychological demons.



Holly A. Hunt, Ph.D., is a psychologist, author, and speaker based in Southern California, where she first established her private practice in 1990. She provides presentations on the topic of expelling the four psychological demons that make us backslide. For more information and to order the book, visit www.HollyAHunt.com.



Arabian Knight: Colonel Bill Eddy USMC and the Rise of American Power in the Middle East received the 2009 Benjamin Franklin Award for biography of the year by the Independent Book Publishers Association. PWSD board member, **Karla Olson** of Book Studio, accepted on behalf of Selwa Press at the awards ceremony May 28, 2009, in New York. Selwa Press publisher and PWSD member **Tim Barger** announced that *Arabian Knight* has been officially banned by the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Information. Tim noted that this wasn't his first book to be banned in the kingdom. He said, "In these days of global satellite TV and the Internet, it is almost quaint to think that banning a book could accomplish anything, except embarrassment for the banning authority, be it a school board in Kansas, a commission in Brussels or a ministry in Arabia. To deny the Saudis the opportunity to

read in English about the history of their country might be considered a free speech issue. I see it as a restraint-of-trade issue, the trade in ideas, something more valuable than money. To discourage the serious reading of history in a country awash in Egyptian soap operas, Bollywood and Hollywood DVDs, slick personality magazines, and disposable popular music is just plain self-destructive."

Tim Barger was born in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, and spent most of his first 30 years in the kingdom. Selwa Press hosts websites at www.outintheblue.com and www.SelwaPress.com.

Events

Wed., July 15, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.—**Sunbelt Publications** presents a class on “**Marketing for Writers.**” Have you published a book, or are you writing a book? Remember, publishing is only the first step. Marketing is important to a book’s success. Sunbelt will host a series of monthly workshops, in which writers can learn from Editor-in-Chief Jennifer Redmond and Director of Sales and Marketing Richelle Floco, as well as from select Sunbelt authors. Subjects covered will include common marketing pitfalls, how to get noticed by book buyers, and how to attract media attention. Come prepared to brainstorm and be creative. Each class is \$10 with advance reservation or \$15 at the door, and seating is limited. For more information call (619) 258-4911, or email marketing@sunbeltpub.com. For a list of other events go to www.SunbeltBooks.com.

Sun., July 19, 10:30 a.m.—**Authors & Art**, the fourth annual reading event in collaboration with San Diego Pride and the San Diego Art Institute at the Museum of the Living Artist in Balboa Park. Kimberly Dark, Fergal O’Doherty and Rob Williams are featured writers/performers. Check The Writers Ink website for additional information at www.sandiegowriters.org.

Mon., July 27, 7:00 p.m.—Fifth Annual **Membership & Community Meeting** at The Ink Spot. Come celebrate yourself and your writing community. Contact Special Events Check the The Writers Ink website for additional information at: www.sandiegowriters.org.

Sat., August 8—check out **Some Like it Hot, an annual Summer Writing Marathon**. Go to The Writers Ink website for additional information at www.sandiegowriters.org.

Resource

Wordsmith.org <http://wordsmith.org/awad/about.html>

Wordsmith.org is a worldwide online community of some half-million readers who share a love for words, wordplay, language and literature. They hail from Australia to Zimbabwe and almost all other places in between. Services include A.Word.A.Day, Internet Anagram Server, Wordsmith Talk, Wordsmith Chat, Wordserver, and Listat.

(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 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 for more information and to sign up for this newsletter.

Closing date

Newsletter contributions must be received by the **last day of each month**.

Send contributions to newsletter@publisherswriters.org

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