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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.

Meetings are held on the last Saturday of each month (except November and December). If held in person, they take place from 10:00 a.m. to noon, usually at the Carlsbad Dove Library (1775 Dove Lane, Carlsbad, CA 92011). If held virtually, they take place from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon. *Always check meeting information in the newsletter for current location and times.*

**Meeting:** Saturday February 22, 2025  
**Time:** 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon  
**Location:** Carlsbad Dove Library – Gowland Room  
**Topic:** Speaking to Sell Your Book  
**Speaker:** Dave Ray

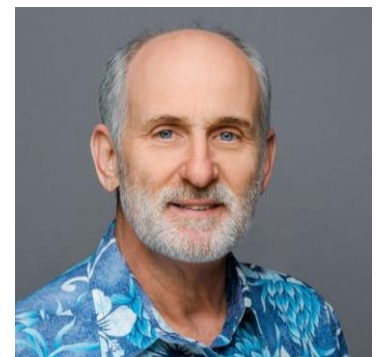
Speaking engagements are a great way to sell your book and yourself. But you need to make sure that your presentation is as effective as possible. In this session, speaking coach and trainer Dave Ray will show what to do and how to get the most out of public appearances. This will frame you as an expert and bring potential readers stampeding to the table.

Your book marketing through speaking does not have to be intimidating, even for those who've never spoken to a group. You only need to do three things to be a great speaker and command an audience: Be Relevant, Be Confident; and, Be Engaging.

Then, of course, there's the part about "Who do you speak to?" and "How do you make the whole event happen?" Dave will show you easy ways to put these pieces together effortlessly and become your own best marketing asset for your book.

**About the Speaker:** *Dave Ray is the owner of Dave Ray Coaching and Consulting. He teaches small- and medium-sized business owners to prosper in today's uncertain economy by perfecting their communications, improving their confidence, and engaging any audience. His mission is to "eradicate 'Death by PowerPoint' from the face of the Earth one speaker at a time."*

*He is the author of Verbal Vigilante: Win Your Battles and Make Things Happen with Powerful Writing, helping readers create influential and powerful letters, blog posts, articles and press releases for business and personal needs.*



*President's Message*



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**By Karla Olson  
President, Publishers & Writers of San Diego**

Thanks to Desireé Duffy from [Black Chateau Enterprises](#), we started 2025 with a lot of great advice and marketing energy. For those who couldn't attend, Desireé is generously sharing her [slides](#), which are full of great information and advice. Please reach out to Desireé if you have any questions or need advice. She's terrific.

Next up, our in-person meeting in February features our very own Dave Ray, telling us how to market our books with the most effective speaking presentations possible. Even if you are new or uncomfortable with speaking in public, Dave promises to make it easy, fun, and profitable. Please join us for networking at 10, with Dave's presentation beginning at 10:30. As usual, we will be in the Gowland Room at the Carlsbad Library.

Please support PWSD by making sure your membership is up to date. We do have expenses around hosting the meetings and sending out the newsletters, so your contribution through membership is very helpful and appreciated. We'll send out an update if your membership needs renewal, or please contact [Robbie@bookstudiobooks.com](mailto:Robbie@bookstudiobooks.com) if you are not sure.

Also, to amplify your publishing success even more, I encourage you to look into joining the Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA). This is a national organization that offers so much support for indie publishers, including marketing programs, educational session and advocacy. Having recently merged with PubWest, IBPA is bigger, stronger, and better than ever. They offer a discount on membership for PWSD members. Use this code: PWSD2025ibpa. Remember, you must be a PWSD member.

*Continued on next page*

## *President's Message—continued from previous page*

Finally, [IBPA Publishing University](#) is coming up May 15–17, 2025 in St. Paul, MN. I'll be there for sure, and I hope you will consider attending as well. As you all know from San Diego's PubU in 2023, it is an information packed, networking rich, fun and fulfilling conference. And, the prestigious IBPA Book Awards are part of it. Check it out!

Please be sure to join us in the Gowland Room at the Carlsbad (Dove) Library on February 22, 2025 from 10 am to Noon.

## **PWSD News**

A couple of notes about meeting etiquette at webinar meetings held next February and at successive even-numbered months. Please be sure you are muted while our speaker is presenting, as background noise is distracting for all other participants. If you have a question during the presentation, put it in the chat, and the host (me!) will monitor the questions.

Please save general questions for the Q&A at the end of the presentation. The host will call on you and ask you to speak if your question needs clarification.

The meetings are not recorded. Instead, most speakers have been sharing their slides, so be sure to go to the [blog](#) to find presentations by many of our past speakers.

## **PWSD Membership**

In-person meetings are \$10 for members and \$20 for nonmembers. We are happy to continue offering virtual meetings free to participants, but we hope you will support PWSD in the following ways:

1. **Make sure your membership is up to date.** Watch your inbox for a notice if your membership has expired. (If you wish, email [Robbie@bookstudiobooks.com](mailto:Robbie@bookstudiobooks.com) and he will check your membership.) *Note: we are likely to raise the membership fee in the next few months (darned inflation!), so renew your membership now.*
2. **If you are not a member, please consider joining.** Right now, membership is only \$47 per year, which helps us to get the best speakers and provide other benefits to our members. Go to [PublishersWriters.org](http://PublishersWriters.org) to join.
3. **Tell your publishing and author friends and colleagues about PWSD** and invite them to join us!

When you join PWSD, in addition to the reduced meeting fee, you get many other benefits, as listed on page 5. You can easily join by clicking on the link to PayPal on our website, or send a check, made out to PWSD, to P.O. Box 387, Ventura, CA 93002.

1. **Make sure your membership is up to date.** Watch your inbox for a notice if your membership has expired. (If you wish, email [Robbie@bookstudiobooks.com](mailto:Robbie@bookstudiobooks.com) and he will check your membership status.)
2. **If your membership is up to date, please consider paying the meeting fee even at virtual meetings.** You can do this at [PublishersWriters.org](http://PublishersWriters.org) and clicking on RSVP.
3. **If you are not a member, please consider joining.** Membership is only \$47 per year, which helps us to get the best speakers and provide other benefits to our members. Go to [PublishersWriters.org](http://PublishersWriters.org) to join.
4. **Tell your publishing and author friends and colleagues about PWSD** and have them join us!

## **IBPA Membership**

If you have launched on your publishing journey and you don't yet know about IBPA, which can be a great support for you, I encourage you to explore the benefits of joining. This is the national association that includes such regional affiliates as PWSD. You can find information on their very robust and informative website at [IBPA-online.org/](http://IBPA-online.org/). IBPA membership is very affordable, and to make it even better, PWSD members get a \$30 discount. Just enter PWSD2025ibpa in the coupon code.

IBPA has a monthly Roundtable that I highly recommend. It allows publishers of all shapes and sizes to share success strategies and brainstorm publishing challenges. I often attend and find them very valuable. Also, IBPA has recently created an education hub called [PubSpot](#), which assembles, in one easy-to-navigate site, all the invaluable information IBPA offers about how to succeed in publishing. From editorial to distribution and more, check out all the great articles and webinars that will help you succeed on your publishing journey.



**“PWSD likes Facebook!”**  
**[Visit us on Facebook today](#)**  
**to let us know you like us  
and join the conversation!**



## Care to Join Us?

**Save more and learn more:** Attend PWSD meetings at reduced member rates! Yearly dues are only \$47—one of the most economical memberships available. As a member, you save \$10 at every PWSD meeting you attend, versus the \$20 nonmember meeting fee. (Get meeting details for PWSD in each newsletter issue.) And take a look in the next section below at all the other extras you get as a member!


## Member Welcome and Reminders

**If you're a new or returning member, welcome to the PWSD family!** Congratulations on joining Publishers & Writers of San Diego, the only publishing group in San Diego County focused on the business of publishing and writing! You have made a wise investment, as you'll see later on this page.

### **Subscribe to PWSD in order to optimize your membership:**

Receiving the email that accompanied this newsletter does not mean your name has been added to the regular notice distribution list. Go to [PublishersWriters.org](http://PublishersWriters.org) and click on the button that looks like what you see at right. This is necessary for you to receive any and all notices from PWSD.

### Free PWSD Newsletter

 **Subscribe to the PWSD Newsletter**  
Subscription is free: get monthly articles from our speakers, writing tips, announcements, upcoming events, and more.

**Get found in the PWSD online member directory:** Email your new or revised bio & headshot to [Webmaster@publisherswriters.org](mailto:Webmaster@publisherswriters.org) as soon as you can, for valuable publicity! Our website is very highly ranked on Google, which means you will get broader exposure by being part of the member directory at [PublishersWriters.org/member-directory](http://PublishersWriters.org/member-directory). You must be an up-to-date member to be in the directory. Unsure when you should renew? Email [Robbie@bookstudiobooks.com](mailto:Robbie@bookstudiobooks.com) and he will let you know.

**Get a snazzy permanent name badge to wear at on-site meetings:** Your badge will be available at in-person meetings. (Please remember to turn it in as you leave.)

**Participate in occasional regional collaborative marketing efforts:** If you're subscribed (see above), you'll be notified of these events whenever they occur.

**Get a 30% discount on IBPA membership and optionally apply for a scholarship to IBPA's annual Publishing University:** If you've launched your publishing journey, join the Independent Book Publishers Association at [IBPA-online.org/](http://IBPA-online.org/) and use PWSD2025ibpa as the code to get your discount.

**Want to be profiled in PWSD's newsletter?** Contact Andrea Glass at [Andrea@writersway.com](mailto:Andrea@writersway.com). If your membership is current, she will provide you with nine simple questions to answer. Then, along with your answers, send her your full contact information, a head shot, and one or two other images, such as book covers or action shots, and she will publish your finished profile in *Publishers & Writers Monthly*.

**Do you have newsletter feature articles or ideas?** Send them to Managing Editor Glenna Bloemen at [gab11853@aol.com](mailto:gab11853@aol.com). We are currently seeking feature articles for the upcoming issues of the newsletter. If you've read something great or have an idea or an article that you believe would be of interest to your fellow members, please submit it to Glenna. Thank you for your continued support.



# Meeting the Needs of All Readers

Alexa Schlosser

*Reprinted with permission. This article was first published in December 2024 by the Independent Book Publishers Association, [IBPA-Online.org](https://www.ibpa-online.org).*

The push for greater accessibility is reshaping the publishing landscape, compelling publishers to rethink how they reach every reader. Publishers face growing regulations and must adapt to meet the needs of readers with disabilities. Michael Johnson, vice president of content at Benetech, and Richard Rieman, founder of Imagination Storybooks, are two industry leaders helping publishers tackle the challenges of making content accessible. This article, featuring insights from both, explores the steps publishers must take to meet accessibility standards while keeping their content engaging and inclusive.

## Preparing for Accessibility Requirements

As accessibility requirements tighten, particularly in Europe and the education sector, publishers must take proactive steps to prepare. According to Michael Johnson, one of the first tasks is to ensure e-books meet certification standards. “The core takeaway is to bring their e-book production up to certification standards. They can work with us or try to self-certify, but they must do the work on the files and have the correct metadata in ONIX,” he says.

Keeping up with changing accessibility standards can be a challenge, but Johnson encourages publishers to stay informed by engaging with industry groups. “The W3C has a variety of working groups covering all manner of topics. BISG has working groups as well. Participating, or at least following, these groups is the best way to stay up on things,” he says. Benetech’s Global Certified Accessible (GCA) service also provides quarterly updates to help publishers keep pace with the latest developments.

## Overcoming Common Accessibility Challenges

One of the most significant hurdles in creating accessible content is ensuring that all elements of a book are usable by everyone. Johnson highlights three main issues: image descriptions, in-book navigation, and language shifts. “All images need to be described—this is true for illustrations, photos, charts, graphs, tables, and formulas. Beyond just describing the image, additional information should be included to connect the image to the relevant text,” he says.

In-book navigation is another critical area. “Navigation includes page numbers, endnotes, photo notes, indices, glossaries, and tables of contents. Anything that helps the reader get through the book,” Johnson says. He also notes the importance of accommodating language shifts, such as

when a paragraph in a different language appears in the middle of the text. “The EPUB should let the assistive tech know about the shift, or the screen reader will try and read the Spanish in French. This is horrible,” he says. Despite these challenges, Johnson believes that creating accessible content is not as difficult as many publishers assume. “The biggest misconception publishers have is that it’s something separate or hard. If accessibility is part of the original process, this is just another design element rather than a separate series of tasks,” he says.

### **Making Children’s Literature Accessible**

Richard Rieman specializes in transforming illustrated children’s books into accessible formats for children with visual and hearing impairments. He explains the process of adapting these books, which includes adding descriptions of illustrations so that blind children can enjoy the visuals. “We have professional audio description writers describe the illustrations the way a child can understand and appreciate them. Then we have narrators—many of whom are blind—voice both the description and the book text,” he says.

For video versions of these books, Rieman’s team adds additional layers of accessibility, such as sign language and captions. “Having both captions and sign language interpretation for deaf children gives them an important early learning experience,” he says. This multimodal approach ensures that children with different types of disabilities can fully engage with the content.

### **Leveraging Technology for Accessibility**

Technology plays a crucial role in adapting books for accessibility. Rieman shares that Imagination Storybooks uses tools like Camtasia for video editing and ProTools for audio production, with experts like their blind audio editor, Tristan Snyder, leading the way. He is also excited about emerging technologies that can further enhance accessibility, including a ChatGPT extension that can create image descriptions and a tool that turns accessible books into songs. “The new technologies we are excited about are Suno.com for making the accessible books into songs and the Be My Eyes ChatGPT extension that can create written descriptions of illustrations in picture books,” Rieman says.

### **Collaborating with Authors and Publishers**

Collaboration between authors, illustrators, and publishers is essential for making children’s books accessible. Rieman explains that many of their projects are funded through crowdfunding platforms like Kickstarter and GoFundMe, allowing authors to create accessible versions of their books. “Our accessible videos are paid for by the authors, often as part of a Kickstarter or GoFundMe campaign,” he says.

Rieman also addresses misconceptions about the market for accessible children’s books.

"Publishers often assume there is no market for short audiobooks, but we price our audiobooks at \$10, and our *Winnie the Pooh – the Accessible Version* is the top-selling version of the original *Winnie the Pooh* book on Audible and has made us thousands of dollars in royalties,” he says. Accessible audiobooks can also serve as valuable promotion tools, driving interest in both the accessible versions and the original books.

## The Future of Accessible Publishing

Looking ahead, both Johnson and Rieman see a promising future for accessible publishing. Johnson believes that by embedding accessibility into the design process from the beginning, publishers can make accessibility a natural part of their workflows. Rieman predicts that the booming audiobook market will lead to more publishers embracing accessible formats.

“The rapid growth of the audiobook market will lead to many more publishers making their books accessible by adding audio descriptions of the pictures. It's an audiobook ramp for all children to use,” Rieman says. As the industry continues to evolve, accessibility will remain at the forefront of publishing, ensuring that all readers—regardless of their abilities—can enjoy the stories they love.

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**Alexa Schlosser** is the managing editor of IBPA Independent magazine. Are you an independent publisher or author-publisher with an interesting story or approach to your work? Email her at [alexa@ibpa-online.org](mailto:alexa@ibpa-online.org).





## *Announcements by and about Members*

*We know you have many events scheduled in the upcoming months to promote your books. Please share with your fellow writers so they can attend. Send your schedules to [gab11853@aol.com](mailto:gab11853@aol.com).*

*We would love to highlight you as a member of PWSD. Please contact Andrea Glass, Member Profile Editor, at [andrea@writersway.com](mailto:andrea@writersway.com).*

## *Calendar of Events*

Some conferences and workshops could go online or be cancelled, due to pandemic or other considerations, so check the newsletter or event websites for updates.

### **San Diego Writers Festival** **April 5, 2025, Coronado, CA**

Celebrate the craft of writing by joining the 6th Annual San Diego Writers Festival coming up on April 5, 2025! For more details: [info@sandiegowritersfestival.com](mailto:info@sandiegowritersfestival.com).



### **IBPA Publishing University** **May 15–17, 2025, St. Paul, MN**

Featuring hands-on sessions, in-depth workshops, and the in-person magic you can't duplicate on Zoom, IBPA Publishing University 2025 will empower you and your publishing program to Connect, Collaborate, and Transform!

- Celebrate and live IBPA's motto of "helping each other achieve and succeed!"
- Educational tracks will help your publishing business Connect, Collaborate, and Transform With a "Start Strong" track for Indie and Author Publishers who are in their first few years and books of their publishing journey; a "Level Up" track for Indie and Author Publishers who have ten or more books already published; and an "Everyone" track to collectively look at some of the biggest issues/opportunities with publishing, like AI, the business case for DEI, and how to pitch your book for TV and movies.

- Participate in fun networking events built to connect you with other publishers and service providers who offer helpful solutions for publishers like you. And make sure to sign up for IBPA’s ever-popular one-on-one “Ask the Expert” mentoring sessions!
- Attend a gala dinner and awards ceremony where we’ll celebrate the Gold and Silver winners of the 36th annual IBPA Benjamin Franklin Awards – come for the reception, enjoy the inspirational speeches, and stay for the after-party!

[Learn more and register today.](#)



**Have more resources to share? Please email them to Newsletter Editor Glenna Bloemen at [gab11853@aol.com](mailto:gab11853@aol.com), and we will be happy to include them in this list.**

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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| <b>California Resources for Writers</b> .....                                                                | <a href="http://WriteByNight.net/California">WriteByNight.net/California</a>                                                                                             |
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| <b>The Top Online Writers’ Conferences</b> .....                                                             | <a href="http://SoYouWantToWrite.org/blogs/syww/Top-25-online-writers-conferences-in-2021">SoYouWantToWrite.org/blogs/syww/Top-25-online-writers-conferences-in-2021</a> |
| <b>University of San Diego–Creative Writing</b> .....                                                        | <a href="http://SanDiego.edu/cas/creative-writing/">SanDiego.edu/cas/creative-writing/</a>                                                                               |
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| <b>The Writers Room</b> .....                                                                                | <a href="http://WritersRoom.org">WritersRoom.org</a>                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Writing Conferences and Events</b> .....                                                                  | <a href="http://NewPages.com/writers-resources/writing-conferences-events">NewPages.com/writers-resources/writing-conferences-events</a>                                 |

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