



JULY 11 Meeting

Independence Day? A Publishing Smackdown!

Ever wondered what it's like on the "other side" of the publishing fence? Join us Wednesday evening, July 11, for a lively debate between two successful authors – one self-published; the other traditionally published.

INDEPENDENCE DAY?



"Pretty Patricia" Corrigan vs. "Buzzin' Bob" Baker

A Publishing Smackdown!


They'll give you the inside scoop on the pros and cons of each direction in a playful, tongue-in-cheek "smackdown" format.

Join author/journalist Patricia Corrigan and independent author/

publisher Bob Baker as they weigh in on the pros and cons of self-publishing (Bob) versus conventional publishing (Patricia). There will be plenty of time for networking and questions, so start making your list now!

Patricia Corrigan is the author of 13 books, including *Wild Things*, an anecdotal history of the St. Louis Zoo, *Chemotherapy & Radiation For Dummies*, and six children's nature books. She leads workshops designed for writers at all skill levels who want to gain confidence in the craft.

Corrigan knows something about writing—she spent 23 years at the *Post-Dispatch*, where she worked as a news reporter, night city editor, feature columnist, restaurant critic, theater critic, travel writer, health and fitness writer, fashion writer and food writer. She is a snorkeler and a theater buff, and currently is learning about opera.

Bob Baker is an author, musician, actor and artist who is dedicated to helping creative people of all kinds get exposure, connect with fans, and increase their incomes through their artistic passions. Bob's books include *Guerilla Music Marketing Handbook*, *Unleash the Artist Within*, *MySpace Music Marketing*, *Branding Yourself Online* and more. He also publishes various audio products, as well as a free ezine, blog and podcast at **TheBuzzFactor.com**. He is the current President of St. Louis Publishers Association. 

Part I Finding a Publisher

This month's "Ten Basic Steps" articles come from the web site of the New York Center for Independent Publishing ©2005–2007. The New York Center for Independent Publishing. NYCIP helps independent publishers reach a wider audience for their books, and to provide information and draw public awareness to the offering of these presses. NYCIP encourages excellence and free expression in publishing through workshops, lectures, book fairs, exhibits, and our Reference Center on Writing and Publishing. <http://nycip.org>

Ten Basic Steps to Finding a Publisher

1. Be realistic about your chances of being published by a major publisher and consider the equally worthy route of independent publishing. Read some of the books listed at the end of this article, learn the difference between publishing, subsidized publishing, vanity publishing, and self-publishing. Consider self-publishing your book.
 2. Think about finding a literary agent for your particular manuscript. Normally you cannot submit a manuscript to a major publisher without an agent. But you may not need an agent to submit your manuscript to an independent publisher.
 3. Study independently published books that will be similar to yours in subject matter at the Small Press Center and independent bookstores, and think about approaching these publishers directly.
 4. Consult directories, such as *The International Directory of Little Magazines and Small Presses* (Dustbooks), *The Directory of Poetry Publishers* (Dustbooks), *Writer's Market* (Writer's
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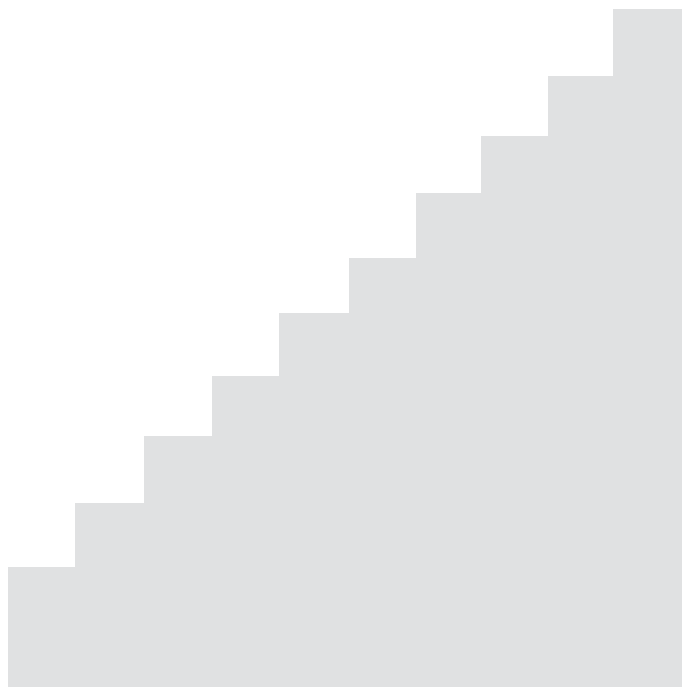
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Digest Books) to find out different publisher's policies towards accepting unsolicited material. If you cannot find particular publishers in these directories, call them directly and ask their policy.

5. Select a few appropriate publishers for your book, rank them numerically in order of preference and initiate contact.
6. Depending on the publisher's policy, it may be better to submit a query letter, book proposal or cover letter before submitting your manuscript. Study samples of book proposal and query letters.
7. Submit your manuscript or proposal. Multiple submissions to different publishers are okay.
8. Use and develop personal contacts to get your manuscript read and/or recommended to publishers. If you submit to a particular editor, know as much about his/her previous books and preferences as possible. Will your book improve the publisher's list?
9. If your manuscript is accepted for publication, study up on financial arrangements or hire an agent or lawyer. Be prepared to promote your own book.
10. When you reach this stage, congratulations! Approximately 10% of all submitted manuscripts are accepted. If you were unsuccessful, rethink your approach, try new prospects or consider self-publishing. 📖



Selected Bibliography

These books can be located in the **New York Center for Independent Publishing (CIP) Reference Collection**. The CIP has over 400 reference books on writing and publishing, and a bibliography which lists over 1700 books on these subjects. If you are not able to visit the CIP in Manhattan, we suggest you browse through these titles at your nearest bookstore.

How to Get Happily Published, Judith Applebaum, 5th ed., 1998, HarperCollins.

Business & Legal Forms for Authors & Self-Publishers, Tad Crawford, 3rd ed., 2000, Allworth Press, New York, NY.

How to Write a Book Proposal, 3rd ed., Michael Larsen, 2004, Writer's Digest Books, Cincinnati, OH.

How to Write Attention Grabbing Query & Cover Letters, John Wood, 2000, Writer's Digest Books, Cincinnati, OH.

Smart Self-Publishing: An Author's Guide to Producing a Marketable Book, Linda and Jim Salisbury, 3rd ed., 2003, Tabby House, Charlotte Harbor, FL.

The Complete Guide to Self-Publishing: Everything You Need to Know to Write, Publish, Promote, and Sell Your Own Book, Tom and Marilyn Ross, 4th ed., 2002, F&W Publications, first published by Writer's Digest Books.

The Copyright Permission and Libel Handbook: A Step-by-Step Guide For Writers, Editors, and Publishers, Lloyd J. Jassin & Steven C. Schecter, 1998, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, NY.

The International Directory of Little Magazines and Small Presses, 2003-2004 Edition, Len Fulton, Editor, 39th ed., 2003, Dustbooks, Paradise, CA.

The Publishing Game: Bestseller in 30 Days, Fern Reiss, 2003, Peanut Butter and Jelly Press, Newton, MA.

The Publishing Game: Find an Agent in 30 Days, Fern Reiss, 2003, Peanut Butter and Jelly Press, Newton, MA.

The Self-Publishing Manual: How to Write, Print and Sell Your Own Book, Dan Poytner, 14th ed., 2003, Para Publishing, Santa Barbara, CA.

Write the Perfect Book Proposal, Jeff Herman and Deborah Levine Herman, 2001, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, NY.

2003 Guide to Literary Agents: 600+ Agents Who Sell What You Write, Rachel Vater, Editor, 2002, Writer's Digest Books, Cincinnati, OH.

Ten Basic Steps to Finding a Literary Agent

1. If you want your book to be published by one of the larger publishing conglomerates, you will in all probability need a literary agent to approach them for you. However, you do not need a literary agent to approach the smaller publishing houses. Step one is to determine which medium you would ideally like to publish your book through. If you decide to go through a literary agent, it is believed by many in the business that it is better to finish your manuscript before hooking an agent. This way, your polished manuscript and proposal can assist you in landing an agent, and you will not have to keep your agent waiting for anything, as you have completed the book ahead of time.
2. No matter what stage your manuscript is at, you should complete some market research on the topic on which you wish to publish. Make sure your topic is defined and easily marketable. Clearly targeting an audience and strategizing on how you can reach them is a useful way to devise a marketing strategy. Further, develop a sizzling title and text for the cover copy that will capture the attention not only of your potential readers but also of your prospective agent.
3. One way to contact agents is through standard mail. Search literary agent books for agents that seem to handle books that are similar to yours. Try *Literary Market Place* as a starting point. Seek out books in a bookstore that are similar to yours and find out who their agents are. Read *Publishers Weekly*, especially the Hot Deals column.
4. Discover where to meet agents on-line. While it may be easier to meet with agents in person, it is also possible to find agents online. One way is to read *Publishers Lunch*, which is an e-mail list that covers the publishing news. One time a week, "Deal Lunch" provides details of the latest agent coups. E-mail **PublishersLunch-subscribe@topica.com** in order to subscribe. Remember that you are not only trying to find a good agent, but also the right agent for your book.
5. Find out where to go to meet agents in person. If you know someone who has an agent, ask for the agent's name. Attend a writer's conference and attempt either to make the acquaintance of an agent or a writer who has a decent agent. By attending the best writing conferences you can find, you will be able to find top-notch writers and agents.
6. After you have begun to research appropriate agents for your book, the next step is to write a captivating pitch letter. Make sure your letter is personalized to the agent, does not exceed 2 pages, has professional form and no spelling or grammatical mistakes. Come up with a 10 to 15 second pitch you will use to sell your book when you come face-to-face with an agent. From there, you should develop a one-paragraph hook for your book, starting either with the most compelling reason people have for reading your book or an intriguing question. Continue your letter by explaining why you have contacted that agent in particular. Then describe your audience and marketing plan as clearly and specifically as possible. Finally, include your credentials, why you are the right person to be writing this book, offer to send a complete proposal and manuscript, and thank the agent. Include a self-addressed stamped envelope so that it will be easy for the agent to respond. If you have been waiting longer than 2 months, follow up with an e-mail or a letter.
7. Following the pitch letter is the book proposal, which will help the agent get a better idea of both your book and the marketing strategies that you will use. For tips on writing an exceptional book proposal, see *Ten Basic Steps to Writing a Nonfiction Book Proposal*.
8. After completing and sending your book proposal, you can wait to receive responses from interested agents. The next step is to learn the basics of approaching agents. First interest the agent by being brief, professional, and intriguing. Do not share personal information or ask the agent about his or her marketing plans until he or she has offered to represent you. Also, note that if an agent charges you for reading your submission, he or she is not a valid agent. Interest the agent in your pitch and don't forget to tell the agent why you are interested in him or her in particular.
9. After an agent has offered to represent you, feel free to ask them certain questions to discover if they are the type of agent that you want for your book. You can ask them questions like:
 - Are you a member of an agent organization?
 - How long have you been an agent/in the publishing business?
 - What authors do you represent and may I contact them as references?
 - Will you handle my book directly?
 - How often will you give me feedback on its progress?
 - Will I have input on all overtures and offer?
 - What is your commission?
 - What expenses will I pay?
 - When do I get my money?
10. When you find an agent whose answers to the above questions suit your needs, you will be able to decide on a contract with that agent and you have successfully completed your goal!

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The Power of Action

One of the big things that stops people from publishing their own book is what I call the Perfection Curse. Aspiring authors feel that everything must be squeaky clean and flawless before a book can materialize. And the burden of juggling all the details keeps them from staying with it long enough to see their book become a reality.

Here's some advice that goes against the grain of what you'll hear from many book publishing authorities:

Of course, strive for the best book you can create. But don't let the Perfection Curse keep you from breathing life into your book idea. Just get it out there—then fine tune it later.

Most self-publishing experts will disagree with me. And I know why they do. It's because so many first-time authors put out junk, and it reflects poorly on the overall reputation of independently published books in general.

But there's another sad aspect to this new author dilemma: The writer who is so scared he will get it wrong, he never completes the mission. Or the would-be author who is so worried about what people will think, she doesn't follow through to see her book become a reality.

Don't let the Perfection Curse stop you!

I was reminded of this recently when I read an article by Jack Canfield. He's the author of *The Success Principles* and co-compiler of the bestselling *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books. (You might say Jack knows a few things about selling tons of books.) Here's an excerpt from his article:

"As you begin to take action toward the fulfillment of your goals and dreams, you must realize that not every action will be perfect. Not every action will produce the desired result. Not every action will work. Making mistakes, getting it almost right, and experimenting to see what happens are all part of the process of eventually getting it right.

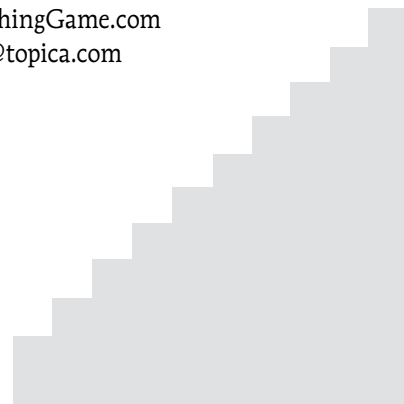
"Don't be afraid to just jump in and get started moving toward your goals. As long as you pay attention to the feedback you receive, you will make progress. Just getting into the game and firing allows you to correct and refine your aim."

Move past your doubts and do something

I believe this trait is one of the biggest factors that led to my full-time author status. If I hadn't started dabbling in publishing and

For more in-depth information on finding a literary agent, go to the source for this list:

Reiss, Fern. *The Publishing Game*, Boston, MA: Peanut Butter and Jelly Press, 2003. PublishingGame.com
PublishersLunch-subscribe@topica.com
 Publishers Weekly 



selling information in the early 1990s, if I had waited till I "had it just right," if I had been paranoid about my early attempts at packaging my reports and manuals ... I would probably still be only thinking about "some day" publishing my own book.


But I took action. I got something tangible (albeit low-budget and primitive) out into the world. I got feedback from real, live human beings. And I made a little bit of money right out of the starting gate, which inspired me to improve the material and the packaging, reach more people, and generate more revenue still.

This approach is especially effective using today's digital printing technology. Put your first book together as best you can, then print only 50 copies. Make notes on how to improve the book as you get feedback from readers. If things go well, print more as needed. Then, at some point, update the content and the look of the cover. Then print more digital copies.

Continue this process until your book gets as close to perfect as you can make it. If sales are brisk, then—and only then—should you do a larger offset print run. And when you finally do print a couple thousand copies or more, you can do so with the confidence that you are offering a book of true value that you can be proud of.



So ... consider Jack's and my advice:
Action is a powerful thing. Take it!

To your publishing success! 

Bob Baker
president@stlouispublishers.org

SLPA Online Catalog

This August, the 2007 SLPA Online Catalog will be updated. This online catalog contains all the books currently in the 2007 printed version, but it will also include an updated selection of our members' books. If you missed the February deadline for the printed edition or joined SLPA after the deadline this year, you can still participate in the online version of the catalog. Please send your information to Sue Sylvia at: slpa@staircasepress.com.

How can I be included in the 2007 SLPA Online Catalog?

You must pay your 2007 annual membership dues by July 25 to be included. Your dues covers one year of monthly meeting fees, and all other annual membership benefits.

What do I need to do to have my book included in this Catalog?

You must provide the following information to Sue Sylvia at slpa@staircasepress.com by **JULY 25, 2007**.

1. A .jpg file of the front cover of your book (as an attachment, NOT as a download link!)
2. A 50-word description of your book, and a 25-word author bio in MS Word or as text of an email.
3. Title, author, publisher, format (paperback, hardcover, e-book, etc.), price, ISBN, address (to purchase), web site and/or phone # (to purchase).

Can I include more than one book in this catalog?

One book listing is FREE to each SLPA member. Additional titles can be included at \$20 per title for members. Vendor members can also be included in the catalog as a listing ad for their services. One service listing is free for Vendor Members. Contact Sue Sylvia at slpa@staircasepress.com with questions.

Members can receive five copies of the printed catalog for their own distribution purposes. The downloadable catalog is online now and will be updated on October 1, 2006. We will encourage people to go to the site and download this PDF for updated publications from our members. 📖

Information on POD [print on demand]



A website article worth mentioning:

www.sfw.org/beware/printondemand.html

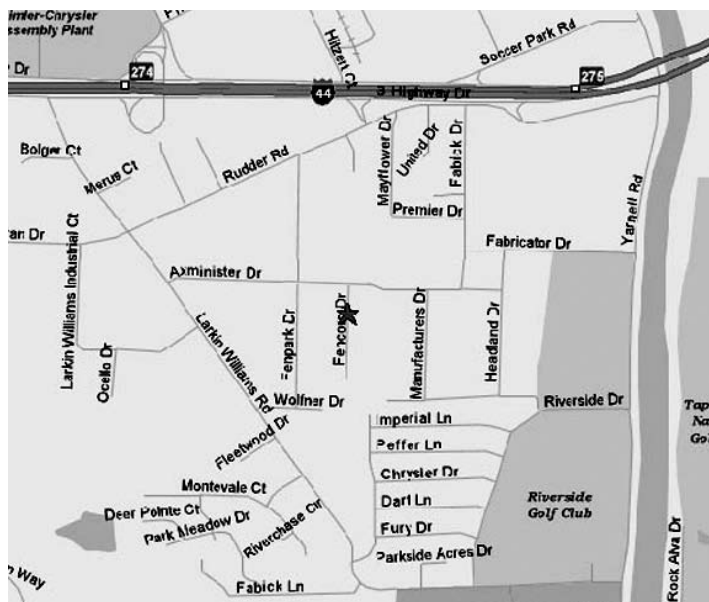
At the bottom of this informative article are links to a couple POD comparison studies—Books and Tales is one mentioned in one of the Yahoo groups on publishing and promoting. 📖



Something fun is happening in August: Usual Meeting Date – Unusual Location

Looking ahead to our August meeting, **Wednesday, August 8**, SLPA will go offsite for a POD and Pizza tour of **Creative Imaging, 1568 Fencorp Drive in Fenton**. Creative Imaging, Inc., has been one of the largest print on demand suppliers in St. Louis since 1985. You may also know them as No-Waste Publishing, their book printing subsidiary. After a tour of the plant and some education and demonstrations of print on demand as a technology, we will celebrate SLPA's tenth anniversary with a pizza party in the warehouse.

Creative Imaging is located a few exits south of The Lodge at Des Peres, onto Hwy 44. More detailed directions, as well as details, will be on the SLPA website and in announcements to come. 📖



We Welcome Our Newest Member

Farzad Wafapoor, AdvanTech Media

farzad@advatechmedia.com

www.advantechmedia.com

The co-founder and manager of AdvanTech Media, Farzad has more than a decade of experience in film and web production. He is an adjunct professor at UMSL and his documentary won the 1996 Emmy Award.

His poems and articles have been published in many international journals, and he is currently working on translating books to English from Farsi. 📖

Paper or Plastic: We'll take both now.

By Susan Whinnery, Treasurer

SLPA has set many goals this year to enhance member benefits. One such benefit, **credit card acceptance**, was mentioned in our February 2007 meeting.

Beginning with July 2007 meeting, we will be able to charge your membership dues payment to your credit card. Accepted cards will be VISA, Mastercard and Discover. This is a manual process using paper tickets and a card swiper. Now, in addition to accepting a check for annual dues, we will have the capability to accept credit cards at the registration table for members wishing to pay this way.



Coming in the near future will be a Payment button and membership form on our web site. Membership dues will be accepted via a process such as, but not necessarily, or limited to, Pay Pal. Keep watching for more news on that to come.



Patrice Munden launches new book and new site



Member Patrice Munden recently launched an e-commerce web site along with the release of her new decorating manual, *The Home Project File: A Decorating & Remodeling Organizer*. This helpful manual allows anyone—do-it-yourself decorators, home renovators or new home buyers—to collect and organize their ideas, samples and materials in one easy-to-use tool, in their car and at their fingertips!

As an interior designer, Patrice is passionate about helping people to develop their own style and to create their dream home now. Spread the word and be sure to visit

www.thehomeprojectfile.com



We Honor Jan Nathan (1939-2007)



PMA's Executive Director, **Jan Nathan**, died on Sunday, June 17, 2007, after a year-long battle with cancer, surrounded by her husband, six sons and her 90-year-old mother. The great majority of PMA members have been directly helped and supported by Jan. Others have benefited by the PMA programs that have been implemented during her leadership.

Jan would want us to carry on the business of the organization that she has worked so tirelessly and successfully to build. Terry Nathan, who has been working by Jan's side the past 15 years, will continue to do the excellent job he has been doing, as will the staff, and the Board will continue to be innovative, creative and committed to the future of our organization.

— *Florrie Binford Kichler, President PMA,
the Independent Book Publishers Association*

Take time to read more about the woman who has done so much to make it possible for the voices of independent publishers to be heard. The article is attached to the end of this newsletter.

Questions About SLPA?



Contact Membership Chairman:
Christine Frank at 314-205-2679 or
Assistant Membership Coordinator:
Linda Austin at 314-822-1170

Next Deadline July 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 **newslettereditor@stlouispublishers.org**.

SLPA Monthly Newsletter design by SLPA member Peggy Nehmen.
Nehmen-Kodner Design www.n-kcreative.com