



# NEWS & VIEWS

## St. Louis Publishers Association

November 2007


### NOVEMBER 14 Meeting

#### Lookin' Good on a Budget

If you're smart about where you spend your money (you do have to spend some!), you can achieve great results. Publishers **Linda Austin** and **Natasha Moore** team with designer **Sue Sylvia** to present a how-to session on book packaging and author presentation. We'll include examples of books, marketing materials and media kits, plus discussion and tips on using book Trailers and video online to promote your identity and book topic without spending a fortune.

##### What you'll learn:

- How to make your self-published book look professional
- The "true cost" of professional help vs. sweat equity
- Little things you can do to help yourself
- Ways to make sure your book "sounds" professionally done
- Quick and easy ways to create and print your essential marketing tools
- Tools you need in your online media room
- Book trailers: what they are and how to create them

**Meeting location: The Lodge at Des Peres.** Doors open for networking at 6:30 PM, meeting begins at 7:00 PM. The formal meeting concludes around 8:30 with networking continuing after the meeting. For directions to the Lodge, visit our web site and click the link. [www.stlouispublishers.org](http://www.stlouispublishers.org) 

#### What do you think? Tell us in the 2007 SLPA Membership Survey!

Got an idea for a meeting topic for 2008? Is there something we could be doing better? Have you seen something great in another organization that we should be doing? We want to hear about it!

This year, the survey will be done online. **A link to the 2007 Membership Survey will arrive via email in the next week.** Please let us know what you think by responding promptly. The 2008 board will be meeting in early December to plan for next year and this annual survey tells us what you want most from your membership in SLPA. If you're a member in good standing (paid and current) you're eligible to participate.


**Don't be shy—we want to hear from you, let your voice be heard!**



### SLPA Board 2008 Election

November is the month when we elect the Board of Directors who will lead SLPA in the upcoming year. The election to confirm these nominees will be held at the November meeting on Wednesday, November 14, 2007. All current members in attendance are eligible to vote. The nominees for the 2008 Board of Directors are:

President – Ed Sylvia  
Vice President – Lynnette Schuepbach  
Secretary – Linda Austin  
Treasurer – Susan Whinnery  
Membership Chairman – Christine Frank  
Communications Chairman – Sue Sylvia  
Webmaster – Farzad Wafapoor  
Publicity Coordinator – Natasha Moore  
Display Coordinator – Barbara Davis  
Special Projects Chairman – Bill Collier  
Newsletter Co-Editor – Peggy Nehmen

These board members are stepping down at the end of their current term: Bob Baker, Bobette Kyle and Scott Ginsberg. We thank them for their contributions to SLPA. 



## Happy Thanksgiving!

### In This Issue



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## Judging a Book by its Cover

*Writer Ceci Miller offers some sage advice for writers who are self-publishing.*

Face it. We do judge books by their covers. So, if you are writing a book, and/or self-publishing, then pay attention. We're drawn to a particular color, style, or cover art. Flat, dull book covers turn us away unless we're looking for a "serious" book. I know that when I venture into mega-bookstore Powells (four floors of new and used books), I'll feel so overwhelmed that I end up buying books just because of the cover.

You know it when you see it. It's the paper sandwich that looks so yummy you can't pass it up. It demands a second look. A well-designed book cover is no accident. It's the product of creative knowledge and great intuition. When you're meeting your sweetie's folks for the first time, you wear something special but not too garish, something that speaks volumes about what a great guy/gal you are.

My grandmother's advice to young women interested in marriage was, "Be pretty if you can, witty if you must, and pleasant if it kills you!" So it is with a book cover. Like a suitable suitor, it should be easy to love. Second, it should promise to enhance your life. A book cover must be both attractive and interesting before readers (like suitors) are willing to make a commitment.


Wisdom recommends using good common sense to impress the folks. If you're a mystery, be cryptic, enticing. If you're a self-help guide, be up-front and upbeat. For the right book, a humorous cover works miracles. Many a goofy guy or gal who dressed unwisely to meet the sweetie's parents, have been saved by being funny at dinner. The gist? Be different, but not so different it makes us squirm. Be funny, but not goofy. Above all, be professional. And if possible, make us stop in our tracks to check you out. 

Ceci Miller is the author of *Sacred Visitations: Gifts of Grace that Transform the Heart and Awaken the Soul*, endorsed by *Chicken Soul* author Marci Shimoff, *Mars/Venus* author John Gray, and bestselling author John Bradshaw. The book's touching, often magical, stories guide readers beyond mere memoir into the profoundly personal world of their own sacred experiences. Ceci's workshops teach the 5 Steps of Sacred Awareness. A student of meditation since 1976, Ceci's heartfelt stories of spiritual experience and contemplation—shared in articles, books, and public talks—have inspired meditators and seekers throughout the world. She is the author of two children's books and has co-authored and edited numerous books for adults. To hear Ceci read an excerpt from *Sacred Visitations*, or to hear her interviews with people about their spiritual experiences on the Sacred Visitations Podcast, go to [www.sacredvisitations.com](http://www.sacredvisitations.com).

## Book Trailers

Book trailers are one of the newest promotional tools on the book marketing scene. Like a movie trailer or TV commercial, it provides an audiovisual bite to entice an audience to your product. Even some of the big publishers have been using book trailers in an attempt to compete through the booming online marketing world. You can use your own video camera movies, your digital photos or free stock images, scans, etc., or hire a company to make a trailer for you. Once made, your book trailer can be loaded onto YouTube, MySpace or onto your own website or blog. The trick is to keep the trailer short (about 3 minutes), somewhat dramatic, and just hint at the characters and plot so that viewers will be intrigued enough to visit your website for more details, which will hopefully create a sale. It may take a little more creativity to make an exciting book trailer for a nonfiction book; the key will be to tell the viewer why he needs the book and what makes it special without getting too detailed.

All book trailers need audio. You may add music or narration, preferably both. Narration requires a calm, firm voice and good timing—almost an acting skill. Still photos should generally play for at least four seconds, long enough to register with viewers and to allow the narrator time to speak through it. Some book trailers rely only on text that appears across the photo clips to narrate the video, but voice narration is more powerful. You may do the narration yourself or enlist the help of a friend with a good reading voice. Use a script.

To read a short article about creating your own booktrailer, see <http://thewriterslife.homestead.com/booktrailers.html> by Dorothy Thompson, marketing expert and author. 

## We Welcome

## Our Newest Members

### Tom Campbell

Adibooks.com/King Printing  
[www.adibooks.com](http://www.adibooks.com)


King Printing/AdiBooks is a book manufacturer based in Massachusetts. They offer affordable quality printing solutions for everything from short-run digital (both color and B/W through larger run offset printing) with a focus on personal service and high quality products.

### Dr. Elizabeth A. Schmitz

### Dr Charles D. Schmitz

### Dr. Robert M. Frank

Briarcliff Publishing  
[www.BriarcliffPublishing.com](http://www.BriarcliffPublishing.com)

A newly formed company focusing on non-fiction books about love, marriage and relationships. 

## Top 10 Mistakes Made in Self-Publishing (and How to Avoid Them)

Write and publish your book. It's hell. And hallelujah. Watch for and avoid these common mistakes.

**10. Settling for less.** This is your art. It deserves the best. Don't settle for less. You can swing deals—and should swing deals because, let's face it, you're on a do-it-yourself (DIY) budget—but make damn sure you're getting the most for your money and time. Invest in the best and you'll never be disappointed. Disappointments are unavoidable but you'll be a lot less disappointed when you deal with competent, experienced beings (A.K.A. “professionals”) from the beginning.

**9. Trying to impress your friends.** When I completed the first draft of my second novel, *ALARM*, I sent the manuscript to over a dozen “writerly” friends all over the U.S. The return was dismal. Don't waste your time doing this. Other writers can't help you. Most are struggling to help themselves. Limit mailings of your first draft to individuals who will do a swift, stern, kick-in-the-pants copy editing of the work. Revise your manuscript and get on with it.

**8. Not querying potential publishers before you do-it-yourself.** A proper publishing deal would save you a lot of money. Not necessarily grief, beefs, sleeplessness and high anxiety, but it would save you a lot of money. It would also free you up to focus more on promoting the release. You can do both (publish + promote), but first try to interest an established press to invest in you and your work.

**7. Assuming all designers read.** Under no circumstances should your book be designed by someone who hasn't read your manuscript. Every. Single. Word. Of your manuscript. Most designers don't read what they are contracted to design. They may “skim” or “read parts” but reading something in its entirety is a different kettle o' fish. If you feel you would have to pay extra to ensure that the designer will thoroughly read your work, find someone else for the job. Straight-up. Find someone who wants to know exactly what—and whom—she or he is dealing with. That is: your book, and YOU.

**6. Not setting deadlines.** Let's say you find a suitable designer for your book. You've seen their portfolio. They actually have a portfolio. They have up-to-date design programs and they know how to use them. They have a scanner. Hot damn. You're in business. But if you don't set a deadline for all of the design work and corrections to be completed, you're in trouble. All designers know how to read a calendar. And count money. Put it in writing. Get it done on time.


### 5. Choosing the most inexpensive printer you can find.

I wanted *ALARM* to be regarded first and foremost as a book. That's why I insisted on a perfect-bound format with CD pockets neatly folded-up and glued on the inside front and back covers. Nice. But my choice in printers was foolishly based on price rather than on the company's practical experience with book-publishing. I had to deal with innumerable printer errors—some of them utterly preposterous—and I was unable to get enough advance copies on time for potential reviewers. Don't let this happen to you. Make sure the printer you choose has the chops it will take to produce your vision in a timely, professional manner.

**4. Getting sidetracked by art-talk.** If you find yourself getting balled up in art-talk banter with the girl processing your print order—books, CDs, business cards, flyers, stickers, whatever—you're losing it. Skip the art-talk, bub, this is business. Tighten it up. This is your craft, remember? Your baby. It deserves strict attention to detail. Always insist on seeing the printer's proofs. What you “sign off on” and pay for is what you should get as the finished product. Don't settle for less. I repeat myself sometimes. I repeat myself sometimes.

**3. Not giving yourself enough lead-time.** Forward-thinking is imperative. Absolutely imperative. Get bar codes, ISBN numbers, blurbs for the back cover, a post office box, etc., as soon as possible. Set up business accounts with online mail-order companies such as Amazon and CDBaby. All that stuff. It takes time. Magazines and newspapers need to receive press releases and review copies at least three months prior to your release date. Three months! Plan accordingly.

**2. Not being prepared for the end-of-the-vowel blues that will hit you—and hit you hard.** After *ALARM* came out, I got depressed. Really depressed. I wasn't prepared for it. A friend knew exactly how I was feeling. It's the same post-release depression that hit him after every book he's ever put out. It comes from exhaustion, he wrote, from the exhilaration of release wearing off. The best thing to do is to just crash. It's like sleep after a long night of partying. When it's done, it seems so empty. But you need to keep going. The work you are doing cannot be done by anyone else. Crash. Have some bacon and eggs for breakfast, and see if a thought or two doesn't squeeze its way into your consciousness.

**1. Thinking your stuff is the next big thing.** It was William H. Gass, I believe, who said quality has always had a small audience. 

Mike Daily is a novelist and recording artist who frequently performs his work in Portland, Oregon, as vocalist for the experimental fiction rock band, O'GRADY. His second novel, *ALARM* carries on the humorously visual narratives of Mick O'Grady, introduced in Daily's first novel, *Valley*. Of that novel, *Ray Gun Magazine* wrote, “Mike Daily packs so many stylish smash cuts into *Valley*, MTV dulls by comparison.” [www.myspace.com/alarmdaily novel](http://www.myspace.com/alarmdaily novel) and [www.overheardpublicity.com](http://www.overheardpublicity.com)



## Making the most of Media Opportunities with an Online Media Room

New technology has impacted every aspect of book publishing—even publicity. For media professionals in search of that next big story, the Internet is their first stop. A recent study shows that over 90% of journalists start researching a story by searching on the Net. That same study also shows that journalists are constantly frustrated by websites with difficult navigation, outdated or irrelevant information, a lack of PR contact, and no downloadable images and/or multimedia clips. In short, many websites and online media rooms are falling short in this age of “instant” information.

For the savvy book promoters out there, this presents a wonderful news-grabbing opportunity. By simply offering journalists, producers, and editors an easy-to-navigate and well-organized online media room, complete with everything they need to take a story about your book or author from start to finish, you have a great chance of scoring excellent media coverage. To help make your online media room a destination of choice for web-surfing journalists, we've put together a few guidelines:

**1. Can I call you?** Sure, it seems obvious, but you'd be surprised how many people forget the importance of providing all contact names, phone and fax numbers, e-mail addresses, pager numbers, and mailing addresses in their online media rooms. One of the top reasons journalists use the Internet is to locate PR contact info, and according to one recent study, 45% of the time they are unable to find that vital information in online searches. Make your PR contact info highly visible on your company website, and position it at the top of each page of your online media room. In addition, ALWAYS provide an emergency response phone number. If a journalist is working on a deadline, their ability to contact you at a moment's notice could determine whether you receive coverage or not.

**2. Playing up your press releases.** Not surprisingly, journalists have indicated that press releases are the most important items in an online media room. Be sure that the press release section of your online media room is updated frequently with the latest news about your book or author. Archive all previous press releases in the press release section of your media room, and post all press releases in HTML to make them easily and instantly accessible.

**3. In this case, a picture really is worth a 1,000 words.**

Downloading images for use in stories is one of the top five reasons journalists visit online media rooms. Be sure to offer high-resolution, downloadable images of your book cover,

author, and any illustrations or photos from the book that would lend visual interest to a feature story or review. If available, post clips of previous radio and TV appearances. Such clips can greatly influence show producers who are searching the Net for guest experts.

**4. Take it easy on me: backgrounders, story ideas, and fact sheets.** Help make the journalist's job a little easier and include a section in your online media room that contains additional information to help flesh out a full article or show segment about your book or author. Provide your media visitors with story ideas to tie your book into current events, backgrounders such as related trivia or topical quizzes, or fact sheets that list basic information about the book and its subject matter.

**5. The online media room: it's like a regular press kit, only better!** When creating your online media room, remember that any component of a traditional press kit can be included in your online media room. As you acquire more content such as reviews, resources, author events, and media placements, be sure to add these to your media room.

Kathleen Meyer is the Marketing Director for BookFlash, an innovative book publicity services firm offering affordable and easy-to-use online media rooms designed specifically for the unique promotional needs of authors and publishers. For information about BookFlash Media Rooms or BookFlash's other book publicity services contact: [www.bookflash.com](http://www.bookflash.com), email: [bookflash@bookflash.com](mailto:bookflash@bookflash.com), phone: 520.798.2356.



“It takes courage and strength of heart  
to follow the path of creativity.”

— Matthew Fox

### Next SLPA meeting – December 12 Under Construction: Building a Strong Author Platform

When someone buys your book, they're buying you and the many ways you reach people. Learn what to do, when to do it (NOW!) and how to connect with your audience. Join us as Scott Ginsberg presents an entertaining, informative evening that will inspire your own plans for reaching your audience the New Year ahead!

## Creating a digital media kit

A digital media kit is NOT your web site. It's actually an extra tool you can use online. It contains many of the same elements as a "traditional" media kit, except it's one comprehensive document in PDF format. No paper, no postage needed. You can use it several ways.

While you'll still want to include a number of individual elements such as book covers, tip sheets, etc. on your site, you can also **post a digital media kit in your online media room as a quick, single-download option**. That makes it great for a producer or journalist who's in a hurry. You can also keep it handy to attach to an email to be when someone requests more information about you. **(REMEMBER: NEVER, EVER send attachments to media emails unless you receive permission from them first!)**

You want to have this PDF handy in case they request it. The benefit of having a digital media kit ready to go is that it saves time in the booking process, for you and especially for the media contact, who can open your PDF immediately. Makes you look, smart, speedy and ultra-responsive!

The point of any media kit is to showcase your talent, your platform and your area of expertise with the objective of securing the media opportunity, media segment or your speaking event. Make it look clean and well-organized. Your book designer can help you with this or you can do this yourself pretty easily. (If this is a DIY for you, resist the temptation to get overly clever or you risk looking home-made rather than professional.)

Your digital media kit should set you apart from the others and showcase your professionalism, credentials, areas of expertise and your platform. It should give the media an idea of your vast knowledge and create certainty that you are their best choice. It creates the impression that you know your topic well and they can feel confident when booking you that you will be a terrific guest.

### Have a simple, consistent design on each page of your digital media kit.

Each page should have a header containing the following info:

- Name of expert or author
- Name of your book and publisher
- Media contact info, direct (fast) contact info

### Here are the pages you will need in your Digital Media Kit:

1. Cover picture of your book (Don't pull this from Amazon. Get a sharp, reproducible one from your designer).
2. A color picture of yourself.
3. Author bio written especially for the media (keep it brief!).
4. Interview topic ideas—fully developed with talking points.
5. Suggested interview questions that are relevant to your topic.
6. Facts that support your segment (*example: a recent AARP study stated that as many as 44 million Americans provide elder care*).
7. Sample quiz—if your material can be made into a quiz or tip sheet format then prepare one for your kit. Print media loves this format.
8. Testimonials from other producers or event coordinators that said you were a great guest.
9. Media page: showcase the media you have done, listing the most important first.
10. Link back to your site if you have a demo or audio demo on your site.

Keep the look clean, simple and professional. Be sure to include your contact info either in header format or in the lower right hand corner of every page including your FAST contact info so you don't miss those last-minute opportunities. Keep it handy, keep it updated... keep it focused. If you speak on several topics, create one for each topic you do.



## THANK YOU to our volunteers!

A big, big thank you to the many volunteers who helped make our "Attracting Attention" weekend a great success. There were many different roles to be filled and we appreciate all who helped!

The Book House is also looking for donations of grocery vouchers, and vouchers to department stores, restaurants, etc. to help make the holidays brighter for the clients of Second Chapter Life Center. Please contact Michelle Barron directly if you have items to donate. (314) 961-9046 or (314) 968-4491 or email [info@bookhousestl.com](mailto:info@bookhousestl.com).

## We have new books for sale!

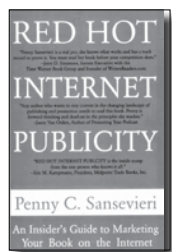
As you know, we just hosted a major publishing conference here in town. We have additional copies of some terrific new books by our speakers' and we'll make these available for sale at our meetings. If you missed the conference or would like additional copies, look for them at the check-in table this month! **Such a deal...**

### **The Book Publishers Handbook** by Eric Kampmann



No publisher should be without this highly readable, nuts-and-bolts guide to the ins and outs of book publishing. The Midpoint team has more than a century of combined book publishing experience, which will prove invaluable to all publishers, from seasoned professionals to those new to the game. The book concisely discusses the editorial process, design, printing, pricing, sales and distribution, marketing and publicity.

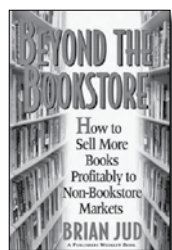
### **Red Hot Internet Publicity** by Penny Sansevieri




Sansevieri's book *Red Hot Internet Publicity* contains more useful web resources, addresses of the best blog sites and web design and tool sites, and pieces of sound advice in this brief 200 pages than any on the market today. She is the epitome of a user-friendly teacher and expert and her writing contains not only valuable information and insights but wit to boot!

For all authors in search of the keys to the value of Internet promotion, this excellent book will be an exceptional value.

### **Beyond The Bookstore** by Brian Jud



The worldwide book market is almost \$90 billion, and every year half of those sales are made in non-bookstore markets such as museums, schools, libraries, warehouse clubs, catalogs, book clubs, book fairs, and to corporations, among many other markets. This book will show you how to increase your sales and profits in these lucrative segments. 

## Questions About SLPA?



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

SLPA Monthly Newsletter design by SLPA member Peggy Nehmen.  
Nehmen-Kodner Design [www.n-kcreative.com](http://www.n-kcreative.com)

## Bookselling Charity Event

**SLPA is teaming up with THE BOOK HOUSE for a one-day fund raising event benefiting SECOND CHAPTER LIFE CENTER.** On Saturday December 1st, from 10:30 to 7:00pm, SLPA will host a Co-Op Booth in The Book House. There is no charge for participating, but SLPA requests that 20% of each book sold would benefit Second Chapter. This would be considered a tax-deductible donation.

Second Chapter Life Center is a non-profit organization helping teens and young adults with mental and physical disabilities at The Kirkham House, a full time foster home. The residents have conditions including autism, developmental delays, attention deficit disorder, cerebral palsy and other physical and mental disabilities.



State funding through has been severely cut and grant money that Second Chapter depends on has not materialized. They currently need to raise at least \$20,000 by the end of the year to maintain their facility.



The Book House opened in 1986 and is located in a charming Historic Victorian House, built in 1865. The owner, Michelle Barron, is a major funding source for Second Chapter. The store covers three floors, a

winding staircase, nine rooms filled with nooks and crannies and a "Bargain Basement" dungeon. One of the few independent booksellers in the St. Louis area, Michelle opens her store to local authors/publishers for events. **If you would like to participate in the SLPA Co-Op Booth, please contact Barbara Davis at (636) 448-9821 for more information.**

The Book House is located at 9719 Manchester Rd. St. Louis, MO 63119 [www.bookhousestl.com](http://www.bookhousestl.com)

## Next Deadline ▶ November 21

Get your news and articles in EARLY! Send your information, articles and announcements to [newslettereditor@stlouispublishers.org](mailto:newslettereditor@stlouispublishers.org).