



## Getting Into Independent Bookstores

by Amanda Clark-Ball

Seven—the number of independent authors that contacted me this week asking for book signings. Eight—the (generous) average number of attendees a typical signing brings. That number doesn't only apply to independent authors. Getting people to attend signings is a struggle for everyone, except for the biggest names, and even those are hit or miss at times.

When I took on the newly created role as Events & Programming Manager for The Novel Neighbor, I was completely new to the bookselling industry. At first, I said yes to just about any signing request. I quickly realized that wasn't sustainable. Each signing event requires several hours of work on the back end, with marketing, production, etc. As much as we'd love to support everyone brave enough to put their book out in the world, there has to be a return on our investment. I didn't want to say no to each incoming request or to take on the burden of subjectively choosing which signings to host, so I set out to find a creative solution to this problem.

The solution came when a group of fifth graders marched in front of



Amanda Clark-Ball



Cameron Collins

our store holding protest signs. The students were led by the author of a recently released children's book on the history of civil rights in St. Louis. We partnered with her to lead a half-day class on the importance of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. The cost of hosting the class included a copy of her new book. The kids worked all morning on creative activities centered on the book's topic, culminating in their protest.

This model instantly became a way to work with independent and small press authors, by breaking the mold of the traditional signing event and getting readers engaged. This has opened other ways to be creative, such as our monthly Local Author Showcase, where we group independent authors together by genre for combined signings. We have seen crowds of up to 50 people—a combination of the authors' friends and family—excited to support their work.

As an independent author, you have so many resources when it comes to forging relationships and getting your work into a bookstore. What isn't readily available is advice on how to work with the

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## Easy Social Media Marketing for Authors

*How to Create Awareness, Attract Fans, and Build a Following Online*

by Bob Baker

As an author, you know you should be using social media more to spread the word about your book. But you're probably holding back, for all sorts of reasons:

- You're afraid of what people might think
- You're worried it'll seem too spammy
- You think you don't have time or the right equipment
- You're not sure what to post
- You tried it once and didn't get much of a response
- You think you'll annoy your friends and followers

If you can relate to any of these obstacles, you're not alone. Yet, these blocks are keeping you from reaching more people and making more of an impact with your book.

At the March 13 meeting, you'll learn at least a dozen strategies for sharing your message online in authentic ways that won't feel spammy, using basic tools you already have.



Bob Baker

Your friends and followers will actually thank you for sharing your messages, because you'll deliver value in a wide variety of inspiring and entertaining ways. Plus, you just might sell more books in the process!

Bob Baker is a past president of the SLPA who helps musicians, authors, and creative entrepreneurs use their talents

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Feb 13, 7pm @ THE HEIGHTS:  
Getting Into Independent  
Bookstores**

with Amanda Clark-Ball  
and Cameron Collins

**Mar 13, 7pm @ THE HEIGHTS:  
Easy Social Media  
Marketing for Authors**

with Bob Baker

**April 13, 8 am @ STLCC-Meramec  
How to Publish Your Own Book:  
What You Need to Know  
REGISTER NOW!**

<https://tinyurl.com/ya45aq2z>

WRIT:704 Section P05 • \$39.00

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(Independent Bookstores continued)

bookstore to connect with readers and grow your audience. I've found a successful way around this issue by offering dedicated time for self-published authors each month while crafting creative events that provide added value to all attendees.

**Amanda Clark-Ball**, Events & Programming Manager for **The Novel Neighbor**, has over ten year's experience in marketing, communications and public relations while serving as a featured speaker on social media, entrepreneurship and resilience. **Cameron Collins**, author of *Lost Treasures of St. Louis* and co-author of *St. Louis Brews: The History of St. Louis Brewing, 3rd Edition*, will share how Amanda's unique approach helped increase exposure for him.



## Mark your calendars! Coming Saturday, July 20th

Robin Cutler, Director of IngramSpark at Ingram Content Group will be here Saturday, July 20, 2019.

Details to follow.

(Easy Social Media continued)

and know-how to make a living and make a difference in the world. He is the author of the highly acclaimed *Guerrilla Music Marketing Handbook* (which appeared in the movie *School of Rock*, starring Jack Black). Bob's other books include *The Empowered Artist*, *The Guerrilla Guide to Book Marketing*, *The Passion Principles*, *55 Ways to Promote & Sell Your Book on the Internet*, *Unleash the Artist Within*, and more. Check out Bob's free blog, podcast, video clips, and more at [FullTimeAuthor.com](http://FullTimeAuthor.com) and [TheBuzzFactor.com](http://TheBuzzFactor.com).

## KUDOS CORNER

### SLPA member **Xu Fangfang**

*Galloping Horses: Artist Xu Beihong and His Family in Mao's China* is a biography about the author's late father, Xu Beihong, a well-known artist whose ink brush paintings pioneered the integration of Chinese and Western techniques. She has published several articles about his art and helped facilitate the first comprehensive solo exhibition of his works in the United States through the Denver Art Museum in 2011. Xu Fangfang will speak about her book and her father's work on March 12 at Stanford University's Department of Art & Art History.



## LAST MONTH'S RECAP

### The Power of Press: Publicity for Authors

Thanks to **Brooke Foster** (co-founder of the branding, design and marketing collective Novella and graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop) for her presentation on The Power of Press at our January 9 meeting. Key points for your writer's toolbox:

#### Do your homework

- Look for unique collaboration opportunities
- Attend in-person events
- Can your book be a reference on a particular story or feature?

#### Establish your brand

- Follow people, businesses and organizations on social media that interest you
- Engage in conversation and create a mutually beneficial exchange



Great pointers and timely advice that ties in perfectly with our upcoming meeting!

March 13: Easy Social Media Marketing for Authors with Bob Baker.

Mark your calendar!

## Meetings on the Second Wednesday of the Month

Richmond Heights Community Center  
(THE HEIGHTS)

The Argus Room • 8001 Dale Ave.  
Richmond Heights, MO 63117  
(Child care available at THE HEIGHTS)

Doors open for networking at 6:30pm  
Program begins at 7pm

The meeting concludes around 8:30pm  
Networking until 9pm

Regular meetings are free to members  
Membership \$60 per year  
Guests \$10 at the door



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