



How to Publish Your Own Book: What I Wish I Knew

by [Kerri Holloway](#), Board Member

Writing a book is no small task. The process of sharing your story—whether it’s a novel, memoir, non-fiction, poetry or children’s book— isn’t necessarily quick or easy. It takes courage to share your thoughts for all the world to see, yet you’re compelled to push through uncertainty and tell it anyway. Progressing from the initial idea to the finished product of a hard copy, ebook and/or audiobook has multiple steps that often intimidate many would-be authors. Perhaps that’s why so many get stuck somewhere along the way and never make it to a completed book.

No matter where you stand in the process—still hashing out the first chapter, made it to the last page of the manuscript, ready to print and need to create a marketing platform—the St. Louis Publishers Association is here to help. “*How to Publish Your Own Book: What You Need to Know*,” is a four-hour workshop presented by SLPA board members **Warren Martin, Andrew Doty, Peggy Nehmen, Jo Lena Johnson and Bob Baker** on April 13 (registration details in the green box below). Each of them has either walked in your shoes along the path to publishing or they’ve helped guide authors on their way to success. Below, they share a few insights from personal experiences, a sampling of what they’ll cover during the April 13 workshop.

What inspired you to write your first book?

Warren: Many aspiring authors and successful authors have motives and inspiration to write. As someone older and in my fifties at the time, I had a lifetime of experience in the Army and life itself, which provided me plenty of material to write about. From a personal perspective, I had interest and concerns related to several issues, and I started to see how writing could create awareness.



[Warren Martin](#)

Jo Lena: At the time I thought I could inspire and heal the world with my big heart, big ideas and writing skills. That was a naive but hopeful thought. Since then I realized that the publishing process and being successful has much to do with the “business of books.”

How is the editing process more than just spellcheck?



[Andrew Doty](#)

Andrew: Editing should first involve conversations that help develop your book and make sure the message or story is clear, concise, and comprehensive. The deeper these conversations get, the more you can use the insights and reflection to improve your book. These are discussions you literally can’t have with a

computer program. Past that, copyeditors and proofreaders look for ways to improve your writing and fix mistakes that spellcheck won’t catch.



[Jo Lena Johnson](#)

Jo Lena: Spellcheck is important but it doesn’t catch the heart and soul of the manuscript nor does it catch contextual mistakes. It’s important to have a professional edit the manuscript, no matter what.

Warren: Editing is vital. I remember when my very first book was up on Amazon a few weeks and an established author friend of mine called me and said, “Hey, have you read your own book yet?” It had hundreds of errors because I hired a cheap editor and did not use beta readers.

Why is it so important to explore different publishing options?

Jo Lena: It’s important because the process is tedious and people have different needs based on the type of book, their intent and the target audience. It’s difficult to break certain barriers when self-published; and then again, having complete control over your project can be awesome if you know what to do with it.

Andrew: There are a thousand ways to publish a book nowadays, and the traditional model of finding an agent to represent you

to a publishing house who will keep 90–98% of the profits just isn’t a good trade-off for many authors. So many empowering tools are available for authors to be their own publishers. Whether you want to publish physically, digitally, or both, it’s important to map out several different strategies and find something that fits your goals.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

April 10, 7pm @ THE HEIGHTS:
Make Your Book Designer Happy
Patrick Dorsey & Peggy Nehmen

April 13, 8 am @ STLCC—Meramec:
How to Publish Your Own Book: What You Need to Know

Space is still available REGISTER NOW!

<https://tinyurl.com/ya45ag2z>

WRIT:704 Section P05 • \$39.00

May 8, 7pm @ THE HEIGHTS:
Author Journey Panel
Moderated by Jo Lena Johnson

Warren: My personal opinion is to NEVER go with the multitude of self-publishing companies available. Most of them sell services and want your money. Using a local publisher is a good option, as is writing a query letter and sending that out to real agents, not the ones who work for self-publishing companies. My recommendation is to go independent, write your book, hire an editor and designer, and be your own publisher. This option still allows you to send out query letters, and to be discovered by big house publishers.

Warren Martin, Andrew Doty, Peggy Nehmen, Jo Lena Johnson and Bob Baker will conduct the workshop on April 13th.



[Peggy Nehmen](#)

Peggy: Self-publishing is always changing. Publishing aggregators now offer more benefits and services. Authors should keep current with the latest trends. On a related note, readers consume books in different ways: ebook, paperback, hardback and audiobooks. Don't limit yourself to just one type of book.



[Bob Baker](#)

Coming Saturday, July 20th

Mark your calendars!

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

Details to come.



LAST MONTH'S RECAP

Easy Social Media Marketing for Authors

Thanks again to SLPA board member **Bob Baker** at [FullTimeAuthor.com](#) and [TheBuzzFactor.com](#) for an entertaining and information-packed session that included a brief Facebook live video recording and 15 concrete examples.

What holds creative people back from using social media? Common reasons: a desire for perfection, people will steal your stuff, lack of money and/or time, feels like bragging, confusion about how to get started, etc. Obscurity is bigger than ALL those reasons. An active social media presence makes you easier to find, period. Think about how you'd like to market yourself while

connecting with supporters and potential readers, then get started!

5 basic types of social media posts

1. **Educate**—did you know?
2. **Entertain**—brief escape from daily reality
3. **Inspire**—wow, look what they did, you can too!
4. **Engage**—interact with others who share the same interests
5. **Promote**—here's what I have to offer and what I know.



KUDOS CORNER

SLPA member Argentina Parra

Silence Is Not an Option: A Memoir of Overcoming Abuse, Anxiety, and Depression is a self-published autobiography detailing the trials and triumphs in surviving abuse.



On its second day, Argentina's book was ranked #1 Amazon New Release in Dysfunctional Relationships and reached #1 New Release in Hispanic & Latino Biographies in December 2018. Her very first book signing, held at La Tia & Poncho's Cantina & Grill in St. Charles, was a sell-out success, with a portion of each sale donated to the Women's Safe House. Her next book signing is April 25 at STLCC-Forest Park, from 6:30-8:00pm.

<https://www.argentinaparra.com>



Meetings on the Second Wednesday of the Month

Monthly Meeting Admission

- FREE for Members
- Guests – \$10 at the door
- Annual Membership – \$60 per year (guest fee applied to membership if you join that evening)

Doors open for networking at 6:30pm
Program begins at 7:00pm

The meeting concludes around 8:30pm
Networking until 9:00pm

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

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