



Build a Loyal Fan Base for Long-term Success

By [Martin McConnell](#), featured speaker for the June 12th meeting

It feels great to make a sale, doesn't it? Picture this. You're at a convention with twenty or thirty bucks in the cash box from book sales, exposing your work to new readers. Maybe you have some money left over for a little dinner after the event. So, what happens next? Did the buyers even take the time to read it? Do you have any way to ask them? You might be surprised by how many people pick up a book at a convention and never lay eyes on it again until they clean out the trunk of their car. If you didn't at least try to get some contact information from them, then you've failed on the marketing front. Even worse, if it was a sympathy purchase, you wasted your time, energy, and money just to gain a couple bucks. Many authors



don't factor in the expenses for that sale (lodging, travel, table supplies, event fees, printing, etc.). Once you consider what it cost up front, that cash box seems lighter than when you started.

As writers, our focus is on the creative work. We want to spend our time and energy on telling a story or sharing information, not thinking about expenses and all the math that goes along with it. Here's the problem with that view: if the creative side is so important and the business side meaningless, why sell your books in the first place? Why not post your stories online for free? Very few authors actually make a living from their books. Of that group, a fortunate few live comfortably on their art alone. If you have any hope of being truly successful in publishing, or any artistic or creative endeavor, then those five books you sold at the last convention are NOT the stats you should be focused on.

This business is about names, a fact that can be realized with a trip to the bookstore. I've spent hours in bookstore cafes observing the different types of people who shop there. Most of them have something very specific on their mind when they enter. Some need a book that teaches them how to do X. Others come with a specific author in mind. They go straight to the appropriate section and look for titles from that author. They might even stop by the service desk to ask if anything new is coming out soon. This is the type of reader you want. These are fans and they can make or break a creative career. You won't find them by acting like a car salesman or a junk peddler. We're told that more sales means more success, but that isn't true. Fans equal success. Without their continued support your sales numbers by themselves aren't worth much.

(Build A Loyal Fan Base continues on page 2)

Self-Publishing: It's Easier Than You Think

By [Robin Cutler](#), Director of [IngramSpark](#)

Over the past decade, the idea of the traditional publisher as a gatekeeper for writers to find their audience has been completely turned upside down. Today, best sellers in print and digital media are routinely independent published titles. **Join Robin Cutler on Saturday, July 20** as she shares how to use the IngramSpark platform to find publishing success. Bring your questions—she's happy to answer them all. Registration is now open (more details on page 2).

[Robin Cutler](#) leads the development of [IngramSpark](#) as an Ingram Content Group service for independent authors and publishers. During her career, she has published over 1,000 books as Assistant Director at USC Press, and as the CEO and founder of her own trade imprint, Summerhouse Press. Robin most recently

worked for Amazon/CreateSpace. She has broad knowledge of independent, academic, and trade publishing. She is an expert in content creation, distribution, on-demand models, and author strategies. Follow Robin on [Twitter @rcutlerSpark](#) and be sure to check out [IngramSpark on Facebook](#), on [Twitter](#) and at www.ingramspark.com.



Register Now!
at
stlouispublishers.org/robin-cutler

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 12, 7pm @ THE HEIGHTS
Finding Fans to Market Your Book
Featuring Martin McConnell

July 10, 7 pm @ THE HEIGHTS
Getting Your Book Into The Local Library
Featuring St. Louis County Library

July 20, 9am - 12pm @ Westborough Country Club
Fire Up Your Book Project!
Featuring Robin Cutler, Director of IngramSpark
Register Now!
<https://stlouispublishers.org/robin-cutler>

(Build A Loyal Fan Base continued)

So, what do you do? Find the people who really want or need your book. Focus on them. Ask them questions. Invite them to critique an early version of the next title. Keep them informed. Become friends. Creating a growing fan base isn't a 1-2-3 process. There are different steps for every

artist, every book, and every brand. When you align your mission to find true fans rather than push sales, you start to cultivate a real following. It's easier to sell again to a happy fan than it is to look for a new customer. Stop selling and start growing those relationships.

Mark Your Calendars!

FIRE UP YOUR BOOK PROJECT THIS JULY!

WITH EXPERT [ROBIN CUTLER](#)

Register for our morning workshop and learn:

- What IngramSpark can do for you and your books
- What is needed to set up your title with IngramSpark
- How metadata can help your book be discovered
- How best to handle pricing, discounting, and returns
- Where in the online world your books can be sold
- Where to find free learning resources through IngramSpark

Saturday, July 20
9am to noon

Westborough Country Club, 631 S. Berry Rd.,
St. Louis (Oakland), MO 63122

SIGN UP TODAY!

stlouispublishers.org/robin-cutler



LAST MONTH'S RECAP Authors Journey Panel

Thanks to SLPA board member [Jo Lena Johnson](#) for moderating our panel on May 8th of local fiction authors: [Brad R. Cook](#), [T.W. Fendley](#), [Cynthia A. Graham](#) and [Peter Green](#), who shared what it really takes to become a published author.

PANEL ADVICE

"People read fiction for entertainment, information, or to escape. Be sure your book delivers on its promise to meet that need." —Jo Lena

"Stay focused on your vision." —Brad

"Be willing to become a beginner again; sharpen your skills (character development, creating new worlds)." —T.W.

"Think of writing as a vehicle for expression. Take your time with your work. Don't rush. Don't cut corners. Make every sentence count." —Cynthia

"It's never too late, just start writing." —Peter

PANEL RESPONSES

Biggest Obstacle? Finding your audience; marketing and publicity. Your publisher is not your publicist.

Worst Mistake? Not knowing your contract limitations; have a lawyer review it to understand all the terms and your rights, up to the very end.



(From left: Brad R. Cook, T.W. Fendley, Jo Lena Johnson, Cynthia Graham, Peter Green)

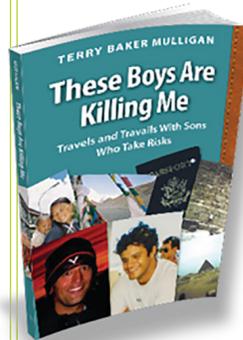
Greatest Accomplishment? Tenacity—after failing with traditional publishers twice, pursued self-publishing and never looked back. Travel to accept book awards was huge validation. Fans wrote a book report about my novel.

Writing Contests, Good or Bad? Can be helpful; do your homework to avoid scams. Best investment is statewide contests; improves your odds of winning and gets you on the library system's radar. Use judges' feedback to make improvements.

KUDOS CORNER

SLPA member

Terry Baker Mulligan



When Terry Mulligan's sons set off on separate, around-the-world journeys, she had a hunch her life was going to get stressful—it did. As featured during her interview on [St. Louis Public Radio](#) (May 8), *These Boys are Killing Me: Travels and Travails With Boys Who Take Risks*, released on Mother's Day, is the heartwarming and oftentimes hilarious story of two young men and their adventures across thirty countries and three continents. Terry's previous works include her award-winning memoir *Sugar Hill: Where the Sun Rose Over Harlem* (IPPY Gold Medal Winner, 2-time Benjamin Franklin Gold Medal Winner).



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)

SLPA NEWS & VIEWS

Editor: [Kerri Holloway](#)

Designer: [Carolyn Vaughan](#)

Webmaster: [Kevin Ericson](#)

