

# KeyNotes

October 2008



Ideas, Inspiration, and News You Can Use to Write and Publish Your Book

## *Hello, Authors and Publishers ~*

Welcome to October's issue of KeyNotes. This month has lots of good memories for me, from the scent of burning leaves (long gone but not forgotten) to my wedding anniversary. I love the feeling of a bright, cool day and the sight of rolling hills touched by red and gold.

Why not write about your favorite October memory? Do it again for November and December and each month of the year, and you will have a book of memories that your relatives will treasure. Wouldn't that make a nice gift when the next holiday season rolls around? We're all looking for ways to save money on gifts, and there's nothing nicer than a gift of your self.

## *Can I Quote You on That?*

There are many examples of companies that have built a reputation for high quality and excellent service. One that often comes to mind is Nordstrom's. So you won't be surprised at this from their employee handbook:

"Rule No. 1: Use your own good judgment in all situations. There will be no additional rules."

## *My Word!*

Ever heard of a **portmanteau** word? Lewis Carroll introduced the idea in *Through the Looking-Glass* as "two meanings packed up into one word." We use them everyday, words like "chortle" (chuckle + snort), "simulcast" (simultaneous + broadcast), and "breathalyzer" (breath + analyzer). I'm particularly fond of "galumphing" (galloping + triumphing), as in, "The two golden retrievers came galumphing into the yard, all legs and eagerness to please."

## *It Happened This Month*

- The Federalist Papers appeared in a New York newspaper, 1787
- American Library Association Founded in 1876
- Margaret B. Owen set a typewriting speed record of 170 words per minute without errors, 1918
- Orson Welles' radio performance of "War of the Worlds" caused a national panic, 1938

## ***Publishing Updates***

We were there on Mount Vernon Place for the Baltimore Book Festival on September 27, along with other rain-drenched book lovers. Margaret Rome, author of ***Real Estate the Rome Way***, greeted visitors at the MidAtlantic Book Publishers Association booth, and we had fun even if the day was dreary. You can read about that day on my blog, <http://ThePegBoard.blogspot.com>.

We're adding a new title to the Book of Days series, planned for publication in the spring of 2009: ***The Cat Lover's Book of Days***. Since felines are some of our favorite people, we're having fun putting this one together. Watch for the cover to appear on the website as a New Year's treat.

## ***Featured Article - Publish and Prosper!***

We've all heard the old admonition to academics: Publish or Perish! If you wanted to move up in college and university circles, you had to publish articles and books, or be seen as a bit of a loser.

Businesses are discovering a new and much more positive version of that old phrase: **Publish and Prosper!** In these days of instant messaging, video emails, and downloadable ebooks, company leaders are rediscovering the value of good old ink on paper as a marketing and brand-building tool. There is nothing quite as effective as a book - well, perhaps other than an appearance on Oprah or CNN - in creating the image of you as an expert. When a person's name and photo are on the cover of a well-written, well published, and good-looking book, that can be worth thousands of dollars of paid advertising.

Just as anyone can throw up a web site and peddle goods and services on the Internet, just about anyone can publish a book. The issue is not having a book - it's having a book that brings as much **respect and recognition** as possible to the author. Commercial publishers such as the big houses - Houghton, Simon & Schuster, Random House, Warner Books, etc. - have controlled publishing for decades. Small, independent presses have always existed to publish niche, regional, and special interest books. But the economic realities of publishing kept it a closely held capability.

The last few years have seen what some call a revolution in publishing. With the development and rapid improvement of digital presses, POD (print-on-demand) printers have sprung up to meet the demand of authors who want to publish their books themselves. If your book has a narrow market - for instance, you want to write about the beautiful bike trails in Maryland - it will be difficult to find a commercial publisher willing to take that on even if you are the next Ernest Hemingway.

Commercial publishers are businesses first; they look at the market and bet on their ability to sell a certain number of books. Suppose you have ridden all those trails, you know every twist and turn, and can write about them with lyrical elegance. Even then, unless you have been a frequent speaker at conferences, or have published articles in bicycling magazines, or have a Website or blog that gets thousands of hits a day, you have a hurdle called "platform." Commercial publishers want to know what your platform is: who you know, who knows you, and how many will buy your book. That's your

market, and they want to be sure you can reach enough to make the investment in your book worthwhile.

OK, so if you are not a nationally known speaker, but you have something of value to say and have written a book or at least have a good outline, what do you do? You **invest in yourself**. Authors today are becoming publishers to keep control of the quality of their books as well as the profits they generate. Some take on all the tasks themselves, learning about editing, cover design, typography, binding styles, paper choices, fulfillment, and marketing. Others choose to work with an independent publisher who will act as a project manager to monitor the tasks and make sure everything comes together properly.

No book will sell itself. The world has to know about it, and the author needs to be ready to actively participate in the marketing efforts. Without that, you might as well save your money, or print just enough books to give away to friends and family. No publisher of any sort will guarantee your book will sell well. But the independent companies that have the interests of their authors at heart provide marketing guidance and assistance as part of their service.

The **key to success** in independent publishing today is to ask questions, insist on answers, and never allow yourself to be pressured into agreeing to anything you don't need or don't understand. With good choices, your book can become an effective marketing tool for your business. Publish and Prosper!

## The Keeper of the Keys

That's me, Peg Silloway. Lover of words and collector of books. Publishing is a natural outgrowth of my life-long love of writing, and now I'm pouring that love of wordcraft into creating books that have something to say, that can make a difference, and that help authors' publishing aspirations become reality. Mix that passion for the written word with a background steeped in business reality - accounting, project management, and small business management - and you have The Silloway Press.



Isn't it high time you published your book? Call me at 301-335-9368, or email me at [Peg@SillowayPress.com](mailto:Peg@SillowayPress.com). Together we can make it happen. **Write On!**

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