



Publishers Association of Los Angeles
EDUCATION • NETWORKING • RESOURCES

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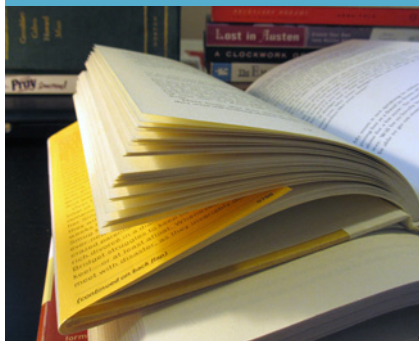
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UPCOMING MEETING

The Latest in Social Networking

7PM, Monday, February 22, 2016

Excited about social media? You should be.

Social media is the quickest, cheapest, and most effective way to reach an audience without the help or permission of a publicist or gatekeeper. There has simply never been a better way for getting your message, your writing, and your books to the largest possible group of people.

Join us to learn what's new with social media. Our speakers will give recommendations about using social media without being overwhelmed. They will discuss the best ways to use sites you probably know, like Facebook and Twitter, and introduce you to new sites you may not know. You'll learn what writers and publishers are doing today to reach, develop, and connect with new audiences, and have a chance to network with others.

Location: Veterans Memorial Building, 4117 Overland Avenue, Culver City
Cost: Free for PALA members; \$10 for IWOSC members, \$15 for nonmembers

See the [full announcement on our website](#) for more details on the event and our speakers.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Honoring David Evans

Dear PALA members:

Our treasurer for many years, David Evans, is stepping down toward the end of spring. He has been one of the most loyal and active PALA members and directors, and we value his lengthy and generous contribution over the years.

It is essential that we fill this position, which opens an opportunity for one of our members to become more involved with PALA.

The position of treasurer carries with it some weight for your resume, and since we are a small organization, the tasks are limited in scope.

You don't have to be a CPA to fulfill this position, and it takes only a very few hours per month.

Here are the duties:

1. Reconcile the printed bank statement monthly.
2. Write checks as needed. We have only a few every month.

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PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION OF LOS ANGELES (PALA)
<http://www.pa-la.org>

President: Gary Young (artsy12@earthlink.net)
Vice-President: Sharon Goldinger (pplspeak@att.net)
Secretary: Robin Quinn (quinnrobin@aol.com)
Treasurer: David Evans (teddytravelerbear@earthlink.net)
At-Large: Brandi Roth (brandiroth@yahoo.com)

Facebook: [facebook.com/PublishersAssociationofLosAngeles](https://www.facebook.com/PublishersAssociationofLosAngeles)

Twitter: @PALAPUB

President's Message (cont'd from page 1)

3. Receive checks at meetings and deposit them in any Chase bank. Any checks that come to the PO box will be deposited to the PALA account by the president.

4. Create an accounting of expenses and payments every other month with totals, preferably on a spreadsheet, but you can use Word if you are not comfortable with spreadsheets. The payments that come into PayPal, which constitute most of the payments, are specifically delineated on the PayPal site, with current totals, and therefore require no work on your part. You will have access to this, or the president can access it and report to you.

5. Attendance at our board meetings, which are over the phone approximately four to five times per year.

If you wish to discuss this with Sharon or Gary (or both by conference call), please e-mail me at artsy12@earthlink.net or contact Sharon Goldinger at pplspeak@att.net or 949-581-6190.

Gary Young
PALA President

**INDUSTRY NEWS**

10 Things Not to Do on Twitter



If you haven't been using Twitter for long, you may not know that there are certain etiquette rules on this microblogging network.

And if you don't follow them, you may have trouble growing your tribe and getting your book the attention it deserves.

Author and social media strategist Frances Caballo breaks down the Twitter rules for you in [this easy list](#) of 10 Twitter faux pas.

Interview with Nautilus Book Awards Director

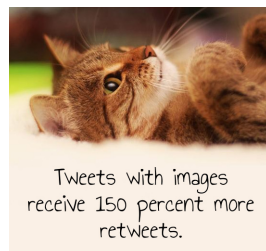
The Nautilus Book Awards, which are now in their 18th year, have an explicit mission to recognize and honor books that are helping build a more positive culture; not just “wishful thinking” about a better future, but actually sharing information, stories, transformational experiences, and community initiatives in many genres that can help people who read books to find sources of hope and guidance.

In a recent interview with the BookMarketingBuzzBlog, Nautilus Book Awards director Mary Belknap talked about the history of this unique book award, how the judges select their winners, and how receiving an award can positively impact sales of your book.

Check out the [full interview here](#).

How to Boost Social Media Success with Pictures

Research shows that images improve your social media engagement. In fact, tweets with images have been shown to



Tweets with images receive 150 percent more retweets.

receive 150 percent more retweets than those without.

Want to spice up your social media posts with imagery but not sure how? The BuildBookBuzz blog has [a recent post](#) that will teach you how to use picture quotes, tipographics, and infographics to generate more buzz.

15 Minutes on Twitter Can Make a Difference

“When I joined Twitter in 2009, I had pretty low expectations. . . . [now] Twitter is one of my favorite platforms. Using Twitter, I found my first writing mastermind group, landed podcast interviews with power influencers. . . and was once retweeted by Vanilla Ice. Twitter is the quickest way to interact with both the authors you love and the readers you hope to have for your books.”

Kirsten Oliphant's [recent guest post](#) on Jane Friedman's blog will change your mind about Twitter too and show you how to use the popular social media site to connect with readers and influencers.

Can Facebook Ads Sell Books?



The [Hot Sheet](#) recently examined whether Facebook ads can sell books. Their answer is complicated—yes and no. You need to understand how to use Facebook properly:

“It's common for authors to pay for Facebook advertising through the use of boosts—where you pay to boost one of your posts with a single click. A typical post by an official Facebook page might reach only 3 to 5 percent of its fans; by boosting, you can reach 100 percent of fans. . .

Professional Facebook strategists advise against this type of advertising. . . and recommend creating ads through Facebook's Power Editor. When paying for Facebook ads, you should carefully craft and test the marketing copy, visuals, and targeting.”

For more about how to use Facebook ads the right way, read Mark Dawson's [Digital Book World post](#) on the subject.

IBPA NEWS

PUBU Registration

Registration for Publishing University 2016 is now open. The Independent Book Publishers Association's (IBPA's) 28th Annual Publishing University will be held April 8–9 in Salt Lake City, Utah, and it is a must-attend networking and educational event focused specifically on issues important to indie publishers and self-published authors. Register and find out more info [here!](#)

MEMBER & CHAPTER
NEWS

Do You Have News?

The PALA newsletter is a great place to share your events, blog posts, books, and other news. Send a link, title, and a short description, and we'll share your announcements with other members. E-mail Sharon Goldinger, pplspeak@att.net, with your info, and we'll announce it for you.

PALA Online

The [members-only page](#) of PALA's website is user friendly and full of useful information you won't want to miss. As always, your questions, and thoughts about our website are welcomed.

PALA Listserv

The PALA Listserv is a private group where PALA members and guests ask questions and share resources. It's a great way to tap the knowledge shared by our

diverse group. To sign up, go to <http://www.groups.yahoo.com>. If you're not already registered with Yahoo, you'll need to do that first (it's free). Then search for PA-LA (don't forget the hyphen). Follow the instructions for joining the list.

Recordings of Past Meetings

If you missed a meeting or need to hear the information again, we have recorded each of our meetings in MP3 format. If you would like to receive a copy via e-mail, please contact Gary Young (artsy12@earthlink.net) with the subject line: PALA RECORDING.

Please indicate which *date* AND *program* in your e-mail. He will get back to you with the simple procedure.

MEETING TRANSCRIPT:

Perils and Pleasures of Self-Publishing

by Maggie Marr, Janiss Garza,
Carolyn Howard-Johnson, and
Gerald Everett Jones (moderated
by Robin Quinn)

Here is a brief excerpt from our recent panel on the perils and pleasures of self-publishing. Click [here](#) to read the full transcript, which includes lots of information from our speakers. Learn how to avoid common mistakes as they tell of the perils they encountered in their own self-publishing experiences and be encouraged and inspired by the many pleasures that they've experienced along the way.

Gary Young: Our program tonight is "The Perils and Pleasures of Self Publishing: Learning from the Experts."

Robin Quinn, who put this together and is moderating, is an award-winning book editor, ghost writer, copywriter, and book coach.

Robin: I'm very excited about this program tonight. This is one of the ideas that came through the PALA brainstorming dinner earlier this year. We have four wonderful speakers tonight:

- We have **Maggie Marr**. She's an independent author of 15 books in the genre of contemporary romance and women's fiction.

- **Janiss Garza**, president of FitCat Enterprises. After publishing her own work, she went on to publish an anthology of other writers' cat stories.

- **Carolyn Howard-Johnson** is the author of the *How to Do It Frugally* series on publishing.

- And last but not least is **Gerald Everett Jones**. He is the proprietor of La Puerta Books and Media, which has published six of his novels.

We're going to present the pleasures and the fun of publishing, and then we're going to talk about the pitfalls.

Maggie: So, pleasures first. I went ahead and was thinking about how different independent publishing is from traditional publishing. I've been lucky to do both in my career. The pleasures that I've found in independent publishing are some are the same as you'll find in traditional, and some are very different.

At the top of my list is control. I think that as authors, whether fiction or non-fiction, many of us have some control issues.

I have so much control as an independent author. I have control with regard to my publication schedule, my promotions and marketing, my covers, my design. I have control over the team that I hire, the way I title. Many of you who are traditionally published, I'm sure,

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Perils and Pleasures (cont'd from page 3)

understand that you do not always have that much control with a traditional publisher.

Number two is that I'm a speed boat. What I mean by that is if you picture a traditional publisher like Random House Penguin, they're this gigantic, monolithic, titanic creature in the Pacific. To turn that thing takes a lot of time. That becomes really important when you think about marketing and promotions, because marketing and promotions change day to day. We can start doing it immediately. It can take weeks, possibly months, to get a response from an editor who has to then go through business affairs or has to go through the marketing team to get a yes to try something new.

Number three is my community. I belong to a loop of 2,000 authors, many of whom are selling millions of books, who've been doing it much longer than I have, and they are the first people I turn to for information, for guidance, for what works for them, for referrals, for anything that I need. And in return, I give that back. I love being part of a community like that. I find it exhilarating. I find that it helps me to feel empowered.

Finally, one more thing: The great thing about being an indie publisher is that not only does it feed my creative soul, but it feeds my entrepreneurial soul. When you independently publish a book, you're not just a writer anymore. You have two separate jobs.

As a publisher, you are a business person, and you look at numbers and analytics and how things work, and what the ROI—return on investment—is for any given property that you as an author, or anyone else that you're working with, has created. As an author, you don't think about any of those things. You write from your heart and you write with passion. You do what you want and you do it because you love it. That's where it starts. But then when you become the publisher you have to really try

to look at this thing that you love, that you created, from an analytical and business perspective. How to give it wings? What's the best marketing plan? What's the best cover?

Janiss: So I'm probably a little bit different from some of the other indie publishers here because the main reason I'm into indie publishing is because I've always wanted to work with other writers and not just publish my own stuff.

My first pleasure is actually the process of crafting a good-looking book. Looking over fonts, working with a cover designer, and having her hand in something that is just so wonderful and so perfect that it informed the interior design after that—it's that kind of thing. It's having great photographs for my cover designer to work with, which were contributed by one of the writers. It's the whole process of the end design layout, and having all the pieces work together really well, like a really awesome puzzle.

To me, that's the whole thing: watching a book come together and really crafting it, making it look good inside and out. It really frustrates me that more people don't take that kind of pride in it. The first thing I do when I open up a book, especially an indie book, is look to see what they did well and what they didn't do so well. To me the whole process is the most fascinating thing in the world, so obviously I'm in the right place.

One of my other pleasures of indie publishing is—I call it being Maxwell Perkins. He was the editor for Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Thomas Wolfe. He is basically the guy responsible for them being as awesome as they are. I've always wanted to do that, ever since I started being the senior editor at a heavy metal rock magazine. I'd work with these writers on their stuff. They handed in this amazing raw material—some of my writers were just amazing writers but what they handed in a lot of times was a little bit raw, so I got to really make it what it deserved to be. That was such a wonderful process.

Carolyn: I took this from a little different standpoint than the rest of you. At the risk of sounding like Donald Trump, I'm going to tell you my four most brilliant moves as opposed to my greatest pleasures. I think within those brilliant moves, you're going to see how they were also my pleasures.

The most important thing for me was that I didn't think of myself as too old to start a new career. I've only been doing this since 2000. I have had a lot of writing experience and publicity experience and marketing experience. Before that I was a journalist. But I didn't start following my star until the time most people are considering retiring. And I can't tell you how glad I am that I did that. You know when you're starting something new, there's always someone—when you're going on a vacation to Europe, there's always someone who's going to tell you that you have to watch for pickpockets and take the pleasure out of it for you? There are always a few of those people hanging around, telling you that you shouldn't do it. I'm proud that I did anyway.

The second thing was that I didn't accept the idea that I didn't have the credentials to do what I wanted to do. I'd gone back to learn novel writing at UCLA, which obviously is different from journalism. And somebody said, "Well, you can do it." And I said, "No, I can't." But I did. I got up my nerve, made an appointment, walked in, and told the instructor about my idea for an e-book. This was back when e-books were new. She just loved the idea and said, "Come teach a class in marketing and e-books." So that's how I got started. That took a little bit of chutzpah.

Number three—one of my good friends says she doesn't think she is by nature collaborative. I don't think I'm by nature collaborative either. But I reached out when I decided that I wanted to start writing poetry, to a woman I'd never met. Her name's Magdalena Ball, and she and I got started writing one book of poetry that turned into a series of

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Perils and Pleasures (cont'd from page 4)

six books called the Celebration Series. They're over on the table. It turned out that I was collaborative. I think the most important aspect of being collaborative is finding the right person to be collaborative with.

Then my fourth thing was setting my mind to learning editing. I think this was one of the most brilliant things I did. It made me a better partner for my editors. And I think that's one of the most important things, whether you're self-publishing or whether you're working with a publisher. You're in a better position to hire an editor, to work with an editor. It makes you less suspicious of their skills. It makes you more confident about nixing their suggestions. If this is something that's really important to you, or really a style choice you've made as opposed to a fast and firm grammar rule, then you should be able to say, "Let's discuss this. What do you think?" and knock it back and forward.

Gerald: So long story short, I did these five novels in the last four years, and this last January, having blown out the pipes with the stuff that I had intended to write, I had no choice but to go to the back burner and write this book that had been simmering for almost twenty years.

So I said to myself, "OK, I've got this fan base. I've got a blog. I even had a radio show. I've got a pretty good case to take to some of these agents"—some of whom I knew on a first-name basis from being at places like this. So I approached the half dozen agents that I knew by name. I did those six, and I got kind of impatient, waiting, and I thought, you know, I can find the e-mail addresses of a hundred other agents. In the end, I had about a dozen agents read it.

They all say "two to six weeks." "I said, "OK, I'll give it eight." Along about the fourth week, I'm going, "Isn't anybody ever going to want this? It's literary fiction; it's all the things that are picking up."

And then it dawned on me. This is the point that I'm getting to: it's all about not waiting. It's all about setting your own schedule. I began to do the math, and I don't know why it took me so long. Basically, once I did the math I realized it was going to be two years before this was in print, even if I got lucky. So I made the decision in June to publish it. Here it is. It's already been out to 60 reviewers.

So, control. Absolutely. Not waiting for anybody! I mean, yeah, I did wait for the reviewers but if they didn't get back to me with their comments, the ship sailed. I'm sorry. Let's move on.

Robin: Gerald, why don't we start with the perils?

Gerald: In the print world, the production ready date—the production ship date—has to be some number of weeks before that street date. They call it the street date: the date that it's available for sale. That's got to be timed pretty carefully because you've got shipping and print production. So the big publishers control this very routinely, and the way they do it with Amazon is through a portal called Vendor Central. No small press publisher that I've met can have access to Vendor Central.

Now, in Seller Central, which is basically for bookstores but also for people selling all kinds of other stuff, any member of Seller Center can create a new product page. You can actually create the book page. The problem is—I tried to do this—because Lightning Source, who I was using for my printing at the time, was not getting any data over to Amazon so they could create the page, I went in through Seller Central because I sell used books, and I created a book page. It came up in 24 hours and I go, "This was really easy." Except in another 24 hours, Amazon took the page down and they said, "Your sale date is in the future." Booksellers are not supposed to advertise books that they don't have in stock. They say, "You're not a publisher; you're a bookseller." So that does not work.

There's a whole lot more of that but I think Carolyn's probably got some really good guidance on it. The thing is that you want to allow time for advance reviews. If you get advance reviews, you want to be able to populate the Amazon page with those before the book goes live.

Carolyn: Originally I worked too much of my marketing around my first book, rather than as me as a person and a writer. I still see that in a lot of my clients. They think in terms of selling their books. I hate the words "selling your book." There are a million ways to sell your book without ever uttering the word "selling." So never say to anybody, "Come buy my book" or "I'm selling books." You can do it a lot of other ways.

The people who are out there who *want* to give you free publicity, because that's their job, they work for newspapers, they work for magazines, they blog. They have to fill those pages with information, and they need you. They need your book, too, but it gets a little tiresome to do interviews just about books. It's gotten so that a media release sent out about the release of a book is just ho-hum. You have to show them that you have an angle, something that they can talk about.

My next one was that I waited too long to start a newsletter and a contact list. I thought I needed to wait until I had a book ready to go. That is just so wrong! Because you've wasted all the time it took you to write the book when you could be building that contact list, building a following for your newsletter, your blog. The time to start publicizing is not on that release date. It's too late to start publicizing yesterday but you can start right now. You can start setting up that marketing program this minute, so that you don't go by a Denny's and pass by one of those racks with all those luscious throw-away papers, that you don't pick one up and go to the list of editors and put those into an excel file that will be ready for you when your book is released, or just

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Perils and Pleasures (cont'd from page 5)

before your book is released, to try to get free publicity.

Janiss: Everything takes longer. The process of laying out the book took a little bit longer than I expected it to, the e-book took longer—everything just takes longer than you think it's going to. If you're trying to schedule things out, give yourself more time than you think you're going to need because chances are you're going to need it!

The other peril that really bummed me out this summer was the slump. The book comes out, and it comes out with a lot of enthusiasm. Since I have a dozen writers, I assigned them each a month to promote the book. It started off for the first five months or so—the sales were really excellent; they were really good. After a while it's inevitable: sales are going to slow down. You're going to have a slump. I knew that was going to happen because every book goes through a slump.

The thing is, the difference between publishing somebody else's work—if you're an indie publisher, not a big traditional publisher, but an indie publisher and you're personally involved—as opposed to your own book: your own book goes through a slump, and you get kind of bummed out. You're like, "Well, what can I do?" And you try to figure it out. If it's somebody else's work that's going through the slump and you're the publisher, you're like, "Oh my god! I've got to do something! I've got to do right by these people." You feel responsible. I was scrambling to try and figure out what I could do, throwing promotional ideas to see what stuck, all summer, to try and get sales up on the book. I really should have had a plan ahead of time, knowing that was going to come. I should have foreseen that and really had more of a plan instead of treating it like spaghetti and seeing what stuck.

Maggie: One peril that I think you have to be very careful of is that you always, always, always, always want to be professional. In every single way, you present

yourself as professional. For me, that means a cover designer, a formatter, two editors, a proofreader. I vet my books in the same way they were vetted when they went through New York. And I would argue that there are a lot of New York books, traditionally published, that have many, many more errors than any one of my books. Right? Because my books that came from New York had errors in them. I remember cringing. And how many eyes read those? You want to be professional in every way that you can, because you only get one shot at a reader. If they look at your book and they think the cover looks schlocky, they're not going to click the interior to see what the writing is. If on Amazon they read the first ten pages and it's just rife with errors, they're not going to buy that book. So you get one shot, and you want it to be the best shot.

To read the full transcript of this presentation, click [here](#).



PALA Officers and Board

Your PALA officers and chairs are

President: Gary Young,
artsy12@earthlink.net

Vice President/Membership Chair:
Sharon Goldinger, pplspeak@att.net,
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