



Quill de Ville

www.WritersLeagueofTheVillages.com

Writers League of The Villages Newsletter

Editor, Penny Thomas
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Upcoming Events – December, 2024

Date	Time	Event	Location
Wednesday, 12/4	2:30 – 4:30 pm	BookExpo Training Session Secrets of Successful BookExpo Sales – Paula Howare	Laurel Manor Rec Center
Thursday, 12/5	6:30 – 8:30 pm	Wine & Words	Riverbend Rec Center
Tuesday, 12/10	11 am – 2: 00 pm	All Booked Up Author Signing Peggy Best, Ron Miller, and Ken Van Camp	All Booked Up, Colony Plaza
Every Thursday, 12/5,12/12, 12/19, 12/26	4:00 to 5:00 pm	Masterclass Paula Howard, Movie Moderator	Via Zoom
Wednesday, 12/11	9:00 – 11:00 am	WLOV Monthly Meeting Holiday Party with Rick Mitchell. Gift Exchange	Laurel Manor Rec Center
Friday, 12/13	2:30 – 4:30 pm	BookExpo Training Session Promoting Your Books, Before, During, and After. -- Mark Newhouse	Laurel Manor Rec Center

Things to read in this edition:

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President's Message

Dear Authors!

As the holiday season approaches, I just wanted to take a moment to express my gratitude for your participation in WLOV this past year. I look forward to the upcoming year of serving as your president, and trust that I will have your continued support and that 2025 will be another successful year. It is your participation and service to our group that makes all the difference.

I hope you all have a wonderful and restful holiday, full of joy and inspiration. Looking forward to an exciting new year with all of you!

Sincerely,
Jeanne

Jeanne E. Rogers
Award Winning Author



GENERAL INFORMATION

FACEBOOK ALBUMS

Click on these links to find WLOV member newspaper coverage and event pictures.

SEPTEMBER FACEBOOK ALBUM

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.935743845259940&type=3>

OCTOBER FACEBOOK ALBUM

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.958936766273981&type=3>

NOVEMBER FACEBOOK ALBUM

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.981058434061814&type=3>

GENERAL INFORMATION (Cont...)

Important Reminder: It's time to pay your \$20.00 membership dues for 2025.

Note: If you are exhibiting at BookExpo2025, your dues must be paid before the event.

There are 3 ways to pay:

- 1. in person at our General Meetings on November 13th or December 11th;**
- 2. online at our website: writersleagueofthevillages.com. Click on: Join or renew here.**
(Note: the website says 2024, disregard the year)

Link: <https://wlovmembership.com/index.php/dues-joining-for-the-first-time/>

- 3. By mail: to WLOV, PO Box 1067, The Villages, FL 32158**



Our **Holiday Party**, December 11th, will feature a **Gift Exchange**.

Guidelines for those who want to participate are: bring a wrapped, unisex, gift of not more than \$10 value and you'll get a gift in return.



Barrel of Books in Mt. Dora is looking for authors to do book signings, November through March. Contact Crissy at 352-735-1950. I did a 2 hour signing there on a Saturday last December. ***Tales from the Eerie Canal*** sold well.

Barbara Rein

***"Best Book of the Year 2021"—Florida Writers Association
TALES FROM THE EERIE CANAL: 22 Stories of the Delightfully Dark and Creepy.***

ON AMAZON <https://bit.ly/TalesFromtheEerieCanal>

GENERAL INFORMATION (Cont...)

WLOV Member Benefit

BE FEATURED IN VILLAGE NEIGHBORS MAGAZINE

Contact Mark H. Newhouse at mark@newhouse.net if you would like to be a guest columnist or be featured in a future **Writing Bug** column promoting WLOV authors and their books via mail to more than 30,000 homes. November's issue featured **Keke** explaining why she was qualified to write about training her human, **Ken Van Camp** because she was a very smart Biewer Terrier.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

WLOV's heart and soul are volunteers and we always need more. There's a 'Volunteer Sign Up' sheet at the back of the meeting room. Or you can Email wlovwriters@gmail.com, talk to a board member, or reach out to one of the volunteers manning the tables at the meeting.



Writer Beware is an excellent resource to stay on top of scams targeting writers. This article, The Impersonation List by Victoria Strauss, has some good tips on what to look out for. <https://writerbeware.blog/2024/03/15/the-impersonation-list/>

Writer UnBoxed is another good resource for scams.

<https://writerunboxed.com/2024/10/25/just-for-authors-writer-bewares-go-to-online-resources/> Victoria Strauss writes about Go-to Online Resources.

SHARING A LITTLE SUNSHINE

Know of a member recuperating from surgery, down with the flu, suffering from the loss of loved one – or facing some other traumatic event? Please contact us at wlovwriters@gmail.com and share the member's name and situation. We'll forward the information to Our Sunshine Committee chair, Kathy deMaCarty, who will send them a card with a caring message to show WLOV's support.



BOOKEXPO 2025

Rita Boehm, BookExpo Chair

EXHIBITORS: If you've signed up for BookExpo2025 you should have received a WELCOME email from me and an email listing the training courses. If you haven't received these emails, please check your spam filter. I'll be sending emails regularly to keep everyone apprised of the latest Expo information.

RAFFLE BASKETS: Please bring one of your books to the December meeting to contribute to our free BookExpo raffle baskets. We also need some medium-sized baskets.

TABLE ASSIGNMENTS: Table assignments will be sent out by the end of December, along with the room layouts so you'll know where your table is

TRAINING CLASSES: Location: Laurel Manor Recreation Center Time: 2:30 – 4:30

Wednesday, December 4th – Paula Howard, **Secrets of Successful BookExpo Sales** (credit card sales, table set-up, etc)

Friday, December 13th – Mark Newhouse, **Promoting your Books: before, during, and after Expo**

If you're planning to attend, send me an email @ Wlovwriters@gmail.com.

EXHIBITOR PARKING: Once books are unloaded at the front of the building, exhibitors must park their cars in the far reaches of the parking lot to leave room for Expo attendees. This year we'll have volunteers in golf carts to assist anyone who finds the walk onerous.

SPEAKERS: At 11:00, "Rocky" of Rocky and the Rollers fame will share behind-the-scenes stories from his lengthy and storied career in the rock-and-roll world. At 1:00, Mike Bowling, inventor of the Pound Puppies toys, children's author, and motivational speaker will share his insights on why you should always say "**I'm Not Done**".

Spread the word! This year our speakers' room has about 80% more seats than in past years. The more people who come to hear our speakers – the more potential customers for your books.

MARKETING: The success of BookExpo 2025 depends on marketing and publicity. We need at least 12 volunteers on our marketing committee. Please sign up at our next meeting, reach out to Dave McKeon, BookExpo2025 Vice Chairperson, or send an email to wlovwriters@gmail.com

“Writing itself is an important freedom: ‘in writing I feel I have some control over the world; I can recreate the world a little bit more to my own liking.’”

Grace Nichols
Reprinted from:

A Writer's Commonplace Book, Rosemary Friedman

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Rita Boehm

BARNES & NOBLE:

Our WLOV featured book selection offers a wide array of wonderful books across a range of genres. Books will be in the store through December 31st. The WLOV display can be found at the far end of the local author shelf—facing the café. Books make great holiday gifts!

IMPORTANT NOTE: In the first 3 quarters of 2024, our book sales are down significantly from past years. Due to this apparent waning interest and support by members, our Barnes & Noble program will change in 2025.

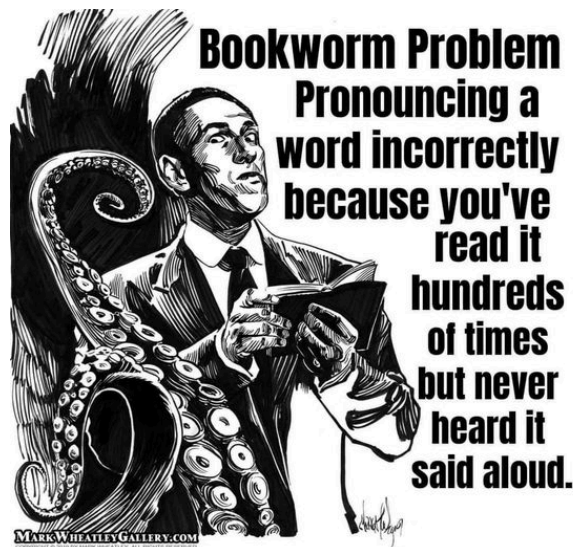
Details have not yet been established. Stay tuned.

ALL BOOKED UP BOOKSTORE: Thanks to the hard work of Bill Pullen the books of six WLOV authors are featured in this wonderful independent book store for two-month periods, with book signings scheduled for the second Tuesday of the month from 11- 2.

Please visit All Booked Up in the Colony Plaza Shopping Center and let Jamie Goeske know you appreciate her support of local authors—and, thank Bill for creating and running this event.

VILLAGES MAGAZINE AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT: EASY WAY TO PROMOTE YOUR BOOKS!

If you wish to have your book featured in the magazine, send an email attachment to WLOVWRITERS@GMAIL.COM, including the following information: See next page for information you MUST submit.



VILLAGES MAGAZINE AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT: EASY WAY TO PROMOTE YOUR BOOKS!

(Must submit BOTH items)

a) a high-quality image of your book cover

b) answers to the questionnaire below (Note: answers may be edited by the magazine for content/space/layout purposes.)

Your Name:

The Village you live in:

Book title and genre:

- **A brief synopsis of your book (approx. 1 -2 paragraphs):**
- **What prompted you to write your book?**
- **What do you hope readers take away from your book?**

What clubs, activities and hobbies do you enjoy?

Where may readers purchase your book?

Anything else you'd like to share?

General information about The Villages Magazine:

1. You must remain a current WLOV member to be part of the program.
2. If you've been featured in the magazine's "Villages Author Spotlight" in the last 4 years, your name will go to the end of the list behind newcomers.



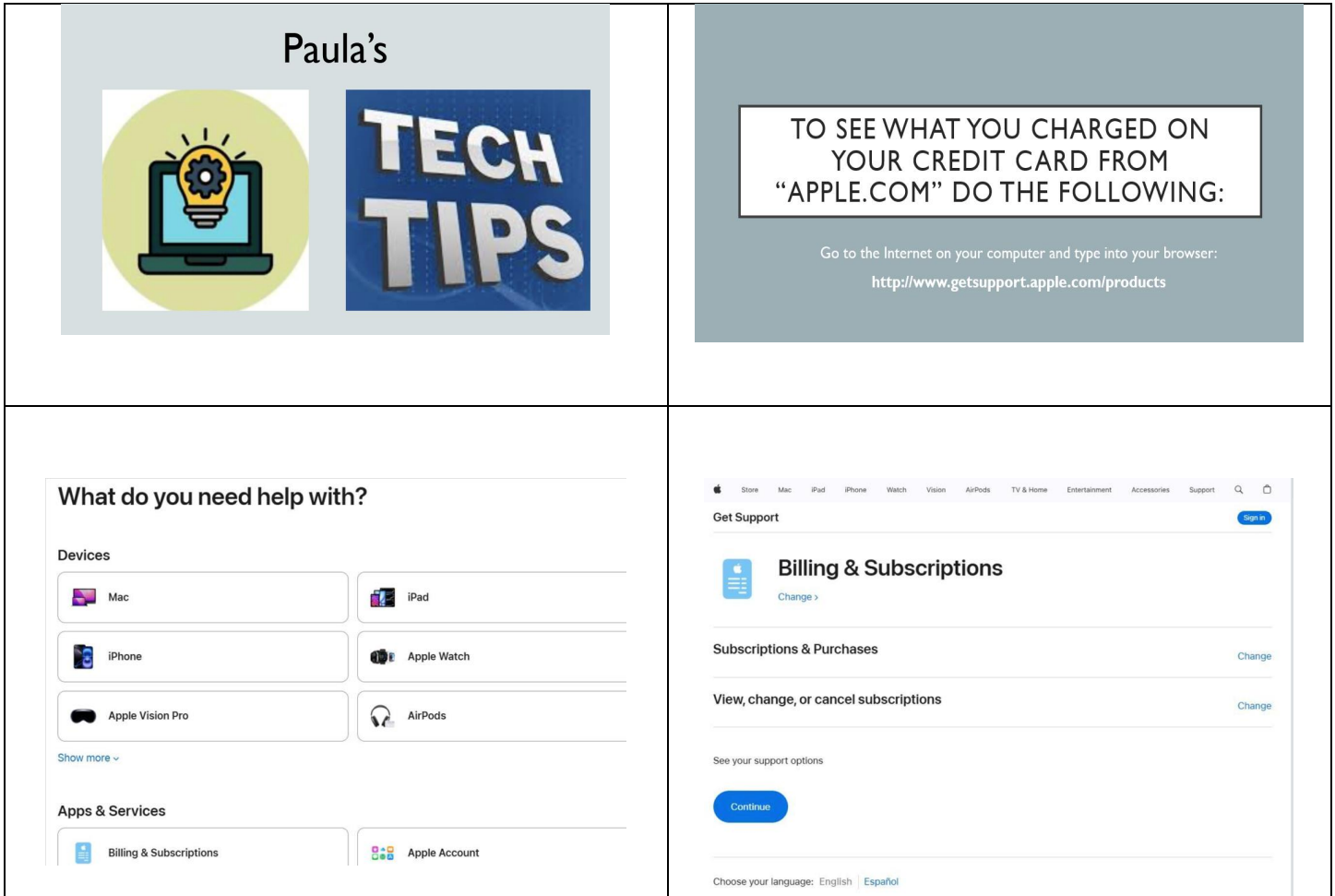
“A writer’s life truly does depend on his desk, and if he want to avoid madness, he mustn’t strictly speaking, ever leave his desk, he must cling to it with gritted teeth.”

Source Unkown

Reprinted from:

A Writer’s Commonplace Book, Rosemary Friedman

Paula Howard gives 'Tech Tips' at WLOV's monthly meeting. The following are her slides given at November's session.



AWARDS, ACCOLADES, AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Brag a bit. Be proud. You did it! Email Penny Thomas, pt0647@gmail.com, details of your award, accolade, and accomplishment.

Colleen Heitmann won Gold for the FWA Royal Palm Literary Award for Unpublished-Children's Picture Book, *AVERY AND GOOBER*.

52 Weeks of Leadership, by **Curtis K. Chocholous**, was featured in The Villages Magazine, November issue.

Ken Van Camp is scheduled to be the WLOV author featured in The Villages Magazine in December.

All Booked Up Tuesday, November 12, 2024

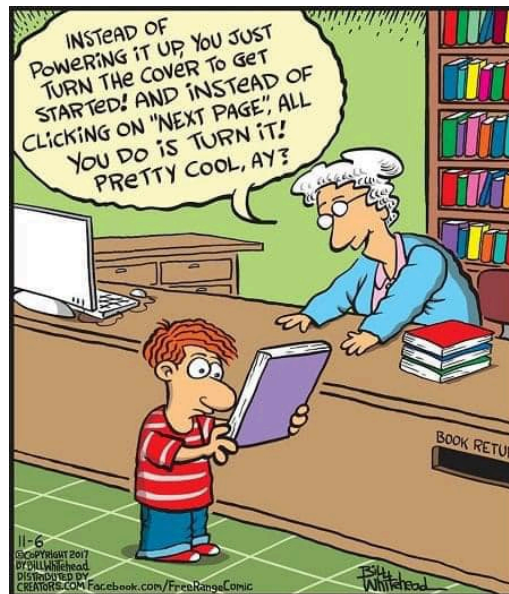


Curtis Chocholous, Fran Szarnicki and Dottie Klein.

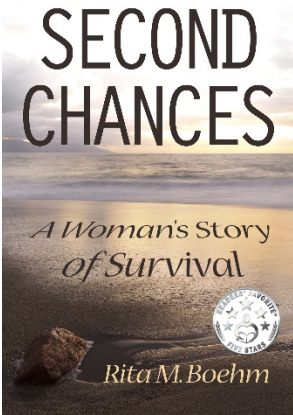
“It’s only after you’ve written a book that you find out what it’s about because everyone tells you.”

Helen Fielding
Reprinted from:

A Writer’s Commonplace Book, Rosemary Friedman



DECEMBER BOOK PROMOTIONS



SECOND CHANCES by **Rita Boehm** — One wrong choice – accepting a drugged glass of champagne from a charming man at a cocktail party -- changes Lindsay Talbot's life forever.

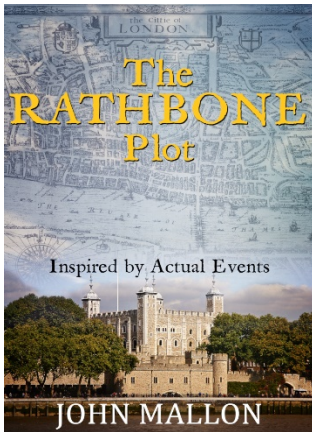
She'll spend two years as a veritable hostage - crossing countries and continents, her life controlled and scripted by her aloof, wealthy, enigmatic captor.

Why her? Who is this man and why won't he let her go?

SECOND CHANCES is Lindsay Talbot's saga of shocking truths, complicated love, heart-breaking loss, and the potential for a future that comes at a price she may not be willing to pay.

SECOND CHANCES is not only the title of this international romantic suspense, it is also the book's publishing story. This first book in the **SECOND CHANCES trilogy** was released ten years ago as Rita Boehm's first book. Over the next ten years, she'd publish 6 more books across a range of genres—learning and growing as a writer with each new release. Last year, with the help of her wonderful critique partners, she tightened the narrative, re-architected the story, and re-published the book, achieving a 5-star Readers' Choice Award.

Book 2, **BEYOND SECOND CHANCES**, was re-architected and re-released earlier this year, garnering another 5-star Readers' Choice Award. Book 3, **ANOTHER CHANCE**, is being finalized for re-release in time for BookExpo2025. This exciting trilogy will enthrall you from book 1.



THE RATHBONE PLOT by John Mallon

London, 1665. Former Parliamentarian Army Colonel John Rathbone is one of the most dangerous threats to the English monarchy. After returning to London from foreign exile, he and his followers scheme to set numerous fires in the city, attack the Tower of London, seize weapons and munitions, assassinate government officials, and incite a land reform movement.

George Harrington, England's Security Department Director, is charged with investigating conspiracies against the Crown and leads his staff in attempting to stop Rathbone's plot. If successful, Rathbone and his co-conspirators will be arrested, imprisoned at the Tower, tried at the Old Bailey Court, and

ultimately executed at the infamous Tyburn gallows.

Inspired by actual events, *The Rathbone Plot* is a powerful depiction of life during England's Restoration and the dual tragedies of the Great Plague and the Great Fire.

From the River to the Sea: A Novel of Love and Conflict on an Elite College Campus by Lawrence Martin is centered on the fictional Great Lakes University outside Chicago. It takes place in the year before the Hamas massacre of October 7, 2023.

The protagonists are college students affected by the campus BDS movement (boycott, divestment, sanctions against Israel). Some are supportive of BDS and others are in strong opposition. Through dialogue and a few on-campus lectures, background information about the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict is presented.

The two main characters are senior David Applebaum and freshman Rebecca Goldman. They are both Jewish, with grandparents who were Holocaust victims. David is smitten with Rebecca, though he finds her views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict naïve and uninformed. He wants her in his bed but she refuses. Then something bad happens on a pro-BDS march that challenges her world view, and makes her reconsider David's advances.

Other characters include: Michael Solomon, a Jewish college junior and convert to the Bahá'í faith; Steve Mandelbaum, a senior who vows to move to Israel right after graduation and join the Israeli Defense Force; Gordon Geddy, the local BDS club leader; and a history professor with a new book about who he blames for the anti-Semitism among many college students.

Early in the novel two FBI agents pay a visit to the school president. They relay concern about a possible terrorist attack on campus. Is BDS involved? Possibly.

Readers should find the novel both educational and entertaining.

Educational: Historical context for the 2023 Hamas attack and Gaza war that followed.

Entertaining: Love among college students, campus conflict and, ultimately, mayhem.



Here is one 5-star review by a Villages resident:

“It reads like nonfiction but is paced like a thriller, with romance for dessert. I enjoyed this book and couldn't put it down. I am more than familiar with the Israeli-Hamas conflict and found a different lens of looking at the struggle. Timely, written before October 7. A must read.”

From the River to the Sea is available on Amazon in print and Kindle formats, and also at Barnes & Noble, Lake Sumter Landing (in the “Local Authors” bookshelf near the café).

<https://www.amazon.com/River-Sea-Boycott-Divestment-Sanctions/dp/1879653001/>

FUTURE BOOK PROMOTIONS

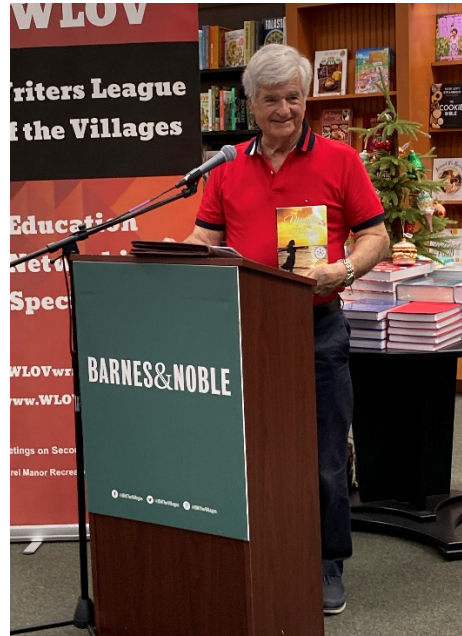
Quill de Ville would like to promote your book. We'll do it by a lottery system. At every WLOV monthly meeting, Penny Thomas will be there with a box. You will put in that box a card containing your book title, your name, and email address. This can be on a 3" x 5" index card, your social/business card, or your promotional bookmark. Every month, Penny will pull out a few cards (she promises to close her eyes as she dips into the box). Penny will then contact you for a photo of the book cover, the back cover blurb, and purchase info to put in the next *Quill de Ville*.

You have to be at the WLOV monthly meeting to put your card in the box.

Barnes & Noble Author's Kick-Off Event November 2, 2024



Casel Burnett, *No Regrets-What My Dad Tried to Teach Me & Now I Know*



David Maurer, *Phantom of the Beach*



Ellen Nofi, *Found Identity*



Ken Van Camp & Keke, *The Dog Park Massacre*



Paul Yakes, *The Letter*



Miss Marple and our author's books.

Self-publishing: The Good and the Bad News

By Larry Martin
Past president, WLOV

I've given a talk on this title several times in The Villages (TV). The PowerPoint slides are online at <http://www.lakesidepress.com/SelfPublishing.pdf>. The good and bad news about self-publishing are the same.

The good news is that it's easy to do.
The bad news is that it's easy to do.

Below are two slides from the talk, starting with the "good news."

Self-publishing: The Good News

- **If you write a book, easy to get it published and listed for sale on Amazon. Most self-published authors use Amazon's free Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) platform, but other platforms are also available.**
- This is "light-years" better than pre-internet
 - No need to take delivery of a thousand books, or deal with a scammy self-publishing company
- Can self-publish your book at no or low-cost, depending on your own skills at cover design, formatting, and editing.
 - For the best result, expect to spend some \$\$ self-publishing your book.

Spectrum of options to get your book into publishable format:

Do-it-yourself-----	Free lancers-----	One-stop self-publishing company
\$0	\$ to \$\$	\$\$\$ to \$\$\$\$

- 1) Hire individual free lancers for each job you want (editing, formatting, cover design, etc.). They are listed all over the internet. Also on fiverr.com. Talk to other writers who have used free lancers.

- 2) Go with a legitimate self-publishing company that will do everything, typically at \$2-4K. To find one, **MUST DO YOUR RESEARCH. Many self-publishing companies are scammers.** They overcharge by thousands, and control your copyright. Their business model is based only on selling stuff to *you*, and *not* on selling your book to the public.
 - Google "Self-publishing companies to avoid."
 - Talk to other writers who have used a self-publishing company. Many self-published authors in TV.

Basically, if you are willing to lay out a few bucks, and have some initiative, you can publish your book and have it for sale online easily. Pre-internet, this was not possible. In 1991, my first self-published book, *Pickwickian and Other Stories of Intensive Care*, was printed by a local company, and then I had to take delivery of over 1000 copies! There was no print-on-demand, no Amazon.com or outlet for sales of self-published books. Now, the situation is very

different. A self-published book need only be printed when it is ordered, so no need to stock inventory. However, the relative ease of getting to this point – compared to pre-internet – does not guarantee a good outcome.

Below is one of the slides about the bad news.

Self-publishing: The Bad News



- **If you write a book, easy to get it published and listed for sale on Amazon**

As result:

- Consensus: @ 90% of self-published books are poorly written, poorly formatted, and/or poorly edited (google “bad self-published books”).
- @ 2 million self-published books every year; your book is unlikely to be reviewed, carried in book stores, or sell enough to make any money.
- Professional help in producing your book is recommended. However, let me repeat: **You need to be hyper-vigilant not to be ripped off by people who prey on authors wishing to self-publish.**



There are many companies looking for the self-published author’s business, and some are to be avoided. The legitimate ones charge basically for the production of the book, and give the author a fair deal; their business model is to make money if the book is successful.

There are also self-publishing companies whose business model is NOT to sell books to the public, but only to the author, at a “discount” from an inflated retail price, one the public will likely never pay. Companies with this business model will also barrage you with offers to buy publicity packages, and even worse, the “opportunity” to have your book reviewed for optioning by Hollywood producers. Or, you get a come-on that your book is great for the movies, and all you need do is have a write the screenplay, at your expense. Avoid these companies and offers like the plague. Their scam nature can usually be uncovered by internet search but, as the slide states, you have to be hyper-vigilant. unsolicited offer, first check out “Writer Beware” at <https://writerbeware.blog/>.



professional
“screenplay”
a detailed
For any

In the slide above, note the three main problems encountered with self-published books: poor writing, poor editing, and/or poor formatting. As you have probably noticed, the first two faults are not uncommon in traditionally-published books; you are not alone if you have wondered how some traditionally-published book came to see the light of day. However, unlike issues with writing and editing, poor formatting is mainly found in self-published books.

It is not easy to format a 300-page print book to look right, with proper page numbers, paragraphing, headers and/or footers. I always pay someone to do this task, as the learning curve using Word is frightful. (Formatting is not so critical in e-books, where there are no page numbers, headers, or footers.) Using the internet, it is easy to find people to do the job for a reasonable fee. One popular source to look for help is fiverr.com.

You may not be able to judge a book by its cover, but you likely can judge the overall quality by how it looks *inside*. Go to any book fair that includes self-published authors, skim through some books and likely you

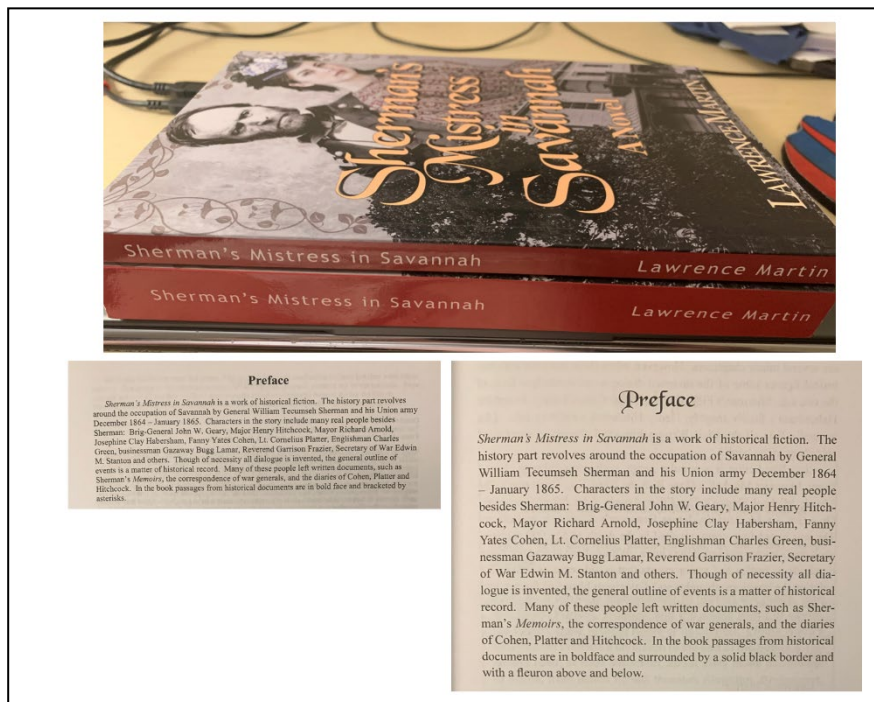
can tell which ones were formatted professionally. An author who doesn't pay close attention to the interior look may also not care too much about the editing or the proofreading. Some indicators of poor formatting:

- No page numbers (it happens)
- Extra line spacing making the book longer than necessary
- No headers or footers.
- Variable use of tabs for indenting paragraphs
- Inside margins too close to the binding, making it difficult to read some text
- Font that is too tiny to read comfortably
- Unusual font for a book (e.g., courier) or one that is not easy to read (e.g., arial narrow). Below are three fonts: traditional 12-point Times Roman, followed by Courier and Arial Narrow.
 - The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog.
 - The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog.
 - The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog.

Sometimes poor formatting can happen despite the author's best intentions. In 2012 I paid to have my first Civil War novel, *Sherman's Mistress in Savannah*, professionally formatted. I uploaded the formatted file to amazon's CreateSpace, then the self-publishing platform of Amazon.com (it has since been folded into Kindle Direct Publishing).

Fortunately, I requested a proof copy before listing the book for sale. Imagine my surprise when I received a very thin copy of this 384-page book. Surprise turned to shock when I looked inside. The print was so small it was barely readable! Did anyone at CreateSpace even look at the book before sending it? I called to report the problem and within a week I received another proof, this one properly formatted – and twice as thick. The picture below shows the two proof copies, with an example of the Preface from each.

Whether or not you self-publish, always request a proof copy of your book before it goes on sale.



Apart from the writing itself, the key elements to publishing a quality book – and for me that require professional help – are cover design, proofreading, and formatting. Let’s assume these elements are taken care of and your book is offered at a fair price on Amazon and other outlets. Now comes some more bad news: marketing is a pain.

Self-publishing: Some More Bad News

For most self-published authors:


Writing is the **easier task**

Marketing your book is the **harder task**

- Most self-published authors put little effort/money into marketing.
- Marketing via social media is time-intensive and difficult.
- For each self-published book, the average no. of books sold is 250 total.
- Companies that sell “promotion packages” typically charge \$\$thousands, and are almost guaranteed to be a waste of money.

Marketing is expensive, time consuming, and chances are any money you spend on this task is not going to be recouped in book sales. Hence, the two emojis for the self-published author.

Two faces of the self-published author

<u>Writing and publishing the book</u>	<u>Marketing the book</u>
	

I don’t end my talk on a downer, but ask this question.

Why bother self-publishing at all?

- **Money?** Remote possibility
- **Fame?** Even more remote
- **Sense of accomplishment?** Definitely
- **Way to learn about a subject that interests you?** Great idea
- **Become part of a creative culture you enjoy?** Absolutely
- **Leave something important to your family?** Especially so, for memoirs

And, not least....

You simply enjoy writing

The answers provided help explain why we have so many self-published authors in our retirement community, and by extension, all over the country: some two million self-published books a year. I’ve yet to meet anyone who spent time and money self-publishing and regretted the effort.

The keys to self-publishing:

1) Make the writing as good as you can: write-get feedback-rewrite;

2) Decide on one of three basic paths to producing your book:

a) do it all yourself;

b) hire freelance help as needed for editing, proofreading, cover design, and/or formatting;

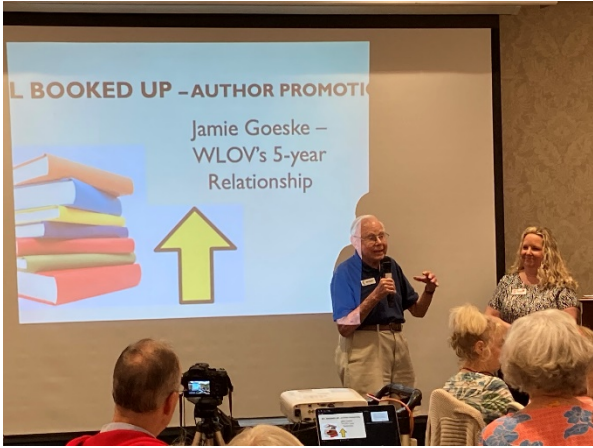
c) research to find a “self-publishing company” for all tasks, one that has a good reputation and an acceptable business model.

Expect pitfalls, unforeseen expenses, and snafus along the way, However, if you are committed to see your book published, it truly is “easy” when compared to the pre-internet era.

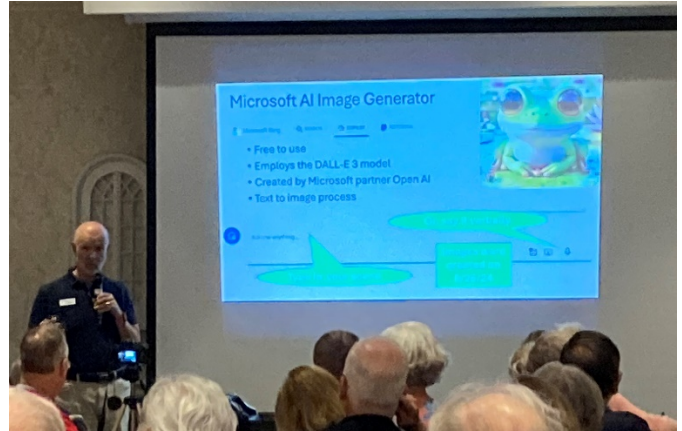
Once your book is published, then comes the hard part: promotion and marketing. Good luck!



NOVEMBER MEETING PHOTOS



Bill Pullen introduced **Jamie Goeske**, owner of All Booked Up, and thanked her for the author promotion she does.



Frank Lancione talks about using artificial intelligence to generate images for your book.

Authors Presenting Their New Books

