

KeyNotes

August 2009



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

Hello, Authors and Publishers ~

V-A-C-A-T-I-O-N! There used to be a song like that, full of youthful delight and exuberance. In the midst of wrapping up two books and a journal, it's time for a break. Don't have time for it but going to do it anyway. When I get head-down-in-the-weeds so busy that I lose track of where I'm going, it's time to force relaxation. Experience has proven that I'll do better work and faster if I back off and do something different for a while. Something like reading, sleeping, and being somewhere cool and calming.

You might want to try this, too. August is the perfect time to catch your breath and reclaim your spirit before the headlong rush to the end of the year begins in September. Sing it with me: V-A-C-A-T-I-O-N!

Cats! They're Everywhere!

I knew when I started working on *The Cat Lover's Book of Days* that it would be a fun project. The delightful surprise is that there are so many cat lovers out there, eager to share their cats' names, stories, and photos. They have made my work so much more enjoyable with their enthusiasm and willingness to have their feline friends included in my book.

I'm still getting the hang of Facebook, and thanks to a very talented young woman named Paula Kalaj, there is now a Facebook fan page for the book. If you like cats take a look and think about becoming a fan. Here's the address: <http://tinyurl.com/nplppu>. Guaranteed to supply your minimum daily requirement of furballs.

Can I Quote You on That?

Continuing the feline theme, this month's quote is for authors as well as cat lovers. Cats have been connected with writing and books for centuries. Some public libraries are even fortunate enough to have Library Cats like the ginger stray who is the hero of *Dewey: The Small-Town Library Cat Who Touched the World* by Vicki Myron (2008: Grand Central Publishing, New York.)

Authors like cats because they are such quiet, lovable, wise creatures, and cats like authors for the same reasons. ~ Robertson Davies

In case you authors question the value of writing about cats, you might be interested to know that Dewey's author just signed a seven-figure book deal, and there's a movie in the offing as well!

My Word!

Ah, vacation! Time for kicking back, goofing off, and generally recreating. If you find yourself **somnolent**, this is the time to give in. Go ahead, take that nap, relish that sleepy, drowsy feeling. Read a while, snooze a while. Enjoy!

Featured Article – Uncommon (Not Impossible) Success

Publisher's Weekly recently featured a story of special interest to self-publishing authors. For those of you who follow the TV show, *Top Chef*, you'll recognize the title of the article and lead line:

"Top Chef's Fabio Self Publishes Cookbook

Last year, no publisher would give Viviani 'the time of day.' Now, they're all clamoring for the Fan Favorite."

This story is sure to make the rounds of the self-publishing discussion boards, as well it should. I'm one of the first to tell authors that not every book should be self-published. If you want to be able to walk into any Borders or Barnes & Noble and find your book on their shelves, then you should seek a literary agent and try to get with a commercial publisher. The odds against you are high, but not impossible.

Fabio Viviani's story, however, illustrates another route to commercial publishing success. He couldn't get publishers to give him the time of day. He was unknown even though he had a successful restaurant. Since he was "a nobody," he chose to work with a self-publishing service company for his cookbook, *The Café Firenze Cookbook: Food and Drink from the Tuscan Sons*, which he co-authored with his restaurant's general manager, Jacopo Falleni. The book publishes this month and has already gone from an initial printing of 5,000 copies to 35,000 copies. That's a *lot* of copies for a self-published book. Oh, and now the commercial publishers are clamoring to publish him.

The single factor that took him from "Not interested" to "Please let us publish your book!" had nothing to do with writing. Between when he started writing the book and its publication date, Fabio became a media star by competing on *Top Chef*, and even though he didn't win, he became a "Fan Favorite." He created that all-important basis for success, a "platform." People who follow cooking shows know who Fabio is. Being known sells books.

This does not mean, of course, that you have to be a TV star to have a successful book. But you do need to make yourself known to the people who care about your book's subject. Marketing comes in many guises. Being on *Top Chef* is certainly marketing. Writing articles on your subject for print and online outlets is also marketing. Making time for social networking is another form. [Note: shameless self-promotion ahead.] Setting up [a Fan page on Facebook](#), like the one for *The Cat Lover's Book of Days*, is another way to reach people who care about your topic. You might have written the next great cookbook, or the next great self-help book, but no one will buy it and read it unless they know about it.

One important lesson of Fabio Viviani's story is that he was marketing *while he was writing his book*. He didn't wait until it was ready to publish. But because he put in the work ahead of time, people are anxious to get a copy now that the book is about to debut.

Viviani demonstrates a key factor in making your self-published book a success: Know who you are writing for, and reach out to them. Let the people who will most likely buy your book learn about you and your book in advance. Work to build a relationship before you ask them to buy.

Speaking of which...if you're on Twitter, you can follow me @McFrugal, and I'm also on LinkedIn. Most of my social networking time, though, goes into my Facebook page and the book's fan page. Hope to see you there!

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. Together we can make it happen. **Write On!**

KeyNotes is published monthly by:

The Silloway Press  **The concierge of publishingSM**

*Copyright 2009, The Silloway Press. If you have enjoyed this issue of **KeyNotes**, please forward it to your writing friends. You may republish parts of the newsletter only if you give full credit to the source and include the website address:*
www.SillowayPress.com.