



The Authority

Connecticut Authors & Publishers Association—Since 1994

Connecticut's Source for
Writing, Publishing &
Marketing Information

Volume 16 Issue 11

November 2009

Another Successful Big E - Photos by Debbie Kilday



The Authority Is Going Green by co-editor Peggy Gaffney

Beginning in January, *The Authority* will be going "green"; that is to say it will cease to be published in a print version, but will instead be delivered to members as a pdf attachment to an e-mail.

The reasons for this are many. Not only will it save CAPA the ever increasing costs of printing and postage, but it will also allow for twenty-first century technology to be used to help our members reach resources with a simple click on any web address

included within an article. Readers will also have the ability to forward any issue that contains something that you've written to friends or agents, as well as print out single articles that you want to save or share. Furthermore, if you write an article, a single click will take the reader to your website, blog or homepage on the CAPA social network. CAPA will no longer be limited by printing constraints in the number of pages and articles we can run each month.

The other change will be the timing of when

The Authority arrives in your e-mail box. Editors Peggy Gaffney and David Garnes will make sure that you receive it prior to that month's meetings. This way we can notify you of speakers at all three venues—Avon, Groton and Shelton—and you will not miss out on any of the great programs that the club works so hard to provide.

Those few members who do not have e-mail addresses will still receive *The Authority* in the U.S. mail.

Questions? Contact Peggy or David.

Meet A Member - T.L. (Tracy) Rotkiewicz

Music is a passion of mine. Always has. Always will.

I decided to write a story about the music industry itself. Early on, I knew it wasn't going to be the stereotypical 'sex, drugs, and rock'n roll.' The original title was *Captains Of Industry*, but it started to look like a book I had read about the industry already.

Over time, with lots of reflection and writer's

block, the characters started to develop. Based solely on characterization, ideas began to flow. There's one thing to remember about writing fiction. The characters should always be seen as individuals. That's what people are. We have our own variations that make each of us unique. Saying that, it helped me personally map out the direction of what would become *The Freedom To Rock*.



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Meetings

Southwest Division
Shelton

12/14

To be announced

Main Meeting

Avon

12/19

Christmas Party

Southeast Division

Groton

12/21

To be announced

Check the CAPA website
for details.

Baking With Barb by Barbara Klein

Have you ever been to a family reunion? Of course you have. Have you ever been to a family reunion without food? That is highly unlikely! Food, being one of the basic needs, makes us feel accepted and comfortable.

CAPA has become almost like a family to me—a place where I feel accepted and comfortable. Starting with my first mud pie, I have always enjoyed cooking and making other people happy. Sunday brunch has been a tradition at my home for many years and I hope I can start a new tradition with brunch on the third Saturday of the month with CAPA.

At our October meeting, we shared homemade whole-

wheat bread, Amish friendship bread, chocolate muffins with peanut chips, pumpkin cookies with cream cheese icing, and corn dip with tortilla chips. Several other things were on the menu—cookies and a cake that I didn't make. Unfortunately (for me) the cookies were devoured before I could try them. (Whoever you are, thank you!) I had requests for several recipes, but the one most asked for was the corn dip.

So here goes the recipe and if you want a different one maybe we will have it next month.

If you have something you would like to share with us just email me at barb@kleinfamily.us and

we will arrange it.

Corn Dip

1 cup of corn (I used fresh from the farm, in the husk, and roasted in the microwave. You can use frozen or canned.)

1 cup mayo. With olive oil
1 cup sour cream (You can substitute light.)

1 can of chopped green chilies, drained

1 cup grated cheddar cheese
3 or 4 scallions chopped
A few drops of hot pepper sauce

Dump in a bowl and mix. Have fun with it. Not hot enough—add more hot sauce, or salsa. Serve with tortilla chips. Enjoy!



“Sunday brunch has been a tradition at my home for many years and I hope I can start a new tradition with brunch on the third Saturday of the month with CAPA.”

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Article Submission

The Authority welcomes articles written by members. Here are some guidelines that we would encourage.

Articles should be about 500 words in length. If the article is larger, the editors reserve the right to reduce the size or divide it into sections that would be run in successive issues. All articles will be edited.

Every aspect of writing, publishing and marketing is of interest to readers of the Authority. Your personal slant on this business is of interest to all of us and welcome.

Please submit articles to editors Peggy Gaffney or David Garnes .

T.L. (Tracy) Rotkiewicz - continued from page 1

The Freedom To Rock will shock you. If you think you know what will happen or you're expecting it to, it won't. There are a lot of topsy-turvy elements. The emotions range from hilarious to downright heart-break. I know I had a hard time writing some of the scenes (requiring tissue). That's another thing. I call them scenes rather than parts or sections. My style of writing has been known to be cinematic. So, I choose to think of it as writer *vérité*. I love being a 'Psycho Rock Chick Writ-

ing Renegade.'

If anybody really wants to know what I'm about, all they have to do is read the book. If that's not enough, then I will share some additional things about myself. I am East Coast born (1975) and bred. I've been writing since the age of eight. Creative writing was always one of my strong subjects, along with art.

As an author, I find self-publishing fulfilling. The story is about artistic freedom. So, why can't the process of publishing be about the same thing? I

know that a socialite's dog has a better chance at getting traditionally published than me and that's okay. The freedom I have been allowed to write this story and include the cover art the way I want is all I need. It's not about money or how many books can be sold. It's about the message. Never compromise your passion for a cash register. If you believe in something enough, somebody somewhere will pay attention.

When I'm not putting pen to paper, I'm working on a variety of projects I

promote. As long as it's a passion of somebody's, I will do everything to help them.

One thing I believe in strongly is safe driving. I help spread the word about *In Control Crash Prevention Training* for inexperienced drivers and anybody who wants to stay safe on the road. Another passion is for a Himalayan school called Jhamtse Gatsal, which takes in displaced and exiled Tibetan children.

(T. L. Rotkiewicz' *The Freedom To Rock* is available through Rocklynn Press at www.rocklynn.com.)

Book Writing is a Struggle - By Fay Taylor

When I decided to write a book about my accident I had no idea it would be hard getting the writing and the publishing done. I was convinced that there was an evil spirit working hard to stop my progress. It did not matter what time I wrote; whether late night or early morning something would go wrong.

Whenever I sat down at the computer to write, the computer would freeze or break. When I picked up the pen, the phone would ring. When I took it off the hook, the doorbell rang. I had so many visitors I started going to the library. Sometimes family or friends would ask for favors, a ride to the doctor, could I pick up a sick niece from school, favors that weren't easy to just say no to.

Once after the computer was repaired, I

awoke at five a.m. filled with energy to write. The power went off. I went outside with pen and paper, and my neighbor, who was taking her early morning walk, stopped to talk. Many days I thought of writing, then one of my kids would stay home from school ill or the school nurse would call me to pick up a sick child.

I struggled day after day, never ceasing to try. The force trying to stop me never ceased either. After four years of hard labor, the disk containing my book was damaged. All the information I had spent hours searching my brains for was erased. I was so devastated I became numb. I soon recovered and convinced myself that the book had a certain time to be published and these incidents were holding it back until then. Now this was the day I was going to print the first chapter to mail

to an agent.

The first thing I learned in my writing class was that it would be very hard to get published if you are not a celebrity. Later I read many articles about authors who experienced problems getting published. The many rejection letters were outrageous. One writer said she'd had over thirty, and one said she would paper her wall with them as a reminder of her struggles to get published. Surely mine would be an exception, I thought.

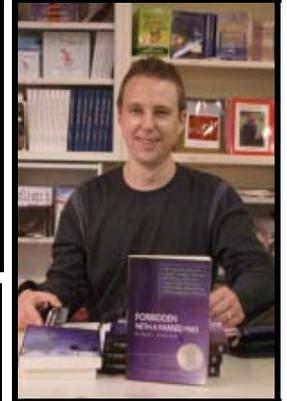
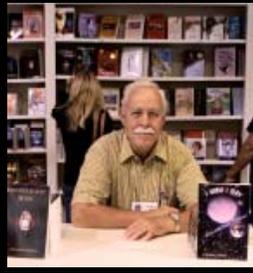
However, when I finished my manuscript it wasn't different for me. I was faced with the same rejections. There were times when I was tempted to throw the manuscript in the trash, but something kept me going.

I refused to self publish, as many people advised. But after years of try-

"After four years of hard labor, the disk containing my book was damaged. All the information I had spent hours searching my brains for was erased. I was so devastated I became numb."

ing, I decided to self publish. New problems arose. I did not have the program to send it to the printer. When they got it, they called to tell me that the page numbers and measurements were incorrect. I was so frustrated. Finally, it was finished.

It was a challenging journey, a trip worth taking that is now rewarding with a fitting title, **STEEL.**



BIG E BOOKSTORE A RESOUNDING SUCCESS—AGAIN!

By Debbie and Mike Kilday

The challenge for the 2009 edition of the CAPA booth at the Big E was to repeat the financial success of 2008.

To be honest, the pace was grueling and we had to take naps in the second floor lounge to cope. Even with a cash register supplied by Dan and an electronic credit card machine supplied by Brian it wasn't easy. We didn't know how we were going to make it all the way through the 17 days but somehow we did – again. The second success isn't always as glorious as the first, but we assure you it is twice as satisfying!

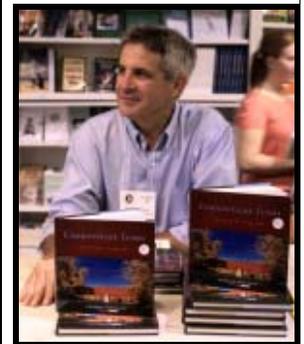
In 2008, CAPA sold a little over 2400 books for a total of over \$30,000. With that accomplishment, CAPA established a presence at the Big E. It put us on the map – a force to be dealt with. We were the 'new kid on the block,' so to speak, and we had to prove we belonged there. We had to show we could do a repeat performance. The standard we set, we realized, would be tough to beat, so we endeavored to be bigger, better, and offer more book choices than we had the previous year. We may have bitten off more than we could chew, but the result was we shattered the old records.

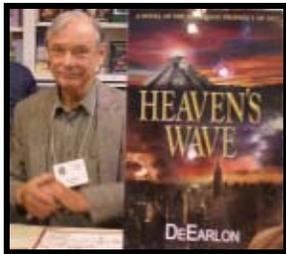
In 2009, CAPA sold nearly 2600 books for a total a little over \$36,000. Like the year before our big sellers were children's and young adult's authors: Janet Lawler, MJ Allaire, and Doreen Tango Hampton. Their professionalism, selling prowess, and broad appeal are the key to their success. No matter what you are selling, if one emulates their methods, you will sell a lot.

A new wrinkle this year was the first appearance of Tractor Mac in our booth. For those of you not familiar with the author Billy Steers, he writes children's books that appeal to boys. Totalling the book sales of the four aforementioned authors, they accounted for 33% of the book sales.

There are many stories to tell, but time and space will not permit it. However, this one will be of particular interest to booksellers. Two middle-aged women entered the booth. For 10 minutes or so they indiscriminately pulled books off the shelves and stacked them on the floor. We observed them with interest because it seemed like too large a number of books for the average customer.

When the women finished collecting the books, they came over to the cash register and plopped three large stacks of books on the table. "We'll





take these”, one of the women said, matter-of-factly pulling out a credit card.

“All of these?” Debbie asked. The customer nodded affirmatively. “May I ask where you are from?”

“We are librarians from a local library,” she replied. Dutifully, Debbie scanned all the books. We filled three large CAPA bags with them, and handed her the sales receipt. The bill came to \$466.

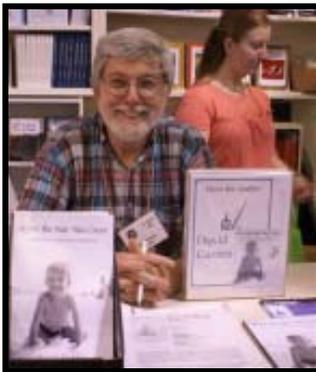
“We don’t need a receipt,” the librarian noted. Debbie slipped it into one of the bags anyway to ensure anyone who looked at the books would know where they came from.

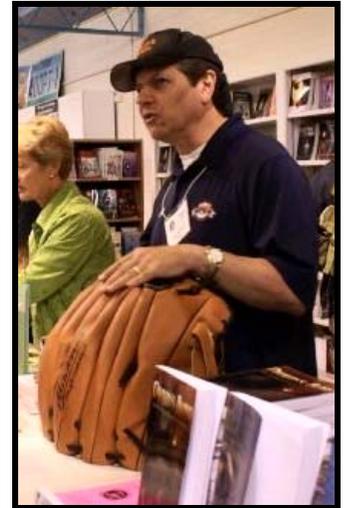
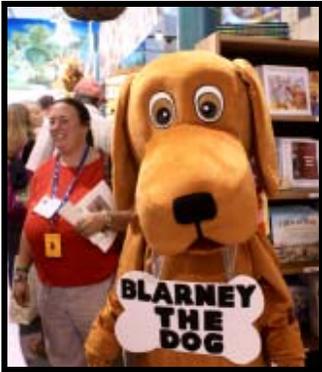
We sincerely hope there will be many more libraries shopping at the Big E in the future. Perhaps CAPA should make it a point to provide every library in the state of CT—and Massachusetts for that matter—with a CAPA Big E flyer next year. Probably we should hit all the independent bookstores also. One never knows. The idea may catch on.

Our vote for best newcomer goes to Kelly Wright, whose book *Blarney the Dog* sold quite well even when she wasn’t there. It seemed she sold at least one a day. Not many authors can say that their book sells even when they aren’t there.

Kelly and her Dad were a tremendous help to us. Kelly helped by unpacking books before the fair started. At her own expense, she also showed up with a ‘Blarney the Dog’ mascot on Connecticut Day. Blarney told all the fairgoers to make sure they checked out all the CAPA members’ books in the CT Building. Many people stopped by saying Blarney sent them. Kelly’s dad brought us food when he saw we could not get away to go grab a bite to eat ourselves. Both Kelly and her dad gave the best gift ever to everyone -- a great big smile to all that stopped by the booth. We thank them from the bottom of our hearts for their help and good will.

In an attempt to be bigger and better this year we increased the number of authors from 62 to 90, and added one more daily shift (from 3 to 4). We estimate 3500 to 4500 books were displayed on the shelves. Our 10 x 20 foot space was jam-packed. To broaden our appeal we added many more books for adult readers because we don’t want to be only known as premier sellers of children’s books. It paid off because we saw a dramatic increase in the number of adults buying books for themselves.





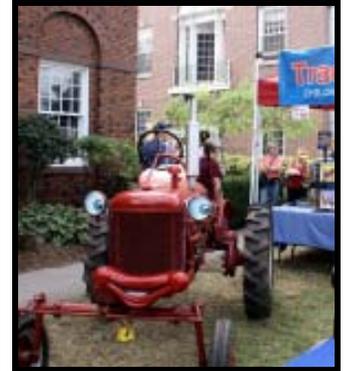
It wasn't just grandparents buying books for their grandchildren, or young mothers buying books for their toddlers. Adults were browsing the shelves and picking out books for themselves because we had made a concerted effort to ensure there were books there for them to buy.



We estimate that book sales for the children/young adult books comprised 53% of the total take. That means the remaining 47%, the greater portion of them books for the adult audience, comprised the remainder of the sales. We would hazard a guess that last year the children/young adult book sales comprised between 66% and 75% of the total.



As an illustration, a trio of 2012-related books offered by Mike Kilday, DeEarlon (Joe Wactowski), and Bill Ayles collectively sold a total of 141. That gives all authors who write for an adult audience a glimmer of hope. Being a newly published author myself, I appreciated the opportunity this experience provided 'to test the waters'.



The high sales also show CAPA has the capacity to sell more than children's books at the Big E. If those books can be made available to the public, there is a market for them. That's what we were aiming to show going into the 2009 venture, and we were proven correct. Certainly it is something to build upon in the future.



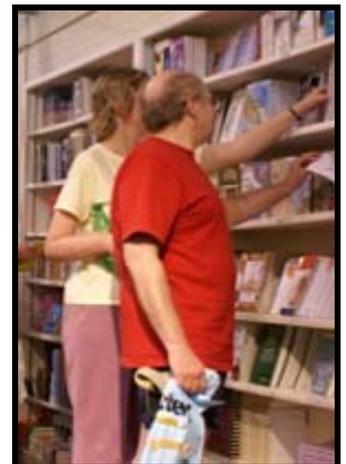
As for the future, Nick Karas, one of the CT building managers told us on the final day, "This is your spot now. When people come into the CT building, they come to see you. I hear them saying 'This is the state building with the book store'. They expect you to be here, and so do we."



As Nick's comments infer, CAPA is on the map. The other state buildings are envious of the CT building and that is the way the CT building managers like it. We have established ourselves as an 'attraction.' However, there is still work to do to fine tune the operation. We still have some logistical matters to work out, like efficient book pick up and delivery, more effective advertising, and author training opportunities. With time and the proper resources, these matters can be addressed.



Last but not least we must give credit to the people behind the scenes who work tirelessly to make sure this event goes smoothly. Besides us, those hard-working people would be Dan Uitti, Doreen Tango Hampton, Joe Keeney, and Peggy Gaffney. And we send out a great big "Thank you" to all the authors that participated this year at the Big E event.



Brag Board



To coincide with the publication of her article "Manage the Writing/Parenting Challenge" in *The Writer Magazine* this December, **Karen M. Rider**

has launched a blog, "**The Writing Parent.**" "I created the Five P's to help me master the challenge of writing along side full-time parenting and the myriad other roles in life. The Five P's-- Passion, Priorities, Perspective, Process and Present-mindedness – can help all writers as they pursue the dream to write and to publish." Please sign-on as a follower and learn all about the Five P's: www.thewritingparent.blogspot.com

thewritingparent.blogspot.com

Adding to the growing series of **Crafty Dog Knits** books that **Peggy Gaffney** publishes through her **Kanine Knits** company, *The Crafty Poodle Knits* becomes book number seven. This joins the unique collection of knitting books for lovers of Labrador Retrievers, Golden Retrievers, Bernese Mt.

Dogs, Newfoundlands, Samoyeds and Welsh Corgis. www.kanineknits.com



Eileen Albrizio To Lead Creative Writing Workshops



In an effort to address the multiple writing needs of this wonderful community, I am offering two different creative writing

workshops that will focus on applying poetic techniques to prose writing.

In one, we will concentrate on the sonnet in the first half and early character development for prose fiction in the second half. In the other workshop we will concentrate on the short poetic forms of haiku, senryu and tanka. In the second half we will concentrate on drafting an ending to your fiction story

and blocking out your chapters before you even start writing your novel!

Visit <http://www.Buttonwood.org> and scroll down to November 21st and then December 5 for further details, or simply email me at EileenRain@aol.com. The workshops are only \$15, so it is little investment for a lot of return!!

I hope to hear from you. In the meantime, happy writing!

"Visit <http://www.Buttonwood.org> and scroll down to November 21st and then December 5 for further details"

What Is My Platform? An Essay By Ames K. Swartsfager

Last Saturday (Oct.17, 2009) I attended the Connecticut Authors and Publishers Association (CAPA) and listened to Adele Annesi explain the meaning of "Platform" and ask what our personal platform is.

A platform is a short summary of what you stand for. The life position you want to be found in your writing. A short tag line that explains you and your substance (I know I am

not quoting her correctly, but that was the gist of it).

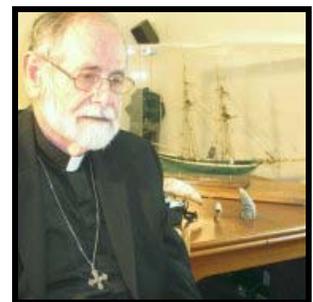
I started to think about my own life and what I stand for. It is easy to say I stand for Jesus since I am an Episcopal priest, although I am a bit of a maverick. But within this framework, I am many other realities. My life seems to take a shotgun approach to the world. I am a writer and I love to communicate. I also love to adventure and see new places.

I am a sailor, and

even though I can no longer sail and cruise the seas, this is also part of who I am. I make scale models of old sailing ships and workboats.

I used to be an artist and would like to paint again, but all these other things get in my way. I am a romantic and would like everyone to know about the trials and songs of the old sailorman under sail. This is why I love to sing and play these old songs with my wife.

Over all of this, and



perhaps the most important, I am a family man. I love my family and would like everyone to have the support and love I feel from my wife and daughters. They have a lot of

continued on page 8

Adele Annesi October Speaker - By Peggy Gaffney

CAPA's own Adele Annesi spoke at the October meeting on the topic of authors branding themselves. She pointed out that each author needs to create an identifiable brand that connects their writing to their public persona. Just like Target or Wal-Mart, an author needs to market himself in such a manner that his readers know what to expect and can rely on the "product" or book to deliver.

She suggested that

authors can't go about creating a brand unless they know what they stand for and what their individual message is. This message will not only identify them in such a way that their books take on a uniqueness that allows the reader to know in advance what to expect, but it will also provide a guide to every aspect of their public identity.

This brand or look to your work should be visible in every piece of publicity you do, from your business cards to your web page or blog.

Think of all the top earning authors. They all have covers on their books that, though not alike, have a look that is repeated and therefore makes them easy to spot on a shelf. That "look" is repeated in everything to do with them.

Adele suggests you think about the look and style you would want as your brand. Create different approaches and then select one that really identifies your work. She indicated that she is available to help any CAPA members who would



like to develop their own branded look.

(Adele Annesi can be reached through her Writing Linx blog at <http://writinglinx.blogspot.com>.)



Celebrating the Success of the CAPA Big E Bookstore!



What Is My Platform? cont'd from p. 7

patience with my activities, even though I have dragged them all over Central America.

So what is my platform, my tag line? I want the "real thing" like Coca Cola but I am not sure what that is.

I seem to want to share who I am, which is why I wrote *Between the Devil and the Deep...* I also am writing a book fictionalizing two years of my life in a ghetto. *Down Island*, another of my books, is about sailing in the Caribbean. You can read it on my blog site (<http://swartsfager-books.blogspot.com>). *Tenderfoot Dude*, a pre-teen book about my adventures as a cowboy,

is written, but not published. Could it be, as Popeye says, "I yam who I yam?" I do not know as yet. But I am working on focusing and discovering what it really is. What an adventure!



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