



You Should Write a Book

By James Gibson

I am a storyteller. I have made my living telling stories. I wrote articles for professional magazines, plus the occasional article about my passion: hiking and backpacking. There were thousands of speeches and presentations along the way, but never a book. My college experience was at a small institution famous for training people to write, speak, and communicate well, but I did not conceive of myself as an author.



James Gibson

My memoir, *Just a Long Walk*, happened almost by accident. I began to journal about my experience and feelings after a major life event, never intending it to be more than a way to put my situation into perspective. But then I shared it with a couple of close friends (one an author), who both told me to “Keep writing, you have a ‘voice’ and a great story,” and “You do know you have a book here, right?”

And so it began: eight years of effort. I do not know how many people write a book on

April 10, 2024
The Heights

airplanes, in bars and hotel rooms, but I did, and I will explain why that worked for me. I will tell you why I did not know where the book was going — I knew the beginning and had a glimmer of the middle, but no idea what the ending would be. My book also was not written in the order in which it appears today. I will tell you the secret that worked for me, and why it made all the difference.

Writing a book is just the beginning. I will share great advice I received from a published author that was critical to how the finished product was developed. I know I made the right decision to self-publish and I will discuss why. I will also discuss the marketing — the selling — of my book; what has worked, what has not, and some things I am still trying to figure out.

Perhaps most importantly, I will share my feelings about my experience, and why it has been one of the most satisfying things I have ever attempted. I hope you can feel the same way.

James Gibson’s professional experience includes 40 years of developing and leading national sales teams. A lifelong hiker and backpacker with experience worldwide, he is currently concentrating on writing and public speaking.

His award-winning book, Just a Long Walk, describes his life-changing solo journey on California’s 225-mile John Muir Trail, considered “America’s greatest trail.” Readers share his mountain experience, tales of people he met in the wilderness, the history of the Sierra, forest fires, a mountain lion encounter, and meeting the love of his life.

Check the SLPA website for information about upcoming events:
stlouispublishers.org

ZOOM

Sign-up is free. Join from your smartphone, computer, or tablet. If it’s your first time, follow the prompts and allow it to access your camera and microphone. Use this link for the meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/94227448734>.

Meeting ID is 942 2744 8734. Passcode is 563402.

The High-Quality Book Design & Printing Panel Discussion

Print-on-demand has made publishing accessible for millions of authors and thousands of publishers, lowering the cost barrier and enabling small print runs of any size. But what if your book needs more than what you can get through print-on-demand? What if you need a different page size, higher-quality paper, or sturdier binding? What if you want to go above and beyond with your book, such as a coffee table book, photography or art collection, children’s board book, or anything with special printing requirements?

Above & Beyond: High-Quality Book Design & Printing Panel Discussion

Moderated by Andrew Doty
May 8, 2024
7:00 p.m. at The Heights
8001 Dale Avenue, Richmond Heights
also available via Zoom

ST. LOUIS PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION
stlouispublishers.org

For those considering publishing a high-quality or unique book, the SLPA will host a panel discussion on May 8 where three area printers will share their experiences and insights from the book design and printing process.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Live-Stream the monthly meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/94227448734>

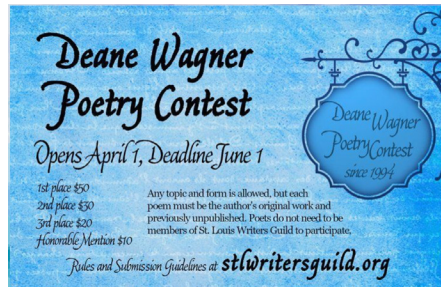
April 10, 7:00–8:30 p.m.
Writing and Marketing a Book —
“Lessons Learned in the Trenches”
by James Gibson
@ The Heights

8001 Dale Avenue, Richmond Heights, MO
(doors open at 6:30 p.m.)

May 8, 7:00–8:30 p.m.
High-Quality Book Design & Printing
Panel Discussion
@ The Heights
8001 Dale Avenue, Richmond Heights, MO
(doors open at 6:30 p.m.)

Poetry Contest Is Open for 2024

The annual Deane Wagner Poetry Contest of the St. Louis Writer's Guild (SLWG) is open for submissions. SLWG membership is not required to enter. For details of rules and guidelines, go to stlwritersguild.org. Deadline: June 1.



“Tell the story of the mountain you climbed. Your words could become a page in some else’s survival guide.”

—Morgan Harper Nichols

“You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view... Until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.”

—Atticus Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird*



LAST MONTH'S RECAP 2024 Vendor Fair Is a Hit with Members and Visitors

The SLPA's 2024 Vendor Fair, held on March 13 at The Heights, was a lively, successful event that brought vendors of publishing services together with aspiring and current authors seeking advice and resources for polishing and publishing their work.

All tables were filled, with vendors displaying examples of books and related material they have helped authors create, edit, design, and market to the reading world. Throughout the evening, vendors did more than simply showcase their projects: They also provided advice and insights to event visitors about getting books written, edited, proofread,

illustrated, published traditionally and independently, marketed, and sold. Genres represented included fiction for adults and children, and nonfiction — memoir, history, biography, and more.

A highlight of the evening was a raffle for a variety of door prizes, from books to professional services to jewelry, with longtime member Bob Baker serving as master of ceremonies.

Visitors left with invaluable advice about bringing their publishing projects to life, and vendors acquired connections to new clients. It was a win-win for all!

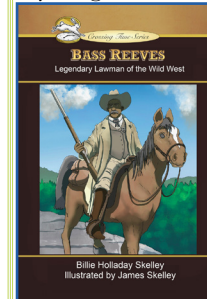


Photos by SLPA board member Kevin Ericson.

KUDOS CORNER

Billie Holladay Skelley

Billie Holladay Skelley's book for young readers, *Bass Reeves: Legendary*



Lawman of the Wild West, has received a 2024 Spur Award from the Western Writers of America in the Best Western Juvenile Nonfiction Category.

The annual Spur Awards honor distinguished writing about the American West and have been regarded as one of the most prestigious accolades in American literature since 1953.

For information about the book, go to:

<https://www.amazon.com/Bass-Reeves-Legendary-Lawman-Crossing/dp/1959489046>.



Meetings are on the second Wednesday of every month

In-person meetings have resumed at The Heights

Free to SLPA members, \$10 to nonmembers.

Zoom access is free to all.

Admission and Membership

- Monthly meetings
- [Membership is \\$60 per year.](http://stlouispublishers.org/join)

Visit: stlouispublishers.org/join
stlouispublishers.org/benefits

SLPA News & Views

Editor: [Ruth Thaler-Carter](http://stlouispublishers.org/join)

Designer: [Carolyn Vaughan](http://stlouispublishers.org/join)

Webmaster: [Sean Gold](http://stlouispublishers.org/join)

