

# How and why you should niche publish your book!



The rationale and process are explained in the **21 free blogs** listed below. All are found at this site.

The first six blogs explain what “niche publishing” is and why every publisher (and every expert of any stripe) should be running to get in line before the others catch on!

So you can quickly pick the information that you most want to know about “niche publishing,” here is a concise **summary of its benefits.**

**If you “niche publish” rather than publish “the regular way” you could...**

- \* **earn far more money, much faster**, with nary a nick of risk!
- \* you'll **never have to compete with big-house publishers**,
- \* you'll **never have to sell through bookstores**, and
- \* from the topic you select **you could create your own very profitable, life-long empire—with YOU the empress or emperor.** By expanding your sphere of buyers, the benefits of your book and message will continue to multiply your appeal, which will continue to bring you more money even faster—

**“Niche publishing” (and “niche marketing”) aren’t magic. But they bring two huge benefits that standard publishers can’t provide.**

**The first is pre-testability.** That means that before you write or print a page of your book, you can pre-test it to see (1) if that book will sell enough copies (that is, the rough number of copies that will be bought and by whom), (2) if the title works, and (3) if you chose the right problem to solve or needs to be met, the right benefit(s) to promise, a persuasive table of contents, and the right author. If the test results yell “GO!”—go. If not, retest until you get the right pre-test response. Or write another book, then build your empire around that book. (The cost of the test? \$500-600? Under \$1,000. If you as a niche publisher using the self-publishing process expect to receive \$100,000 gross from your book sale; \$50,000 net; and the test may cost 1-2% of returns. If the test is no-go, that’s a 2% risk. Take that bet every time!)

**The second benefit** is that your **niche book can be the core product of an empire** that can triple your book income every year, and multiply that again from spin-off or related books, MP3s, videos, seminars, speeches, reports, consulting, and classes that you can offer or sponsor to your eager book buyers and their colleagues. Why? Because **your book, targeted specifically to those buyers, proves that you’re an expert in their field, that you and your guidance can solve their problems and fix their frustrations.** Why wouldn’t they rush to buy more good stuff from you in book #2 or through a dozen other empire-linked ways once you have proven that what you say or show works as promised?

**So that’s where two elements linked to this blog play key roles.**

In 2008 I published a book called ***Niche Publishing: Publish Profitably Every Time***. See [www.nichepublishing.org](http://www.nichepublishing.org) for full details and the book's table of contents. That book has sold out in four different renditions, and the paperback issue is still unavailable (unless Amazon is selling old copies of it and keeping the royalties.)

Eureka! **The original, last version is still alive in digital format.** It's available for \$7. We offer it, instantly downloadable, at [www.gordonburgett.com.order3.htm](http://www.gordonburgett.com.order3.htm).

I've offered 100+ four-hour seminars about niche publishing and have had the opportunity to hear every question, challenge, and suggestion about the process. I still remain convinced that, done as suggested, it is still the best process (with the least risk, if any) and the fastest and safest way for self-publishers to enter the field and reap the rewards.

Alas, while there are many "empires," as I call them, prospering today, it's more difficult to tie them directly to the emergence of one book and one gutsy, hard-working emperor or empress drawing their buyers to the empirical central theme.

What I see more often is a speaker emerging from a topic field with a new idea or process and a following drawn from attendees at their seminars, keynote speeches, or breakout sessions. Somewhat less obvious is the leader's book that serves as the central focus of the unique message the "leader" comes to represent. But what stays as the binding tool as that "empire" takes form is the book, and spin-offs from it, that continue to give substance and breadth to the person and their idea. The point: **empires are usually built from a book's foundation.**

Final points.

If niche publishing seems to fit your path of development, the

one element least discussed but most needed is likely shared as much by you as it was by me: we can build our niche empires faster, better, and surer if we take the time to **create a solid strategy for growth**. Then focus on one message, like the big tree, from which our modest forests will eventually grow. **Make oneself “the” core of something that others in our orb need for their own development**. Write “the” book that your colleagues must master to create (or at least establish) their own excellence. Focus there, spread your process and message until its name and your become synonymous. (The topic of self-publishing is synonymous with the name Dan Poynter. That began with his book *The Self-Publishing Manual*.)

**That’s where the remaining 21 blogs fit in.** They answer the questions a “niche publisher” must ask. They are trees in our forest. Combine them with *Niche Publishing: Publish Profitably Every Time!*

**Where are those other 15 “magic” blogs?**

Go to [blog.gordonburgett.com](http://blog.gordonburgett.com) (if you’re not reading this blog at that site) and all 21 blogs are there waiting for you! When a blog opens up, go to the **search box in its upper right corner**. Then select and type some key words from a selected blog title, open it with your mouse, and that chosen blog will rather miraculously appear. Hiding the same way is where you’ll also find the 20 more niche-related blogs.

Even if you just type “niche,” about 10 assorted niche-related blogs will appear, and if the sought blog isn’t there, continue downward to the end of that blog chain to where it says “older” or “newer,” and in the subsequent lists of “niche” blogs you will find what you are seeking...

**Here are the titles of the 21 blogs** that help explain “niche publishing”:

## **Niche Authors and Publishers:**

- \* Make a bundle almost risk-free by publishing niche books.
- \* Why niche publishing is a much better deal...
- \* Ten advantages to niche publishing.
- \* How niche authors and niche publishers share the gold.
- \* Niche books are very profitable. How are their authors chosen?
- \* Why you may not want to niche publish.

## **The Niche Blog Bundle:**

- #1. What's so good about niche publishing?
- #2. The goals and assumptions of pre-test publishing.
- #3. How do you define (or find) a profitable niche for your book?
- #5. Are you a niche writer, a niche publisher, or both?
- #6. How much should you charge for your book?
- #7. How much does it cost to pre-test your niche book?
- #8. Get a free mailing list for your niche book pre-test.
- #9. Two sample notes to pre-test a niche book.
- #10. A sample flyer like those used in niche book pre-testing.
- #11. A postcard to know your niche pre-test book results!
- #12. It's time to actually test your niche book!

## **More about Niche Pre-Testing:**

- \* 25 key steps about pre-testing your niche book.

## **Niche Speaking:**

- \* Niche Speaking: Cash in with fewer (but more devoted) listeners.

## **Niche Book Marketing:**

- \* 101 niche marketing topics.
- \* Can we sell two new books by using 12,200 jumbo postcards?

(Incidentally, there are **400+ writing-, speaking-, and**

**publishing-related blogs** also lurking on this page quietly awaiting your visitation!)

That's it. Best wishes to you with your "niche publishing." I do **consult** in this area so if I can be of assistance, please contact me at [glburgett@aol.com](mailto:glburgett@aol.com).

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

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## [10 Professional Tips to Sell Your Own Books...](#)

Here's a great list of "to do's" about how to sell your own books that was shared and discussed at the last (9/10/16) BAIPA (Bay Area Independent Publishers Association) meeting in Novato, CA. That is precisely what my clients (and publishing friends) want and need to know. Since you're my friends too, let me share it with you—and invite you to share it with your friends as well. (The few notations in *italics* are mine to perhaps clarify the questions I had when I first read it.)

It is from IngramSpark, the huge distributor more known as Ingram or LSI through which most of us sell our books, mostly, to bookstores. It was shared at BAIPA by Jackie Thompson, a delightful soul full of fun, truth, and straightforward info and responses. From them, her, and me to you:

- *Before, during and after* **(l)earn what you can from industry data.**
- **Leverage distribution opportunities, US and global.**
- **Invest in professional editing, design and marketing, not**

**inventory.** (*What good's the inventory if your book is embarrassing to look at and worse to read?*)

- **Use POD and digital to test demand for your book.** (*Not too many years ago you had to run 1,500+ copies just to see if a dozen unbribed souls would buy their own copy!*)

- **Use POD to increase format choices** (paperback, hardcover, large print).

- **Get to know your local librarian, learn from their collections.** (*You can do the same for niche books by studying the 10 newest books your niches are reading.*)

- **If you are publishing to children and YA (young adults) have the material rated for age, and add this to your metadata.**

- **Use Social Media to build platform and market to your readers.**

- **Own your ISBN.** (*Even if some of the open publishers don't require it or will give you one of their ISBNs, instead post your own in every format and edition you publish.*)

- **Support your local bookseller and library.** (*Make it easier and a greater joy for them to later support you!*)

Good stuff I wish I had read when Ben Franklin and I were setting type and telling old jokes about older yokes on the Olde Sod.

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

[ More how-to writing, publishing, and speaking stuff at [www.gordonburgett.com/order3.htm](http://www.gordonburgett.com/order3.htm). ]

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# Leading your idea in print down its most profitable path...

So you've got an **article** or **book idea** that you want to turn into both **big money** and widely-seen **expertise presence**. That's the way to think! I'd also add that the copy needn't be completely rewritten again and again, so also think **reprint, rewrite, reprint of rewrites, and more...**

Let's say you want to write about the 2016 Chicago Cubs and their playing in the coming National League baseball playoffs—and perhaps for the pennant, of all things! But, if you can't tell, or wouldn't want to tell, a baseball from a ball of wax, your idea and copy to sell again and again could be about the Trump-Clinton presidential election, kumquat delicacies from the kitchen, or driverless autos driving nonetheless on the streets!

Alas, I've been a baseball fan from/in Chicago almost since the Great Fire and the hapless Cubs haven't won a pennant for 107 years. You know us by the fetching blue, red, and white "C" hats that we have had to hide in our cupboard for generations. Alas, this is our year, so we dusted them off and wear them on our heads for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and almost all the hours between—until October when we will know if the hex of the billy goat is true. **So I'm picking the Cubs for this empire-building article writ long...** (But if you're reading this in the Philippines, on the Pyrenes, or in Peru, kumquat delicacies might be easier to understand...)

Let's start with an **article** about the "plight of the Cubs" (or any fetching topic) for an American magazine. You do the usual



things: some basic research to find the most interesting angles or slants, pick the best approach, and subject that idea to a two-pronged **feasibility study**—is it feasible to write and is it feasible to sell? (Go to the search box in the upper top right corner and type in **feasibility study** to see how the magazine approach works. The blog copy comes from either [How to Sell 75% of Your Freelance Writing](#) or [The Travel Writer's Guide](#). To read those books, used and sold for a pittance, check the [Amazon catalog](#).) The feasibility study tells how to test magazines vs newspapers, who are the most likely readers, the querying process, and (for magazines), should you get a “go-ahead,” how you best present the copy for sale. (If it fits newspaper freelance buying fields too, submit the written article in final form, without a query and sent in ready-to-go fashion.) If the idea is a “go” as feasible to write and sell, send your articles to the best markets in both categories.

If the **magazine** buys your submission, you can use much of the article's contents again (at least slightly rewritten) two ways: as a **reprint** or a **rewrite**. Then if a rewrite is bought, you can send that off to a still-virgin magazine as a reprint. With cunning, you can have several of each of these three partially-completed masterpieces filled in (completed) and in print, all paying you! (Again, go to the Search box above and write in reprints or rewrites to see step-by-step blogs with more details.)

With **newspapers**, there are two paths: (1) you can literally sell the first copy to as many newspapers as will buy it as long as they aren't “national” newspapers (like the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, or the *Wall Street Journal*—sell them one at a time, and, after it is sold, thoroughly rewrite the piece before selling it to another “national”) and (2) don't simultaneously sell it two or more regional newspapers within 100 miles of each other (“distribution ranges”). Otherwise, you can sell the very same newspaper article(s) to any other

newspaper (except the “nationals”) as long as they don’t overlap. Just tell the newspaper editor yours is a simultaneous submission and you are selling it outside of their 100-mile circulation orb.

What more can you do with reams of unused copy parts shouting to be read? Throw all the used copy into a cauldron, add the unused gems, mix them up again, and “**topic spoke**” them to find as many of the other potential eager buyers as will shriek and pay, delightfully, to use your genius and make you rich. Check the blog search for items about “topic spoking” in the 400+ blogs waiting to be used!

How many **books** can you pluck from that cauldron (adding in other sources still untouched)? You could write/publish a book for all kinds of Cubs’ *aficionados*: one for kids/young adults, one for the regular folk, another for seniors (some praying for the Cubs to win, others incredulous that they are anywhere near the top), another for the Cubs fans focusing on this year and the past two, another putting all 107 years in perspective, and so on.

And because each book requires a mound of research, interviews, anecdotes, photos, and more, you can turn this into new wealth of found and reworked copy and pluck out more **articles**, and thus more **rewrites**, **reprints**, and **reprints of rewrites**. You can also sell related **photos** where you sell copy (check photos in Search), often the same photo repeatedly since they are almost always sold on one-time rights.

Lost in this pile of print are the **directly related spin-offs**, like **audiobooks** of any or all of those books just mentioned; **focus books** about specific elements of baseball for the truly absorbed, of the past year or two or of all time, like the pitching, the records set and broken, ERAs, a projection of future years and records of new(er) players emerging in the 2016 excitement; even **videos** and **movies**, all being in print before being converted to other media. Then using the most

visible of the platform builders, authors speaking about their (new) specialty from the platform: see **rallies, speeches, how-to workshops, seminars, talks**, and so on...

Every time your champion copy has your by-line attached to your super writing in a newspaper, magazine, or book, you are solidifying yourself as an **expert** in that field, building a following, and making yourself more wanted by **information and product producers**. They want to get more good items from you, a recognized “valuable and prolific source” of, in this case, baseball, Cubs, and sports ideas, information, and articulation.

The point here is that **almost any word or idea has lots of legs (and ears) and can be multiplied very profitably many times by many means**. The trick is to create interesting copy about ideas that others want to know more about that is spelled properly and has the facts, quotes, and anecdotes artfully blended into more good ideas. Most exceptional writers don't stray too far from what others want to know, and they churn a fair amount of interesting text into many articles, then books, rather than just making one sale or two before wandering off to find unrelated subjects for articles that are also sold a few times. **It's wiser and fills your coffers faster by turning your related ideas and copy over and over.**

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

[ More how-to writing, publishing, and speaking stuff  
at [www.gordonburgett.com/order3.htm](http://www.gordonburgett.com/order3.htm). ]

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# A very new format for a seminar workbook...

In a now very long past—decades—I must have literally copied and carted 40,000 seminar workbooks (sometimes a half mile, too often up stairs). Most of those workbooks were 12-20 pages long! Too late to complain: that was the way it was done. But yesterday technology finally removed my shackles—and perhaps my blinders!

Some fact-setting now, then a detailed explanation copy of the new format that you may be interested in modifying and using. Explaining the 40,000: I have given more than 2,000 four-hour seminars, most as college/university extended ed offerings, almost all in California. They rarely had less than 20 participants, which meant 24 or so workbooks in case last minute registrants were waiting at the door. Ugh.

But yesterday a different request opened my eyes. I spoke to the **NSNC** (National Society of Newspaper Columnists) in L.A. about "[Publishing for Profit](#)" and, even though I myself had been a columnist several times, I had no way of knowing what other writing experiences the veteran audience had nor which of the dozen or so suggestions I would offer and expand upon they might wish to pursue.

Nor did I want to schlep any workbooks nor published books to sell BOR. (The airlines made that impossible anyway by charging for baggage—and rubbing in more salt by starving me en route!) But I did slip a copy of eight different books into my suitcase to display on a side table so they could see that they actually existed!

I know, I could have run copies off of the workbooks once I reached L.A. But I'm doubly convinced now, the day after, that the new format is many times better and smarter for the

future, it gives the audience more options, and it reduces or eliminates the burdensome task of hauling products for sale. That's why I'm sharing it now, while the fire burns, in case it would help you too. (If you have already discovered this "new" workbook process, congratulations! I'm sure you double agree! Why didn't you tell me?)

**The rationale:** I knew that all of my attendees were writers, they used computers daily, understood how to find websites, blogs, and could figure out the free-book code. Therefore all I had to do was explain the media or means needed, where the items could be found, the links or addresses for each, and what the resource references referred to. I gave them the instructions needed in the first two paragraphs, where the program was going in the next two, and the broadest of explanations of what the four sections to be covered in the text that followed.

That took a minute or two to re-explain at the beginning of the presentation, but then I could focus on the most important ways columnists might earn more and live happier. When appropriate, I could direct them to one or several of the references and, in some cases, tell them the best subtitles to the critical step-by-step details. There must be 600+ printed pages in the three free books and 200+ in the other items. Thus, by knowing where the information is at hand, almost immediately, they can pick, select, or reject it as they wish—or go back later, if they change their minds.

**The workbook:** The two-sided page *is* the workbook. In this case the program was designed to show U.S. columnists how else they can share, market, and expand their written gems (now or later) into other lucrative venues or ventures. That is what I talked about. If they need the application guidance, the resources would then send them to the "how-to" support material.

Enough explanation. What follows is the "workbook" they

received.

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## **Workbook as delivered to the NSNC presentation:**

### **Welcome!**

I'm Gordon Burgett. It's 2016, we're all experienced writers, and the airlines won't let me schlep boxes of handouts as baggage anymore, so I'm going to use the Internet to let you pick what specific information you think will be useful to you later. At that point, you can download what you want or need, if anything. The most important material is free, there's no shipping or tax, and it'll be in your hands almost immediately!

Thus you have no workbook or piles of paper to lumber through. Just sit back for the first hour and let me explain a sort of strategy and ways that should help you considerably increase your writing income, then I'll answer any questions you have during the remaining 15 minutes. If you have more questions later, please email me at [glburgett@aol.com](mailto:glburgett@aol.com).

My task is to help you fill your coin bags and increase your second-life options by doing more of what you already do very well—and make even more money (heavens!) by doing it.

I think the more-mullah quest starts with you strategizing at whatever point you are along your moneymaking-by-writing trail. I'll address that.

The rest of our oral trek today roughly follows the other four sections on these pages. I've posted lots of backup resources here that you can download if/when you want or need them. The most important material is free—three full core books, three helper reports, four website articles, and 400+ blogs to pluck from. To download most of that information, use our order page

at [www.gordonburgett.com/order3.htm](http://www.gordonburgett.com/order3.htm)

Here's how to download or see the resources: (1) find and separately order each **free book** on the order form—but *before* you submit each order write the coupon number [       ] in the coupon code box on that order form. Then submit the form, the price will drop to zero, and follow the download instructions that follow! (The freebies expire on 8/20/16.) Other items, unless noted, are from the order form and can be ordered separately or together at any time. They are also available from Amazon but if you want the three books free you must follow the instruction in (1). How to get the three **free reports** is explained below. See [blog.gordonburgett.com](http://blog.gordonburgett.com) for the blogs listed. Once there, find the SEARCH box, upper right corner under the Twitter logo. In that box enter either the topic you want to see more about (like query letters or niche) or the word I will give you. The **website articles** are from the direct website link location.

(I) **WRITING—[Travel Writer's Guide](#)** (free ebook)

Explains how to sell 75%+ of your freelance writing (mostly newspaper and magazine articles), how to triple your income by topic-spoking, how to earn more with sidebars, and how to organize profit-packed copy-, quote-, and anecdote-gathering trips...

Related resources:

“4 Proven Ways to Sell 75% of Your Freelance Writing” Go to **blog**, enter 4 proven ways

“How to Sell 75% of Your Travel Writing” (2 cassette program), \$20 + shipping

“25 Professional Query and Cover Letters” (ebook), \$4.99

“Reprints, Rewrites, Reprints of Rewrites, and Resales” (ebook), \$4.99

“The magic of topic spoking.” Go to **blog**, enter topic spoking

(II) **PUBLISHING–Niche Publishing: Publish Profitably Every Time** (free ebook)

A huge percentage of the risk-free, market-guaranteed book money is found here. We made \$2 million from dentists and are now following the same path from K-12 school administrators, supers, principals, and school boards. That process and business plan is explained in this book. If you write and publish, almost all the niche profits are yours. If you find experts in the field, you direct/edit, they write, and you publish, most of the profits are still yours but the fame is theirs.

Related resources:

“12-Step Pre-Test for Niche Publications” (ebook), \$4.99

“How to Test Your Niche Book before Writing or Publishing” (ebook), \$9.99

“How to Get Niche Articles in Print 75% of the Time” (ebook), \$2.99

(III) **PUBLISHING–How to Get Your Book Published in Minutes and Marketed Worldwide in Days** (free ebook). If you’re not niching, use the “open press” revolution plus Create Space/Kindle [Amazon] and Lightning Source as your first or major paths to building your own empire. Publish here, then (perhaps) try the major publishers.



Related resources:

“Open Book Publishing: Almost a Miracle! (ebook), \$3.10

“When Would I Always (or Never) Self-Publish My Book?” Go to **blog**, enter self-publish

“12 More Ways to Turn Your Book into Many More...” Go to **blog**, enter more ways

“Focus books and Selling a Book by its Parts” Go to the **blog**, enter focus

“Sample Focus Book: Rights and Responsibilities of School Principals” (ebook), \$3.99

“Sample Focus Book: How to Create the Best Staff Possible” (ebook), \$3.99

(IV) BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER—Empire Building (O.P., no replacement book yet.) Ultimately, for big money, expand the perception of your expertise through related information dissemination means, like speaking, seminarizing, giving workshops or retreats, audiobooks, classes, consulting, social media venues, radio-TV, guest performances, and so on. Or create/sell little empires along the way. Or align your writing, researching, interviewing, and publishing skills with others’ empires. Or do it all.

Related resources:

“How to Set Up and Market Your Own Seminar” (4-cassette seminar), \$40+shipping

“Six Special Tools That Get Speakers Booked First” (ebook), \$9.99

**MORE FREE REPORTS:**  
*Lifelong Wealth by Being  
Indispensable*  
*Finding Indispensable Article  
Topics*  
*101 Niche Marketing Topics*

Just subscribe to my newsletter (seldom sent) at <http://www.gordonburgett.com/free-reports> and all three reports are immediately downloaded. Nobody else ever sees your address. Then if you want to escape my elist, just email me to be removed. I'm not offended—I forget names instantaneously.

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That's it. If it helps, go to it.

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

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## [Emceeing: a Barbershop St. Patrick's Day script](#)

Welcome!

Here is another Barbershop presentation script—for those eager to read Barbershop presentation scripts. Enjoy!

I'm Gordon Burgett, blogmaster of my own blog, which you are now reading. 90% of the posts here refer to writing, editing, publishing, speaking, and related commentary about selling one's ideas and information.

The other 10% discuss emceeing, which is an extension of my speaking activities, which are in turn linked to the 2000+ paid presentations I've offered in the past 30 years. Still, the scripts shared here are to a special group I have been part of for about 16 years: barbershopping, first in Santa Maria, CA; more recently in Marin County (north of San Francisco), CA. Through these blogs I have exchanged scripts written and techniques learned with other script writers for

their barbershop groups. (You may see the other emceeing script info by writing in "emceeing" in the search box upper right on this page.)

So this is a short script when the Marin County Golden Gate group sang at a St. Patrick's day gathering which I found in a box of past (but shamefully unblogged) emceeing material. I think it took place in about 2013. Sadly, I don't recall anything more. I suspect it was in the middle of a speaking tour across CA when I came home that day to emcee and sing, and in the rush to get back out to complete the tour I forgot to leave any more details. That's it. You can see that I'm a real person at [www.gordonburgett.com](http://www.gordonburgett.com)!

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Here, from the depths, is the script of this mysterious presentation:

Good evening, we are the Marin Golden Gate Barbershop Chorus, directed by Phil DeBar. I'm Gordon Burgett, and this dapper fellow is our Associate Director, Paul Wren, who Phil is about to ask to lead the group in "Danny Boy."

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[I've lost the actual text here but I must have introduced Phil DeBar, our Director, and he gave a short, audience-involved demonstration of what barbershopping is about. He had the audience sing one of the four voices in a short song, to try their talents at harmonizing!

Then I asked Phil to lead the Chorus in "Amazing Grace."]

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I continued:

"We've already heard some of our favorite Irish music and we're enjoying St. Patrick's Day festivities and food, so maybe a few Irish jokes would be in order.

Father Murphy, infused by religious fervor, swept into a bar in Donegal.

He grabbed the first man he saw and said, "Do you want to go to Heaven?"

"I do, father!" the man replied, so the priest told him to stand by the door.

Father Murphy turned to a lively lass and he asked her the same question.

"Oh yes, father, I do." So he pointed at the door and suggested she join the other man already there.

Then Father Murphy saw Billy O'Toole shrinking in a corner, trying to be invisible.

"O'Toule," he said. "What about you? Do you want to go to heaven?"

"Oh no, thank you, Father. No I don't!" came a fast reply.

The priest looked bewildered and said "Are you telling me that when you die you don't want to go to heaven?"

O'Toole replied, "Oh yes, Father, I do—but when I die. I thought you were rounding up a group to go right now!"

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Are you ready for some more music? But let me ask you first,

Does anybody have a birthday today? If so, would you raise your hand?

(If a hand went up, I'd ask them to stand up and tell us something about themselves because we had a gift for them.)

(If nobody responded, I'd ask, "If any of you had a birthday in the past year, would you raise your hand?" The moment the

hands went up, the chorus broke into “Happy Birthday!”

HAPPY BIRTHDAY! I wished them all when the music ended, then I suggested they give themselves a hearty round of applause for having lived so long!

—

When the chorus sat I asked, “How about some grand quartet singing?”

Not only can our first group make great sounds, they are international imports brought here today for your merriment. They come from four places, all hot beds of melody: fellows, raise your hands when I tell where you are from: our bass, \_\_\_\_ from Uruguay; \_\_\_\_ , the lead from England; \_\_\_\_, the baritone, from Texas, and \_\_\_\_\_, our tenor, from the Bronx. Ladies and gentlemen, this is Opus IV!

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Our second quartet has lesser pedigrees—they come from Fairfax, San Rafael, Mill Valley, and Point Reyes. Let’s welcome \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_ (they stepped forward when I gave their names). They are called the MarinTones...

—

You surely heard about Poor Paddy and his life of sorrow and pain. But things finally changed for Paddy—and it happened on St. Patrick’s Day too. He had found the love of his life, and had promised to mend his ways, particularly about not forgetting about their dates and that he would never again be as much as one minute late.

So you can imagine his distress when he arrived at the restaurant to dine with his sweetheart and he couldn’t find a parking spot!

Around the block he drove, then two blocks. He was in a panic

when he pulled over and prayed: LORD, take pity on me! If you'll find me a parking place I'll go to MASS every Sunday of my life, I'll quit drinking Irish whiskey, I'll...

Just then the car parked in front of him pulled out.

He looked to heaven and shouted as loud as he could, "NEVER MIND! I've found one!"

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How about two more songs from the Marin Golden Gate Barbershop Chorus, directed by Phil DeBar?

Get ready to "Turn Your Radio On...", then a favorite oldie, "I Want a Girl Just Like the Girl That Married Dear Old Dad."

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It's surely unfair and unkind to mix an Irish holiday, an Irishman, and some of the best brewed Gallic grog in the same joke, but I've been given special permission from old Saint Patrick himself—because when I told it to him even he too couldn't stop laughing...

It's about Muldoon who had been out drinking into the wee hours, and one suspects it was not his first time either.

So he kicked off his shoes and crept into his house so he didn't awaken his true love, Kathleen.

He was heading up to the bedroom but only made it up two steps before he fell backward on his rump.

Unfortunately, he had a bottle of whiskey in each back pocket!

But he was so afraid he might have made too much noise for Kathleen, he fumbled back on his feet, found a light, turned around, and dropped his pants. There in the hallway mirror he saw his own rear end cut and bleeding. So he found a box of Band-Aids, and put one on each place where he saw blood.

Then he crawled up the stairs, fell into bed, and was barely asleep when he saw that the sun was up—and he felt his lovely Kathleen pulling on his big toe.

“Muldoon,” she said, “you were out drunk again last night!”

“Oh,” he groaned, “Have mercy. Why would you say such a mean thing?”

“Because when I went downstairs the front door was wide open, there was booze bottle glass all over the floor, and there was a trail of blood from the glass right into this very bed!”

“But mostly it was because of those Band-Aids stuck on the hallway mirror!”

—

I suppose there’s been a Muldoon in every house. Let’s sing two more songs to lift Muldoon’s holiday spirit. There’s no home on any holiday more forgiving than the HOME ON THE RANGE...or a promise more joyous than being “Once in Love With Amy...”

—

Finally, what day would be more appropriate for a miracle than a Saint’s Day? And who would be better equipped to shake loose that miracle than a local Irish priest driving back to Marin County from San Francisco after perhaps over-enjoying just such a celebration?

Father Timothy had just crossed the Golden Gate Bridge and was creeping down the hill when a cop pulled him over. The policeman leaned in, smelled the sweet aroma of alcohol, and saw an empty wine bottle on the car floor...

“Have you been drinking, Father?”

“Ah yes, officer, but just water.”

The trooper asked him, "Then why do I smell wine?"

The priest looked down, saw the bottle, and shouted "GOOD LORD! He's done it again!"

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Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of all of the chorus, we thank you for being such a welcoming audience. Let me once again acknowledge the MarinTones, Opus IV, and our director, Phil DeBar... [who asked Paul Wren to close the show with "America the Beautiful."]

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## [Origin of the phrase "out in left field"](#)

Chicagoans gave birth to the term "out of left field" about 100 years ago. The left field in the pre-Wrigley playing grounds butted up to a many-storied insane asylum, and when the crowds made too much noise the lunatics screamed out the windows and banged on pans. Their comments truly were "out of left field."

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## [Author of Self-Publishing Manual, Dan Poynter, has](#)



## died...

The author of the best-selling **Self-Publishing Manual**, Dan Poynter, has died. We were “in the trenches” writing friends and I already miss him, in part because it was Dan’s turn to buy lunch. So will thousands more whose lives he touched and changed. He had been quite ill for a while, seemed to be improving, but, instead, Dan passed away a few days back.

Poynter wrote almost 100 books but he was best known for his **Self-Publishing Manual**, now in its 14th edition. Many of us exploring the hinterlands of “doing-it-ourselves” publishing, with our starter books (rarely sought, even more rarely bought), pounding away on clunky typewriters and wading in rubber cement, wandering through the last days of the past century, when up popped his how-to gift. The **SPM** was a light from heaven. It answered questions we didn’t even know we should ask. As Dan learned more, the book kept getting better and bigger. In short order his grateful fans, hat in hand, too often bruised by the titans from Gotham and other bookstore bulk buyers, turned his manual into a huge seller...

Dan was a close friend of mine for lots of decades. We’re a few weeks apart in age (he would never admit it), I lived about 20 miles away, and we seemed to wander into the same ersatz gatherings and adventures, befriending many of the same odd people, and we quietly joined the Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA)—Dan helped birth it—and the National Speakers Association (NSA).

He was a tall, quiet fellow who gave freely of his knowledge. Many know that he was President of the Parachutists Assn as well. He joked that he married the thrill of descent (he was a life-long bachelor), and was faithful to the end.

In fact, rather than using his law training Dan set up and ran a loft in Oakland. His publishing career (and life) started

when he couldn't find a book about parachute knotting that his clientele needed, to get licensed. "I knew as much about publishing as some poor soul tapping rubber trees for a living," he told me. So he contacted every company however involved with knotting and made copies of the diagrams and instructions they sent back, pulled them into a \$40 three-ring instruction manual, wrote the conjunctive copy, then bought a dandy house near Goleta (Santa Barbara) from the profits. It overlooked the Pacific Ocean east of the UC Santa Barbara. From his front porch you could see the only American mainland target attacked by the Axis in World War II, an oil tank sighted by the misdirected Japanese Navy.

I first met him at a free lunch where Xerox was showing their brand new copiers to a bevy of hungry writers (becoming publishers). We passed on the street a couple of times but we didn't really meet again until he tried to kill himself (inadvertently, he claims) by falling 100+ feet straight down and almost impaling himself on a volleyball net pole on East Beach. He had written (or was writing) a book about Parasailing (or was it Paragliding? He also wrote a pile of other weird books). There was a slack in the tow rope and he found himself stalled in midair! Alas, the pause was miraculously timed—a gaggle of bone doctors taking a break from a convention happened to be playing volleyball when he dropped in on them! He was nearly killed. A few days later, in the weakest voice hearable, he called and asked if I'd take his newest book to the ABA in Los Angeles the next week. I did (when I found out what the ABA was), and that started a long string of lunches, Gold Coast meetings (a sort-of branch of NSA), and so on...

Dan had a sense of humor, much of it hoarded internally. He didn't have time (or much patience) for editing would-be books sent for his help by adoring fans. He threatened to farm them all off to me, and rarely he couldn't help himself: I would get a DOA bundle (with a spine) in the mail with a note daring

me to make sense and save the soul of the hapless scribe of the offending manuscript. The note usually mentioned that I was the only person who could get the author in print since the bundle was so much like my own books!

A final story. Dan gave weekend gatherings for book creators at his palace. The couple of times I spoke there he would hold up one of my early books and tell the attendees that it was certainly not how to design your own cover—and that he had bought a couple of copies of the book so he wouldn't run out of such a pitiful display. I told him I was hunting for some hole in one of his books, the table of contents lost in the index, upside-down chapters, or something equally egregious for revenge. But I never found anything out of place—and now he's left before me and the fun is gone.

Dan Poynter was a smart fellow and already is a much missed friend.

Gordon Burgett

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## **Writers: How to Write in Financial Comfort Even in Old Age!**

There are ways to do what the title says—and about 1000 other ways that guarantee writing penury, most about as lucrative as begging for or selling writing pencils on the street! I'll not foul this blog by describing how you can find cliché distress or dangling destitution—poverty you can find on your own. Or it will find you, particularly if you're lazy or wreyete horribly!

For the rest of you wordsmiths overflowing with words, wit, proper punctuation, vivid imaginations, and computers that spell well, here's what an old writer thinks are the most likely paths to help you at least end up paying your own bills—and comfortably at ease between now and then.

We can **eliminate some kinds of writing** at the outset, like **essays** and **poetry**. Verse may be the showcase of a mastermind, but 99%+ of the poets, bless them, even when in rhyme don't have a dime.

Let's focus on the **four paths** that make the most cents.

**Geniuses** could secure comfort if they could express their wizardry in lucid, sought prose, then link themselves to vendors who could harness, package, and sell their brilliance. (So much for geniuses.)

A harder path would be from the bottom up, **from stringer to city editor to editor-of-editors**. Theirs might be the bobbing path of nervous comfort while publishing mastheads sink into the sea. Editing excellence may have to be mixed with the deft art of vessel leaping, derring-do in life preservers, afloat, preserving words and news while awaiting the calm. Still, in business and government there may be a million jobs that have a writing core. They pay well and keep the faithful comfortable during retirement. Some of the greatest writers had their day jobs there, and bloomed into fame from the product of their nighttime/weekend passions.

**Fiction writers** have the privilege of inventing comfort when needed, of living where their imagination takes them to find solace. But to have enough coin to eat and stay warm as needed requires that they cook up a tasty singular plotstew of people, purpose, and place that readers want, then keep that blend boiling until their culinary/literary fame makes them well rewarded. For most this is surely the hardest way to spend a life fed solely by writing.

The fourth path is obvious but its luster is so unseen by the everyday public that most miss its truly gilded glow. These are the folks who **write for close-knit bonds of workers**. They define their niches—surveyors, goat breeders, school principals—and write books or create how-to guides or give workshops transformed into BOR tomes about what every member of the group needs to know to do what they do better. Most also speak professionally about what they write. And if their primary field folds or changes form they reform their knowledge to match the new configuration, get the groups' email addresses and sell their solutions to their associations and their members. They have ready-made followers eager for every applicable word that they write or speak. When they write articles, they know specifically who will read them and what they need or want to read. Their blogs are avidly awaited, they use social media to enhance their expertise, and as they get known and grow older their demand grows proportionately. They're probably too busy to be too comfortable in their prime years, but they could have a self-generating empire that would keep them very comfortable as they age. The downside? Who knows they exist (comfortably or at all) and who reads their chosen words, other than the tight circle of their followers.

That's it. Musing about how those fed by the flames of imagination and word-molding are most likely to be able to be comfortably closer to their preferred mode of creation longer and freer from debilitating or impoverishing distractions.

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

P.S. I write books and speak their messages, mostly. Some are published by others, while I also publish niche books, all of which I edit but are written by others. Here is a [list](#) of those books that are currently available. (Oh yes, I'm also old.)

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## Where might your bio and sales info do you the most good?

If you are digitally displaying your achievements and the products/skills that you have for sale, where might that be shown to your best advantage? Even if it's only done to delight your kids, prove your prowess to your spouse, or put some strut in your aging parents' prance, where might they most likely (and logically) see it?

Maybe at your **website**, where you can hide almost anything in its most exquisite, self-defined detail?

Or, in miniature, in your **social media profiles**?

Yesterday I became convinced that at least for writers, speakers, and publishers maybe the best shout sheet would be at our **Author Central page at Amazon.com**.

I concluded that from a dandy multi-segment workshop given by three BAIPA leaders at the monthly (second Saturday) gathering in Novato, California. (BAIPA is the San Francisco Bay Area Independent Publishers Association.) According to David Cutler, Judy Baker, and Ruth Schwartz, we would be woefully derelict if we left anything unrevealed at that site.

Why would Amazon be the prize listing site for our bios and the related exposition of products, services, and current or coming activities? Because far more buyers go to or through Amazon to buy paperbacks, ebooks, and audiobooks (plus batteries, kettles, and harmonicas, etc.) than anywhere else. And more eyes usually mean more buys of our printed or spoken

gems! (You don't publish through Amazon? You can list all other products there too.)

What can you include there to prove to the hungry public that you know your stuff and that your knowledge is immediately (and wisely) purchasable? Your books (bound or digital), audiobooks, articles, blogs as they appear, a long introduction, photos, videos, events (present and future), plus more...

How can others review and use this well presented repository? You can link them [there](#), put a widget at your website, or they can just put your name up at Amazon.com and your Author Central info will appear—if you create it, which is fast and free.

I know, others have to go through Amazon to reach it. That bothers me too. But I will simply explain to them that it is where they can find the best and most recent list of my publications and services—and give the link or widget.

That's it. I felt a bit stupid being all but unaware that Author Central existed despite the fact that Kindle and Create Space sell lots of my books (as do several other publishers, and us too). But I will use it often now. I'm interested having them hawking the existence of my words, wit, and (rumored) wisdom 24 hours a day, though I hope they keep that display some distance from the kettles and harmonicas.

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

P.S. There's an obvious exception to the Amazon answer to this blog's query: if you are a **niche-oriented publisher or speaker**, the best location would be in niche-related places. You are unlikely to be selling through Amazon.com. Two very unlike business models! (See my blogs about niche publishing if this is unclear. Just write niche publishing in the

“search” box in the upper right corner.)

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## Little things not to say when you're emceeing ...

There may be a million things not to say when you are in charge of a program or ceremony.

Let me share a half-dozen wee comments that, in themselves, aren't going to get you hooked off the podium, but, done right, they will easily distinguish you as a professional who is comfortable and smooth...

For example, do you know anybody who wants to be introduced last (unless that spot is saved for the highlight of the show)? Even worse, “last but not least.” Why not say “final” or “concluding”? Or if you are using numbers, like “first speaker,” “second speaker,” and so on, just use the number for the last? Like “Many of you may have heard our fifth speaker, ...”

Along the same line, “We've saved the best for last...” Hmm, if I was speaker #3 of five what goes through my mind? I must have bombed, or whatever one does who isn't the best...

Ever hear, “the one and only”? That does convey special esteem, but it also makes the listeners ask, “the one and only what?” Why not tell the audience why that person is held in such high regard, like “the fastest woman in the world, ...” Even there “the one and only” may be one race from being inaccurate. Consider something less transitory like “America's most rewarded Olympic Gold swimmer, ... ”



How often have you heard that the speaker “needs no introduction,” then they are introduced (usually in great length)! Two points here: (1) surely there are folks in the crowd who have absolutely no idea who the person is, so you have to say something about them or their prominence, and (2) if you are certain that the coming speaker is beyond introduction, prove it. Save the introduction.

But you can't just point at them and grunt or push the microphone into their hands. So a compromise. “\_\_\_\_ is well known to most of us...” and complete the introduction with a concise listing of their accomplishments or honors.

Finally, you must remember which is the podium and which is the lectern. You are standing on the podium, your notes are sitting on the lectern.

A very good emceeing guidebook full of solid advice is Dana LaMon's *Master the Ceremonies* (see [www.danalamon.com](http://www.danalamon.com)).

Emceeing is lots of fun—it's also alarming the first times out. The most important thing to remember is that the audience isn't there to see or hear you.

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett

P.S. Want to be an emcee for three or four hours, probably alone and usually non-stop? Give full seminars! Details at [“How to Set Up and Market Your Own Seminar.”](#)

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