



Art Adkins

Newsletter - September 2009

Upcoming Events

September 10
Columbia County Library
50th Anniversary
7:00

September 13
Borders
Brookwood Place, GA
1:00

September 19
Clay County Library
Authors Roundtable
11:00

September 20
Borders
Athens, GA
1:00

September 25
Waldenbooks
CNN Center
Atlanta, GA
12:00

September 26
Waldenbooks
Alpharetta, GA
1:00

September 27
Waldenbooks
Buford, GA
11:00

The last two months have been extremely busy for me. I have conducted two writer workshops, traveled all over Florida and Georgia marketing The Oasis Project and worked on my third novel in the Slade Lockwood series. I have just been invited to do a book signing in South Carolina and I look forward to sharing my work with them. Recently I was in Alaska on vacation and found the time to share Slade and company with friends. Visit my website and you will see a picture of them holding my book on board the Veendam!

Finding time to write the last several months has been difficult, but you have to make the time. Sometimes I have had to get up early or stay up late to chronicle Slade's exploits. I tell aspiring writers that you have to write to get better at your craft and this is so true. This is especially true when you are developing characters with depth and creating a mystery to entice the reader to turn the next page. To paint that mental picture involves you sitting and writing and using good word choice and sentence structure to bring the story to life. To create escapism for the reader, you have to inspire them, touch them and make them not want to put your book down. I have had a lot of positive fan emails the last several months talking about these very issues. Readers do not want to be bored and it is our job as writers to make sure they 'get their money's' worth when they purchase our books!

In one of the creative writing workshops I just held, I was asked by an aspiring writer which is more important to me – the plot or the character. It was an interesting question. For me, they are both entwined and one cannot survive without the other. I have read novels where the character is great and the plot is bad and vice versa. In each instance I had no desire to read any more of that author's work. To have a strong story involves both plot and character working together to start us on our journey of escapism. In my opinion they have to complement each other.

I have encountered a lot of book store managers the last several months and I am going to share some stories about them with you in the next section. I am going to publish my newsletter bi-monthly and I enjoy hearing from fans and friends.

Keep reading and writing,

Art

When is the last time you contacted that friend or relative in a neighboring state and asked them to throw a book signing party? You complete the invitations, set the venue and make it a fun affair. Prepare a brief presentation and tell them you will do a book signing afterwards. Tell them you want to limit it to fifty people. Bring a gift for the host and give them a free autographed copy of your book.

Remember, friends and family that are not around us everyday still care about what we do. Visit them and share your success with them. They are proud of you and your accomplishments so let them know what you have been up to. Besides you may get an idea for another book by talking to them!

Book Signings

As I continue developing my marketing platform for The Oasis Project and my other works, I am stunned by the number of helpful book store managers willing to take a chance on new authors and assist them in marketing their books. Everywhere I go managers are talking about authors and the work they are promoting. I have sold books alongside self-help, children and fellow mystery authors to name but a few.

When I have the opportunity, I ask the managers which authors are the most successful at selling and promoting their work. These are the authors I want to emulate and I am sure you feel the same way. I have been given a lot of answers to that question, but there is a common denominator to become a successful author. The most successful authors are those who like to talk to people. I have had managers tell me horror stories about authors who sit in their chair and stay behind their table and avoid public contact at all costs. If you are doing that you are not going to sell very many books. If you have read my newsletter before, you know I have spoken about this topic. Book store managers are giving us space, usually at the front door, and this space could be used for other displays, it could be a discount table or have a variety of other uses. They are taking a gamble we are going to be more profitable than whatever was there before us. The author that sits behind their desk and does not talk or engage people and who does not sell books will probably not be invited back. There is another problem with this – the store manager is going to be reluctant to invite any author to do a book signing if they have negative experiences with authors not selling books. I know some people are naturally bashful and getting them to talk to people is like pulling the tooth of a wounded tiger – it's not going to happen. If that is the case and you are one of those types of authors, then go to book expo's or where there is a large group of authors. I have seen authors at these locations say very little and still sell books. It allows them to be quiet and still market their work. I am sure the host would prefer you to be more out-going, but work with what you have.

Speaking of working with what you have, take the time to develop an ice breaker to initiate a conversation. My youngest son is 6'7" and weighs 280 pounds. His height and size cause people to approach him to ask about his physical stature. At first he would become bashful and withdrawn, but I have encouraged him to use his body as a conversation piece and he has learned to do this very successfully. He is a financial advisor with Edward Jones in Orlando and I have seen him smile good-naturedly when someone wants to see how they 'measure' up when they stand alongside him. He has taken his physical stature and turned it into a conversation piece. You can do the same with your work as a writer. I put a pelican on my display table and I have a lot of people ask about the bird. Once they ask I am off and running. I get to tell them my hero has a pet pelican and before you know it we are talking about my novel, Cedar Key where it takes place and Power Grid, the next in the Slade Lockwood series. Use what works! I saw one author use humor to greet people and was very good at it – this is a technique I am not comfortable with.

Lastly, talk to people. You have to market your work and you cannot do that if you do not talk.

Thank you and keep reading!

Upcoming Events

October 3
Books at Park Place
St. Petersburg
10:00

October 4
Waldenbooks
Pensacola
2:00

October 9
Linda's Books
Seabring
5:00

October 10
Waldenbooks
Wellington Green
12:00

October 11
Borders
Kennesaw, GA
1:00

October 18
Borders
Marietta, GA
12:00

October 24
Borders
Northlake Mall, GA
1:00

October 25
Borders,
Douglasville, GA
1:00

October 31
Waldenbooks
Kissimmee
2:00