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Your local venue for the women of Cape Cod to share their ideas, experiences and resources while inspiring each other in their life's journey

Inspire . Encourage . Network . Share

Literary Women



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In her column **The Write Way**, Katie O'Sullivan discusses common editing errors that can send your writing directly into the slush pile.

If you have a question about writing or editing we'd love to hear it!

Please email your questions to
Katie@CapeWomenOnline.com

The Write Way: The Business of Blatant Self Promotion

by Katie O'Sullivan

There comes a time in every author's life when the business of writing becomes less about writing and more about... well, business.

I reached that point this spring. Preparing for the release of SON OF A MERMAID (now available in paperback and ebook!) took almost as much effort as getting to "The End" in the manuscript. In some ways, promotion is harder than writing.

Authors like to dream that once their book is released, word of mouth will have it flying out of bookstores. But how do you get those first few mouths to talk about your book?

Many writers are by nature shy, which is why we prefer to sit at our keyboards rather than, say, perform stand up comedy. Some of us have the added bonus of insecurity, preferring to stay in the shadows and let our characters have all the fun.

Think of Kathleen Turner's character in the classic 1984 movie, Romancing the Stone. A best selling author of sizzling romance novels, she rarely left her apartment, not even to do book readings. It wasn't until she was forced out of her comfort zone and met Michael Douglas's character that her life had any actual romance.

In real life, an author needs to actively promote her books with a combination of online promotions, mailings, and in-person appearances. And the work has to start before the book hits the shelves.

CREATING A PRESS KIT

A simple book press kit should contain the following:

1. Cover page (a simple letter addressed to the recipient)
2. Author bio (tell us about you!)
3. About the Book page (blurb, publisher, release date, target audience)
4. Fact sheet (the information a bookseller uses to look up the book through distribution channels)
5. Book reviews (if – and when – available)
6. Events calendar (of both local and online appearances, if available)
7. Press release (if appropriate... a newspaper wants a press release. A gift shop doesn't.)

If you have color postcards of your book cover, or even bookmarks, you might want to include one of those. (My mother-in-law, a former PR guru, suggested printing the event listings onto bookmarks, and to change them as appropriate over time. Cool idea, right?)

For postcards, posters, and other branded materials, I like the prices at Vistaprint (www.vistaprint.com) They have a nice selection of products, consistent quality, and reliable shipping.

Some people put the actual book into the press kit, or a link/code for the reader to get a copy of the ebook for free. (Especially helpful if you're looking for reviews - give them the book. Many online reviewers state up front they won't buy your book in order to review it. If you want a review, send the book.)

Reviews sell books. Especially on Amazon, where the more reviews you have, the more likely Amazon will be to recommend your book or have it turn up in a search. Goodreads is another increasingly important spot for your book to be listed and reviewed. (FYI, self-published authors can add their own books to Goodreads, too.)

Another caveat to creating press kits is that many places are purely electronic now. Even some local papers prefer to get everything via email. It makes it easy for the editor to drop information right onto the page. You might still send a press kit, but include your email address along with your phone number, and offer in the letter to email any information they might want.

SOCIAL MEDIA IS A MUST HAVE

Social media is becoming more and more important. Do you have an Author Facebook Page? Do you have a Twitter account? A blog? A website? Do you have a group of authors that you work with? Does your publishing house assist authors on promotions?

My new publisher, Crescent Moon Press, has an active online marketing loop where authors share information and resources. I have yet to meet any of these women (and men) in person, but feel many of them are now good friends. I'm thrilled at how willing they are to help my book succeed. With their help, I've put together a "blog tour" where my book and I will appear on sites based across the U.S. and Canada.

Starting May 15, I'll be doing interviews and giving away prizes on tons of different blogs, websites and Facebook pages.

You can find my complete tour listed on my blog by clicking the tour "badge" that my daughter created for me. If you don't have a handy teen to help you make a badge of your own, borrow one. Or try one of the free sites online that lets you upload your photo and create it yourself, like www.QuickMeme.com.

GETTING OUT AND ABOUT

Then there are the local appearances. There are actually a lot of independent bookstores and small gift shops on Cape Cod who are happy to host author appearances and book signings. In most cases, just sending an email out of the blue doesn't seem to work. You will have more luck if you call first, or stop by with either your book in hand or some form of promotional materials.

Chat with store owners. There may be opportunities to tie in with other promotions or events going on in the town. For example, when I was promoting my romance novel, PERFECT STRANGERS, I signed books at Where the Sidewalk Ends as part of Chatham's "Paint the Town Red" Valentine celebration weekend.

For SON OF A MERMAID, one of the appearances on my schedule will be at The Little Beach Gallery, in Hyannis, as part of the Cape's Maritime Days. I'm also hoping to do book signings in Provincetown during Family Week in August. My book is for young teens, after all.

Think of your book and its target audience. What are their interests? Where will they be hanging out? You want to get your book in front of as many potential readers as possible.

Trust me. Self promotion is hard work. This is business, and needs to be taken seriously. Not that it's hard to promote a good product - and I do think my book is a great product - but the whole self-promotion thing gives me the willies. Tooting my own horn doesn't come naturally to me.

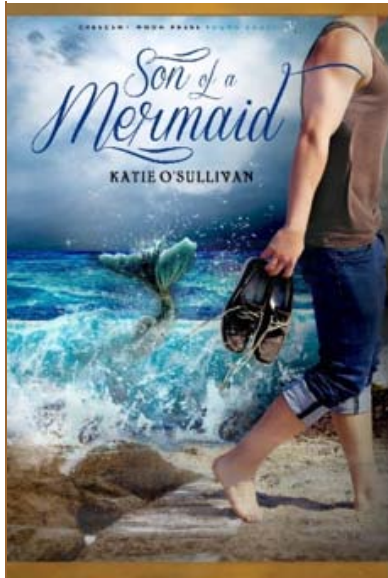
But SON OF A MERMAID? I'm hoping it'll make a big splash. With luck – and hard work – it will.



Katie O'Sullivan loves editing, writing and playing with words. She lives in Harwich with her family, and the big dogs who "make" her walk on the beach every day.

Her third book, the young adult novel SON OF A MERMAID, will be available May 2013 from Crescent Moon Press. Check the Event listings for upcoming book signings, or visit [her blog](#) for details.

For more information about working with Katie to make your words sparkle on the page, email her at: katie.osullivan@yahoo.com



Available at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

[Click here](#) for Katie O'Sullivan's
Summer Book Signings & Events



FROM THE MAILBAG:

"Back in school, they taught us to put two spaces between sentences. Now my editor is telling me that's wrong. Who's right?"

It depends. Are you using a typewriter or a computer keyboard?

The convention is to put two spaces between sentences to separate them when using a font that isn't "proportional," like Courier. Old-fashioned typewriters often used Courier.

However, most fonts and word processing programs today automatically use proportional spacing, so there's no need to add two spaces. Ever.

Every major style guide, including the Chicago Manual of Style, will tell you to use a single space after a period. So it's not your editor being a grump. (At least not this time.)

There is a classic rant against "two spacers" in [Slate magazine](#) which I urge you to read if you don't believe little ol' me. And even if you do believe me – and already knew about the one space rule – read it because it'll make you smile. Because you knew you were right all along.

If you have a question for our Mailbag please email katie.osullivan@yahoo.com



Make
Every
Word
Count

Professional Editing
Critique and Writing Services
Coaching for a Winning
College Essay

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