

You Can Call Me Publisher

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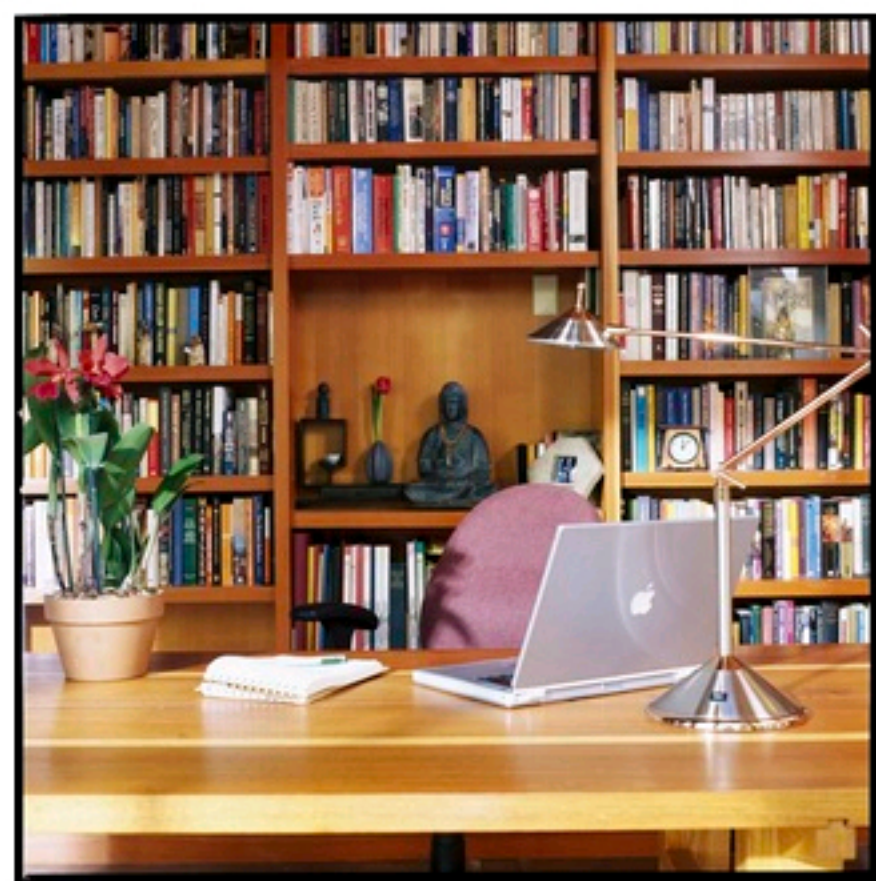


Photo By Jamie Hadley

company that would do a floor to ceiling job, right down to distribution. But there were bumps along the way. The cover art was the wrong color. The books weren't always assembled as I'd envisioned. We all made mistakes. Gutenberg probably had an easier time inventing the printing press. But we persevered.

Now I hire the artist for the book cover, choose the content, and set the price. It turns out that I'm a control freak. I love the process of seeing my books and the work of others smash through boundaries and shout, "Here I am!"

Today I face choices about ebooks versus paperbacks. I face choices like: should I drag out that old manuscript that didn't fit publishing tastes a while back? Or should I send a screenplay to Bette Midler? Well, why not? Be bold. You may not get rich opening up that doggy boutique, but there's no time like this year to see your dreams come true.

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At my age, you face unpleasant changes. You don't jump at the chance to drag on that one piece suit for a swim. You don't always sleep like a log. And your doctor may tell you that besides sleep apnea, you grind your teeth. You have small pains. You have birthdays you once associated with people who ate oatmeal for dinner. But there are good things, too. You finally know what makes you happy.

For me, it was opening my own publishing house. It meant saying goodbye to the belief that winning awards, working with established literary agents, and having two former New York book editors as a cheering squad would help me sail down the aisle of traditional publishing. Because being a fiction writer is a lot like being an actor. You may be talented and still spend years on unemployment. Blend all this with a floundering economy, the rise of social networking, and a publishing industry having more contractions than a woman in labor, and it seemed like the perfect time to open my own publishing house. Thanks to a husband who has a real day job, I had the means to see where this could lead.

Through a series of contacts with people in publishing, I found a