

SO, YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL

My name is Myrna Burkes and I am serving my second Biennium as President to Beta Tau Chapter in San Antonio. I never thought I could or would write a story when I retired from education over a decade ago. I taught 2nd, 4th and 5th grades and love reading and writing. When I retired, I missed teaching ...so much that I began journaling. A year later, in 2012, Sandy Hook occurred and brought back many concerns I had as a teacher, so my journaling focus turned to those concerns.

I realized I had the makings of a book and began writing, completing and publishing my first novel, "Mistakes and Opportunities". Before I knew it, I'd written and published my second novel, "Another Day In Paradise", and a year later, the third, "A Special Kind of Girl". My first trilogy, "The Caradan Series" was born. I followed up the following year with "Laura's Soldier", the first novel in the series, "Caradan - The Next Generation".

It has been my pleasure to present for book clubs, PTA groups, libraries, etc. I share:

- How to get your Tax Identification Number from the Social Security Administration
- How to plan story writing and self-publish
- How to assist in your own **teaching and writing** endeavors

HOW TO PLAN YOUR STORY

- It's important that you have an **interest in** and **knowledge of** the characters you create.
- Establish **topic**.
- How to **Research** your topic...it is essential.
- How to **Establish** different **settings** or **locations**.
- How **Create characters, plot, plot twists**.
 - How to use **index cards**.
 - Importance of **independent readers**

The following is the information I put on my index cards.

- **Setting or Location:** Informs the reader of the season, weather, city or street, school name and description real or make-believe and move throughout the story.
- **Characters:** Should feel real, and your readers should be able to visualize them. Age? Hair color, eyes, nose, ears, forehead, size, shape, height, ethnicity? Do they wear glasses, have a limp? What do their clothes look like? What is their profession, and do they like it? What do they enjoy doing in their spare time?

- **Dialogue:** Good dialogue comes from having a connection with your characters. You want each character to have a unique voice and when I joined SAWG (San Antonio Writer's Guild) I was told not to use anything but "he said" and "she said" "he asked, etc. The gentleman informed me that words like "he exclaimed" and "she encouraged" were unnecessary. I needed to stick with simplicity. I was shocked and this seemed so wrong. I followed this format in my first book, but you'll notice the change in my writing dialogue in the remaining books.

Readers: Use variety a of friends, family members and two professional individuals, and never the same ones for the same book. I share four sections of the final manuscript with four individuals (readers) and they edit for grammar, continuity etc.

Now, before I begin explaining how to self-publish, I'd like to share a couple of things with you. First, Your first draft is just that. Plan to write three or four drafts until you reach the final draft. Second, you need to keep track of your word count. The first manuscript I turned in to a publisher was met with a positive response. However, I was told, "This is a wonderful beginning manuscript for a novel." However, a novel requires a minimum of 70,000 to 80,000 words. You have written a novella of 7,800 words. LOL. All I could think of was, "Good Grief...70,000 more words!"

How to Self-Publish

Originally, after dedicating significant time on research, I chose a self-publishing publishing company my novels and determined that the best option was <https://KDP.Amazon.com>. There are many publishers who try to copycat Amazon, so be sure to pay attention. Many use KDP or Amazon as part of their titles. It's so convenient to publish both Kindle and Paperback books with one publishing company. **The correct site is <https://KDP.Amazon.com>.**

BENEFITS OF USING KDP AMAZON?

- Extremely user friendly.
- Creation
 - Step by step on what is required for setting up your manuscript
 - Design your book cover
 - ISBN Number
- Management
 - Cost/Royalties
 - Sales/Reports/Taxes
 - Marketing
 - Author Central

WEBSITE : I use GoDaddy. It is also pretty user friendly and takes you through the steps to create your site.