



An Interview with Mark Gebbie, Publisher and Editor of Gebbie Press

Small Business PR with Big Business Prowess!

By Dahlynn McKowen

In 1955, Conley “Con” Gebbie, a former PR man for Shell Oil and Pan Am Airlines in New York City, created his first media manual, the *Gebbie Press House Magazine Directory*. Targeted for use by freelance writers and photographers, the directory offered contact information for magazines all over the nation.

Come 1971, Con sold the copyright to that directory to the National Research Bureau in Burlington, Iowa. But he wasn’t finished: Con created and published a new directory of all the print and broadcast media in the United States. Keep in mind that this was the age of encyclopedias and phone books, long before the Internet came to be.

Back then, companies published guides to newspapers, magazines and radio stations, but “no one had ever (nor to this day have they!) organized all the media outlets in one compact volume,” per Gebbie’s website. Con called it the *Gebbie Press All-In-One Media Directory*. In 1974, a mere three years after the first edition, Con Gebbie died of cancer. His wife, Amalia Gebbie—a former advertising manager at Bloomingdale’s in New York City—took over researching, updating and publishing the directory.

In the 60 years since the release of that first directory, this family-owned and operated company continues to offer media directories to writers, photographers and anyone needing such valuable information. Mark Gebbie now oversees Gebbie Press, and we are excited to have him with us for this month’s issue, which begins on page two.



Continued...

Gebbie Press

Dahlynn: Mark, thank you for sharing your insight with the readers of the *Wow Principles*. To get things started, please tell us how you became involved in the family business.

Mark: My father passed away when I was 18 years old. It was then that I became the associate editor of Gebbie Press. I was attending the S.I. Newhouse School of Journalism at Syracuse University in New York when he died. When my mother passed, I became both the editor and publisher of Gebbie Press and have been doing so for nearly 40 years.

D: Our newsletter readership is comprised mostly of writers, many of whom that have written books and self-published them, and many more who would love to either write or complete a book. How can Gebbie Press best assist them?

M: As far as actually writing a book, I, myself, can barely write a sentence, so our company can't be much help there (*laughing*). But what we can provide is media contact information so that if an author has a book to sell, he/she will have the tools to so do.

D: Marketing is very important in every industry, especially publishing. What can authors do to improve those skills?

M: Since many of our clients are authors, they can write a better press release than me! The trick they need to know is to spin or slant that release to their advantage. Tie it into something happening in the news, perhaps.

Continued...

Have you joined PS on Social Media yet?

Never miss an issue of *The Wow Principles!* More than 110 back issues can be found on the PS website. Sign up today at www.PublishingSyndicate.com.

Do you Tweet? Follow and we'll follow back: @PublishingSynd

Facebook users: Become a fan and "like" PS!
www.Facebook.com/PublishingSyndicate

www.LaughUntilYouPee.com: Terrific stories from the very funny NYMB series. WARNING! Go to the bathroom first...



I'll put myself on the spot and give an example of a good headline and lead paragraph. Say the author's book is about cooking, farm animal rights and health in America, and it was being published and released back when Mad Cow disease was all the rage in the news. A timely headline would have been:

“BISONS DON'T GET MAD COW DISEASE”

~~ OR ~~

“NOT ONE CASE OF MAD COW DISEASE REPORTED IN BISONS”

Dateline: Omaha, Nebraska. Dr. Thomas Jarvis of The Bison Industry Council announced today that, “Bison simply cannot contract Mad Cow disease.” For beef eaters worried about tainted hamburger, bison burgers are a healthy alternative. Much leaner than beef, bison is also a heart-friendly, low-cholesterol choice. Author Jane Doe explains this in her new book...



My point is this: By having a strong headline and lead, an author will attract the media. It's the author's job to figure out a way to make any given audience interested in his/her book. Then Gebbie helps by providing the contact information—from tens of thousands of media names to personal email addresses—to target the media. Be it magazines about plumbing to gospel radio,

from weekly papers in tiny towns to large daily papers in big cities, Gebbie nearly covers it all in both the English- and Spanish-speaking media.

D: Technology has certainly helped with marketing and PR. Publishing Syndicate has used all three media versions sold by Gebbie: print, online and Excel. Do you find that one is more popular than the other, and if so, why?

M: Hey, a book that you can hold in your hand—aka, our print directory [shown left]—is not something I have to explain the merits of. Books are great! (*again, laughing*) Granted, an author looking at the print version can't “email” from the book, but he/she can look up the editor of *Writer's Monthly* in about two seconds in that directory using the index.

Continued...



D: Public relations firms charge big dollars and sometimes do not follow through with their pie-in-the-sky promises. What are your thoughts about brick-and-mortar PR firms?

M: Did you ever see the movie, *The Sweet Smell of Success*? That's about the extent of my first-hand experience with PR firms. The movie does make the point that even one well-placed release can stir up a lot of interest in things.

PR is hard work and a gamble. And PR firms are expensive. I'm assuming that most authors aren't exactly rolling in dough, as it were. That's why my family created Gebbie Press, to give everyone a chance to go after publicity.

My advice to an author flying solo—and what I mean by that is an author who is self-published or an author who has a publisher, but that publisher is leaving the marketing up to the author—is for him/her to pick ten places they want to get some ink then call and email the editors of each. Then do that again and again, each day. The most successful are those who market themselves continuously, just not here and there.

Continued...



The *The Sweet Smell of Success* was released in 1955. Per IMDb: "Powerful but unethical Broadway columnist J.J. Hunsecker—Burt Lancaster—coerces unscrupulous press agent Sidney Falco—Tony Curtis—into breaking up his sister's romance with a jazz musician." Some say that the Hunsecker character was based on the famed newspaperman and radio gossip commentator Walter Winchell.



In June's issue, NYMB contributor and multi-award winning author **Diana M. Amadeo** (photo left) will share her story of "work envy." Diana, who has in excess of 500 publications with her byline in books, anthologies, magazines, newspapers and online, humbly and persistently tweaks and rewrites her thousand or so rejections with eternal hope that they may yet see the light of day.

PS does consider writing-themed articles for publication in this newsletter. Payment is \$25. Submit your completed article (no pitches, completed work only) to Dahlynn@PublishingSyndicate.com. PS takes only non-exclusive rights for the newsletter and any promotion of the newsletter.

D: Let's go back to technology. With technology changing practically every day, what challenges do authors—and even PR companies such as Gebbie Press—face in the future?

M: Frankly, I'm pretty old school and don't have a lot of interest in whatever is "the latest and greatest." Gebbie doesn't try to compete with the mega-giant PR and marketing database firms like Cision, many of which invest vast sums of money into new media "gimmicks" and self-promotion. Nor could we. We're a mom-and-pop shop catering to folks who can't afford thousands for publicity, offering them a variety of formats that are easy to use and understand. And I'm proud to say that when you call us, there are no phone trees. You'll be speaking to a member of the Gebbie family.



D: Thank you for spending some time with us today. But before we sign off, I have two more questions and ones we always ask: What books are you reading right now?

M: (*laughing then said jokingly*) THE EPA's lead paint inspector and lead paint risk assessor manuals.

D: Funny! OK, question two: What do you do in your off time?

M: Like all small business owners, I work!



To learn more about Gebbie Press, click on the links below. They offer a variety of packages to help with your media and PR needs:

WWW.GEBBIEPRESS.COM

WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/GEBBIE-PRESS-MEDIA-CONTACTS-DIRECTORY

TWITTER: @GEBBIE_PRESS

GEBBIE PRESS INC., NEW PALTZ, NY, 845.255.7560

LAUGH UNTIL YOU PEE

Have you peed from laughing today?

www.LaughUntilYouPee.com



Published monthly by
Publishing Syndicate LLC
Dahlynn McKowen
Ken McKowen

All Rights Reserved, Copyright 2015

We want to hear from you!
Contact Publishing Syndicate at
Writer@PublishingSyndicate.com

