

Interview with Donna M. McDine - January 2009

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Donna M. McDine is one of the most supportive, enthusiastic and energetic authors I know. As busy as she is with her writing, she takes the time to promote and inspire other writers, including me. I am delighted to interview Donna and have her share with us the exciting things that are happening in her career.

Bev: You are now the Marketing Manager at *Stories for Children Magazine*. How did this come about?

Donna: In the last several years I have attended numerous in-person writers' conference and the last two Muse Online Writers Conferences. The success stories that I've been privy to when a writer finds success in finding an agent or publisher are exhilarating. I have often wondered: How can I make this happen? Are these events pipe dreams? I'm here to tell you, you can make these special connections happen and they do not need to be pipe dreams, but reality. While coasting through the cyber-space hallways at the 2008 Muse Online Writers Conference, I received a virtual tap on my shoulder and an unexpected surprise was presented to me. VS Grenier, founder and editor of *Stories for Children Magazine* presented me an offer to join her team, starting January 2009 as Marketing Manager.

Your attendance at conferences is indeed crucial to be put into the right place at the right time. You never know who has been watching your writing career from afar and may present themselves to you and offer a wonderful opportunity.

Go for it...market your writing career...the break you've been striving for may just be right around the next corner!

Bev: What are your responsibilities in this job?

Donna: My responsibilities include researching and contacting children's writers and illustrators for the monthly Featured Guest interview, Media Releases, cross promotional and marketing efforts, and customer service inquiries.

Bev: In December, 2008, you also started your *Write What Inspires You! Newsletter*. What was your inspiration to publish this newsletter and what are your plans for future issues?

Donna: Since embarking on my writing career in 2007 I have continually read and heard about creating your platform. Not fully understanding what a platform is and how it can benefit your writing I began to pick many established writer's brains via email and at conferences...particularly The Muse Online Writers Conference. After becoming inspired from the wealth of positive information I began to brainstorm ideas for creating my platform. I kept coming back to a newsletter. Since I have always been interested what other writers have to say I thought why not interviews with writers, but to expand it to interviews with editors and illustrators. The topics of the newsletter started to take a life of its own on and I expanded it to Book Reviews, Proclaim Your Successes Column and Reflections or Dreams column before the first issue debuted in December 2008. The Reflections or Dreams column is submission based and non-paying at this time. If you are interested in more details of the column please email me at: dmcaine@optonline.net with any questions you may have.

Bev: The *Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators Bulletins* have mentioned many of your successes. Where do you get all of your ideas for these articles?

Donna: Many of my non-fiction articles have derived from a publications needs or theme list. Several of my fictional short stories are based on my children also...sssh...don't tell them. Now that my oldest is a teenager she doesn't appreciate it as much.

Bev: Do you have a favorite story or article you've written?

Donna: Hmm. The one non-fiction article that holds a special place in my heart is "The 'Ghosts' of the Night." The idea came from a family vacation in The Outer Banks, NC. Each night the adults and children would head to the beach with flashlights to find ghost crabs.

Bev: Which do you prefer to write, fiction or non-fiction?

Donna: Tough question. Depending on my inspiration and the topic determines this for me. For non-fiction I enjoy the research process and discovering details I didn't know before. For fiction when an idea and conflict comes to me I immediately begin writing my ideas and develop it from there. My notes and first draft are always written in long hand with my favorite Graf von Faber-Castell pen my family gave to me for my 40th birthday. I guard it and my family knows not to use it...it's a quirk I have. Once I find a pen I love to write with, it's mine only. I know, I know...we also tell our children not to be selfish...too bad on this one kids.

Bev: Besides your personal writing and your position as Marketing Manager, you have a couple of blogs. Can you give your readers a hint at how you organize your time?

Donna: Organization has always been a positive factor to me...even though my family and friends call me an "organization freak". Hey, I could be called worse. I believe it comes from my 16 plus years working in Corporate America and juggling multiple bosses at any given time. I am a lists person by nature and I breakdown my To Do lists in categories, Must Do Today, Follow-up Today, Weekly Goals, Monthly Goals. At first in my writing career I did not follow suit and I did not write out my goals, but with the encouragement of an established author I began to. Once I did, my dreams and goals became clearer, which provided me with a focus for the day, week and month. Now to expand it to 6 months and yearly...haven't gotten that far. You'll see by Bev's next question I needed to reflect on it for yet another tough question...just kidding Bev...your questions are terrific. Another important factor to stress is to treat your writing time as a job and show up.

Bev: What are your goals/plans for 2009?

Donna: Now that Bev has forced me to set my goals/plans for 2009...LOL...here goes:

- ✓ Increase my opt-in subscriber list for my Write What Inspires You! Newsletter to 200.
- ✓ Edit and resubmit my historical fiction manuscript entitled, "The Golden Pathway" for further consideration by the publisher.
- ✓ Finally complete my middle grade manuscript, edit, submit.
- ✓ Become an instrumental team member at Stories for Children Magazine

✓ Network, network, network

Bev: Where can we learn more about your adventures in the writing and publishing world? Web site? Blog?

Donna: To find out more about my writing career please visit me at:
www.donnamcdine.com and www.donna-mcdine.blogspot.com

Sign my guestbook and receive my Free e-book "Write What Inspires You! Author Interviews"

Bev: Thank you, Donna, for always taking that extra step to help other writers. I'm looking forward to hearing more good news about your writing.

Donna: Thanks to you too, Bev, for interviewing me...I enjoyed our time together. I look forward to staying in touch in 2009 and beyond.