

# *PWR Newsletter*



*I self-published  
Peter Rabbit!*



*Beatrix Potter*

(July 28, 1866 – December 22, 1943)



PUBLISHED WRITERS OF ROSSMOOR



# PUBLISHED WRITERS OF ROSSMOOR



*A Club to Help Authors Publish and Promote Their Books*



January 7, 2017

Volume VI, Issue 1

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**Coming up!**  
**Our monthly PWR meeting**  
**This Saturday, January 7, 2017**  
**From 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.**  
**In the Fairway Room at Creekside Clubhouse**

## *January's Speaker on Self-Publishing: Lee Foster*

BY BARBARA KIRBACH



Barbara Kirbach

After producing sixteen books with traditional publishers, why did Lee Foster switch to publishing four books “independently”? The award-winning travel writer and photographer, who just published *An Author's Perspective on Independent Publishing: Why Self-Publishing May Be Your Best Option*, will explain why he now recommends this path for most authors.

All Rossmoor residents, including current or aspiring authors, are encouraged to attend our PWR meeting this Saturday, January 7th, from 10:00 A.M. to noon in the Fairway Room at Creekside.

Program Chair Ron Wren says that Lee will give valuable advice on the publishing of printed books (especially those printed-on-demand), e-books, books-as-websites, apps, and audio books.

Lee himself notes that “self-publishing

is now an ascending practice and will continue to thrive. More and more authors are pursuing the independent publishing dream. Technological developments make ‘indie’ publishing more plausible with each passing year. Increasing market access for ‘indie’ authors continues to erode the domain that traditional publishers once ruled exclusively.”

Lee is the winner of eight Lowell Thomas Travel Awards, including being named the Lowell Thomas Travel Journalist of the Year. He lives in Berkeley and currently publishes travel and literary books, apps, articles, and photos, especially about California. □

For more information on the program, contact [ronwren@aol.com](mailto:ronwren@aol.com). For more information on PWR, visit [www.rossmoor-writers.com](http://www.rossmoor-writers.com).



Lee Foster

## *The President's Page*

BY DUKE ROBINSON



Duke Robinson

We PWR people make real paperback books and e-books. I'd like us to hold our heads high in 2017. I don't suggest we be snobby or snooty. We're not better than people who don't write books. But it's a good art, a good passion, a good endeavor, and because books contribute so much to civilization, working with them gets us up in the morning, ready to face a new day. The difficult endeavors of writing, publishing, and promoting our books make us feel good. And rightly so.

For 600 years, book technology has carried knowledge to readers. Books unclog blocked minds and stir readers to enrich themselves with new information and understanding. They also send people on flights of fancy they would otherwise never get to enjoy.

Books bring comfort and consolation to people. William Falk, Editor-in-Chief of *The Week* magazine, says in his 2016 year-end issue, "From early childhood on, I have found enormous solace in books. When I was lonely or

hurting or confused, I read. When I was curious about the Civil War, baseball, and outer space, books transported me to battlefields, playing fields, and Mars. When in midlife I searched for answers, or even just clues, I found them in books."

In the same magazine, in an essay entitled "Why We Need to Read," Will Schwalbe says, "Amid our over-scheduled, hectic lives, it's important that we find the time to pick up a book.... Reading is the best way to both escape and engage with the world."

Schwalbe also contends that "reading is one of the few things you do alone that can make you feel less alone. It is a solitary activity that connects you to others." Indeed, shared reading experiences tie us together, whether through a formal book club, or simply with a few friends, when you read the same books.

Falk further notes that the benefits of reading books are scientifically quantifiable. He cites a recent Yale study that tracked 3,635 people over twelve years and found that book readers lived an average of two years longer than non-book readers.

So here you are, an aspiring or published author. Unlike so many folks in their later years who have trouble giving worthwhile meaning to their lives, you've found a way to contribute to your own welfare and that of others.

And, just think: you might help your readers to live a couple of years longer! □







## ***PWR Featured Author of the Month: Karl Livengood***

**BY BARBARA KIRBACH**



Karl Livengood

For his biography, *Norman Weiner: An Artist's Story*, Karl Livengood is PWR's Featured Author of the month in January. Weiner is world renowned for his paintings, drawings, etchings, and sculptures, which are in hundreds of collections, including many of those of Rossmoor residents.

Karl was also recognized as PWR's Featured Author in 2015 for his book *Sailing a Dream to An Incredible Life*, which was based on his 20,000-mile journey aboard his sailboat, *Aurora*.

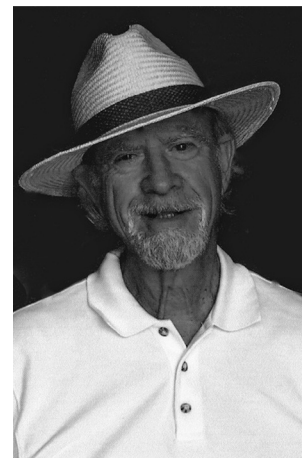
The publication of *Norman Weiner: An Artist's Story* will be celebrated on Tuesday, January 24th, from 7:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. at Art Studio One at Gateway. Weiner's artwork will be projected on a screen during his and Karl's remarks about the book.

Weiner is offering free signed copies of his pen-and-ink drawing "The Dancers," for those persons who buy copies of the book for \$15 while the

supply lasts.

For many years, Weiner has taught portrait and figure drawing to Karl's wife, Betsy. When Weiner asked Betsy to help him create a digital presentation of his vast portfolio, Karl was amazed and fascinated by the beauty and diversity of the artwork, as well as by the 95-year-old artist's intelligence and razor-sharp insights. Thus, without hesitation, he asked Weiner if they could collaborate on creating a written journey of his life.

"Together," Karl says, "Norm and I collaborated to create his biography. Often his memories would expand, adding more content and clarity. It became a back-and-forth process of incorporating interesting vignettes that deepened my understanding of his personality, life, and character."



Norm Weiner

Reviewer Evelyn Epstein said of Karl's book: "Karl Livengood has put together a compelling read of an extraordinary artist's life. The use of Norman's recalled memories, together

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with Karl's astute capacity for capturing the essence of who Norman Weiner is, results in a book that readers won't want to put down."

Karl grew up in Cleveland, and majored in sociology and psychology at nearby Hiram College. He earned an M.A. in Social Work from Case Western Reserve University in 1962 and began working as a social worker with gangs in the Mission District of San Francisco.

But to feed his real passion—sailing—Karl started a small construction business. He and Betsy have lived in Rossmoor for ten years, where she creates art and writes books as a member of Mary Webb's Writers' Club. Karl is the Coordinator for PWR's Author Events. □

(For more information about PWR's Featured Author Program, contact Barbara Kirbach at [blkirbach@gmail.com](mailto:blkirbach@gmail.com) or visit our website at [www.Rossmoor-writers.com](http://www.Rossmoor-writers.com))





## *Vegetarian Circle*

BY GENE GORDON



Gene Gordon

food faddist that he was, he gave it up and moved on to other diets. □



Upton Sinclair

### **Vegetarian Writer of the Month: Upton Sinclair**

Should Upton Sinclair be included as one of the vegetarian writers in our series? He was a writer for sure, with 100 books to his credit as well as other works. He won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1943.

Not so fictional was his famous novel *The Jungle*, based on the meatpacking industry in Chicago. So horrendous were the conditions for animals and humans in this industry that, after the book's publication, domestic and foreign purchases of American meat fell by half.

Sinclair was converted to vegetarianism by Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, the developer of Kellogg's Corn Flakes. Sinclair tried vegetarianism for a few years, but, lifelong





## ***PWR Website's New Look***

**By JOHN BRAGGIO**

With input from the club's president, Duke Robinson, and the board, I went through several iterations of the PWR website, which was initially developed, implemented, and maintained by John Gilbert. Nearly all the website improvements were completed in November 2016. Other changes to the website will be made based on suggestions from club members and others who visit the site.

Please submit your suggested website edits to John Braggio or Linda Arden by visiting [www.rossmoor-writers.com](http://www.rossmoor-writers.com), by using the website's e-mail template (Home/Contact Information/PWR Club E-Mail Template), or by describing your suggested edits to a PWR website representative at a monthly meeting. □



# Shoshana's Shpiel

BY SHOSHANA KOBRIN



Shoshana Kobrin

I'm pleased to announce the publication of my latest book, *7 Steps to Positive Connection: Manifesting Your Satisfied Soul*. This book continues the theme of my previous *Satisfied Soul* books. Here's a description of *7 Steps*:

Lifesatisfactionisallaboutconnection. High mobility, consumerism, and the stress of our challenging and fast-paced world confront us every day.

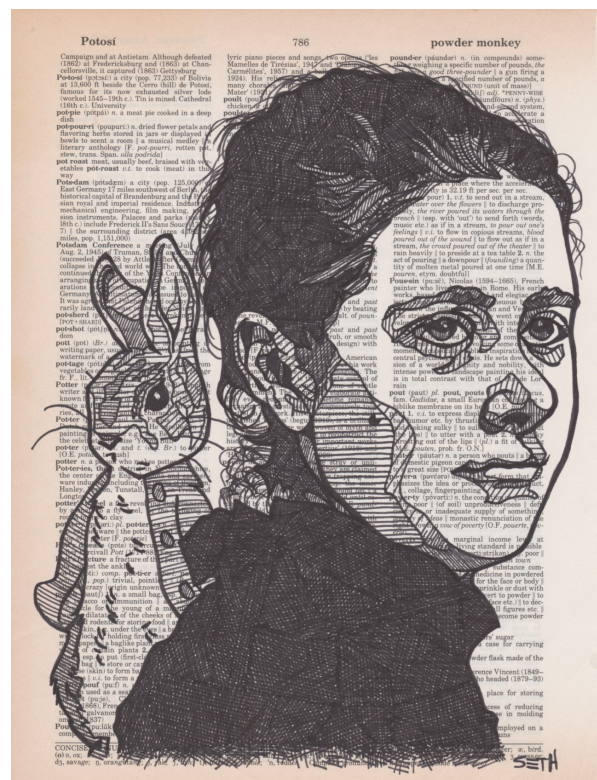
The seven key steps are connections with: body, emotions, others, living style, our culture and environment, our authentic selves, and our higher selves. Building deep-rooted connections with all aspects of life results in rich and vital living.

Practical exercises, meditations, and quizzes offer strategies to repair disconnection and change negative thoughts, feelings, and behavior to the positive. Positivity (a main theme in this book) and happiness go hand in hand. Thriving with passion is in your stars, so help yourself to happiness! Embark on a voyage to the fertile land of your Satisfied Soul.

Hard copies are available by e-mailing me at [shoshanakobrin@gmail.com](mailto:shoshanakobrin@gmail.com). The book in hard copy and e-book is also on Amazon. For a direct link and to explore my previous books, check out my website: [www.shoshanakobrin.net](http://www.shoshanakobrin.net).

I invite you to receive my bimonthly newsletter, which contains hints about writing, marketing, inspirational blogs and quotes, and extracts from my books. You'll receive a copy of one of my unpublished stories.

AsSamuelJohnsononcesaid,“Awriter onlybeginsabook.Areaderfinishesit.”□

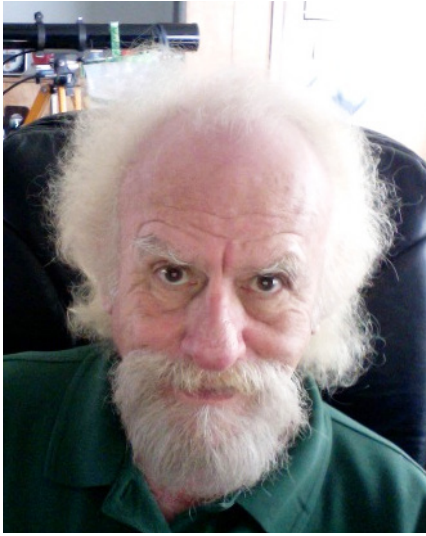








## *From the Editor*



Paul Weisser

## *Beatrix Potter, Self-Publisher*

Helen Beatrix Potter's legacy is a rich one. She was a wealthy heiress, who waited until 47 to marry—a radical choice for the time. She was also a dedicated, if amateur, environmentalist. Today we mostly remember her for her books, but we also remember her for her mammoth lifetime work of preservation; it is in large part because of Beatrix Potter, and her dual income as both an heiress and a successful children's book author, that we have England's Lake District National Park.



Potter began writing as a child, in a journal she kept in a complicated code that wasn't deciphered until years after she died. The earliest journal still in existence began when she was fourteen, but she is believed to have kept earlier ones that were destroyed. Her code writing continued for sixteen years—almost 200,000 words, which is about the length of two average novels. And even her closest friends never knew they existed.



Potter first conceived *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, a story about four little rabbits whose names were Flopsy, Mopsy, Cottontail, and Peter, in 1893 in a letter she wrote to Noel Moore, the frequently-ill son of her former governess.

The publishing companies to which Potter attempted to sell *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* had plenty of suggestions on how she could make the book “better”—or rather, more salable. Among other things, they suggested that she cut down on the number of illustrations and alter

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the book's size and number of pages. However, she stuck by her guns.

Finally, unable to find a publisher, Potter compiled the story along with forty-one black-and-white woodblock engravings of her own illustrations and privately published 250 copies of the book on December 16, 1901, when she was thirty-five.

As both author and illustrator, she was responsible for more than just the text on the page; she was responsible for its artistic direction, and in many ways, its actual production.



And then there was the small matter of financing. While her later books were picked up rather quickly, Potter first had to overcome extreme prejudices against both her gender (women were discouraged from involvement in the

business side of publishing at the time) and her vision for the book (which was exacting, down to the page number, the types and quantity of illustrations, and the physical dimensions of the page). She operated in somewhat of a vacuum, without the enormous mechanism of the picture book industry as it exists today.

However, *Peter Rabbit* was so successful that one of the publishers who had initially rejected her, Frederick Warne & Co, picked it up for publication and sold over 20,000 copies by the next year, both in a standard edition and a more expensive clothbound edition.

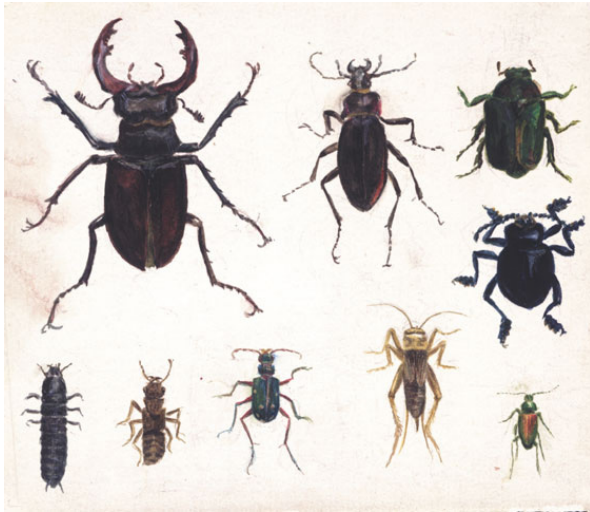


Both versions of the book feature her own pen and ink drawings in an effort to replicate her original watercolor illustrations. Following its success, she and Warne published *The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin* the following year.

Potter's charming illustrations (in color in the Warne version) came from years of examining the world and trying to duplicate it. Her earliest

(continued on page 14)

sketchbooks—beginning when she was eight or nine—include careful renderings of caterpillars, mushrooms, and moths. Her pet bunny appears on ice skates, wearing a hat and scarf. She studied and painted fungi in later years, eventually presenting a scientific paper that was dismissed at the time largely because of her gender. Her watercolors were so accurate that they are still used for scientific identification, and the conclusions she reached are now known to be correct.



Beyond self-publishing two of her own tales, Potter created and patented a Peter Rabbit doll, which was licensed to Frederick Warne & Co, earning both herself and the company considerable royalties. The doll led to stationery, tea sets, wallpaper, blankets, art books, and figurines of her popular characters. She is considered the first author to make use of the commercialization of her characters, and evidence of her merchandising efforts still exist today.

By the time of Potter's death in 1943, she had radically reshaped the author/publisher relationship—rather luckily for us, in the here and now—into something much more like a partnership than it had been. Interestingly, Potter, who was childless, was briefly engaged to one of the Warnes before his premature death, and ended up leaving the rights to her works to the publisher on her death.

One of the few surviving copies of the original *Peter Rabbit* is on sale at Jonkers Rare Books, based in Henley-on-Thames, Oxford, with an asking price of £35,000.

To date, the book has sold over 45 million copies and been translated into dozens of languages, but it all started as a quiet private venture, financed by Potter herself. □







## *Thoughts for the Month*

*“Thank goodness I was never sent to school; it would have rubbed off some of the originality.”*

*“I have never cared tuppence...for the modern child; they are pampered & spoilt with too many toys & books.”*

*“The shorter and the plainer the better.”*

*“There is something delicious about writing the first words of a story. You never quite know where they’ll take you.”*

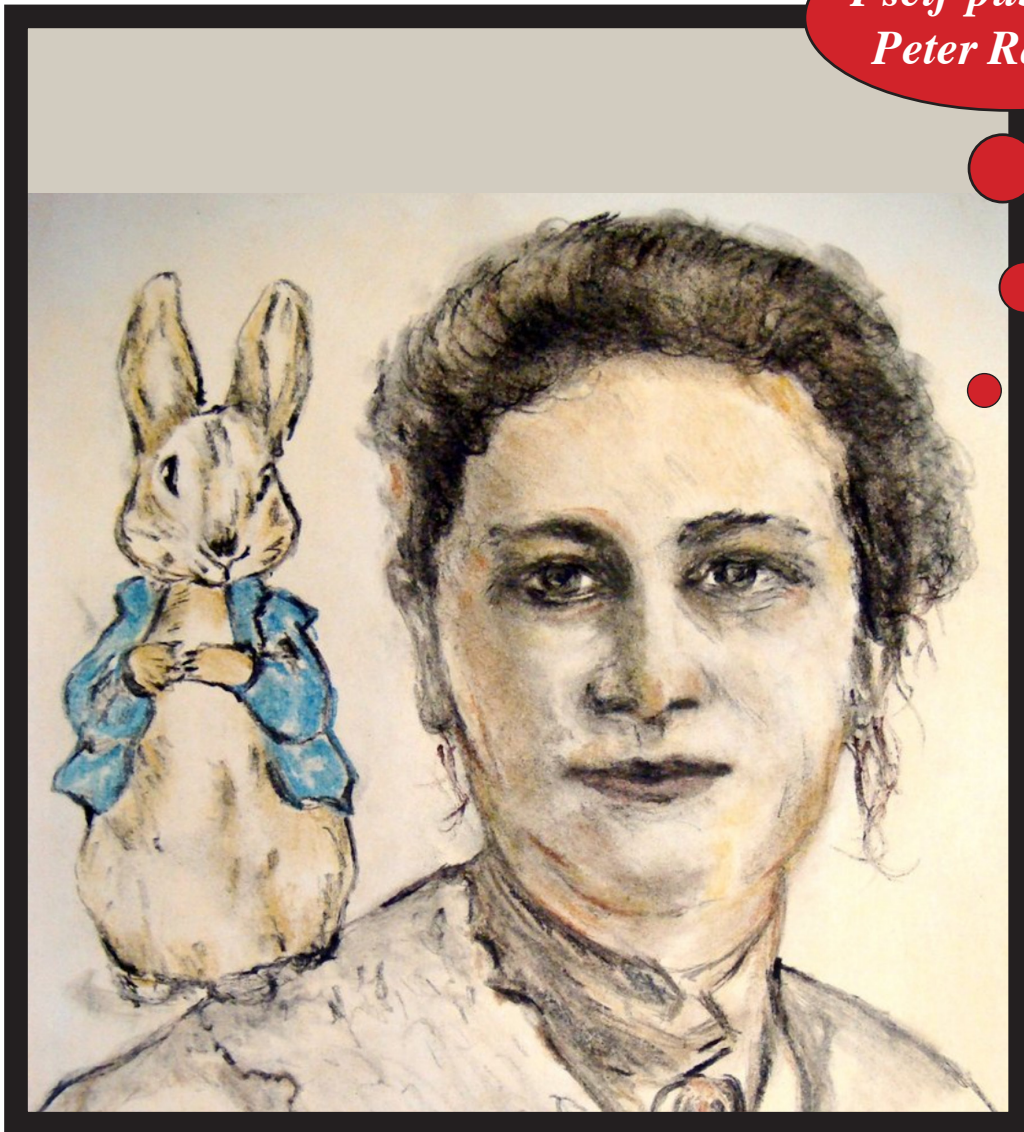
— Beatrix Potter



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