

The
Wow

e-newsletter

by Ken and Dahlynn McKowen

Principles

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*Dream of Things founder
Mike O'Mary*

No Dream Too Big

This month we'll be introducing you to Mike O'Mary, founder of Dream of Things, a book publisher and online book retailer. We learned of Mike and his website through fellow author, editor and longtime *Wow Principle's* e-newsletter reader and contributor Terri Elders. If Terri liked this guy and his business, that was good enough for us!

You might say that Mike O'Mary is a dreamer. A longtime magazine contributor, freelance writer and playwright, Mike always dreamed of publishing his own work. His dream came true and he became quite successful with his two self-published books: *The Note* and *Wise Men and Other Stories*.

Learning much during this process, Mike's dream expanded and he became a publisher. "I have always enjoyed working with creative people—writers, actors, directors, musicians, photographers, video producers, etc.," Mike shared. In 2009, he launched Dream of Things (www.DreamofThings.com); the site focuses on nonfiction anthologies. Just knowing the database numbers for this newsletter alone, we can say with much certainty that there are many anthology writers in the world, and Mike agrees with us: his online community has grown to nearly 1,000 in a year's time. "This is a site

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No Dream Too Big

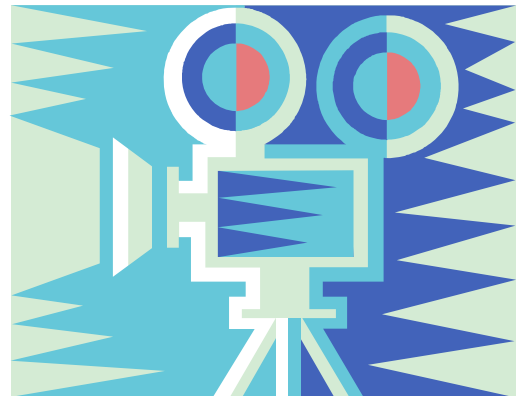
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where writers and artists can come together to suggest ideas for books and to write or contribute to books built around themes and ideas,” Mike explained. “Dream of Things will publish the books and writers and other contributors will share in the royalties.”

Ah ha! Did you catch what he said in that last sentence—“royalties.” Mike’s payment structure is very interesting and one you’ll have to check out for yourself on his website under the tab “Workshop.” Not to worry, you do not have to sign up for a workshop (yes, your collective “oh-no!” faces flashed in my mind). The word “Workshop” is Mike’s keyword for the page that explains submission guidelines, payment info, and also the place where he posts story call-outs, which, as of this writing, numbered over a dozen.

Getting to know Mike and his business has been fun and, unfortunately, there’s not enough room to share all of our conversation in this issue. For this reason, I’ll hit on a few key points/questions I asked him:

Dahlynn McKowen: You say that Cup of Comfort and Chicken Soup for the Soul use stories that “are so saccharin-sweet that they’re a little hard to swallow.” Having worked with Chicken since the 1990s, and having read more than 100,000 story submissions, your statement is understandable. These two anthologies tend to follow a G-rated curve: if you had to put a movie rating to your anthology series, what would it be?



Mike O’Mary: In movie terms, our anthologies would definitely be PG—not because of language or violence or anything like that, but because of *depth*. Most Chicken Soup stories are short and sweet. Most Dream of Things stories are short and *deep*, and with that depth comes added authenticity. So you can think of Dream of Things as Chicken Soup, but with more meat, thicker broth and more spices.

The forthcoming Dream of Things anthology about “Saying Goodbye” is a great example. The stories are short, but there is an incredible amount of depth to them. People who read this collection are going to be blown away—not by the sadness of some of the stories (some are actually very funny), but by wonderful stories of people saying goodbye to the people, places and things in their lives with grace, dignity and humor.

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In comparison, Chicken Soup stories can be very touching, but sometimes they feel “packaged.” Everything gets wrapped up a little too neatly. It’s better to just tell the story, preferably a story that will show *by example* how someone at a crossroads in life dealt with that experience, for better or worse. What I *don’t* want is for the author to interpret an experience and tell me how to think or feel about it. Readers can think and feel for themselves.



DM: Of the anthologies you have posted right now, do you have one that is a favorite or you’re particularly excited about?

MO: I have two favorites. The first is about stories of forgiveness. We’re seeing some incredible stories, and again, I think it’s because this is a topic that invites stories with depth. My other favorite is the anthology of coffee shop stories, which I like because it’s so wide open. Sitting in a coffee shop is sort of like sitting in your living room with 20 or 30 strangers. Almost anything can happen. It’s great!

DM: You mentioned that you accept nonfiction book proposals. Anyone can write a book, but it’s that special someone who can write *and* sell the book, making it very successful. As a publisher, what three things do you look for in a solid book proposal?

MO: 1) Great story, 2) Something unique or unusual—an example: *Everything I Never Wanted to Be* by Dina Kucera is a memoir told from the unique perspective of a ninth grade dropout who is currently working as a grocery store clerk while also trying to make it as a stand-up comic, and 3) An author who understands that he or she will have to be deeply involved in promoting the book. If the author thinks the book is going to sell itself, I’ll pass because we’re both going to end up being disappointed.


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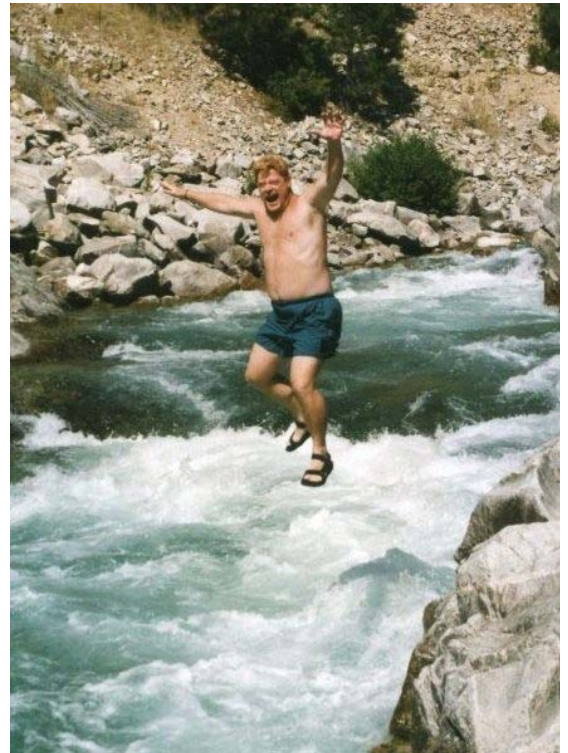
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DM: Our readers love scoops on upcoming anthologies. Do you have a scoop to share, maybe an upcoming anthology title not posted on your website yet?

MO: I'll give you two scoops: 1) We are already accepting stories for humorous and awe-inspiring travel stories; several of the humorous ones have been about trips to Disneyland, so I'm toying with the idea of doing a spin-off that is all stories about Disneyland, Disneyworld, Euro Disney, etc. I just need to talk to my attorney first to make sure I won't get sued! 2) We're probably going to put out a call for submissions for a second volume of stories about saying goodbye.

Again, not enough room in this issue to run the entire interview. To read Mike's bio and learn more about Dream of Things, go to www.DreamofThings.com. Also, we'll periodically post call-outs and special announcements from this anthology series. Take the leap of faith like Mike did (that's him, a Chicago city boy jumping into a Montana river...a favorite photo of his, he shared) and get writing! What are you waiting for? -- Dahlynn 



Two Treats for September!

Thanks to Terri Elders for introducing us to Mike O'Mary. And we're especially excited about September's issue: Terri will be our very first guest feature writer! Not quite sure of her topic yet, but it likely will be about her exclusive summer writing adventure in London.

Our second treat focuses on a Florida-based publisher by the name of Nelson Ottenhausen. We met Nelson by e-mail/phone back in 2002 when he submitted a wonderful story for *Chicken Soup for the Fisherman's Soul*. Nelson paid us a visit a few weeks ago while visiting his daughter in California: over dessert and some fine wine, we enjoyed much talk about the world of publishing. This retired Army Lt. Colonel turned writer turned author turned publisher is an inspiration, and we'll share Nelson's business and writing career in the next issue. If you want to learn more right now, Nelson's website is www.patriotmediainc.com. Tell him the McKowens sent you!

HOT STUFF! HOT STUFF! HOT STUFF! HOT STUFF! HOT STUFF!

Dream of Things

www.DreamofThings.com

Coffee Shop Stories

Great Customer Service Stories

Stories of Forgiveness

Internet Dating Stories

Stories that Exemplify Teamwork

Stories about Great Teachers

Humorous Travel Stories

Advice You'd Like to Pass On to Others

Cubicle Stories: Life in the Modern Workplace

It's Only a Game: Lessons Learned from Playing/Coaching Sports

Making Waves: Stories about Role Models and People Who Inspire and Motivate Us

All Dream of Things anthology call-outs are open until Mike gets enough stories to fill a book. So don't wait, as you might miss out on your chance!

Chicken Soup for the Soul

www.ChickenSoup.com

Teens: Deadline: December 31, 2010

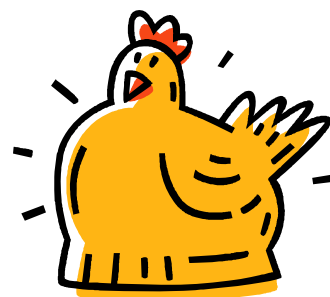
Young at Heart: Deadline: December 31, 2010

Mothers and Daughters: Deadline: December 31, 2010



Devotional Stories for Times of Trouble

Deadline: February 28, 2011



A Cup of Comfort

www.CupofComfort.com

No new postings as of August 29th.
Hopefully they'll have new titles up soon!

Go for it! Get published!