



Jane Karker with Office Dog

# Jane Karker

BY PAULETTE OBOYSKI  
PHOTOS BY CHERYL MCKEARY

**Want to publish your memoirs** or a story that you have put on the back burner all your adult life?

It is not necessary to hire an agent or find a big publishing company to accept your manuscript to be made into a book. You can self-publish with the help of Jane Karker's company, Maine Authors Publishing & Cooperative in Rockland, Maine.

## Jane Karker's Publishing Journey

Jane Karker was born in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1956. She moved to Maine in 1983 because she says that she had always dreamed of living in the Northeast. She and her husband Lee, an Episcopal priest, have spent most of their lives here. Their son, Dan is now the editing manager of Maine Authors Publishing (MAP). Leah, their daughter, is a mathematician at Wesleyan University.

Karker says, "I think the most valuable thing to know about me is that I am a woman entrepreneur in Maine. That's how I identify myself, more so than a publisher. I started my business from scratch and it was born out of an important state program called the *Maine Enterprise Option*. I took courses under another program called Women, Work and Community." These enlightened government programs helped Karker start the beginnings of her publishing business ventures.

John Christie is a Maine entrepreneur and outdoors writer for *Maine Seniors* magazine. In 2001, after he sold all of the newspapers that he owned, he became a career counselor for the Maine Department of Labor. He was the only entrepreneur working there at the time as a Local Enterprise Coordinator for the *Maine Enterprise Option* program. He chose to introduce and then mentor Karker who was accepted for this program. He states, "I knew Jane Karker from previous entrepreneurial



encounters and was familiar with her successful sales skills. She bit into the programs offered and aggressively made them work for her. She had a great idea of starting *Custom Museum Publishing*. She had the drive and the appropriate skills to make this business work.”

Karker launched Maine Authors Publishing & Cooperative in 2009, *starting with twelve authors* in their first catalog.

Recently, Christie was able to help his long-time Camden friend, Sonny Goodwin with publishing his memoir. Christie wrote the forward for the book and his son, Jake applied his computer skills and helped to edit the manuscript. Christie then directed Goodwin to get it published through Jane Karker’s publishing company. Goodwin’s book, *Tales from the Life of Sonny*, is to be released in February 2016.



John Christie



Author Deborah Gould

Karker recalls, “I entered the world of publishing through the printing industry. I think that makes my approach unique and part of the reason for our success. I started under the flag of “Custom Museum Publishing” in 2005. We had a small staff of three and produced art catalogs and museum printing using affordable small-run printing technology, which was new back then.” When this business slowed down, Karker launched Maine Authors Publishing & Cooperative in 2009, starting with twelve authors in their first catalog. It skyrocketed and there was no looking back.

Karker states, “Maine Authors Publishing is a for-profit company with elements of a cooperative. We are an independent

press serving the needs of “Indie authors” from editing, printing, design, and all the way to market via our distribution and trade catalog sent to Maine bookstores, shops and LL Bean. We are unique among publishers for two reasons: First our authors receive 100% royalties for books sold to libraries and stores. Secondly our authors band together in a cooperative fashion on the marketing side of things, like shared trade shows, signings and intense training on how to become your own publicist. We offer full-day training conferences and smaller classes all year. We bring in experts in the field as well as our own authors as instructors.”

Genie Dailey, MAP editor confirms, “I’ve known Jane for almost 15 years, having worked with her in the printing business prior to her establishing Custom Museum Publishing. After I retired, a chance meeting rekindled our working relationship, and as a long-time editor of books, I was excited about the unique idea that became Maine Authors Publishing. Jane is so energetic and so dedicated to helping Maine authors get their books into print. I knew that MAP would be a success.”

Dailey continues, “Since the inception of the company, I’ve been involved as MAP’s “lead editor,” and Jane bestowed the title of Editorial Consultant on me for use on their website and in their catalogs. I work as a freelancer, evaluating and editing books by (mostly) Maine authors. It’s great fun to work on these manuscripts and then see the excitement of the authors when their labors of love are delivered as finished books. I truly believe that most of these books would still reside in their authors’ computers if it weren’t for Jane’s forward thinking and bold entrepreneurial spirit.”

**Authors’ Stories**

Award winning Maine author, Deborah Gould, published her first book with a standard publisher, but was unhappy with the



Genie Dailey MAP Editor



Published Books

loss of collaboration with that arrangement. When she heard about Maine Authors Publishing, she drove to Rockland to meet with Jane Karker.

Gould states, “Karker and her MAP staff offered me a menu of services from which to choose—everything from editing and design to marketing plans and publicity. They understand that the book business is a collaborative effort between publisher and author – I was part of the process from cover to cover – and they worked with me to put together a personalized package to publish, market, and distribute my book.”

Gould published two books using Maine Authors Publishing’s services: a whimsical book, “Father is here...he’s as fat as a pig,” and a Maine historical novel, *The Eastern*. She has sold more books in four months with MAP’s service than four years with the

standard publisher, and when she sells her MAP published books, all the proceeds go to her. “Standard publishers retain all the sales revenue and pay authors only a small percentage in royalties,” Gould says. “With MAP, I paid the costs of the publishing process and keep all the revenue from sales.”

Don Carrigan, a well-known news reporter for WCSH6 in Maine and his wife, Donna, published a children’s book about their cat, Togus, through Maine Authors Publishing. For years, Don Carrigan co-starred his Maine Coon cat in his at-home winter weather news feature for the television audience. When the couple decided to write a children’s book about their famous cat, they asked Tom Block to be their illustrator. Block introduced the Carrigans to Jane Karker at Maine Authors Publishing in order to help them produce the book.

Carrigan recalls, “Jane Karker and her team were great to work with and they assisted us with every aspect of publishing our



Company Typewriter

“Jane Karker and her team were great to work with and they assisted us with every aspect of publishing our book, *Togus A Coon Cat Finds a Home*.”

—DON CARRIGAN



Don Carrigan and  
Togus the Cat

book, *Togus A Coon Cat Finds a Home*. We chose to do the book launch at the Maine Coast Book Shop in Damariscotta because it was near our home. There had been some delays with the printing of the book but Jane pushed hard on the printers to get the books completed in time for the big presentation day. There was a huge response from the public at the book launch—an enormous line of people—and we did not have enough books

for all who attended. We called Jane and she drove to the printer in Augusta, brought us another box of books and everyone went home with a copy! This was just a sample of the great lengths that she goes in order to help her authors.” The Carrigans have sold over 3,000 books so far!



Publishing staff



Jane Karker

**Favorite Books**

Karker's all-time favorite book is *A Book of Hours* by Thomas Merton and she said that she usually reads it around a campfire with others. She is presently reading, *When We Were the Kennedys* by Monica Wood and *The Eastern* by Deborah Gould.

**Future Projections**

Jane Karker is truly a Maine entrepreneur. She has helped many Maine authors get published and enthusiastically encourages new authors to write their stories. Her business is expanding and she hopes to bring this model to other areas in New England.

Karker considers her greatest success to be attracting talent, including the talented individuals who are on her staff—nine on

the payroll and a half dozen outside editors and illustrators who work from home—and the over 200 authors that have published their books through her company. Karker also donates two scholarships yearly to the Maine Writers and Publishers Alliance for two young writers to attend the Alliance's fall workshop. Karker relates, "Owning a business gives a person a chance to put their money where their mouth is and see what it is really like to stand up to ones ideals. I like that about business."

Now is the time to get your story published. As the saying goes, "Everyone has one good story to tell." Thanks to Jane Karker and her staff, Mainers can easily publish their memoirs or the novel that they have been thinking of writing.

MSM



Front row from left: Jane Karker, (owner/president), Morgen Benz (bookkeeper), Nikki Giglia (managing editor & publicist), Raylan (office dog), Genie Dailey (editorial consultant).

Back row from left: Kristine Wagstaff (publishing & marketing coordinator), Dan Karker (editing & distribution supervisor), Lindy Gifford (graphic designer), David Allen (art director), Kelly Brooks-Bay (sales & events coordinator)