

Feature story in a series of Women Entrepreneurs in the Corridor region

Author, publisher in our midst

Local writer started publishing company in Everly

EVERLY – Many have seen her name, read one of her books, commented on her blog or maybe even attended one of her seminars. Jean Tennant has been writing professionally for 30 years; her first book was published 25 years ago.



Jean Tennant has been writing professionally for 30 years, and owns Shapato Publishing in Everly.

After having several books published, many of them fiction thrillers, Tennant began traveling around the Midwest giving seminars on writing. A friend suggested Tennant should have her books available for purchase at the seminars, and that's when Shapato Publishing started. It began out of her house, and when the business kept growing, she acquired office space on Main Street in Everly.

Services Tennant provides include ISBN, barcode, copyright, cover design, editing and formatting, Library of Congress control number, and listing with Books in Print. Once the book has been proofed, corrected, and formatted, it is sent to the printer. Tennant uses three different printing companies, and she picks which printing company to use based on the style and genre of the book.

Seven years ago, Tennant co-founded a writer's group that meets twice a month at Arts on Grand in Spencer. Attendees, who vary in ages from high school students to 80-year-olds, share writing pieces and critique each other's writing. During these meetings, Tennant kept hearing stories about growing up in the Midwest. In 2008, she decided to put together a book of these stories. "Walking Beans Wasn't Something You Did With Your Dog: Stories of Growing Up In and Around Small Towns in the Midwest" was the first anthology book Tennant edited and published in August 2008.

Each year since then, she has compiled, edited and published an anthology in the same genre. "Knee High By the Fourth of July" was published in 2009, and "Amber Waves of Grain" was published in 2010. She is working on the fourth book in the series, "Make Hay While the Sun Shines," which will be released this fall.

Tennant is publishing another book this fall, written by Benjamin "Coach" Wade; "Survivor" fans may recall the name. Coach Wade is a three-time contestant on the CBS reality show "Survivor." He isn't able to write about his "Survivor" experiences due to contract, but that's not the only story he has to tell. At the age of 24, he went on a kayak adventure in South America. "No Turning Back" is the story he wrote about his journey. Tennant has been a "Survivor" fan since it began, and through social media, and a bit of luck, she was able to connect with Coach Wade. The two have never met, but have worked on the project via email, phone calls and even text messages.

Even though Tennant is always busy publishing other people's work, she still writes for herself. She will have an essay included in the upcoming edition of the Chicken Soup series, "Chicken Soup For the Soul: Answered Prayers."

When asked about the publishing industry's changes with e-books, Tennant isn't worried. Many of her books are available on Kindle and other e-readers. "There will always be people who want the real books," said Tennant. "That, and you have to keep providing good content."

Tennant grew up in San Diego, Calif., and moved to Iowa with her family when she was a junior in high school. "And I'm still here!" she said. She discovered the great things Iowa has to offer, and continues to make her home in Everly.

Find all of Tennant's books on her website, www.shapatopublishing.com. Find her schedule of upcoming seminars on www.jeantennant.com.

Women in Business Club

The Iowa Lakes Corridor is proud to launch the Women in Business Club. To join, a woman must own her own business and want to meet with other women in business to share ideas, challenges, successes and grow professional relationships. Those interested in joining should contact Pat McGill, at 712-332-2965, patmcgill@mchsi.com or Jean Tennant at 712-490-5165. Women throughout the Corridor region are encouraged to attend these meetings.

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The Iowa Lakes Corridor Development Corporation is the regional economic development agency for Buena Vista, Clay, Dickinson and Emmet counties. Its mission is to foster, encourage, aid, promote or otherwise assist in the economic growth and development of the region. For more information about the Iowa Lakes Corridor Development Corporation, call 712-264-3474 or visit www.lakescorridor.com.