

July 2016

InSpire

Every Woman Has A Story



Lilly the Lash ♥s Summer Reading!

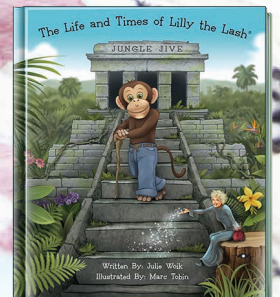
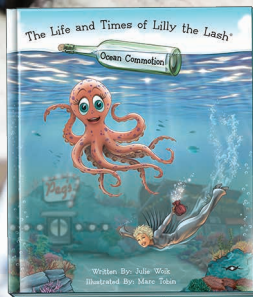
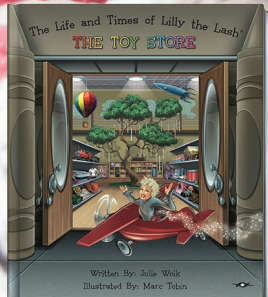
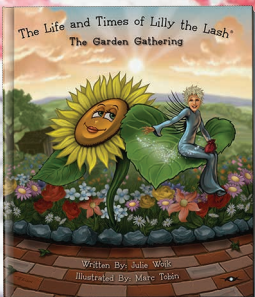


Once Upon A Rhyme

A Couple's Love of Sport & Country

Come to the Ham 'N' Jam!

Once Upon A Rhyme The Inside Story



Photography by Travis Pohl for L&M Photography.

It was in our February 2012 issue that we had the pleasure of meeting and interviewing author Julie Woik, a Wisconsin native making a difference through her character-building children's book series, *The Life and Times of Lilly the Lash®*. It's been over four years now, and in the fast-paced, ever-changing world of books and entertainment, that's nearly a lifetime. We thought it would be interesting to sit down with her again and find out exactly how things have been going, if becoming an author has been everything she imagined, and what's next on the horizon. Her experiences, you'll find, are both inspiring and somewhat surprising.

In our initial interview, you mentioned becoming an author wasn't on your "bucket list." Has this experience been everything you thought it would be?

Well, I'd have to say everything and much, much more! Writing, which I certainly do enjoy, is merely one aspect of this journey. For me, it's been more about all of the amazing people I've met along the way: people who appreciate my books, who have played a part in moving the series forward, or who simply have their own story to share. Although unexpected, my life has been greatly enriched since taking on this venture.

You're the author, but I understand you're also the publisher. Why did you decide not to go with a traditional publisher?

I felt it would be difficult for a large publishing house to embrace my concept of an eyelash teaching life lessons. I also had a particular size, feel, and vision in mind for the books. Publishers produce a book with the art directors, illustrators, and editors they have on staff. I wanted to choose my own team to assure quality control.

What does publishing a book entail?

For me, it starts with the illustrator. Once I get my ideas across and the images are digitally created, they are sent to my graphic designer. I then generate, edit, and hand off all of the other data having to do with the book, which the

designer prepares for the printer. The printing company and book bindery work in conjunction to make the books. It's important to shadow the layout and protocol set by the major publishing houses. The information displayed on the spine, the identifying ISBN number, and the Bar Code are only a few of the underlying elements required in order to compete in the retail market.

In 2012, you had three books. Have you added any since?

Yes, we have five. Book four, *The Kacklin' Kitchen*, (which takes place in Wisconsin), teaches respect, and came out in 2014. Book five, *Jungle Jive*, teaches balance, and was released in February of this year. Presently we're working on number six, *Art with Heart*, a book teaching confidence. With a plan for fifteen books in the series, there's always something in the works.

Your books have been out for nine years. How has the Lilly the Lash series been received?

With overwhelming admiration! The comments I've received over the years have brought me to tears more times than I can count. Our customers, without a doubt, are at the base of our success. Because Lilly has struck a chord deep within the hearts of so many, people go out of their way to share in detail how the books have affected their lives or the lives of their loved ones.

There are many children's books. Why do people like yours?

Every week people talk to me about the incredible beauty of Marc Tobin's illustrations. They go on about how much they love to read the sing-songy rhyme. Even the font is a fan favorite. It's a combination of everything that draws them in, but it's the character-building lessons that seem to leave a lasting mark. They can't thank me enough for the meaningful messages carefully woven into each of the entertaining storylines. Our values and morals have been called into question in recent times, and it's become crystal clear that people want nothing more than to get back to basics. It's these compassionate statements made by the parents and

grandparents, educators and therapists, and of course the children themselves, which have given us the absolute confirmation that *Lilly the Lash* is something quite exceptional.

Marketing is every entrepreneur's challenge. How do people learn about your books?

Lilly the Lash's website is a major link for our customers, as it's utilized for the sale of the books and for access to the free educational activities provided for each book. Having said that, a product's website can only be successful if the consumer knows the website exists. So early on I decided to take a grass-roots approach by introducing the books to the public through book signings at art and craft shows. This was, and still is, the most effective and direct way to connect; however, you can only meet so many people in a day. Social media, blogging, community calendars, daytime television programming, newspaper and magazine articles, radio interviews, and speaking engagements are all an intricate part of our marketing strategy.

Does everything you try work?

HA! That's a good one!! I wish that was the case. What amazes me is that you never know. The things you think are going to work out great, don't, and the next thing you try is a home run. Here's a perfect example. We had less than six degrees of separation from Ellen DeGeneres. My graphic designer, Elsa, worked with a gal whose friend was visiting her friend, who happened to be the head writer of *Ellen*. Elsa inquired if the visiting friend would be willing to show him my books. She readily agreed. Well, you can imagine my excitement!! I sent the books and we waited. By the week's end, we got word. Although the writer thought the books were wonderful, he unfortunately added, "It's just not what we're looking for right now." Well, you can imagine my disappointment!! My husband Finn and I have compared this feeling to walking on a waterbed. It's up and down and all around. Over the years we've learned to level our emotions in regard to opportunities that come our way. It's called life. It's all

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part of the journey. As heartbreaking as that scenario was, we believe that things happen for a reason, and for whatever reason, Lilly the Lash's books weren't meant to be on The Ellen DeGeneres Show... YET!

I'm sure writing and publishing keeps you busy. Is there anything else you're responsible for?

There's the accounting, tour planning, school presentations, book orders, and a never-ending list of things I need to tend to. In addition to my daily tasks, I also design and construct all of our ads, posters, brochures, and bookmarks.

Do you have anyone helping you?

Most of what is Lilly the Lash starts with me, but it's becoming increasingly difficult to manage all of the different directions we're moving into. Besides the books, my illustrator supplies images for my marketing needs as well. My designer then carefully primes my handiwork for the end user. When it comes to the public eye, I count on my publicist

who arranges a majority of my radio, television, and newspaper interviews, as well as the placement of our advertising efforts. I fashion the look and layout of the website, but I couldn't tell you the first thing about how a website works. I cut, paste, and present my idea to the webmaster team, and they make it happen. Currently I'm the one developing the curriculum and all of the activities related to the books, but the time is forthcoming, and soon I'll need to hand off those responsibilities as well. It's like any other growing business in that respect. You move forward as things evolve.

What's next for the Lilly the Lash enterprise?

So many avenues are opening up. QVC, Zulily, and gift catalogs are just the beginning. A month ago I was contacted by The Gap Kids store to do book signings. All pretty exciting! A state-of-the-art national television commercial is our major focus at the moment. We have known for some time that this significant step would be necessary for the

mass exposure we were seeking, but due to the financial burden of the planning, production, and airing of the commercial, it wasn't an option to be considered – until now. Since the inception of Shark Tank, folks have suggested I make an appearance on the investor-based show. Although that never transpired, I quite by accident managed to hook my very own efficacious "shark" named Paul. This keen West Coast force is determined, knowledgeable, and connected. He has the financial clout and promotional expertise to make Lilly the Lash a household name. He loves our product, my infinite dedication, and the extensive merchandising potential; but more importantly, he believes in our mission to get the world back to basics. What's next for the Lilly the Lash enterprise you ask? Well according to my shark, it's everything he can sink his teeth into!! *

For more information, visit www.lillythelash.com

Julie looks over the illustrations of her new book.

