Author Meet & Greet!

Welcome to Author Meet & Greet

All are welcome here.

Connect with authors through their social media links (if they choose to share them), learn about their writing process, and purchase their works.

The 4 most current interviews are posted here. Older ones may be found under the Archive: Author Meet & Greet on the main page of this blog by the author's last name.
So, without further ado, let’s get to know

**Meet & Greet Author: #131**

**Tom Lutz**

Your Name: Tom Lutz

Genre(s) of your work: New book, *Born Slippy*: noir, thriller, literary novel

Year of Published Work(s): 2019

**Bio:**

I spent the first part of my life as a wandering musician, carpenter, cook, and wastrel, and then realized that there were people called professors, and they got to read books and write them for a living. I started going to school and never left, BA, MA, PhD. I teach now at UC Riverside in the creative writing department.

I'm the author of nine books: this new novel, three books of travel writing, two books of cultural history (one on the history of tears, one on the history of slackers), two books of literary history, and a philosophical essay on aimlessness. I've also done hundreds of book chapters, newspaper and magazine articles, stories, reviews, interviews, radio shows, podcasts, and short films, and edited thousands of articles, journals, and books.

For the last ten years, I've been the editor in chief of the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, which I founded and still run. And I have been writing feature films and television for the last decade or so as well, doing the Hollywood shuffle.

I live in Los Angeles and travel whenever I can.

**Why do you write in the genres that you do?**

Because my teaching job pays my bills, I get to write about whatever I want, whenever I want. I don't have to worry about the books selling enough to keep me alive, which is a good thing, because although a few of them got on bestseller lists, a few of them definitely did not! But this freedom means I have been able...
wanted, and really be my own boss, immune to the market. Because I studied and taught literature for years, the thing I wanted to do most—write novels—was incredibly daunting to me, so I kept procrastinating by working on other writing projects. Until now.

**How has writing changed/altered your life?**

My success as a writer has made everything else possible. But more than that, I find that I’m a bit of an addict—I start to feel a little sick if I haven’t written for a while, and I know that if I’m getting depressed, or out of sorts, nothing keeps the doctor away like sitting down and getting lost in the process of writing.

Writing screenplays and pilots freed up my fiction juices, and gave me a sense of the pleasure to be had making people up, and let me finally sit down and write the novel. I have never had so much fun, never experienced so much pleasure (at work) as I did writing *Born Slippy*. I couldn’t wait to get back to it day after day.

**Who are your favorite authors and why?**


In classic American literature: Wharton, James, Cather, Howells, Hurston, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, O'Connor, Ellison, Roth, Morrison.

Classics around the world: Garcia Marquez, Borges, Dostoevsky, Flaubert, Austen, Sterne, Fielding, Woolf, Tolstoy, Dickens, Brontë, Brontë, Achebe, Thiong'o, Nabokov, I don’t even know where to start….

Among my friends in LA: Percival Everett, Michelle Huneven, Viet Thanh Nguyen, Danzy Senna, Aimee Bender, Jonathan Lethem, Paul Mandelbaum, Laila Lalami, Seth Greenland, T.C. Boyle, Susan Straight, Michelle Latiolais, Andrew Winer, Charmaine Craig, Antoine Wilson, Jane Smiley, Jervy Tervalon, Michael Jaime Becerra, Alex Espinoza, Miriam Gurba, Lisa Teasley, Jerry Stahl, Mona Simpson, Gary Phillips, Steve Erickson, Yxta Maya Murray, Josh Emmons, Gina Nahai, Goldberry Long, Michael Tolkin, Lisa See, Denise Hamilton, Justin Torres, Bruce Bauman, Dana Johnson, Chris Kraus, Howard Rodman, Luis Rodriguez, Aimee Liu, Maria Amparo Escandon, Sesshu Foster—I’m just getting started….

And that is just fiction….

**What is your opinion of mainstream/corporate bookstores?**
I am in favor of all bookstores, the more the merrier. Like any serious reader, I know that there is nothing like a brilliant independent bookstore, and I love seeing some of them begin to thrive again, especially here in my neighborhood, Skylight, Eso Won, Chevalier’s, Vroman’s, The Last Bookstore, Book Soup…..

How much does personal experience play in your written work?

It is always part of the mix, sometimes in obvious ways—for instance, the places in this novel (Vietnam, Taiwan, Indonesia, Japan, Massachusetts, California) are all places I have spent time, and many of the characters are based, however loosely, on people from my life—and sometimes less obvious: my book on the history of tears has no personal experience described in it, but it is completely driven by trying to understand my own weepy family. The travel books are 100% my experience, but I always try, in that work, to look out rather than in: it is my experience of other people.

What motivates you to complete your (writing) work?

The pleasure of doing it. Also, I find that if you tell someone you are writing a novel, it is embarrassing if they keep asking you about the novel and it is never finished....

Do you believe writing should be censored – that some topics should remain taboo?

Absolutely not. Literature is an examination of what it means to be human, and so nothing human can be foreign to it. If you don't want to deal with something, you don't have to read it, but that doesn't mean it shouldn't be written. I understand such a blanket policy opens the door to all sorts of horrific representation, and ultimately all sorts of hate speech. But like I say, we don't have to read it.

Where can people find you and your work?

Tomlutzwriter.com has a calendar of events and will always be updated with new publications. I'm on Amazon.com, Goodreads, Facebook and very infrequently on Twitter and Instagram.
Thank you so much, Tom!

Otto Schafer

Pseudonym: Otto Schafer

Genre(s) of your work: Contemporary Fantasy

Titles/Year of Published Work(s):

Title: The Secret Journal

Series: God Stones

Bio:

Otto Schafer grew up exploring the small historic town in central Illinois featured in his first work of fiction, The Secret Journal. If you visit Petersburg, Illinois you may find locations familiar from the book. You may even discover, as Otto did, that history has left behind cleverly hidden traces of magic, whispered secrets, and untold treasures.

Like many of you, Otto Schafer always wanted to write though, occupied with raising a family and building a successful career, he struggled to find the time. But the stories refused to rest, springing into his mind as he ran the forested trails of Illinois and invading his dreams at night, until finally he began writing them down.

Otto is currently working on the second book in the God Stones series. He and his loving wife reside in a quiet log cabin tucked away in the woods. You can often find him sitting out back by the koi pond, whittling words into stories for his readers.

Why do you write in the genre that you do?

A fan of adventure, mystery, and fantasy I have always loved to read books that take me on an action-packed journey. For me, it’s the journey to what lay hidden in the cave, at the end of the rainbow, or buried under the old oak tree that is much more exciting than what is actually there. Somewhere along the way I realized I want to create journey’s for readers to get lost in. I want to build
How has writing changed/altered your life?

So far, completing this first book and learning the process of publishing and marketing has opened up a whole new world to me. Where this goes and what I can make of it is unknown. I would love to answer this question five years from now.

Who are your favorite authors and why?

Jules Verne and J.R.R. Tolkien for the hours and hours of classic adventure they provided. Glen Cook and his Black Company was the first fantasy series I ever read and he got me hooked. Stephen King for his ability to develop his characters and draw me into his world.

My all-time favorite may be Ray Bradbury. I default to Mr. Bradbury whenever I need inspiration and he never fails me.

What is your opinion of mainstream/corporate bookstores?

I am grateful. Grateful for the ability to get my own book out there into the world. Amazon made that a lot easier for writers. That said, one of my favorite places to spend a rainy Saturday is sitting cross legged on the floor of a local bookstore reading blurb after blurb trying to find the next perfect read.

How much does personal experience play in your written work?

So much! Everything from the locations to the people I write about. I certainly relied heavily on my knowledge of Petersburg, its history, and my own childhood for The Secret Journal. I put my whole heart in those pages, pulling on very real events and very real places from back in the day.

I am currently working on a side project about a serial killer in the Peoria area. I rely heavily on my knowledge of trail running and the areas local trails since I frequent them often and know them well. What is it they say? Write what you know. There is truth in that, but I also find it fun to write what I don’t know. I spent endless hours researching for this first book and loved it. It is fun when you get to pick the topics you study.
What motivates you to complete your (writing) work?

I think I have always been very self-driven. I go all in, whether it is completing a 100-mile ultra-marathon or writing a book. What drives that inner motivation is a mystery to me, but I feel it always there, tugging at me.

Do you believe writing should be censored – that some topics should remain taboo?

No, I don't. We always have a choice not to read it. If it isn’t your thing find something else.

Where can people find you and your work?

Amazon: https://www.amazon.com/Otto-Schafere/B081ZK9MQ8

Website: https://ottoschafer.com/

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/ottoschaferauthor/

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/ottoschaferwriter/

Thanks for sharing with us, Otto!

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Neda Disney

Name: Neda Disney

Pseudonym (if you use one): Your question just made me so sad that I never thought of having a pseudonym. I will make one up by the end of this interview. Just you wait!

Genre(s) of your work: Literary Fiction, Magical Realism

Titles/Year of Published Work(s):

Planting Wolves (November 4, 2019)
Bio:
—I have been a costume person on tv and films, a writer, producer on Public Radio in NYC. I'm currently on the REDCAT council in Los Angeles (a theater and art theater).

I'm a mother, family person, and have a pretty big group of friends I've known from childhood all the way up to recently. Wow, my life sounds lovely. I'm so lucky!

**Why do you write in the genre that you do?**
—I love metaphors and magic realism makes so much room for that. It's also inescapably visual. I'm very involved in the art world in Los Angeles and have grown more and more fluent in abstract visual storytelling.

I'm enchanted by that.

**How has writing changed/altered your life?**
—I've written my whole life so it has never altered my life. But I can tell you that during the times I haven't written, my thinking grew very one dimensional and a part of me unknowingly grieved.

**Who are your favorite authors and why?**
—David Foster Wallace, Laurie Moore.

**What is your opinion of mainstream/corporate bookstores?**
—It's very important to me to not have opinions on things I'm not fully informed about. I think that is the very definition of a jackass!

**How much does personal experience play in your written work?**
—I bet a lot. I don't actually know consciously but maybe it's like dreams- don't they reinterpret and download information your mind takes in?

**What motivates you to complete your (writing) work?**
—Mostly, I want to find out how the story ends.

**Do you believe writing should be censored – that some topics should remain taboo?**
their reasons. I could write the person into a story.

**Where can people find you and your work?**

—You can order my book at Barnes and Noble and on Amazon- as hardcover, paperback, as ebook, and audiobook: [https://www.amazon.com/Planting-Wolves-Neda-Disney-ebook/dp/B07WK963CQ](https://www.amazon.com/Planting-Wolves-Neda-Disney-ebook/dp/B07WK963CQ).  
—Planting Wolves has a page on Instagram: [http://instagram.com/planting_wolves](http://instagram.com/planting_wolves). For events, etc., check it out!  
—I also have a website: [www.nedadisney.com](http://www.nedadisney.com)

And thanks for your unique questions.

*Thank you, Neda*

Chris Marchand

**Your Name:** Chris Marchand  
**Genre(s) of your work:** Non-fiction, history, education, and church ministry.

**Titles/Year of Published Work(s):**  
*Celebrating the 12 Days of Christmas: a guide for churches and families* *(2019)*

**Bio:**  
I grew up in Central Illinois and I suppose a Midwestern view on life informs a lot of what I do. I’ve always seen myself as an artist who makes things and for years I wanted be a professional musician and singer-songwriter. I’ve recorded a few albums (which are available on Bandcamp) but I was never able to figure out how to make a music career work. When I was in fifth grade I won my school’s
I've found much more success with that over the years.

After graduating from Eureka College with a degree in literature and music, and then marrying my wife Elisa, I went to Garrett Seminary in Evanston, Illinois, where I studied theology and church music. It was there, after writing a Master’s thesis and doing a special project, that I really began to learn to write. After graduating we moved back down to Peoria and have been involved in church ministry and school work ever since. We have four kids ranging from 10 years old on down to 1, so life is full and crazy. I am willing to discuss anything related to film, music, literature, and art at a moment’s notice.

Why do you write in the genre that you do?

For the past few year I had been trying to figure out what my first book would look like. When I got the idea to write on the history and traditions of the 12 days of Christmas, my writing became more focused on research, education, and compacting a lot information into a format that would be enjoyable for a general audience. I'm interested in all kinds of writing, and am working on a realistic novel set in contemporary times, as well as a few books written for the church world and people of faith.

How has writing changed/altered your life?

I went and got two seminary degrees, both of which culminated in a thesis or special project. It was there that I learned how to endure revising my work through multiple drafts, a process that takes months. This taught me that writing is a slow and arduous journey, that involves longterm endurance. Since my degrees were primarily research-based, they also taught me how to pursue truth and not settle for an easy answer with my writing. Great writing is born of struggle! I suppose this lesson has helped me with my normal day-to-day life as well!

Who are your favorite authors and why?

I like authors who write “serious” literature, and who yet have humor injected into everything they do. My favorites would be C.S. Lewis, Umberto Eco, David Foster Wallace, Mark Twain, Salman Rushdie, Margaret Atwood, Chaim Potok, Jane Austen, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Cervantes, and Walter Miller.

What is your opinion of mainstream/corporate bookstores?

My wife and I were watching the film You’ve Got Mail recently, which is one of her favorite films. I observed that the film is out of date in so many ways,
bookstore puts the neighborhood boutique out of business. What was funny to me is that now even the giant bookstores are really struggling, whereas it might be more likely in today’s world for an innovative, locally owned store to find a way to thrive.

Generally speaking, I feel pretty conflicted about mainstream bookstores. I want authors and artists to have as much of an opportunity as possible to get their works out into the world, and I suppose in theory the big stores can help them do that (assuming they can get their books stocked there). I view Amazon similarly, in that they make it possible for an author’s work to be available everywhere. At the end of the day though, the best place for an author’s work is at a locally owned bookstore or a library, mainly because the people there are the most passionate about literature and will help authors to find their most faithful audience.

How much does personal experience play in your written work?

The novel I am writing is loosely based on my own life, though it will be a highly fictionalized version of me and my family. The book I’ve written about Christmas is highly personal as well, as I hope my family and those in my community will take my suggestions about the holiday serious enough to want to begin implementing them into their own lives. And even though it’s a general history and advice book on the holiday, every single page is essentially an answer to my own questions about Christmas.

What motivates you to complete your (writing) work?

My wife, children, and death. In 2008 I was diagnosed with thyroid cancer, and though I was able to recover from it, it set about a course of events in my life, from having children, to moving back to our hometown Peoria, to starting a blog and podcast. I feel like there is a sense of urgency in what I create. I know I have been graced with only so many breaths in my lungs and I want to use each one of them well. I also want to leave a legacy for my children. I write based on my own interests, but I also believe I’m writing for a present and future community.

Do you believe writing should be censored – that some topics should remain taboo?

Basically no. I believe in moral writing and that our works both describe and end up shaping our culture and world. So, in some senses I believe an author should
the same time I believe they should always be able to write about what they want and it will be up to readers to determine if they want to ignore it, boycott it, or love it. Often the most challenging or “offensive” work has also been able to influence people in profound and even moral ways.

Where can people find you and your work?

https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1532655339/ref=dbs_a_def_rwt_bibl_vppi_i0

https://wipfandstock.com/celebrating-the-12-days-of-christmas.html,


https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/celebrating-the-12-days-of-christmas-chris-marchand/1134053256?ean=9781532655333

https://www.amazon.com/Chris-Marchand/e/B07Z6KG9XZ?ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_1&qid=1572379872&sr=8-1

https://www.postconsumerreports.com

https://www.facebook.com/Chris-Marchand-8316794572/

https://twitter.com/PostCnsumrChris

https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/19682784.Chris_Marchand

chrismarchand.bandcamp.com

Thanks so much, Chris!

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Jack Ketchum (PINNED – Interviewed in December 2017).

Name: Dallas Mayr

Pseudonym (if you use one): Jack Ketchum

Genre(s) of your work: Horror and Suspense (and the occasional Black Comedy.)

Titles/Year of Published Work(s): Writing professionally since 1970, first fiction 1976, first novel, OFF SEASON, 1981.
Bio:
see my website http://www.jackketchum.net/

Most Recent Novel, THE SECRET LIFE OF SOULS, written with Lucky McKee and Most Recent Collection, GORILLA IN MY ROOM.

Why do you write in the genre that you do?

I grew up loving fantasy, and horror is the dark side of fantasy.

How has writing changed/altered your life? The usual perks of self-employment — no punching the time clock, no damn bosses hovering over your desk. But in addition to that, writing mandates continual periods of self-examination. You don’t easily get away with lying to yourself on the page. It requires you to scour your history and your present for your deepest faults and pleasures, to reveal and revel in them, to find the strengths in your life and work from there, reaching outward.

Who are your favorite authors and why?

Far too many to list here. I read all over the place and consequently my favorite writers come from all genres and backgrounds, from Henry Miller to Gabriel Garcia Marquez, from Raymond Chandler, Elmore Leonard and John D. MacDonald to Thomas Hardy, Philip Roth, Michael Chabon, Joyce Carol Oates, Peter Straub and Stephen King. Why? Because they’re smart, empathic, courageous. Because they’re good!

What is your opinion of mainstream/corporate bookstores?

I wish we had a lot more mom-and-pop, brick-and-mortar bookstores. I seriously miss browsing.

What do you hope your readers will take away from your work?

The need for empathy and tenderness in the world, that the souls of beasts and humans matter. And a few hours of just plain fun.

How much does personal experience play in your written work?

Depends on the piece. Some, like THE GIRL NEXT DOOR and RED, are highly personal, others…? I don’t know where the hell they came from!

How do you find the motivation to complete a book/story?

Finishing a piece is almost always easy. It’s getting started that’s hard. Getting all your ducks in a row and then having the balls and suspension of disbelief to say to yourself, this is really going to work.

What makes you NOT finish reading a book?

I give books a first paragraph test. If it passes, then a first chapter test. If it passes that, I’ll almost always finish the book — I can tell from there that I’m going to want to. If it fails I scuttle it immediately. Very occasionally, too much repetition will make me dump it. I don’t want to waste reading-time. Too much good stuff out there.
Do you believe writing should be censored – that some topics should remain taboo?

Nothing should ever be censored. Everything is worth discussing. How long a discussion is another matter entirely.

Any pet peeves in writing? In reading others' work?

Life's short. I don't bother with peeves. If I'm bored, I just close the book.

Where can people find you and your work?

Website, see above. I have a list of published works there.

What can I say?

I am honored to have snagged a bit of Jack Ketchum's time, for him to share his thoughts and words with me (and my readers), and for his participation in a blog such as this one. Thank you so much – for the interview as well as your writing. It has and continues to be an inspiration.

Readers, I implore you to look into Jack Ketchum's work, especially if you are a horror/suspense fan. From the mouth of Stephen King – “Who's the scariest guy in America? Probably Jack Ketchum.”

28 comments

Robert Weisskopf says:
July 31, 2017 at 11:28 pm

Sue
Thank you for the opportunity to tell your readers about my work.

Donna Essner says:
August 2, 2017 at 3:31 pm

Sue, Thank you so much for taking the time to interview, Terry John Malik about his forthcoming novel, THE BRICKLAYER OF ALBANY PARK.

suerovens says:
August 2, 2017 at 4:13 pm
Hi Donna,

My pleasure. As an independent author myself, I know that marketing is key and getting the word out by any means is crucial.
Thanks!
Sue

★ Like

Reply

Ronald Mason says:
August 8, 2017 at 7:42 pm

Thanks very much Sue for the opportunity to talk about my current book and upcoming book. Its an honor.

★ Liked by 1 person

Reply

susanbassmarcus1 says:
August 11, 2017 at 5:00 pm

Hi Sue. Thank you for including me in this roundup of four writers. I read all the interviews with pleasure. The CWA includes so many interesting members. I enjoyed meeting my fellow interviewees via your blog.
Susan Bass Marcus

★ Liked by 1 person

Reply

Teagan R. Geneviene says:
January 29, 2018 at 4:46 pm

It’s nice to see Teri here — always good to know a little more about her. I had to laugh about her friends being more careful about what they say. 😂 It’s funny how many people worry they’ll be “in the book” when they learn you write. Hugs!

★ Liked by 1 person

Reply

popkin16 says:
May 4, 2018 at 6:21 am

McKenna is a great author and I am excited to see more of her work!

★ Liked by 1 person

Reply

Pauline G. Dembicki says:
October 3, 2018 at 10:54 am

Hi Sue:
Thank you for this opportunity.
Pauline G. Dembicki

★ Like
Of course! Thank YOU for doing it! 😊

Sheila M. Cronin says:
October 3, 2018 at 4:41 pm

Excellent interview, Pauline. You write timely books. Wishing you continued success and inspiration!

John T. M. Herres says:
February 22, 2019 at 3:54 pm

Thanks, Sue, for giving me the opportunity to join these other fine Writers on your blog.

You are more than welcome, John. Thank YOU for being a part of it.

Thank-you to Sue Rovens for creating this great forum for fledgling authors like myself.

Thank YOU, Ralph, for doing it! I hope it brings many eyeballs to your work 😊

LB Johnson says:
May 21, 2019 at 11:14 pm
I definitely have some new books to order (zombie turkeys – still chuckling). I just finished my fifth book and I’m taking a year off to just read and read and read. Thanks for the great interviews.

suervens says:
May 22, 2019 at 1:39 am

Thanks, LB! That’s the point of the interviews – to give everyone a chance to find out about each other. Thanks for reading and feel free to spread the word! 😊

Pingback: What I Didn’t Want To Do On My Summer Vacation - Pamela Morris

suervens says:
August 30, 2019 at 10:15 pm

Great interview! Hope you are doing well after one heck of a tough summer!

Joan Hall says:
October 17, 2019 at 11:15 pm

Nice to read your Meet and Greet post, Craig. Bruises huh? LOL

Joan Hall says:
October 24, 2019 at 9:55 pm

Thanks for featuring me today, Sue!
suerovens says:
October 25, 2019 at 3:18 am

Great to have you as part of the Meet and Greet! Thanks for doing it! 😊

Reply

coldhandboyack says:
October 24, 2019 at 10:25 pm

Great interview, Joan.

Reply

Joan Hall says:
October 24, 2019 at 11:32 pm

Thanks, Craig!

Reply

Pingback: Author Meet & Greet by Sue Rovens | Brian Finney Writer
Pingback: Sue Rovens Interviews Neda Disney on Author Meet & Greet
Pingback: Rita Lee Chapman Interviews Neda Disney

Leave a Reply

Sue Rovens - srovens@yahoo.com