

Best in Show



Local Talent
By Lynette Carrington

The journey of a successful author can take many paths. Gilbert resident Bonnie Best's journey was given a first-class ticket in a most unexpected way. The local entrepreneur is currently putting the finishing touches on her book, "The Real Poop Scoop on Building a Lucrative Pet Care Business." As if that weren't exciting enough, she is being personally mentored in her current pre-publishing phase by New York Times bestselling author Richard Paul Evans.

So how did the former veterinary technician and successful business owner turn into an up-and-coming author? By her own account, Best didn't

necessarily set out to be an author. Rather, she began with the purest intentions of wanting to help others.

Best used to work full time as a vet tech, but decided that she wanted more time for her family. As a result, she began pet sitting so she could have a more flexible schedule. Best said that owning her own business was about "being financially independent and not relying on others." What she discovered was that she could be top dog at her own business and continue to work with the animals she dearly loves while having a schedule that worked for her family. Along the way, Best



also bred dogs, served as a judge in dog shows and donated her time to pet-related causes and rescue efforts.

This year marks the 12th year of Best's pet sitting service, The Best Pet Sitting. In the early years, she realized that pet sitting was a lucrative, part-time, "at-home" career. Best said that many people she spoke with were often surprised that she was able to make a living at doing something she loved. She also helped two other women set up their own pet sitting businesses.

After discovering that she had a real knack for pet sitting, she thought she could help others achieve their dreams of owning their own successful business. "I wanted to put this together to mean something," she said. "The Real Poop Scoop" is appealing to many readers, since some information is applicable to any home-based business. Then along came Richard Paul Evans.

Bestselling author, entrepreneur and acclaimed speaker, Evans runs Write Wise (with partner Robert G. Allen), a company that aims to take great book manuscripts and foster them along to the level of exceptional, while mentoring the authors as they move through the publication process. It is his distinct pleasure to help others achieve their dreams of being published.

Write Wise was designed to mentor authors and educate on the realities of the dog-eat-dog world of publishing. "We're about the business of getting out there," said Evans. "We make sure that they have a product that is marketable."

Evans and other industry specialists have been working with Best, who has made several trips to Salt Lake City, Utah, where Evans resides. Evans has had 12 New York Times bestsellers and sold 14 million books in 15 years. His top-selling titles include the world-renowned "The Christmas Box," "The Gift" and "The Five Lessons a Millionaire Taught Me." He has deep roots within the publishing community, and his name alone will help to open doors for Best as she works to make the right industry connections.

"They want me to be able to speak about my book," Best said of all the coaching she's been receiving. "He (Evans) wants me to be

involved in all of it." Before being involved in Evans' program, Best thought you could probably just write a book, get a deal and the publisher would take care of the rest.

Not so, she found out. "It's a lot of work," Best said. "They prefer that you are active in making the book and they want you to market the book."

A book producer, graphic designer, schedule coordinator and editing staff have helped her in her publishing quest. The manager of a local Barnes and Noble even assisted her in evaluating some potential book cover ideas. One of the cover concepts depicts the sassy silhouette of a young lady with a bouncy, ribbon-adorned ponytail walking a dog down the street with a metropolitan backdrop. Best's daughter posed

as the real-life inspiration for the cover art. It seems to attract the target market and conveys fun, business savvy and perhaps even a touch of that financial freedom that will certainly pique a reader's interest.

One of the things about Best's manuscript that interested Evans was the fact that it was

a "how-to" book steeped in personal experience. "Bonnie is taking the route I did when I first started," explained Evans. Best is initially self-publishing her book and then will secure a publishing house to help catapult her book to the next level.

Best recently attended the BookExpo America 2008 in Los Angeles with Evans and published other well-known authors, editors and publishers. "It's like the Westminster of the book world," she said.

Amidst all of the hard work and details that go into writing, editing, fine-tuning and publishing a book, Best's work is still "going to the dogs," as her business continues to thrive. Best's daughter not only served as potential cover-model inspiration, but also assists her mother with the pet sitting business while she pursues a business degree in college.

Best loves her business, her clients and their beloved pooches and continues to be devoted to giving her personal touch of integrity to everything she does. Her business has changed over the years but continues to win her heart. "It (the business) evolved like Gilbert," Best explained. "I've never lost a client, and I love it when they're so excited about the service – I'm just tickled pink," she exclaimed.

She finds great joy in caring for others' pets, watering their plants, gathering their mail and helping to keep their homes secure, but more than that, she wants people to be able to go away and truly enjoy their vacations knowing that their "babies" and their homes are in good hands.

The next several months will be a whirlwind of activity for Best as she readies herself to be published and works to market and support her book. "The whole process is a story," mused Best, and she suggested that maybe when she is done with this chapter in her career she'll write a book about her foray into authorship and personal experience with publishing. For now, life for this longtime Gilbert resident remains dog-gone spectacular.

By the end of the summer, you will be able to find "The Real Poop Scoop" at Amazon.com and Barnes and Noble. To learn more about Bonnie Best and her book, e-mail author@therealpoopscoop.com or visit www.therealpoopscoop.com. □



Opposite page: Bonnie Best with two of her four-legged friends
This page: The working cover, title and subtitle for Bonnie Best's upcoming book