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***"My only regret about self-publishing is that
I waited so long to do it."***

--Michael R. LaMontagne and Ronald E. Snyder
Authors of *King Fortis the Brave*

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July 18, 2001

INTERVIEW WITH LYNN THOMAS, AUTHOR OF THE CURRENT #2 BEST SELLING EBOOK ONLINE by Richard Hoy

What does it take to be a best selling e-author? I know you'll learn a lot from this interview with Lynn Thomas. Lynn's book, [How to Make and Market Gel Candles that Sell Like Wildfire](#), held the #1 best selling spot on Booklocker.com for several months in a row, longer than any other author in the history of the company. Her book is also the current [#2 best selling ebook online](#).

INTERVIEW WITH LYNN THOMAS

Q. Tell us about yourself, from a writer's perspective.

A. I have been writing since I first held a pen (or crayon!)

My entrance into writing was something I had written when I was very young for my paternal Grandmother after my Grandfather had died. It spoke of how she was like the Willow Tree that would bend with sorrow, but not break. She often spoke of how creative and touching my writing was.

This same Grandmother spun tales of her childhood and "the old days" throughout my youth and would spark my imagination with imagery and adventure.

I have always written. Journals, poetry, stories, songs. There's a 'need' in me to write. I live to write. When I write I lose track of time and experience bliss.

I have written fiction, poetry and non-fiction. I like non-fiction for I love to research things and find out what makes them tick and then convey this information in a useful, easy-to-follow format.

In addition to my writing, I have been an entrepreneur for most of my life, with a strong business background.

Q. How did you get started writing books?

A. My first unpublished book was a book of poetry stretching from my teen-age years through the raising of my two sons.

My greatest labor was in compiling my paternal grandmother's biography... which interwove many of her recollections and the era of which she lived. It took years to complete... and I could still edit it, if you know what I mean... are we ever finished?

Q. How did you get the idea for your best selling book, [How to Make and Market Gel Candles that Sell Like Wildfire?](#)

A. My husband and I were at an open air market scouting for gift items. At one of the booths there was what I thought to be a miniature aquarium. Upon closer inspection I was totally surprised to find it was actually a candle. I had never seen a gel candle before and my inquisitive mind was full of questions... but all the vendor would say was that they were made by her brother. She wouldn't tell me anything about how they were made. I bought one of the candles and enjoyed it for weeks before lighting it.

When I did light the candle, I was mesmerized as the candlelight seemed to dance off the seashells within. I was hooked. I had to know more. This led to months of research, trial and error, and thorough note taking. It was then that I realized that I could save other people months of start-up time and frustration by sharing what I

had learned. I wrote, edited and compiled [How to Make and Market Gel Candles that Sell Like Wildfire](#).

Prior to and during this time I had been studying how to market on the Internet and was looking for a product or service to sell. It was then that I decided to turn the book into an ebook pdf file and sell it on the Internet.

Q. How many months passed between your initial idea for your book and the actual publication?

A. It took longer than perhaps other books, for I spent months not only with on-hand experimentation and candle research, but I also had to learn about ebooks. It was at least 6 months until I was ready to make my first sale.

Q. Please share with us the process of writing and publication, from idea to research to text manuscript to final sales copy.

First I had separate files on my computer, each relating to a different chapter/topic of the book. I would often go back to the actual candlemaking to walk through the process of what I wanted to convey. I then sketched out the flow of the book. What chapter/topic first, next and after that. Then I added each file to the chapter, working one at a time in order, without editing what I wrote.

When I entered all the information into the draft, I then began the editing process. Chapter by chapter... and then editing again and again. To better illustrate a point or idea, I added photos ... some of which were taken during the actual candlemaking process.

After much editing and rewriting, I sent the file to a very good friend of mine who is also a school teacher, Tish Ebling, who served as my editor. When Tish sent back the grammatical changes, I would incorporate them. This would often lead to new ideas that I'd include into the book. When I finally felt it was "done" (as I said earlier, are we ever finished?), I compressed the entire file into a pdf file. The final steps were in creating links and bookmarks within the pdf file itself.

Q. If you've obtained online press through discussion lists, bulletin boards and/or ezines/websites, how did you manage to get mentioned?

A. I've been mentioned on online groups through word of mouth and from my own postings. I usually post with my email signature.

I also offer other sites reciprocal links to my website... and I have been offering an

affiliate sales link which some people have added to their sites.

I have also been contacted by other authors to reciprocate ad swaps and reviews in newsletters.

Q. What is your email signature (if you use it to promote your book)?

HOW TO MAKE & MARKET GEL CANDLES
THAT SELL LIKE WILDFIRE!

<http://www.howtomakegelcandles.com>

Gel Candles are Fun, Easy & Lucrative!
The resource to getting started and the
reference guide for your gel candle hobby
or business. To subscribe to our FREE
Gel Candles News© newsletter, send any
email to:

Gel_Candle_News-subscribe@egroups.com

Q. Where did you learn to format and produce an ebook?

A. I researched both offline and online information about books, marketing, and publishing and I purchased many books, including [How to Publish and Promote Online](#) by MJ Rose and Angela Adair-Hoy and the [E-Publishing E-Kit](#) by Angela Adair-Hoy

Q. Do you publish an free ezine/emag targeting your readers?

A. Yes, I publish the Gel Candles News© newsletter. The newsletter archives are at: http://www.howtomakegelcandles.com/newsletter_archives.htm

Q. Now that you've been there, can you share some positive points about ebooks?

They can have terrific navigational features. With the pdf format you can have links off the text of the page; and use the bookmarks feature to navigate both within and out of the document. I also like the way the photos and the page layout retain their looks.

I think we are in the beginning of a new frontier. Who knows where all of this will lead? I feel fortunate to be part of this exciting time.

Q. Now, how about some negative points about ebooks?

While I tend to believe everyone's basically decent, there is so much time and effort put into researching, compiling, editing, writing and marketing an ebook that I wish there was a way to better secure them.

A. Please share with us a clever marketing task that proved successful.

I don't know if I'd say it's clever, but one thing I'm very happy with is that I've made a real effort to make my website a resource center for candle makers (we also have crafters and soap makers). I have encouraged reciprocal links, affiliate sales, and article submissions for the newsletter. I feel this has made the site more beneficial to the readers and is evolving into a wonderful network neighborhood.

Q. What aspect of the entire epubliishing process are you most proud of?

Just getting it out there. Just actually doing it. There were times during the research, writing, editing and promoting when I could have given up. But I didn't. It's a labor of love ... and the letters and comments I have received from my readers have made it all worthwhile.

Q. What is the most difficult part of the epubliishing process?

I only can say that it is difficult to wear all the hats. To be the author, promoter, publisher, webmaster and editor. I often wish I had more time to promote. I often wish I had more time to write. I have difficulty prioritizing my day... it's all important.

Q. Will you be publishing more ebooks in the future?

Yes, I have more books in various stages of planning. I feel that anything I publish in the future will have the benefit of what I have learned from this ebook... and hopefully will not take as long in compiling and promoting.

TO LEARN MORE:

[How to Make & Market Gel Candles that Sell Like Wildfire!](#) is the perfect tool to get started in making and marketing gel candles. Anyone is welcome to subscribe to the newsletter by sending any email to Gel_Candle_News-subscribe@egroups.com, and they are welcome to visit and become involved with Lynn's evolving Resource Center at: <http://www.howtomakegelcandles.com/resources.htm>

Richard Hoy is the co-owner of [Booklocker.com](http://www.booklocker.com), the most author-friendly epublisher online offering up to 70% royalties on ebooks, 35% royalties on print on demand books (the highest in the industry), and non-exclusive contracts. Booklocker.com strives to help authors make money by combining publishing with Internet marketing.

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