An Interview with Chris Weigand (USA)

October; 2019 Featured Guest
at
Time with Tannia
(http://timewithtannia.com)

By:

Tannia E. Ortiz-Lopés

1. A woman with many hats: a Catholic writer, wife, mother of three grown children, a teenage daughter, and also Nana to five granddaughters. How to do joggle them all and still have time for writing?

Well I'm lucky that my children are grown and for the most part take care of themselves so my time is mostly mine to do with as I please. I wasn't a writer when my first three children were growing up, so there was no challenge. Then my fourth child was born and was the spark that started my writing career. When she was younger I grabbed any extra minutes and used them to write. As she got older and went off to school those minutes became longer. I'd like to give you the easy answer and say writing is a priority, but I would be lying. God and family are my priorities and the writing fits into their schedule.

My youngest daughter just graduated from high school and will start college in August, so I have reached a crossroads in my life. I will now have more writing time, but also time to do some thing besides raising children. I am looking forward to this new stage in my life and hopefully a few of my works in progress will get finished.

2. In 2005 you had your first article published in "Once Upon aTime…" a magazine for children's writers and illustrators. Do you considered that opportunity a validation of your work and the beginning of your writing career?

Yes and no. Yes because it was the first thing I had published and confirmed that the classes I had taken were worth what I had paid for them. No, because my writing is in a far different place than it was in those early days. I still write inspirational things, but through a few years of searching and missteps I found a niche that I am really comfortable in, Young Adult.

3. For the benefit of new authors who are considering submitting an article for publication but who also need some encouragement, can you please share briefly with them the process?

The most obvious is write the article. There are two ways to go about this: First write the article you want and start querying. Second: With an idea in mind you could search the internet and market books to find out what editors want and then write to their needs. Once the article is written and edited then you either search the markets and send it off or if you previously have searched send it to the magazines that might accept it. Make sure no matter which process you use to read the publications guidelines and then make sure that your article meets those guidelines. You don't want to send that parenting article to a sports magazine. Be sure and check word counts. Many places have a range for the number of words they will accept. If you follow the guidelines and have written something the editors are interested in you increase your chances of having your article accepted for publication. Be persistent. If one publication rejects it send it to another. Continue this process until someone sends you that sought after acceptance. Accept their offer, sign their contract and wait for the byline.

4. Aaron's Revenge echoes somewhat the King Arthur story. From an article to a novel, how do you keep up with the world and character developing? Lessons learned from the publication of your first book?

Character and world development is an ever evolving process. When I start a novel, it is usually with the barest idea of character and world. As the story progresses I discover things that will work within the story and take note of them. So my research is something that goes hand in hand with the writing. Unfortunately sometimes I get stuck in a research loop and am not writing as much as I would like, but for the most part this is the system that works best for me. And note this system works for "ME." Each author has to find their own system, what will work for them. As far as keeping things straight, for the most part that is not too difficult. Once I decide on a character trait or a world feature then I try and note it somewhere other than in the story. I have reams of notebook paper, maps, and other pertinent papers scattered throughout my Lair. The biggest problem is remembering where it is stored.

Lessons Learned: Don't rush it. Take the time to edit, edit, edit. Have someone else look at it. Stay away from Vanity publishers that don't take the time to read the novel and charge you lots of money. A quick story here; For Aaron's Revenge I submitted to a couple of traditional publishers, got rejected and got discouraged. I got sucked into a Vanity publisher who charged me a lot of money. They never read or edited the book. It was all up to me. When it came time to design the cover, I let them design it; Big Mistake. They did ask me for input and I had visions of two knights sparring with the castle overlooking

the field. They got the castle right and the two princes. But what they got wrong four times was the field. When it first came across my desk for approval, there was a dirt area where the sparring was taking place. That would have worked except for the tire marks in the dirt. The story is set in a medieval world and I think people would have been hard pressed to find cars and trucks. So back to the designer; this happened three more times until I finally gave up and told them to put grass instead of dirt. If you chose to go the self-publishing route (which I still shy away from) make sure the cover artist knows the story and that the book is well edited.

5. When did you decide to create your own site, http://www.weigandchris.com/, to showcase your YA books?

Looking back; I started it in 2010 around the same time Aaron's Revenge and Women of the Bible came out.

6. Based on its description: "A place where angels and dragons muse, where princes and princesses find themselves. A place for God to share His word," I gathered its original purpose was to showcase your Dragons Trilogy: Palace of the Twelve Pillars (Book I), Palace of the Three Crosses (Book 2), and Sanctuary of Nine Dragons (Book III)

Along with showcasing my books my original intent was to share writing advice, inspirational posts and life events. I quickly discovered that my blog was not aimed at the audience I wanted and dropped the writing advice. I started showcasing book promos and reviews, but discovered I hate doing reviews, not because the books aren't good, but I have trouble being brutal and they take a lot of time. So now I still do book promos but only do reviews for books and/or authors that have really grabbed my attention.

7. How does this trilogy stand aside among other YA books sharing the same theme of dragons, faith, and courage? Do the elements of faith entwined in the story could have a positive pivotal effect also on non-believers?

I would like to believe they do. I struggled with pigeon-holing my books in the Christian genre. Finally I decided that's who I was, it was the message I want to share so Young Adult Christian fantasy became the niche. I do still think that the message in the books can be applied to non-believers though. Themes of making choices and living with the consequences, the battle between good and evil, and family are themes in everyone's life.

8. From dragons to a co-authored series, Sir E. Robert Smythe. What are some of the challenges and benefits of co-authoring? Do you recommend this experience to other authors?

My experience was not the typical experience. The man who is the creator was just that, the creator. He supplied me with some vague plots and characters geared toward children and asked me to age it up to Middle-grade. I did, with a little input from him; I further expanded the plots and characters, (along with creating one of my own Sir E. Robert) and wrote the books. I also did the work of finding a publisher. I was lucky that the publisher for my other books was willing to take on this series.

Once the books were written they went to the creator for final approval and then were sent off to the publisher.

I can't say one way or the other if co-authoring is a good thing. I know I struggled with it because I mistakenly thought I could write Middle-grade since I already wrote Young Adult. I found it harder to write because the characters and the story lines were not my own. I work better if I create from beginning to end. One other note: I'm not comfortable writing middle-grade and have determined my place is in Young Adult.

9. Apart from writing YA books, you also have a passion for more serious theme which is showcased in your other site, https://christinaweigand.com/ with its description: Faith, Inspiration and a Cup of Tea. Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word. Luke 1:38 NAB

My faith is the guiding force in my life. As I mentioned previously my first blog had inspirational posts. As my portfolio became more young adult and middle grade I decided that I needed to spin my inspirational away from the YA blog. So about a year ago I created Faith, Inspiration and a Cup of Tea. Along with my inspirational posts I also spotlight other books that have a faith based theme. This includes all genres, but mostly focuses on Adult.

10. Women of the Bible: A Study – what personality traits or circumstances inspirited you to choose them? Targeted audience?

I can't pick out one particular trait or circumstance that resonates across all the women. Each was chosen for the life they lived and the challenges they encountered. What they want through is something that every woman encounters in one way or another. I felt the women's examples could encourage and guide women through life's ups and downs.

The targeted audience is women ages 18-?, although I don't see why men couldn't take something away from it also.

11. How can our readers contact you?

www.weigandchris.com
www.christinaweigand.com
Twitter: @CAWeigand
Facebook: www.facebook.com/caweigand
Goodreads: www.goodreads.com/chris_weigand
Amazon: amazon.com/author/christinaweigand
Instagram: chrisweigand1

12. A word of advice to new author.

Don't give up. You will encounter road blocks, but if you are passionate about your writing don't let anyone tell you that you aren't good enough.
Butt In Chair, Hands on Keyboard. (B.I.C.H.O.K). (Borrowed from someplace I don't remember, but totally applicable)

Tannia E. Ortiz-Lopés, author of *El Espejo de mi Alma* (BoD 2015) .
Author's website: timewithtannia.com **Stock photography website:**
https://www.bigstockphoto.com/search/?contributor=Boricua63&safesearch=n
Gift Shop: http://www.zazzle.com/teolpuertorico

READERS' COMMENTS:

Date Received:	October 25, 2019
Name:	Tannia
Comments:	Chris, thanks for accepting my invitation to be one of my Featured Guest. Writing your interview questions was a lot of fun. It was refreshing to read in FB, that they made you think. lol This is why I always tell the potential featured guest, to read previous interviews. I take pride on writing interesting out-of-the-box interviews. Enjoy your time in the spotlight!

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