

DAILY AMERICAN REPUBLIC



Gaëlle Freer holds two books she has published: “Kozmo” by her husband Ralph Freer and “I was born in Marchefroy” by her mother Jacqueline Le Valliant Byrne. The Freer’s first forays into self-publishing lead Gaëlle Freer, a retired English teacher, to found an independent publishing and marketing service called Blue Rooster Company.
DAR/Samantha Tucker

Authors in Poplar Bluff and beyond have a new, customizable resource for publishing and promoting their books. Lifelong book lover and retired English teacher Gaëlle Freer has embarked on a new venture by founding Blue Rooster Company to provide authors with support and publicity — and to engage her passion for reading.

Blue Rooster Company began after Freer and her husband Ralph decided to skip traditional publishing and print his children's book, "Piper's Posse," on their own. During the process, Freer realized she enjoyed book design and identified a need for "author-published" marketing resources.

"I don't like to use the word self-publishing, because everybody has this nasty connotation to it. So what I like to say is author-published, because really, that's what it is. It's the author that is publishing their own work," Freer said.

Freer published three more books, two by her husband and one by her mother, as she honed her ideas for Blue Rooster Company. She decided to prioritize two things she feels are lacking in the publishing industry: staying true to authors' visions and ensuring they retain all copyrights to their work.

"I think those are the two really important things that people are looking for, and that they're not getting from major publishers," she explained.

Publishing houses claim varying levels of copyright over writers' works and tend not to release them.

She also devotes more energy and resources to marketing than publishers do, at least for authors outside their A-list. Promotion is another issue for writers striking out on their own.

"Authors don't want to market, they want to write," Freer noted.

Once she knew what she wanted to do, the name and logo came easily — blue is Freer's favorite color and she loves roosters for their confidence and attitude.

"Ralph designed my rooster for me," she said, and he further customized it with high heels and chicken-sized crown.

Freer breaks down her services into a menu of options for publishing, marketing or both. On the publishing side, she serves as a book designer and editor for manuscripts at any stage of the writing process. She also prints through two companies, which she declined to name but praised for their investment in the book printing process. For marketing, Freer can set up author websites, cultivate social media presence, and coordinate book launches and signings.

The only thing she refuses to do is publish ebooks, because in her experience they are a letdown to both the manuscript and the author.

"I will put books on Amazon, I will do KDP (Kindle Direct Publishing), the whole thing, and I know how to do that," she said. "But I don't think ebooks do a book justice and on top of that, the author gets a mere pittance."

As Blue Rooster Company expands, Freer is looking for illustrators, beta readers, proof readers and graphic designers. While she wants to find local talent whenever

possible, Freer is open to accepting clients anywhere in the U.S. So far she has several, most out of Cape Girardeau, where Freer is a member of the Southeast Missouri Writer's Guild.

She described their support as a blessing.

"I'm fortunate in that I belong to a group of people that have been exceedingly supportive of my little venture," she said.

She encouraged writers not to worry about bringing in a finished product or a polished masterpiece.

"If you have a story, I will help you make that happen ... I will take you from wherever you are in the writing process and get you wherever you want it to be," she said.

For Freer, helping authors release their stories feels like a continuation of her teaching career, which spanned 39 years and three states. Even better, she will never run out of reading material.

"I've taken my love of books and I want to put it out there for the world to see," she said.

More information Blue Rooster Company can be found at blueroosterco.org and by contacting Freer at gabellebfreer@gmail.com or 573-714-1352.