

I Love To Write Day: How it All Began

By John Riddle

In the spring of 2002 I was driving from my home in Delaware to the Blue Ridge Mountain Christian Writer's conference in Asheville, North Carolina, where I was scheduled to speak. My oldest daughter, Bonnie, was in the car with me; she was a college student at the time and interested in attending some of the workshops. Even though she was already a published writer, she knew the value of learning more about the craft of writing.

As I was passing through the Richmond, Virginia, area, I was thinking about a magazine interview I had to do the following week. Normally I am the one interviewing someone and then writing an article, but this time I was going to be the subject of the article. Writer's Digest magazine wanted to do a profile of me, highlighting my success in writing for so many Websites over the past few months.

When I worked in the fundraising field a number of years ago I loved planning big special events. One time I tried to set the Guinness Book of World Records by having the largest number of people dance the "Twist" in one location. I even got Chubby Checker to tape some Public Service Announcements to help promote the event. As a writer and author, I knew I needed a Website, and when I came up with the name I Love To Write.com, (that site has evolved into I Love To Write Day.org) it wasn't long before the idea of holding the 'world's largest party for writers' came about.

I told Bonnie to "remember this moment," because I "officially declared" November 15 to be I Love To Write Day, and I knew that I Love To Write Day would be a success.

However, never in my wildest dreams did I believe how successful it would become! About two weeks after the conference was over, I established the I Love To Write Day Website and began sending out press releases to media outlets all across the United States. I also sent information to schools, bookstores and libraries.

About ten days later I started getting numerous media requests for interviews and more info about I Love To Write Day. And the response from schools was absolutely overwhelming. By the time November 15 rolled around, over 11,000 schools all across the country had signed up to hold special ILTWD events and activities. Bookstores, libraries, churches, community centers and even a few malls joined in the fun. When *USA Today* published an interview with me on the first ILTWD, my phone didn't stop ringing, and I lost track of how many e-mails I was receiving.

The Governors of 9 states have officially proclaimed November 15 as I Love To Write Day in their states, and urge all of their residents to find time to write and celebrate the day.

My goal for I Love To Write Day is simple: people of all ages are encouraged to write something. A poem, a letter, an essay, start a novel, finish a novel...the possibilities are endless!

Hundreds of people e-mailed or wrote to me shortly after the first I Love To Write Day. They shared samples of what they had written, and how they enjoyed writing again. Unfortunately, many people have stopped writing, and the thought of putting words on a piece of paper (or a computer screen) can be a frightening experience.

I urge everyone to remember how important writing can be. Spend some time writing something *today*. You don't have to set a goal of writing a novel (unless you have wanted to write one for a long time); just write something that is short, and meaningful to you.

Writing can be fun, but also challenging. People need to be challenged, and writing is but one of many creative ways to express yourself. I am very excited because more I Love To Write Day activities are being planned all across the United States. For many people, that will be the beginning of their writing career.

I Love To Write Day has the potential to launch the career of the next John Grisham, Mary Higgins Clark, Stephen King or Toni Morrison.

Please visit the official I Love To Write Day Website at www.ilovetowriteday.org and learn how you can join in the fun. When people become stronger writers, they become better communicators...and everyone wins!

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I Love To Write Day
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