



Website of Lee Foster Wins SATW Award

By Lee Foster

My website for Foster Travel Publishing (www.fostertravel.com) received a 2019 Award from the Society of American Travel Writers (SATW) Western Chapter.

The award was the Bronze in the Website category, one of 10 categories in the annual writing competition.

Judges remarked, "This site is clean and easy to navigate, as well as offers a chance for readers to sign up for updates. Its California Travel pages offer off-the-beaten-

track ideas.”

Origin of the Website

The website goes back to 1995. At that time it was one of the first viable travel journalism websites when the Internet became a reality.

The earliest version of the website used the electronic articles that I posted on CompuServe, starting in 1983. I had two features, West Coast Travel (WCT, about California and the West) and Adventures in Travel (AIT, about Worldwide travel). Those features remained online on CompuServe for 17 years, from 1983 until 2001. CompuServe paid me a 10% royalty every month for the price they charged consumers looking at my writings, which they ranked as Premium Content.

In 2009 I transformed the original html (hypertext markup language) website to the up-and-coming WordPress structure. I worked with designer Bradley Charbonneau.

By 2017 further changes in the website structure were advisable. Primarily, new themes requiring less custom coding were now available. I chose the theme Newspaper. Moreover, new and more desirable plugins emerged, such as Yoast for Search Engine Optimization.

I hired designer Jeffrey Samorano of www.wpinoneclick.com to guide the process in 2017. Jeffrey continues monthly maintenance on my site. Working with Jeffrey, I also OKed changes regarding the web host, moving from Hostgator to the WordPress-only specialist WP Engine. Later we moved again to a host provider Jeffrey favored, known as Flywheel.



Lee Foster SATW Award for Website 2019

Several aspects of the website continue to evolve and require ongoing improvement. Such is the nature of restless living websites today.

Content on My Website

My website currently has 500+ articles. Each week I develop a new article or refresh and update an earlier article, putting it at the top with today's date.

I use the word website and blog to mean the same thing. The blog is the new or refreshed item each week, which becomes the website.

The Newspaper theme allows the website to be organized as I wish, clustering:

-California Travel

-Publishing & Consulting

-Worldwide Travel

Aside from travel journalism and some literary projects, my other main subject is modern publishing, a rapidly evolving field. I publish ongoing articles related to the 10 chapters in my book [*An Author's Perspective on Independent Publishing: Why Self-Publishing May Be Your Best Option.*](#)

The main focus of my current travel journalism effort is California. For example, I am updating my book *Northern California History Weekends* (published originally with Globe Pequot). You can see this book among my several California books on my Amazon Author Page at <http://amzn.to/1jl9Lnz>. I am putting all 52 chapter articles from this book on my website as stand-alone concepts.

When completed, I will self-publish a new edition of the book, with a slightly changed title. At my request, I received an amicable reversion-of-publishing-rights from this respected traditional publisher, Globe Pequot. We experienced a successful 15 years together in the traditional author mode.

Future of Publishing

My story of Globe Pequot returning to me all publishing rights is a tale of a good relationship between an author and a traditional publisher. The emergence of website/blog publishing opportunities is an aspect of the story.

Globe came to me a year ago and said, "We're ready to print another thousand copies of *History Weekends* at Bang Printing in Minnesota. Just a heads up." I replied, "That's good, but better would be that you give me a reversion of rights and I publish the book myself." They replied, "Hey, Lee, we've had a good run on this book. We're not here to slow you down. If you want the book back, we'll agree." The Globe editors are people who love travel books, as I do.

Globe saw the book as a printed book only and printed by offset printing. That was a

reasonable approach 15 years ago. But then came the ebook revolution and the possibility of print-on-demand, meaning you only had to fund printing a book one at a time, after it was purchased. I will do the book as a printed book produced print-on-demand, as an ebook, and as a “website book” with all its chapters of my website.

In my opinion, the presentation of the book content on my website/blog may be more important than any other form in the future.

Such is the revolution occurring in modern publishing. Many of my traditional publishers of printed books, magazines, and newspaper are in deep trouble. Those who have adapted to website and e-product presentation stand a better chance to survive. The modern “independent” publisher may have a long term opportunity for success, but failure will also result for many.

As website publishing becomes a preferred survival pattern, I take some pleasure in this award for my website.