

My First Official Booksigning

Author: Mary Varble (w/a Marie-Nicole Ryan)
Original Publication Date in *Love Notes*: December 2004

Believe it or not, rural Western Kentucky is a hotbed of readers and buyers of books. My first official book signing took place during the Western Kentucky Book Expo Oct. 30 in Sturgis, Ky. And you can't get more rural than that.

Heavily advertised in the Union County Advocate, the Henderson Gleaner and the Evansville Press, the Expo was a tremendous success — more than 2,000 people found their way to the Arnold Convention Center, and 10 of them even plunked down some cold hard cash to buy one of the three offerings I had on hand. I even turned down one sale because I thought the buyer was too young — seventeen — to be reading about lovemaking. Okay, so I'm old-fashioned.

I'm aware of what teenagers are subject to every day at school and on the television, but I'm a mom, and I just couldn't in good conscience sell her a book that I thought was too steamy for her young eyes.

I had a great time pretending to be an extrovert and chatting up the visitors. I arrived early and found my assigned table which I shared with another author. My sister also tagged along to spend the day with me in case I was lonely, scared and to keep me from chewing my new acrylic nails.

Besides having new acrylic nails, I did make some other preparations for the book signing. Now, I don't mean I colored my roots and bought new slacks — yes, I did do those things, but I mean some of the practicalities that go along with presenting the image of a published author. I'm talking about personalized pens and bookmarks, which buyers are said to fancy. I also had the cover art for my latest book mounted on foam core and placed on an easel. Yes, my heroine's long legs and stiletto heels drew some raised eyebrows, especially from the guys who passed my table.

I also had some sheets with review snippets and some brochures which had a few choice reviews as well. The brochures had more takers, so I'll have more of those the next time. Romance lovers also can be drawn to your table by chocolates and caramels.

It was a great experience and a great day for people watching, especially fellow author, Woody the Weiner Dog. He and his consort Chloe were so well-behaved, you barely knew they were there. Of course, he drew many more customers than I, but seeing him in his "doggles" was worth the trip to Sturgis. He posed for pictures too. You sorta had to be there.

No, my picture didn't make any of the papers, but photos of my sister and mother did. Go figure.