

Release Party, **Autograph Dessert**, Launch Party And how Niki Anderson did it

- Select a **date** not too distant from the release date of your book (AFTER the release). Make sure your book is in bookstores in your hometown where you'll host the party.
- Choose a **venue**. I've used my own house and made the event a 2-day Open House; I've used a hotel and offered the hotel's luncheon choices (3 at most), and twice I've offered a dessert which is the most economical for author and guests; the last event was at a Golf & Country Club with view of the greens which was the most beautiful locale of all (a friend who was the golf course member endorsed me for use of the facility). I paid only \$250 for rental, not including food costs.
- I seek a balance between a lovely place and a reasonable cost that I'm sure I can recoup in money from book sales and from the small ticket price I charge for the **dessert and beverage** (coffee & tea only--and an optional dessert for those with diet restrictions, etc.); **always under \$10**. Remember, you don't want your reservation price to be so high they decline the invitation or come with no money to purchase your book. (I charged \$6.50 at my last one; a bit low.)
- I mail **invitations** to everyone I know; I make the reservation colorful, attractive, and fully informational on 8.5 x 11 paper; triple fold and post. I also post many invitations online and include RSVP.

Decor and favors: Each table has my book standing in the middle so guests can peruse the pages; none are ever ruined. I choose simple inexpensive centerpieces; once a African violet, for the garden book I used small fresh bouquets in vases that all came from my home; for the last cat book event, the golf club offered to put bouquets on he tables and I asked for pussy-willows with the daisies. In my introduction I suggested that since we couldn't bring our cats along, we could think of them by enjoying the pussy willows. I also had one among 365 beautiful cat calendar pages I cut out from a previous year and placed a different one at each place setting. They also received a cat theme Pass-It-On card with a cute saying and a Bible verse near the water glass; those were the favors.

- I offer **two dessert selections**: this last time the choices were a cheesecake with raspberry coulis or a carrot cake.
- I call the **newspaper** and describe my event; they usually write a nice article about "their local author" and her books; the column includes details about the **Autograph Party & Dessert** with info: my website, a phone # for reservations, price of the event, location, date and time.
- I **notify other small newspapers** in the area and the **Moody radio station** in our hometown.

The **Program**:

- I begin with brief **introductions** of my family who are always present from in town and out of town.
- There's a **door prize** I present after the introductions (last time, a beautiful soft-side cat carrier). Okay. Remember, the book was *Whiskers, Wit, and Wisdom: True Cat Tales and the Lessons They Teach* (You don't have to offer a cat carrier!) I also have a **table spread with cat-theme gifts**: nice ones, but ranging in value from expensive books and items I picked up on sale during the year to lesser things as small as a catnip mouse or a cat art calendar; all are desirable

but vary in value. I let the guest pick out her/his gift if they answer correctly during a game of questions from a list of fun bits of trivia relating to cats. Guests love this part of the program. They're jumping to their feet with hands raising (The door prize is promised in the invitation).

- I **thank** those who helped me in any way with the book process, like those present whose cat stories I retold in the book, and also those who participated to help me host the event, like my soloist/pianist, and those who load and unload books, the hotel hostess I worked with to organize the event, my photographer-friend who created the Smilebox, and others. I also presented them with a gift. I gave Book Brew coffee and a Book Brew mug this last time.

The **book dedication**

- I expressed my love and accolades and gave a special gift to my lifetime author-mentor, Christine Tangvald to whom the book was dedicated and also to my little granddaughters who were also part of the book dedication. My granddaughters were present from out-of-town so I brought them forward and gave them each a stuffed animal kitty which inspired smiles and applause.
- Then I give a **30-minute talk** that is a crossover ministry to unbelievers who are there, and is also of interest to believers.
- I've always had a **soloist** who sings popular or Christian songs related to my book: gardening book or one of my cat books. At this last event, lyrics were typed on the back of the program so guests could sing along with the last song. The worship music and theme songs the pianist plays as guests arrive brings **God's presence** and reinforces the book theme.

My **book signing** is at the beginning while guests are filing in (about 30 min. only), passing first at my welcome table where a list of paid guests helps my two friends confirm reservations. If someone arrives w/o a reservation not realizing she was to pay (it happens), she's welcomed, of course; most offer to send a check later.

- At the very end of the event I **return to book signing table** that is decorated with a bouquet of roses and all previous books and the present release standing beside the roses like a centerpiece. Seated at my left is the cashier, also a friend. At my last event she was none other than a Crown Financial Seminars teacher with my son assisting her by writing receipts. I've never taken debit or credit cards but I'm sure that's helpful. I note on both my website and snail mail invitations that I accept only cash or checks.
- My **Smilebox slideshow** of the event (condensed in 3 min.), created by author and friend Ronna Snyder, is available at this link: (copy and paste)
<http://smilebox.com/playEmail/4d5445354d5451314e7a673d0d0a&sb=1>
<<http://smilebox.com/playEmail/4d5445354d5451314e7a673d0d0a&sb=1>>