

Hague woman uses Internet resources to share her faith

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by Darlene Polachic for The StarPhoenix

When Ruth Marlene Friesen discovered the Internet, she realized it was a whole new way to share her faith. Friesen became acquainted with the world-wide web while looking for avenues to publish *Ruthe's Secret Roses*, an inspirational novel she had written.

The novel was a work-in-progress for many years. "I got the idea when I was 12," she says. As an adult, Friesen worked in Saskatoon and Ontario before returning to Hague in 1983 to care for her ailing parents. All the while, she was writing and polishing her novel, and searching for an appropriate publisher.

At one point, she made a detour from her goal to compile a history of the Friesen family, *A Godly Inheritance*, based on her grandmother's journals and diaries, which were written in Gothic German script used by Germans in Russia and Ukraine.

"I wrote that book because I wanted Grandma's descendants to know about the godly life she lived. Her whole life was a testimony of faith in God." Friesen self-published the 300-page family book, "running off the pages on an old Gestetner behind the furnace." She has become the unofficial clan historian and is constantly updating the text and producing new copies on demand.

Self-publishing the history book gave her the idea for self-publishing *Ruthe's Secret Roses*, a story which is set in Saskatoon and area and clearly enunciates Friesen's faith perspective.

About that time she discovered the Internet. "As I learned my way around it, searching for an avenue to publish my novel, I discovered there were a number of interesting ways by which I could share my faith with people," Friesen says. "The first thing I learned when I signed up for Internet service was that I could get free Web space.

"Initially, I just put up some pages to let people know I was available for editing, word processing and Gothic German translating, but then I had an idea for an on-line Journal. I called it 'Journal of God's Provision' and recorded my progress and how God was supplying toward my ultimate dream of publishing my novel. My tag-line read: Journal of God's provisions for a woman starting an Internet business on a shoestring too short to wrap around a finger."

It soon became evident her Web site needed "more than just personal chatter" so Friesen started an e-zine, or an e-mail newsletter, with the idea of helping people start an on-line affiliate business as she had.

"Before long, I had 100 subscribers, and in corresponding with them, I made friends with some. They saw me as someone who gave good advice. That put me in a mentoring role. When people get to know you as a penpal, they trust you and open up to the point where you can tell them what God is doing in your life and how He can do the same thing in theirs."

She says: "Some Web sites by Christian people are so heavy-duty and up-front with their faith it's

almost like an overpowering perfume. I find just behaving in a cheerful and polite manner, but being unafraid to mention when God provides for me in surprising way, has gained me a reputation in my circle of contacts."

In preparation for the publication of her book, Friesen changed her *Journal-Digest* to *RoseBouquet*, which she calls an inspirational e-zine for her reader fans. *RoseBouquet* contains a number of features including Refreshing Dew, an article in each issue; and Rose Close-ups, the profile of a friend, often a character from her book.

Friesen's actual book publishing odyssey began with offering free downloads of *Ruthe's Secret Roses* as an e-book to those who would send feedback that she could use in testimonial advertising or reviews. But when she discovered what a strong impact the book was having on its readers, it confirmed her belief that the book had a specific destiny and deserved wider distribution. That led to offering it as a print-on-demand book through BookLocker.com

Today, Friesen has her own Web domain: <https://Ruthes-SecretRoses.com>. Her tag line reads: "When you meet Ruthe and her Friend - You've got Friends!"

"Near the bottom of every page I have a small invitation to meet my best Friend. If they click on that, I guide them, in my own style, to receive Christ."