



About the Author of:

Crossing the Canal: An Illustrated History of Duluth's Aerial Bridge

Author, publisher, and book designer Tony Dierckins was born and raised in St. Paul, Minnesota. First trained as a graphic designer, Dierckins came to Duluth in 1984 to attend the University of Minnesota Duluth, where he received a B.A. in English in 1988. After a brief stint as an editor for Minneapolis's Meadowbrook Press, he returned to Duluth and UMD in 1991 to earn a Masters in English.

Following graduate school Dierckins signed on as manuscript editor for Duluth's Pfeifer-Hamilton Publishers, where he acquired and transformed *The Duct Tape Book* with author Tim Nyberg. In 1994 he left Pfeifer-Hamilton and joined Nyberg to form Bad Dog Press, a national humor publisher specializing in parodies of popular self-help books. At the same time, Dierckins and Nyberg continued to write *Duct Tape* books and calendars for Workman Publishing while Dierckins began helping others self-publish as a sideline under the moniker X-communication. (Dierckins was known to friends as "Tony X".)

In 1998 Bad Dog Press dissolved (Nyberg continues the *Duct Tape* franchise) and Dierckins took a position with UMD teaching writing and graphic design. Along the way he continued to help others self publish while writing and releasing more books through other publishers, such as *The Warning Label Book* (1998, St. Martin's Griffin) *The Mosquito Book* (1998, Dennoh Press), *Creative Voices* (2000, Andrews-McMeel), and the *CoasterBook* series (2001, Running Press).

In 2001 Dierckins left the comforts of academia and turned X-communication into a full-fledged publishing house, releasing the award-winning *True North: Alternative and Off-Beat Destinations In and Around Duluth, Superior, and the Shores of Lake Superior* in the spring of 2002, which he co-wrote with Kerry Elliott. Over the next few years X-comm released books focusing on Duluth and Western Lake Superior, including the bestselling *Will to Murder: The True Story Behind the Crimes & Trials Surrounding the Glensheen Killings*, WDIO-TV Anchor Dennis Anderson's memoir, *Good Night, Everybody...and be Kind*, and *Leatherheads of the North: the True Story of Ernie Nevers and the Duluth Eskimos*, by the *Duluth News Tribune's* Chuck Frederick.

X-comm also acquired *The Mosquito Book* from its original publisher and released several unique history books by Dierckins: *Greetings from Duluth* (volumes 1 and 2), *Zenith: A Postcard Perspective of Historic Duluth*, and *Greetings from the Arrowhead: the North Shore and Canoe Country*. These book present the history of Duluth and Western Lake Superior through the perspective of vintage, full-color lithographic postcards published between 1895 and 1950.

Dierckins has never stopped helping individuals and organizations self publish, but now does it through X-comm's affiliate, X-presso Books, which most recently helped the Monastery of St. Scholastica publish *All Her Ways*, a full-color "coffee table" history of the Monastery and College. Dierckins executed the design and layout of the book's cover and interior.

Crossing the Canal, the twentieth book Dierckins' has authored or co-authored, is by far his most ambitious project to date in both the scope of its text and design and exemplifies Dierckins' belief that history books need not be boring regurgitations of fact but dynamic documents that balance words with images to create a book that is both informative and entertaining.