



National Writers Union ~ Twin Cities Chapter ~ March 2008

Inside this issue: A joint workshop co-sponsored by NWU and PEN offers tools and legal rules for the freelancer working onsite. Media Reform, citizen journalism classes and upcoming festivals round out the coming of spring.

Letter to Twin Cities Writers

Good news for you TV junkies out there, the writers' strike has ended. Granted, this is old news with the settlement coming late February, just days before the Academy Awards. For those of you that may have an interest beyond the red carpet styles and the newer episodes of 'Law and Order; this victory for writers will hopefully set a precedent for other types of writing contracts. When the recent Writers Guild of America strike concluded with a victory for writers in television and movies – it did so in order to secure the right for payment for the use of their material online and in the new media. Our NWU members have also struggled to secure these same rights for years. The screenwriters were able to prevail because—unlike the NWU—their union engages in collective bargaining and has the right to strike. Whether the WGA victory will or can be used as a precedent for other types of writing contracts remains to be seen. It is a step in the right direction.

Please go to <http://www.wga.org/indes.aspx> for more information on the WGA and the settlement.

In Solidarity,

Jan Alan, NWU-TC Chair

About our Members ~

Congratulations to Tom Swift, an award-winning journalist and freelance on the publication of his book, *Chief Bender's Burden*. This is a biography of Charles Albert Bender, 'who was considered the greatest American Indian baseball player of all time, and ... [and] whose career unfolded in the face of immeasurable prejudice.' Officially the book goes on sale April 1, 2008, but is offered online with a discount as well as the numerous book signings including one at the Metrodome on Friday, April 6, 2008, beginning at 6:00 p.m. before and during the Twins game (v.s. Kansas City).

Please visit tom-swift.com for additional book signing locations and excerpts from his book. Below is one of the many reviews.

Praise for *Chief Bender's Burden*:

"Signal thanks to journalist Swift for this authoritative biography of Charles Albert Bender. ... Swift sets aside the myths about this most famous American Indian player while vividly describing him. ... [This book] is for all interested in the First Nations, quite apart from baseball."

—Library Journal (Starred review)

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First Things First ~

- **Save Your Home Hotline:** According to a national survey, nearly half the homeowners who have adjustable rate mortgages don't know how their ARM(s) adjust or reset, and most don't know how much their monthly mortgage payments will increase when they do. To provide quick, accurate information, the AFL-CIO has set up a new Union Plus Save My Home Hotline: 1-866-490-5361.

- Steering Committee meetings are open to interested members. The next SC meeting is on Tuesday, March 25, 2008, at 1:00 p.m. at the East Lake Library in Minneapolis. The address is 2727 East Lake Street. Please join us.

- There is a revised contract guide available in PDF form that can be down-loaded and referred to without sitting in front of a screen – clicking away, page after page. Kudos to Chris Ammer and Miryam Williamson for all their efforts.

Members can get to it by logging in and going to http://www.nwu.org/nwu/index.php?cmd=showPage&page_id=1.5.1.5.

This guide is a treasure-trove of information to every member inquiring about book contract advice.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Please mark your calendars for the following workshops and activities confirmed for the coming months. NWU-TC notices will be sent out just prior to each event. For additional or new information regarding the time, date and the featured topic will be posted on the NWU-TC website, www.nwu-tc.org

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March Workshop: Work Rules for Freelancers

On **Tuesday, March 18** at 1 PM, the Twin Cities chapters of the National Writers Union and the Professional Editors Network will co-host this event on the work rules that apply for freelance writers and editors when working onsite for employers.

Attorney Joe Henderson of J.F. Henderson Law and a representative from the state's Department of Labor and Industry will speak at the workshop.

This interactive session will be held at the Rondo Library, 461 North Dale Street (at the intersection with University Avenue), St. Paul MN 55103, (651)

266-7400. Parking is available under the library; enter the ramp from eastbound University Avenue. The meeting will be in the library's community room.

Please join us for this FREE event! Further details about the Twin Cities National Writers Union, check out www.nwu-tc.org; for more details about the Twin Cities Professional Editors Network, go to www.pensite.org

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Jeremy Iggers former Star Tribune writer and co-founder of the Twin Cities Media Alliance offers the following workshops for those who are interested in getting involved in media reform.

The primary activities at the [Twin Cities Media Alliance](#) are publishing the [Twin Cities Daily Planet](#), and offering [citizen journalism classes and media skills workshops](#), but media accountability is also an important part of their mission.

If you are interested in media reform and media accountability, here are some ways that you can get involved:

1) Media activist Nancy Doyle Brown will lead introductory workshops on what is wrong with our media system, and what we can do about it. The first two workshops are scheduled for **Tuesday, March 18**, 6 p.m.-8 p.m. at Nokomis Community Library, 5100 34th Avenue South, Minneapolis, and **Tuesday, April 1**, 6:30 p.m.-8:00 p.m. at the Washburn Community Library, 5244 Lyndale Avenue South, Minneapolis. To register for one of these workshops, or for announcements of upcoming workshops, email Nancy at nancy@tcmediaalliance.org.

(Nancy's views of the media are her own, and do not reflect official positions of the Twin Cities Media Alliance, but you can expect a lively discussion and some fresh insights.)

2) The **National Conference on Media Reform is coming to the Twin Cities June 6-8, 2008**. This is an opportunity to "join fellow activists, media makers, educators, journalists, policymakers and concerned citizens in calling for real and lasting changes to our nation's media system." Featured participants include Bill Moyers, Dan Rather, Amy Goodman, and Free Press Founder Bob McChesney, who was the keynote speaker at last fall's TCMA's citizen media

forum. To register or get more information, visit the conference website at www.freepress.net/conference.

3) We want to build on the momentum of the NCMR by organizing an ongoing local media reform group associated with the Twin Cities Media Alliance. If you want to help create this group, or just want to be informed about future media reform events and activities, please contact me at Jeremy@tcmediaalliance.org, or Nancy at nancy@tcmediaalliance.org.

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- The Freelance Communicators Network meets every month at the Old Country Buffet on County Rd. B2, between Snelling and Fairview near Rosedale. This month join them for socializing and business on Friday, March 21, 2008, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. For more information, please contact John Fineberg at, 651-699-3333.

COMING IN APRIL

- The Bloomington Art Center will present the Annual Bloomington Writers' Festival and Book Fair. **Saturday, April 5, 2008, 9:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.** is the date to connect writers with authors, to partake in workshops and find writers' resources and businesses. This event is sponsored by the Bloomington Literary Council and the Midwest Independent Publishers Association (MIPA). The keynote speaker is novelist Faith Sullivan. For information, or to register for workshops, please visit www.BloomingtonArtCenter.com

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- The Loft's 7th Annual Festival of Children's Literature will be held on Friday April 11, 9:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. and Saturday, April 12, 2008, 9:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Aimed at writers for young people, illustrators, publishing professionals, and educators, The Loft's 7th Annual Festival Children's Literature will include workshops, presentations, panels, book sales, and more. Get details and registration information at <http://www.loft.org>

CLASSIFIEDS

The Midwest Independent Publishers Association (MIPA) reports that 167 titles from 78 publishers in the 12 eligible states has been entered in MIPA's 18th Annual Midwest Book Awards competition for excellence in independent or non-profit publishing. More than 700 books has been distributed to the judges for review in 25 categories.

The judges will return their evaluations by March 31, 2008, and results tallied. Finalists will be posted on the MIPA website in early April. Winners will be announced at the awards ceremony on May 14, 2008, with the help of our special guest, Matthew Hurley, from Publishers Weekly.

An RSVP is requested if you plan to attend the Midwest Book Awards Ceremony at the Minnesota Humanities Commission, 987 East Ivy Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota, on Wednesday, May 14, 6:30-8:30 p.m.



The Connection with NWU-TC's own Jim Wishner – once again inviting Twin City listeners to tune into his show, "The Connection" on Saturdays, 7:00 a.m. on KTNF 950 AM aka, Air America-Minnesota.

Note: Just a reminder to colleagues that Jim is always looking for writers to interview. Preference would be non-fiction, musings or thoughts – for on-air discussion with Jim. Contact information, dejim@prodigy.net or 651-578-1967. The station also streams live online at www.airamericaminnesota.com

Marginal Notes from the Editor

I find it a great irony that this election year of 2008 is also the Chinese year of the Rat. If there are any prognosticators out there, the Year of the Rat is also one of foreboding – traditionally one with several natural disasters. Weather and the election aside; the NWU has had its own man made disaster with the resignation of our three (elected) vice presidents as announced in the January newsletter. A

lengthy conference call (mid-January) included our UAW administrators Scott Sommer and Bob Madore offered nothing more than a promise from Madore that our union 'will not go under my (Madore's) watch.' How comforting.

Throughout February, I was 'waiting to exhale' to hear a more reasonable explanation for the inequities that resulted in those resignations – and a fear of our own chapter's reaction. To date, no plausible explanation has been forthcoming. Equally disappointing was the little to no response from our own TC members. Offers to partake in the Steering Committee meeting for open discussions of our future, calls for volunteers to partake in organizing committees brought no response, let alone interest.

In the final analysis, it appears that member reactions to the dealings on the national level have little effect at the local level. I could pontificate more on this but I will not.

Going back to this election year – besides the diversity of candidates, the primary turnouts have broken every record in numbers. It would seem that with the success of the Writers Guild, the upcoming Media event in June and calls for Media reform might inspire writer involvement, it has not. Compliancy amidst the need for change seldom creates change for something better. Past elections are a testament to that. I believe in unions. I also believe that we as writers need our or at least a union that will represent us.

The deadline for the April issue is March 28, 2008. Please send articles, comments and items of interest the editor at, jangigi@earthlink.net

In Solidarity and to the future,

Jan Alan, Chair/Editor

National Writers Union, Twin Cities Chapter

"Do not wait to strike till the iron is hot, but make it hot by striking"

W.B. Yeats