



NWU-TC Newsletter December 2006

Letter to Twin Cities Writers

The work of writing is a solitary affair. But the work of championing writers' rights and promoting the business of writing is a collective affair. That's where the National Writers Union comes in. If you've let your NWU membership lapse, or if you're thinking about joining, now is the time!

At a recent meeting of the National Executive Board, I met with a leadership team and learned about new campaigns and services for members. I met chapter chairs from around the country, shared ideas with them, and was reminded, once again, why we need a National Writers Union. Our Twin Cities chapter remains active with monthly meetings, networking, and advice. Steering Committee members are creating partnerships with other writers' groups and progressive organizations to widen our network of support. The national network and support of our parent union, the UAW, enhances our strength. The NWU is our union, and—we have the opportunity to make it relevant to our lives as Minnesota writers.

New leadership in the union: The dynamic, dedicated, and capable team of officers are committed to improving services and responsiveness to our members and to work more effectively for writers' rights.

New leadership in Washington: With the new Democrat led Congress, the NWU now has a good chance to move our legislative agenda forward. Among our goals are (1) secure collective bargaining rights for freelance writers (something freelance writers in many other countries already enjoy); (2) criminalize copyright infringement, so that those who steal our written works pay the same penalties as those who steal music and movies.

New and improved member benefits: The soon-to-be-launched Hire A Union Writer website will allow NWU members to post resumes and writing samples on a site that will be available to potential employers. The HAUW website will be linked to a renewed Jobs Hotline where employers can post job opportunities and members can find them.

Contract advice and grievance assistance remain among the core services of the NWU. Members get help from a national network of trained volunteers. If you're concerned about a contract or need help resolving problems with a publisher, write to advice@nwu.org.

You can join the NWU from the national website: www.nwu.org. Or, if you'd prefer, drop me a line at suegrieger@earthlink.net and I'll email you a form that you can print out and mail.

Happy Holidays to all!

Sue Grieger
Chair, National Writers Union, Twin Cities

Worth repeating:

On the National level, the NWU continues to serve members with contract advice and grievance assistance. The dedicated group of trained volunteers helps members get better contracts or recover money owed them by clients. To use this invaluable resource, write to advice@nwu.org and describe your situation. An advisor will contact you within a few days.

And locally, the current focus of our chapter is on the continuation of valuable relationships, networking and related educational and economic resources for the talented writers in our area. Our strength is in our solidarity as writers. The Twin Cities chapter of the NWU is one of the strongest in the country.

DECEMBER CALENDER OF EVENTS

December 9: *Holiday Celebration of the Arts*, 12 p.m. - 7 p.m. This event at the Anderson Center for the Arts in Red Wing, Minnesota highlights the work of over 55 artists, writers and musicians. Open studios, music, art and book sales, demonstrations, food and refreshments are scheduled throughout the day. If you haven't been to the Anderson Center, you are in for a very special treat! For the shopper in you, this might be just that opportunity to find that unique holiday gift.

Editor's Note: The repeat notice of the above event may seem redundant; and today is December 9, perhaps too late to consider the trip to Red Wing. But the importance of this center to our Twin Cities chapter should not be ignored. Thanks to the efforts of Jackie Mosio (Writers for Change), our chapter and the Anderson Center are now partners. This partnership opens the door to provide multiple opportunities for TC member participation through a variety of venues: these opportunities include the Center providing retreats of two to four weeks in

duration to enable writers, artists and scholars to advance or complete works in progress; speaker presentations, web site links, holiday and summer art celebrations, as well as the Children's Book Fair. For those serious about professional personal growth and representation of our chapter, a short trip (whatever day is convenient) is, at the very least, in one's best interests.

The Center's address is **163 Tower View**, just outside of Red Wing. The scenic drive on Highway 61 from the Twin Cities is less than an hour. For additional information, visit <http://www.andersoncenter.org/>

If you would like to work on partnering ideas and the relationship with the Anderson Center, please contact Jackie Mosio at jbellemosio@aol.com.

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**Friends Book Store and Gift Shop
Minneapolis Central Library
300 Nicollet Mall**

Stop by the new Friends Bookstore at the Central Library for our special week-long holiday sale on all USED Merchandise (books, records, videos, magazines).

- December 9,11,12,13, all USED merchandise will be 50% off.
- December 14th (Thursday) all USED merchandise will be just 25 cents.
- December 15th and 16th (Friday and Saturday) \$2 for all the books you can put in a grocery bag.

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Co-authors, Allen and Linda Anderson will be featured speakers on Saturday, December 16 at 1:30 p.m. at the Animal Humane Society, **845 Meadow Lane North**, Golden Valley as part of the ongoing Authors on Animals series at the shelter.

Previous guest authors in the series have included Dr. Temple Grandin, Dr. Jonathan Balcombe and Emily Buchwald. They will donate the all proceeds from the sale of their books on Saturday to the Animal Humane Society.
http://www.animalhumanesociety.org/news_authors.asp

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Coming in January –

Please join us on Tuesday, January 16, 1 p.m., at the Resource Center of the Americas (RCA) to hear our special guest, Joel Hoekstra, the Managing Editor of *Minnesota Monthly*. Mr. Hoekstra will include discussion of the magazine's aims, and offer advice to aspiring freelancers.

Joel came to *Minnesota Monthly* from a position as Senior Editor with *Experience Life*, a health and fitness publication produced by Lifetime Fitness. He also worked as a freelance writer and editor, prior to his current position with the *Minnesota Monthly*; that also included work for This Old House, *Metropolis*, *Northwest World Traveler*, the *Star Tribune* and several other national and regional magazines. During the course of this varied career; Joel has had the opportunity to interview such notable personalities as actor Morgan Freeman, chimp researcher Jane Goodall, and clothing designer Tommy Hilfiger.

The Resource Center of the Americas (RCA) is located at **3019 Minnehaha Avenue South** in Minneapolis, half a block south of East Lake Street, right behind Minnehaha Liquors.

Contact John Toren jhtoren@comcast.net or Cary Griffith Cary.J.Griffith@ceridian.com with any questions.

About our Members ~

Ted Fiskevold, NWU Twin Cities Local 13 member from Detroit Lakes, recently accepted a position with Detroit Lakes Newspapers which is part of the Forum Communications chain.

Fiskevold added his writing, photography, reporting, layout and editing skills to the editorial staff beginning November 13, as the *Outdoor News and Countryside* Editor and the county government beat reporter. He will also be assigned random stories and photography from the general news mix.

Detroit Lakes Newspapers publishes the *Becker County Record* on Wednesdays and the *Detroit Lakes Tribune* on Sundays-- both online at www.dl-online.com - and a variety of other publications.



Twin Cities own Jim Wishner, NWU member and radio commentator, interviewed Laura Zabel, Executive Director of Springboard for the Arts, on his weekly radio show 'The Connection', in November.

Inspired by an ongoing survey that began last September to gauge the economic impact of arts in the Twin City area, Wishner jumped on the story. Within the interview, and according to Zabel, '...there is much to be proud of in the Twin Cities, as the quality and quantity of arts available here make it a national and worldwide destination point.' Included in her commentary, was to encourage public officials and policy makers to support those engaged in artistic endeavors and public showcases for local artists.

A CD of the November 26, program is available by contacting Jim Wishner. Please email Jim, with your address or contact information, to jim@citolink.com for your own personal copy.

The Connection, airs Sundays, after the 5 p.m. news on KTNF AM 950 in St. Louis Park. It also streams live, on line, on the Air America Minnesota web site at www.airamericaminnesota.com.

If you have suggestions about future guests or topics, a news tip for the Minnesota News Connection statewide broadcast service, please also contact Jim Wishner at 651-578-1967 or 888-692-9358.

CLASSIFIEDS

Featured Opportunity:

The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library is pleased to announce that nominations are now open for the 19th Annual Minnesota Book Awards, honoring the state's finest authors, illustrators, publishers, and other literary contributors. Eight categories have been established to recognize and celebrate the best in Minnesota literature: Autobiography, Memoir & Creative Nonfiction; Children's Literature; Fine Press; General Nonfiction; Genre Fiction; Novel & Short Story; Poetry; and Young Adult Literature.

This is open to anyone willing to pay the \$30 entry fee and provide the required number of reading copies is eligible to nominate a book. Nominators may include, but are not limited to, authors, publishers, and agents. Nomination forms and the eligibility and entry guidelines are available online at The Friends of the St. Paul Library. The deadline for submission of nominations is 5:00 p.m. on Friday, December 15, 2006. Winners will be announced at the 19th Annual Minnesota Books Awards event on Saturday, May 5, 2007 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel - Saint Paul Riverfront.

Nomination forms, the eligibility and entry guidelines are available online at The Friends of the St. Paul Library. For more information, please contact Ann Nelson at The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library at mnbookawards@thefriends.org

Please watch for additional information regarding our chapter's future involvement with this event on the NWU-TC website and in the newsletter.

Marginal Notes from the Editor –

While the Twin Cities chapter of the NWU is considered one of the strongest in the country; unions in general, as well as the importance of union membership and involvement seems to have fallen on hard times. In some circles, it is just as controversial to admit one is a union member as it is to say, 'Merry Christmas',

during this holiday season. A mention of either has been known to nearly inflame political fallout. I can't help but feel there is a connection here of sorts.

The following excerpts are from a piece called, 'A Lesson from Geese', written by an unknown author who took time to observe and learn from them:

There is reason behind the behavior and instinct (of geese) to fly in the V-formation. As each bird flaps its wings, it creates uplift for the bird following. In the V-formation, the whole flock adds at least 71% more flying range than if each bird flew alone. A goose will feel the drag and resistance, should it fall out of formation and try to fly alone – that goose will quickly go back into formation...

Like geese...people who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier than those who try to go it alone. When a goose gets tired, it rotates back into formation, and another goose flies at the point position. If people would realize that ultimately their success depends on working as a team, taking turns doing the hard tasks, and sharing leadership.

Geese in the rear of the formation honk to encourage those up front to “up their speed”. It is important that our “honking from behind” be encouraging. Otherwise it's just – well – honking.

When a goose gets sick or wounded, two other geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and provide protection. They stay with the unhealthy bird until it is either able to fly again or dies. Then they launch out again with another passing flock or try to catch up with their own. May we be so sacrificial that we may be worthy of such friends in our time of need.

Writing is the solitary profession of the individual, often fearful of losing this individuality. But it is because of this solitude and need for common purpose – the principles and sense of justice for the individual within that community that the NWU was created.

This time of celebration, once known as Christmas, is now referred to as the holidays, because individualism has been granted precedence and we have become solitary revelers too fearful of offending others with our own self-declarations of what that declaration may represent.

The connection between unions and Christmas is that if you celebrate something else besides Christmas, you can still enjoy this time - as the principles apply to whatever family holiday or traditional gathering you have. Whatever our greeting to others may be; like the geese it can be looked upon as a universal greeting of good will towards others; “honking to encourage”, if you will.

If we, as writers, can celebrate our occasional successes; surely we can “share the hard tasks, taking turns with leadership...encourage...” our fellow writers in the community of the union.

I wish you all the best in the coming new year and within your celebrations that all have their roots in the principles of tolerance and charity.

The deadline for the January newsletter submissions is December 28. Please send them to Jan Alan, NWU-TC Editor, jangigi@earthlink.net Thank you.

In solidarity,

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'God bless us, everyone.' - Charles Dickens -