



Twin Cities Chapter ~ March 2007 Newsletter

Editor's note: Welcome to the "shovel out" edition of the NWU-TC newsletter. Until last week, Minnesota's winters have been scant of any snow. We made up for it this month with near-record accumulations. Hardy though Minnesotans can be; I hope our readers got through the last week safely, having suffered no other inconveniences from the storms than wet socks and sore shoulders from 'shoveling out'; and were able to keep custody of the family car – away from the impound lot. If the blizzards didn't get your attention - perhaps another March occurrence will - Daylight Saving Time begins four weeks earlier than usual – further comments can be found in **Marginal Notes from the Editor**.

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For reader ease and accessibility, please note the following meeting dates and topics:

Tuesday, **March 13**, 1-2:30 p.m. - **Launching Your Website/**
Wednesday, **March 14**, 7-9 p.m. - **Trends in Publishing**
Tuesday, March 20, 1 p.m. - Author, Robert Alexander, **From Russia with Love**

For a more detailed description of these presentations and NWU-related and other events, scroll down to the **March Calendar of Events**.

Letter from the Chair to Twin Cities Writers, March 2007

FUN (that's right, FUN not FUND) RAISING! An early advocate of free speech, women's equality and independence, birth control, and union organizing, Emma Goldman worked hard to change the world, BUT she never forgot to have fun. When chided for being frivolous, she retorted: "If I can't dance, I don't want to come to your revolution."

In the spirit of Emma Goldman, the Twin Cities chapter has begun a new FUN RAISING campaign. FUN is even more important than funds to keep our chapter thriving and vital. At our February Steering Committee meeting, we talked about how we can raise more fun as we move ahead with new ideas. Here are some exciting projects for you to watch for:

Twin Cities writers are talented and prolific and one way to demonstrate this and have fun is to share our work. The Twin Cities chapter plans to present Free-Form Readings in various locations. Writers will have opportunities to read their work in a public forum—whether it is an excerpt from a literary work, an article, a proposed piece, a poem, a journal or blog entry, or a letter to the editor. You will receive an email soon asking whether you are willing to share something you've written. Go for it!

As a writer, you also have an opportunity to be in the forefront with cutting edge tools for communication--that is New Media such as blogs, wikis, social networking websites, streaming video and podcasts. According to the New Media Institute, more than 70 percent of large companies have implemented corporate weblogs; twice as many Americans used the Internet as their primary source of news about the 2006 campaign compared with the most recent mid-term election in 2002; and web traffic to the blog pages of the top 10 online newspapers grew 210 percent during 2006.

The NWU as an organization has taken little notice of the New Media revolution before NOW. Our chapter is primed to ask the important questions about the New Media, such as: How are the New Media affecting communication? What are the implications of New Media for traditional copyright? And how can our union use these New Media tools to assist writers? In the coming months, the Twin Cities chapter will seek interested writers to study and discuss New Media, with the goal of presenting a regional New Media Conference that can be a model for other chapters. We intend to reach out to members across the country for ideas on speakers and topics. The Boston chapter has already expressed interest and has offered financial help for such projects. Stay tuned for more on this.

I hope you will join me in the commitment to have FUN as we move ahead with these plans! Write to me at suegrieger@earthlink.net

March Calendar of Events

March 7, 5-7 p.m. The UpSwing Business EXPO

The UpSwing Business EXPO will be held at the Northland Inn, 7025 Northland Drive in Brooklyn Park MN. This is a networking event & mini-trade show for leaders of companies in a variety of industries. Business professionals numbering from 500 to 700 attend each event. It's the largest business networking event in the Twin Cities, and it's held five times a year. Cost for the event is a business card.

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Please join us on **Tuesday, March 13 at 1-2:30 p.m.** for a co-sponsored event featuring panelists on the topic of '**Launching Your Web Site**'.

Sponsored by the National Writers Union, Twin Cities Chapter (NWU-TC), and the Professional Editors Network (PEN), the speakers are **Barbara K. Mednick** and **Mark Levine**.

Whether you are considering hiring a computer person or doing the work yourself, you will be given down to earth, user-friendly advice for writers/editors using or considering a web site for marketing their talent. The presentation will focus on the nuts and bolts of the decision to build a web site and discuss how to actually get started. Speakers will provide handouts.

Barbara K. Mednick, is president of BKM Consulting, Inc. where she provides PR/marketing communications consulting, writing, and training to Fortune 500 companies, mid-size companies, educational and nonprofit organizations.

Mark Levine is the president of Click Industries, an ecommerce company that operates more than 30 websites that provide products and services for small business owners, writers, musicians, and other creative individuals.

The presentation will be held at the Resource Center of the Americas (RCA), Lower Level, 3019 Minnehaha Avenue South, Minneapolis.

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Wednesday, March 14th 7-9 p.m., NWU members are cordially invited to attend this event hosted by the Midwest Independent Publishers Association, (MIPA). The topic, **Trends in Publishing**, features, *Publishers Weekly* representatives; **Matthew Hurley** and **Louisa Ermelino**.

Their discussion includes; the emerging role of independent publishers' vs the Big Seven, which book categories are doing well, book review processes, issues related to book distribution and the changing roles in all steps of the publishing process including wholesaling, returns and other factors that influence business.

Matthew Hurley is celebrating his 18th year with *Publishers Weekly*. Recently appointed sales director, he shares responsibilities in the U.S., Canada and Europe.

Louisa Ermelino joined PW as Reviews Editor in April of 2005. She had been a reviewer for trade and consumer magazines, most recently chief of reporters at *In Style* magazine. She is the author of three novels, and teaches creative writing at Columbia.

The event location is the St. Anthony Park Library, (lower level), 2245 Como Avenue in St. Paul.



From Russia with Love: The movie – no, the author, Robert Alexander.

Following a successful career as a writer of science fiction novels under the name R. D. Zimmerman, Robert Alexander turned to the history of Russian, a country he knows well. Alexander has been visiting Russia frequently for more than 30 years, and since 1990 he has been a partner in a St. Petersburg company that operates a warehouse and customs clearance center, a dental clinic, and a chain of espresso-wine bars. The results of this change in direction were two best-selling novels set in revolutionary Russia, *The Kitchen Boy* and *Rasputin's Daughter*.

Join us on **March 20**, at **1 p.m.** at the Resource Center of the Americas as he shares secrets of plot development, research, and generating suspense, and also a few insights into the publishing word gathered during a long and successful writing career.

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 with any questions.



Bloomington Writers' Festival

The fourth annual festival will be held on March 24, 9:30-3:30 p.m., at the Bloomington Center for the Arts, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington. Workshops include, "Bringing Memories to Life" and "Marketing". NWU-TC member John Toren will be teaching a workshop titled, "Every Writer Needs an Editor".

Workshop fees are \$10, and participants need to pre-register by calling 952-563-8587. Suggested donations for other events are \$3-\$5. For more information, go to www.bloomintonartcenter.com or call the number above.



Sunday, March 25, 1 p.m. Members of the Women Poets & Writers of the Twin Cities--including NWU member Sue Grieger --will read and perform their poems, stories, and songs on as part of the PRISM series at the Coffee Gallery, 1011 Washington Avenue South, Minneapolis. Other participants include Wanda Brown, Joan Calof, Nancy Cox, Shelley Getten, Phyllis Goldin, Karla Melvin, and Judith Weir. Admission is free.

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An exhibition entitled, *Behind the Gate: China in Flux after the Flood of the Three Gorges Dam*, will be held at the Macalester College, Janet Wallace Fine Art Center Gallery from **March 2** through **March 27**. The exhibition features photos taken by Associate Professor and author, Wang Ping.

Ping is the acclaimed author of the short story collection *American Visa*, the novel *Foreign Devil*, two poetry collections: *Of Flesh & Spirit* and *The Magic Whip*, the cultural study, *Aching for Beauty: Footbinding in China*, and the forthcoming collection of fiction stories *The Last Communist Virgin*. Visit WangPing.com for more information.

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The Friends Book Store, at the Minneapolis Downtown Public Library will have a Winter Thaw Sale, starting on Saturday, March 10 thru March 24. All used merchandise (books, records, books on tape, magazines) will be on sale during this period. Prices will be 50% off. Starting March 17th, and running through March 21st, all used items will be 25 cents each! The final three days of the sale (March 22-24) will be a \$2 bag sale- all the books you can fit into a grocery bag for \$2. The store opens at 10 a.m. each day and we are closed Mondays and Sundays.

Military Poster Sale (April 14, Saturday): 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., The Friends Book Store will hold a Military Poster Sale in the Doty Boardroom. Authentic vintage posters from WWI and WWII will be offered for sale with prices ranging from \$10 to \$60. Some history books and other related items will also be offered for sale. Questions, call 612-630-6178.

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New member benefit

If you are looking for freelance work, a dynamic members-only program to link up writers and clients is available on the Hire-a-Union-Writer web portal at www.nwu.org.

To sign up, log into the union hall/members only section and scroll down on the list on the left side to Member Resources, where there is a link to Hire a Union Writer. You can enter your genres, specific publications, and (if you wish) your resume and samples of your work. As soon as 100 members register, the NWU will notify unions around the country of the search engine they can use to find union writers. This is a new program to link up writers and clients, and we need as many of you as possible to sign up for it to be effective. Hire-A-Union Writer may become one of the most valuable benefits of NWU membership.

Beginning In April ~ Readings for writers. This is an invitation and opportunity for NWC-TC members to reconnect through readings (whatever genre), at local coffee shops and libraries to share their writings, re-connecting as friends and having fun. Watch for details.

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The Employee Free Choice Act, which empowers those workers wanting to form a union that had previously languished in the Republican majority Congress passed in House of Representatives on March 1. There is a Minnesota Senate resolution (sponsored by Senator Tomassoni) coming up before the Minnesota Senate Rules Committee on March 5, in support of this federal legislation.

Marginal Notes from the Editor:

This time last week, most folks were mesmerized by the conscientious warnings by local meteorologists' of the one-two punch blizzards heading our way. Most began their mental, if not physical, 'hunker-down preparedness' for the storms. Lack of any discernable winter snows (literally, for years) in Minnesota, made this March almost exciting. But, alas March weather traditionally changes radically. This week promises rain and warmer temps.

In 2007, the blizzards- to-blossoms® weather is not the only radical change to be remembered this March. In less than a week, by order of federal law, daylight saving time begins – four weeks early. The inspiration for saving daylight began with Benjamin Franklin in 1784. Officially adopted by the U.S. in 1918, it's been with us ever since. Daylight saving has had a remarkable impact on a wide variety of unexpected areas – from local Twin Cities feuding in 1965 to Middle East terrorism.

This year, it may be wise to Google 'daylight saving time' not only for interest, but also for a how-to manually adjust your PC's, and other related devices that had been programmed for the traditional time changes in April and October. On a personal level, this earlier change requires I re-program me – my old body clock does adjust eventually, usually around the time we go back to 'normal'. March used to be symbolic for weird weather, St. Pat's Day fun, and spring. For me, in 2007 and for years to come, it is now the month requiring longer adjustment to the hour I lose and can never get back.

The deadline for April newsletter submissions is March 28. Please send them to Jan Alan, NWU-TC Editor, jangigi@earthlink.net

In solidarity,

Janet (Jan) Alan, NWU-TC Editor
Poise & Pen

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"You never know what your history is going to be like until long after you're gone." --George W. Bush, Washington, D.C., May 5, 2006