



Twin Cities Chapter Newsletter ~ May 2007

Inside this issue: NWU-TC survey results, poetry readings, writer's workshops and meetings from pitching to magazine editors to observing (or participating in) a live demonstration of the radio interview.

Letter to Twin Cities Writers

The Twin Cities chapter is moving forward with our ongoing series of workshops. The May 8 workshop features magazine editor Amy Sitze discussing how to pitch a magazine article. See our News and Events page for details. The new "Free-Form Reading Series" is slated to start on June 14 at Magers & Quinn Books in Uptown, Minneapolis. Writers who said they'd be interested in sharing their work will receive an invitation this month.

We currently have a great group of Steering Committee members who have developed plans for summer and fall programming. Our meetings are fun: everyone pitches in, the tasks are not overwhelming in terms of time or talent, and the results are quality programming, professional networking opportunities, and more.

During the next month, our chapter will hold formal elections for Steering Committee members and Delegates to the union's national assembly, also known as the DA. The DA will be held August 8-12, 2007, at Emerson College in Boston.

After serving on the Steering Committee every year since 1999, I will be stepping down, and will not run for chair of our chapter. But I won't be going away; I am willing to mentor up to three NWU members who will commit to the roles of chair, co-chair, or treasurer.

I'm looking for NWU members to step forward to help our chapter. Prior experience is helpful, but not required. What is required is the interest, the desire to make a difference, the ability to work well with others, and a tolerance for the occasional process changes that are mandated by our national counterparts. A sense of humor helps too.

In addition to the chapter Chair or Co-Chairs and Treasurer positions, which are

mandated by our national bylaws, we need several other Steering Committee members to carry out the tasks of organizing events and communicating with members.

Members will receive more information and an official “call for nominations” early in May. Please take the time to consider making a difference, having fun, and enhancing your professional network as a member of the NWU-TC chapter steering committee.

It has been my pleasure to serve as interim chair this past year, and I look forward to our continued association.

In solidarity,

Sue Grieger

Special recognition and our thanks go to Sue Grieger for her dedication and service with the Twin Cities Chapter as the interim chair for the last year. As a ten-year member of the NWU-TC, Grieger has held varied positions with the Steering Committee as co-chair, as well as membership committee chair and newsletter editor. Additionally, she is (one of) our local grievance officers and contract advisors.

During the transition period with the (yet to be determined) new officers, Grieger will continue to advise and mentor these officers. Volunteers indeed are the heart of any organization; some volunteers, whose all out efforts and energy is difficult to replace – Thank you Sue!

Editor’s note: In addition to the survey results listed, the Steering Committee members raised the following questions listed here to assist us in bringing the best options and choices to member and to help re-build our local chapter. For both members and non-members, please consider the following:

What enhances your interest in meetings: The topic, place or time? For non-or lapsed members, what would pique your interest in joining or re-newing? Please send your responses to the Editor, jangigi@earthlink.net

Our Members Present ~ May readings:

Magers & Quinn Bookstore, 3038 Hennepin Avenue (Uptown) in Minneapolis, will feature a reading by Sharon Chmielarz on Thursday, May 24; at 7:00 p.m.

Chmielarz’s book, *The Rhubarb King, Poems*, published by the Loonfeather Press, Bemidji is one of the 2006 MIPA Midwest Book Award Finalists.



Writer and poet, Andrea Jenkins will be the featured reader at the celebration of the Midtown Greenway and the annual meeting of the Midtown Greenway Coalition – Neighborhoods for a Great Greenway. This event takes place on Thursday, May 24, 6:30- 8:30, at the Midtown Global Market on Lake Street and Chicago Avenue in Minneapolis.

The Midtown Coalition is a citizens' group that is dedicated to leading a community-based process to develop and continually improve a greenway and non-stop bikeway along the 29th street railroad corridor in Minneapolis. Future plans for a greenway include the current site of the Cepro Grain Elevator site.

Andrea Jenkins' work has appeared in several local publications including, *The Minneapolis Spokesman and Recorder*, the City of Minneapolis Web site, the *Minneapolis Observer* and others. She has performed with The Outward Spiral, Mama Mosiac and many others. Andrea has self-published a chapbook of poems called *tributaries: poems celebrating black history*. She currently is co-curator of the S.A.S.E, Carol Connolly GLBT Reading Series at Inter-media Arts.



The National Writers Union Free Form Readings will be initiated on Thursday, June 14, at Majors & Quinn Bookstore, on Hennepin Avenue, in Minneapolis (Uptown). For additional information, please go to the **Coming in June** section in this newsletter.

National Writers Union Survey results

This spring, the Twin Cities NWU Steering Committee sent a brief survey to people in our chapter whose memberships had lapsed. We wanted to hear why they had left the union, and what might bring them back.

Below is a summary of results from the 22 surveys received:

The benefits cited most for being a member were contract advice, meetings and workshops, and networking. (Half of those surveyed said contract advice and or networking, meetings and workshops were the union's key benefits). Others mentioned Hire-a-Union-Writer, the member-only online job postings, agent listings and publications.

The cost of dues and issues at the national NWU were the primary reasons why those surveyed said they left the union. (About half of those surveyed listed cost or the national's problems.) Others cited inconvenient meeting locations or times, having less time, writing less. One didn't see the value in being in the union. About a third of those surveyed expressed interest in joining a local writers' network not affiliated with the NWU; half said they might be interested in joining such a group.

Lapsed members said they would consider renewing if the union:

- Offered group health insurance (two people said that)
- Offered more meeting topics for experienced writers (one person's comment)
- Offered a press pass for members at no extra charge (one person's comments)
- Had an affordable entry level rate (one person's comment)
- Provided more support and recognition for members outside the Twin Cities (one person's comment)
- Focused more on writing and less on political agenda (one person's comment)
- If the national proves it can survive (one person's comment)

Several of those who were surveyed said they planned to renew. We are grateful for all those who join or renew. The steering committee is working to strengthen this chapter. If you have ideas or comments about what our chapter can do to become more valuable to you as a writer, please contact us at www.nwu-tc.org or email any of us on the steering committee.

Kate Havelin khavelin@aol.com Sue Grieger sgrieger@earthlink.net or Jan Alan jangigi@earthlink.net

MAY EVENTS CALENDAR

How to Pitch a Magazine Story, is the focused topic in this information-packed workshop led by local editor Amy Sitze, who will share tips on how to pitch a magazine story to editors. Please join us on Tuesday, May 8, at 1:00 p.m. at the Ridgedale Library (conference room 172), in Minnetonka. This interactive workshop will also include time for questions and networking.

Sitze edits *Gardening How-To* Magazine, which is published by North American Membership Group (NAMG) in Minnetonka. It's the largest gardening-only magazine in the United States, with 650,000 subscribers. She has worked as a writer, author, and editor on topics ranging from electronic components to e-learning for corporations and higher education. Sitze is a graduate of St. Olaf College with a major in English.

The Ridgedale Library is at 2601 Ridgedale Drive, Minnetonka, 55305. The library is just east of Plymouth Road and south of Ridgedale Shopping Center. The library phone number is 952-847-8800. As always, this workshop is free to all writers. For further information, contact Kate Havelin, khavelin@aol.com

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Two major events; the Friends of the Library sponsored 19th Annual Minnesota Book Awards was held at the Crown Plaza Hotel in St. Paul, on Saturday, May 5; and the upcoming 2006 Midwest Book Awards Ceremony (details below) both honor members of the NWU-TC who have been nominated in various categories. Please watch for the names of these NWU-TC participants, winners and nominees that will be posted in the June newsletter.

The 2006 Midwest Book Awards Ceremony will be held at the prestigious Minnesota Humanities Commission, 987 East Ivy Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota, on Wednesday, May 9, 2007, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

The Midwest Independent Publishers Association (MIPA) 17th Annual Midwest Book Awards attracted an unprecedented 146 nominations from 65 publishers in ten of the twelve Midwestern states in our region. The 69 award-winning titles come from 35 different publishers representing all ten states. There were ties in two categories.

Sponsored by the Midwest Independent Publishers Association (MIPA); this competition for excellence in independent or non-profit publishing recognizes creativity in content and execution, overall book quality, and the book's unique contribution to its subject area.



A Writers Festival ~ May 11-12, 2007

The Loft Literary Center together with the Minnesota Magazine & Publishers Association (MMPA) to present the first-ever Magazine Writers' Festival, May 11 and 12, at the Open Book in downtown Minneapolis. The festival is designed to help both aspiring and experienced writers build their skills—and better understand how editors and publishers work. Check out this dynamic program, which features more than thirty top area writers, editors, and publishers. The keynote speaker is David Carr, media critic with the *New York Times*. This Minnesota native will share his journey to the Big Apple and what trends he sees ahead for magazines—and for magazine writers.

Registration costs are \$180; \$160 for Loft/MMPA members and can be done in person at the Loft, by phone, 612-379-8999 or online at www.loft.org

COMING IN JUNE

Working Class Culture and Counter-Culture

The 2007 Conference of the Working Class Studies Association

June 14 – 17, at Macalester College, St. Paul. Join academics, artists, activists and others for presentations, performances, roundtables, films, workshops, readings, tours, and more! Sessions will engage labor history, classroom pedagogy, working class experiences on campus and in the world, labor and grassroots activism, representations of workers and self-representations by workers, and culture from bowling and baseball to poetry and music. Presenters will come from across the U.S., plus Canada, Great Britain, France, South Africa, Nigeria, Brazil, and Australia.

Topics will include:

- Working class history through film
- Deindustrialization, culture and resistance
- Class in the classroom: Teaching strategies
- The Wobblies' Big Red Songbook
- American Indian history as working class history
- Telling the stories of working class neighborhoods in the Twin Cities
- Cultural work and social transformation
- Working class literature

Cost is \$100 for academics employed full-time; \$50 for all others.

For more information and to register:

www.macalester.edu/history/workingclass/index.html

Questions: Peter Racheff, phone 651-696-6371, or racheff@macalester.edu

The National Writers Union Free Form Readings ~
Greetings Writers,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in our National Writers Union Free Form Readings. Our first reading is scheduled for Thursday, June 14, 7:30 p.m. at Magers & Quinn independent bookstore on Hennepin Avenue in Uptown. If you are not already familiar with Magers and Quinn, check out their web site at www.magersandquinn.com

Please let me know ASAP (by May 15 at the latest) if you are available on that date. Magers and Quinn will include your name to their press release.

Please give me an idea of the selection of your writing that you plan to read and about how long it takes to read it. Your reading may be from published or unpublished material. Magers & Quinn would like to be able to sell your books if your reading is from a book.

We are very excited about this new opportunity! We have another potential reading site in St. Paul this summer. I know that some of the recipients of this message are not available on June 14, but I want you to be informed of our plans as we launch this new venture.

I look forward to hearing from you! Please let me know if you have any questions.

Marly Cornell

NWU-TC Free form Reading Program

animarly@aol.com or call, 952.929.5913

Minnesota Northwoods Writers Conference Workshops & Readings will be held at Bemidji State College in Bemidji on June 17-22, 2007.

This annual event features the distinguished visiting writers in various categories. For more information, or to register please visit; <http://www.bemidjistate.edu/writersconference> or NWU-TC member Susan Carol Hauser, MFA Chair, English Department, shauser@bemidjistate.edu or write;

Minnesota Northwoods Writers Conference Director, Liberal Education Program

Bemidji State University, # 23
1500 Birchmont Drive NE,
Bemidji, MN 56601



Occasional Poetry

This six-week course (J46-1), will be held on Thursdays, June 14 - July 26 (no class on July 5), from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Open Book. The instructor is Andrea Jenkins. Enrollment is open. This Summer 2007 offering is part of the Loft's new multi-cultural series, Walking between Worlds. The address is Suite 200, Open Book, 1011 Washington Avenue South, in Minneapolis.

Class description: An occasional poem is written for a specific event or moment in time. These poems can commemorate a wedding, or other special occurrence; or perhaps a protest march or political event. These poems can also play a major role in creating community for marginalized or under represented populations with their ability to inspire and even mobilize their listeners. In this class, you'll write and revise four occasional poems, read and discuss poetry by Maya Angelou, Nikki Giovanni, Emmanuel Ortiz, Essex Hemphill, E. Ethelbert Miller, Carol Connolly, and June Jordan, and develop oral reading techniques. You'll attend and critique one community reading in order to develop the awareness, ability, and acuity to create poems that build community and strengthen interpersonal relationships.

Class participation will include reading, writing, workshop participation and in-class spoken performance.



Mark your calendars for this fun presentation. For those writers interested in media exposure, but too modest (or scared) to envision actually participating in an on-air interview – opportunity knocks. Air America's the "Connection" commentator, Jim Wishner will conduct and tape an actual interview to be used on his Sunday program at the Rondo Community Library, University and Dale in St. Paul.

The presentation will take place on Tuesday, June 12, at 1:00 p.m. This chance to

observe the actual interview will be followed by discussion and networking. While this is open to all writers and interested parties, the participant must be a member of the union. For more information, contact, Jan Alan, jangigi@earthlink.net or call 612-727-2750. Please watch for additional details on the NWU-TC web site.

CLASSIFIEDS

In previous issues, Jim Wishner's offer to interview writers has inspired the idea to bring the interviewer (Wishner) to the interviewee. If you have skimmed over the previous entry – please re-read the above and reconsider.

Make the Connection with NWU-TC's own Jim Wishner - inviting Twin Cities listeners to tune into his show, "The Connection" on Sundays at 5:00 p.m. on KTNF 950 AM aka, Air America-Minnesota.

"Good stuff, between the static crashes," according to Jim. Note this reminder to colleagues that Jim is looking for writers to interview. If you have a new work out, essay, book, musings or thoughts - Jim would like to hear from you -

You can contact him at dejim@prodigy.net or 651-578-1967. The station also streams live online at www.airamericaminnesota.com

Radio prime time. Once upon a time.

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Below is the interview Amy Goodman conducted about the Postal Hike for Publications based on Time-Warner's recommendation. I don't know if you want to read all of it, but the website for people concerned about the issue is given by Karina Vanden Heuvel, the publisher of *The Nation*.

Based on a recommendation by Time-Warner Communications, the U.S. Postal Service is in the process of raising the postal rates for the small publication industries. A web site for individuals concerned with this issue and its crippling effect is given by Karina Vanden Heuvel, the publisher of *The Nation*.

Please visit <http://www.stoppostalratehikes.com> or call 1-888-999-3877 for a copy of or audio of the interview conducted by Amy with Karina Vanden Heuvel.

Marginal Notes from the Editor

Few individuals in the United States know much about May 1 – International Workers Day. Most Americans assume that (any worker) celebrations on this day

take place in Cuba or the former Soviet Union – without realizing that this ‘workers day’ also had its beginning in this country – as early as the 1860’s.

Workers banded together and struggled mightily for the eight-hour work day; but did not succeed until the 1880’s when organized labor was able to garner enough support at the national convention held in Chicago to declare and successfully lobby for the eight hour day. The year was 1884; the union, The Federation of Organized Trades and Labor (later known as the American Federation of Labor).

Socialism was an attractive view held by workers held at that time, with its ideology of the workers having control over production and distribution of goods and services. That view and the misunderstandings that followed would spark one of the most infamous occurrences in labor’s history, known as the ‘The Haymarket Massacre’ in Chicago. Neither time nor space allows me to give the particulars of this event that changed not only the history of labor, but that of the legal system. Please visit www.chicagohs.org for more information on the unions that eventually grew to include the expressions often used today: ‘An injury to one is an injury to all’ or ‘unions, the guys that brought you the weekend’.

May Day is not just a day for leaving baskets of flowers on neighbors’ doorsteps - once was so popular – or to swill wine and philosophize about current ‘difficulties’ in the workplace. It is at the very least a time to reflect on the sacrifices made and of the lives lost that inspired the inception of unions for all workers, even writers.

One final note, May also brings Memorial Day – a time to remember and honor both past and current members of our military – whether with graveside flowers or a simple thank you.

The deadline for the June issue is May 28. Please forward submissions to editor, jangigi@earthlink.net

In solidarity,

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“The coroner will find ink in my veins and blood on my typewriter keys”

~ C. Astrid Weber ~