



Twin Cities Chapter Newsletter ~ June 2007

Inside this issue: The NWU-TC election results, Free Form Reading Series begin, MIPA and Minnesota Book Awards finalists and winners, a re-cap of meetings and writer workshops.

Letter to Twin Cities Writers

The Twin Cities chapter of the NWU still stands as one of the strongest in the country. Over the past year, our active and self-sufficient group has proven that we are rarely short of talented and enthusiastic volunteers. Please welcome the new and returning members of our Steering Committee. As editor, I took the liberty of offering some additional and personal comments. It has been and will be my privilege again, to work with the following dedicated and dynamic individuals:

Jan Alan – Current Newsletter editor is honored to now also serve as the Chairperson of the NWU Twin Cities Chapter.

Mark Connor – Budding playwright and actor, whose other business card reads, 'Fighting chance/Boxing for Life' - is also a personal trainer for physical fitness and self-defense.

Marly Cornell – Chapter Secretary - who initiated the Free Form Reading Series and served as chairperson for the 2006 Midwest Independent Publishers Association (MIPA) Midwest Book Awards –willingly tackles every task with humor and common sense.

Sue Grieger – Long-time member and the 'glue' that held our chapter together who graciously will continue to give assistance and serve as mentor for the upcoming year.

Kate Havelin – Award-winning author in two categories in the 2006 Midwest Book Awards, whose bio includes ten years of writing for WCCO television, and who crafted our chapters' survey, giving us the starting point for continued growth.

Sharon Smith – A mystery writer whose nomination statement included her intention to keep the TC chapter "vital and profitable for its members."

Paul Zerby - Membership Coordinator – whose background as an attorney and community organizer will no doubt, add further panache to our meetings.

Some of the goals I would like to achieve in collaboration with Steering Committee members will be to keep our chapter's focus on the continuation of valuable relationships, networking and related educational and economic resources for the talented writers in our area. We have weathered one of the toughest years at both the National and local level. Late spring of 2006, brought together the interested members that kept our chapter together. Our first strength is in our solidarity as writers; that often as not become friendships as well. Won't you join us in this venture ahead?
In solidarity and to the year ahead,

Jan Alan, NWU-TC Chair

First things first ~

As writers, whatever our genre, too often we neglect to look at our efforts as a business venture worthy of capital gain – and setting the correct rates. The following is the response given by Miryam Williamson, to an editor's question about a minimum day rate for freelance writers. For those not familiar with the officers at the National level, Williamson is the First Vice President of the National Writers Union. (Thank you Miryam, for allowing me to share your response with our chapter.) Williamson wrote:

We don't specify rates, we only advise our members. As a union of independent writers, we are unable to fix rates.

Please allow me to suggest that, instead of thinking in terms of minimum (or maximum) rates, you think about what is fair and reasonable, what it takes to live safely and decently in today's economy. If you're used to thinking in terms of a year's pay, divide that by 2000 (50 40-hour weeks) for an hourly rate. Keep in mind that independent writers pay for their own sick leave, vacation days, social security taxes, and health insurance. The rule of thumb is to add 25%-30% to the basic pay rate to account for benefits.

Remember that you get what you pay for. If you pay the least possible rate, you'll probably get the least experienced and talented writers -- and you'll pay for higher quality by editing and reworking submissions yourself, at your presumably much higher rate.

Now you have the kind of advice we give our members, but from their point of view. If you'd like to hire one (or more) of our members, take a look at our Job Hotline area. The place for potential employers to go is:

http://nwu.org/nwu/index.php?cmd=showPage&page_id=1.3.4.2

You'll find all you need to know right there.

Our Members Present ~ June Free Form Reading Series

The Twin Cities Chapter of the NWU invited interested writers to read from their published or unpublished material. Please come to hear the five writers who answered the call:

Barbara Haselbeck will read from her travel essay, *Going Solo to Patzcuaro*.

Jackie Mosio presents a poetry collection, *Interpreting Sorrows*, about her work as a Spanish medical interpreter.

Reva Rasmussen will bring offerings her nonfiction book in progress about her travels in China with a woman of Chinese citizenship and member of a Muslim minority group.

Kathilyn Solomon, a children's book author who will read from her work.

Jacqueline White brings the memoir she's writing called *My Transgender Husband: A Love Story*.

This event is **FREE** and open to the public. Refreshments will be served.

Thursday, June 14, 7:30 p.m. marks the date and time for this exciting venue. The readings will be held at Magers & Quinn Bookstore, 3038 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis (Uptown area). **If you are not already familiar with Magers and Quinn, check out their web site at www.magersandquinn.com

Future **Free Form Readings** will be held in other locations this summer. Potential sites are Nina's Cafe (above Common Good Book Store in St. Paul and Micawber's Book Store in St. Anthony Park. If you want to participate in a reading, contact Marly Cornell at animarly@aol.com or call, 952-929-5913.

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In previous issues, Air America's 'Connection' commentator and NWU-TC member, **Jim Wishner**, offered to interview writers. This inspired the idea to bring the interviewer (Wishner) to the interviewee. Please join us for a fun and informative afternoon presentation as Wishner instructs authors on interviewing techniques, conducts and tapes an actual interview with author, **Kate Havelin**, to be aired on his Sunday morning radio program on 950 AM.

The presentation takes place tomorrow, **Tuesday, June 12, at 1:00 p.m.**, at the Rondo Community Outreach Library, 461 Dale Street North, in St. Paul (on the corner of Dale and University). Underground parking is available. This is FREE and open to all writers and interested parties. The library phone number is 651-266-7400. For more information, contact, Jan Alan, jangigi@earthlink.net or call 612-727-2750.

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JUNE WORKSHOP REMINDERS

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 come from across the U.S., Canada, Great Britain, France, South Africa, Nigeria, Brazil and Australia.

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 Rachleff, phone 651-696-6371, or rachleff@macalester.edu



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 contact NWU-TC member Susan Carol Hauser, MFA Chair, English Department, shauser@bemidjistate.edu

COMING IN JULY

If you missed the May meeting, here is another opportunity to hear **How to Pitch a Magazine Story**, the focused topic in an information-packed workshop led by local editor **Amy Sitze**. Please join us for this re-scheduled event on Tuesday, July 17, 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.

Amy Sitze is editor of *Gardening How-To*, the country's largest gardening-only magazine. It's published by the North American Membership Group in Minnetonka. Sitze has also written and edited about e-learning and electronic components. She 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

Special Recognition and Our Congratulations

Two separate major annual events; the Minnesota Book Awards sponsored by the Friends of the Library and the Midwest Independent Publishers Association (MIPA) Midwest Book Awards offer competitions for excellence in the varied categories.

Our chapter congratulates the following finalists and winners of these prestigious events, and those members whose behind-the-scenes efforts contributed to the success of the events themselves.

Minnesota Books Awards finalist in the Novel and Short Story category – Alicia L. Conroy, *Lives of Mapmakers*, Carnegie Mellon University Press.

Midwest Independent Publishers Association – First Place in the Recreation/Travel/Sports category and Honorable Mention in the General Interest category – Kate Havelin, *Minnesota Running Trails: Dirt, Gravel, Rocks & Roots*, Adventure Publications, Inc., Cambridge Minnesota - Kate Havelin.

Merit Award in the General Fiction category - Sharon Chmielarz, *The Rhubarb King, Poems*, published by the Loonfeather Press, Bemidji.

Additional kudos goes to:

Marly Cornell for her auspicious efforts as the Chairperson who made the 17th Annual MIPA Midwest Book Awards a reality.

Jackie Bell Mosio, who served as a Judge in the Religion/Philosophy/Inspiration category for the MIPA Midwest Book Awards.

Marginal Notes from the Editor

The theme of the previous editorial (May issue) focused briefly on May Day and its importance in this country's history of labor unions – as well as a reminder to put emphasis on the meaningful purpose of Memorial Day. Additionally, my follow-up request for the June issue submissions also included the offer to add a memorial for those members who had lost loved ones or family in a military conflict.

Aside from a few 'wonderful idea' email responses to that request there are no names to add for that remembrance in this issue; or so I believed. Recently, an

email from the National office pointed out that as of this month, there were more journalists killed in covering the current war in Iraq than had died around the globe in World War II or the twenty-year conflict in Viet Nam and Cambodia - combined.

I did a Google search and though varied, the mortality statistics of fellow journalists are extraordinarily high. Even more chilling is the fact that journalists are specifically targeted for kidnapping, torture and murder. This seeming assault of grim facts given you is not some macabre need to replace the lack of a remembrance list slated for this issue.

But because there is a greater need for reflection when we as writers, (particularly a UNION of writers), are so unaware that the third of May, World Press Freedom Day, is officially the day to pay tribute to the fallen of our profession. To realize that our TC chapter is indeed fortunate for the lack of names to be listed in an offered memoriam. We should reflect and take comfort in that when covering a story in this country, the likelihood of injury, let alone death is almost non-existent.

Just food for thought.

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

In solidarity,

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“The purpose of a writer is to keep civilization from destroying itself.”

~ Albert Camus ~