

# BOOKNOTES

THE OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTER OF THE WASHINGTON BOOK PUBLISHERS

April 2, 2007

## [www.washingtonbooks.org](http://www.washingtonbooks.org)

The Washington Book Publishers, an informal, all volunteer group of editorial and publishing professionals in the Washington, D.C., area since 1976

## CONTACTS

### 2006–2007 President

Claire Reinburg, director,  
NSTA Press, National Science  
Teachers Association, 703-312-9213,  
[creinburg@nsta.org](mailto:creinburg@nsta.org)

### Vice-President

Laura Lawson, senior acquisitions  
& development editor, Davies-Black  
Publishing, CPP, Inc., 202-887-8420,  
ext. 227, [llawson@cpp.com](mailto:llawson@cpp.com)

### Treasurer

Don Reisman, director of publications,  
RFF Press, Resources for the Future,  
202-328-5064, [reisman@rff.org](mailto:reisman@rff.org)

### Membership and mailing list coordinators

Barbara Hart, president,  
[bhart@pubspros.com](mailto:bhart@pubspros.com);  
Ashley Young, editorial assistant,  
[ayoung@pubspros.com](mailto:ayoung@pubspros.com);  
Linda Stringer, senior editor,  
[lstringer@pubspros.com](mailto:lstringer@pubspros.com),  
Publications Professionals,  
703-934-4499

### Marketing chair

Holly Hemphill, director, marketing  
& communications, American  
Council of Engineering Companies,  
[hhemphill@acec.org](mailto:hhemphill@acec.org)

### Hospitality coordinator

Christine Hauser, editor/consultant,  
703-526-0581,  
[christinehauser@msn.com](mailto:christinehauser@msn.com)

### Web master

Tony Davies, [tony\\_davies@yahoo.com](mailto:tony_davies@yahoo.com)

News and job bank coordinator,  
Yamile Kahn, managing editor,  
Woodrow Wilson Center Press,  
Woodrow Wilson International  
Center for Scholars, 202-691-4041,  
[yamile.kahn@wilsoncenter.org](mailto:yamile.kahn@wilsoncenter.org)

Post your news on the Web site, or email  
[yamile.kahn@wilsoncenter.org](mailto:yamile.kahn@wilsoncenter.org)

The Washington  
Book Publishers 

Dear Colleagues,

Please plan to attend a special WBP program in April, when digital and web publishing pioneer Michael Jensen of the National Academies Press will share insights and advice on how savvy publishers can use the web to make their content more “findable” in that enormous conversation called “Web 2.0.”

Michael’s talents in predicting changes in technology and harnessing the resulting opportunities for scholarly publishing helped propel NAP’s site to the top of search engine rankings. Innovative research tools combined with print and digital book formats make NAP’s website a model for publishers in all fields. Come along for a tour of how you might apply some of these strategies and where our next stops might be on the technology-development trail.

**What: How Publishers Can Thrive in Web 2.0 and Beyond**

**Who: Michael Jensen, Director of Web Communications and Director of Publishing Technologies, National Academies Press**

**When: Tuesday, April 17, 2007 (6:00 p.m.: Refreshments; 6:30 p.m. Program begins)**

**Where: International City/County Manager’s Association (ICMA), 777 N. Capitol Street, Washington DC (stay tuned for directions)**

**RSVP: Please RSVP to Christine Hauser, hospitality chair, at [christinehauser@msn.com](mailto:christinehauser@msn.com)**

(Event is free to Washington Book Publishers members; \$10 for nonmembers.)

And mark your calendars, also, for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual WBP Book Design and Effectiveness Awards. The entry deadline is May 2, 2007, and co-chairs Deb Weiner and Margot Ziperman have streamlined the entry process this year with an online submission form. Watch for the awards announcement in the mail and on the WBP website. Awards Night will be June 12, 2007.

Hope to see you at these upcoming events,

—*Claire Reinburg*



## Save the Date for the WBP Annual Awards Show

A sure way to anticipate the coming of spring in Washington is to prepare to attend the annual Washington Book Publishers Design and Effectiveness Awards Show! This year, the date is Tuesday, June 12, 2007, at 6:30 PM, at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Conference Center, 1800 K Street NW, Washington, DC.

The event is open to the public, so please share this notice widely!

The coordinators for this year’s show are Margot Ziperman from CQ Press ([mziperman@cqpress.com](mailto:mziperman@cqpress.com)) and Deborah Weiner from Georgetown University Press ([weinerd@georgetown.edu](mailto:weinerd@georgetown.edu)).

Deadline for entries is May 2. Watch for the Call for Entries to arrive in your mailbox and mark June 12, 2007, on your calendars!

## Literary Losses

12/21/06 — *Philippa Pearce*, 86, English children's book author, whose most famous book, *Tom's Midnight Garden* (1958) inspired a movie, a play, and three TV adaptations.

1/17/07 — *Art Buchwald*, 81, newspaper humor columnist. He won the Pulitzer Prize for commentary in 1982, and published more than 30 books.

1/31/07 — *Molly Ivins*, 62, author and political columnist. In her 1998 collection of newspaper column, *You Got to Dance with Them What Brung You* (Vintage), she wrote, "Even I felt sorry for Richard Nixon when her left; there's nothing you can do about being born liberal—fish gotta swim and hearts gotta bleed."

2/7/07 — *Fred Mustard Stewart*, 74, best-selling author of family sagas, some of which were adapted into films and one into a mini-series. (*Ellis Island*, 1982).

2/13/07 — *Elizabeth Jolley*, 83, English-born writer of prize-winning Australian literature.

3/1/07 — *Arthur Schlesinger*, 89, historian and author of more than 20 books and winner of both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award.

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## Back by Popular Demand

The following class from Publications Professionals LLC of Fairfax, Virginia, may be your ideal spring activity!

**Basics of Proofreading and Copy-editing.** Learn to use professional proofreading marks and to do basic copyediting for style and grammar. Taught with real-world examples, this course emphasizes practical application in a work setting. When? 6:30–9:30 p.m., Thursdays, April 26, May, 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, June 7, 14 (8 sessions totaling 24 hours). Where? George Mason Middle School. Cost? \$425, plus textbooks. For more information and a registration form, call 703-934-4499 or email Ashley Young at [ayoung@pubspros.com](mailto:ayoung@pubspros.com).

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## Member Announcement

Allan Graubard recently published his novella ROMA AMOR on the literary site Big Bridge ([www.bigbridge.org](http://www.bigbridge.org)), with a print version to appear in 2008, along with a selected poems and tales from Spuyten Duyvil (New York).

## Members of December WBP Meeting Share Marketing Tips

### *Nonprofit or Commercial Publisher... We Need All the Book Sales We Can Get in '07*

*Panelists: Gina Armento Lindquist, Marketing & Sales Director, Georgetown University Press and Holly Hemphill, Director, Marketing & Communications, American Council of Engineering Companies*

On the evening of December 13, Holly Hemphill, WBP's new chair of marketing, led a lively discussion of book marketing strategies and tips with Georgetown University Press's Gina Armento Lindquist. About 40 attendees met at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars to share success stories and advice for effectively reaching an audience and maximizing book sales, regardless of a press's official status as nonprofit or commercial. Holly opened the discussion by asking a few questions that elicited basic information from the group regarding the types of publishing in which they were involved and the marketing strategies they were using. Most of those present were doing a mix of electronic and direct mail promotion, almost all still publish a catalog, and about 75 percent were from nonprofit or society presses.

Among the tips shared and discussed:

**Pricing strategies.** The significance of pricing decisions should not be underestimated. Although many publishers use a standard pricing strategy, the actual computation is harder than it seems. A standard pricing strategy for books is to multiply the unit cost of a book by a number, often 7, to come up with an initial book price. The process becomes complicated when it's time to decide what, in fact, is a unit cost. Does a unit cost include printing only, or should it also include all the production costs, e.g., editing, proofreading, indexing. Where does marketing fit in? Or distribution? In addition, the price of a book can not only affect its profitability, but whether it sells at all. *The Huenefeld Guide to Book Publishing*, the longstanding guide to publishing management, includes an exercise in how to develop a multiplier of this type for your particular press.

**The importance of a backlist.** Gina and Holly emphasized the importance of a publisher's reviewing its backlist and evaluating it on a regular basis. It might be time for a price adjustment, for example, on books that have been out for several years.

A thorough acquaintance with the full list might lead a publisher to pair a backlist title with a newer book in a special promotion. One participant mentioned books that are "ahead of their time" can be promoted when public interest picks up and the book can be pushed to a more receptive public. Topics in the news can also lead to opportunities to promote a backlist book. It's increasingly important to view the backlist as a key asset, since through online stores publishers have increasing opportunities to reach more buyers. Some backlist books bring in a good amount of revenue for modest investment.

**E-newsletters.** On the topic of e-newsletters, Holly spoke about a free e-newsletter she and her colleagues launched at the National Science Teachers Association. Representatives from communications, public policy, membership, and marketing worked together to select the news items and featured resources in a weekly electronic newsletter that now goes to 250,000 individuals (both members and nonmembers). The key to the success of the e-newsletter was its focus on newsworthy items and not just the inclusion of product promotion. Absence of banners or other ads also kept the focus on useful news and likely contributed to the expanding subscriber numbers.

Chelsea Green publishes a monthly e-newsletter that features 6–7 books, usually on a particular theme. Holly noted that you can plan the calendar for your e-newsletter so you can capitalize on seasonal events and collect items in advance to ensure a steady flow of information. *Constant Contact* and *Vertical Response* are two software packages that have proved worthwhile for managing email marketing.

**Amazon.com.** Several presses consider Amazon a key way to get information about their books out to the wider market. In response to a question about whether publishers monitor or try to influence the reviews that appear on Amazon, someone commented that they wished they had time to more closely track those reviews on the site.

**Publisher websites.** [www.chelseagreen.com](http://www.chelseagreen.com) is a publisher's website noted for high quality and clever use of the website as both a marketing tool and a resource. The publicity director uses the site to provide resources for the press, and the overall design works well for everything the press wants the site to accomplish. A book order form on the

website is also an excellent place not only to collect information about the buyer, but also to have the buyer sign up for updates and news of forthcoming books.

**Catalogs.** Holly advised creating smaller versions of large catalogs to more directly reach targeted markets. For example, she created smaller catalogs to target teachers at different grade levels.

**Advertising.** Georgetown University Press recently started advertising on local public-radio station WAMU, in order to promote the press itself and to educate people about what they do. Often the ads were to pro-

mote a particular book. The feedback has been very positive. The Press also used various kinds of online advertising.

Other topics covered in less detail because of time constraints were split runs of paper and hardback books; book signings and author events; copublishing or partnering opportunities; and the implementation of ISBN -13. Although too brief to offer comprehensive answers to many of the questions brought up by WBP members, the meeting provided a forum in which to discuss marketing issues and solutions by sharing knowledge and experience.

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## Northern Exposure: A Book Festival in Vermont

Three-piece suits and pricey briefcases are hard to find in the Green Mountain state, but books thrive. When I picked up the agenda for the Burlington Book Festival in September, I yearned for a presentation on a muckraking expose that would inspire my inner self to raise a symbolic fist in protest. But political topics were scarce, save during the Saturday evening event.

Taking place in eleven locations around Burlington, Vermont, the festival highlighted Vermont writers and culture. Offerings ranged from book readings and signings to art exhibits and free samples of Ben & Jerry's ice cream. (Guess where the lines formed.) Children's books were well represented, as were literacy projects and books by Vermont folklorists, publishers, artists, biographers, and historians.

The former Vermont state poet, Ellen Bryant Voight, read from her work. Other writers included first-time novelist Jeffrey Marshall, cabbie Jernigan Pontiac, poet Jay Parini, illustrator Edward Koren, Twain biographer Ron Powers, and novelists Julia Alvarez and Chris Bohjalian. Other Vermonters included folklorist Joseph Citro and novelist Howard Frank Mosher.

San Francisco author, poet, and bookseller Lewis Buzbee read from and discussed his paean to bookstores, "The Yellow-Lighted Bookshop." "When I enter a bookstore," he said, "I feel the universe unfolding." And artist/photographer/professor Robert Del Tredici presented an exhibit of dramatic silkscreen illustrations for the novel *Moby Dick*.

"Hold the Front Page" (an odd title for a book-centered presentation, I thought) addressed the perennial questions "What makes editors and publishers tick?" and "What's the state of publishing today?"

The Saturday night highlight was the Second Annual State of the Onion Address, wherein writers from the popular satirical website and publication aimed their humor on the current state of the nation at a large and receptive audience. Poet/writer Robert Bly closed out the festival on Sunday with readings of his poetry.

The venues made attendance a bit more complicated and the festival would be better served by a central location, as with the National Book Festival, which is presented on the National Mall. While there's no less negotiating and jockeying for position in this bucolic setting, there's a palpable feeling that less is at stake. People here live and let live for the most part; in Washington the prize may be an invitation to the White House or a role in bringing down a hated regime.

—Dawn Leland

## Understanding the Middle East

Dodge, Toby. *Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation-Building and a History Denied*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.

Friedman, Thomas. *From Beirut to Jerusalem*. New York: Harper Collins, 1998.

Gelvin, James. *The Modern Middle East: A History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Keddie, Nikki. *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003.

Khalidi, Rashid. *Resurrecting Empire: Western Footprints and America's Perilous Path in the Middle East*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2004.

Kennedy, Hugh. *When Baghdad Ruled the World*. New York: Perseus Books, 2006.

Marr, Phebe. *The Modern History of Iraq* 2nd ed. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2004.

Packer, George. *The Assassins' Gate: America in Iraq* 1st ed. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005.

Rosen, Nir. *In the Belly of the Green Bird: The Triumph of the Martyrs in Iraq*. New York: Free Press, 2006.

Shadid, Anthony. *Night Draws Near: Iraq's People in the Shadow of America's War*. New York: Henry Holt, 2005.

Adapted from Juan Cole, President, Global Americana Institute, "Very Basic Suggested Reading List on the Middle East," at [www.juancole.com](http://www.juancole.com).

## Recommended from Dawn Leland

Chernow, Ron. *Alexander Hamilton*, Penguin, 2005.

Derr, Mark. *A Dog's History of America: How Our Best Friend Explored, Conquered, and Settled a Continent*. North Point Press, 2005.

Kevin Phillips, *American Theocracy: The Perils and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil, and Borrowed Money in the 21st Century*. Viking Penguin, 2006.



## Questions about Web 2.0? Get Answers at the April 17 WBP Meeting!

### Calendar

#### APRIL

Thurs., April 12, 11:30 AM lunch program, author Walter Isaacson discusses *Einstein: His Life and Universe*, Eng. Speaking Union, DC, [www.esuwdc.org](http://www.esuwdc.org) for more info on program and price.

Fri. – Sat., April 13–14, “The Bible: Books that Didn’t Make the Cut” (2-day seminar), SI Resident Assoc. Prog., Ripley Ctr., 202-357-3030, \$141, gen., \$95 mem.

Sat., April 14, meeting, Mid- and South-Atlantic Chap. of American Society of Indexers, Columbia, MD, \$30, gen., \$20, mem., <http://msasindexing.org>.

Wed., April 18, 12 PM and 6: PM, Meet the Author: poet and lecturer in Native American Studies Luci Tapahonso, reception and book signing, NMAI.

Fri., April 20, 8 PM, “Portrait of the Artist as a Young Woman” discussion with Jennifer Egan, Francine du Plessix Gray, Kate Lehrer, Deborah Tannen,” FSL, \$15.

Fri., April 20, 12 PM, Historian and author Heather Ewing discusses her book *The Lost World of James Smithson: Science, Revolution, and the Birth of the Smithsonian*, illustrated lecture and book signing, NMNH.

Fri., April 20 – Tues. April 23, Annual Stone Ridge Used Book Sale, Bethesda, MD, [www.stoneridge.org/booksale](http://www.stoneridge.org/booksale).

Sat., April 21, 10 AM – 5 PM, “Manga to Anime: From Astro Boy to Spirited Away,” SI Res. Assoc. Prog., Ripley Ctr., 202-357-3030, \$45 gen., \$30 mem.

Wed., April 25, 7 PM, “An Evening with author Julia Alvarez,” SI, Ripley Ctr., 202-357-3030.

#### MAY

Thurs., May 3, 12 PM – 1 PM, Arnold Rampersad discusses his book, *Ralph Ellison: A Biography*, Pickford Theater, JM Bldg., LC, 202-707-1958.

Sat., May 12, 7 PM, 27th Annual PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction Ceremony, FSL, 202-544-4600, \$100.

#### JUNE

Thurs., June 14 – Sun., June 17, AAUP 2007 Annual Meeting, Minn., MN, [annualmeeting@](http://annualmeeting@)

Mon, June 4 – Wed., June 6, Publishing for Impact: A Conference for Mission-Driven Nonprofit Book Publishers, DC, [www.publishingforimpact.org](http://www.publishingforimpact.org).

Tues., June 12, 6:30 PM, WBP Design and Effectiveness Awards Show, CSIS, [mziperman@cqpress.com](mailto:mziperman@cqpress.com) and [weinerd@georgetown.edu](mailto:weinerd@georgetown.edu).

#### Locations

CSIS, Centr. for Strategic & Intl. Studies, 1800 K Street, NW, DC, 20006, 202-887-0200

FSL, Folger Shakes. Lib., 201 East Capitol Street, SE, (202) 544-4600

LC: Library of Congress, 101 Independence Ave, SE, DC, (202) 707-8000

NMAI: Natl. Mus. of Amer. Indian, 4th & Indep., DC, 202-633-1000

NMNH: Natl. Mus. of Nat. Hist., 10th & Const., DC, 202-633-1000

### Job Bank

Job postings are run at no charge and are included at the discretion of the newsletter coordinator. Submissions should no more than 100 words. To submit a posting, please contact [yamile.kahn@wilsoncenter.org](mailto:yamile.kahn@wilsoncenter.org). For complete listings, go to the WBP Web site at [www.washingtonbooks.org](http://www.washingtonbooks.org).

Acquis. Ed., DC, CQ, res. & letter, Charisse Kiino, [ckliino@cqpress.com](mailto:ckliino@cqpress.com) (3/26)

Bookkeeper/Adm. Asst., VA, home-based business, fax res. 703-591-7389 or email [BHart@pubspro.com](mailto:BHart@pubspro.com) (3/29)

Com. Ed., DC, Natl. Bus. Aviation Assn., [hr@nbaa](mailto:hr@nbaa) (3/14)

Copywrit., DC, Fixation Marketing, [jess@fixation.com](mailto:jess@fixation.com) (3/14)

Ed., VA, *HR* magazine, fax res. 703-535-6427 or email [jobs@shrm.org](mailto:jobs@shrm.org) (3/20)

Online Ed./Wri./Prod., VA, U.S. News Ventures, [BKPatrick@aol.com](mailto:BKPatrick@aol.com) (3/23)

Prog. Asst., DC, Intl. Food Policy Research Inst., for info, <http://careers.ifpri.org> (3/23)

Tech. Ed., MD, [smodi@theaspengroup.com](mailto:smodi@theaspengroup.com) (3/9)

Tech. Wri., MD, [edwardskh@gmail.com](mailto:edwardskh@gmail.com) (2/28)

Tech. Wri./Rept. (contract), DoD, [rosemary\\_kendricks@yahoo.com](mailto:rosemary_kendricks@yahoo.com) (3/9)

Writ./Mng. Ed. (biomedical), MD, Palladian Part., [writer@palladianpartners.com](mailto:writer@palladianpartners.com) (3/9)

Writ., Commun. Team (DC), Dem. Sen., [SenateWritingJob@hotmail.com](mailto:SenateWritingJob@hotmail.com) (3/22)