



## *Summer Members Meeting Report*

### **Networking, Negotiation and Noshing**

Our summer members meeting was our most well-attended so far. Eighteen members gathered with several guests and a great featured speaker for a yummy catered lunch and some friendly networking, a fantastic presentation on Zen and the Art of Negotiation, and another informative Mastermind session.



*Missy Loewe of Visual Arts Press (Gaithersburg, MD), Annemarie Kelly of Optimal Living Press (Rosemont, PA) and Barbara Morrison of Cottey House Press (Baltimore, MD) enjoy a spirited discussion of some of the more challenging aspects of the current book publishing industry.*

Thanks to Annemarie Kelly for her always-engaging icebreaker activities, to board Secretary Eileen McIntire for arranging the meeting space at the lovely Columbia Public Library and the absolutely delicious lunch, and to attorney Phil Marcus for his in-depth look at what makes a successful negotiation— or "sustainable deal"—and what it takes to get there.

Folks, I can't stress enough what you're missing if you don't attend our member meetings! The web, email and Skype are great staying-in-touch tools, but there's just that certain something you get from in-person gatherings. I'll be posting more photos from the meeting on our website's Blog page for you to enjoy, and hope we see YOUR smiling face at the next one...which will be sooner than you think, as your board voted to go to regular quarterly member meetings, now that we have the member base to support the more frequent schedule. That means more value for your membership dollar, so stay tuned for our winter meeting announcement!

## ***Board Report***

### **Housekeeping's Almost Done!**

Your MBPA board of directors met before our summer members meeting to take care of some business matters, including:

bringing our financial accounting and business processes into the 21st century by relocating our treasury to PNC Bank. This allows our organization to make use of the speed and convenience of online banking without lots of fees. This is particularly important for a group whose members are as geographically spread out as ours are.

moving our non-profit incorporation to the state of Delaware, which is much more business-friendly for these types of legal filings than any other state. We're awaiting final approval of our paperwork, but very soon we'll have our shiny new 501(c)6 legal non-profit status from The First State.

finalizing the updating of our bylaws. Again, we reviewed our existing bylaws over the past several months with an eye to updating them to reflect the realities of today's communication options, etc. We're all very pleased with the end result, which was more tweaking than any major overhauls. The new rules will be more accommodating of the nature of our group, allowing us to be more flexible in our day-to-day operations while providing more fiduciary control and accountability to our membership.

While these issues are all rather mundane, your board is working hard to ensure that our organization is well-prepared to support the kind of growth we anticipate over the next few years. Having these "housekeeping" items out of the way will free us all to concentrate on expanding not just our membership, but also the benefits we bring to our members and the positive results that will ultimately show up on your bottom line as publishers.

I heartily thank our Treasurer, Peg Silloway, for her energetic and enthusiastic work on all these issues; Immediate Past President, Sheila Ruth,

for compiling the changes to our bylaws and formatting the new document, which you can find [here on our website](#); and to all our board members for their dedication to all our success.

### ***Letter From the President:*** **A Vision for Our Future**

During this meeting, I also set out my goals for my term of office. These were formulated with input from the board, and a lot of discussion with Vice President Annemarie Kelly, whose greater experience in group leadership I value and respect. The objectives we developed for MBPA include:

Focusing our promotional messaging to appeal to multiple constituencies:

- Existing members - To encourage you to make more use of MBPA as a professional support organization and the tools we provide during member meetings and on our website to help you become more effective, profitable publishers
- Potential new members - To attract the attention of prospects and convince them that joining MBPA will help them become more successful publishers
- Trade distributors - To build awareness among industry distributors, wholesalers and jobbers of the high quality of our members' titles, with the intention of giving our members a boost when they apply for representation
- Booksellers - To build awareness and appreciation of our members' titles, with the goal of generating more orders and a case for handselling
- Consumers/End readers - To build awareness and appreciation of our members' titles, with the goal of generating more demand, sales, positive online reviews and referrals

Growing our membership by at least 25 new members per year, with a total membership of at least 100 by the time our terms end. One of the ways I hope to achieve this is by reminding you, our existing members, that there's no better salesperson than a satisfied customer. Please consider in your interaction with other local publishers that a referral from you is the most convincing sales pitch they can get. A larger, stronger MBPA is good for all of us, as we operate largely on dues and revenues from our outside events.

In service to that end, one of the things I'll be working on is the formation of committees to handle the many tasks it takes to keep an organization like ours moving forward and providing real value to its members. By creating these committees, we'll spread the work out among several people instead of burning out a small core group, which is what has endangered the health of our group in the past. It will also provide the kind of internal structure that makes the best use of each person's individual interests and skill sets in service to the group.

Following are the committees I propose, and a description of the services each will provide.

**Membership** – Outreach to prospects and development into active, involved members. Includes active promotion of MBPA to indie publishers, maintaining the member database through our website (easy and intuitive), liaison with treasurer for processing offline member transactions and followup with members whose renewal is due.

**Benefits** – This committee will develop relationships with outside product and service providers to create and promote benefits for our members. For instance, calling Staples to arrange an affiliate program that allows special discounts for MBPA members, or arranging a special month with our region's booksellers during which they feature our members' titles in their stores. This committee will have the support of the board in developing ideas. Obviously, it will also work closely with the Membership committee.

**Events** – This committee is responsible for organizing, promoting and running our internal events, such as member meetings, Educational Sessions and—eventually—our regional book awards competitions and Mini Publishing University conferences.

**Programs** This committee is responsible for organizing, promoting and running our external marketing programs and exhibits, such as our presence at book festivals and literacy celebrations.

**Communications** – This committee is responsible for organizing, promoting and producing our eNewsletter (like that you're reading now), Program Catalogs such as those we hand out at book festivals, and making sure MBPA is regularly and appropriately represented in IBPA Affiliate Relations, such as the Affiliate Listserv and affiliate retreats.

**Website** – This committee is responsible for updating and promoting our group's website. This includes posting regular informational updates, maintaining and encouraging activity in the discussion forum, and general housekeeping such as making sure our subscription to Wild Apricot, the software host, is always up to date.

With the exception of the Programs committee, which is being chaired by Sheila Ruth, all these committees need a chairperson to make sure all tasks are carried out. **Please consider this my personal request to YOU to consider stepping up and volunteering to head one of these committees.** No, it doesn't mean you'll get stuck doing all the work. It only means you're responsible for finding other volunteers to help you.

In a group such as ours, which runs on a minimal budget, success depends entirely on members willing to volunteer their efforts on behalf of the group. The more people who step up to offer a few hours of their time each month, the less work each must do. It is this work that will make MBPA a truly valuable asset to all of us, so we'll only be as strong as you help us become. Please [let me hear from you](#)—soon, we have a lot to accomplish—so we can

get started on the road to making MBPA the robust and effective trade association I know we're capable of becoming.

### ***Upcoming Events***

#### **Fall Book Festivals: Opportunities to Show Your Stuff!**

If you've been a publisher for more than a year, you know that like springtime, early autumn is a busy time in the industry. Some of the major consumer book festivals take place at this time, and MBPA will be a part of three of these this year. But there's an exciting change this season: In response to many member requests, we're experimenting with making these shows more than marketing opportunities. We're also going to offer the option to send a limited number of copies of your titles to be sold at each event.

Due to the logistical challenges and sales tax implications of our large geographic service territory, your board decided that limiting the number of copies we can accept for sale would make it possible to offer this service to exhibiting members without making it completely unwieldy to pull off. A side benefit for MBPA will be the revenue generated for the group through our vending fee of 20% of retail price on each item sold. This rate is in accordance with those of similar situations elsewhere in the industry.

So please [jump over to the website to register](#) for participation in the MBPA booth at the following events:

**Baltimore Book Festival** The Baltimore Book Festival, our largest each year, will be held September 25-26, 2010. Cost of registration is \$15 per book for members, \$30 per book for non-members. The deadline for us to register is September 10, so we need to have your registration by September 7.

**Collingswood Book Festival** Held in downtown Collingswood, New Jersey, this was a good show for us last year. This year, it's on for October 2 from 10-4. Cost of registration is \$15 per book for members, \$30 per book for non-members. Our deadline to register is September 1, so we need to have your registration by August 28.

**Carlisle Book Festival - Celebrate the Book** This will be a new show for us this year, held October 23 in central Pennsylvania. Costs are still be calculated as we just recently received their information. The deadline for us to register is September 15, so we need to have your registration by September 12. Registration info will be posted on our website in a few days.

Members who wish to display at these shows in their own booths, but who wish to be positioned near the MBPA tent, should also send in their applications to us so we can all register together. (You can download application forms from each show's website, listed on our [Programs](#) page.)

We can't guarantee we'll be positioned adjacent to each other, but we can say that if we don't register together, we almost certainly won't be. We've had good luck being placed together when we did this in the past and requested such placement.

Since these are the events that allow you to actually get your books in front of readers, we encourage you to participate in these affordable marketing opportunities. We look forward to seeing you there!

### ***MBPA Online***

#### **Extending the Value**

Sure, we're all spread out over the MidAtlantic region, but that doesn't mean we can't stay in touch! After all, this IS the Internet age. So please, extend the value of your MBPA membership:

Visit our website's [Discussion Forum](#), where there are some really interesting and enlightening threads already going, and more being added all the time.

Check out our [Blog](#), too, for updates between newsletters.

And of course, you can follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

You can now include your social media contact info in your MBPA online member profile, so hop on over to update with that info and maybe your photo -- it's always nice to be able to match a face with a name!

### ***Post Script***

#### **An Offer, An Opportunity**

I share here the contents of an email I received the day before our members meeting from Lisa Jobs, a professor at Rosemont College, who was referred to us by IBPA, our national parent organization. Though I did my best to vet the source, I can't make any guarantees or vouch for the program. Still, it seems worth checking out, so here's the inquiry:

#### *Attention Self-Publishers:*

Need some extra FREE help with your self-publishing business this fall?

Can you use some help with some other project you just haven't gotten around to -- perhaps some assistance to determine the best way to produce an ebook?

Or maybe you need to find the best distribution method for an upcoming title or choose a fulfillment company?

Well, these are just some examples of how my publishing students can help!

I have graduate students from Rosemont College's Graduate Program in Publishing, who would love the opportunity to work on a project for you this fall AT NO CHARGE!

All you'd have to do is visit my class and provide my students with your project in my upcoming course, Self-Publishing Principles and Practices. Ideally, you'd be able to attend class one night to discuss your self-publishing business and project at our campus in Rosemont, Pennsylvania on Montgomery Avenue.

The class runs on Wednesday evenings from 6-9pm beginning 9/8. In addition, we'd love for you to join us at the end of the semester, when students will make presentations on your project during one or two of the final classes of the semester. You will receive copies of their final project for your perusal.

I can be flexible to meet your business schedule; however, the class times are fixed. If you're interested, [please contact me asap via email](#) and/or phone at 610-909-0115 to discuss. Preference will be given to the first few who contact me.

*(NOTE: Originally she asked to be contacted by 8/13, so not sure if she'll still consider inquiries, but it's worth a try.)*