



book group expo

June 8-11, 2007—San Jose, CA
San Jose Convention Center

For immediate release

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Book Group Expo Repeats Success

Sold Out Events, Best-Selling Authors, Festival Atmosphere

San Jose, California – June 14, 2007 – Call it one for the books. This year's **book group expo**—the San Jose-based literary extravaganza started in 2006—proved that Bay Area readers and others are an increasingly powerful force in the literary world. Held on June 8, 9 and 10 at the San Jose McEnery Convention Center, **book group expo** attracted book groups and book lovers from across the country, featured more than 80 authors and hosted 22 literary salons.

Kicking off the weekend was returning favorite, Afghani writer Khaled Hosseini, who read from his number-one New York Times bestseller *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. In his sold-out salon, he thanked the participants, many of whom are in book groups, for their dedication. He credits book groups and word of mouth for the surprise success of his first novel *The Kite Runner*, which ultimately sold more than 1.25 million copies in paperback and has been made into a movie to be released later this year.

Also headlining **book group expo**, were New York novelist and columnist Anna Quindlen (*Rise and Shine*), humorist Roy Blount, Jr. (*Long Time Leaving – Dispatches from Up South*), Historical Biographer Donna Woolfolk Cross (*Pope Joan*), Elizabeth Gilbert (*eat, pray, love*) and Iranian/American author Firoozeh Dumas (*Funny In Farsi*).

The three-day expo was more than author readings and book signings. Through interactive events, book groups exchanged strategies. Via informal networking, avid

readers were able to make recommendations to each other. Booksellers, including Books Inc. and Kepler's Books and Magazines, set up shop. And in the festival Marketplace—another returning favorite from last year's expo—vendors offered everything from local art and gourmet food to organic beer and fine wine. "In short, because passionate readers are also passionate about life, we've made **book group expo** a multi-layered, multi-sensory experience," says Ann Kent, one of the event's co-founders.

Participants couldn't agree more, spending as much time sampling the wine and chocolate as they did checking out the next potential next bestseller. "They've created the kind of atmosphere that makes you want to linger all day," says one Phoenix-based attendee. "I did!" She wasn't alone in this sentiment. **book group expo** participants not only lingered, but returned each day to luxuriate in the experience. "This is just an amazing event.... I am almost overwhelmed by it!" said Debra Webster of San Jose,

Of course, books remain the centerpiece. "What makes **book group expo** different from the usual book fair is the comfortable, congenial atmosphere and the easy interactions between authors and readers," comments Carole Kraiss of Palo Alto. Adds Laurie Weaver of San Jose, "Being able to learn about creative processes and interesting lives really makes me want to read an author's work." First time attendee Tracy Clark of Redwood City, had just one word: "Wow," then adds, "The whole experience was magical."

Like last year's expo, attendance at **book group expo** 2007 was mostly female readers from book groups and book clubs, though there was a definite male presence and plenty of people unaffiliated with book groups. A substantial number of attendees traveled from as far as Seattle, Las Vegas, Minneapolis and Oklahoma, not to mention large contingents from Phoenix, Arizona, and Southern California. With initial conservative estimates placing the number of attendees at just over 1,600 the founders are pleased with the growth over last year's 1,100 number. "The word is getting out," says Kent, "and people are realizing that there really isn't anything quite like this anywhere in the country." In addition, she adds, "The sponsors and vendors are realizing that attendees are a dream

target audience: educated, loyal and willing to spread the word when they find something they love.”

book group expo was founded in 2006 by Ann Kent and James Reber, both passionate readers themselves, as a way to bring readers and writers together in the modern equivalent of the old-fashioned literary salon. Their small professional staff and committed group of volunteers are equally dedicated to making a mark on the literary map and creating an event that is both serious and fun.

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What people are saying:

“ Thank you for inviting me to the inspiring and fun book group expo. I had a ball! Kudos to Ann Kent for launching an event that will soon become legendary!”

Pat Montandon, Author – *Oh, The Hell Of It All*

“ Congrats on the success of last week's expo -- wow! There was a ton of >energy in the rooms - both the marketplace and the various salons. Well done -- and thank you very much for your work on behalf of the written word! “

Laura G. - Attendee

“ book group expo was a wonderful experience and a warm and intelligent audience. It appears that Chapter Two was a resounding success! Here’s to many chapters to come!”

River Jordan, Author – *The Messenger of Magnolia Street*

“ The attention to detail in your organizing of the event is excellent! I could tell watching you speak . . . that you were a Leader. I love people like you who make so many good things happen in my life. I just want to take everyone I know to this event.”

Virginia B. – Attendee

“ I think I told anyone . . within earshot, that I've never participated in such an intelligent, well organized, thoughtfully produced, and FUN book event, and I've been to quite a few. Every detail was perfect!”

Jennie Shortridge, Author – *Eating Heaven*

“ I was absolutely blown away by this event. I LOVED IT, every minute of it. The experience was magical. Thanks for coming up with this phenomenal idea and bringing all these wonderful ideas and people together.”

T. Clarke - Attendee