

Queens Book Fair Announces Author sign-up for 2007 Queens Book Fair

By PA Public Relations Company

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Queens Book Fair 2007 Announces Author sign-up for 2007 Queens Book Fair. This year's book fair will be held on September 1, 2007 at the Jamaica Market in Jamaica, New York. The 2005 Queens Book Fair was featured in Newsday, May 3, 2005, article "This book fair's for the self-published" New York City Edition Neighborhoods section pg. A52. Self-published authors from around the country flocked the 2005 Queens Book Fair, along with book lovers around the tri-state area.

Queens Borough President Helen Marshall proclaimed the month of April as Book Month in Queens in April of 2005.

In 2005 the Queens Book Fair presented a Power Networking Breakfast prior to the opening of the Queens Book Fair to "Connect the Dots" between Corporate, government, Small Businesses and the literary world.

The fair has generated local buzz for emphasizing the growing phenomenon of self-published African-American authors. The writers have seized mainstream publishers' attention by independently printing small quantities of their work and controlling all of its creative and financial aspects.

The authors' success hinges on marketing strategies as diverse as door-to-door sales, street vending and arranging book signings at popular restaurants or nightclubs. But before this year, only Harlem had established an annual book fair where writers are exposed to thousands of readers in one setting.

The Queens Book Fair attracted hundreds of people to Jamaica Market, and Piper and Rogers were counting on the event to introduce some writers to a bigger audience than they've ever enjoyed.

"It was packed," Rogers said. "And I was shocked. It was rainy and we didn't think people would show up. But they still came out."

To some degree, the women are all about taking chances. They started their book business almost by accident a decade ago, while selling gift baskets and floral arrangements at the St. Nicholas of Tolentine Flea Market in Jamaica.

C & B Books Distribution began bringing used books from their own collections to sell at the market, selling out each week. A frequent customer soon asked if the pair could get their hands on books by other African-American authors.

"She asked how soon we could get them, and I said we'd have them for her the next Saturday," Rogers said. "And I thought, 'I don't know how I'm going to get these, but I'm going to find out.'"

Rogers, 44, not only supplied the requested books, but soon found herself fielding requests for work by other black writers. Within weeks, she and Piper were visiting distributor warehouses that stacked dozens of titles from tiny imprints around the country.

By 2001, the women sensed a revolution stirring in the African-American literary community. Sister Souljah's 1999 cautionary coming-of age novel "The Coldest Winter Ever" had reinvigorated an urban-literature market that had hibernated for decades, provoking a new generation of black writers to eschew the mythic glamour of drugs and violence.

Other genres took shape around the same time, including revenge melodramas, romance thrillers and inspirational memoirs about overcoming abuse, addiction and lives of crime.

"It's a whole industry booming within an industry," said Angela Wallace, whose self-published novel, "Secret Dramas," earned acclaim for its unique hybrid of soap opera and mob intrigue. "[Writers] are implementing their own imprints. As a result of that, they're bringing other black authors in under their umbrella. I think mainstream publishing is noticing that."

Brenda Piper and Carol Rogers established their own tiny umbrella on the Internet in 2002. In March 2002 Mr. Phil Andrews joined C & B Books as its Public Relations Director to strengthen C & B Books brand name recognition in the literary community. C&B Books Distribution eventually opened its first physical location at the Jamaica Market in October and introduced its newest location in a compact corner store in Flushing in January.

The partners built their stock through consignment deals with self-published authors, advising writers through labor-intensive processes such as mission statements, cover design, press releases and book signings.

While she tirelessly provides encouragement and advice, Piper, 53, insists that no book will sell without its author's own follow-through.

"They have to be willing to get out," she said. "They can't just drop their book at the store and expect the stores to sell their book. We support authors through C & B Books authors club which promotes self-published authors.

But the women treat the Queens Book Fair like a community service as much as they do a business endeavor.

The event, which offered seminars and workshops for published and unpublished writers alike, kicked off with a networking breakfast to help forge partnerships in New York's independent literary scene. Readers had the chance to meet and solicit advice from their favorite authors, as well.

"Harlem and Brooklyn, they already have their recognition - even the Bronx," Piper said. "Queens was very low-key, and it's just starting to blossom."

To be placed on our email list for the 2007 Queens Book Fair or to join our authors club you may log on to our web site at www.cbbooksdistribution.com or you may email us at cbbookdist@aol.com. Authors may register for the upcoming 2007 Queens Book Fair by logging on to www.queensbookfair.com

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