



book group expo

June 17-18, 2006— San Jose, CA
San Jose Convention Center

For immediate release

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Book Group Expo Triumphs

*92 authors created record enthusiasm for books –
Amy Tan’s skit brought down the house with laughter, while
Khaled Hosseini captivated a room of 400 fellow readers*

San Jose, California – June 19, 2006 – The first-ever **Book Group Expo** is a part of history now. The past weekend made San Jose, California a temporary literary Mecca, filled with authors, known and not-yet-discovered, engaged in conversation with hundreds of dedicated readers in Literary Salons that covered a wide variety of topics from mother-daughter relationships to history, death, crime and more.

The *two-day affair of readers, writers and fun* at San Jose’s McEnery Convention Center on Saturday, June 17 and Sunday, June 18 delivered a packed and hushed Saturday Morning Salon as author Khaled Hosseini read from and answered questions about his celebrated novel *The Kite Runner*. Later, another Salon brought down the house with laughter as The Book Group From Hell – a fully improvised skit featuring Amy Tan (in disguise), Kathi Goldmark, Sam Barry, Susanne Pari, Asa DeMatteo, Audry Ferber, and Rabih Alameddine – concluded.

Co-creators Ann Kent and James P. Reber breathed life into the idea about a year ago during what was just a casual lunch that became the launch pad for **Book Group Expo**. “We knew the idea was a good one when each person we told took it on as his or her own and joined our efforts,” said Kent. “The outpouring of praise and thanks this weekend proved that we struck a chord in a community that I am so glad to be a part of.”

Reber added, “The results were incredible – the energy of everyone throughout the weekend was just amazing. We both feel that Book Group Expo has a great future here and in other cities across the United States. We are excited and committed to bringing BGE back to San Jose next year.”

Author Liaison Kathi Goldmark and Program Director Susanne Pari worked extremely hard to create thought-provoking salons featuring the pairing of topics and authors that would intrigue the audience. “As a result, authors had an opportunity to meet a unique group of readers who posed some of the best questions and comments they had ever heard. “We had about fifty authors offer to be ‘auctioned off,’ for book group visits or phone calls,” said Goldmark, “to an audience that was thrilled to learn how valued their support is for literature and writing.”

The book group phenomenon has had a profound impact on the publishing world, bringing unknown authors to the forefront of literature. Amy Tan notes, "This was a great opportunity for writers to meet their readers and readers to meet the writers whose works they discuss in their groups. It is really book group readers who are keeping literature thriving and relevant, and who can bring good books to a wider audience." Tan also encouraged attendees to push the publishers to help put in motion additional ways in which groups could connect with readers suggesting teleconference calls and more.

Philip Prock from Books Inc. reported, "As a bookseller, I loved this event. It brought together a wide variety of book lovers and authors for one huge party with wine, chocolate, and intelligent lively discussion. Because the Expo targeted such a specific segment of serious and enthusiastic readers, folks attending were invested in the event. Not only did they want to meet authors and attend the panels and discussions, but they purchased a lot of books!"

Regarding the Salons, Pari said, "We wanted to create a different kind of Program for readers and authors, salons that would address the topics in fiction that book groups value – relationships, social behavior, cultural issues – while also offering expertise on group dynamics and the art of discussion. We're thrilled that it worked so well."

Readers who missed the first time event still have a chance to hear and see what the buzz was all about. Audio captured by ApplauseCast and video from ForaTV of specially selected salons will be available at www.bookgroupexpo.com and readers are welcome to stay connected by emailing connect@bookgroupexpo.com. *Proceeds from this event benefited the Bring Me A Book Foundation (www.bringmeabook.org).

Comment cards from the expo provided instant and positive feedback...

"Finally, a San Jose event that wasn't about sports or computers! Thanks for the brain food...AMAZING!" –Sunday participant's exit survey.

"I attended with several members of my book group, and carried off two bags filled with books, and at least one or two of these will become monthly selections in the near future." –Anne Moses of San Jose

About Book Group Expo:

Founded by Ann Kent and James P. Reber **Book Group Expo** is an innovative experience bringing together book lovers and authors in an intimate and conversational way. To learn more about book group expo, visit www.bookgroupexpo.com.