

Authors Booth at the 2011 State Fair, July 14 -31

Update 3/3/2011 by Naida West

Please print this out or future reference if you wish to participate.

OUR MISSION: To visit with and educate fairgoers about writing and publishing, and, if visitors show an interest, sign and sell books. Because of this educational role, we are located in the public area of the A/B Building, called either the Counties Building or California Building. Our booth is clean, artistically arranged, and air-conditioned. It is on the ground floor across near the Cinnamon Buns and the Channel 10 broadcasting booth, nearest to the north or west entrances. CALIFORNIA AUTHORS will be on the wall.

FAIR HOURS: Gates open at 12 noon on Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs.
Gates open at 10 a.m. on Fri, Sat, and Sun. Every day the building closes at 10p.m.

SHIFTS: 8 hours long. "A" shift 10 – 6, "B" shift 12 – 8, "C" shift 2 – 10 p.m.
M, T, W and Th : "B" and "C" are the only shifts. This overlapping system allows every author to participate in peak traffic hours, with only 2 authors from 8 - 10 p.m. You may arrive earlier and/or stay later than scheduled. If you want shorter hours, please contact me. We might structure one table as "early" / "late" half-day shifts.

BOOTH MANAGEMENT: Since 1997, when another author and I signed the first contract, I have co-managed the booth and scheduled the authors. This time I'm doing it alone. Not an employee, I am an author like you, and I'll be in the booth most of the time, responsible for showing data to officials who ask to see it. I keep a few extra passes for emergencies (example: ill author hasn't the time to mail passes to a sub). I am the responsible party to assure that conditions of the contract and booth rules are adhered to. Fair officials. If something needs attention (e.g. lighting), I know where to find the right person to fix the problem. Please do not bother the Fair staff. They have their hands full with many booths. This year, the 50th anniversary of the Peace Corps, we will have Peace Corps authors, perhaps with their own table.

ONLINE CAPABILITY REQUIRED. You will receive updates via email, and will be asked to enter your seller permit number, Megan's Law data, address, phone numbers, and URL on an Exl file. All scheduling will be done via email.

PAYMENT TO THE FAIR [Applicable only to those who handle sales]: In lieu of a prepaid booth fee, each seller will pay 15% of after-tax receipts to the Fair. This is a privilege; other vendors pay thousands of dollars in advance, and they use a single cash register, which automatically calculates the Fair's percentage. In exchange for this privilege, you are on your honor to pay after your last day in the booth. You will receive a daily audit sheet to record your sales, and your check for the Fair. Put those two items in an envelope, and hand it to me on YOUR last day at the Fair. **Make the check out to: California State Fair.** If you cannot do your calculations on your last day, it is

imperative that you mail the envelope on Monday, August 1. To: Naida West, P.O. Box 809, Rancho Murieta, CA 95683. I deliver all the envelopes in one big envelope.

SMALL PRE-PAYMENT [New this year]. When your personal schedules are confirmed, you will be asked to mail me a small check to cover your share of **website development/update, group liability insurance, and postal stamps**. I am required to purchase group insurance this year, even though I, like many of you, already have homeowners insurance to cover accident liability. Divvied up among 30+ authors, your portion of the insurance will be minimal, probably around \$3 per author. Added to that is your portion of the website cost – calculated according to the number of days you participate. I'll know the exact amount when scheduling is complete. The total amount of prepayment for most of you will be about \$10, although those of you in the booth 8 – 10 days will pay more. The website assures media coverage, with calendar and links to the sites of all participating authors – URLs, trailers, or whatever you desire. In past years I footed the entire \$350 cost of the website, and my partner paid for the stamps.

The Prepayment is not a booth fee. You are NOT “renting” a particular amount of space or a whole table. The prepayment is, however, a guarantee that you will be one of the authors at the 2011 Fair.

DEADLINES

By March 20 -- List of booth participants confirmed, scheduling begins. Please reply to this first email as soon as you can with dates or times when you CANNOT be at the Fair. Or email me with “I can be there at any time and date.”

By April 11 – Schedule complete, authors notified of pre-payment amount

By April 25 – All prepayments received, guaranteeing booth participation. Those who do not pay will be replaced by someone on the waiting list.

PERSONAL PUBLICITY. Your individual publicity efforts are effective in directing traffic to the booth. Please do what you can to help, especially those of you who work in the media, and those who have publicity agents.

SELLERS PERMIT: [Applicable only to those who handle sales] All persons selling goods must have a California Sellers Permit. If you don't already have a permit, you can apply for one at the California State Board of Equalization (online is quicker).

BOOKLOVERS BOOKSTORE/ BRADLY SIMKINS will sell books for authors who, by contract, are not allowed to handle sales. Please contact me about coordinating your schedule with Brad. Understandably, he likes to bunch you up on the same day.

BOOTH FURNISHINGS: [Same as last year, unknown colors as yet] The booth will have 4 or 5 painted tables sized for multiple authors – 6-8 authors are in the booth every day during the peak hours. Chairs are provided, with one or two extras for those who are

required to assist an author for physical or legal reasons. All tables have hidden storage beneath them. The booth looks like a small bookstore. See attached photos. Extra shelf space behind your table makes it possible to display the books you are selling, and obviates the need to load your table with tall stacks of books – discouraged as tacky and a disadvantage to your tablemates. I'll ask you to list the number of titles you will be selling on an Exl file, and will schedule you accordingly at the variously sized tables.

Old books needed as décor. Please bring books you no longer want, to help fill the bookshelves. Be aware that in some cases visitors may want to buy the used books, and if you're not there another author might sell them. Remaining books will be given or thrown away. Last year a delighted volunteer cleaning up a county display hauled them to small library near a Native American reservation in northern CA.

EARLY BOOK DELIVERY for your convenience: On July 13, the day before opening day, many of us drive to the building to deliver our boxes. On that day, no loading pass is required for gate entry or delivery. I will be there between 8:15 – 8:55 a.m. The doors are locked at 9 for judging county displays. If you cannot come in the morning, you can deliver books 4pm – 12 m, but I won't be there.

Delivery directions: Enter Gate 12 (at the end of Hurley Way at Ethan). Drive past the kiosk and stay on the paved road for about ½ mile. Turn right over the humped bridge and you'll see the south side of Bldg A/B. Park near the west or north entrances. To deliver after opening day (July 14), you must display your loading pass at the kiosk. Your vehicle will not be admitted during Fair hours or within 40 minutes of the gate opening. You can always tote your books from the parking lot, about ½ mile away. Count on gravel to impede small wheels.

THE STORAGE ROOM is built into a sidewall of the booth. Boxes, books and posters not in use are stored there. The room is unlocked at night. In 13 years nothing has been stolen, however I wouldn't leave visible laptops. After the Fair closes down at 10 p.m., the doors are locked and the building is guarded. You can leave your books and display up overnight only if you are scheduled the following day at that table.

AUTHOR POSTERS: [Same size as last year] You must have a poster to insert in the framed, permanent poster-holder affixed to the wall behind your table. If you do not have one made, let me know in advance and I'll schedule you at a table with an author whose poster will hang on the wall. We remove our posters when our shifts end or leave it there if scheduled the next morning. Design your poster as you like, featuring yourself, your new book, or all your books. **Poster specs:** 24" x 18"; vertical orientation; matte finish, laminated if you desire. No cardstock, foam or other backing – it will be too thick for the snug fit of the holder. Some authors will have a 1-inch white border, others utilize all available space for the graphic.

GATE PASSES, PARKING PASSES, AND 1 LOADING PASS will be mailed to you after I receive them, often just a few days before July 13. You will receive one gate ticket and one parking pass for each day that you participate, unless otherwise arranged. To be

sure you receive them in time, please notify me where to send them if different from your home address. The **Delivery/Loading pass** is good for the duration of the Fair. Show it and may drive to the building on Fair mornings, but your car must be out of the grounds and in the parking lot 30 minutes before the gates open.

DIRECTIONS TO PARKING, LOT Z

The vendor lot, Z, is located in the bottomland of the American River, access from Hurley or Ethan Way. From the end of Hurley Way, turn left, proceed until you get as close as possible to the ramp up the levee to the gate kiosk. Access from Expo Blvd: Turn right (south) on Ethan Way, continue straight beyond Hurley Way and proceed as above. Note: Do not attempt to drive through the parking area on delivery morning 7/12. The area will be clogged with big rigs for large animals.

SHUTTLE BUSES are supposed to run every 10 – 15 minutes during the Fair. Don't count on it. It is difficult to wrestle boxes and handcarts into some of the old school busses and shuttles. Plan at least ½ hour from parking your car to the booth. If you plan to leave a handcart in the storage room, put your name on it.

STORING PURCHASED BOOKS FOR CUSTOMERS. If your customers don't want to haul books around the Fair, put the paid-for books in a clear plastic bag with name, address, and phone number of the customer visible. Store the books under the table and bring them to the attention of another author if you won't be there when the owner returns. Orphan books are placed in the seller's book boxes for him/her to deal with. Sometimes customers are glad to pay for shipping at the time of sale. The U.S. Post Office maintains a booth nearby. I have used it every year.

BOOTH RULES:

Never leave the booth entirely unattended during Fair hours. Notify another author when you need a lunch or restroom break.

Don't eat in the booth. Hide water and coffee in places where it will not spill on the table. Food munching and garish drink containers spoil the appearance of the booth. There are tables with benches a few feet away.

Don't bring extra people into the booth. Booth space is tight, with just enough chairs for authors and those who must be there to assist with sales for legal or physical reasons. Family members can sit at the nearby tables.

Don't bring tables, chairs, or tablecloths. These are provided.

Don't tape, nail, or tack things to the front of the table or the walls.

Share your table if you have 1-2 titles and your neighbor has many. This is considered in the scheduling. If your tablemate needs a reminder, I will help.

Don't block the view of other people's books with your body or large signs. Your sign will be on the wall behind you. Small price signs on the table are helpful.

Don't speak to a potential customer until that customer is finished speaking to, or looking at, the display of another author.

Don't stand in front of the table, or leave the table, to hustle buyers. If people want to come to the booth, they will do so. We're not circus hawkers. The enjoyment of fair-goers is paramount.

If you can't make your shift you must provide 48 hours notice. If you're a no-show and have not provided notice, you will not be invited back next year. In case of emergencies, I keep a list of authors hoping for more hours.

RETRIEVING BOXES AFTER THE FAIR ENDS. Most authors haul their books to the parking lot on their final day. You can leave them over night on July 31 and retrieve them **early** on August 1, the day after the Fair ends. No gate or loading pass is required on August 1. Expect tear-down jams of impossible proportions after 10 p.m., July 31.

FAQ #1: HOW MANY BOOKS SHOULD I BRING? Answer: Better too many than to sit there with nothing to sell. The number depends on:

- 1) the number of days you participate
- 2) how engaging you are with the public
- 3) how enticing your book cover is
- 4) how well your books fit the reading tastes of the fair-going public
- 5) how many fairgoers have switched to e-readers

FAQ #2: WHAT ARE THE BEST DAYS FOR BOOK SALES?

Formerly, weekends. For the first time, mid-week was best in 2010. We turned in more money to the Fair than in any previous year. I attribute that to the 8-hour overlapping shifts, with all authors there at peak hours, and the July Fair run rather than Aug.

Looking forward to seeing you! Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have a question not covered in this document.

Naida West (home) 916-985-7411 (cell) 916-350-0152