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Bend, Ore— Bend’s nascent literary scene got a boost this week with the announcement of the 40th annual Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association (PNBA) Book Awards. Not that any of the winners were central Oregon authors, but three of the six recipients are clients of Terra Communications, a book marketing company based in Bend. Their award-winning clients include Diana Abu-Jaber for *The Language of Baklava*; John Daniel, author of *Rogue River Journal: A Winter Alone*; and Garth Stein for *How Evan Broke His Head and Other Secrets: A Novel*. The PNBA Book Awards, the most prestigious literary award in the region, recognize exceptional books written by Northwest authors.

Terra Communications has been located in Bend since its establishment in 1999. They provide publicity and marketing services for many of the Northwest’s finest writers, as evidenced by these recent awards. “Along with scheduling book tours and media for our clients, we make sure they get submitted to all the applicable regional and national book award programs. Then, if ‘lobbying’ opportunities exist, we take advantage of them,” says Dawn G. Stuart, founder and marketing director of the company. One of the benefits to the central Oregon community of having Terra Communications based here is that they often bring their talented authors to the region for readings, even though most authors of this caliber don’t usually travel to any but the largest cities. “Most of our clients are published by large New York presses who organize their national book tours. That means Seattle and maybe Portland,” Stuart says, “but we handle their regional promotions so we schedule engagements in many smaller cities throughout the Northwest and occasionally we bring them across the mountains to give presentations in Bend, Sisters, and even Redmond and Madras if time allows. Fortunately, Paulina Springs Books in Sisters has a strong reputation for supporting author events. The word gets around to the writing community so we don’t have to do too much arm-twisting. Also, the Bend Public Library is establishing a name for itself by hosting popular literary events.”

Terra Communications has always been extremely selective about the quality of books they represent. “When I first got into the literary business clients were hard to come by since I didn’t have any experience with books, aside from being a voracious reader and wanna-be writer,” Stuart says, “however, I’d worked in sales and marketing for 25 years and knew I had to establish our reputation for excellence from the get-go if I wanted to attract the types of writers I was interested in representing. Even during our lean years I didn’t accept poorly written books.”

The plan seems to have worked and now Terra Communications is considered the premier book marketing company in the Northwest. Not only do they handle publicity work for several of the recent PNBA winners but another of their clients, Craig Lesley,

author of several novels set in Oregon, received numerous accolades for his latest title, *Burning Fence*. *The Oregonian* and *Salem Statesman Journal* both selected it for their Top Ten Best Northwest Books in 2005. John Daniel also made *The Oregonian*'s list. *Burning Fence* was one of the best selling books in the Northwest last year according to the Book Sense regional best seller's list.

The primary goal of Terra Communications is to work with the best new and emerging literary voices in the Northwest and help them increase sales and name recognition. "With our clients' success comes our success," Stuart says. "The funny thing is few people in our industry know we are based in Bend. They assume we're located in New York or Portland. We have a small staff, dress casually—sweats and pajama pants are favored attire—and we take time off when the snow is good."

Because most of their work is done via the Internet and telephone, they can be based anywhere. "I'm sure there might be advantages to being in New York," offers Bob Rogers, Terra Communications' web designer and IT guy, "but the benefits don't come close to compensating for the quality of life we get living in Bend. I could make more money in a larger city, but I'll take the mountain views and access to world-class rock climbing any day. Bend offers the benefit package I was looking for and I'm proud to be part of a company that supports some of the best writers in the Northwest."

Some of Terra Communications other award-winning clients include Pam Houston, Jean Hegland, and Phil Condon who, along with John Daniel, were featured authors at the Nature of Words in Bend this past November. With events like Nature of Words, the dynamic new literary publication, High Desert Journal, and the Northwest's premier book marketing company calling Bend home, we can only expect the region's literary scene to flourish.

To learn more about the PNBA Book Awards and these top Northwest writers go to www.terracommunications.biz.