

# Greenhouses and glass tree houses . . .

**Many women** publishers are finding it a struggle to succeed in publishing, and when they do reach executive level positions, they often feel isolated. Alysia Tate, IPA member and editor and publisher of *The Chicago Reporter*, has won numerous professional awards and was even highlighted as one of the region's up-and-coming leaders in the *Crain's Chicago Business*' "40 Under 40" list. However, it has not been easy getting there. "I have also struggled with management issues—both in terms of projects and people." The IPA is working to expose and address these problems by increasing our dialogue with women members and restructuring our services to meet their needs.

A 2003 Annenberg Public Policy Center study revealed that only 5 percent of executive positions in major media companies were held by women. This statistic supports the sentiment recently expressed in David Carr's January *New York Times* article titled, "To Reach the Heights, First Be Male." Carr explores the pitfalls that women still face when developing careers in media. Although women have made considerable progress over the last three decades,

they encounter leadership barriers and hurdles that are rarely imposed on their male counterparts. The real problem, as Carr writes, is that "once you get through the ceiling, you find a secret glass tree house suspended far above your head. That's where the men sit."

The IPA is concerned about the illusion that, as reflected widely in corporate media, the fight for women's rights is over. As Jacqueline Lalley's cover story reminds us, this overstatement of progress conceals the deeper and persistent problems of discrimination against women.

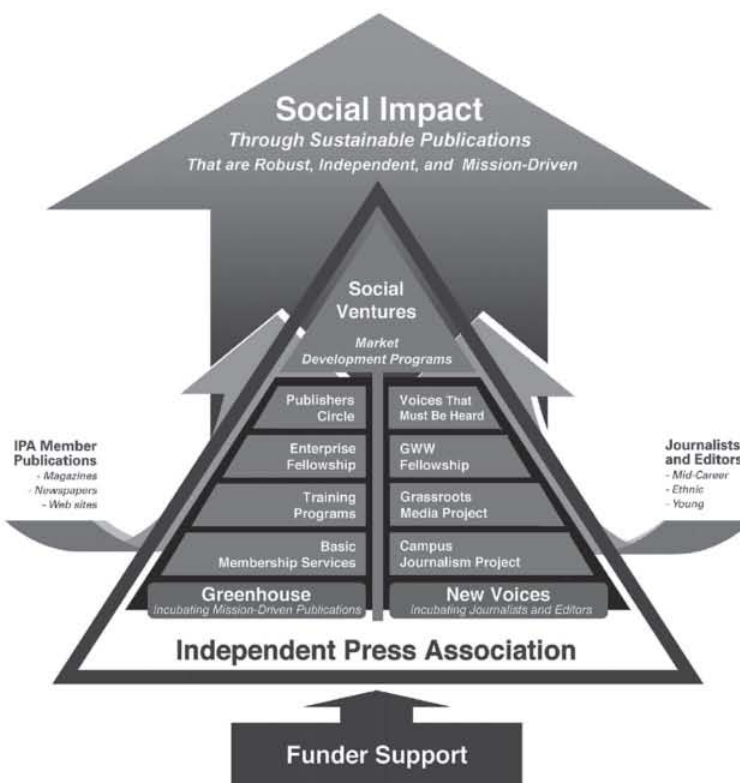
Women working in media, despite their growing numbers, are still challenged by structural barriers to professional advancement. Furthermore, when they launch media enterprises, they are confronted with a lack of infrastructure support and a fragmented movement-building process. These hurdles and inequalities have led to a dearth of women in critical decision-making roles where they can exert influence on the kinds and types of content and reporting that the general public receives. If society is to overcome continued inequality, women must

gain crucial media leadership positions in which they will have the power to set editorial direction and thus reframe public debate on their issues. With this power, these leaders will be able to amplify the voice of women by reverberating women's issues through a diverse array of publications.

For those readers who are not yet aware, the IPA recently reorganized into three divisions (see the adjacent diagram and our Director's Message). To help women achieve media power, we are mobilizing our Greenhouse division's incubation services to aid our women members.

In part, the aim of our Greenhouse is to amplify the voices of women and women's issues by ensuring that our female members, allies, and collaborators develop the critical leadership skills, mentoring, and networking they need to succeed. Our strategy is to nurture women and their publications so that they may create and broadly distribute content that will stimulate and support a renewed women's movement for equality.

The Greenhouse division serves as an incubator for progressive members, often women, by building the business capabilities of independent publica-



tions so that they succeed in the marketplace. We accomplish this by stemming the high business failure rate among independent publications, thus enabling more members to participate in our market-expansion projects. We have configured the Greenhouse division with four service levels that parallel the typical lifecycle of a publication. Our intent is to transform members from their initial point of entry through four layers of preparatory services to maturity where they are then eligible, ultimately, to participate in our Social Ventures programs, such as the Independent Press Development Fund (IPDF) and our Indy Press Newsstand Service.

At the basic level, we plan to assess new member publications and develop a tracking plan for improvement including technical assistance programs. At the second level, we will provide a new distance-learning curriculum that includes a direct marketing course for growing subscribers. Our third level will consist of the Enterprise Fellowship, which trains participants in how to develop a fundable business plan for their publication. At our highest level, Publishers Circle, qualified members will be eligible for the IPDF loan fund participation and mentoring by our more experienced member publications.

By extending our basic services and offering other benefits customized for women, the result will be a more durable and influential women's press that controls a growing portion of the media economy. With our Greenhouse, there will be fewer glass tree houses!

**ROBERT EDGELL | DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT FOR THE IPA.**

*Robert Edgell is also a media economics scholar and researcher with the University of St. Gallen, Switzerland.*

## Convention Wrap Up

With over 275 registrations, 30 speakers, and 10 exhibitors, the convention was a success! The conference served as a valuable networking tool and offered many hands-on sessions.

This year, the convention started off with a series of pre-conference workshops for small, medium, and large publications led by Cheryl Woodard, David Parker, and iMAG respectively. More than 30 sessions and workshops took place on topics such as "Retail Censorship," "Building Ad Relationships," "Creating a Media Echo Chamber," and "How to Create Successful Direct Mail."

Many new IPA members experienced the annual conference for the first time. Also, new members to the independent press came to advance their publishing knowledge. As member Esther Cervantes of *Dollars & Sense* said, "I'm new in my job, so the practical sessions meant the most to me."

The Member Advisory Committee gathered during the convention and was officially introduced to conference attendees and announced plans to strengthen communication among IPA members.

Winners of the Utne Independent Press Awards were announced at the opening reception sponsored by Quad Graphics. Several member publications were recognized such as *New Internationalist* and *The Chicago Reporter*.

Keynote speakers included Amy Goodman, host of Democracy Now!, Raymond Roker from URB magazine, and Greg Palast, journalist and author of best-selling book "The Best Democracy Money Can Buy."

Congratulations to the winners of the annual Best Cover Contest: First place went to *Hyphen*, second place winner was *Bulb*, and *HEEB* and *Bitch* tied for third.

In celebration of IPA's 10th Anniversary, John Anner and Beth Schulman were honored with an IPA Breakthrough Award for being visionary leaders of the independent press. Joshua Neuman from *HEEB* Magazine supplied humor readings from the winners of the Humor-Writing Contest. For entertainment, San Francisco based comedy troupe Killing My Lobster performed a "Best of Collection" show.

