

**For Immediate Release**

**Contact Touchstone/Simon & Schuster:**

Marcia Burch  
Simon & Schuster  
[Marcia.Burch@simonandschuster.com](mailto:Marcia.Burch@simonandschuster.com)  
(212) 698-2100

**Contact Gather.com:**

Liz Bradley  
Kel & Partners  
[liz@kelandpartners.com](mailto:liz@kelandpartners.com)  
(857) 891-5531

**Additional Contact for Touchstone/Simon & Schuster:**

Martin Barabas  
[martin.barabas@earthlink.net](mailto:martin.barabas@earthlink.net)  
(212) 865 9797

**GATHER.COM ANNOUNCES FIVE FINALISTS IN WRITING CONTEST DUBBED  
"AMERICAN IDOL FOR BOOKS"**

***Winner to be Awarded Guaranteed Publishing Contract with Simon & Schuster***

**NEW YORK, New York/BOSTON, Mass., May 22, 2007** — Gather.com, the leader in [social media for adults](#), and the Touchstone imprint of Simon & Schuster, a global leader in the field of general interest publishing, today announced five finalists in the Gather.com First Chapters Writing Competition. Referred to by numerous media outlets as "American Idol for Books," the competition has received 2,676 manuscript submissions since its inception in January. The names and hometowns of the five novelists advancing to the finals are listed below, as well as online at [firstchapters.gather.com](http://firstchapters.gather.com).

- Geoffrey Edwards—Chicago, IL
- Scott Middlemist—Phoenix, AZ
- Geeta Menon—Los Altos, CA
- Stephen Prosapio—Oceanside, CA
- Terry Shaw—Knoxville, TN

"The energy around the First Chapters Writing Competition is truly electric," says Tom Gerace, Gather.com founder and Chief Executive Officer ([tom.gather.com](http://tom.gather.com)). "The Gather.com community has ignited the blaze of competition and taken user-generated content to a whole new level."

Four of the five finalists were selected by Gather.com members and one was picked by the Gather.com editorial staff. The manuscripts of the five finalists will be evaluated by an esteemed judging panel, including Carolyn K. Reidy, President of the Simon & Schuster Adult Publishing Group; Mark Gompertz, Executive Vice President & Publisher of Touchstone Books;

George Jones, CEO and President, Borders Group and Tom Gerace, Founder & CEO, Gather.com. The panel will select one talented novelist as the Grand Prize Winner on May 31<sup>st</sup>.

"Everyone loves an underdog and Touchstone is excited to publish the winner and make one aspiring novelist's dream come true," commented Mark Gompertz, Executive Vice President and Publisher, Touchstone.

The Grand Prize winner will be awarded a guaranteed publishing contract with Touchstone and a \$5000 cash prize from Gather.com. The winning book will be available wherever books are sold. To obtain more information regarding the specifics of the judging, please reference the competition timeline below.

### **GATHER.COM FIRST CHAPTERS WRITING COMPETITION TIMELINE**

**Round 1: January 11 – April 3, 2007: COMPLETED**

**Round 2: April 4 – May 1, 2007: COMPLETED**

**Round 3: May 2 – May 22, 2007: COMPLETED**

**Winner Announced: May 31, 2007:**

The esteemed judging panel will select one talented novelist as the Grand Prize Winner!

#### **The Judging Panel:**

- Carolyn K. Reidy, President of the Simon & Schuster Adult Publishing Group
- Mark Gompertz, Executive Vice President & Publisher of Touchstone Books
- George Jones, CEO and President, Borders Group
- Tom Gerace, Founder & CEO, Gather.com

In addition to receiving a guaranteed publishing contract and distribution with Touchstone, the winner's book will receive significant promotion at Borders<sup>®</sup>, the official bookseller of Gather.com. As the retail sponsor of Gather.com, Borders, Inc., a leading retailer of books, music, movies and stationery items, is promoting the First Chapters competition via email to its millions of Borders Reward<sup>®</sup> members.

#### **About Simon & Schuster**

Simon & Schuster, a part of the CBS Corporation, is a global leader in the field of general interest publishing, dedicated to providing the best in fiction and nonfiction for consumers of all ages, across all printed, electronic, and audio formats. Its divisions include Simon & Schuster Adult Publishing, Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, Simon & Schuster Audio, Simon & Schuster Digital, and international companies in Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom. For more information, visit our website at [www.simonsays.com](http://www.simonsays.com).

#### **About Gather.com**

Gather.com ([www.gather.com](http://www.gather.com)) is the leader in social media for adults. Gather.com members connect around shared interests ranging from politics to books and from cooking to travel, and they're compensated for their activity on the site. Members can engage in conversation with state and local politicians, health and financial experts, personal coaches, bestselling authors, and more. Over one million people visit Gather.com each month to read content created by

Gather.com members. Gather.com has a highly educated, highly informed adult audience membership -- a demographic elusive to most social networking sites. This demographic has made Gather.com an exceptional partner to media companies, advertising agencies, leading consumer brands, book publishers, and movie studios. Gather.com is a privately held, privately funded company headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts. Investors include Allen & Company, The American Public Media Group, Hearst, The McGraw-Hill Companies, and Southern California Public Radio. For more information, visit [www.gather.com](http://www.gather.com) or call (617) 720-4000, x1032.

**About Borders, Inc.**

Borders is a subsidiary of Borders Group, Inc. (NYSE: BGP) a \$4.1 billion retailer of books, music, movies and stationery items that trades on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol BGP. Headquartered in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Borders Group, through its subsidiaries, operates more than 1,300 Borders and Waldenbooks stores and employs more than 32,000 people worldwide who serve more than 30 million customers each year. More information on the company is available at [www.bordersgroupinc.com](http://www.bordersgroupinc.com).

###