



## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
(Sherman, CT)

---

### Book on Danbury State Fair wins national design award

*A memoir across generations*

[“The Life and Times of The Great Danbury State Fair,”](#) a book written and published in Connecticut, has won a bronze medal for non-fiction cover design from the Independent Publishers Book Awards.

Author [Jack Stetson](#) of Danbury completed the writing of “The Life and Times of the Great Danbury State Fair,” which he discovered as an unfinished project in his grandmother’s attic after she died. [Gladys Stetson Leahy](#) had written a history of the fair from its inception to 1956. Her husband, John, was the owner and general manager, and he persuaded her to record the background of the fair, which she blended with memories of family and friends.

“I was so impressed with my grandmother’s manuscript; her writing style and sense of humor, as well as the amount of research that went into it, I knew I had to get it published,” Stetson said. “As the Danbury Fair continued to develop and run for another 25 years, I felt a need to complete this unique story.”

Stetson completed the history through 1982, the year the fairgrounds were sold, and added his own boyhood memories of the large and well-known fair, which featured

June 6, 2017



traditional and exotic attractions, many inspired by John Leahy's admiration of P.T. Barnum.

The Independent Publishers, whose award is known as the IPPY, received nearly 5,000 entries, and celebrated winners on May 30, the evening before the annual BookExpo publishing convention opened in New York. The IPPY awards recognize merit in a broad range of subjects and reward authors and publishers who "take chances and break new ground."

The book cover was designed by Mark Gerber, co-owner and art director of [Emerald Lake Books](#), the independent Sherman publishing company that brought the book to market.

Before joining Emerald Lake Books, Gerber, of Brookfield, worked with major publishing companies on books by Danielle Steele, Stephen King and Eric Van Lustbader, who now writes the Jason Bourne thrillers. He also has illustrated for the Wall Street Journal and Institutional Investor. For Hasbro, he illustrated the playing cards for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the board game "Clue."

Tara Alemany, founder of Emerald Lake Books, described the process of developing the cover art.

"When we were considering what the cover should look like, we were looking for something that tied together the Fair with John Leahy, who made the Fair what it was," Alemany said. "The cover of this book needed to acknowledge its agricultural history, but capture the excitement and love so many of its visitors had for it. Both Mark and I independently realized that we needed to use a watercolor painting created by Warren Baumgartner, 'Oxen Pull at the Danbury Fair,' which was presented by True magazine to Leahy at the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Fair. It was the perfect connection between Leahy and the Fair he loved so much."

According to Gerber, "By the time I moved to this area, the Fair had been closed for five years. But, through Jack and Gladys' writing, I miss it as if I'd attended for years. When Jack pointed out the illustration hanging on his office wall, I knew that was the cover. Baumgartner's drawing, design, and mastery of the medium beautifully captures an early fall day at one of the Fair's most popular exhibitions. I'm told it's not necessarily an accurate view you might have seen there, but it nails the experience."

Alemany and her company previously won two silver medals at the annual Florida Authors and Publishers Association (FAPA) 2015 President's Book Awards in Orlando, presented to the best books of 2014 and the first half of 2015, as well as honorable mentions in the Readers Favorite awards.

**Press release distributed by Emerald Lake Books. To interview Jack Stetson or Mark Gerber, contact Paul Steinmetz at [Paul@emeraldlakebooks.com](mailto:Paul@emeraldlakebooks.com).**

June 6, 2017

