

Celebrating  30th Summer Gathering

Conference 2008

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Workshop Descriptions (UPDATED 6/10/08)

- 1. Story Starters-- (BELINDA ANDERSON)** The desire to write burns inside. The pencils are sharpened. The computer is humming. But how do you shift your creative mindset from neutral into forward motion? This workshop will provide story starters and strategies for you to take home to keep the creative juices flowing. Those looking for ideas will find fodder for new work. Those already engaged in projects may discover a new creative perspective.
- 2. More Story Starters-- (BELINDA ANDERSON)** Workshop leader Belinda Anderson has more tricks up her sleeve. Join her in a continued exploration of how to engage the muse. This workshop will include a brief review of the first “Story Starters” session for newcomers.
- 3. Finishing Touches-- (BELINDA ANDERSON)** Today’s authors are increasingly required to become more involved in the production of their books, whether they’re self publishing or working with more traditional publishers. With her third book due this summer, workshop leader Belinda Anderson and guest authors will share experiences and tips on subjects ranging from the importance and procurement of blurbs to the details of creating a cover.
- 4. The Grammar of Poetry-- (DR. VICTOR DEPTA)** As poets we tend, in the excitement of composition, to overlook the elements of grammar out of which our poems rise. As readers, we are sometimes confused by poems which, with a closer look at grammar, become clear. It is the hope that, in this workshop, a few of the difficulties can be overcome. Intermediate level.
- 5. Poetry in a Sentence-- (DR. VICTOR DEPTA)** However successful, or unsuccessful, a poem may be, its meaning and effects are dependent on the English sentence, on the aural and

imagistic quality of words and the placement of them in the complete poem. It is the aim of this workshop to consider the tonal achievements of a poem through sentence structure. Intermediate level.

5. Poetry in a Sentence—(repeat) (DR. VICTOR DEPTA)

6. Writing about Personal Experience: Pre-writing to Post publication-- (KRISTA FINK)

Do you have a personal story you want to get out but cannot get the motivation and persistence to write it? Krista Fink, author of newly published *Silent No More: Speaking Out About Domestic Violence*, will share how she used involvement in writers' communities, competitions, deadlines and pre-writing activities to keep the writing flowing. She will also share strategies for building a platform and selling books in advance to help increase your appeal to publishers. And as the work is not over just because your book is published, Krista will talk about how you can play an active role in marketing.

7. Children's Book Publishing-- (MARC HARSHMAN) In this workshop, Mr. Harshman will survey his own experiences in the area of children's book publishing and how it has changed over the past 20 years. He will discuss professional organizations, agents and editors, critique groups, library, bookstore and online resources, as well as practical advice concerning manuscript preparation, audience, character, narrative tension, and picture book visualization. He will also briefly examine the influence of both children and storytelling upon his writing. There will be ample time given over for questions from the attendees. Beginner to Intermediate Level.

7. Children's Book Publishing -- (Repeat) (MARC HARSHMAN)

8. Religious Poetry in the Modern Era-- (MARC HARSHMAN) Mr. Harshman intends to survey the major voices in religious poetry in the modern era with an emphasis upon Judeo-Christian tradition, as well as examine trends in the publishing of the same. The workshop will include readings from seminal voices in the discipline including T.S. Eliot, Wendell Berry, Kathleen Norris, R.S. Thomas, David Jones, Denise Levertov, Rumi, George Mackay Brown, Mary Oliver and others. He will also provide an overview of current periodical markets receptive to religious poetry. Some time for a question and answer period will be provided. All skill levels welcome.

9. How to Write an Attractive Query Letter: a State of the Publishing Industry Workshop – (CHRISTINE WITTHOHN & JUDITH MIRAMONTEZ) Literary agents Christine Witthohn and Judith Miramontez brings their knowledge of the publishing industry to give attendees an idea of just what editors, publishers and agents are expecting and how best to approach them. As part of this session, held in the Assembly Hall, conference attendees may bring their query letters for review during the workshop. (Names and titles may be kept anonymous or pseudonymous to protect the guilty.) Their suggestions will help you to increase your chances of getting noticed among the hundreds of letters and email queries an agent or editor receives in a given week.

10. Publishing your own Book (Free!) for Sale Online-- (BRUCE COOK) Discusses strategic and technical issues in publishing your own Print on Demand (POD) book on Lulu.com. Includes step-by-step instructions for creating your own book on Lulu.com. All levels.

11. Storytelling Workshop-- (RICH KNOBLICH) Learn the craft of presenting a humorous short story from a storyteller with 20 years of experience. Rich will begin with a selection of books on writing humor then progress to the development of his own tall tales. Participants will be shown how to learn extended tale and conclude with writing for humor. Appropriate for Beginner to intermediate (though advanced writers are welcome to come for the entertainment value).

11. Storytelling Workshop-- (RICH KNOBLICH) (Repeat)

12. Voice Lessons-- (GRETCHEN MORAN LASKAS) We all talk about voice, but sometimes it can be hard to find. Using three exercises, Laskas will help writers hone their own way of seeing the world and capturing it on the page. Beginner Level.

12. Voice Lessons (Repeat) (GRETCHEN MORAN LASKAS)

13. Novel Edits-- (GRETCHEN MORAN LASKAS) Wondering what to do with that stack of 100, 200, 300 plus pages? Laskas will help writers see the forest in the trees. When to cut, where to add and how to tie up strings without choking the life out of the novel will all be discussed. Advanced Level.

14. How to Organize a Hassle-Free Writer's Group – (Saturday Information Session) (GEORGE LIES) Writers groups exist in some communities in the state, offering a unique way to obtain peer feedback on your prose and poetry. This session offers proven ways to organize a writer's group in your hometown. Attendees will learn how West Virginia writers in the Morgantown Writers Group survived the ebb and flow of group dynamics to celebrate its 15th Anniversary in 2008. This information session includes lots of handouts on how to contact local writers, that first meeting, setting-up a schedule, doing promotion, how to do manuscript critiques, finding well-known guest writers, sponsoring open workshops, how to find small grants or donations for special events and, oh yes, tips on handling personality clashes. The presenter, George Lies, former President, WVW, Inc., and founding member of MWG, in 1994, will discuss and explore ways to start a writer's group – and keep it going.

15. Small Group Critique sessions-- (PROSE, First Session) (GEORGE LIES) Join George Lies as he uses the same small group peer to peer critique methods employed successfully by the Morgantown Writers Group. Fiction and nonfiction will be the subject as George leads two sessions of people interested in giving and receiving critiques. **(Entrants must pre-register by June 8, See Newsletter Article)**

15. Small Group Critique sessions (PROSE, Second Session) (GEORGE LIES) (Entrants must pre-register by June 8)

16. Writing the List Poem— (DR. JOHN MCKERNAN) We will examine some different kinds of list poems—beginning with different kinds of lists found in the Old Testament and early epics. We will look at some modern versions of the list poem and play around with some idea for our own lists—which we might turn into poems.

17. Publishing Poetry— (DR. JOHN MCKERNAN) We will start by looking at some hard print possibilities—identify some local places to publish poems, move on to some regional publishing places and mention some national publishers. We will also need to discuss different possibilities on the internet: blogs, e-zines, e-periodicals, e-versions of print journals, and e-journals. We will end by mentioning some opportunities to self-publish.

17. Publishing Poetry (Repeat) (DR. JOHN MCKERNAN)

18. Exercising your poetic imagination— (LLEWELYN MCKERNAN) Exercises to rev up your right brain/ image-making ability, then convert what results into poems.

18. Exercising your poetic imagination (Repeat) (LLEWELYN MCKERNAN)

19. Breaking into the Romance Writing business-- (SUZANNE MCMINN) Tips and tactics for breaking in to a major publishing house—from thinking big and mapping your marketing plan to working with an editor pre-sale and keeping the sales coming post-break in. Topics include dreaming big, planning like a pro, working smart, developing hot ideas, balancing art and business, putting waiting time on your side, tapping into your inner promotional diva, and the all-important “secret” to selling. Everything the on-the-brink author needs to know about targeting and marketing your work in the competitive romance biz!

19. Breaking into the Romance Writing business (repeat) (SUZANNE MCMINN)

20. Getting to the heart of Emotions in Prose-- (SUZANNE MCMINN) From characterization and setting to conflict and pacing, it’s all about the emotion. What IS emotion? How do you identify just the right feeling for your character at just the right time? What are the words that evoke emotion? How do you weave them through your work with just the right balance? How can you imbue every aspect of your plot with the soul-stirring, sensational feeling that makes it a page-turner? Take your story from flat road going nowhere to roller-coaster ride of tension and passion with these concrete strategies for exploring and layering realistic emotion onto every page.

21. Playing with Words-- (JIM MINICK) What poetry can teach the non-fiction writer about metaphors and word play. Whatever the genre, metaphors sweeten the writing, making an ordinary scoop of a sentence into a deluxe banana split. How do you play with language to find original metaphors? How do you see the world anew? These will be the central questions we playfully tackle in hopes of finding metaphors wherever we look, metaphors that like a forked tree, tune the wind. Please bring 1-3 pages of prose or poetry for in-class workshopping. All skill levels welcome.

21. Playing with Words (Repeat) (JIM MINICK)

22. The Humor of it All-- (JIM MINICK) How do you write something that makes others laugh? Though we all enjoy a good chuckle, making that happen with words is not easy, as Mark Twain well knew. This workshop will explore different types and methods of humor, and we hopefully will laugh a little as well. Intermediate to Advanced Skill Level.

23. Original Music from Traditional Sounds and Form-- (KEITH & JOAN PITZER and POPS WALKER) Whether folk, country, blues, pop, or whatever new name is germane this season, all songs follow similar structure. Understanding this from other songs will help to shape new original material that is both listenable and yet new. Lyric structure will be covered as well, both from traditional structure, as in metre, rhyme, and patterns, as well as varying the pattern for original musical changes. Keith Pitzer will use traditional, popular and his own songs as teaching tools for this comparative learning experience. Providing counterpoint to this approach will be Pops Walker. Staff presenter last year at WV Writer's Conference. Pops' approach to writing is deeply soulful and passionate while still following traditional forms and patterns. Intermediate level.

24. Issues Depicted in the Arts Panel Discussion-- (KEITH & JOAN PITZER and POPS WALKER) Writers as varied as Denise Giardina and Ann Pakecake have incorporated real-world issues into their writing, be it the coal mine wars or mountaintop removal. This panel seeks to show how real world issues that affect people can be incorporated into a variety of art forms, from poetry to fiction to nonfiction to song and anywhere in between.

25. Writing for Radio-- (CATHY PLESKA) Ever wonder what it takes to write those brief, snappy radio essays? Come practice the clean, smooth writing of personal essays for broadcast. We'll explore the worlds of commercial and satellite radio plus podcasts. Consider being discovered through sound—the next generation in publication is here. Don't let it pass you by!

26. Publishing Creative Nonfiction-- (CATHY PLESKA) If you know what Creative Nonfiction is, or want to find out, and would like to explore the myriad opportunities to publish in this genre, come explore all the possibilities. I'll tell you of personal experiences, good and bad, and what it takes to write and publish in the old, new genre of Creative Nonfiction. Be prepared to do some writing, too!

27. Guerrilla Marketing Your Book-- (CARTER TAYLOR SEATON)

How to promote it once it's written. How to write an "elevator speech" about their book or potential book; make lists of where they could give talks in their own community and share them with the group; we'd discuss how to get free publicity; the value of donating copies to organizations, etc.

28. Role of Research in both Fiction and Non-Fiction-- (CARTER TAYLOR SEATON)

A discussion on the types of sources, where to go for what, the value of first hand interviews, personal observations, how to credit sources, when and whether to do so, how to blend facts into fiction, etc.

29. Screenwriting-- (ROBERT TINNELL) The screenwriting workshop will examine ways to avoid common traps screenwriters fall into - particularly as regards studio development executives. It's hard enough to get a film made - our goal is try and remove some of the easy reasons we give those executives to say "no." All levels.

30. Writing Comic Books and Graphic Novels. (ROBERT TINNELL) Robert Tinnell – Will cover as much ground as we possibly can on the fundamentals of writing graphic stories, including how they differ from other forms and how they are they same. All levels.

31. Whose View to Choose-- (SANDY TRITT) is an interactive workshop that examines the craft of point of view. After a brief lecture, volunteers will perform a skit featuring an "invisible" narrator. Watching the narrator interact with the characters within each point of view, attendees develop a much better understanding of how point of view affects a story. This workshop examines how to select which point of view to use, how to control the omniscient point of view to avoid "head hopping," and how to select the perfect viewpoint character for each scene. This workshop is valuable for writers seeking to better understand this important element of craft.

32. Lifecycle of a Character-- (SANDY TRITT) This workshop discusses how a character goes from conception to maturity, growing into a character who jumps off the page and into the reader's heart. After conception, we breathe life into a character by giving him wants and fears. Then we take him through the tumultuous teen years by exploring his emotions and learning more about him. As he matures, we add more layers, exploring different aspects of his personality and history. This workshop is for writers of all levels, and includes discussion and samples of tools such as character trait charts and growth charts.

33. Execution and Craft-- (ROBERT W. WALKER) The basic elements that create consistent Voice and the Elements of Style from Strunk & White to Jerome Stern's Making Shapely Fiction. Useful and constructive information which in the end creates compelling lines via an authorial voice. Before you can sell a word you must master this technique. Robert Walker is the master of dramatic active moving and flowing sentences that drive the dynamo of the story ever forward in a visually powerful flood that has readers ripping through pages. There will be in-class, hands-on learning that you can use for a lifetime of writing success. This class will be two and a half hours in duration.

34. Teasers and Lures-- (ROBERT W. WALKER) Walk into Rob's parlor. Writing the shortest and most important story you will ever write – the treatment, logline, premise (whatever) of your novel or non-fiction work and its platform. This sales tool is, among others, perhaps the most important single item that can sell or lose a sale in the marketplace. Robert Walker will have you mastering this kind of writing in the later stages of this class.

35. Creative Nonfiction in Column Writing-- (DOLLY WITHROW) **WORKSHOP CANCELLED**

36. Writer House Rules-- (DOLLY WITHROW) **WORKSHOP CANCELLED**

36. Writer House Rules (Repeat) (DOLLY WITHROW) **WORKSHOP CANCELLED**

37. People's Choice Prose (Friday Session) We'll have two sessions of People's Choice Prose, wherein participants have 4 minutes to read an original short piece of prose which will then be judged by the vote of their People's Choice Session Peers. Awards will be given at the Saturday Awards Banquet for first, second and third places.

37. People's Choice Prose (Repeat on Saturday)

38. People's Choice Poetry (Friday Session) We'll have two sessions of People's Choice Poetry, wherein participants have 4 minutes to read an original poem which will then be judged by the vote of their People's Choice Session Peers. Awards will be given at the Saturday Awards Banquet for first, second and third places.

38. People's Choice Poetry (Repeat on Saturday)

39. People's Choice Youth

40. Finding the ax for the frozen sea within-- (ETHAN FISCHER) Taking a cue from Kafka but on cheerier, poetic notes, we shall discover those lines that open us up to the cold or molten seas within. Often the ax lurks in miniature at the tip of tongue or pen. Exercises will let poets and others find words that frighten as they console; music or dream may furnish triggers. To daydream in public and be overheard will lead us to arresting images (you may need a lawyer). Bring old drafts that thrill or disappoint you, fragments shored against our ruin (to echo Eliot). Let's break in or out with poems opening frontiers for which no passport's yet been conceived!

41. Fate's Footfalls: Crafting the Radio Play-- (ETHAN FISCHER) Learn elements that lead to engaging short plays for radio. Here we can make almost anything occur and on a low budget--just inked page, personage, and microphone. We shall discuss/demonstrate how to fit words to those voices that broadcast imagination. Dialogue and sound effects can fuse what you/they have to say. Radio scripts have long been a good (often comic) place to begin or focus a playwriting career. Let's collaborate on the special landscape of the ear. Workshop will give attention too to vital adaptations and more.

42. Story Skeletons-- (JERRI BELL) Learn about the "bones" that support a story from the beginning, through the middle, to the end. We'll create our own sample "story skeletons" with an interactive group exercise. **Youth Workshop.**

43. Through the Window of the Haunted House-- (JERRI BELL) Learn how to engage all five senses to create a vivid setting and to set the mood of your story. We'll complete an individual writing exercise. **Youth Workshop.**