

FREE intensive  
creative writing skills workshops

# Writers' Toolkit

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Sponsored by the West Virginia Division of Culture and History  
and the West Virginia Library Commission



**Friday, March 16 – 7 p.m.**  
**Saturday, March 17, 2012 – 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.**

**THE CULTURE CENTER**

State Capitol Complex, Charleston

# A FREE intensive creative writing skills workshop

Sponsored by the West Virginia Division of Culture and History  
and the West Virginia Library Commission

# Writers' Toolkit

FRIDAY, MARCH 16

7 p.m.

Norman L. Fagan West Virginia State Theater



## ***“Bright Streets and Dark Paths: The Often-Painful, Sometimes Glorious Journey from Rough Draft to Polished Manuscript”***

**Sarah Sullivan**

In her keynote address, author Sarah Sullivan will offer a behind-the-scenes look at creating her latest book *Passing the Music Down* (Candlewick Press, 2011), a picture book based on the lives of Melvin Wine and Jake Krack, two old-time fiddle players from West Virginia. She will give participants a look at the illustration process from the writer's point of view, plus some observations on writing a novel for young people, or, “How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Revision.” *Passing the Music Down* is the endearing story of what young people can learn from their elders, the importance of remembering our heritage, and a reminder that

friendship knows no age difference. As a young boy, Jake heard stories about Melvin Wine, a master fiddler from West Virginia. A teacher prompted him to go hear Melvin at a festival, and their friendship began with the boy asking Wine, “Will you teach me all your tunes? . . . I want to play like you.” The student and his mentor's relationship spans many aspects of life, culminating with the student becoming a skilled musician in his own right and a mentor for younger students.

Sullivan is the author of three other picture books, including *Once Upon a Baby Brother*, which was included on the Bank Street College Best Children's Books list of 2011. Other titles include *Dear Baby: Letters from Your Big Brother* and *Root Beer and Banana*. She holds a master's degree in writing for children from Vermont College where she won the Harcourt Post-Graduate Scholarship. Her poetry has been published in *Cricket* magazine and her first novel for middle-school readers is set for publication by Candlewick Press. Sullivan has taught writing workshops at The Writer's Center in Bethesda, Maryland, and at the Highlights Founders Workshops, as well as in libraries and schools throughout the country. She lives with her husband in West Virginia. She says of her work, “As I look back over the books I've written I can see that I write about connections – connections between people of different backgrounds, as well as connections between people and places. . . . That yearning or desire for connection can be powerful for a writer.”

Reception to follow

# Writers' Toolkit



**SATURDAY, MARCH 17**

**9 - 9:45 a.m. – REGISTRATION (Pre-registration not necessary)**

**10 a.m. - Noon – MORNING SESSIONS**

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## **“CRAFT AND CREATIVITY IN PICTURE BOOKS”**

Library Commission  
Reference Room

### **Sarah Sullivan**

The workshop will touch on all elements of picture-book writing, including word count, pacing, plot, language, genre, page turns, when to rhyme, revision tips and figuring out where to submit a polished manuscript.

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## **“SCREENWRITING FOR BEGINNERS”**

Library Commission  
Training Room

### **Danny Boyd**

This workshop will focus on the basic building blocks used to develop and construct stories for cinema. The particular formatting style and available screenwriting software will be discussed, but like most entertainment writing, it's all about the story. Boyd also will present a general overview of the screenwriting process from concept to final script.

Danny Boyd, a West Virginian, has a degree in communications from West Virginia University and one in filmmaking from the University of Arkansas. He is a three-time U.S. Fulbright Scholar. Boyd has been a professor of media studies at West Virginia State University (WVSU) since 1983, actively involving his filmmaking students in his professional projects. In 1994, he established the Paradise Film Institute at WVSU for the purpose of supporting filmmaking in the state through resource services, production support, foreign exchanges and continuing education. His first feature film, *Chillers*, was released in 1988. Still in international video and television distribution, this horror feature was awarded the Silver Scroll for excellence from the Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films in Los Angeles. In 2008, Boyd teamed with William Bitner to co-write the illustrated novel *Death Falcon Zero vs. the Zombie Slug Lords*. Rekindling his childhood love of comic books, he has embraced the modern graphic novel format as his current primary creative outlet. His graphic novels, *Chillers* and *Carbon*, are now in production.

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## **“SHORT TAKES: WRITING FROM LIFE”**

Norman L. Fagan  
West Virginia  
State Theater

### **Karin Fuller**

This workshop will concentrate on selecting material from our lives that we can use to craft creative columns, fun flash fiction, and memorable memoirs. Even the most mundane moments can be a source of inspiration for original and inspiring tales. This workshop presents principles and writing prompts that can be used to find and draw out personal stories, and tips on how to spin straw into gold.

Fuller has been writing the weekly column, “Smell the Coffee,” for the *Charleston Sunday Gazette-Mail* since 1977. She is a two-time first place winner of the *Writer's Digest* romance genre short fiction competition, and her stories have appeared in such publications as *Family Circle* and *Woman's World*. She has previously taught workshops at the West Virginia Writers Conference and the West Virginia Book Festival. She lives in South Charleston with her husband, daughter and an ever-changing cast of furry characters.

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**“THE SEVEN  
DEADLY SINS”**

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Green Room

**Sandy Tritt**

“The Devil of Rejection” tempts every writer with the seven deadly sins of writing. They seem innocent enough – a misplaced comma here, an adverb there – but soon the writer finds himself sinking into the dreaded darkness of the rejection pile. This workshop will examine seven common mistakes: poor grammar and spelling; telling, not showing; passive voice; purple prose; repetitiveness; point of view breaches; and gawking characters.

Tritt is a writer, ghostwriter, editor and speaker. The founder and CEO of Inspiration for Writers, Inc., an international editing and critiquing service for aspiring writers, she has edited hundreds of manuscripts. She serves on the editorial staff of *Rosedog.com* and *Author-me.com*, and currently acts as the publication consultant for *Confluence Literary Magazine*. She is a past president of West Virginia Writers, Inc. and Ohio Valley Literary Group. Tritt was the recipient of the 2002 Artsbridge Arts Award for Writing, and the West Virginia Writers’ 2008 J.U.G. (Just Uncommonly Good) Award for mentoring. Her short stories have received many awards and have been published in literary magazines and local journals including *Gambit*, *Confluence*, *Allegheny Echoes*, *The Northwestern* and *Mountain Echoes*. Tritt has ghostwritten one award-winning screenplay, two memoirs, two novels and five nonfiction books.

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**Noon – 1 p.m. Great Hall – Networking and book sales**  
**1 - 3 p.m. – AFTERNOON SESSIONS**

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**BRING A  
BAG LUNCH**

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**“USING PLACE  
TO SPARK  
CREATIVITY”**

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Library Commission  
Reference Room

**Sarah Sullivan**

Eudora Welty once wrote, “. . . any place that ever was lived in is like a fire that never goes out.” Place can be a rich source of inspiration. Using examples from award-winning works of fiction and nonfiction for both adults and children, participants will look at ways writers draw on place to enliven and enrich their work and conclude with an exercise designed to explore the places that inspire and haunt us.

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**“THE GRAPHIC  
NOVEL”**

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Library Commission  
Training Room

**Danny Boyd**

Most writers transition from comics to film, but Danny Boyd did the reverse, finding writing graphic novels a faster way to create even bigger stories. Approaching the graphic novel as “cinema on the page,” he will cover the basic components of graphic narrative creation/construction, and present a general overview of this growing medium within the art, literature and film world.

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**“ROMANCE,  
WITH A TWIST”**

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Norman L. Fagan  
West Virginia  
State Theater

**Karin Fuller**

Romance stories are among the most popular on the market today, but writing them can be surprisingly difficult. How can you make sure your work gets noticed? Through the writing exercise, “40 Facts and One Lie,” Fuller will show participants how to find the kind of details that make characters real to the reader, and how to use those details to build short romantic stories that stand out from the crowd.

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**“THE LIFE CYCLE  
OF A CHARACTER”**

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Green Room

**Sandy Tritt**

Characters are the lifeblood of fiction, and the ability to create well-rounded, memorable characters is more craft than art. This workshop will discuss how to breathe life into a limp, two-dimensional character so he jumps off the page and into the reader’s heart. Tritt will discuss the conception of a character and how to slowly bring it to life by giving it wants and fears. As the character matures, the writer adds more layers, exploring different aspects of personality and history. Handouts will be provided including character trait charts, character growth charts, and personality component checklists.