



August 2011

3rd Annual Writer's Conference  
September 22\* - 24, 2011

**Hampton Roads Writers**  
Where Characters Connect

## 3rd Annual Writer's Conference Bigger Than Ever



Michael Palmer

What does Michael Palmer, the New York Times bestselling author of *A Heartbeat Away*, *The Last Surgeon*, and many other medical thrillers, have in common with Marisa Corvisiero, author, attorney, and literary agent with the Perkins Literary Agency? They are both keynote speakers at HRW's 3rd Annual Writing Conference which will be held September 22-24 in Virginia Beach.

This year's writer's conference will deliver even more bang for your bucks than ever before as we've added more of what you want and need. We are offering fifteen breakout sessions, four free writing contests, first ten lines critique sessions, free agent pitches, plus optional professional manuscript evaluations and optional after-hours bonus workshops.



Marisa Corvisiero

Though the deadline has come and gone for the writing contests and no appointments remain for the 10-minute agent pitches with Marisa Corvisiero, we still have openings for Thursday evening's optional pitch clinic with Chuck Sambuchino from *Writers Digest*, three spots left for Friday evening's optional group manuscript evaluation with Ms. Corvisiero, and eight appointments available for the 10-minute pitch sessions with Linda Konner.

Register now, if you haven't already done so, because these exciting opportunities are going fast, and our deadline for conference registration is quickly approaching.

On Saturday, October 22, 2011, Linda Carol Cobb will present a workshop on ***Effective Oral Presentation: How to Read Your Work Aloud and Wow the Audience.***

Have you been wanting to read your work in front of an audience, perhaps at an event such as an Open Mic, but you would first like to learn the skills needed to be an effective public speaker? Then this workshop is for you. Even if you regularly make oral presentations but feel you need to hone your speaking skills, Linda's workshop will give you that added boost.

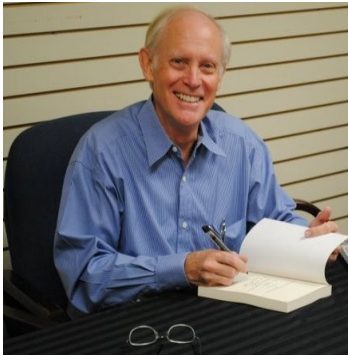
Linda has 37 years of teaching experience in public speaking, journalism, visual language, drama, and advanced composition.

The workshop will be held at Virginia Wesleyan College from 10:30 A.M. -12:30 P.M. Check-in begins at 10:15 A.M.

## Traveling Pen Workshop to Focus On Effective Speaking



## HRW Member Profile



**Lynn Johnson**

Lynn Johnson decided to do something fun with his life after thirty-six years as an auditor and analyst with the U.S. Government Accountability Office. That something was to pursue writing for fun and profit. His debut novel, *Warriors of the Forgotten Front*, is based on the first-hand accounts of his father, Sergeant Aaron Johnson, and several other men from his WWII unit during the Italian Campaign, a campaign that was hard-fought but that Johnson feels has been overlooked.

Though he always knew he wanted to write, Johnson thought his audience would be just his family. Then he took a writing class from Luran Strait, founder of Hampton Roads Writers, and with her encouragement and that of his classmates, he decided to seek out a larger readership. We want to congratulate Lynn Johnson on the publication of his first book and wish him success with his future endeavors.

*Warriors of the Forgotten Front* is available on amazon.com

*“When I began writing, the words that inspired me were these: ‘A writer is someone who has written today.’ —J.A. Jance*  
This quote has inspired Lynn Johnson

## Diction Lesson

Have you ever been reading a book and come to a word you don't know, and instead of taking the time to look it up, you just skip over it? Most of the time we can get the meaning from the context; we learned that in grammar school. But isn't that cheating the writer? Why did the writer choose that word instead of another one? Why do writers choose the words they do? It has to do with voice.

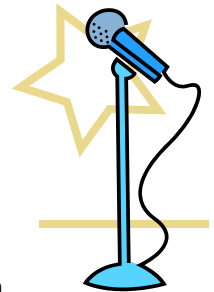
Diction, the writer's choice of words, helps shape the writer's voice. It's not only important what we write, but how we write it to create the feeling we want our reader to experience. Word choice depends on the occasion and the author's purpose, whether the writing is formal or informal, fact or fiction, humorous or serious, informative, or purely entertaining. Our choice of words, no matter the occasion, should be precise in order to take the reader where we want him to go. Do we want to convey that our character is angry? Don't let him just shut the door; have him slam it. Is our character anorexic?

If so, should she be described as slender or gaunt? Word choice matters. It is one of the tools writers use to get their thoughts into the mind of the reader. As an exercise, take a section of something you are working on and go through it with a fine tooth comb (we'll discuss clichés at another time). Do any words stand out? If not, maybe



## Open Mic Nights

The remaining Open Mics for 2011 and the first one of 2012 will all be held at the Mary D. Pretlow Library, 111 W. Ocean View Avenue in Norfolk from 6-8:30 P.M.



Please bring 3-5 minutes of material to share. Sign-ups to read begin at 6 P.M. All our Open Mic events are open to everyone.

Aug. 16, Tuesday

Emcee: John Starks

Oct. 27, Thursday

Emcee: Pete Freas

Jan. 25, Wednesday

Emcee: Dennis Bounds

### Writing Prompt: Poetry

Write a short descriptive poem about your backyard. You might write about observations of your literal backyard, your neighborhood, city, or town.

## Computer Vision Syndrome for Writers

With many writers now using computer word processing programs for their work, the problem of eye discomfort and blurred vision with prolonged computer work has become a significant problem. There are a few simple things you may do to alleviate or minimize these problems.

**Take A Break:** Every 20 minutes look up from the screen and look across the room or out the window. This relaxes the eyes' internal focusing system used for reading distances. Also, blink several times to help rewet the surface of your eyes to keep them from getting too dry which could cause a stinging and burning sensation. If you've been diagnosed with "dry eye syndrome," due to poor tear quality or quantity, you may want to instill a drop of artificial tears in each eye before you start working and periodically thereafter to supplement your natural tears.

**Use an Occupational Eyeglass Prescription:** Depending on your prescription needs,

### Writing Prompt: Voice

Write a news story based on the following headline:  
"Hospitals won't help dying man"

your eye care professional should be able to prescribe a pair of "computer eyeglasses" which will provide a wider field of view for the computer screen and any reference notes

you may work with. This will relax the eyes' internal focusing system and also minimize the neck movements and pain associated with trying to use standard bifocals for computer work. Your lenses should also have an antireflective or antiglare coating to minimize glare discomfort from the screen and room lights.

Doing these simple things will make your computer work more comfortable and less tiring as you work on that novel or book of poems that's going to put you on the best seller lists.



### Don't Forget!

Buying Amazon.com books and other products sold on the Amazon.com site (including gift cards) through our HRW website is a quick and painless way to financially support HRW. For each sale, our group earns a 4-6.5% referral fee. The more products sold through a referral from the HRW page, the higher the percentage referral we receive. You pay no more going through our site than you would if you went directly to Amazon.com. Look for the Amazon link on our HRW home page and start shopping today. Oh, and tell your friends and family about it!

## Local Writing Groups Abound

Looking for fellow writers to share your work with? Do you like to be critiqued and offer critiques of your own? Do you like to discuss poetry, and journaling, and writing memoirs? Many opportunities exist for writers to network in Hampton Roads.

For a listing of local writers' groups, go to the Hampton Roads Writers website and click on Local Writing Groups on the sidebar. There you will find groups like the Pungo-Blackwater Library Writers' group and the Bayside Author's Room. Bet you didn't know about them, did you? Our website is a great place to visit if you want to spend time in the company of other writers but don't know where they're hiding.

Actually, they are not hiding at all. They are all around you, whether you live in Virginia Beach, Norfolk, or any other community in South Hampton Roads, or even if you live on the peninsula, the Eastern Shore, or Northeastern North Carolina. We've even listed groups in Richmond.

## Did You Know?

The Hampton Roads Writers website features more than information about our organization. It's a great place to visit if you want to find resources for writers.

Have you written a fabulous piece you'd like to enter into a contest but don't know where to send it? Check out our Writers' Resource page and click on Print and Online Writing Contests. You're sure to find some places that grab your interest. Is your child a writer, too? On the same page you will find paying and non-paying print and online publishing venues for minors as well.

Have you thought about starting your own blog, or are you interested in finding blogs about writing, click on Blogs for Writers Worldwide and Blogs by Literary Agents. They will surely give you some good ideas. Oh, and if you have a few minutes to kill (what writer needs another reason to procrastinate?) that same resource page has online games for writers. But be forewarned: They're addictive!

## Don't Just Sit There. Join Us!

HRW is an all volunteer group of writers eager to give back some of their time, treasure, and talent in order to help other less experienced writers grow in their writing craft and ultimately attain publication success. Even if you are not currently seeking to be published, joining HRW will be an enriching experience as you are connected with people who enjoy being immersed in the literary arts.

All membership money is used to pay professional writers for their workshop services during the Traveling Pen Workshops and our annual conference, to maintain the website, publicity, to provide scholarships to our events for people who cannot afford to attend, and to cover the cost of office supplies and liability insurance.

HRW members receive discounts on all our Traveling Pen Writers' Workshops and at our annual conference in September. They also receive a personal member page on which they may display their writer's bio, publication credits, and link to their blog, if they have one.



**Hampton Roads Writers**  
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P. O. Box 7607, Norfolk, VA 23509, [hamptonroadswriters.org](http://hamptonroadswriters.org)

## Get Social with HRW

Join Hampton Roads Writers on Facebook and Twitter. Interact with writers from around the world.

Receive updates on news, events, and all the latest conference updates.



### Social Networking Tip:

Writers who want to share their work need a "hub." A hub is the main source of your work, whether a blog or website. Use social media sites like Facebook and Twitter to feed in to this source.

For more information about the articles in this newsletter, visit  
[hamptonroadswriters.org](http://hamptonroadswriters.org)