

# HRW

**Hampton Roads Writers**  
Where Characters Connect

A Quarterly Newsletter

January 2011

## In the Company of Authors

As long as we keep writing, we will always be writers. However, many of our members have gone one step further and are authors, some not for the first time. Congratulations to the following HRW members who recently have had a new book published:

Lynn Johnson, *Warriors of the Forgotten Front*

Midori Bamba, *The Three Survivors*

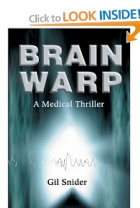
Phyllis Johnson, *Being Frank With Anne*

Meg Wade, *Confessions of a Southern Baby Boomer*

Judy Snider, *I Love You, Be Careful*

Dr. Gil Snider, *Brain Warp*

Judi McCoy, *Begging For Trouble*



For more information on their books, including how to purchase them, go to [hamptonroadswriters.org](http://hamptonroadswriters.org) and view their members' pages. Hampton Roads Writers is an organization that can help you add your name to the list.

## Open Mic Nights



# Free!

One of the pleasures of writing is sharing it with others, and one of the easiest and most painless ways of doing that is by becoming involved in our Open Mic nights. Just bring three to five minutes of material to one of the venues and enjoy the camaraderie of other writers as you take turns reading your work. This is not to be confused with professional theater; there are no auditions, no call-backs, no endless rehearsals. This is simply an evening of sharing your carefully crafted words with others who have the same interest. So pick out that favorite poem or story excerpt, practice in front of a mirror (or your non-critical dog), and come on out and join us. You will find our Open Mic schedule on the Hampton Roads Writers website.

## HRW 2011 Writers' Conference

HRW's Third Annual Writers' Conference will be held September 22-24 in Virginia Beach. The conference schedule, which began in 2009, started as a one-day event at its inception, expanded to a two-day affair last year, and is expanding yet again with the addition of an added break-out session on Thursday evening, September 22, from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. Thursday evening's session, entitled "Mastering the 10-Minute Agent Pitch," will be facilitated by

Chuck Sambuchino, an editor for Writer's Digest Books and one of the conference speakers. The conference will feature *New York Times* bestselling author Michael Palmer, M.D. who is author of *The Last Surgeon*, *The Second Opinion*, *The First Patient*, and many other medical thrillers. Also featured at the conference will be several other authors, editors and agents. Visit the HRW website ([hamptonroadswriter.org](http://hamptonroadswriter.org)) often for updates.

# To Blog or Not to Blog

A blog, an online journal chronicling a person's life, hobbies, or opinions, can offer many benefits to a writer. First and foremost, it keeps a writer writing, and that can never be a bad thing. The more you write, the better you get, yet some of us feel the inspiration drain out of us when we stare at that blank, white page of the poem we intended to write or the novel we promised ourselves we would finally begin. Blogging, because of its nature of being short bursts of writing about something we are infinitely familiar with, is a painless and fun way of filling up that empty page and improving our craft while we're at it.

Another benefit of blogging is that it instantly puts us smack dab in the middle of a community of writers (just like joining Hampton Roads Writers does!). Other writers can be a constant source of support, whether you are a newbie at writing or have been at it for years. It's hard to keep writing in a vacuum. We begin doubting ourselves, and the old "why did I ever think I could write?" goblin keeps popping up and sitting on our shoulder. Immersing yourself in a community of writers can give you the confidence you need to keep plugging along. After all, these fellow writers have experienced what you have. Plus, you get the bonus of receiving feedback via the "comments" link on most blogs.

To find out additional benefits of blogging, do an Internet search of blogging for writers and read some examples. A good place to start is Wordpress.com which offers an excellent (and free!) platform to begin your blog and read some posts by new and experienced bloggers. Once you join Hampton Roads Writers and put a short bio on our members page, you can have your blog linked to your HRW page. Hope to read your blog soon!

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## Bond With Your Audience

by Linda Carol Cobb

"Pretend they're naked." "Just look over their heads." These pieces of bad advice to a nervous presenter don't work.

If I were going to read to an audience and imagined them nude, I would laugh and lose focus. Looking over their heads doesn't work either because people notice this lack of eye contact. When you're listening to someone, don't you want that person to look you in the eyes? Some people don't trust others if they don't establish eye contact.

Direct, sustained eye contact is essential to an effective oral presentation. When you look directly into the audience members' eyes, you're creating a bond with them. You're sharing something personal with them, and you want them to respond to you.

Practice your reading aloud several times, so you can look up frequently--at least once every sentence--from your manuscript. Always look directly at your audience at the beginning and end of your reading. Try to sustain the eye contact for several seconds each time. If you look up and down too quickly, you'll look like one of those bobble-head dolls.

Bond with your audience at the next Open Mic Night. Eye contact can make the difference between a dynamic performance and a mediocre one.

*Linda Carol Cobb taught public speaking and coached an award-winning forensics team for over 30 years. She has an M.A. in communications.*

### We Need You

**Be a part of the writing community and join Hampton Roads Writers. Better yet, don't just join but get involved by volunteering on one of the committees. Help us make this the best year yet and the best conference ever! Visit our website ([hamptonroadswriters.org](http://hamptonroadswriters.org)) for more information.**

## Did You Know...



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. Referral money paid to HRW in no way impacts you, the buyer. Your purchase price through a referral from the HRW page is identical to what it would be if you were to go directly to Amazon.com and order. Simply visit our HRW home page and click on the Amazon link on the left-hand side to begin shopping and supporting...and thanks!

## Have Pen, Will Travel

Don't miss out on our Traveling Pen Series, exciting 2-hour workshops taught by experts on such topics as self-editing, writing a screenplay, and effective and realistic dialogue, to name a few. These very popular classes fill up fast, so check our website and your schedule and register for one or more right away!