



# Hampton Roads Writers Where Characters Connect

May 2012

## Writers' Conference Planning in Full Swing

Hampton Roads Writers 4th annual conference will be held September 20-22 at the Doubletree Hotel in Virginia Beach. Look at these numbers: 1 evening plus 2 full days of workshops, 2 best-selling keynoters, 2 first ten-lines critique sessions, 29 workshops/breakout sessions, ten-minute agent pitches, and cash prize contests for short fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. Every year's events keep getting better and better as we add new workshops and present more opportunities for you to mix with fellow writers, agents, and best-selling authors.

We are offering early-bird tuition until July 27 for everyone, but you can get an even greater discount if you join

HRW. Why not kill two birds with that proverbial stone by sending in your tax deductible membership donation when you register for the conference? For more details about the conference, including bios of our expert presenters and descriptions of sessions, go to our website, [hamptonroadswriters.org](http://hamptonroadswriters.org), and click on 2012 Writers' Conference at the bottom of the homepage sidebar. Then print out your registration form, fill it in, and send it along with your check for the conference as well as one for membership to the address on the form. We want to see you there, and we want to keep seeing you as you become a valuable part of our organization.

## Love at First Sight

Our new longer form Open Mics for prose writing have been such an immediate success that our presentation slots filled up quickly. We no longer have openings for May 26 and only a few left for the July 7 Long Form Open Mic. There are eight slots left for September 8. If you are interested in being a presenter for one of those critique sessions, be sure to go online and get the details on our website for making that happen. It is on a first come, first served basis, and the slots go fast.

Even if you don't get chosen to present or you do not wish to present, please come as an observer and a listener as you can learn so much that will help your own work from hearing our professionals give their critiques. Michael Khandelwal will critique on July 7, and Shonda Buchanan will critique in September.

## Open Mic Nights Schedule Through Summer

May 23, 2012 Wednesday from 6-8:30  
Mary D. Pretlow Library, 111 W. Oceanview Avenue,  
Norfolk, VA Emcee: Jack Callan

June 27, 2012 Wednesday from 6-8:30  
Meyera Orberndorf Central Library, 4100 Virginia Beach  
Blvd., Virginia Beach Emcee: Dr. Milt Saunders

July 24, 2012 Tuesday 6-8:30  
Pretlow Library Emcee: Anne Meek

August 21, 2012 Tuesday 6-8:30  
Central Library Emcee: Shonda Buchanan

Please bring 3-5 minutes of material to share. These open mics are open to everyone, readers and listeners alike.

## Have Pen, Will Travel

Our Traveling Pen Series has several great offerings scheduled for the next few months. At a bargain price of \$10 per session for HRW members and \$20 for non-members (another reason to join HRW!), they are not to be missed. All classes are held on Saturdays at the Tidewater Community College Virginia Beach campus in the Blackwater Building. Though admission is accepted at the door, please email ahead of time so that we may have enough handouts for all the participants. Here are what you have to look forward to:

**June 2, 2012, 9:30 AM - Noon** WORKSHOP TITLE: "Dialogue," he said: Creating Realistic & Effective Dialogue for Writers of Screenplays, Stage Plays, Novels, and Short Stories, presented by Dr. Dennis Bounds, Screenplay Instructor at Regent University

**July 21, 2012, 9:00 AM - 12:30 PM** WORKSHOP TITLE: **Refreshing Grammar** presented by Linda Cobb, a professed grammar nerd and retired high school teacher with an M.A. in communications. (Check in at 9:00 AM, workshop starts at 9:15) **NOTE: Most of our TPS workshops last 2 hours. This workshop lasts 3 hours and 15 minutes.**

**Aug 18, 2012, 10 AM - Noon**; check in at 9:45 AM WORKSHOP TITLE: Making A Scene: Snappy Dialogue meets Concrete Detail WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION: This two-hour workshop is designed to help the writer: 1. understand when and how to employ scene, 2. construct unique, believable dialogue that serves multiple functions, and 3. choose details that ground the reader, evoke the senses, and convey relevant emotion

## Hampton Roads Writers Loses a Treasure



Since our last newsletter, we have been saddened by the death of one of our beloved friends. Judi McCoy, an advisor on our board of directors, left us in February, and the ensuing hole in our leadership, as well as in our hearts, will not be filled or forgotten. Judi was a prolific writer of mysteries and romances, including the "Dog Walker" series she began in 2009. Her 2010 novel *Death in Show* won Romantic Times Most Humorous Mystery award. Judi was also a presenter at some of our conferences and Traveling Pen workshops. If you have never read any of her novels, why not honor Judi by picking one up or checking one out of the library? It will be a treat! Use the Amazon.com link on HRW's homepage to order one or more of her books. Simply type Judi's name in the search box.

**Literary Trivia Question: What American humorist and member of the famed Algonquin Table once quipped, "It took me fifteen years to discover I had no talent for writing, but I couldn't give it up because by that time, I was too famous"?**

**Answer on page 4**

## Calls for Submission

**Downstate Story:** <http://www.wiu.edu/users/mfgeh/dss/guidelines.html> Published every fall. Each issue contains 10 original short stories and original illustrations. Accepts a variety of genres. **Deadline: June 30th** of every year. Looks for short fiction, under 2,000 words, and the shorter, the better. Prefers a connection with Illinois or the Midwest, but anyone can submit work. **Pays \$50 on acceptance.**

**Inch Magazine:** <http://bullcitypress.com/submissions> Quarterly devoted to tiny poems, tiny fiction (750 words or fewer). Submit up to three flash fictions. **Pays three copies.**

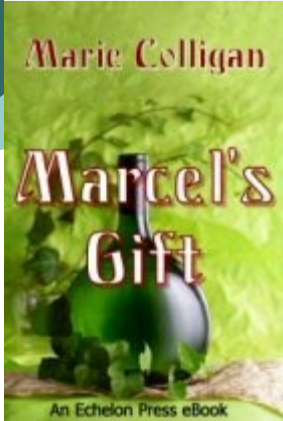
**Prime Number:** <http://www.primenumbermagazine.com/Submit.html> Seeks to publish distinctive work, regardless of theme, form, or style. Contributors will include both emerging and established writers. Between issues we will, from time to time, post *Prime Decimals*, consisting of flash fiction, flash non-fiction, and shorter poems. The annual print issue will include the editors' selections from work that has appeared in the quarterly issues and *Prime Decimals*. (Can submit up to three flash pieces.) **Pays copy of the annual.**

**Barge Journal** is a perfect-bound print magazine, published twice a year. **Payment is 1 contributor copy and two cash prizes per issue of \$80 and \$60.** This isn't the place for traditional short stories or poems. Our focus is on stretching, manipulating, or completely abandoning traditional forms of literature, moving writing away from the "literary" side and more to the artistic side of creation. "Stuff not Things" as we say. But you can read all about that and our submission guidelines on our website: <http://www.bargepress.com>

*I find the great thing in this world is, not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving.*

*Goethe*

## Marie Colligan's Book Now On Sale



Marie Colligan, a member of Hampton Roads Writers, began her writing career with the publication of several non-fiction pieces for various women's magazines. Now she has made the leap to fiction and has produced a lovely, and gorgeously written love story, *Marcel's Gift*.

Marie won several awards in fiction from Writers' Journal magazine. In their *Write to Win!* Contests, she has won First Place twice, and in their fiction contest she came away with two Honorable Mention awards.

According to Marie, you can usually find her at The Greater Lehigh Valley Writers' Conference in Allentown, Pennsylvania, the Hampton Roads Writers' Conference here in Virginia Beach, and the Festival of the Book in Charlottesville, Virginia, where for the past two years, her fist page entries of her novels were selected for reading and rated high by the panel who said they would want to read more. At our Hampton Roads Writers' Conference held here last September, New York Times best-selling author Michael Palmer said her entry showed "quality and tight writing."

A native of New Jersey, Marie earned her degree from Upsala College in Sussex County and was the student coordinator of the literary magazine, "Forsythia." She belongs to three writing critique groups in the Lynchburg, Virginia area, one of which she facilitates. She is married and has a son and grandson. Recently, Marie was interviewed about *Marcel's Gift*, by WSET TV's Living in the Heart of Virginia.



## Software Ideas to Make Your Writing Life Easier And More Fun

Many of you are very happy with the keyboard life that has characterized writing for more than a century. It's one thing if you can play your keyboard like a concert pianist, but it's an entirely different situation if you are only able to grind out twenty words a minute or less. (Yes, I used to be a hunt and peck guy too.)

Several years ago I was delighted to discover Nuance's "Dragon Naturally Speaking" voice recognition software. After several annual upgrades, I can virtually put my keyboard aside, sit back and tell my story into my wireless mike. Dragon gets to know you after awhile, and if you don't become too sloppy about your

pronunciation, and don't forget to let the Dragon know about your punctuation, you will have an easy go of getting through that chapter today. Try it, you'll like it!

My second tip of the day has two parts. A six star recommendation for "Final Draft version 8" for scriptwriters and a seven star recommendation for "Power Structure" which virtually guides you through every aspect of high quality writing, all the way from flash fiction to novels.

"Developed for writers by writers, power structure is a playground for your mind. Power structure makes it easy to sketch out, organize and analyze all the decisions and thought pro-

cesses that are critical to developing any successful story." As if that's not enough, it works well with Dragon NaturallySpeaking!—Whoopie!

Creatively yours,

Dr. Milt Saunders



**Dr. Milt Saunders is an advisor to the board of HRW**

# Show, Don't Tell: Not Always the Best Advice

By Lauran Strait



An oft-quoted writing rule is show, don't tell. However, there are times when the reverse is true. Here are some suggestions on how telling rather than showing can be the course of greater wisdom in certain situations.

Times when you should tell:

- ◆ When you need to move from scene to scene, it's okay to use transition phrases that are full-on narrative telling. Often readers need the information—known as bridging action—to orient them as to when and where the POV character is physically and/or chronologically in the story. Especially in the case where an extended amount of time has passed during which nothing all that significant happens or when more of the same old, same old occurs, narrative summary and/or transition phrases are perfectly appropriate. Most of the telling-not-showing occurs at the beginning or end of chapters or scenes.
- ◆ When we need to see characters purposefully moving around, doing things, acting and reacting to stimulus, straight-forward telling is the way to go. Examples are: John slammed the axe into the dragon's head; John swerved around the belched dragon fire; Armed with

mace and vulgar mouth, Angelina approached the rabid dog.

- ◆ When we need to alleviate confusion about who is speaking, we use narrated speaker attributions, either in the form of dialogue tags (he said, she said) or beats (Alexis kicked the dog). Beats, known as stage direction, are bits of action that show a character's character (also known as revealing character) or that show your character's reaction to what's happening around him or her. Beats are the actions readers "watch" throughout the story, and they come to the reader through fairly unobtrusive narration, though narration nonetheless. A reader's "watching" of the beats equates to what viewers do when they "watch" TV, movies, plays, and real life events. Observers don't literally hear a narrator's disembodied voice telling them that John said thus and so to this or that person, or that Mei-Li picked up a so and so. But we know who does and says what because we observe the innocuous narration, while our subconscious (our own internal narrator) simultaneously interprets what we've "seen," helps us understand it, and helps us extrapolate the implications of what has just been said and done.

## Another Success Story

Congratulations to our own Lisa Drago, treasurer of Hampton Roads Writers, who was awarded Third Place prize in the [2012 Charlotte Wise Memorial poetry contest](#) (subject: America's heritage oculture) from the [Poetry Society of Virginia](#) for her poem, "Monongah's Miners," which commemorated the 1907 coal



mining explosion in Monongah, West Virginia that took the lives of 500 men and boys. She was awarded a cash prize at a luncheon ceremony in Richmond, Virginia on April 22, 2012.



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. Last year we earned over **\$300** with 201 items sold at a total retail value of \$5,333.74. 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. In fact, you can start by buying Marie Colligan's new book, [Marie's Gift](#). While you're at it, you can order Judi's books, too. Here's one to start with: [Fashion Faux Paw: A Dog Walker Mystery](#). Oh, and tell your friends and family about our link to Amazon!

Answer to Literary Trivia question: Robert Benchley