

Hampton Roads Writers Where Characters Connect

Special Edition, August 2013

Christmas in September



Do you wait until the last minute to get your Christmas shopping done? Are you sometimes at a loss for what to get your family, friends, or office mates? How would you like to remedy both of those situations while at the same time attending an outstanding writers' conference?

Come to our 5th Annual Hampton Roads Writers' Conference on

September 19-21 at the Westin Town Center, located at 4535 Commerce Street in Virginia Beach. Besides a first-rate conference held at an upscale venue with a program including 1 evening plus 2 full days of workshops, 2 best-selling keynoters, 2 first 10-lines critique sessions, 10-minute agent pitches, and cash prizes for short fiction, short non-fiction, and poetry, this year we will also have a 2-hour social on Friday evening immediately after the day's sessions, featuring appetizers, beer, wine, and soft drinks, and a fabulous silent auction. You can bid on a variety of fun and beautifully presented baskets with tastefully selected items that are sure to make your Christmas shopping woes disappear.



In addition to our fabulous baskets, our auction includes such items as a Kindle Fire, a \$100 gift card to Amazon, and gift cards to local restaurants such as Aldo's, Bravo, and Gordon Biersch, as well as gift certificates to spas for facials and massages, and tickets to an ODU football game and a production of *A Christmas Carol* at the Wells Theater. Are you having company this fall and need extra room to house them? The auction items include a two-day stay for two at the Westin Town Center. Better yet, bid on it for yourself and treat yourself and your significant other to a

romantic weekend for just the two of you. We will also have smaller stocking-stuffer gift cards for places like Trader Joe's, Barnes and Noble, Panera, and Starbucks. (Continued on page 2)

Christmas in September (continued)

Hot and Cold Hors D'oeuvres

Spanakopita

Mini Quiche

Beef empanada

Hibachi beef skewers

Thai spring Rolls with dipping sauce

Chicken Satay, mojito buerre blanc

Wonton wrapped shrimp with sweet chili sauce

Antipasto skewers

*Libations**

House wine

Domestic beer

Soft drinks

Bottled water

*Two complimentary drinks, followed by cash bar

As if the silent auction weren't tempting enough, the menu for the social is making my mouth water as I write this. After a full day of workshops, take some time to relax with your fellow writers. Meet our keynote speakers, presenters and agents. Talk to people you are just beginning to get to know, and form bonds that may help you in your writing goals. I can guarantee from experience, you will be so pumped up after Friday's full-day session, you won't want to simply head to your car and go home. You will want some unwind time and some social networking time. Our Social and Silent Auction is just the ticket.

Visit our [website](#) to see our other baskets as well as a detailed description of what each contains. You will also learn how to reserve your spot for the social. Remember, you must register for the conference to come to the social and silent auction, but you may have as many friends as you want meet you there. Just be sure to pay for each one who attends with you. **NOTE: Only cash or check accepted for payment at the silent auction.**

Working the Writer's Conference: Are You Ready? by Cecelia Robbins

We hope you have been preparing. Hampton Roads Writers offers, in addition to regular Open Mics, a long-form version of the Open Mic. You've had the opportunity to have your first chapter of your novel critiqued by local professionals: teachers, professors, journalists, experts in the writing field. This is an incredible offering. Writers usually pay a lot of money for such evaluations. HRW has offered them at no cost. Unfortunately, due to a high number of no-shows taking up valuable slots, this may change in the future.

Agent One-on-One Pitch Sessions: Agents prefer to see writers who have a completed novel. Don't present kid-lit to an editor whose profile lists YA or adult fiction. Again, read their profile. Visit their website. Practice your pitch with an audience. Be confident. And remember, they want to see the first chapter of your novel. You can't fudge on this detail.

Networking: This is a neglected aspect of the conference. So many writers in one place—get to know some of them. If you have writer's business cards, hand them out. Think about expanding your web of contacts. If you write action-adventure, ask around for other writers working in that genre. Remember to sign into the genre network. We will have a table set up with sign-in sheets. Please sign in with your email if you are interested in networking with other like-minded writers.

Breakout Sessions: HRW has some great breakout sessions this year. I had trouble deciding which ones I wanted to attend. Please read the offerings, and make sure you get your reservation in.