

Hampton Roads Writers Where Characters Connect

April 2014

Session Previews for the 2014 Writers' Conference

The Sixth Annual Hampton Roads Writers' Conference will be held on September 18-20 at the Westin Town Center in Virginia Beach. One evening plus two full days of workshops, two best-selling keynoters, two first ten-lines critique sessions, forty-five workshops during nine breakout sessions, ten-minute agent pitches, ten-minute indie publisher pitches, and cash prize no-entry-fee contests for short fiction, short non-fiction, and poetry add up to an incredibly entertaining and informative weekend for a very reasonable price. Workshops cover fiction, nonfiction, memoir, poetry, and the business of getting published. A book shop, book signings, and many networking opportunities are available.



Janet Burroway, Professor Emerita at Florida State University and author of eight novels and writing craft textbooks, and **Brad Parks**, the only author to have won the Shamus, Nero, and Lefty Awards for his Carter Ross Mysteries, will deliver keynote addresses. Check out our [website](#) to see our other presenters who include fiction writers, non-fiction writers, poets, journalists, agents, public relations experts, and independent book publishers.



Here is a partial description of a few of our many planned break-out sessions:

- **Where the Wild Things Are: Getting to the story.** Presented by keynoter Janet Burroway, this workshop will discuss a couple of examples of written fiction, including Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*, but it will centrally involve practical hands-on exercises in finding the plot of your story, either one you make up during the session, or one you are working on already.
- **Welcome to the Woodshed: Getting serious about writing.** Presented by our other keynoter, Brad Parks, this workshop is one part inspirational speech and one part how-to guide. Brad talks about how to change your life so writing rises to the fore. Get ready to finally accomplish your writing goals!
- **The Keys to the Kingdom: Why you need an agent, and how to get the right one.** For all that has changed about the publishing world in the past decade, one thing hasn't: People not named E.L. James still need to get the right agent if they want to last. Seven books into his own career, Brad Parks talks about what he did wrong at first, what he's done right since then, and how you can query your way to the agent of your dreams.
- **Life Before the Alphabet: Learning to write by heart (poetry).** This workshop will consider orature and its place in the contemporary world of letters. How can orally composed or delivered art help modern day writers of poetry, prose, plays, and screenplays? Our aim is to stimulate and nurture the aural imagination. Bring a draft of a piece you are currently working on. Presented by Dr. Philip Brady, author, Youngstown State University professor, and executive director of Etruscan Press.
- **Introduction to Independent Publishing.** This workshop offers an introduction to independent literary publishing. Aimed at authors trying to come to terms with the rapidly changing landscape of the publishing world, the workshop will focus on roles and various models of the independent press. We'll touch on editorial policies, distribution, production and design, grant-writing, promotion and marketing, and the role of authors. Presented by Dr. Philip Brady.
- **Maximize Your Twitter Platform.** Make the most of this popular social media platform. Learn strategies for how to tweet smarter, connect with your target audience, market your personal brand, and build your online presence. Presented by Kaylee Davis, literary agent at Dee Mura Literary.

(Continued on page 6)

Show and Grow your Prose with Professional Critiques

You are at a cocktail party one evening and you discover that the man with whom you are trading small talk is an orthopedist. “Doctor,” you say, “I have this crick in my neck that just won’t go away.” Before you get another word out, this man tells you to call his office in the morning and make an appointment. Nobody offers free professional opinions anymore. Nobody, that is, except Hampton Roads Writers at our Show and Grow Your Prose sessions. Don’t miss an opportunity to read ten minutes of your prose (short story, memoir, or novel chapter only) in front of a very accepting audience of your peers, followed by a brief professional critique by our guest critiquer and by the moderator (usually Luran Strait, founder and president of HRW), all without the removal of even a penny from your pocket. Even if you don’t want to read a piece, sitting in the audience and listening to what the critiquer has to say can help you with your own writing. In fact, after sitting in the audience and listening to other people read their work and receive professional feedback, many people have been emboldened to dust off some of their own pieces or write a new one for the next session. We have only time for six or seven readings per session, so go to our [web-site](#) for detailed information on how to share your work. Registration is required for those who wish to read, and as you will see on our webpage, you will need to format and email us your submission in time for us to prepare it for the session. Readers will be chosen on a first come, first served basis.

Here is the schedule for the next sessions, all of which will take place at Meyera Oberndorf Central Library in Virginia Beach from 9:15 to Noon. Oh, and did I mention that they’re free?

April 5, 2014: Author **Valerie Wilkinson** will offer the professional critiques. No reading slots remain.

May 10, 2014: Author and educator **Michael Khandelwal** will offer the professional critiques. Seven reading slots remain.

June 14, 2014: Author and educator **Dr. Dennis Bounds** will offer the professional critiques. Seven reading slots remain.

July 12, 2014: Author **John Mack** will offer the professional critiques. Seven reading slots remain.

August 9, 2014: Author and educator **Michael Khandelwal** will offer the professional critiques. Seven reading slots remain.

October 11, 2014: Author and educator **Dr. Bill Ruehlmann** will offer the professional critiques. Seven reading slots remain.

Elephantine Publishing: A Collaborative Publisher by Amanda Aksel



While sharing marketing tips and discussing cover art in Virginia Beach, independent authors Amanda Aksel, Heather Hildenbrand, and Sara Panek all came to the same conclusion: wouldn’t it be great if there was a publishing house that offered all the resources of traditional publishing while still allowing the creative freedom of independent publishing? With a defined vision, Elephantine Publishing was born.

Elephantine is a collaborative publisher with a goal to partner with authors to turn the love of writing into a successful career. The publishing partners work side by side with authors through every step of the publishing process to create a distinct and professional title. Using strategic marketing, Elephantine provides our authors with industry tools and resources to build readership and grow sales.

The crew at Elephantine is currently accepting submissions. If you’re interested in joining the herd at Elephantine Publishing, visit the website at: www.elephantinepublishing.com.

Be sure to check the submissions tab to learn more about their unique submission process. Heather Hildenbrand will also participate in the pitch session at this year’s Hampton Roads Writers’ Conference.

It’s simple. Elephantine seeks to provide access to all stories worth telling, whether or not the words fit into a neatly labeled box. Words that resonate in your bones. Stories you’ll never forget.

HRW Keeps Growing!

Hampton Roads Writers welcomes the following new members who have joined since January:

- ◆ Donald Alcorn
- ◆ Jane Bethel
- ◆ Jennie Bethel
- ◆ Shari Graber
- ◆ Jacqueline Johnson
- ◆ Michael Khandelwal
- ◆ Kent Miller
- ◆ Carmen Moore
- ◆ David Neff
- ◆ Colin Norman
- ◆ Tanya Young
- ◆ Sally Parrott
- ◆ Shawn Snider

Deadlines, Deadlines!

Want to keep an extra \$40 in your pocket? Then take advantage of HRW's early bird tuition for our annual fall conference. The cost of the conference is \$220 for HRW members and \$260 for non-members, ***BUT*** you can save \$40 if you register by **June 27**. That's right! If you send in your registration and payment by **June 27**, members pay only \$180, and non-members pay \$220. Which brings me to another point: If you are not already a member and are planning on coming to the conference, why not join HRW at the same time you send in your early bird tuition? At \$35 for membership, you actually come out ahead.

Another deadline fast approaching is the one for our contest submissions. You may enter a piece of your writing in one or all of our categories: fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. But we must receive them no later than **July 25**. The prizes are rather exceptional for a no-fee entry contest. The only stipulation is that you must register for the conference. Please go to our [website](#) and read all the details, including awards and submission guidelines, and then get busy on that piece of writing you've been aiming to finish.

Who Are We?

Our members come from all fields and professions: doctors, lawyers, poets, novelists, journalists, housewives, students, teachers. You name it, we've probably got one of those. The only things we all have in common is love of the written word and the desire to get better at our craft and help others along the way. Here are snippets about some of our newest members:

Michael Khandelwal writes poetry and fiction as well as editorials, profiles, and features for *Hampton Roads Magazine*. He is co-founder of The Muse and is the President of the 2008 Virginia Electoral College. Michael is one of our newest members to the HRW board.

Carmen Moore heard about HRW through a friend who discovered it online. Carmen has a degree in communication and had considered writing a book in the genre of adult mystery or fantasy. She ended up writing a children's book.

Donald Alcorn, who also belongs to Virginia Beach Writers where he often heard about HRW, finished writing a historical/biblical novel and is now ready to begin the publishing process.

Shawn Snider, a resident of Harrisonburg, heard of HRW through his wife and is definitely planning on attending this year's conference in September. He began writing fantasy/paranormal three years ago. He has already finished one novel and has begun another. Pitching his first novel is also in the works.

Jane Bethel and **Jennie Bethel** are mother and daughter. Jane is currently working on a nonfiction piece. Jennie is an artist who writes a separate poem for each of her pictures.

Kent Miller originally heard of HRW by reading about an Open Mic on the monthly calendar at the Mary Predlow Library in Norfolk. He then went to the HRW [website](#). He is committed to improving his craft by taking writing classes and attending the HRW conference. Kent has written some poetry and is presently focusing on completing his suspense novel.

Jacqueline Johnson is awaiting the publication of her second fantasy/young adult novel of a planned trilogy. Jefferson Davis Middle School's library in Hampton has added her first book, *Test of Time*, to their inventory. Schools are interested in her books because they meet the criteria for the Virginia SOL's, the state's educational standards. She heard about HRW through an article in the "Writer's Block" column in the Hampton newspaper.

Shari Graber heard about HRW through a friend. She is a playwright who belongs to Virginia Playwrights Forum in Norfolk. She has written plays and three musicals, many of which have been produced. When asked how she got started in this genre, she responded that she just started writing one day.

Tanya Young discovered HRW through an email from The Muse. She is a freelance journalist who writes for newspapers. She writes poems. She attended John Mack's seminar and thoroughly enjoyed it. She plans on attending additional events, despite living far away in Kill Devil Hills, N.C.

Traveling Pen Series

These 2.5-hour workshop sessions on different aspects of writing are \$10 for HRW members and \$20 for non-members. Check out one or more of the upcoming ones:

Saturday, April 26, 2014, 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon: Plotting or Pantsing? Presented by author **Heather Hildenbrand**. How to write a story with a tight plot whether you plan it out one breadcrumb at a time or write by the seat of your pants. What makes a story work? From structure and pacing to story arc and character depth, we'll cover the bases, including a plotting formula for the right and left-brained artists. In this workshop (and in your future stories), there will be no skimming of details and not a single boring moment to be had.

Saturday, May 31, 2014, 9:30 a.m.—12:00 noon: Flash Me! How to create and publish short (flash) fiction. Presented by author and educator **Ginger Marcinkowski**. A hands-on workshop that uses prompts to create short stories for both the secular and Christian markets. This is no place to be shy as we will be creating 100-word flash fiction from prompts, and you'll be given places to submit them for publication. It's time to get published!

Saturday, June 28, 2014: Topic and presenter still to be determined.

All workshops are held at the Virginia Beach Tidewater Community College campus, in the Blackwater Building, room CW-134. Please send your name, address, email, and phone number along with a note about which workshop you're registering for and payment (check or money order) to:

**Hampton Roads Writers
P.O. Box 56228
Virginia Beach, VA 23456**

Payment is possible at the door, but we'd appreciate an email from you ahead of time so we can assure a sufficient number of handouts for everyone. HRWriters@cox.net.

For more detailed information about these workshops, including more about the presenters, please visit our [website](#).

HURRY!

BRING A BIG NAME TO VB

An anonymous donor will gift Hampton Roads Writers 1K to establish a keynote speaker fund with the condition that an additional 2.5K is raised during our **Bring a Big Name to Virginia Beach** fundraising drive. We are asking for donations *in addition* to your **regular** yearly membership. Make sure you designate what portion of your check or money order is for our fundraiser. Remember, all donations are tax deductible.



Buying Amazon.com books and other products sold on theAmazon.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. Why not start by purchasing a book or two written by one of our conference presenters, then bring them to the next conference and get them signed! Oh, and tell your friends and family about our link to Amazon!

Grammar School With Bernadette

Sometimes, when two words are apart, they have one meaning. When they're put together to form one word, they mean something else.

Every day versus everyday:

"Everyday" means ordinary or routine. *I should have worn my everyday shoes for this walk in the park.* "Every day" means daily. *I need chocolate every day.*

Anyone versus any one:

"Anyone" is the same as "anybody." They're interchangeable. *Can anyone tell me who is the toughest Marvel superhero?* "Any one" means any particular person or thing. *I don't think any one of those bicycles is right for me.*

All together versus altogether:

"All together" means everyone in the same place. *We were all together to watch the final episode of "Survivor."* "Altogether means completely. *In a song from the film "Hans Christian Andersen," the inimitable Danny Kaye sings about the emperor: "He's altogether as naked as the day that he was born."* For some reason, that song helps me remember when to use "altogether." Strangely, "altogether" also means "nude." *He knew he shouldn't be at the supermarket in the altogether, but he forgets sometimes.*

Sometime versus some time:

"Sometime" means at a random time in the future. *Let's go out to dinner sometime.* "Some time" means a period of time. *A good home-cooked meal takes some time to prepare.*

Two words, not one:

Some phrases are always two words, but people often try to make them one. Remember not to make these into one word: "A lot" (meaning many), "No one" (extra confusing because "nobody" is one word and means the same thing), and "All right" ("Alright" is becoming more common, but it's still not standard).

One word, not two:

And some words mistakenly get broken into two, though they should be one:

"Anyhow" (meaning however),
"Albeit" (meaning though),
"Although" (also meaning though).

Bernadette Kinlaw has been writing for the *Virginian-Pilot* since 1988. Her column, "Grammar School," appears once a week in the Daily Break and online. She may be reached at bernadette.kinlaw@pilotonline.com. Thank you, Bernadette, for allowing us to print portions of your column.



Meetup

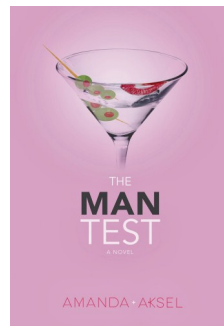
Hampton Roads Writers is now on Meetups. Check out the HRW Meetup web page (www.meetup.com/HRW2014). By joining us on our Meetups page, you will be the first to know when new Meetups are scheduled. You will also have easy access to our calendar as well as activities and other writing groups around the Hampton Roads area.

We're new at this, so come get in on the ground floor as we launch this Meetup. It only takes a minute to join, add a short bio, and see what is going on in the area writing community.

If you use a colloquialism or a slang word or phrase, simply use it; do not draw attention to it by enclosing it in quotation marks. To do so is to put on airs, as though you were inviting the reader to join you in a select society of those who know better.

Strunk and White

HUZZAH!



Congratulations to new board member Amanda Aksel on the publication of her novel, *The Man Test*, available through Kindle, Kobo, Nook, Amazon, and Smashwords. *The Man Test* is the first book to be published under the new collaborative publisher, Elephantine Publishing (see article on page 2).

On her blog, amandaaksel.blogspot.com, Amanda offers this teaser: "Marin Johns is San Francisco's Pollyanna couples therapist. She's months away from wedded bliss when she discovers her fiancé is having an affair. After nursing her broken heart with Kleenex and break-up songs, she adopts a new brand of thinking when she uncovers a tell-all book that proves all men are liars and cheaters who will do and say anything so they're not found out. No exceptions. In an attempt to convince her friends of her newfound truth, she begins a fictitious relationship with James, a do-gooder from Montana. Marin seeks any means necessary to catch him cheating from hiring a PI to enlisting the help of a fidelity tester. **Will her new "boyfriend" beat the statistic, or will Marin regret the satisfaction of being right?**"

The Barbara Dunn Hartin Poetry Prize by Celcelia Robbins

When Barbara (Bobbie to her friends) Dunn Hartin, a well-loved local writer and poet, passed away, her family funded a poetry prize in her memory through HRW. Thanks to Luran Strait's careful stewardship, these funds endowed several years' worth of prizes, lasting up to the 2013 Hampton Roads Writers' Conference. Sandy Patton, my friend and fellow poet, won first place in 2013. Sandy says, "Receiving the First Place Award for the Barbara Dunn Hartin Memorial Poetry Contest at the Hampton Roads Writers' 2013 conference was such an honor. As a member of the Virginia Beach Writers Group, I consider myself fortunate to be able to share my poetry weekly with peers and friends. This award meant a great deal to me personally as it provided both a boost of confidence and a sense of validation regarding my writing."

I was the recipient of two Dunn Hartin prizes in poetry: third place in 2012, second place in 2013. Over and above the delightful financial incentive was the acknowledgement of my poetry. These are the first prizes I've won. I spend my time in a little room, scribbling madly, writing poetry, short stories, novels, all genres, topics, styles. Yet who knows if this work is worth any consideration? I am grateful to those who think it may be. This recognition gives me the courage to submit my work to literary magazines, hoping to share my work with a wider audience.

In that spirit, I wrote a thank-you letter to Bobbie Dunn Hartin's daughter, Nancy Reynolds, for her family's generous funding of this prize. Nancy wrote back, "Mom never met a style she wouldn't try...all varieties of topics and genres. She just LOVED WORDS."

What better things can be said about a writer? They tried it all. They loved words.

Pen-Ultimate Names

Identify these famous authors who are better known by their pseudonyms:

1. Eric Arthur Blair wrote a long fable about a society in which some animals are more equal than others. In 1948, he published a novel about a nightmarish society of the future, one in which everybody had a Big Brother.
2. Famous for her novels describing life in Nineteenth-century England, including *Adam Bede*, *Silas Marner*, and *Middlemarch*, Mary Ann Evans adopted a masculine pen name, by George.
3. Convicted of embezzlement, William Sydney Porter spent almost four years in prison, where he began his career as an immensely popular writer of short stories. Most of his tales are about life in New York and are marked by surprise endings.
4. Josef Korzeniowski was born in Poland and grew up speaking no English until he was seventeen, yet he became one of the greatest stylists ever to use the English language. A sailor as a youth, Korzeniowski is most famous for his stories and novels of the sea.
5. Russian-born Yiddish author Solomon Rabinowitz took his pen name from a Hebrew expression meaning "Peace be unto you."

Answers: 1. George Orwell 2. George Eliot 3. O. Henry
4. Joseph Conrad 5. Sholem Aleichem

From Richard Lederer's *Literary Trivia*

A Sampling of Conference Workshops (continued from page 1)

- **Join the Pitch Party!** Learn how to pitch your manuscript on line in 140 characters or less. We will go over this alternative to traditional querying and how to make it work for you. Presented by **Kaylee Davis**, literary agent at Dee Mura Literary.
- **Make Your Manuscript Sing!** A writer's voice can be likened to a fingerprint. Learn how to find your authentic voice, or simply fine-tune it, by reevaluating your ideal genre and strengthening the skills that will hone your signature writing style. Presented by **Kimiko Nakamura**, literary agent at Dee Mura Literary.
- **What Agents Mean When They Say, "Show; don't tell."** Show, don't tell is probably the most ubiquitous writing advice. But what does it really mean? How do you know when to show and when not to? Is it ever okay to tell? In this breakout session you will learn how to kick your powers of description up a notch and have an opportunity to practice showing versus telling in a hands-on writing exercise. Presented by **Linda Epstein**, literary agent at The Jennifer DeChiara Literary Agency.
- **Who Is Telling Your Story?** Point of View (POV) is one of the most powerful tools in a writer's arsenal. Effectively applied, it can bring characters to life and draw your readers into the story. When misunderstood and misapplied, it can also create confusion and turn a good story into a difficult and unsatisfying read. This workshop will provide an overview of POV with a focus specifically on developing an effective Limited Third Person narration. Presented by **Jeff Andrews**, author of *The Freedom Star* and *Gandy Dancer*.