



Hampton Roads Writers
Where Characters Connect

May 2015

Writers' Conference Approaches



The Hampton Roads Writers' 7th annual conference will be held September 17-19, 2015, at the Holiday Inn Virginia Beach-Norfolk Hotel & Conference Center on 5655 Greenwich Road in Virginia Beach. Here is the rundown of the conference by the numbers:

1 evening plus 2 full days of workshops, 2 best-selling keynoters, 2 first ten-lines critique sessions, 50 workshops during 10 breakout sessions, ten-minute agent pitches, cash prize contests for short fiction, short nonfiction, and poetry, complimentary 90-minute cocktail social, and a 2-hour open mic.

The regular and advanced track workshops cover fiction, non-fiction, memoir, poetry, marketing, screenwriting, and the business of getting published. A book shop, book signings, and many networking opportunities are available.

Our Friday keynote speaker is contemporary fiction author [Ellen Meister](#). Ellen is the author of *Dorothy Parker Drank Here* (Putnam 2015), *Farewell, Dorothy Parker* (Putnam 2013), *The Other Life* (Putnam 2011), *The Smart One* (HarperCollins 2008) and *Secret Confessions of the Applewood PTA* (HarperCollins 2006), as well as numerous essays and short stories. *The Other Life* was nominated by BookPage for the top 20 books of 2011 and by the New Atlantic Independent Booksellers Association for Book of the Year. It was also selected by the Austin Public Library for their Best Fiction of 2011 list and was singled out by the American Booksellers Association for the prestigious Great Reads Indie Next list. It is currently under option with HBO for a television series.

Ellen served as editor for an online literary journal and for a literary podcast program and now teaches creative writing at Hofstra University Continuing Education, mentors emerging authors, lectures on Dorothy Parker and the Algonquin Round Table, and does public speaking about her books and other writing-related topics. Ellen is the voice of Dorothy Parker on her hugely popular [Facebook page](#).

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Writer's Conference (continued from page 1)



Dr. DeWitt Henry, Professor of Writing, Literature, Publishing at Emerson College, is our Saturday keynote speaker. Dr. Henry is the co-founder and Executive Director of Ploughshares, the literary journal of Emerson College. Dr. Henry received his Ph.D. in English from Harvard University in 1971. He served as judge for the Annual John C. Zacharis First Book Award (\$1500 for best first book of poetry or fiction by a *Ploughshares* contributor), 1990-97 and 2007, and was the interim Director/Editor-in-Chief of *Ploughshares*, 2007-8 and judge for *Ploughshares* Emerging Writers' Contest in 2011. Recent publications include: The memoirs *Visions of a Wayne Childhood* (2012); *Sweet Dreams: A Family History* (Hidden River Press, 2011); and *Safe Suicide: Essays, Narratives, and Meditations* (Red Hen Press, 2008). His novel *The Marriage of Anna May Potts* (University of Tennessee Press, 2001), won the Peter Taylor Prize.

Don't Miss Out on Our Early Bird Tuition Register Now

Early bird tuition **(until June 26)** \$200 for HRW members, \$235.00 for non-members

From June 27 to September 10 - \$235 HRW members, \$270 non-members

September 11 through the start of the conference - \$280 for members and non-members alike

Tuition includes two lunches and cocktail social (cash bar) with **COMPLIMENTARY** heavy hors d'oeuvres

\$125 Students (with proof of **current FULLTIME***** enrollment)

\$140 one-day member and non-member(Fri or Sat only)

\$50 Thursday evening only

*****Fulltime enrollment means that you are a high school student, an undergraduate student taking a minimum of 12 credits per semester, or a graduate student taking a minimum of 6 credit hours per semester. Please include a copy of your FALL 2015 class schedule along with your conference registration.**

Presenters Abound at Annual Conference

The list of presenters for this years' annual writers' conference is long, varied, and rich with talent. On the slate are three literary agents. [Mark Gottlieb](#)'s focus on publishing began at Emerson College, where he was a founding member of the Publishing Club, later its President, overseeing its first publication and establishing the Wilde Press. After graduating with a degree in writing, literature and publishing, Mark began his career with the Vice President of Berkley Books (Penguin), working with leading editors.

[Heather Flaherty](#), a literary agent at [The Bent Agency](#), represents authors who write **children's, middle grade, and young adult fiction and nonfiction**, as well as select **new adult fiction, and pop-culture or humorous non-fiction**. Her path to literary agent began in the editorial department at Random House in the UK. That's also where she became a YA and Children's Literary Scout, which finally landed her back in NYC, consulting with foreign publishers and Hollywood in search of the next big book.



[Melissa Edwards](#), a literary agent at Aaron M. Priest Literary Agency, is a graduate of Washington University in St. Louis and Vanderbilt Law School. She is a member in good standing of the New York State bar.

While Melissa began her career as a commercial litigation attorney, she always maintained aspirations to work in publishing. At present, Melissa handles foreign rights and is actively reading to develop her own list.

For more about these agents and what type of work they are looking for, visit the HRW [website](#).

In addition to our agents, we have [Michelle Garren Flye](#), the award-winning romance author of six novels. A bestselling Science Fiction/Fantasy author and speaker, [Dr. Chris Kennedy](#) is a former naval aviator with over 3,000 hours flying attack and reconnaissance aircraft. [Lynn Yvonne Moon](#) is the author of the successful 4-book *Agency* series for adults and the young adult *Reflection* series. [Vanessa Barger](#)'s books include *A Whispered Darkness*, *Steaming*, *Slack Tide*, and *Lock and Key*. [Princess Perry](#) is a Senior Lecturer in the English Department of Old Dominion University. [Kelly Sokol](#)'s work has appeared in print and online journals including *ConnotationPress*, *The Quotable* and *The Pitkin Review* and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. [Ellen Bryson](#) authored *The Transformation of Bartholomew Fortuno*, a novel set in P.T. Barnum's American Museum in New York of 1865, about human appetites and longings, and what it means to be profoundly unique.

Also on the schedule are poets, screenplay writers, and a visual artist. A full roster of all our presenters can be found on our [website](#).



Contest Deadline July 24

Now is the time to polish the best of your fiction, nonfiction, and poetry efforts and enter them in one or all of Hampton Roads Writers writing contests. Registration for the 7th Annual HRW Writers' Conference is required. This is a no-fee contest with big rewards: \$500 for first place, \$250 for second place, and \$100 for third place. Honorable mention winners receive \$75 off our 2016 conference price.

Entries must follow specific guidelines for length and formatting. These can be found on the HRW [website](#).

Show and Grow Your Prose with Professional Critique

Don't miss this opportunity to read ten minutes of your **prose (short story, memoir, or novel chapter ONLY)** to the audience, followed by brief professional critiques by our guest critiquer and by the moderator (usually Luran Strait). Only 6 readings per session. Anyone may listen as part of the audience, BUT if you want to share your work, [registration](#) is required. Visit our [website](#) for more details, including how to format your work.

Show and Grow are held at the Meyera Oberndorf Central Library in Virginia Beach from 9:15 to noon on Saturdays. Here is the schedule of events:

May 9, 2015 Author and Professor, Ginger Marcinkowski will offer the professional critiques **4 reading slots remain**

June 6, 2015 Author and educator, Dr. Dennis Bounds will offer the professional critiques. **6 reading slots remain**

August 15, 2015. Author and educator, Michael Khandelwal will offer the professional critiques. **6 reading slots remain**

October 10, 2015 Journalist and Professor Emeritus Dr. Bill Ruehlmann will offer the professional critiques. **6 reading slots remain**

Who Are We?

Our members come from all fields and professions. 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.

Kelley McGee Sousa possesses a BA in Media Studies, along with an MA in Organizational Communications from Northeastern University. As a professional writer, she covered local news and became an anchor and reporter for various TV stations around New England. She earned several reporting and writing awards, including New England Emmy nominations, an AP award, and was part of a team that won a national Edward R. Murrow. Kelley is taking time out to raise her young children while she revises a novel dealing with workplace dynamics, relationships, humor and reinvention.

Dr. Nigel Sellars has a BA in journalism and holds a doctorate in history. Prior to being a professor of history at CNU, he worked as a journalist for two newspapers in Oklahoma. His writing career began when he was in high school. His doctoral thesis was published, along with a collection of short stories. Sellars wrote fantasy and science-fiction novels, both of which were traditionally published. He has also completed a historical non-fiction book that chronicles the life of a serial killer.

Kristine Bauer began writing in junior high school when she and her friends created scripts for popular TV programs. She contributed articles to her high school and college newspapers. Now that she is retired, she plans on re-kindling writing on a regular basis. As a storyteller, her interest lies in the duality of characters, family history and fiction.

Susan Stuhlman is an elementary school principal who is also a published author of a short story and educational texts. Her desire for the future is to write adolescent and young adult fiction that revolves around current issues with the environment. Her hope is to become a professional writer. Sensing a change of direction, she said, "Sometimes I feel like the poster child for the Helen Redding song, 'It's My Turn.'"

Richard Eley classifies himself as a sci-fi writer. He is the author of short stories and has an apocalyptic novel in progress about an escaped mutant bacterium that eats metals. He would like to publish 22 of his short stories as a collection. He describes creating a novel in these terms: "What a chore it is, writing a novel. I suppose that's why I love short stories. I can write one in a few days." He likens creating a novel to getting a college education. "You actually have to do some work to finish."

Gillian Spencer was a TV writer for the major three networks while living in New York. She wrote for several daytime dramas, the PBS children's program, *Reading Rainbows*, and the documentary, *Music and the Mind*. Changing genres to non-fiction, she is currently working on a book about music and consciousness and its application to therapy and healing.

The art of writing is the art of discovering what you believe.

—Gustave Flaubert

Traveling Pen Series

These 2.5-hour workshop sessions on different aspects of writing are \$10 for HRW members and \$20 for non-members. All workshops are held at the Virginia Beach Tidewater Community College campus in the Blackwater Building, Room CW-134. Check-in is at 9:15; workshop begins at 9:30 Here are our upcoming ones. Go to the HRW website for more details and course descriptions.

August 1, 2015 -- [Pens and Penne: Crafting a Cookbook](#) -- presented by Executive Editor of *Virginia Wine Lover Magazine*, **[PATRICK EVANS-HYLTON](#)**. A cookbook is one part inspiration, one part perspiration, one part recipes, and a dash of this, and a dash of that. Join award-winning food writer Patrick Evans-Hylton, author of three (soon to be four) cookbooks for this workshop to help you start down your delicious journey in crafting your own.

June 27, 2015 -- How to Write and Stay in Limited Third Person POV. Presented by **[PRINCESS PERRY](#)**, ODU professor.

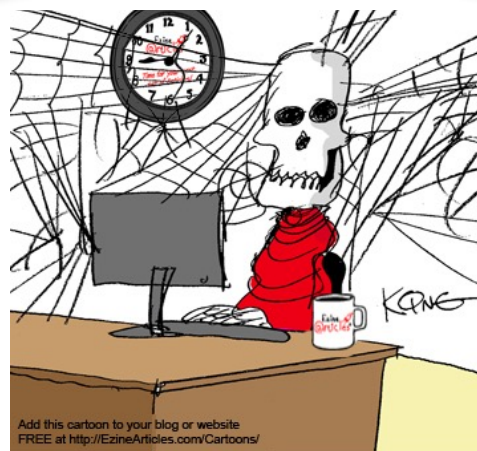


Buying amazon.com books and other products sold on the amazon.com site (including gift cards) through our HRW website is a quick and painless way to financially support HRW. For each sale, our group earns a 4-6.5% referral fee. The more products sold through a referral from the HRW page, the higher the 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. Don't forget to tell your friends and family about our link to Amazon!

HRW Keeps Growing

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

Michael Rigg
Susan Stuhlman
Dr. Chris Kennedy
Vanessa Edwards
Latoya DeBardelaben
Jeanne Johansen
Lucretia Walton
Deborah Newell
Amanda Scott
Lisa Anderson
Lori Hendricks
Dr. Melina Patrick
Gillian Spencer
Joan Barnes
Sandra Brown Rarey
Kate McGaughey
Mary Kay Valkuchak
Beth Cardier
Kaitlin Jones
Ashley Woodland
Judith Johonnot Fowler



Gertrude vowed to stay at her computer until she had written all 1,000 articles in her writing plan.



Grammar School with Bernadette:

We live in a hyphen nation

Some people don't use hyphens enough, while others go overboard with them. Hyphen usage has a few rules for you to follow.

Sometimes hyphens are incorrectly used with words that end with "ly." You never need a hyphen after an adverb ending in "ly." An adverb is a word that modifies another word: heartily, merrily, rapidly, wickedly, uncomfortably.

Wrong: *They are happily-married*

Right: *They are happily married.*

At times, using a hyphen looks a little funny.

What happens when warm- and cold-blooded animals share a habitat?

The hyphen after "warm" is to signal that the "blooded" also goes with it.

Hyphens are used when descriptive words go together. The two words describe a single idea.

lily-livered fighter

thrill-seeking skydiver

heart-stopping dessert

mind-numbing details

chocolate-covered cherries

When two adjectives both describe a thing, you don't need a hyphen

A little used car is a small auto that is not new.

A little-used car is one that doesn't get on the road very often. In the second sentence, "little" goes with "used," so you need the hyphen.

The prefixes "all" and "self" are hyphenated:

all-knowing

all-consuming

self-sustaining

self-taught

Hyphens can be used with ages when they come before a noun or if a noun is understood

Angel is a 4-year-old devil.

Angel is a devilish 4-year-old.

But: *Angel is 4 years old, and I hear she is quite devilish.*

Descriptions combined with "well" get a hyphen when they come before a thing.

His well-known buffoonery was the talk of the dormitory.

Sometimes a hyphen is used to avoid confusion

The small-business owners are to meet for lunch.

The hyphen is there so that you don't think that a number of tiny business owners are gathering.

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The President's Corner by Lauran Strait

Books: My Magic Carpet to Everything

Books always have been in my life. Before I could read, my mom spent hours reading to me and my brother and sister. We were especially fond of books like those by Beverly Cleary, with her wonderful kids of Klickitat Street: Ramona, Beezus, Henry Huggins, and Ralph S. Mouse. These stories about a neighborhood filled with funny and adventuresome children set my mind wandering. I longed to meet friends like Henry Huggins and Ramona Quimby. I yearned for my own donut machine so that I, too, could make a million tasty treats.

I discovered the world of Laura Ingalls Wilder and fell in love with *Little House on the Prairie* books after I learned to read by myself. I sometimes wished that Laura and her sisters were my own sisters. Via the stories, I almost felt like we were.

Later, I moved on to Mark Twain. I still remember the night I couldn't sleep because I

couldn't get Injun Joe out of my mind; he both thrilled and scared me, and I needed to find out what happened next in the story. That's when I learned the fine art of reading under the covers with a flashlight well after bedtime. A year later, Helen Keller came into my life. And then I discovered Clara Barton, founder of the U.S. Red Cross.

Oh, what joy I felt in being transported across space and time to places I'd never been and otherwise never would have been able to see were it not for books.

Those characters, both the made-up and real ones, inspired me eventually to create my own menagerie of fictional actors, whose lives scrolled across the pages of my novels. But it all started with the storybooks introduced to me by my mother all those many years ago.

I'd love to know who or what inspired you to write. Feel free to contact me at HRWriters@cox.net.

Bernadette (cont'd)

Some people use the phrase "pick-up truck." This is wrong in two ways. "Pickup" is the correct spelling, and you don't need to add "truck" because a pickup is a truck. (Sort of how you don't need to say ATM machine.)

These same words do not have hyphens in Merriam-Webster. AP and Webster's differ in other areas, too. AP says not to use a hyphen with "fundraiser." Webster's says to use "fund-raiser."

I'm not certain whether a large committee is tasked with making these hyphen decisions or just a guy with a Magic Eight Ball. Cannot predict now.

Sources: *Oxford Dictionaries*, *M-W.com*, *Washington State University*, *The Associated Press Stylebook*.

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.

Who Are We? (continued from page 5)

Lea Ann Douglas started writing as a child but became a professional freelance writer after getting her MFA at the University of Virginia. She started her career as a journalist and playwright but has since branched out to include poetry and fiction. Although she still writes plays, most of her writing falls under the genre of speculative fiction/fantasy. Her books and plays include: *The Queen's Rune and Other Tales of the Sidhe* (as Shannon Avery), Vulgar Marsala Press; *Grand Opening*, UVA Press; *Children of Freedom*, UVA Press; *Alligator Mansion*, UVA Press; *The Neophyte*, UVA Press; *Tuatha de Danann*, Jei'ala Press, along with many other short stories and poems that are in online and print magazines. Her writing ambition is to finish revisions on her monster fantasy novel, *The Book of Shadows*. "Now I know why I usually write short stories," she said.

Dr. Chris Kennedy, a former naval aviator with over 3,000 hours flying attack and reconnaissance aircraft, is a bestselling science fiction/fantasy author and speaker,. Chris is currently working as an Instructional Systems Designer for the Navy and is a member of the Speakers' Bureau for the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI). Chris's full length novels on Amazon include the *Occupied Seattle* military fiction duology, the *Theogony* science fiction trilogy, and the *War for Dominance* fantasy trilogy. Chris is also the author of the self-help book *Self-Publishing for Profit: How to Get Your Book Out of Your Head and Into the Stores*. He is currently working on *The Search for Gram*, the fourth book set in the Theogony universe.

Catch up with Chris at <http://chriskennedypublishing.com> or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/chriskennedypublishing.biz>. Follow him on Twitter at @ChrisKennedy110.

4 Steps to the Perfect Blurb by Chris Kennedy

Don't know what a blurb is? It's the description on the back of your book, and it's a critical element of your marketing package. It's what hooks readers, so having an enticing book description is a necessary part of your sales process. An enticing blurb has four elements:

1. **Situation.** The first part of your blurb is a simple description of what's going on, showing potential readers where the story occurs and who the main characters are.

2. **Problem.** The next piece of the blurb identifies a challenge or difficulty that makes the situation untenable or brings about conflict. This part usually starts with "But..." or "However..." or "Until..."

3. **The slimmest chance.** This element is the hook that makes your audience want to know more. Even though the situation (#1) seems doomed by the problem (#2), there is still hope that things will turn out all right because of this unlikely event or this person's weird ability. Together, these first three elements create the drama that propels the story.

4. **Mood or tone.** This element lets readers know what emotional state they're going to be in while reading the book. Is it a dark and foreboding tale of horror, or is it a tense but entertaining thriller? The blurb converts book browsers into book buyers.

That's all there is to it! If you follow this template, you will be well on your way to designing a great blurb.

Want to know more? Check out "Self-Publishing for Profit" by Chris Kennedy on Amazon at <http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00SW536EM>.

Don't Underestimate The Weight of Verbs

by Linda Carol Cobb

"To be, or not to be." Not.

Variations of *to be*—*is, are, was, were*—dominate other verbs in writing. Think about the meaning of *verb*. It can show a state of being or express an action. *To be* forms show only a state of being. Something simply exists, is defined or is described. In symbol form, that could be represented by an equal sign. Sometimes a writer wants to do nothing more than that. In that case, use *to be*.

But for writing that is engaging and vivid, consider using stronger verbs. These verbs express action and give the story momentum. Rather than say "Tom is nervous," write "Tom bit his fingernails as he paced the room."

Overusing *to be* verbs indicates lazy writing. Check out something you've written to see how many times you've depended on them. My biggest peeve in writing is seeing *there is/are*. If writers have used this once, they've probably used it a number of times. Rephrase the sentence to make it more compelling and active.

Other lame verbs can be replaced by stronger ones, too. Take the sentence, "The man walked down the street." Think about descriptive verbs to replace *walked* to give the sentence substance. The man sashayed/marched/stumbled/tiptoeed/staggered down the street. Using a specific, descriptive verb can make a sentence more vivid.

I'm not suggesting to never use *to be* forms. They have their place. Just don't overuse them. Creating momentum with strong, active verbs will enliven your writing. Let your verbs carry their weight.

We Should Have This Problem

"A famous writer who wants to continue writing has to be constantly defending himself against fame. I don't really like to say this because it never sounds sincere, but I would really have liked for my books to have been published after my death, so I wouldn't have to go through all this business of fame and being a great writer. In my case, the only advantage to fame is that I have been able to give it a political use. Otherwise, it is quite uncomfortable. The problem is that you're famous for twenty-four hours a day, and you can't say, 'Okay, I won't be famous until tomorrow,' or press a button and say, 'I won't be famous here or now.'"

--Gabriel José de la Concordia García Márquez (Mar. 6, 1927 – Apr. 17, 2014)