



Hampton Roads Writers
Where Characters Connect

May 2016

Expand Your Horizons

Hampton Roads Writers Eighth Annual Writers Conference is a few short months away, so plan ahead and put it on your calendar now. Here's what you have to look forward to at our September conference: 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; workshops covering fiction, non-fiction, memoir, poetry, marketing, and the business of getting published, plus a book shop, book signings, and many networking opportunities.



Our Friday Keynote speaker is *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling novelist Mary Burton. Mary's work has been compared to the works of Steig Larson, Lisa Gardner, and Lisa Jackson. Her latest books, *I'll Never Let You Go*, *Cover Your Eyes*, and *Be Afraid*, all feature Nashville's preeminent law enforcement family, the Morgans. 2016's *Vulnerable* completes the quartet. The author of twenty-seven novels and five novellas, Mary is a member of International Thriller Writers, Sisters in Crime, Mystery Writers of America, Novelists, Inc., and Romance Writers of America. She also writes contemporary women's fiction as Mary Ellen Taylor.

In addition to her keynote address, Mary will be giving two workshops, including *Writing Your Novel One Draft at a Time* and *The Secret Ingredient in a Page Turner*.

On Saturday, our keynoter is Robert Crane. Robert is the author of four multi-book series. He began his writing career in 2011 and since then has completed thirty-something novels, going full-time as a writer in 2012. He enjoys videogames, is a movie buff, and lives mostly in his own imagination. A recluse by nature, Robert vows that HRW's conference will be his only public appearance in 2016.

Robert will give several workshops on self-publishing, writing a series, using humor, and finishing what you've started.

For complete details about our conference, including contest deadlines and early bird discounts, go to <http://www.hamptonroadswriters.org/2016conference.php>



2016 Conference 10-Minute Agent Pitches

The 10-minute elevator pitch provides you the chance to present the idea of your book the way you would if you were on a slow elevator ride with an agent or publisher. Your job is to learn how to pitch so compellingly that the agent or publisher tells you to send the entire manuscript for consideration of representation.

Conference attendees have the opportunity to sign up for a 10-minute pitch session with two of the three literary agents **FREE of charge**. Slots will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis, with priority given to members of Hampton Roads Writers. Come prepared to pitch your project.

Reserve a Room

TO RESERVE A ROOM AT THE HOLIDAY INN VIRGINIA BEACH - NORFOLK HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER AT THE REDUCED CONFERENCE RATE, call the hotel directly at 757.449.4400 or tollfree at 1.800.567.3856 on or before 8/16/2016 and mention that you're attending the HRW Conference and would like to receive the lower room rate.

The reduced room rate is \$125 a night, plus state sales tax, plus \$1 a night city tax.

For more information on the hotel, go to <http://www.hamptonroadswriters.org/2016conferencehotelreservation.php>

First Ten Lines

Have you put a book down after reading the first page because it didn't grab you? I have. (My eighth grade English teacher is turning over in her grave.) I've also been able to quickly tell that I was going to enjoy a book after reading the first page.

At our September conference, you will get a chance to hear how some of the world's most critical readers would react to your writing.

If you're interested in knowing what literary agents [Lucienne Diver](#), [Paul Stevens](#), and [Eric Smith](#) think about the beginning of your work, send SIX (6) copies of the **first ten lines (not the first ten sentences)** of your novel or nonfiction book to:

HAMPTON ROADS WRITERS
P.O. Box 56228
Virginia Beach, VA 23456

Items must be received in our hands **NO LATER THAN August 26, 2016** to be considered for entry into one of the critique sessions.

For Guidelines go to <http://www.hamptonroadswriters.org/20161sttenlines.php>

Don't Miss Our Early Bird Conference Discount!

Early bird tuition (until June 10) \$220 for HRW members, \$255.00 for non-members

From June 11 to September 8 - \$255 HRW members, \$290 non-members

September 9 through the start of the conference - \$310 for members and non-members alike

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

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. Here are our upcoming offerings. Go to the HRW website for more details and course descriptions.

Saturday, May 21, 2016 -- Digital Strategies for Writers, presented by [Deb Markham](#)

Saturday, June 18th -- Driving Plot Through Revelation of Character Motivation, presented by **Princess Perry**

Saturday, July 16th -- Using WordPress for Your Author Blog or Website, presented by [Star LaBranche](#)

Saturday, Aug. 20th -- Topic and presenter to be determined

Saturday, Oct. 22nd -- How To Become A Best-Selling, Multi Award Winning Children's Author: If I Can Do It, So Can YOU!, presented by [Danielle Leibovici](#)

Saturday, Nov. 19th -- Narrative Time Warp: Managing the Passing of Time in your Fiction and CNF, presented by [Valerie Wilkinson](#)

And by the way, everything in life is writable about if you have the outgoing guts to do it, and the imagination to improvise. The worst enemy to creativity is self-doubt.

~Sylvia Plath

HRW Keeps Growing

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

Jamie McAllister
Star LaBranche
David Cariens
Skip McLamb
Ron Sobel
Bert Aaron
Sherry Carrington
Kimberly Naylor
Tameika Sawyer
Marlene Olaes
Leigh Anne Lagoe
Elari Onawa
Mart Powell
Terrie L. Branch
Nicole Rountree
Anitra Hill
Eve Turner
Drew Nickell
Michal Mahgereftch
Dr. Dennis Slavinsky
Jenny Sparks
Julie Kolb
Lisa Tarrants
Christine Bacon, Ph.D.
Kevin Brown
Kyla Brown

Contest deadline July 8

The deadline for our no-fee contests in fiction, nonfiction, and poetry is fast approaching. Don't miss out. You must register for the conference in order to submit your work.

For more information go to <http://www.hamptonroadswriters.org/2016contest.php>

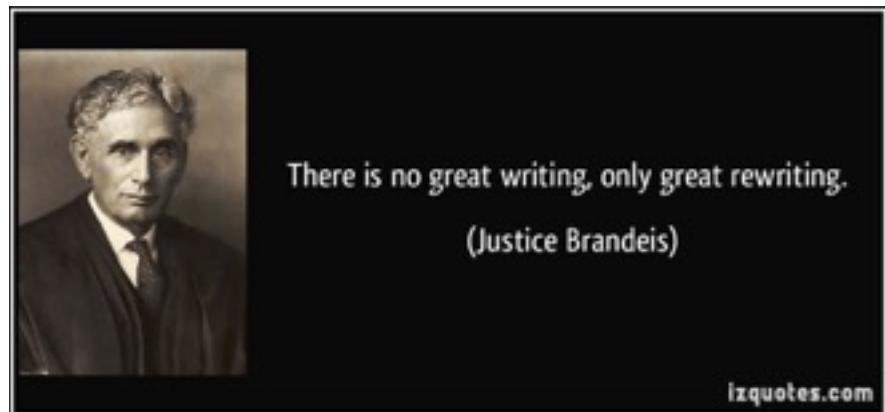
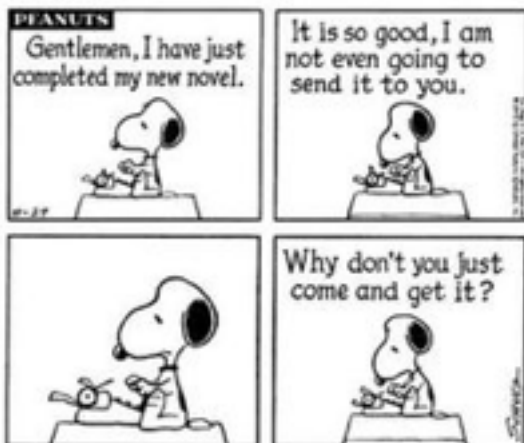
Show and Grow Your Prose with Professional Critique

Take advantage of these opportunities 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 removing a penny from your pocket. Even if you don't want to read a piece, sitting in the audience and listening to the critique can help you with your own writing.

We only have time for three to four readings at our dinner meetings and four to five readings at the Muse sessions, so go to our website 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 are our upcoming Show and Grows.

DINNER MEETING -- THURSDAY, May 12, 2016, from 5:30 to 9 PM in the back meeting room at Gus and George's Spaghetti and Steak House at 4312 Virginia Beach Blvd, Virginia Beach, VA 23452. Valerie Wilkinson and Dennis Bounds will serve as the professional critiquers. Try to arrive by 5:30 if you'd like to participate in happy hour and network with fellow writers. Food orders need to be put in as close to 5:45 as possible so we can finish eating and start the readings about 7. Friends and/or family welcome.

SATURDAY, August 6, 2016 from 10:00 - 12:30 [Show and Grow your Prose with Professional Critique](#) at the Muse Writers Center, 2200 Colonial Ave #3, Norfolk, VA 23517. Luran Strait and Michael Khandelwal will serve as the professional critiquers.



Protecting Your Written Work

by Michael D. Rigg

“Only one thing is impossible for God: to find any sense in any copyright law on the planet.”
—Mark Twain

Just like millworkers, who want to make sure that no one robs them of the wages they’ve earned through the sweat of their brows, we, as writers, want to protect the “sweat of our fingertips.” Unfortunately, writers can’t depend on fair labor standards and other workplace laws. Writers, and other creative people like musicians, artists, and inventors, look to the law of Intellectual Property (IP) for legal protection.

According to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), IP covers “Creations of the mind.” That is to say “...creative works or ideas embodied in a form that can be shared or can enable others to recreate, emulate, or manufacture them.” The USPTO lists four ways to protect IP: (1) patents, (2) trademarks, (3) trade secrets, and (4) copyrights. Patents cover inventions. Trademarks deal with things like business signage, logos, and slogans. Trade secrets protection is what corporations use to ensure that their internally developed processes cannot be used by others to gain an unfair competitive advantage. Of the four types of IP, writers most often turn to the law of copyright to protect their interests.

Keeping Twain’s warning in mind, future articles will take a look at some of the basic principles of copyright law in the United States. And to underscore the warning, while the basic principles of copyright law are relatively clear, applying the rules and their exceptions in any given situation can be complex. You should seek legal counsel for advice and guidance on how the law affects your poem, short story, novel, or other creative work.

No doubt, you have more questions than answers at this point. What does a copyright protect? How do I claim a copyright? Are there limitations on what can be copyrighted? What does that pesky “©” symbol mean? Does a U.S. copyright protect my work in other countries? Stay tuned. We will touch on these and other questions in subsequent articles.

About the Author: Michael D. Rigg is a writer who happens also to be an attorney. He does not practice Intellectual Property law and does not represent clients in his day-to-day legal practice (he is a government employee). Thus, this article is neither legal advice nor a solicitation of business.

“Cheat your landlord if you can and must, but do not try to shortchange the Muse. It cannot be done. You can’t fake quality any more than you can fake a good meal.”

—William S. Burroughs

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 compiled by Sherrie Pilkington (thanks, Sherrie!) about some of our newest members.

David Cariens - As a CIA Intelligence Analyst, David has been writing since 1967. Now retired from the CIA, he continues to teach what he's known for, analytic writing. To date, he has four publications and an additional three due out early 2016. He's also a victims' rights advocate, and two of his publications are on school shootings in Virginia (Appalachian School of Law and Virginia Tech). Getting to know him would be an interesting connection!

Skip McLamb - A retired school administrator, Skip is a natural born communicator. He already has article publications to his credit with various topics such as gifted education, marine education, and outdoor teaching techniques. He's quite the go-getter because he's tackling a novel, short story, and a children's book! As Skip puts it, "I've spent time gathering writing wood, so in 2016 I'm hoping to start a fire!"

Star LaBranche - Writing since she can remember, Star is able to blend multi-genres. It's not unusual for her to use poetry, fiction and non-fiction in the same writing. She blogs at www.scrapbookoftruth.net and is getting her new website up and ready for interaction. She revealed her heart for writing when she said, "My dream is to be able to blog and write books and not starve to death."

Ron Sobel - Ron's creative energy flows when crafting new adventures for young readers. Currently, he has two 16-page illustrated books based on his main character, Jack, tackling new adventures. He's also written a larger work entitled *The Amazing Adventures of the Whiz-Kid*. Ron shared that his son has requested a birthday present in relation to his writing. "Dad, for my birthday present I'd like you to write about your childhood and life in general." What a beautiful compliment on so many levels.

Bert Aaron - Bert says he's a novice and is focused on pulling together his life lessons and autobiography for the purpose of speaking something of value into the lives of his grandchildren. Never mind that he's 94 years old, he has writing goals and aspirations. He wants to give a helping hand to the generations after him and show his love for life, his lessons learned, and I feel sure, his secrets to a long life.

Sherry Carrington - She has always loved writing and favors the genres of nonfiction and children's. She is the author of *Church Girls Fight Cancer*. You can find it available on Amazon. Since cancer touches each of us in one way or another, I feel sure this is a benefit to anyone needing encouragement. Her heart is to write books that inspire, encourage, and engage.

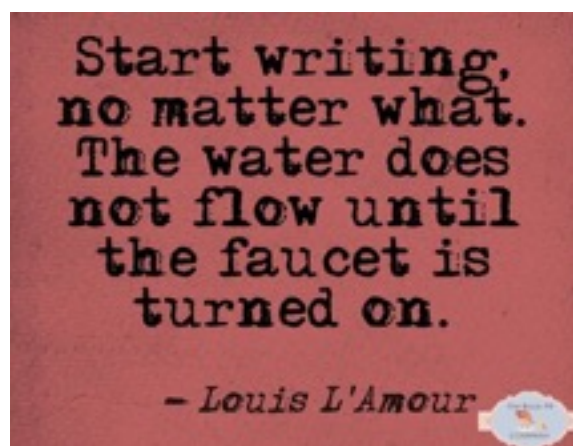
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Rae Spencer has been writing poetry and fiction since the mid 90s and began keeping a nature photography/writing blog in 2011 (raespencer.com). While most of her publications have been poetry, she also writes fantasy, sci-fi, romance fiction with an occasional literary short story. Her first book on poetry, *Entwined Magiseria*, is schedule for release through unbound Content this year!

Elaine Biech, is a consultant by profession and a non-fiction writer by choice. She finds herself in the unique position of having publishers such as Wiley, McGraw-Hill, Kendall Hunt, Jossey-Bass, Barrett-Koehler, and 8 other publishers pitch book ideas to her! All of her work is nonfiction in the business categories of leadership, management, supervision, and the like. Her books have sold over 2 million copies, have been translated into 10 languages, and have won numerous awards. Even if you don't need to read up on corporate skills, she's a treasure trove of information!

Niki Davis found HRW via a link to our website. She connected with our Facebook page and was alerted to an event. After attending the event, she became a member. She says her love for writing began in elementary school around the age of seven. She enjoys writing realistic fiction, speculative fiction, horror and a little erotica. One of her writing goals is to write a series or two in each of those genres. We're glad to have her as part of the HRW writing family!

Samantha Shannon is an Indie Author who is finding great inspiration from past musings recorded on the back of old homework pages and cocktail napkins. "They're such useful gems in my current novels and blog," she says. She favors fantasy and sci-fi, both in her reading and writing. She has two published novels based on an urban fantasy series, a novella preparing for publication and her first children's book is in the illustration process, not to mention the two poetry books she's compiled but has not yet published.



***Thanks, But This Isn't for Us: A (Sort of) Compassionate Guide to Why Your Writing is Being Rejected* by Jessica Page Morrell, Tarcher/Penguin (2009)**

Book Review by Phyllis Stewart-Ruffin

Lengthy titles annoy me, but the eighteen words scream attitude that I find irresistible for a book on the craft of writing. Suffused with humor, "Thanks, But..." elucidates the main screw-ups and weaknesses that cause editors to reject most manuscripts they receive. Not for the easily offended, Morrell's no-holds-barred approach prepares the writer for the toughest critiques—those of agents and publishers.

Morrell, based on her years as a developmental editor who made her living by breaking writers' hearts (her words, not mine), entertains throughout her book. She explains the usual subjects, such as beginnings, plotting, and conflict, in such depth that her work is suited for the experienced writer. Chapters include examples, sources for further reading, and deal breakers, those things that would cause an editor to stop reading. The catchall chapter, "Driving an Editor Crazy: Goofs, Gaffes, and Howlers that Sink a Manuscript," addresses bad writing that can be fixed—usually.

Morrell keeps the reader's interest through her unique approach, such as analogizing the teasing, flirting, and delay used in striptease to the suspense that should be used with any genre. A section titled "Quick and Dirty Tips for Keeping Readers Worried and Uneasy" assists the writer with incorporating suspense.

"Thanks, But..." offers compassion in the form of detailed advice on how to grow from being a good writer to an amazing writer. By avoiding the problems detailed in "Thanks, But..." a writer should have no problem obtaining an agent and a publisher. Or if you merely seek a laugh-out-loud read, enjoy.



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