



WRITERS' CONFERENCE PROGRAM SCHEDULE

September 29, 2018

REGISTRATION and Light Breakfast: 9:00 - 9:45 am

WELCOME: 9:45 am

MORNING KEYNOTE: 10:00-10:50

Organizing Your Writing – Mary Carlomagno, nationally recognized media expert and author of three best-selling non-fiction books on simplicity, will discuss how she uses her best organizing strategies to achieve writing success. Discover how to create focus, avoid procrastination, and establish a writing routine that works for you. Before starting her company, Order, Mary held marketing positions at Doubleday and Dell. She moved to the retail side in 1993, running the national events program for Barnes & Noble, later becoming Director of Sponsorships. Inspired by entrepreneurship, she started Order in 2005 to help busy people find more sanity and appreciation in their lives. Order specializes in clutter control, apartment solutions, office spaces and shopping addictions. Mary's philosophy is based on her personal experience of finding order, a journey she wrote about in her first book, Give it Up! My Year of Learning to Live Better with Less.

SESSION A: 11:00 – 11:50

What Do Acquiring Editors Really Want? Amy Gash, Executive Editor, Algonquin Books. What is it in a writer's work - and the writer herself - that excites an acquisition editor? Algonquin Books publishes a carefully curated number of titles each year and their books overwhelmingly receive prestigious awards and become best-sellers. In this session, we will go inside the mind of Algonquin Executive Editor Amy Gash, who has led many of Algonquin's titles to success. Amy will share insights on what editors really want in the submission, acquisition and publishing process. Why is a certain book project chosen? What does she look for in a debut writer? What are the top tips she has for aspiring writers? The session will explore these questions and more.

Connie Roberts Reads from *Little Witness*, the riveting poetry collection inspired by her childhood spent in an Irish Orphanage. Q&A to follow. Connie Roberts is a lauded, award winning poet and Hofstra University Creative Writing Professor. In the New York Times review of her work, the journalist Dan Barry writes, “In her vivid recounting of a childhood spent in one of Ireland’s notorious industrial schools, truth hides behind no ‘masquerade of metaphors.’ Roberts honors children, holds adults accountable, and finds acceptance, all with a reportorial rigor that, through her soaring language and big-hearted vision, achieves poetic art....This is the poetry of rock-hard experience. It will skin your soul.”

From Picture Books to YA: How VOICE Makes the Character! Caitlyn Dlouhy, Vice President & Editorial Director, Caitlyn Dlouhy Books, Simon & Schuster Atheneum Books for Young Readers - You know it when you hear it, but how do you get it for your character, your narrator? Written or visual voice (yes, there’s visual voice) is what only you can bring to your work and with this workshop you’ll become better at identifying and bolstering it. Expect to do some on-the-spot practice, as well as work on something of your own that’s been feeling flatter than you wish it did.

Building Character Through an Actors Methods with Billy Mitchell, an award-winning director, and playwright whose fill-in-the-blanks comedy *Villain: DeBlanks* has been seen in New York City, LA, and London, featuring Tony, Emmy, and Olivier-winning performers such as Kathleen Turner, Bruce Vilanch, Bebe Neuwirth and others. In this session, we will look at the methods actors use to bring to life the characters they inhabit on the stage, and how you as a writer can leverage these techniques to produce more realistic, nuanced characters in your stories.

SESSION B: 12:00-12:50

What a Character! Crafting strong characters in picture books and novels with Rachel Orr, celebrated picture book and YA agent for illustrators and authors at Prospect Agency. Strong characters hold the key to strong writing, regardless if your book is fiction or nonfiction, commercial or literary, a picture book or a novel. Using examples of recent books she has represented, Rachel Orr will discuss the importance of crafting characters that are both unique and flawed, while still remaining likeable. She’ll also provide tips for having the characters drive the plot, and talk about the significance of strong secondary characters as well.

ALL ABOUT ROMANCE & MORE! Susan Litman, Acquisitions Editor, Harlequin Books, a division of HarperCollins, will introduce attendees to Harlequin's

publishing program, including both the series romance program and the Trade imprints. She will share insights on what editors want, what they are currently talking about - including the importance of relatable characters and in particular the new relationship dynamics driven by the current state of women's issues. She will share tips on what editors look for when acquiring new authors and building partnerships, how to catch an editor's eye in your pitch, synopsis and manuscript. Time permitting, Susan will take questions and offer additional practical information and insider tips on everything from how to get your manuscript noticed by an editor—from determining which editor to approach to pitch to submission—to what happens to your book after you've signed that contract.

BEARING WITNESS – A poetry workshop w/ Connie Roberts.

In the dark times, will there also be singing?

Yes, there will be singing.

About the dark times.

~Bertolt Brecht

In this workshop we will discuss “poetry of witness,” described by Carolyn Forché in her anthology *Against Forgetting: Twentieth Century Poetry of Witness* as a genre of poetry written by “poets who endured conditions of historical and social extremity...poems that bear the trace of extremity within them, and are, as such, evidence of what occurred.” The poets in *Against Forgetting* are all personal witnesses, people who coped with extreme conditions such as war, imprisonment, torture and exile. We will expand upon Forché’s definition of poetry of witness and study how poets bear witness to their own lives and the world in general. In addition, students, in a writing exercise, will explore a large issue that concerns them—racism, sexism, disability, domestic violence, war, climate change, sexual abuse, etc.—and share it with the class.

LUNCH: 12:50 – 2:10 (get yourself a nibble while exploring charming Madison)

SESSION C 2:10 – 3:00

First Pages – Children’s (PB, MG, YA) – Caitlyn Dlouhy & Rachel Orr

First Pages – Prose – Amy Gash & Susan Litman

Writing Dialogue Across Genres - Billy Mitchell, award winning playwright, director and celebrated speaker. Successful dialogue, not only in drama, but in fiction, creative nonfiction or poetry can reveal character and plot, distinguish characters from each other, move the story along and enable the writer to "show" not "tell" the story, among other advantages. With an ear for unique voices and years of experience crafting powerful dialogue that engages audiences and keeps them on the edge of their seats, Billy will share tips on writing successful dialogue no matter your genre. He will offer some do's and don'ts -- what to strive for and pitfalls to avoid. Billy also will take participants through a lively interactive dialogue exercise.

AFTERNOON KEYNOTE: 3:10 – 4:00 Get Your Manuscript Past the Gatekeeper with Revision Technique!, Donna Galanti, author of the bestselling paranormal suspense *Element Trilogy* and the children's fantasy adventure *Joshua and The Lightning Road* series. Donna is a contributing editor for International Thriller Writers the *Big Thrill* magazine and regularly presents as a guest author at schools, events & conferences. Donna shares what can get your manuscript past the gatekeeper (the intern!) and in the hands of the agent. Have you had your manuscript requested over and over only to have the door closed on your work after that? Now, you'll come away with a handy list of problems that could be plaguing your manuscript and keeping you from getting an agent. Addressing these issues, before sending it out again, could power up your story and get it past the gatekeeper.

CLOSING REMARKS; PRIZES; CAKE; 4:00-4:20

* **FIRST PAGE SESSIONS** - If you signed up for either selection of First Pages in Session C you need to do the following:

Bring four copies of a first page of a single manuscript with you to the conference and place it in the designated bin upon arrival. It will be located near the entrance. As many First Pages as possible will be read aloud by a volunteer reader and two editors/agents will give their critiques. First Pages will be read in the order in which they are received.

It must be the *very first page of your work*, not a first page of a later chapter. Do not put your name on the paper, but do include a title and indicate the genre (picture book, chapter book, middle grade, young adult, adult). Your manuscript must fit on a single sheet of paper (begin at the top of the page). If you submit a second page, only the first page will be read.

Formatting - Use standard manuscript formatting—double spaced, 12 point Times New Roman or Courier font, one-inch margins all around, half-inch indents for each new paragraph, single column of text. You may include up to the first 23 printed lines (not sentences!) of text from your manuscript.



CRITIQUE GUIDELINES

For Conference 2018, on September 29, 2018

Please print out and keep handy to format your manuscript.

Total submission cannot be longer than 15 typewritten pages of a Fiction, Middle Grade or Young Adult novel, or of sample chapters of a non-fiction work. Complete Picture Book manuscript will count as one submission, even though it is less than 15 pages. If you would like to have a summary included, it must be part of the 15 pages. Poetry: one poem per critique.

1. Submissions must be typed double spaced on an 8 ½ x 11 white paper with 1" margins all around, in a Times New Roman, Courier or Garamond Font no smaller than 12 pt.
2. Please put your name, title of the work, genre (Fiction, YA, MG, PB, NF) and complete word count of your finished novel (if you have one) on the first page, your last name, and the title on all subsequent pages on the top left hand corner of each page.
3. Please number all pages on the top right hand corner.

IMPORTANT: Send your submission as **Word 97-2004** document (.doc) to ConferenceCritique@WomenWhoWrite.org no later than August 15, 2018.

In the SUBJECT, please say 2018 PROSE (or POETRY or CHILDREN'S) CRITIQUE SUBMISSION so it won't get lost in our mailboxes. We will confirm receipt within a couple of days. Why a Word .doc format? Because a lot of editors can't open the later versions. Regular mail submissions cannot be accepted.

Just some quick tips:

- Editors and agents notice things like misspelled words, or words that the computer has spell-checked incorrectly (use of *their* instead of *there*, or *to* instead of *two* or *too*.) So before you hit that send button, please be sure to read over your work carefully and send in your very best.
- Please follow the formatting rules to show you are a professional (does not apply to poetry).
- Do not expect your editor or agent or author to accept your work for publication. A critique is exactly what the word means.
- Your editor or agent will tell you what they liked about it, but also what confused them or slowed them down or what they feel needs to be worked on. If you go in with that in mind, you will come out with some great professional advice on how to make your work better.