

# Writers' Notes

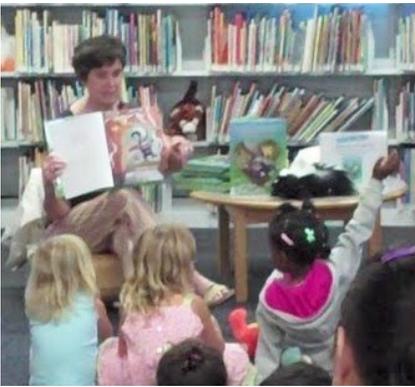
The Newsletter of  
*Women Who Write, Inc.*

Fall 2014

Volume 19, Issue 2

## President's Message

Since the last issue of *Writers' Notes*, our organization has been extremely busy. Our new fiscal year started on May 1st, and with that, membership renewals. Amy Reade, our new VP, Membership & Liaison to Writing Groups, along with Tricia Vanderhoof, our Directory Chairperson, spent months concurring with each other: the end result being an updated, improved Directory.



Then Mary Olmsted, along with her Conference Committee: repeaters Pat Weissner and Melissa Azarian, newly added Helen Branch, Maureen Haggerty and Dana Punzo, worked endlessly to make this year's Writers' Conference a wonderful program. Other members volunteered their services on the day of conference as well. Already three members have stepped forward to offer their services for next year's conference. That's a fine compliment to Mary and her committee members for a job well done.

On behalf of all of our members, I would like to thank the names listed above for their dedication to WWW. You've all done an outstanding job!

## WWW Writers' Conference 2014

If you were among the 61 women at the Women Who Write Conference on Saturday, September 20, you're probably still chuckling about Chris Grabenstein's extraordinary keynote presentation. Or you may be reworking your query letter so it reads more like one of Kim Perel's examples of what captures an agent's interest. You might be polishing a poem for submission to a journal, following the advice of editors Gina Larkin, Priscilla Orr, and Tom Plante, or incorporating Sara Sargent and Bridget Smith's feedback on the first page of your children's book.

Whichever session – or sessions – continues to resonate, you almost certainly left the Madison Community House that day more energized about your writing, more focused on your writing goals, or at least more entertained by Chris's improv comedy skills (well-matched by some of the talented conference attendees).



Conference Chair Mary Olmsted and the dedicated committee members built on the success of prior conferences and also introduced some "firsts," including the first "first pages" session for the Prose track; the first panel of poetry journal editors; and the first time only acquiring agents and editors were invited to lead the sessions (with the well-chosen exception of our best-selling keynote speaker). [continued, page 3]

### In This Issue

Success Stories

Upcoming Events

#### Focus on Conferences:

WWW Conference  
Writers' Digest NYC  
Conference  
NJ-SCBWI Conference

### By the Numbers...

61 Conference Attendees  
(45 Members/16 Non-members)

50 Critiques

12 Top-notch Presenters

1 Amazing Cake



## A Note from the Editor



Welcome to *Writers' Notes*! As the new Editor, I'm excited by the opportunity to put my own stamp on a newsletter that has long kept the members of Women Who Write interested and informed. But what to change? I've been asking myself that very question since former Editor Maggie Roycraft handed me the proverbial reins (and a really large binder!). Maggie did a wonderful job with WN, so the changes will be subtle: we'll keep what we love (success stories, events, member news), but also focus each issue on a particular writing resource. This month, the theme is conferences; going forward, perhaps it will be publications, retreats, workshops, contests. What do you think? I appreciate feedback, so please get in touch with your comments as well as your submissions.

## 2014 Blairstown Writers

### Retreat

Congratulations to **Juanita Kirton**, Blairstown Writing Group Facilitator, on the success of the Third Annual Blairstown Writers Retreat at the Kirkridge Retreat Center in Bangor, PA, held on Sept. 13,

This year's guest speakers were Judi Keats, Professor of Fine Arts at Keystone College; Jen DiOrio, producer at OffSides Production; Maggie Martin, writer, educator and performer, and Juanita directed the opening ceremony, breathing exercise and facilitated the "Heart Box" writing prompt.

Writers' Notes Editor: Michelle Hollander

Copy editors: Maggie Roycraft, Marlaina Cockcroft

Photographer: Juanita Kirton

## Success Stories

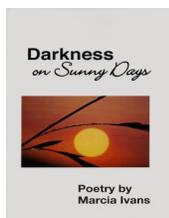


**Ann Frommer's** new novel, second in the *Tailgunner* series, will be published by Vicann Press and available early November 2014. Look for *Tailgunner:R3 (Revenge.Redemption.Resolution. the aftermath of war)* on Amazon.

**Ronnie Hammer**, complete with hard boot, crutches and good intentions, spoke at the Morristown Library on October 8 about her book, "En Garde, My Battle With Breast Cancer." The event was held in recognition of October's Breast Cancer Awareness Program.



**Pamela Hegarty's** second Christa Devlin historical thriller, *The Emerald Tablet*, was released in spring 2014.



**Marcia Ivans** has a new book, *Darkness on Sunny Days*, available through the author. She will be reading and discussing the book at Watchung Booksellers and Bernardsville Library. See the Events section for more information.

**Alice Lazzarini's** recently-published memoir, *Both Sides Now: A Journey From Researcher to Patient*, has generated invitations to speak about research and women in science. The book is available on Amazon, and a list of book signings and presentations, along with other information, can be found on her blog: [www.alicelazzarini.com](http://www.alicelazzarini.com).



**Darlene Sneden** recently published her essay, "Help with the Laundry," in the new release *Chicken Soup for the Soul, Touched by an Angel*. The book is available via Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Target and many independent bookstores, or directly from the Chicken Soup website (<http://www.chickensoup.com>). Also see Darlene's introduction to the essay on her blog: <http://adventuresofamiddleagemom.com/2014/09/22/chicken-soup-soul-touched-angel/>

**Laurie Wallmark's** picture book, *Ada*, about a smart little girl who likes science and math, will be published by Creston Books in 2016.



## Writer's Digest Conference 2014: Big, Really Big!

by Michelle Hollander

I first discovered *Writer's Digest* (WD) at Barnes & Noble late in 2013, when I was having an oft-repeated discussion with myself about kicking my writing into gear. "Maybe some sort of publication?" I inquired. "Sure," I replied, "Add another magazine to the thick stack already waiting to be read at home!"

I ignored my own sarcasm, bought an issue, then a subscription, and then started to receive a mess of WD emails, including multiple invitations to the annual conference over the weekend of August 1-3. I started thinking, "Hey, a weekend in New York City with a bunch of other writers: why not?"

Of course, there were 20 reasons "why not," but I'm so very glad that I did. The sessions were informative and engaging, led by established authors, editors, agents and other industry professionals, and there were three or four from which to choose at any one time. Some focused on the business of writing, others on craft; some on fiction writing, others on non-fiction. Keynote speakers Dani

Shapiro and Harlan Coben, both bestselling authors, were worth the price of admission on their own, in my opinion. (I missed the closing keynote with Kimberla Lawson Roby.)

As valuable as the sessions were, the networking was even more so. Conference organizers told me that there were more than 600 attendees this year, up from about 500 last year. I met writers from all over the United States and Canada, and even pitched Women Who Write to a few.

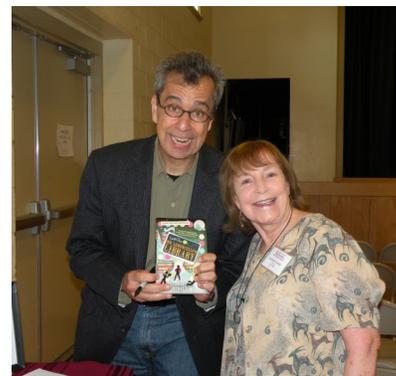
While I opted for the basic conference package, with sessions running from Friday at 5:00 until midday on Sunday, more ambitious attendees also signed up for the *Writer's Digest* Pro sessions all day on Friday. In addition, very many participated in the Pitch Slam throughout the conference, and the whole pitch process was a heavily discussed theme throughout.

Conferences, publications, writing groups, writing organizations like ours...

### WWW Conference

(cont'd from page 1)

Looking ahead to next year, Women Who Write welcomes interested members to join the Conference committee and help bring fellow writers an exceptional day to learn, share and enjoy each other's company.



it's all about being part of a writing community, and I feel that much more connected for having attended the WD conference. I aim to return next year, and hope that some of my fellow WWW will join me.

## Five things I learned at the NJ-SCBWI Conference

by Marlaina Cockcroft

**5. They're not kidding about the sweater.** Nearly every email from NJ-SCBWI prior to the conference reminded attendees to prepare for a cold conference climate, and it was in fact chilly inside the hotel. I do appreciate the heads-up.

**4. Sensible shoes are better.** Because after dashing around from workshop to panel to first-pages session to agent critique to lunch to the parking lot to lug my bags to my hotel room to workshop to dinner to critique group etc., my feet were about ready to quit on me — and those heels are actually sort of comfortable. (Conveniently the hotel offered a little spa-product sampler in the rooms; I gave myself a nice foot massage.)

**3. It's good to live in NJ.** Well, of course I always thought so. But fellow attendees told me again and again how great this conference is, how large it is, how so many agents and editors attend it and are completely accessible, that I felt pretty lucky to live in the state where it's held. Several people traveled in from out of state; I drove an hour. (The only downside? I didn't get a chance to hang out in Princeton proper — no Thomas Sweet visit, for instance. On the other hand, the hotel had pretty good cheesecake.)

**2. Take notes, you'll need them.** I came away with good information on everything from how to keep your word count down on picture books (a difficult thing, sometimes) to the kind of revenue opportunities to seek out, to the overall state of the U.S. children's book market (surprisingly strong). Not to mention useful critique suggestions on 3 manuscripts. And on to rewriting ...

**1. Kidlit folks are the nicest folks.** There must be something about the sort of person who would want to write for children. Everyone was incredibly friendly and open and helpful, and I had a lot of good conversations.

**Addendum:** The conference runs a nice book sale. I brought home Ame Dyckman's "Tea Party Rules" and Leeza Hernandez's "Cat Napped!" which were met with much approval by my own two picture-book readers, or as I call them, the focus group.

Reprinted from Marlaina Cockcroft's blog: <http://angryyoungmom.blogspot.com/>



## Upcoming WWW Events

## Member Events

Join us for the **WWW Winter Gathering** on Sunday, January 11, 2015 from 12:00 to 2:00 pm at Café Beethoven, 262 Main Street, Chatham.

**The WWW Prose Workshop** will be on Saturday, March 21.

**Goldfinch Launch Party** will be held on Thursday, April 23, 2015 at the Bernardsville Library, 1 Anderson Hill Road, Bernardsville

**The WWW Poetry Workshop** is scheduled for Saturday, February 28.

To avoid date conflicts, if you are planning an event that will include WWW members, please contact our Programs VP, Debbie Gerrish.

**Marcia Ivans** will be appearing at The Library of The Chathams, 214 Main Street, Chatham, from 2:00 to 3:30pm on November 22. Contact 973-625-0603.

**Julie Maloney** will lead the Women Reading Aloud Writers' Weekend Retreat, returning for the 7th year to the Beacon House Inn, Sea Girt, NJ. April 24-26, along with NY Time bestselling novelist, Jacqueline Sheehan. [www.womenreadingaloud.org](http://www.womenreadingaloud.org)

On January 14, 2015 at 7pm the Bernardsville Library will be hosting a reading and discussion with , **Nancy Gerber**, **Marcia Ivans** and Judith Hugg. Contact Madeline English at 908-766-0118.

[Details for these workshops to follow--check our website.]

### Guidelines for Submitting to *Writers' Notes*

- Please submit in a Word document (cannot be read-only); 12-point Times New Roman or 10-pt Gill Sans MT (preferred).
- Please query before submitting, so we can determine length and be sure there is space for the article.
- Submissions are edited for length, grammar, etc. and will be formatted to the newsletter. Try to place the most important points of your piece in the first paragraph, journalistic style, since space may require us to make cuts.
- Success stories & events may be submitted at any time, without queries.
- By all means send pictures to accompany your submissions. Photos may be cropped.
- Deadlines for each issue are announced through Yahoo Groups.
- Submit to [writersnotes@womenhowrite.org](mailto:writersnotes@womenhowrite.org)



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