

The Writer's Wire

Women Who Write: A Place, a Space, a Voice

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WOMEN WHO WRITE, INC.

Encouraging, supporting and educating women who aspire to write

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ROWING & WRITING: NOT FOR THE WEAK

What does the sport of rowing have to do with writing? I asked myself this question after returning from my son's collegiate regatta on the East Coast, and I realized they share common practices and philosophies. Both activities require dedication, long hours of practice, and attention to form. Sound familiar?

Dedication: Rowing is a sport you have to want to do. You have to give it your all every time you enter the boat. It is often painful and difficult because of the repetitious nature of pulling the oar smoothly yet consistently through the water . . . every . . . single . . . time. Just like writing, you must want to put the words on paper, to tell the story you have inside of you. Writers have to commit to writing and dedicate themselves to their poetry or prose.

Practice: Rowers call it “putting in the hours on the water,” and in racing season that may mean twice a day, early in the morning or after a long day of school or work, in all kinds of weather conditions. Writers also have to commit to carving out time every day to spend writing, to practice getting the words on the page smoothly and coherently. Just like rowers, who may have a bad day with poor split times and lackluster stroke rates, writers too can feel the pressure of the empty page and not being able to make the words flow. Writers also find that sometimes they just don't like what they've written. It all takes practice.

Form: Doing the same activity over and over again lends itself to focusing on good form. Rowers must concentrate on knowing when to push with their legs and pull the oars with their arms. They achieve this fluid motion with practice. Having good form means the boat will glide through the water with less effort. Kind of like writing, when you dedicate yourself to telling the story, and you practice writing every day, you begin to feel the form of your story take shape.

To be truly successful in rowing is to “make the boat sing,” to pull together in unison with others so that everyone works as one and the effort becomes a shared experience, resulting in joy that everyone shares. As readers, we know when writers have achieved this pinnacle moment because we stop, pause, and re-read a sentence or a passage that is so perfect, so effortless . . . so joyful that we feel at one with the author. Let's get out there and write.

—Jessica Luetzow



[Editor's note: Ian Luetzow's team from Drexel University won their race at the Dad Vail Regatta by less than 1/100th of a second, demonstrating that dedication, practice, form, and passion do pay off!]

DRUM ROLL, PLEASE . . . CONFERENCE SPEAKERS ANNOUNCED

The Women Who Write writing conference gets better every year. We've recently finalized the speaker line-up for the 2015 conference. Mark your calendars for July 18 and plan to attend. Better yet, attend and bring a friend or two. The conference will be at the Louisville campus of Indiana Wesleyan University, 1500 Alliant Ave. Registration is \$60 for WWW members, students and seniors, and \$75 for all others. Continental breakfast and lunch are included. Online registration will soon open.

Jan Arnow, keynote speaker, will talk about writing nonfiction to support a passion or cause. Jan is an internationally known lecturer, peace advocate, and author of *In the Line of Fire: Raising Kids in a Violent World* and *Teaching Peace: How to Raise Children to Live in Harmony—Without Fear, Without Prejudice, Without Violence*.

During lunch, leaders of the local writing community present a **panel on regional writing resources and groups**. The panel includes Jessica Luetzow (director of Women Who Write), Kimberly Crum (owner of Shape & Flow Writing Studio and president of Louisville Literary Arts), Mary Popham (Cherokee Roundtable), and Mary O'Dell (founder, Green River Writers).

Attendees will be able to choose from among **12 workshop topics** during the day (four time slots with three workshops each). Speakers include:

- Jennie Bentley, cozy mysteries
- David Domine, nonfiction
- Kathleen Driskell, poetry
- Angela Jackson-Brown, using regional settings in fiction
- Paulette Livers, writing and incorporating setting in fiction
- Alice Speilburg, working with literary agents
- Tytianna Wells-Smith, children's poetry
- Sheri Wright, using crowdsourcing
- Erin Fitzgerald, finding your "child's voice"
- Susan Lindsey, conducting research
- Selene Phillips, lessons from journalism
- Cheri Powell, marketing your books on the Internet

WRITERS ON WRITING



“Close the door. Write with no one looking over your shoulder. Don't try to figure out what other people want to hear from you; figure out what you have to say. It's the one and only thing you have to offer.”

—Barbara Kingsolver

ABOUT WOMEN WHO WRITE

Membership: Our goal is to encourage, support and educate all women who aspire to write. Our group is diverse and dynamic, and includes writers who are just starting out, those who are newly published, and those in the middle of their careers.

Regular meetings are from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month at the Highlands-Shelby Park Library, Mid City Mall, 1250 Bardstown Rd., Louisville, Kentucky.

WOMEN WHO WRITE BOARD

Director	Jessica Luetzow
Associate Director	Paula Dillmann
Associate Director, Communication & PR, Editor	Susan E. Lindsey
Secretary	Charlet Johnson
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IN THE NEWS

Women Who Write continues to grow. More than two dozen women attended the May meeting. We love seeing our members build their writing skills. Here are a few recent success stories.



Bonnie Jean Feldkamp hit the big-time with an article in the *New York Times*' MotherLode column. Her article—[“In a Blended Family, ‘Your Dad’ Becomes ‘Dad’”](#)—was published May 3.

Erin Fitzgerald's young adult book *Smart Butt: Scenes from a Bold-Faced Life (Starring Earlene)*, published last year, has been made into a play. See the [community performance](#) Saturday, May 16, 4 p.m., at [The Bard's Town](#), 1801 Bardstown Rd., Louisville.

Jeannie Waldridge submitted a story, “The Church Meeting,” to a quarterly contest sponsored by WOW! Women on Writing, and recently learned she is one of ten finalists.

Judith Owens-Lalude will be selling her books at the Buy Local Fair, Sunday, May 17, noon to 6 p.m., at the Water Tower off Zorn Avenue. The event, sponsored by Louisville Independent Business Alliance, features local businesses, musicians, artist and craftspeople, chefs, community organizations, farmers, and (obviously) writers.

Susan E. Lindsey will speak at the annual conference of the Liberian Studies Association (LSA) about her book in progress, *Under the Vine and Fig Tree: Slavery in Kentucky, Freedom in Liberia, and Ties That Bind*. Her book tells the true story of fifteen Kentucky slaves who were freed and then migrated to Liberia, Africa, to start new lives. Several of them were literate and corresponded for years with their former master. Susan's book is built around their surviving letters. LSA is the world's largest group of scholars studying Liberian history, issues, and governance.

CONTESTS, MARKETS & GRANTS*

- **Baltimore Review Contest.** Poems, short stories, creative nonfiction on the theme “crime.” Prizes: \$500, \$200, \$100. Check word limits and contest details [online](#). Entry fee \$10. Deadline May 31.
- **Mid-American Review Fineline Competition.** Works up to 500 words. First prize \$1,000 and publication. Ten finalists receive notation and possible publication. Entry fee \$10. Deadline June 1.
- **Faust Sonnet Contest.** Accepting up to three unpublished sonnets in Shakespearean, Petrarchan, Spenserian, or non-traditional forms. No entry fee. Cash prizes total \$2,000. Deadline June 1.
- **Proud to Be: Writing by American Warriors.** Anthology seeks writing and photography with a military service perspective from soldiers, veterans, and their families. No entry fee. Deadline June 1.
- **Pulp Literature's Hummingbird Prize for Flash Fiction** for previously unpublished fiction up to 1,000 words. First prize \$300; runner-up, \$75. Entry fee \$15. Prize for each of five categories: \$250 and publication. Deadline June 15.
- **Writer's Center Emerging Writer Fellowship.** Seeking submissions in fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Emerging Writer Fellows will be featured at the Writer's Center in Bethesda, MD, for a celebration and reading. Honorariums of \$250 and \$500. Deadline June 20.
- **Mark Twain Humor Contest.** Humor writing up to 7,000 words. Prizes from \$1,000 to \$100. Entry fees \$12 or \$22. Deadline July 10.
- **Fairy Tale Review Contest.** Seeking “your best fairy-tale work along the spectrum of mainstream to experimental, fabulist to realist.” First prizes in prose or poetry, \$1,000 each. Entry \$10. Deadline July 15.
- **Good Housekeeping Silver Linings Story Contest.** Nonfiction stories about “a time in your life when something good came from a seemingly bad situation.” From 1,500 to 2,500 words; not previously published. Submit work to www.goodhousekeeping.com/memoir-contest between June 1 and September 1, 2015. First prize \$2,000 and possible publication.
- **Trajectory Journal** now accepting poetry and short stories. Send submissions to *Trajectory Journal*, PO Box 655, Frankfort, KY 40602. Include a SASE for response. All year.

EVENTS FOR WRITERS

- May 20–June 10, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.: **Playwriting: An Introduction**, a four-session workshop with award-winning playwright Nancy Gall-Clayton. Participants will write a monologue, several brief scenes, and a short play as homework. Sharing writing in class is encouraged, but not required. Nancy will provide a safe, friendly, and helpful process for commentary. Class size limit: 7. Shape & Flow Writing Studio, Mellwood Arts Center, 1860 Mellwood Ave., Louisville, KY. \$90 for four 2-hour sessions. Register by email: shapeandflow@gmail.com.
- May 22, 7 p.m.: **West End Poetry Opera**, presented by Roots and Wings, in partnership with the Kentucky Center. Kentucky Center's Bomhard Theater, 501 W. Main St., Louisville, KY. Free performance, but tickets are required. Call 502-584-7777 to reserve your seat.
- June 2: **Kentucky Great Writers Series**, 7 p.m., Carnegie Center, Lexington, KY. Connecting authors to readers and writers in an intimate atmosphere. Featured authors: Jacinda Townsend (*Spirit Monkey*), Arna Bontemps Hemenway (*Elegy for Kinderklavier*), and Molly Harper (*Better Homes & Hauntings*).
- June 2, 9 a.m.–4 p.m. **Inspire! Writing Camp** for 3rd to 11th grades, Winchester, KY. Do you know a young writer? Check out this nonprofit education camp developed by an award-winning English professor at Eastern Kentucky University. Fee of \$135 includes personalized pencils, canvas art project, T-shirt and camp book. For information, email inkspire.camps@gmail.com.
- June 5–6: **Books-In-Progress Conference**, Carnegie Center, Lexington, KY. Features keynote speaker Bobbie Ann Mason, Pulitzer Prize finalist and author of *Clear Springs*, *In Country*, and *The Girl in the Blue Beret*. \$175, with \$25 off for students; additional \$25 for a one-on-one session with a literary agent.
- June 5–7: **Write Away! Retreat for Authors and Aspiring Authors**. Lost Lake Lodge at Wooded Glen, Henryville, IN. Registration: \$597. Call or email: 502-445-6539 or Cathy@CathFyock.com. Facilitator: Cathy Fyock.
- Sept. 11–13: **Imaginarium: A Convention about Creative Writing**, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Louisville, KY. See the website, www.entertheimaginarium.com for details.

BREAK THROUGH THE BLOCK



Most writers occasionally deal with writer's block. Journalist Gene Fowler famously said, "Writing is easy. All you do is stare at a blank sheet of paper until drops of blood form on your forehead." A popular T-shirt defines writer's block as "when your imaginary friends won't talk to you." What causes that extraordinarily frustrating inability to write? How can you move past it?

New writers are often blocked because they fear that their work will not be perfect. That's OK—no first draft is perfect. Just get the words down, then you at least have a starting point.

Occasionally, the problem is that you're stuck at a particular section of writing. Move on to another section or chapter. Write the easy parts first, then come back and fill in the gaps.

Some blocked authors struggle with having too much information to convey or a very complex topic. When that occurs, find a single area of focus and let the rest go, or consider writing a series.

Other writers face the opposite problem; they have too little information. The solution here is straightforward: keep researching until you feel you have adequate information to get started. You may still need to track down the odd fact or two, but you can always insert queries to yourself in the text and circle back later.

Some writers lose interest in their project partway through. In such cases, you may be able to shift the topic or theme slightly to regain interest, or let go of a bad idea so you can start pursuing a better one.

Sometimes it's helpful to step away for a while—take a walk, a nap, a shower, or otherwise focus on something else—then come back to writing.

Finally, some wannabe writers may like the notion of being a writer more than the actual work of writing. Finishing a book takes months or years of hard work, with no guarantee of publication or profit. If you really want to write, commit to learning and improving your craft. If you want to be a writer, *write*.