

St. Davids Christian Writers' Conference

2011 Faculty



Karen Blomain earned her M.F.A. at Columbia and has authored six books of poetry, including *Normal Ave.* and *Borrowed Light*. The film rights for her first novel, *A Trick of Light*, were purchased by Barbara Streisand's production company and her second, *The Season of Lost Children*, will be released in 2011.

Karen will lead a Wednesday through Friday continuing morning workshop on Where Poems Come From--with topics including "As the Poem Turns," "Poem as Praise," and "Writing without Our Eyes." She will also lead individual sessions on "Inventing and Sustaining Your Creative Life" and "Tidying Up after the Muse: Strategies for Self Editing."



Diana Flegal is an agent with the Hartline Literary Agency and editorial assistant to the agency's founder, Joyce Hart. Diana has also served as a women's speaker, apologetics teacher, and bible study leader.

One of her chief joys has been teaching apologetics to high school students. Diana represents inspirational fiction and nonfiction in both the CBA and general markets.

Diana will lead Friday sessions on "Do I Need an Agent?" and "How to Write an Attention-Grabbing Proposal."



Carol Hamilton writes for *Examiner.com*. Her work has also appeared in *Vista*, *Women Alive!*, *Shepherdess Journal*, and many other publications. She presents anti-bullying programs with Bucketfillers for Life, Inc. and speaks to rejuvenate women. She is marketing/PR director board member for National Speakers Association Pittsburgh and president of New Castle's First Toastmasters.

Carol will lead a Wednesday through Friday continuing morning workshop for beginners titled "From A Hobby to Career: Turn Doing What You Love into Income." She will also teach an afternoon session on "Sell Your Writing through Professional Presentations."



Holly Miller has authored or co-authored 14 books and thousands of articles and short stories that have appeared in *Today's Christian Woman*, *Reader's Digest*, *Writer's Digest*, etc.

A contributing editor to the *Saturday Evening Post*, she is also a judge for Evangelical Press Association writing competitions. Her most recent book is *Feature & Magazine Writing: Action, Angles, and Anecdotes*.

Holly will lead a Wednesday through Friday continuing morning workshop on "Magazines: the Quickest Path to Publication." She will also lead an afternoon general session on "Where Do You Go from Here?"



Bob O'Connor, a self-published author, now has six titles in print plus an audio book. At least three of them will soon be available as e-books as well. He has sold almost 6,000 copies of his books, when the average self-published author sells 100 copies in a lifetime.

Among his titles are two historical novels, including *The Virginian Who Might Have Saved Lincoln* and three nonfiction books, including *The U.S. Colored Troops at Andersonville Prison*.

Bob will lead two Wednesday afternoon sessions on "How to Successfully Self-Publish" and "The True Grit of Writing Historical Fiction."



Trish Perry has had five romantic comedy novels--including *The Perfect Blend* and *Sunset Beach*--published by Harvest House, with another--*Tea for Two*--to be released in 2011. *Sunset Beach* won the 2010 Greater Detroit RWA Booksellers Best Award.

Trish wrote a column for *Christian Fiction Online Magazine*, and has also had numerous essays, short stories, devotionals, and poems published.

Trish will lead a Wednesday through Friday continuing morning workshop on "Creating Stories Your Readers Will Love."



Melanie Rigney, a past editor of *Writer's Digest*, has also served as editorial director of *Writer's Digest Books*. Currently a freelance editor with *editorforyou.com*, she has edited and evaluated manuscripts for dozens of clients.

Melanie is also a writer-editor with the Department of the Treasury and oversees content on 25 of its web sites.

Melanie will lead the Writers' Retreat.



Nancy Skultety is the author of the picture book *From Here to There* from Boyds Mills Press and two books in the Barron's Educational Series: *101 Words Your Child Will Read by the End of Grade 1* and *101 Words Your Child Will Spell by the End of Grade 1*.

Formerly a first-grade teacher, she now holds a Masters of Reading degree from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and works as a reading specialist in a public school district.

Nancy will lead a Wednesday through Friday continuing morning workshop on "Getting From Here To There: Writing For Children."



Kathy Carlton Willis is an editor, publicist, and book doctor, who established Kathy Carlton Willis Communications as a way to help get the word out about the work of writers, speakers, and conferences. . Kathy also "gets jazzed" serving as a speaker/ singer for faith-based and secular groups, as well as writers' conferences.

Kathy will deliver the keynote address "Reinventing Life in the Middle: You Can Survive a 'Do Over' and Live to Tell About It." She will also lead a Wednesday through Friday continuing morning workshop for advanced writers titled "Shine On!" and individual sessions on "What's God Got To Do with It? Following God's Direction in Your Writing Career," and "You Can't Judge a Book by Its Cover."

Karen Blomain



"Where Poems Come From"

Wednesday through Friday--9:15 AM

All three workshops will include:

- exploring samples of the type of poems we will be working on.
- writing a poem using prompts specific to the topic
- reading and discussing the poems written by participants

Wednesday: "As the Poem Turns"—will focus on the movement from the initiating or triggering image or idea in the poem to the "turn" where the real subject of the poem announces itself.

Thursday: "Poem as Praise"—will focus on using one's daily experience to formulate a poem of praise.

Friday: "Writing without Our Eyes"—will focus on using senses other than sight. While the visual sphere is so rich and easily accessed, it is not the only image bank we can call upon. This workshop will explore alternates.

"Tidying Up after The Muse: Strategies for Self Editing"

Wednesday--2:30 PM

(Blurb not yet available.)

"Inventing and Sustaining Your Creative Life"

Thursday--10:45 AM

(Blurb not yet available.)

Diana Flegal



"How to Write an Attention Grabbing Proposal"

Friday--10:45 AM

You have written your book and are now ready to reach out to editors and agents. This workshop will teach you the nuts and bolts of writing your proposal.

What are the parts you need, and in what order should they be presented and spaced? Is it necessary to brag on yourself in the author bio? Should you let the agent or editor know you are an inexperienced, new author?

We will address these questions and many others in this class. When we are through, you will know how to prepare the parts and why each is necessary in your inquiry to an agent or editor.

"Do I Need an Agent?"

Friday--2:30 PM

Why do I need an agent? What will he or she do for me? How do I go about finding and working with an agent? What can I expect from the relationship?

As an agent myself, I will do my best to answer your questions or direct you to the resources that would best do that. I will share what we agents expect from you authors--and what we need in the form of a proposal.

Carol Hamilton



"From a Hobby to a Career: Turn Doing What You Love into Income" (Beginner's Track)

Wednesday through Friday--9:15 AM

Wednesday: Professional Writing--I'll teach you how to avoid common mistakes with a professionally presented and formatted manuscript. You'll learn the meaning of terms like rights, copyright, SASE, query, and proposal. Then you'll use what you've learned to start an article for submission.

Thursday: Professional Sales--You'll master how to study the marketplace, so that you can find the right home for your manuscript, send it correctly, and track it. You will also fine-tune the article you started in the first class to fit a specific magazine.

Friday: Professional Marketing--Professionals say the writing business is 50% writing and 50% marketing. So we'll discuss contracts and rejections, social networking, building a platform, business cards, one-sheets, agents, and the fact that publishers expect their authors to sell books.

"Sell Your Writing through Professional Presentations"

Thursday--2:30 PM

Even traditional publishers expect their writers to promote their books. And, if you are self-publishing, it's especially important that you get out there and talk! I'll teach you how to plan a program and find venues. We'll discuss what to wear and the timing and organization you will need to improve your public speaking skills. I will also help you prepare for Open Mic.

Holly Miller



"Magazines: The Quickest Path to Publication"

Wednesday through Friday--10:45 AM

It seems all authors want to write books these days, but they have trouble marketing their book manuscripts because they don't have a "platform." In other words, they're unknown, and agents and editors aren't willing to take chances on unknown writers. I'll teach you how magazines are a great way to become established, build a reputation, earn money, and acquire the skills of the trade.

"Where Do You Go From Here?"

Friday--1:30 PM

I'll offer strategies on how to keep the writing momentum going after you go home from the conference.

Bob O'Connor



"How to Successfully Self-Publish"

Wednesday--1:30 PM

I will review the short list of traditional publishers--only one has ownership in the United States--then focus on alternative ways to publish. I'll include one aspect that too many writers forget: how to sell books. Conferees attending my class will also receive a booklet on how to become a published author.

"The 'True Grit' of Historical Research"

Wednesday--2:30 PM

I will explain some of the methods I use to make sure my books are authentic and believable. When writing historical fiction, I try to be so true to what actually happened that even historians sometimes have trouble separating the truth from the fiction.

You'll hear some amazing things that I have discovered, and how I incorporate those findings into my books. I will also reveal some tricks to my trade that I don't often share!

Trish Perry



"Creating Stories Your Readers Will Love"

Wednesday through Friday--9:15 AM

Wednesday: The Five C's of Your Story--Every published author begins by writing that first word, that first sentence, those first pages. Whether you've only written that first word or are already deep into your novel, whether you're writing suspense or romance, historical or contemporary, you'll want to keep the same five particulars in mind. We'll address the Five C's of your story, to make sure you know its basic structure before you flesh it out.

Thursday: Your Book's Two Stories-- Wouldn't you love to write a story that eventually made it to the big screen? Plotting your novel as if that were your goal will enhance your storytelling capabilities. Screenwriting emphasizes two separate story layers. We'll define and study the external and internal layers that will draw your readers in.

Friday: Fleshing Out Your Story--You have a basic plotline in mind. Now what? How do you get your hero or heroine from status quo to initial conflict? From initial conflict to "the point of no return?" How do you keep the middle of your story from sagging, while your protagonist progresses to the climax? Taking what we've learned in our earlier sessions, we'll explore how to achieve that goal.

Melanie Rigney



Writers' Retreat

Tuesday (1:00-4:00 PM), Wednesday-Friday (10:45 AM), Wednesday-Thursday (3:30 PM)

Writer's Retreat is all about critique--giving and taking. It's about craft, and about making your work the best it can be. This course is limited to six people who are at least 10,000 words into a book-length work, fiction or nonfiction.

Please note: The retreat is a six-session commitment, including 1-4 p.m. on Tuesday (early arrival). You'll have the opportunity to read three passages from your work to the other participants and ask for feedback on specific aspects of the manuscript that don't feel quite right to you. And, you'll offer specific feedback to the five other "retreaters."

It's an intense but positive and productive experience. Due to the small class size, writers cannot participate for more than two years in a row. To apply, please click on **Retreat** to send 10 pages of your project via e-mail to Melanie Rigney by May 15. Applicants will be advised of selection status by June 1.

Nancy Skultety



"Getting From Here To There: Writing For Children"

Wednesday through Friday--10:45 AM

Wednesday: The Road to Publication--I will share my road to publication to show how you can do it too. In this session we'll discuss motivation, and how to draw energy from it to write. I'll also offer advice on how you can use your own knowledge base, and tap your own resources, to write for children. I'll list 20 specific ways for you to reach publication. Look forward to class interaction, homework, and handouts to get you on your way!

Thursday: What Do You Know?--Class time will be provided for you to practice building stories and characters' personalities. You will also be encouraged to share your work if you so desire. I'll also discuss marketing, and assign homework designed to reveal what's being published today--and how your work might find its place in the market.

Friday: It's A Wrap!--We'll discuss what you've discovered about markets and how your writing fits. Some in-class writing and critique will give you opportunity for practice and input. Come ready to work, ask questions, and be encouraged to write and be published!

Kathy Carlton Willis



"Shine On!"

(Advanced Track)

Wednesday through Friday--9:15 AM

These sessions are intended for writers who have been published and are looking for ways to advance their freelance career. This track will help you get to the next level, by creating a business plan and learning to market yourself and your writing more effectively.

Wednesday: Gleam--When you first started writing, you just wanted to fiddle with words. Then you realized you needed to take your writing career seriously. You heard about platform and branding. Perhaps even made an attempt to establish a business plan. Now you're ready to advance your writing career to the next level. We'll take a second look at your: 1) Platform, 2) Marketing and Business Plan, and 3) Branding.

Thursday: Glow--As an experienced writer, you've learned that instinct will only take you so far in the advancement of your career. Learning to be more strategic and intentional is essential. In today's track, you'll learn, 1) How to write marketing into your manuscripts, 2) Niche-marketing, 3) Social Networking.

Friday: Gloss--By now you've had several opportunities for media interviews. Now that it's your time to shine, learn how to be a grace-filled guest. Even if you are comfortable being interviewed, this session will help you: 1) Increase name recognition, 2) See more listeners convert to consumers of your products, 3) Establish yourself as the go-to person of your brand—your passion.

"Reinventing Life in the Middle: You Can Survive a 'Do Over' and Live to Tell About It" (Keynote Address)

Tuesday: 6:45 PM

Most of us wish we could get a fresh start when it comes to a specific aspiration. Hear how God recently gave me an opportunity to reinvent my life, and the steps you can take to embrace fresh opportunities when you come to a fork in the road. How do you put "flesh" on the new ideas God gives you? We'll take an honest look at what it takes to redirect our lives when we're smack-dab in the middle.

"What's God Got To Do with It? Following God's Direction in Your Writing Career"

Wednesday--10:45 AM

Come and learn how God's guidance can empower you to write with a freedom and confidence that you've never known before. Some write because they dream of being writers. And that's okay. But those who write because they can't NOT write—who seek God's face for direction, experience something more. Don't become paralyzed by the fear of the unknowns in this industry. Let God dream big dreams for you!

"You Can't Judge a Book by Its Cover and Other Myths about First Impressions--Busted"

Wednesday--2:30 PM

One of the most important aspects about working as a writer is learning how to make a good first impression. With proper planning and the right materials, you'll be prepared for any opportunity that arises. We'll cover business cards, hooks, elevator speeches, basic image consulting and other ways to make positive first impressions.

"Jumpstart Success with a Good Mentor"



By Michele Huey

Wednesday--1:30 PM

What do Jack London, Ernest Hemingway, and Mark Twain have in common? They all were mentored by more established writers. Come, learn how a mentor can give you the edge in getting published.

Please bring along a short piece of your prose or poetry, as you'll be paired up with another writer who will act as your mentor (and vice versa) for this workshop.

"Get Your Blog On"



By Susan Lower

Thursday--2:30 PM

Ready to get your blog on the web? Learn what it takes to create, maintain, and drive traffic to your site. By the end of this course you'll have planned, designed, built content, and found your audience to get your blog on!

"Computer File Management"

By Cathy Young

Wednesday--1:30 PM

Writers, we have entered the Digital Zone. Are all your files under one directory on your computer? Can't find that awesome devotion you wrote? Can't decide where you should put mama's favorite apple pie recipe? This class may be just your speed. Learn the basics of file management in this digital age!

Manuscript Makeover

with Holly Miller

The manuscript makeover is aimed at writers who are working on or have completed a book-length manuscript and are ready for serious feedback.

Requirements:

At least ONE MONTH in advance of the conference, send to the following address \$35 (check or money order made payable to Holly Miller) and the opening 20 pages of your book plus a synopsis. Enclose a cover letter stating that the manuscript is for the St. Davids conference.

Holly Miller
807 Forest Drive
Anderson, IN 46011

Holly will do a thorough editing of the pages and will critique the synopsis. During the conference in June, each writer will have a half-hour private consultation with her, and she will go over the manuscript line by line with you. In addition, she will meet with the group for a one-hour session at 2:30 on Thursday afternoon to discuss common strengths and weaknesses.

Openings are limited, so this service is offered on a first-come, first-served basis. Manuscripts that do not include a check--or which are from persons not registered for the conference--will be discarded.

Writers' Colony

The writers' colony is aimed at more experienced authors who just need some time--away from the demands of everyday life--to concentrate on a manuscript. As these conferees won't be attending classes, they will only be charged room and board plus \$50. There are some requirements, however.

Persons wanting to participate will be known as conference "fellows." A "fellow" must have attended the conference as a full-time conferee at least once in the past three years. He or she must have a proven track record with significant publishing accomplishments.

"Fellows" are not permitted to attend daytime classes, but will receive all meals, and may attend the evening activities. Each "fellow" will be asked to lead a critique group and/or one mentoring meal, during which he or she will host a roundtable discussion. Participation will be limited to 3 to 5 writers. There is no scholarship help available for this program.

To apply, submit a 6 to 8 page manuscript and a list of your writing credits, participation in critique groups, conferences attended, and anything that would highlight your commitment to the writing craft. DO NOT put your name on the manuscript. Put your name and contact information on a cover sheet, along with the name of your manuscript, and mail to :

Lora Zill
Writer's Colony Application
P.O. Box 149
Conneaut Lake, PA 16316

The postmark deadline for applications is April 30, 2011. If you have any questions, please click on [Lora Zill](#) to e-mail our conference director, or call 814-382-8667.