

Washington Writer



The nation's largest regional writers organization
Supporting capital-area writers since 1975

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Support 2003 Washington Writers Conference

Support WIW and the 2003 Washington Writers Conference by making a financial contribution, purchasing an ad in the conference program or renting a resource table at the conference.

Contributions: Individuals who make contributions to support the conference will be listed in the conference program. Listings for each contribution level will include:

- \$25-\$49: the supporter's name.
- \$50-\$74: the supporter's name and one line of up to 40 characters describing the supporter's business.
- \$75 or more: the supporter's name, a one-line business description and an e-mail and/or Web site address.

Please note that contributions to WIW are not tax deductible as charitable gifts. However, they may be deductible as business expenses.

Ads: Camera-ready display ads may be purchased in the conference program. The ad rates follow. Contact WIW (see below) for specific dimensions for camera-ready ads.

- \$100 for one-sixth page
- \$150 for one-third page
- \$200 for half page
- \$300 for full page

Tables: Resource tables will be available throughout the Washington Writers Conference for individuals and organizations that want to have representatives at the conference or to display their resources. Rates for the tables follow:

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SEE CONFERENCE INSERT

24th Annual Washington Writers Conference Offers Rich Tradition with New Twists

By Perry Frank, Washington Writers Conference Planning Committee Chair; WIW Secretary

The 2003 Washington Writers Conference scheduled for **May 16-17**, at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., will mix popular staples with new features, promising a program with appeal for established writers and those just beginning their careers. As in the past, the conference offers writers opportunities to interact with agents throughout the event, as well as to sign up for an agent breakfast or one-on-one pitch session (see conference insert).

See **CONFERENCE** page 4

May WIW Conference Features Washington Post 'Book World' Editor Marie Arana

By Joseph Barbato, WIW Board Member

"Every book review editor in the country should have to write a novel," says **Marie Arana**, editor in chief of the *Washington Post* "Book World," who will be the keynote speaker at the 2003 Washington Writers Conference, **Friday, May 16**. "You really don't know the perils and pleasures of writing a book until you get your hands dirty and do it yourself."

Arana, whose memoir, *American Chica: Two Worlds, One Childhood* (Dial Press, 2001), was nominated for a National Book Award, is now working on her own first novel. "I have been so humbled by the process — I have such respect for



See **MARIE ARANA** page 5

Marie Arana

New WIW Health Insurance Rates Effective May 1

By Amy Swauger, WIW Executive Director

WIW's group health insurance benefits will continue with coverage available from Optimum Choice Inc. for **May 1, 2003-April 30, 2004**. Comprehensive dental coverage is available through United Concordia.

WIW offers group insurance in conjunction with the Cultural Alliance of Greater Washington (CAGW). Kaiser Permanente will no longer offer group coverage to WIW or CAGW members after **April 30**. Members currently enrolled in the Kaiser group plan have the option to convert to individual coverage with Kaiser effective **May 1**, or to apply for coverage through Optimum Choice.

Members already participating in any of the plans offered by WIW have been mailed specific information about the upcoming coverage year. To ensure continuing coverage in the Optimum Choice group plan, or to become a new program participant, members must submit their enrollment forms to WIW's benefits administrator, Benefits Plus Inc., by **Tuesday, April 15**. Members converting to individual coverage through Kaiser must submit their enrollment forms directly to Kaiser by **Tuesday, April 15**.

See **HEALTH INSURANCE** page 6

Time to Look at a Writer's House Again

By Ken Reigner, WIW President

WIW may become homeless sometime by the end of next year, so the time has come for us to consider seriously a permanent home for our organization — a WIW Washington Writers' House.

WIW last visited this issue in 1985 and 1986, under the leadership of former WIW President **Mark Perry**. At that time, a WIW Housing Committee and the boards of directors of WIW and the WIW Legal and Educational Fund examined the possibility of buying a permanent home, rather than continuing to rent office space.

In 1986, WIW lost its office space in the Colorado Building in downtown Washington, D.C., due to building renovation. WIW leaders explored buying a writers' house then before moving to our present office in the Woodward Building at the corner of 15th and H Streets N.W. in D.C., about two blocks from the White House.

WIW's current office lease expires at the end of January 2004, when the building management may inform us that we must vacate our offices by the end of June 2004. The management is considering completely refurbishing the building, much like nearby office buildings.

WIW could not afford the renovated office space, where rent would likely triple. WIW now pays \$1,987 per month, or \$23,844 per year. If next year's rent, which is pegged to the Consumer Price Index, increases at the same rate as the 3 percent increase from last year, we could expect to pay \$2,047 per month, or \$24,559 per year.

So we are now pouring approximately \$24,000 in rent down the drain each year. Next to salaries, rent is the largest single item in the WIW budget. If we were to buy a building, those same funds could go toward paying off a mortgage and building equity in our investment.

With the current economic downturn and the state of the commercial real estate market in downtown Washington, the WIW board had hoped that the management would postpone indefinitely its plans to refurbish the Woodward Building.

Recently, however, the management has sent inspectors and engineers throughout the building to examine its structure in preparation for the building's renovation. So it appears that we cannot safely assume that we may be able to stay in our present office quarters indefinitely.

Besides saving us from throwing away rental payments, a Washington Writers'

House could provide many benefits to WIW members, including these:

- Space for additional staff, including a full-time Job Bank coordinator, which would improve member programs.
- Meeting space to hold regularly scheduled professional development events, such as workshops, seminars and conferences. Currently, we must rent such space.

With WIW's limited budget, it has proven very difficult to locate affordable meeting venues that are handicapped-accessible, centrally located and near Metro public transportation. Hosting regularly scheduled workshops and

seminars in a writers' house would also help provide a higher profile for WIW in the local and national writers' community.

- Writers' work

space. We could provide offices where WIW members and out-of-town writers and researchers could work for a modest fee. Such offices would be fully equipped with telecommunications facilities.

- Room to expand the WIW library with current publications to become a more valuable, up-to-date resource for WIW members.

- Office space for the WIW Legal and Educational Fund.

In the June 2001 elections, WIW members voted resoundingly to keep our own office and to continue running the organization ourselves, rather than turning the organization over to an outside association management firm.

We have gone a long way toward putting WIW back on a sound financial footing. But the job is not yet done. The Washington Writers' House proposal dovetails with the need to increase WIW's reserve fund. Presently, WIW only has about two months' of reserves in a money market fund, placing us in an uncertain financial condition.

It is time for WIW leaders and members alike to focus seriously on rebuilding our reserves and to make plans for acquiring a permanent home for our organization.

Funding this project and rebuilding our reserves would involve some financial investment and sacrifice by all WIW members, but it would be well worth it. I would like to know what other WIW members think of this idea.

Please send your thoughts about this Washington Writers' House proposal to: WIW Washington Writers House, 733 15th St. N.W., Suite 220, Washington, DC 20005, fax (202) 638-7800 or writershouse@washwriter.org. I look forward to hearing from you.

It is time for WIW ... to make plans for acquiring a permanent home.

Washington Writer

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Submissions: Send to newsletter@washwriter.org.

Deadline: 1st of the month for the following month.

WIW members may subscribe to an electronic version of the *Washington Writer*. To subscribe, go to www.washwriter.org/resources/membersonly/emailnews.htm.

WIW is a professional association for writers, editors and journalists in the Washington, D.C., area. Membership: Individual — *New:* 1 year, \$125; 2 years, \$235; *Renewing:* 1 year, \$100; 2 years, \$185; Dual — *New:* 1 year, \$205; 2 years, \$380; *Renewing:* 1 year, \$165; 2 years, \$300; Seniors (65 or older) and full-time students — 1 year, \$70; 2 years, \$125; Job Bank subscriptions (members only) — 6 months, \$72; 12 months, \$120.

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WIW-L Listserv e-mail list: To subscribe, go to www.washwriter.org/listserv/lists.htm. To post a message, send e-mail to wiw-l@cmich.edu.

Revving Up Your Research: An Overview of Databases at the Library of Congress

By Lois Berkowitz, WIW Board Member; Pubspeaks Chair

Good writing is based on good research. At our **Tuesday, April 15**, Pubspeak, **Tom Mann**, reference librarian in the Main Reading Room at the Library of Congress, will provide an overview of the Library of Congress' hundreds of databases and will field questions on the library's resources and services. Mann's talk on research was very well received at last year's Washington Writers Conference. He is the author of *The Oxford Guide to Library Research* and is well known for his broad range of research knowledge and skills. He has been at the Library of Congress for 21 years.

Sharpen your research knowledge **April 15**, at the Irish Channel Pub (in the Red Roof Inn), 500 H St. N.W., Washington, D.C., a short walk from the Gallery Place/Chinatown Metro stop. Order food and drink from 6:30 p.m. Mann will speak at 7 p.m. Free to WIW members; \$10 for nonmembers. Reservations are required. Call the WIW office at (202) 737-9500, fax (202) 638-7800 or e-mail rsvp@washwriter.org. Be sure to state the event to which you are responding. Credit card payments should include the cardholder's name, card number, expiration date and ZIP code for the billing address.



Linda Wolfe Keister

Passion and Order Make Good Editors

By Elizabeth Joyce, WIW Member

Successful editors must have a "passionate, intimate relationship with language" and an "analytical mind that demands order." Freelancers so equipped may best profit from the "10 Steps to a Successful Freelance Editing Career" presented by **Linda Wolfe Keister** at WIW's Feb. 26 workshop.

For Keister, a freelance editor/writer and former George Washington University instructor, successful editing stems from a complex array of interrelated interests and skills. The following steps summarize her contract-winning approach:

- "Learn all you can about the publication process and how that process drives the level of editing: developmental editing, substantive editing, copyediting, line editing, editorial proofreading and proofreading." Your responsibility, said Keister, is to do your job at the appropriate level and then let the document go.
- "Develop your skills, knowledge base and level of familiarity with all things editorial: spelling, grammar, usage, syntax, layout, fonts, spacing and presentation. Learn the finer points of language. Recognize red flags. Respond to your intuition and sense of logic." Working in editing pools on large projects, Keister suggested, is a great way to learn red flags and improve your own skills.
- "Look it up. Be able to support the changes you make. Collect and become familiar with dictionaries, language resources and style guides."
- "Read. Read about editing. Read about writing. Read all you can. Keep the printed page or screen in front of your eyes." Editors who are too tired to read literature and periodicals in their spare time, said Keister, seldom make the best editors.
- "Become an expert with editorial tools. Know standard proofreading and editing marks, and write neatly. Learn the lingo of the trade. Learn how to edit online using your word processor's tracking feature. Know how to mix hard copy editing with word processing searches."
- "Use the Internet wisely to verify facts and spelling. Use it to define and answer queries."
- "Work smart. Have a plan or approach before you begin editing. Develop a list of tasks and a project-specific or client-specific style sheet. Record the history of the project."
- "Establish a good relationship with the author or client. Respect the author's work, be part of the author's team and make the author's work shine." Do not try to become the author by excessively revising his or her work.
- "Develop your business from several angles. Don't put all your eggs in one basket." Diversify your work sources by joining job banks, signing up with temporary agencies, going back to former employers, responding to newspaper ads for freelance editors or networking in editing pools.
- "Be prepared with a good contract or letter of agreement and a fee schedule." Working (if possible) with examples from the client's project, provide samples of the levels of editing to help clients or authors "understand their expectations and yours. Be able to identify rates of pay, hourly vs. flat, pages per hour."

By following these steps, Keister concluded, you may not only make a living as a freelancer but also support the "writing habit" that motivates all good editors.

Elizabeth Joyce is a Silver Spring, Md., writer/editor specializing in health, aging and women's issues.

Learn Techniques of Effective Negotiating At April 28 Workshop

By Beryl Lieff Benderly, WIW Vice President; Chair, Professional Development Committee

April 28 at 7:15 pm. Negotiating to Win. If, like many writers, you hate negotiating with clients, you will love this workshop. Attorney and author **Jim Thomas** will discuss techniques that can help you increase your income and reduce your stress by getting the best deal. WIW member **Tom Hollon** reports that in the year after he began applying Thomas' methods, his earnings rose \$15,000 for the same amount of work. Come find out how Thomas' approach can work for you, too.

June 24 at 7:15 pm. Getting Into Public Relations. Have you ever thought about getting into the lucrative and challenging public relations business, but not known where to start? Come to WIW's June workshop and learn how to get started in the business, what skills you will need, what to expect as an associate at a PR firm and as a PR freelancer, whether and how to start your own PR firm, how to solicit business and more. Moderated by WIW Board Member and longtime public affairs officer **John Blair**, the event features **Steven Grant**, vice president at Ogilvy; **Scott Punk**, a contractor with Hill and Knowlton; and freelancer **Amy Bunch**.

The **April** workshop will take place at Wisconsin Avenue Baptist Church, centrally located on Nebraska Avenue N.W., just east of Wisconsin Avenue (at Tenley Circle) in D.C., near the Tenleytown stop on the Red Line. Exit the Metro on the east side of Wisconsin Avenue and walk half a block away from Wisconsin. Take the first right on Fort Drive N.W. The sign may be missing. The church is the red-brick building across Nebraska Avenue. Parking is available in the church's lot (enter the alley next to the church on Alton Place) and on the street.

The **June** session will take place at Adas Israel Congregation, half a block north of the Cleveland Park stop on the Metro Red Line. It is wheelchair accessible and has its own parking lot.

Admission is free for WIW members and \$20 for nonmembers. Reservations are required. To reserve call (202) 737-9500 or e-mail rsvp@washwriter.org. Please mention the event for which you are responding and whether you are a WIW member.

Boost Your Career at WIW's May 2003 Writers Conference

May 1 Deadline for Writers Conference Scholarships

Partial scholarships for writers to attend the **May 16–17** Washington Writers Conference are available from WIW. The Halberstam scholarships honor **Dr. Michael Halberstam**, a WIW founding member who was killed during a robbery.

To apply, send a one-page typed letter describing why you want to attend the conference to WIW Halberstam Scholarships, 733 15th St. N.W., Suite 220, Washington, DC 20005, e-mail halberstam@washwriter.org or fax (202) 638-7800. Deadline for submissions is **May 1**.

Volunteer Opportunities

WIW members who volunteer to work on the Washington Writers Conference may earn discounts of up to 25 percent on the conference registration fee. Volunteer needs include the following advance and onsite activities:

- Selling conference program ads and seeking in-kind and financial donations to support the conference.
- Distributing conference promotional materials to area bookstores and libraries.
- Assembling registration packets.
- Assisting with one-on-one agent meetings during the conference.
- Distributing workshop handouts.

To volunteer, e-mail writersconference@washwriter.org or call the WIW office at (202) 737-9500. If you have a preference, indicate how you would like to help with the conference.

CONFERENCE SUPPORT

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- \$150 to rent a full table and have a representative present throughout the conference
- \$75 to rent half a table and have a representative present throughout the conference
- \$25 to display materials without any representative present

Contact WIW by **Friday, May 2**, to make a contribution, purchase an ad or reserve table space. Mail checks to WIW, Washington Writers Conference, 733 15th St. N.W., Suite 220, Washington, DC 20005. To use a credit card, call (202) 737-9500 or fax (202) 638-7800. Credit card payments must include the cardholder's name, card number, expiration date and the ZIP code for the billing address.

CONFERENCE

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This year, the White House News Photographers' Association (WHNPA) and the National Press Club are partnering with WIW on the event. WHNPA will present a preconference session on photojournalism and display prize-winning photos from the association's "Eyes of History" contest throughout the conference.

Presentation of the first annual Washington Writing Prizes will be a conference highlight. The winners will be announced during the opening plenary session on Friday evening. Friday night also features book signings and a reception, as well as keynote speaker **Marie Arana**, editor in chief of the *Washington Post* "Book World." Arana, whose memoir, *American Chica: Two Worlds, One Childhood*, was nominated for the National Book Award, reflects the multicultural environment of the 21st century. Currently on leave from "Book World" to complete her first novel, she models the multi-tasking, multi-career style of today's writer.

John F. Baker, editorial director of *Publishers Weekly*, will offer his perspective on the publishing industry as Saturday morning's plenary speaker. At Saturday's luncheon, **Howard Means**, former *Washingtonian* magazine senior editor, business guru, novelist and biographer, will talk about local markets and his own career transitions.

The importance of retooling, keeping abreast of new markets and technology, and preparing moves in and out of the freelance world in a difficult economy is evident in the preconference workshops planned for **Friday, May 16**.

Our Saturday program features a four-track design that groups sessions under the broad categories of Fiction, Nonfiction, Business and Innovation. Each track includes sessions on practice and marketing. Participants may attend all the sessions in one track or mix and match throughout the day.

Attendees may notice more writers on panels than in the past, a conscious attempt to balance the wisdom of editors and agents with the front-line experience of freelancers. Those who are keen on audience participation will want to check out our "Storytelling" session, which calls for improvisation, and "Open Mike Poetry," which will include a discussion of poetry markets as well as readings.

For other conference highlights, please review the conference insert in this month's newsletter or visit www.washwriter.org.

Register by **May 1** to take advantage of the advance registration rates. This year's conference will be the best ever.

Win a Free Membership and Conference Registration

Friday, May 9, is the deadline for WIW's Member-Get-a-Member Contest. The person who recruits the most new members will win a year's free membership and free Washington Writers Conference registration. Second prize is free conference registration, and third prize is a year's free membership. The names of all participating WIW members will be entered in a drawing to win a year's free subscription to the WIW Job Bank.

New members may pay their dues by credit card. Call the WIW office at (202) 737-9500 or send a fax to (202) 638-7800. Faxes should include the new member's name, mailing address, phone number and e-mail address, along with the name of the WIW member recruiter.

New members may also complete and fax or mail the form on page 7 to WIW. Payment by check payable to WIW should be sent to WIW, 733 15th St. N.W., Suite 220, Washington, DC 20005. **Payment must be received by 5 p.m., Friday, May 9.**

WIW Awards To Honor Member Accomplishments

WIW members will be honored for their work on behalf of the organization when the 2003 **Philip M. Stern** and Small Group leader awards are presented on **Friday, May 16**, during the opening session of the Washington Writers Conference, held at the National Press Club.

The Stern Award, named for a founding member and benefactor of WIW, is presented to a WIW member who has made an outstanding contribution to the writing community. A candidate for the award must not have been part of the judging panel or president of WIW within the past three years.

The Small Group Leader of the Year Award recognizes the WIW Small Group leader who has done the most to advance WIW's ideals through the Small Groups.

Nominations for both awards are due by **May 1**. To make a nomination, send a summary of the candidate's accomplishments to WIW, 755 15th St. N.W., Suite 220, Washington, DC 20005 or fax (202) 638-7800. Nominations may be e-mailed to sternaward@washwriter.org or smallgroupaward@washwriter.org.

Jack Evans Introduces Measure To Repeal D.C. Master Business License

By Amy Swauger, WIW Executive Director

Calling on the D.C. City Council to “end it, not mend it,” D.C. City Council Member **Jack Evans** introduced the Master Business License Repeal Act of 2003 on March 4.

Evans cited numerous complaints from his Ward 2 constituents and others about the new requirement for businesses operating in the District of Columbia. It had been rumored that Evans was considering introducing a proposal for a more streamlined requirement, but in the end he opted to try to eliminate the current law entirely.

“I am not confident we can implement this program in a way that truly makes it a convenient tool for businesses and citizens to simplify their interaction with government regulatory bodies,” Evans wrote in his weekly newsletter. “For this reason, I believe we should repeal the law entirely and convene a working group to revamp the program from the ground up, if at all.”

The bill was referred to the Committee on Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, which could take action on the proposal before the current **May 30, 2003**, master business license filing deadline. The committee, which is chaired by Council Member **Sharon**

Ambrose, could also extend the filing deadline, pending action on the Evans bill.

WIW President **Ken Reigner** testified before Ambrose’s committee in October regarding WIW’s concerns with the license requirement. In February, a WIW delegation took part in a focus group that the D.C. Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs held concerning the license.

Nine of the 13 City Council members cosponsored the legislation, indicating strong support for ending the current licensing requirement. In addition to Evans, cosponsors include **Sandy Allen** (Ward 8), **David Catania** (At-large), **Kevin Chavous** (Ward 7), **Adrian Fenty** (Ward 4), **Jim Graham** (Ward 1), **Vincent Orange** (Ward 5), **Kathleen Patterson** (Ward 3) and **Carol Schwartz** (At-large).

WIW members should contact Evans and the bill’s cosponsors, thank them for their support of the Master Business License Repeal Act (bill number B15-0178) and urge them to seek quick action on the measure by the Committee on Consumer and Regulatory Affairs. Write to all members of the D.C. City Council at 1350 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20004, or e-mail dccouncilmembers@dccouncil.washington.dc.us.

MARIE ARANA

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anyone who writes any kind of fiction,” she says.

At the May conference, she will discuss her experiences in the solitary world of a writer after a career spent in New York trade publishing and, for the past 10 years, as an editor at “Book World.”

“I call my background the great triangulation — or maybe it should be the three rings of hell,” she says with a smile. “When I worked in book publishing at Simon and Schuster and Harcourt Brace, I thought I knew everything about books.... I worked on about 10 books a year. Then I came to ‘Book World’ and got a completely new view. I was forced to look at so many books. It was a great revelation.”

Now, as a writer, Arana is not the editor/publisher of a book, and not the critic, but the creator: “It’s a totally separate thing, and my experience in publishing and on the book review don’t help,” says Arana. “When you are writing a novel you have nothing but dead air in front of you.”

Arana’s new anthology, *The Writing Life: Writers on How They Think and Work* (Public Affairs), a 440-page paperback collection of more than 50 essays by leading writers of fiction and nonfiction, is due out May 13. Selected from a series that Arana initiated upon

joining “Book World” in 1993, the book includes pieces by writers as varied as **Julia Alvarez**, **Patricia Cornwell**, **Umberto Eco**, **George Pelecanos**, **Jane Smiley** and **E.O. Wilson**. *Kirkus Reviews* has called the anthology an “addictive” collection of “fat, juicy plums” from the long-running “Writing Life” column.

In her introduction to the book, Arana offers a peek at the take on writers she will express at the Washington Writers Conference. Writers, she says, are “individuals who for one reason or another choose to work in solitude, struggling against oblivion, spilling their hearts and minds onto endlessly blank pages, often for meager recognition and pay.”

As recounted in *American Chica*, Arana grew up in the United States and Peru, the third child of an American woman and an MIT-educated Peruvian father. She is fluent in six languages and holds degrees in Russian, Mandarin studies and linguistics from Northwestern, Yale and the University of Hong Kong, respectively. She lives with her husband, **Jonathan Yardley**, in Washington, D.C.

Joseph Barbato, co-author of Writing for a Good Cause, is president of Barbato Associates, a consulting firm in Alexandria, Va. He is a contributing editor at Publishers Weekly and reviews books for USA Today and other publications.

Gail Ross Leads April 22 Law for Writers Workshop

By Amy Swauger, WIW Executive Director

WIW and Washington Area Lawyers for the Arts (WALA) will cosponsor the second annual “Law for Writers” workshop **Tuesday, April 22**, as part of WALA’s “Creative Control” series for artists.

The workshop will feature **Gail Ross**, a partner in the law firm of Lichtman, Trister, Singer and Ross, who is a publishing consultant, literary agent and co-author of *The Writer’s Lawyer*. Ross will explain how the law applies to each step of the writing process, from creation of an idea to publication, distribution and touring with a best seller.

The event will take place from **6:30–8:30 p.m.** at the Charles Sumner School, 1201 17th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. The closest Metro stop is Farragut North on the Red Line. The fee is \$15 for WIW and WALA members, \$20 for nonmembers and \$5 for students.

To register, contact **Maggie Ascher**, WALA director of education and marketing, at (202) 429-0960, ext. 23, or educationdepartment@thewala.org.

Classified Ads

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Writing Consultant. University Writing Prof/Director will critique all genres — access to agents — 47 clients published. (410) 516-0405.

See www.washwriter.org for ad rates and more D.C.-area writers’ resources, literary events and advice.

Knowledge and Persistence Help Get Contracts

By Carolyn Harris, WIW Member

Dale Susan Brown, author of four non-fiction books for people with disabilities and a poetry collection, spoke at the March 12 "How to Get a Contract for a Nonfiction Book Without an Agent" Pubspeak. She shared techniques she has used to get her books published, which are best suited for writers whose work is for niche markets and of interest to smaller publishers.

Techniques include:

- Find your mission and be committed. Read everything in your field. Frequent bookstores and Web sites. Attend conferences and exhibits. Meet people. Talk to publishers. Pay attention to credits in books; authors thank their agents and other helpful people. Follow the marketplace. Read *amazon.com* and other Internet reviews. Read junk mail. Get on mailing lists. Know what is out of date. Brown repeats the aphorism: "Luck is when preparation meets opportunity."

- Turn yourself into a recognized expert. Develop a platform. Make speeches. Form self-help groups. (Brown helped people in 43 states form such groups.) Learn what others find attractive, funny and effective. Build mailing lists. Write sincere letters of appreciation to authors and experts you respect. Get feature stories written about you, but develop a thick skin.

- Write articles. Write book reviews. Polish your craft. Know what will be in your book proposal. Several years ago, Brown asked WIW to assign her a mentor. Before they met, she had completed a three-page prospectus. By the time she called her publisher, she had a cover letter, outline and sample chapter ready. Another tip: Brown loves research so much that, on one book, she wrote the first draft before researching to make sure she researched only what was needed. She also warns: Get the book contract straight before you start writing the book.

- Join writers' groups. Three in the area include WIW, the National Writers Union and the Writer's Center.

- Market your book. Brown signed books at 14 local bookstores, first calling the community relations managers of each store, providing whatever they required (photo, one page of book, etc.). Send letters,



Brown/Bolles Title

blocked off weekends for the book, leaving chores and social life for weekdays. She took vacations in blocks to work on the book. She set goals for each work period and frequently took two- to three-minute exercise breaks instead of walking around the block or getting a snack.

Brown's books include *Job-Hunting Tips for the So-Called Handicapped* (with **Richard Bolles**); *Learning a Living: A Guide to Planning Your Career*; *Finding a Job for People with Learning Disabilities, Attention Deficit Disorder and Dyslexia*; *Learning Disabilities and Employment* (with **Paul Gerber**); *Steps to Independence for Those with Learning Disabilities*; and *I Know I Can Climb the Mountain*.

Member Carolyn Harris retired from speech writing and has started screen writing.

but do not spam; be personal.

- Discipline yourself. Before starting her last book, Brown rearranged her office, giving the book priority. She listed all excuses for not working and wrote a positive response for each. She

HEALTH INSURANCE

From page 1

Two types of coverage are available through Optimum Choice: HMO (health maintenance organization) and POS (point of service). The new monthly premiums are:

- **Optimum Choice HMO**: \$485, single; \$925, individual plus one person; and \$1,230, family.

- **Optimum Choice POS**: \$564, single; \$1,078, individual plus one person; and \$1,435, family.

- **United Concordia Group Dental**: \$18, single; \$30, parent and child; \$32, two parties; and \$46, family.

Both the Optimum Choice and United Concordia plans are available to all WIW members without any medical underwriting or screening for preexisting conditions. Only members who are already enrolled with Kaiser are eligible for conversion to individual coverage without medical underwriting. Kaiser members must convert before **May 1**.

Effective with the **June 2003** premiums, WIW members should send their insurance payments directly to WIW, 733 15th St. N.W., Suite 220, Washington, DC 20005. Benefits Plus will continue to handle new enrollments, termination of coverage and questions about claims and coverage.

For more information about changes in WIW's health insurance program or to find out how to enroll as a new participant, contact **Cindy Blair** at Benefits Plus, (301) 840-6624, ext. 6, or insurance@washwriter.org.

Post-Holiday Party Shines Through Snow

By Pamela Martin, WIW Intern, American University

More than 80 people braved the winter weather to attend this year's WIW Post-Holiday Party at the National Press Club's First Amendment Lounge Friday, Feb. 28. Guests enjoyed great food, great company and great door prizes.

The event provided an opportunity for members to network. "It's good to see the faces behind the e-mail addresses," said WIW President **Ken Reigner**, who joked with others about requiring people to put their e-mail addresses on their nametags. New student member **Derek Hoffmann** said, "I've already exchanged information with a couple of people."

Jennifer Niven, who has been meticulously editing her sequel to 2000's acclaimed *The Ice Master: The Doomed 1913 Voyage of the Karluk and the Miraculous Rescue of Her Survivors*, said it was "so much nicer to get out and meet the people." Her next book, *Ada Blackjack: A True Story of Survival in the Arctic*, will be released through Hyperion Books in November.

A lucky door prize winner received a copy of Niven's *The Ice Master*.

Other prizes included WIW member **Storm Cunningham's** *The Restoration Economy: The Greatest New Growth Frontier: Immediate and Emerging Opportunities for Businesses, Communities and Investors*, the first book to explore restorative development; and WIW Vice President **Beryl Lief Brenderly's** *Her Works Praise Her: A History of Jewish Women in America from Colonial Times to the Present*, the first social history of Jewish women in America of this scope.

Though attendee **Bill Elder** missed winning one of the door prizes by just one number, he said the party was "a great idea" and "a nice way to end a week."

Other attendees included WIW Secretary **Perry Frank**, Treasurer **Susan Kuhn** and Board Members **John Blair**, **Barbara Pruet**, **Lois Berkowitz**, **Joe Barbato** and **Al Portner**. Social Events Committee members **Sharyn** and **Mel Greberman** and **Karen O'Keefe**, who organized the event along with Blair and Portner, attended the party. Members of the Washington Writers Conference Planning Committee **Bob Greene**, **Mark Laster** and former WIW Executive Director **Judy Saks** all enjoyed the party as well.

Make Payments Online Via the WIW Web Site

Pay for your WIW membership, Job Bank subscription, Washington Writers Conference registration and other services and activities online at www.washwriter.org. The site now has secure pages where you may enter your credit card information.

Please note that WIW's e-mail is not secure, and credit card information should never be e-mailed.

Job Bank Success

By Ann Cochran, WIW Board Member;
Job Bank Committee Co-chair

Randi Henderson is a full-time freelancer, specializing in medical and health topics. Her freelance career began when she accepted a buyout from the *Baltimore Sun* after 20 years as a reporter. In her first months of trying to establish herself on her own, she said, "I was beginning to doubt that there were many areas into which my reporting skills could be translated.

"I don't remember who told me about WIW, but I joined and started looking for work on the Job Bank. Towards the end of that year, I responded to a posting for a government contracting position, to cover meetings and write reports. It was grueling work, involving a full week of day-long meeting coverage, writing overnight drafts and extensive post-meeting polishing and follow-up. No problem for a newspaper reporter who had churned out her share of daily stories."

That contract is ongoing, although it has bounced around to several different contractors. "There were years when I did not have any involvement with it, but intermittently the calls would come: 'Can you work on this project again?'" reports Henderson. "The work is challenging, rewarding and very well-paying."

Freelancing did not turn out to be what Henderson expected. She thought she would be writing books and magazine articles, but better opportunities came from other places such as federal contracting. She is busy, but insists, "It is tremendously reassuring to know the Job Bank is there if I am ever looking to fill my calendar."

WIW Job Bank subscribers receive regular listings of freelance, temporary, part-time and full-time job opportunities as soon as WIW receives them from employers. Subscriptions are only \$72 for six months or \$120 for one year. Just one job can more than pay for your subscription.

Here are samples of what you missed last month if you did not subscribe:

Freelance jobs

- Medical foundation grant writer, \$25/hour
- Agribusiness writer, \$2,000–\$4,000
- Writer on international conflict resolution, \$200/article
- Writer on housing and community development, \$40/hour
- Copy manager, advertising, \$40/hour

Part-time jobs

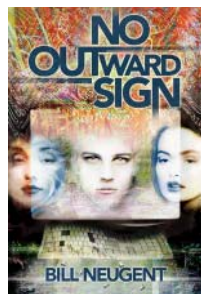
- Health writer, \$30/hour

Full-time jobs

- Associate editor, \$43,000–\$61,000
- Proofreader, \$35,000–\$40,000

For details call (202) 737-9500 or write to jobbank@washwriter.org.

Bylines



No Outward Sign

Bill Neugent has published his first novel, *No Outward Sign*, which deals with cyberterrorism and conflict between the United States and Iraq. The novel was selected for distribution to participants in a government security conference, to raise awareness of national cyber vulnerabilities. Neugent is scheduled to give keynote speeches on cyberterrorism and to do book signings at Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque and the Department of Veterans Affairs cybersecurity conference in San Francisco.

Mary Carpenter's first book, *Rescued by a Cow and a Squeeze*, is a children's biography of **Temple Grandin**, who was diagnosed with autism as a child. Grandin overcame severe learning disabilities to become a successful professor of animal science and the country's foremost designer of humane facilities for livestock. Carpenter's 11-year-old son, **Oliver Zagorin**, drew a cow for the cover.

Family Circle published **Kathryn McKay's** personal essay, "Telemarketers are People Too," in its January 2003 issue.

Phil Harvey's short story, "Curaçao," has won the *Antietam Review's* Summer Literary Contest. His story, "Roberta's River," has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize by *Phantasmagoria*. In addition, a third story will appear soon in the *Potomac Review*.



Phil Harvey

Wonderful West Virginia magazine published **Bruce Sloane's** article, "Dolly Sods and the Allegheny Front," in its March 2003 issue.

The National Association of Science Writers (NASW) presented **Beryl Loeff Benderly** its second annual Diane McGurgan Award for outstanding service. This endowed award consists of a beautiful certificate and a \$500 prize. Benderly's accomplishment was bringing NASW



Beryl Loeff Benderly

into the Authors Coalition of America, which consists of 17 national creators organizations and distributes funds from overseas reproduction of American writers' work. Benderly also serves on the NASW board.

WIW Member-Get-a-Member Contest/Membership Application

Membership Rates:

Individual — *New*: 1 year, \$125; 2 years, \$235; *Renewing*: 1 year, \$100; 2 years, \$185; **Dual** — *New*: 1 year, \$205; 2 years, \$380; *Renewing*: 1 year, \$165; 2 years, \$300; **Seniors and full-time students** — 1 year, \$70; 2 years, \$125; **Job Bank** subscription (*members only*) — 6 months, \$72; 12 months, \$120. Make checks payable to **WIW**.

Please mail application to:

**WIW, 733 15th St. N.W., Suite 220
Washington, DC 20005.**

Or fax credit card payments to WIW at (202) 638-7800 or call (202) 737-9500.

Name of WIW member recruiter _____

Name of new member _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone: *Day* _____ *Eve.* _____ *Mobile* _____

Fax _____ E-mail Address _____

Amount enclosed or to be charged \$ _____

Pay by ☐ check ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover ☐ American Express

Card number # _____ Expiration date _____/_____/_____

Signature (for credit card payments only) _____

BOARD REPORT

By Perry Frank, WIW Secretary

The WIW board of directors moved decisively at its March 6 meeting to close a projected budget gap of nearly \$9,500 for the 2002–2003 fiscal year ending **June 30**. The gap is largely due to less-than-anticipated income from memberships and the WIW Job Bank during the last eight months.

To increase revenue, WIW will mount a membership drive that includes incentives for bringing in new members. The nonmember fee for workshops will rise from \$10 to \$20; the higher cost is still within the means of most, but also encourages guests to join WIW and take advantage of the many events that are free to members. Finally, WIW is seeking sponsors for the Washington Writers Conference. A mailing to associate groups and vendors is expected to generate \$5,000 in additional income. WIW is also tightening up by postponing a planned Advisory Board dinner until the 2003–2004 fiscal year and cutting some printing and consulting costs.

Board Member **Al Portner** and Executive Director **Amy Swauger** reported on the health insurance briefing held March 3. In addition to reviewing the changes in coverage, the board discussed the possibility of teaming with the National Writers Union (NWU) on insurance and other programs. An NWU representative was invited to the April board meeting. (See page 1.)

Swauger also reported on another matter of member concern, the requirement for independent writers to obtain a master business license in the District of Columbia. On March 4, D.C. City Councilman Jack Evans introduced legislation to repeal the existing requirement. (See page 5.)

Board members discussed recent WIW-L Listserv e-mail discussion list postings regarding the WIW Job Bank. The board explored ways to increase outreach to potential employers and to involve member volunteers. Job Bank Committee Chair **Deborah Wunderman** plans three mailings to employers this spring. She will present a long-range plan for increasing the quantity and quality of listings as part of the budget development process for fiscal year 2003–2004.

Planning for the Washington Writers Conference is in full swing. (See page 1 and the conference insert.) **Marie Arana**, editor of the *Washington Post* "Book World," will give the keynote address the evening of **Friday, May 16**. Sessions will cover aspects of fiction, nonfiction and the business of writing. At least 15 agents will be on hand for the event. (See agent list in the insert.)

For the first time, WIW will award writing prizes in four categories. Vice President and Prize Committee Chair **Beryl Lief Benderly** reported that the winners have been informed and will be announced at the conference.

Swauger noted two additions to the April events calendar. The **April 15** Pubspeak will feature **Tom Mann** discussing research resources at the Library of Congress. (See page 3.) WIW and Washington Area Lawyers for the Arts will cosponsor an **April 22** workshop on legal issues for writers. (See page 5.)

Also present were President **Ken Reigner**; Secretary **Perry Frank**; Board Members **Joe Barbato**, **Lois Berkowitz**, **John Blair**, **Chris Gearon**, **Barbara Pruett** and **Jackie Washington**; and WIW member **Robert Fraser**.

WIW Welcomes New Members

Renee Adler, Pamela Alexander, Blake Ashburner, Roger Atwood, Andrew Bartlett, Geoffrey Chisholm, Kathleen Corcoran, Carla Coupe, Joseph Cowart, Todd Cunningham, Onka Dekker, Michael Derr, Erika Ginsburg, Gina Hagler, C. Rita Harmon, Lee Hassig, Susan Hills, Sarah Holt, Susan Jewell, Kimberly Lankford, Taylor Lincoln, Ellen McKenna, Cheryl Mendonsa, Tomas Mirga, Evans Moore, Matt Nerzig, Christina Nichols, Richard Ogden, Christine Prickett, Janice Lynch Schuster, M. A. Sheehan, Dominic Solimando, Harvey Solomon and Lynora Williams.

TREASURER'S REPORT

By Susan Kuhn, WIW Treasurer

The Jan. 31 financial statements for WIW continue to reflect lower than budgeted revenue from both membership dues and Job Bank subscriptions. For the month, there was a net loss of \$1,054. For the first seven months of the fiscal year that began July 1, 2002, there is a net loss of only \$157. This is due to the \$3,000 profit generated from November's Freelance Business Conference plus careful monitoring of expenses to achieve savings where possible.

As noted in the board report, the board of directors voted in March to adjust both the revenue and expense budgets in response to the organization's continuing cash flow challenges. The final third of the fiscal year is always the time of greatest income generation and expenditures for WIW because of the Washington Writers Conference in May. Through mid-March, signs pointed to a successful 2003 event, with registrations received to date running ahead of the same period last year.

Profit and Loss Summary

Jan. Income	\$ 15,546
Jan. Expenses	\$(16,600)
Net Income	\$ (1,054)

► **Sign up today for Washington Writers Conference. Use the registration insert.**
► **Enter Member-Get-a-Member Contest.**
See pages 4 and 7 for details.

Join us at these events:

Tom Mann Pubspeak, April 15
Law for Writers Workshop, April 22
Negotiating to Win Workshop, April 28
WIW Board Meetings, May 1 and June 12
Washington Writers Conference, May 16–17
See pages 1, 3 and 5 for details.
Check for updates at www.washwriter.org.

April 2003

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