

A Publication of the Seacoast Writers Association

THE Seacoast Writer

FALL
2008



GET READY FOR THE SWA FALL CONFERENCE

Saturday, October 18, 2008 at Chester College of New England

A few leaves have already dressed in their autumn finery. These first colorful changes are hints of things to come, most importantly, to us writers, the upcoming SWA conference. As always, we have a spectacular lineup of presenters. No matter which workshops you choose to attend, you are guaranteed a worthwhile and mind-expanding experience.

Again this fall we are following a format that has worked very well for us at previous fall conferences. We offer a choice of one workshop from four two-hour sessions in the morning, and repeat the same workshops after lunch. Because each workshop is offered twice, the workshops can be kept smaller and you have a better chance of obtaining both your first choices (especially if you register early—and also save \$10 off the registration fee). Please give us your two primary choices and a third alternate choice, just in case.

The Workshops and Our Presenters

Sharpening Your Dialogue—Tom Dunn

Dialogue — for many writers, it is the most difficult aspect of writing to make believable: taking a piece of work you've already started that includes (or you think, should include) dialogue and making it feel that it is really being spoken. Well done dialogue can draw your reader into your character's head while revealing truths and contradictions that narrative often can't.

Bring 15 copies of a page of drama, fiction, nonfiction, or poetry that either includes dialogue or you think could include dialogue. In a non-performance workshop format we'll be looking at the dialogue word-by-word to give you suggestions on ways to make the dialogue more believable as well as more interesting. We'll be exploring how the dialogue 'sounds,' how it 'resonates,' how it 'enlightens,' and

most importantly, how it helps to build dramatic tension in your work. If time permits, we'll also start a discussion on how to adapt your work into totally dialogue driven forms of writing such as playwriting and screenwriting.

Tom Dunn has written over one hundred plays that have been produced at theatres around the country. His most recent productions were at World Premiere Theatre in California (*Life and Death at Wal-Mart*) and at John Stark High School in Weare (*Charles Dickens Presents Oliver Twist*). Tom is the co-author of *The Playwright's Handbook* (Plume), the best selling textbook for playwrights for the last twenty years. Before moving to New Hampshire, Tom was the founder and director of The Playwrights' Center of Minnesota and the director of New Dramatists in NYC (the country's oldest



workshop for playwrights). Currently, Tom is director of The Alchemists' Workshop and he runs the performing arts program (film and theatre) at Nashua Community College. For more about Tom Dunn and samples of his work, go to: www.doollee.com/PlaywrightsD/dunn-thomas-g.html.

Poetry and the Myth of Experience— Christopher Locke

We each have a story to tell—that's the easy part. How do we move beyond the easy story to tell the story we never knew was waiting to be shared? In order for poetry to matter, it must be a conduit for Truth. That does not necessarily mean the poem is a true story, or that the validity of the poem resides solely in autobiographical detail.

Poetry is about communication; it is about transferring a 'felt-thought' into a reader's consciousness. What matters in poetry is conveying emotional risk that resonates, so that the reader finds the experience impactful, or better yet, profound. We'll look at successful poets who subscribe to this practice, as well as try our own hand at a few exercises that focus on going beyond experience to craft the best poem possible.

Christopher Locke was awarded the 2007 Individual Artist Grant in Literature from the New Hampshire Council on the Arts. *The End of American Magic*, his first full-length collection of poetry, is forthcoming from Salmon Poetry in Ireland. His chapbooks of poems include *How to Burn* (Adastra Press, 1995) and *Slipping Under Diamond Light* (Clamp Down Press, 2002), which former U.S. Poet Laureate Billy Collins described as containing "...poems delivered in plain, sure-footed language. Read a few opening lines and you'll find yourself helplessly engaged." Chris has been widely published in both the U.S. and internationally, and is the winner of numerous poetry prizes. He lives with his wife and two daughters in New Lebanon, NY, where he teaches writing and literature at The Darrow School. Check out Chris: www.nh.gov/nharts/artsandartists/poetshowcase/poetlaureate38.html.

Humor: Writing with Your Funny Bone— Joann Duncanson

Whether you write for newspapers, magazines, poetry readings, contests, or for your own amuse-

ment, if humor is your thing, come and join us. We will look at the pleasures and pitfalls of writing with humor in the 21st century, the various genres of humor, writings of humorists past and present, and some of our own work. Then we'll try our hands/pens/laptops at an exercise in poetry or prose—your choice—using humor as the base. Last but not least, we will share tips on how to make a literary tuna sandwich that's to die for.

What to bring: (1) fifteen copies each of one or two examples of your work to share and discuss, (2) a sense of humor, and (3) a readiness to learn, and laugh while you're doing it.

Through her newspaper columns (25 years) and poetry (forever), Joann Duncanson has been on a mission to help readers see humor in their own lives and in the world around them. From her first full-time job as a humorous greeting card editor to her current one-woman *Laughing at Ourselves* program, she's been on a funny bone roll. Currently a columnist for *The Monadnock Ledger-Transcript*, and a past winner of the N.H. Newspaper Association's Columnist of the Year Award, she is the author of *Who Gets the Yellow Bananas?* and co-author with Fred Samuels of *Breakfast in the Bathtub*. She lives in Greenland, NH and writes in a coffee shop near you. Find more about Joann at: www.jsnowduncanson.com.

Getting to Know You: Digging Deeper into Your Characters—Katherine Towler

In this workshop you will look at the different types of characters found in fiction and discuss the intersection between character and such elements as setting, plot, dialogue, and language. How do you take a rough draft and through revision deepen your understanding (and the reader's) of your characters? You'll explore strategies for creating characters who are more dynamic and complex and will complete a short writing exercise designed to help you discover more about a character (or characters).

Of Katie's characters, our beloved SWA presenter Don Murray said in the *Boston Globe*, "Towler's characters are as complex and contradictory as those with whom we live our lives...A master of pacing, (she) accomplishes the higher art of bringing us to see the drama in the commonplace."

Katherine Towler is the author of the novels *Snow Island* and *Evening Ferry*. She *cont. on page 5*



SWA FALL CONFERENCE MAIL REGISTRATION FORM *(please print)*

Early Registration begins September 15, 2008. Workshops will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis, based on the date of receipt of your registration form. We will try to accommodate your first choices, but workshop capacities are limited, so send your form in today! Please cut off the bottom of this form and return the top portion postmarked by October 1 with all conference fees to receive **EARLY REGISTRATION RATE**. Checks should be made payable to Seacoast Writers Association and mailed to registrar Michael Wade, 9 Brookside Drive, Stratham, NH 03885. (Do NOT send to our post office box!)

Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Tel: (____) _____ email: _____

Select Workshops: Indicate first, second and third choice by noting (1), (2), (3)

- ~ Sharpening Your Dialogue _____
- ~ Poetry and the Myth of Experience _____
- ~ Humor: Writing With your Funny Bone _____
- ~ Getting to Know You: Digging Deeper into Your characters _____

CONFERENCE FEES:

Registrations postmarked by Oct. 1:

- \$40.00 First-time Conference fee\$ _____
- \$45.00 Early registration, member\$ _____
- \$60.00 Early registration non-member\$ _____

Registrations postmarked after Oct. 1:

- \$55.00 member\$ _____
- \$70.00 non-member\$ _____
- Note-taker, interpreter or attendant, meal costs only: \$17.00\$ _____
- Renew my membership or join SWA. (\$20 annual membership fee) ...\$ _____
- Total Amount Enclosed:**\$ _____



Currents VI

Hot off the press, the latest Currents will be available for purchase at the conference. Currents VI contains the prizewinning fiction, personal essay and poetry from SWA writing contests of the past three years. The perfect-bound volume with an outstanding color cover is a real treasure for the price of \$15.00 per copy.

If you would like registration confirmation, please include a SASE or postcard, or print your email address here (_____). The Registrar will notify you if a workshop is filled and it is necessary to give you your third choice.

TIME TO RENEW?

Your membership must be current in order to receive the member discount.

CANCELLATIONS/REFUNDS

Cancellations postmarked by October 1 will incur a \$10.00 administration fee. Sorry, no refunds after October 1.

NOTE: By special arrangement, Chester College faculty and students will be charged only a five-dollar registration fee.

SWA FALL CONFERENCE AGENDA

October 18, 2008

Chester College of New England, Wadleigh Library

8:30 a.m.

Registration and Continental Breakfast

9:00 a.m.

Welcome and Announcements

9:45 a.m.- 11:45 a.m. Morning Workshops

(Choice of one of four workshops)

~ Sharpening Your dialogue - Tom Dunn

~ Poetry and Myth of Experience - Christopher Locke

~ Humor: Writing with Your Funny Bone - Joann Duncanson

~ Getting to Know You: Digging Deeper into Your Characters - Katherine Towler

12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

Lunch, book sales, networking

1:15 p.m.- 3:15 p.m. Afternoon Workshops

(Choice of one of four workshops listed above)

3:15 p.m. Turn in evaluation forms; safe home and happy



Directions to Wadleigh Library, Chester College of New England, Chester, NH

From the Northeast, take Rte. 101W to Exit 5 onto Rte. 102, right onto Rte. 121 to Chester College.

From the Northwest, take Rte. 101E to Exit 2 and follow Rte. 121 to Chester College.

From Massachusetts, take I-93 to Exit 4 (Rte. 102). Follow 102E into Chester and turn left onto Rte. 121 to Chester College.

Chester College of New England is located on Route 121 near the intersection with Route 102. There is ample free parking at the Wadleigh Library. For maps and other information on the college, go to www.chestercollege.edu.

cont. from page 2 has received fellowships from the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts and Phillips Exeter Academy, where she served as the George Bennett Writer-in-Residence. She teaches in the MFA Program in Writing at Southern New Hampshire University. She has just completed the third volume in her Snow Island trilogy. You can hear Katie read from her work at www.katherinetowler.com.

Mark Chester, NH as your destination for your October 18th leaf-peeping tour. We'll see you at the conference!

Conference Book Sale

Our Conference Book Sale gives conferees the opportunity to purchase presenters' and other writers' books. Writers (other than presenters) who wish to make their own published books available for sale at the Conference are welcome to do so, but must manage such sales themselves. Purchasers: Sorry, Cash or Checks only. No credit card sales.

"Gently Used" Book Sale

If you have books on writing or other books you've finished with that your fellow writers might enjoy, please bring them to the conference for sale. We'll sell them at \$1.00 for hardcovers and 50-cents for

paperbacks, proceeds to benefit SWA.

SWA Members and Friends

David Crouse, a SWA fiction workshop presenter, has received the Mary McCarthy Prize for his recently-published second collection of short stories, *The Man Back There*. For an update on David, check

www.alaska.edu/english/people/faculty/crouse and see his Oprah review at www.oprah.com/article/omagazine/readin-groom/200808_omag_book_crouse.

SWA member Joy Starr has just published a collection of her poems, *Martini Dust* with SWA workshop presenter Sid Hall. For further information, contact Joy at joystarr@comcast.net.

A performance of "Surprised by Joy," the project of Portsmouth Poet Laureate Elizabeth Knies, an SWA workshop presenter, will be held at the Portsmouth Public Library on Sunday, Oct. 26 at 2 p.m. Free and open to the public.



Ilya Kaminsky to Judge Pat Parnell Poetry Contest

Poet Ilya Kaminsky will judge the sixth annual Pat Parnell Poetry Contest. Kaminsky is the author of the award-winning *Dancing in Odessa*, which was named Best Poetry Book of the Year 2004 by *ForeWord Magazine*. For more on Ilya, see ilyakaminsky.com.

The Pat Parnell Poetry Contest was established in recognition of the work of Pat Parnell, professor emerita in the writing program at Chester College, who was one of the founders of *Compass Rose*, the literary and visual arts journal of Chester College of New England. Pat is the SWA Conference Coordinator.

Each year, the winner of the contest receives \$400 and publication in *Compass Rose*. All other entries will be considered for publication. Deadline is November 15, 2008. For complete guidelines, visit www.chestercollege.edu and click on the *Compass Rose* cover (bottom right hand side).

SWA Writers Contest

It's not too early to begin thinking about the 2009 SWA Writers Contest. Your work could appear in the next edition of *Currents*! Entry forms and guidelines will be distributed at the conference. Deadline for submission will be February 1. Prize information, contest entry forms, guidelines and additional information will also be available on our website: <http://seacoastwritersassociation.org>.



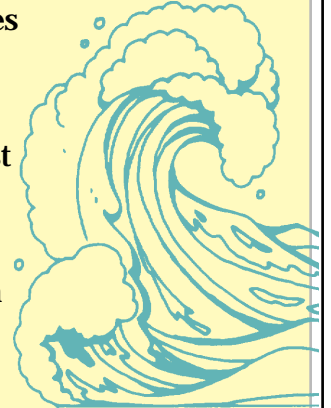
Family History at Sea

by Christopher Locke

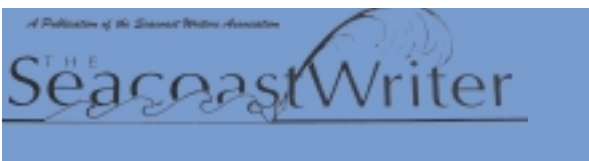
Twilight, and we creep
into the water. Waist deep
in the tide's icy run, we stiffen
like corpses and grimace
past the waves, the crumbling
pier, and the lighthouse dragging
its one eye across rocks
ruined by seaweed and memories
of lost ships—fifty years since
a wooden trawler packed
with Irish hopefuls, their families
waiting in Boston, the South End,
a guaranteed job as real as the gold
bars of sunlight striping their faces
between the cracks in the deck.
But the lighthouse keeper

*"it goes on night and day
all your life, and when your life
is over it's still going."
— Philip Levine*

could not rise from the stink
of his gin, and the beam
went cold until all those cries
he heard for salvation,
desperate men floating
in the dark tumult of the last
minutes of their lives,
were nothing more than
the gulls which greeted him
next morning, announcing
the blue day spread above,
the sea crashing indifferently
against the world of heat
and land as my grandfather
rocked below the waves, his feet at last
touching America



Seacoast Writers Association
PO Box 6553
Portsmouth, NH 03802-6553



REMINDER:
Seacoast Writers Fall
Conference
Saturday, Oct. 18,
8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.
