GREENSBORO, NC—The University of North Carolina at Greensboro sits about as close to the geographic heart of the state as you can get. That makes it a fitting venue for the North Carolina Writers' Network 2012 Spring Conference, to be held Saturday, April 28, from 8:00 am – 6:30 pm in the Elliott University Center.

The annual event, co-sponsored by UNCG’s creative writing program, draws writers from across North Carolina and beyond for workshops in fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, children’s writing, and publishing, led by distinguished writing faculty. This year’s conference will also feature a Publishers Panel with book and journal editors; a Faculty Reading; an Open Mike reading for conference attendees; and “Lunch with an Author,” where attendees share lunch and informal conversation with faculty members.

In fact, geography will very much be on people’s minds, as the keynote address will feature representatives from an exciting new web-based project called “A Literary Map of North Carolina.” A collaborative project between UNCG and the North Carolina Center for the Book, the NC Literary Map is a database-driven, searchable/browsable, multi-level, multi-media online research tool to foster interest in North Carolina’s rich literary tradition. Guests can search by author or genre, or just browse the map to find authors who have lived in or written about North Carolina. Scheduled to be launched officially in the fall, visitors can catch a sneak peak at the website, www.library.uncg.edu/dp/nclitmap.

Course offerings at the 2012 Spring Conference include two all-day workshops, one on fiction led by Alan Michael Parker, and a nonfiction...
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The Writers’ Network News is produced with the generous support of the following organizations:
MY six-year-old granddaughter recently shared her thoughts about the “Magic Tree House” series in an article about Mary Pope Osborne in the Carolina Alumni Review. Beth McNichol, the article’s author, begins, “If Lea Dardess could get a meeting with Mary Pope Osborne (’72), the two might make literary magic together. She has an idea that she thinks would be perfect for Osborne, the bestselling children’s book author. If you can picture it: Jack and Annie, brother and sister who time-travel in a tree house full of magical books, find a Susan B. Anthony dollar with a mysterious ‘M’ on the back. They use their powers to find the real Anthony, who needs their help.”

McNichol goes on to say, “Lea could write her own story about the women’s suffragist, but she’s got enough on her plate now that she has a spelling test every Friday. And she needs to reserve some time for dreaming about becoming a dolphin trainer.” Children who are enthralled with Osborne’s books see themselves in the books. Lea’s mother, my daughter-in-law, discovers her stealth-reading in the evening after lights out.

Lea finds enchantment in books. She and her friends are the readers of the future. We are too easily discouraged by articles about declining readership and statistics that give us such depressing information as “42 percent of all college graduates never read a book after college” (Jenkins Group) or “one in four people did not read a book in the previous year” (Associated Press poll, 2007).

I am an optimist. I admit it. I read these statistics to mean the glass is half full. Fifty-eight percent of college graduates did read some sort of book, as did three out of four people who responded to the AP poll.

Great books inspire great readers. Parents who love books and introduce their children to reading give them a gift. Children like Lea may be tomorrow’s writers, too. And the North Carolina Writers’ Network will be here for them.

For the first time since the economy collapsed in 2008, the Network has more than a thousand members, and we are working hard to serve more writers in the future. Thanks to our members and to the support of the North Carolina Arts Council, as well the adept management of our Executive Director and his excellent staff, we are holding our own financially. Attendance at the 2011 Fall Conference reached pre-2008 levels.

We expect the same success at the 2012 Spring Conference at UNC-Greensboro on April 28. We are here to connect the writers of the Writingest State, and to welcome Lea and her friends as members as soon as they are ready to join us.
Fall Conference Attendees Kick Up Their Heels
BY CHARLES FIORE, COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

There was still some color left on the trees by the time the Network’s 2011 Fall Conference opened in Asheville. Conference-goers were treated to a warm November weekend in the mountains near the historic Biltmore estate. The 2011 Fall Conference drew more attendees than any NCWN event in the past five years. Registrants came from as far away as Minnesota to participate in a full slate of workshops and panel discussions.

On Friday night, author Silas House set the tone for the weekend with an understated but powerful keynote address. He offered a literary call to arms, and implored his listeners to remember that all writing is a form of activism, all writing is a form of preservation, and writing can change things.

Saturday kicked off with a panel discussion on “Authors in Appalachia.” Breakfast was followed by a full day of Master Classes and Marts, including the brand-new Marketing Mart which provided writers with an opportunity to create or refine an effective plan to pitch, promote, and sell their current, upcoming, or proposed books by scheduling a thirty-minute, one-on-one session with a publishing or bookselling professional.

Over lunch, Karen Wells, the Executive Director of ARTS North Carolina, spoke on “What’s Next? Ideological and Economic Realities and Opportunities.”

The afternoon then gave way to additional workshops and sessions, including a panel on “Brave New Media” that taught attendees the difference between a “Tweet” and a “Like” and encouraged writers to master at least one form of social media.

After a full day of classes, conference-goers were ready to cut loose. The pre-dinner faculty readings kept listeners spellbound. After-dinner entertainment was provided by Keith Flynn & the Holy Men. The four-piece band literally had some diners up out of their seats and dancing. Saturday night ended with three separate sets of Open Mike readings that were energized and well-attended.

Sunday began with a panel on agents and editors, moderated by the Network’s own Ed Southern. Workshops and Marts continued through the Closing Conversation at 1:00 pm. Asheville’s own Mala-prop’s sold books all weekend, and the aesthetic of the western North Carolina mountains was present in everything from the readings, to the panel discussions, to the hotel’s statuesque dairy cow that served as a very reliable directional marker over the course of the weekend.

But the best part of any conference is the opportunity it offers to spend time with others who are devoted to the same time-consuming and often solitary craft. The 2011 Fall Conference—like every Network event—was a wonderful opportunity to get away from the writing desk for a little while and make new friends.

KEITH FLYNN
Soon after I became the Network’s executive director, I decided not to read new books by Network members. With all our members, and all their productivity, I realized that I could never read them all. If I could not read the new books by every Network member, I would read new books by none of them. It seemed a fair policy.

A little less soon, I realized that submitting my work to contests, especially those in North Carolina, would be a no-win proposition for me. Most likely, it would be a literal “no-win” situation, but if I did win, it might look a little funny. I might hear a stray whisper about favors and connections and insiders. That whisper would offend me much more than losing a contest.

When I had just dropped out of grad school to “be a writer,” and was working in a bookstore to pay the bills, I noticed that the North Carolina literary scene was a lot like high school. Some writers were like the star quarterback or the head cheerleader, some were like the king and queen of the prom, some were like the kids with the coolest cars, some were like the kids who could get the beer.

They all seemed to hang out together, to have known each other for years, and to do each other favors. So-and-so got an agent on so-and-so’s recommendation. So-and-so blurbbed so-and-so’s new book, and vice versa. So-and-so was in so-and-so’s workshop, and now so-and-so has a three-book deal. Whatever simile you chose to use, the state most definitely had a literary in-crowd. And, Lord, how I griped about them.

I have many reasons to want to go back in time and smack around the younger me for being such a dolt. Sadly, whining about the state’s literary cool kids is one of the least of those reasons. I see now so much I could and should have done to boost my nascent writing career, if I hadn’t let my arrogance sustain my ignorance. (First and foremost of what I should have done? Get over myself and write better.)

Now, lo and behold, I find myself in a position to be about as inside as an insider can get. How would that self-righteous outsider in the bookstore react, if told he would someday have this job? I worked for one of the state’s most venerable publishers; I’m married to the assistant director of the BOOKMARKS Festival of Books; I’m asked to serve on all sorts of committees. If I were any more inside North Carolina’s literary world, I’d be behind it.

Which, of course, is the danger of being in with the in-crowd. It’s the problem with in-crowds, in general. Sooner or later, an in-crowd—insular, comfortable, maybe a little smug—ceases to be in. Then they become, not so much out, as left behind.

I am sure that somewhere in this state, a struggling young writer (heck, probably a successful older writer, too) is mocking the Network for its insularity, its cliquishness, its self-satisfaction. Someone somewhere is railing against North Carolina’s literary in-crowd. Even with the best of intentions, we give them cause: inevitably, we make friends, and we support our friends. When hiring for workshops and conferences, I never invite as many new instructors as I might like, and I never can invite all the writers I might like; I bring back those who’ve been here before, who’ve proven themselves to be good teachers that draw registrants. I don’t look as hard as I should for writers with talent but no connections, and I don’t try as hard as I should to connect them.

My goal, though, and my hope, is to make sure the Network remains more of a community than a crowd, more collegial than cliquish: open, welcoming, supportive of each other’s good work, demanding each other’s best work. We have more than 1,000 members across the state and beyond, at all levels of skill and experience, and we want more.

C’mon in, y’all. All the cool kids are doing it.
Complete Schedule

8:00–9:00 am  Registration

8:00 am – 6:00 pm  Exhibits & Book Sales Open

9:00–10:30 am  Workshop Session I

Fact and Fiction (All-Day Fiction) with Alan Michael Parker
You can’t make it all up, right? Nor can you render religiously exactly what happened—stories need invention, the mechanics of time, re-telling, and shape. Stories need characters and scenes: life doesn’t always accommodate. So what’s the best way to combine experience and imagination and write the best fiction? In this class, we will focus on questions of fidelity, distortion, fancy, and freedom, as we examine various ways to approach the writing of fiction. Bring a pen, lots of paper, and a good-sized ball of string (really). In the morning, exercises and discussion: in the afternoon, more, as well as a little adventure.

“What Did You Say?”: Dialogue Matters in Nonfiction (All-Day Nonfiction) with Randall Kenan
A tension has always existed between nonfiction (factual) writing and the siren call of fiction, where the writer can make the characters say whatever we like. How do we capture quality, telling speech from real people without crossing the line into “invention”? What is good dialogue? Dialogue is first and foremost about characterization. We will examine the concepts of subtext, “American” English, of spelling and of phonetics. How does one develop a good ear? In workshop we will be closely reading brief samples from recognized masters of nonfiction writing—Joseph Mitchell, Joan Didion, John McPhee, and others. Participants are asked to bring a page or two from their work involving reported speech. Recommended reading: Up In the Old Hotel by Joseph Mitchell.

Get Out of That Room in Your Head: Crafting Physically-Charged, Moving Fiction with Mylène Dressler
As writers, we face a daily challenge: we create (and live, much of the time) in the spaces inside our heads, yet our task is to create dynamic, breathing characters and active, arcing stories capable of moving our readers as well as stopping them dead in their tracks. How can we notice and break through “brain-locked” writing, and learn to craft fiction that inhabits the physical world, packing visceral as well as emotional punch? In this workshop, we’ll discuss the limitations of writing that happens only-inside-our-heads, and explore techniques and exercises that will help you—and your audience—connect with your stories and characters in charged, vital, and vivid ways.

The Persona Poem with Janice Fuller
In his poem “Ars Poetica,” Czeslaw Milosz proclaims, “The purpose of poetry is to remind us / how difficult it is to remain just one person, / for our house is open, there are no keys in the doors, / and invisible guests come in and out at will.” This workshop will explore the reasons writers turn to persona poems and the creative value of this experience. The persona (or mask) poem is a first-person poem in which the poet assumes the voice of an object or person. The workshop will begin with a reading of some canonical and contemporary models of the persona poem in order to consider which qualities make the poems successful. The session will also include tips for how to invite “invisible guests” into our poems.

A Nonfiction Story: From Idea to Book with Justin Catanoso
In this session, journalist and author Justin Catanoso will take you through the process of producing a nonfiction book: developing the idea, working with an agent, obtaining a publisher, and doing the work necessary to write a 350-page manuscript in 15 months. In Catanoso’s case, the result was his first book, a family memoir published by HarperCollins in 2008. This interactive session will also share such documents as the book proposal, outlines, and note cards used to organize each section of each chapter, and examples of edited chapters.

Accounting for Writers with Ted Shalek
This workshop will cover the accounting basics that writers need to know: how royalties are taxed, what expenses can
be deducted, what authors have to do to (legally) sell their books themselves, and the point at which a hobby becomes a business.

11:00 am – 12:00 pm
Open Mike Readings
Sign up at registration

12:00–1:00 pm Lunch
“Lunch with an Author”
Sign up at registration

1:00–2:00 pm Faculty Readings

2:30–4:00 pm Workshop Session II
Fact and Fiction (All-Day Fiction) with Alan Michael Parker
“What Did You Say?”: Dialogue Matters in Nonfiction (All-Day Nonfiction) with Randall Kenan

Showing AND Telling (Poetry) with Rebecca Black
“Show, don’t tell,” is the first rule of writing well—you’ve heard that often enough. However, good poems can arise from the right mixture of scenes, images, and striking moments when the writer speaks his or her mind with clarity and boldness. During this workshop, we’ll explore poems that delight in exploiting the delicate balance between showing and telling. As the session progresses, we’ll try drafting our own poems by imitating a few model poems by Louise Gluck, Elizabeth Bishop, Billy Collins, and other masters, using simple, timed writing exercises to generate new work. Students will leave with a sense of accomplishment, knowledge of some excellent model poems, and a new poem draft.

Writing the Natural World with Paul Bogard
In this workshop we will explore writing about the natural world. No matter what genre you write most, a careful and colorful representation of the natural world can add life and credibility to your work. We will look at a few examples of nature writing and environmental writing, then try our hand at some of the techniques we’ve talked about. While our focus will be on creative nonfiction literature, writers of fiction and poetry can benefit as well from learning new ways of incorporating an attention to the natural world into their work.

Breaking into Children’s Publishing with Megan Bryant
Children’s publishing is more competitive than ever before. In this workshop, you’ll gain an understanding of the current business climate that will provide a solid foundation for pitching and selling your manuscript in today’s especially competitive conditions. We’ll also discuss tips, tricks, and practical advice about writing for children.

Guerilla Tactics: Promotional Strategies for the Cash-Strapped Author with Charles Fiore
Unless money’s no object, you’ve got to be ferocious when publicizing your book. And whether you’re a self-published author or you’ve gone the traditional route, nobody loves your book like you do, and no one is going to work harder, or be a better proponent, for your book than you. In this workshop, we’ll discuss low-cost strategies for being your own marketing and PR department—the same strategies used by professional PR agents and publishers that you can do for a fraction of the cost. We’ll discuss the dos and don’ts of author website design; how to mobilize the robots at Amazon.com to work for you; and develop successful tactics for getting media attention for your book and your events. You’ll leave this workshop energized and fully equipped to begin promoting your book—whether or not you’ve got the backing of a publisher’s marketing department.

4:30–5:30 pm Introducing the Literary Map of North Carolina
Archivists Jennifer Motzko, Kathelene Smith, and Keith Gorman discuss the development of an online map devoted to the literary heritage of North Carolina.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro Libraries, working with the North Carolina Center for the Book, is developing an innovative online literary map of North Carolina to support public interests, encourage student research, and document the state’s rich literary tradition. This unique project is a database-driven, searchable/browse-able, multi-level, multi-media online research tool which provides an extensive amount of content on works written about North Carolina and authors associated with the state. Currently, a formal launch for the website is planned for the fall of 2012. The
presenters will also give a sneak peek at the project’s future plans, which include digitization of original manuscript materials, development of educational and cultural resources, and sustainability of the Map.

5:30–6:30 pm Publishers Panel

Faculty

In 2011, Rebecca Black was a Fulbright fellow at the Seamus Heaney Center for Poetry in Belfast, Northern Ireland. Her first book, Cottonlandia (2004), won a Juniper Prize. A former Wallace Stegner and National Endowment for the Arts fellow, she is an assistant professor at UNC Greensboro; she and her family divide their time between San Francisco and North Carolina. She is at work on a second manuscript, Presidio.

Paul Bogard is the author of The Geography of Night: Discovering Darkness in an Age of Light (Little, Brown, 2013) and the editor of Let There Be Night: Testimony on Behalf of the Dark (2008). His essays have appeared in such places as Creative Nonfiction, River Teeth, Gettysburg Review, Audubon, and Outside. He teaches writing at Wake Forest University.

Megan E. Bryant has written more than 190 children’s books (including a New York Times bestseller and two VOYA Nonfiction Honor Books) for several major publishers including Chronicle Books, Penguin, Simon and Schuster, Running Press, Scholastic, HarperCollins, and Disney. As a former children’s book editor, she has edited more than 325 children’s books in all genres.

Justin Catanoso became senior lecturer and director of journalism at Wake Forest University in September 2011. He has had a thirty-year career as a professional journalist at newspapers in Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and North Carolina, including eleven years as a reporter with the Greensboro News & Record, where he received a Pulitzer Prize nomination in 1992 for his investigative reporting into fraud in the tobacco industry. He was founding executive editor of The Business Journal in the Triad, which started publishing in 1998. In 2008, HarperCollins published his first book, a family memoir titled My Cousin the Saint: A Search for Faith, Family, and Miracles, a Book of the Month Club selection, and a summer reading pick by the Order Sons of Italy in America. Justin’s writing has also appeared in The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, BusinessWeek, Attache, and Delta Sky in-flight magazines, Catholic Digest, and on National Public Radio.

Mylène Dressler, who has recently moved to North Carolina, is a novelist whose books include The Medusa Tree (MacAdamCage), The Deadwood Beetle (Putnam), and The Floodmakers (Putnam), and an essayist whose work has appeared in Pilgrimage, Creative NonFiction, and New Graffiti. Her fiction has been described as “splendid” by the New York Times and has been honored with “best-of” listings by Book Sense, the Christian Science Monitor, and others. A professor and frequent distinguished visiting writer at various universities, including the University of Texas at Austin and the McCullers Center in Georgia, she leads workshops designed to develop the skills, stamina, and confidence of emerging and established writers. She is the current Visiting Writer at Guilford College, where she teaches fiction, creative nonfiction, and contemporary literature. For more information about Mylène and her work, please visit www.myleneadressler.com.

Charles Fiore is the communications coordinator for the North Carolina Writers’ Network. Previously, he served as a freelance public relations specialist and the public relations director/marketing coordinator for ACTA Publications, where he led publicity campaigns for bestselling authors Bill James, Gary Graf, and Paul Wilkes, among many others. Fiore is also the author of the novel Green Gospel (Livingston Press, 2011). His short fiction has appeared in numerous literary magazines and in the anthology, Sudden Flash Youth: 65 Short Short Stories (Persea Books, 2011). His website is www.lcfiore.com.

Janice Moore Fuller has published three poetry books—Archaeology Is a Destructive Science, Sex Education, and Séance, winner of the Poetry Council of North Carolina’s Oscar Arnold Young Award (for North Carolina poetry book of the year). Her poems have appeared in numerous magazines and anthologies, including Magma (Lon-
don), New Welsh Review, Asheville Poetry Review, Poems & Plays, Cave Wall, and Comstock Review. Her plays and libretti have been produced at Catawba College’s Florence Busby Corriher and Hedrick theatres, BareBones Theater’s New Play Festival, the Minneapolis Fringe Festival, and France’s Rendez-Vous Musique Nouvelle. A Fellow at artist colonies in Ireland, Scotland, Spain, and Portugal, she is Writer-in-Residence and Professor of English at Catawba College.

Keith Gorman, Assistant Head of Special Collections and University Archives at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, obtained his MLS from Simmons College and Ph.D. in history from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. After a career as a cultural historian, Keith left the classroom and worked at a number of different repositories from the Smithsonian to the Martha’s Vineyard Museum. His current research focus is on the role of archives in shaping a community’s identity and collective memory.

Randall Kenan is the author of a novel, A Visitation of Spirits; two works of nonfiction, Walking on Water: Black American Lives at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century and The Fire This Time; a young adult biography of James Baldwin; and a collection of stories, Let the Dead Bury Their Dead, a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award. Recently he edited and wrote the introduction for The Cross of Redemption: The Uncollected Writings of James Baldwin. Among his awards are a Guggenheim Fellowship, the John Dos Passos Prize, a Whiting Writers Award, the North Carolina Award, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters’ Rome Prize. He is associate professor of English and Comparative Literature at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Jennifer Motszko graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee with Master’s degrees in History and Library and Information Science. She has worked as the Manuscripts Archivist at the Martha Blakeney Hodges Special Collections and University Archives for the past four years. Jennifer became involved with the North Carolina Literary Map project in its infancy and has worked with Kathlene Smith to write grants and supervise work on the project.

Alan Michael Parker is the author of two novels, Whale Man (WordFarm, 2011) and Cry Uncle, along with seven collections of poems, including Long Division (Tupelo Press, 2012). His stories and poems have appeared in The American Poetry Review, The Gettysburg Review, Kenyon Review, The New Republic, The New Yorker, Paris Review, Pleiades, and The Yale Review, among other magazines, and in The Best American Poetry 2011 as well as the 2012 Pushcart Prize anthology; his essays and reviews have appeared in The Believer, The New York Times Book Review, The New Yorker, Salon, and elsewhere. Since 1998, Parker has taught at Davidson College, where he is Professor of English and Director of Creative Writing; he is also a Core Faculty Member in the Queens University low-residency MFA program.

Ted Shalek is the Chief Financial Officer of Smart Online, Inc., a software development company providing a unique mobile platform that allows creative writers to develop mobile applications without knowing computer codes. He is also a lecturer at UNCG in the interdisciplinary entrepreneurship program. He teaches entrepreneurial finance to non-business students. Ted is a Certified Public Accountant and a Certified Valuation Analyst. He earned an MBA from The University of Tampa and a bachelor’s degree in accounting from John Carroll University in Cleveland, Ohio. Ted is married to Dr. Dianne Welsh, the Charles W. Hayes Distinguished Chair in Entrepreneurship at UNCG.

Kathlene Smith works in the Martha Blakeney Hodges Special Collections and University Archives as the Artifacts, Textiles, and Digital Projects Archivist. She has a master’s degree in Art History from Louisiana State University and a master’s degree in Library and Information Studies from The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Smith has been involved with the North Carolina Literary Map from its initial stages and is currently working with Jennifer Motszko on the supervision and future development of the project.
The 2012 Squire Summer Writing Residency will return to Queens University of Charlotte, July 19–22.

This year’s Residency will begin Thursday evening, July 19, with registration, check-in, and a “Writingest State” trivia contest.

The Squire Summer Writing Residency is open only to the first fifty registrants, who can choose a workshop in poetry, fiction, or creative nonfiction. Registration and more information will be available on www.ncwriters.org in May.

The Residency offers an intensive course in the chosen genre, as well as a panel discussion on the business of writing, and readings by faculty and registrants. Attendees take meals together on campus, and are encouraged—but not required—to stay in dorm rooms that will be set aside for this conference.

The 2011 Residency, held in New Bern, featured workshops led by Virginia Holman, Peter Makuck, and Liza Wieland.

* If you had come to the 2008 Squire Summer Writing Residency, you would understand that.
A Note from NetWest

BY ROSEMARY ROYSTON, PROGRAM COORDINATOR

NetWest has marked its 20th anniversary, and I stand amazed at how many lives we touch in our end of the state. Each time I turn around, there is an event I can attend, or a group of writers who not only write, but listen! It is so very valuable to have that outside support, especially for new writers.

As an example, this fall semester I required my creative writing students at Young Harris College to participate in a public reading. For many of them, this was their first time reading their creative work to an audience. My students ranged from visibly petrified to nervous-but-eager. I reserved our local coffee house, and the students and I began to invite other faculty, staff, and students. But the e-mail that made the difference, the one that bolstered our attendance the most, was the one I sent to my local NC and GA NetWest members. The coffeehouse was packed! My students could not have had a more ideal, supportive, or attentive audience. The topper: a week later, as the semester was wrapping up, students showed up to Writers’ Night Out on their own accord. Yes! Thank you, fellow writers and readers. We make such a difference in our communities.

Some of the highlights from our nine-county area include the following:

Nancy Simpson, Karen Paul Holmes, Maren O. Mitchell, and Janice Townley Moore all have poems in the new anthology, *Sunrise from Blue Thunder*, published by Pirene’s Fountain to raise money for Japan after the earthquake and tsunami. The anthology can be ordered from www.pirenesfountain.com, and includes poems by Dorianne Laux, Jane Hirshfield, and David Ray.

Mary Ricketson, NetWest’s Cherokee County Rep, recently had two poems published with FutureCycle Press.

In Brevard, the Wordsmiths group led by Nancy Purcell, Transylvania County Rep, has been discussing from time to time the business of writing, specifically, self-publishing. What is it? What does it cost? Who edits your work? Wordsmiths has hosted two guests to provide answers to the myriad questions that exist around self-publishing. In the near future, a new monthly open-mike afternoon, “A Gathering of Writers,” will kick off.

In Clay County, “Coffee with the Poets” is in its sixth year and begins 2012 at Cafe Touché, 82 Main Street in Hayesville. Poets and writers are invited to come and share with the friendly audience at the open mike. A NetWest member is featured each month, but the open mike is open to anyone who brings a poem or short piece of prose. This event meets on the second Wednesday of each month, except January.

Bob Grove is also reviving NetWest’s prose group, serving as the facilitator, and they will meet in Murphy, the second Thursday of each month, at Tri County Community College, 7:00 pm, Room #152 in the McSwain building.

Glenda Beall, Clay County Rep and Director of Writers Circle, has classes scheduled beginning in March and continuing through September. To find a listing of all classes, see www.glendacouncilbeall.blogspot.com/.

2012 Regional Reps

**Albemarle/Outer Banks** (Washington, Tyrrell, Perquimans, Pasquotank, Hyde, Dare, Currituck, Chowan, Camden Counties)
Paula Oliver, caps@charter.net

**Cape Fear Coast** (New Hanover, Duplin, Columbus, Pender, Brunswick Counties)
Charlene Pollano & Sea Quills, charvp@hotmail.com

**Central Foothills** (Catawba, Lincoln, Burke, Alexander, Caldwell Counties)
Scott Owens, asowens1@yahoo.com

**Charlotte Metro - South** (Mecklenburg, Gaston, Union, York (SC), Lancaster (SC) Counties)
Annie Maier, anniemaier453@msn.com

**Chatham, Lee Counties**
Al Manning, amanning@richkwok.com

**Down East** (Carteret, Onslow, Craven Counties)
Helen Aitken, aitkenhb@yahoo.com

**High Country** (Ashe, Watauga, Avery, Alleghany Counties)
Christine Arvidson, christinearvidson@mac.com

**Iredell, Yadkin, Wilkes Counties**
Suzy Barile, suzyb3@gmail.com

**Pitt, Wilson Counties**
Celestine Davis, celestd@gmail.com

**Wake County**
Alice Osborn, avosborn@earthlink.net
Albemarle/Outer Banks
BY PAULA OLIVER, ALBEMARLE/ OUTER BANKS REGIONAL REP
CAPS@CHARTER.NET

Our region is rich in backwaters, sounds, rivers, and estuaries that flow into the Albemarle, Currituck, and Pamlico Sounds. Many naturalists, authors, and poets pass through and visit some of the area’s national wildlife refuges. They treat themselves to glowing sunrises, amber sunsets, and the moist tease from the sound waters. Others wait in the still calm and hope to catch a glimpse of a mama bear running with her cubs, or fishermen watching their lines, hoping to catch a big one.

As writers, we want a creative pathway for our imagined settings, episodes, or verses to become a storyline. As our thoughts flit and dart, we desire to hook and reel them in—capturing them with pen and paper, before they drift away.

The Albemarle/OBX region will meet often to discuss our writings, opportunities, and goals for 2012. Contact me at caps@charter.net for date, time, and meeting place.

Cape Fear Coast
BY CHARLENE POLLANO, CAPE FEAR COAST REGIONAL REP
CHARVP@HOTMAIL.COM

The Sea Quills, six women who recently formed a writing group in Wilmington, felt lost without their networking opportunities when Elizabeth King Humphreys, the NCWN rep for the Wilmington/Cape Fear area, stepped down in January. Our response to this dilemma was to volunteer, as a group, to take on the duties of the Wilmington-area Regional Rep and fill the void left by Elizabeth’s departure.

We are excited as we look forward to the coming year. Our ideas to help bring writers together extend from open mikes and speakers on various topics on the craft of writing, to workshops, Writers’ Nights Out, and perhaps even the occasional “book-tasting” party. (You’ll have to attend to find out just what that is!)

Our region is the home of the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and a creative writing program that is one of the top twenty-five in the country. It is also the setting for the filming of numerous movies and TV series. The fine arts thrive in this region as well, illustrating the powerful draw that the historical city of Wilmington and the surrounding Cape Fear Region have on the creative soul. It is a virtual artist’s colony filled with talents of all sorts, and a wellspring of creativity to those who seek to enrich their lives through artistic expression. We are lucky to be living in such a writer-rich community: Wendy Brenner, Michelle Boyajian, Clyde Edgerton, Philip Gerard, Bekki Lee, Celia Rivenbark, and Paul Wilkes, to name just a few.

The Sea Quills began when one of those Yankee types, Charlene Pollano, retired from Hampstead, New Hampshire, to Hampstead, North Carolina, bringing her desire for a new writing group with her. As a member of the same writing group for fourteen years, she knew that she would be actively searching for a connection to the “Writingest State.” So, what do you do when you are a newbie in a writing-rich region? You advertise on the NCWN website for a new writing group, and presto, it appears in the form of five women.

In the order of joining, they are Christine Parker, a Porter’s Neck resident and former Californian, who is an author, speaker, and educator with a broad background including program development and community affairs. Deborah Nunnery is a Southport resident who wrote a novel of historical fiction, Music of the Better Angels; she now writes full-time. Teri Meadowcroft, a Wilmington resident, received a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from UNC-Wilmington. She joined the Sea Quills to refocus on her writing. Blonnie Bunn Wyche, a longtime (and I mean longtime) North Carolinian and a retired teacher, has won awards for her short stories, published in such magazines as The Broad River Review and The Crescent Review. She is also the author of two young adult historical novels, The Anchor and Cecilia’s Harvest, and is the ghostwriter of the book, Ghosts on the Battleship North Carolina. Georgia Ann Mullen, another one of those Yankee transplants, has published two books of historical fiction: A Shocking and Unnatural Incident and Wixumlee Is My Salvation.

Not only are all of the members of the Sea Quills committed to the craft of writing, but they are looking forward to extending their interests to publishing a group anthology, creating a Facebook page, and becoming acting representatives of the area’s writers.

So, that’s who we are, and we are anxious and ready to meet Wilmington area writers who are...
REGIONAL REP ROUND-UP

looking for the camaraderie and expertise of other writers. We welcome the creative ideas of others as we embark on this adventure of knitting together a “group of one’s own” in the Wilmington/Cape Fear region.

At the time of this writing, a monthly date, time, and location have not been determined. For further details, please contact Charlene at charvp@hotmail.com or Blonnie at 910-762-2339.

Central Foothills
BY SCOTT OWENS, CENTRAL FOOTHILLS REGIONAL REP
ASOWENS1@YAHOO.COM

2012 is shaping up to be a great year for writers in the Central Foothills (Catawba, Caldwell, Alexander, Lincoln, and Burke Counties). Although the schedules for Lenoir-Rhyne University’s Visiting Writer Series (“In Their Own Words”) and Catawba Valley Community College’s Fall Literary Festival have yet to be determined, Poetry Hickory’s calendar of second-Tuesday-of-the-month readings is already full, with two dozen featured writers including John Lane, Tamra Wilson, Jessie Cartly, Tony Abbott, Maureen Sherbondy, Malaika King Albrecht, Richard Kraweic, Scott Owens, Helen Losse, Carol Novack, Robert Lee Brewer, Tammy Trendle, Robert King, Robert Kimsey, Celisa Steele, Barbara Jo Taylor, Kathryn Kirkpatrick, Alice Osborn, Debra Kaufman, Amy Tipton Cortner, Molly Rice, Alex Grant, M. Scott Douglass, and Jonathan K. Rice.

Additionally, NCWN’s Writers’ Night Out, which takes place before Poetry Hickory each second Tuesday, will feature four writing workshops this year, led by Maureen Sherbondy (March), Richard Krawiec (April), Robert Lee Brewer (June), and Debra Kaufman (October). And in case that is not enough to keep a writer busy, Poetry Lincoln will continue its monthly readings featuring Devona Wyatt, Morgan DePue, and Shane Manier, and including notable guests such as Keith Flynn and others.

One of the biggest new arrivals in the Piedmont will be the Poetry Council of North Carolina’s Poetry Day, coming to Catawba Valley Community College on April 14. This annual event honors the winners of the Poetry Council’s annual contests, including the Oscar Arnold Young Award for the best book of poetry from NC, and features readings from all of the winning poets. So far that means Katherine Soniat, Julie Suk, Joanna Catherine Scott, and Susan Lefler (Oscar Arnold Young winner, runner-up, and honorable mentions, respectively) should be reading at the event.

Other notable writerly happenings in the region include the publication of and reading from the second annual Best of Poetry Hickory anthology sometime in September, the second annual 100 Poets for Change event on September 29, and the Aroma of Art Ekphrastic Reading on March 1.

Finally, area writers Molly Rice, Ann Chandonnet, and yours truly will have new books out. Rice’s Mill Hill will be released from Finishing Line Press shortly; Chandonnet’s edition of new and selected poems will be released in the spring; and I will have three books published: Country Roads, a collaboration with photographer Clayton Joe Young; For One Who Knows How to Own Land, from FutureCycle Press; and Shadows Trail Them Home, a collaboration with Pris Campbell, from Clemson University Press.

Chatham, Lee Counties
BY AL MANNING, CHATHAM-LEE COUNTIES REGIONAL REP
AMANNING@RICHKWOK.COM

2011 was a good year for NCWN members in Chatham and Lee Counties. Three of our members—Sheila Bolt-Rudesill, Baggage; Ashley Memory, Naked and Hungry; and Joanie McLean, Place—had books published last year. Several other members had poems or short stories accepted by various literary journals. We have been busy.

Noted author and teacher Marjorie Hudson is presenting her acclaimed Kitchen Table Writers Workshops at the Rosemary House Bed & Breakfast in Pittsboro, and at McIntyre’s Books in Fearrington Village.

Pittsboro Writers’ Morning Out continues on second Saturdays at Davenport & Winkleperry coffee shop. Readings, critiques, editing, and publishing—anything connected with writing is open for discussion, and sometimes arguments, by this group. There is a world of useful information interchanged among the members.

In April, to celebrate National Poetry Month, we are soliciting a poem a day from local writers to be published on our blog at www.pittsboro-wmo.blogspot.com.

We also plan to hold our popular Ultra Flash Fiction and Poetry contests later in 2012.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

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REGIONAL REP ROUND-UP

Central Carolina Community College is one of the few community colleges offering a creative writing curriculum in their Continuing Education Division. We work with them to help advertise the curriculum and the various workshops involved.

We also cooperate with the Chatham County Library to help advertise their literary events, such as their first annual Poetry Slam, which was a rousing success.

**Down East**
BY HELEN AITKEN, DOWN EAST REGIONAL REP
AITKENHB@YAHOO.COM

NCWN members “Down East” meet the last Monday of each month, at lunchtime, rotating locations between Jacksonville, Morehead City, and New Bern. We pass on information for local writing opportunities, contests, issues, and topics, plus we save some time for reading and networking. Discussion topics include “Establishing Goals,” “Writer Motivations,” “Smashing Writer’s Block,” “The Business of Writing,” and others.

Writers in Carteret, Craven, or Onslow counties who wish to join should contact Helen Aitken at ourwritersgroup@gmail.com for more details.

**Wake County**
BY ALICE OSBORN, WAKE COUNTY REGIONAL REP
AVOSBORN@EARTHLINK.NET

Wouldn’t it be great to meet the actual author at your next book club discussion? At Wonderland Book Club this will be a regular occurrence in 2012. We’ll host Val Nieman (Blood Clay), Mary Lambeth Moore (Sleeping with Patty Hearst), Elisa Lorello (Faking It), Marjorie Hudson (Accidental Birds of the Carolinas), Sandra Carrington-Smith (The Book of Obeah) and Nancy Peacock (A Broom of One’s Own). Talk about a fantastic lineup of talented NC authors!

I’ve led the Wonderland Book Club for four years, and in the three years that I’ve been the NCWN Wake County Regional Rep, this book club has served as my outreach effort for bringing writers and readers together. This year, with so many authors visiting, my goal is to draw new members to our club and have them inspire aspiring writers who want to discover more about the craft of writing and the business of publishing.

Through Wonderland, our visiting authors will also expand their readership. Our core group that has been meeting regularly over the years have all become friends and have grown in our reading and writing strengths. Many veteran members have even had books published!

We start off our meetings with a brief introduction of the goals of the club and the goals of the Network. Then we go around the circle introducing ourselves to the other members in 30 seconds or less. As an active networker myself, I’ve coached many writers on the art of being succinct and purposeful when making introductions. After this segment, we enter into our lively book discussion, and if the author’s there, she discusses her writing and publishing journey with us. Finally, we rate the book on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being highest. (Don’t worry, authors, we don’t rate when you’re in the room!)

If you’ve been on the fence about visiting the Wonderland Book Club, this is the year to come on down! Prior reading of the books is encouraged, but not required. Enjoy food, deep conversation, and the joy of reading with friends.

Wonderland Book Club meets the last Friday of every month at the Center for Excellence (please note new location), 3803-B Computer Drive, Ste. 106, Raleigh, NC 27609, from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. Please tour our website which includes our reading schedule: http://www.meetup.com/wonderlandbookclub.

Interested in being a featured author in 2013? Email Alice at avosborn@earthlink.net.

Congratulations to our new Regional Reps!

**Annie Maier** (Charlotte Metro — South) & **Charlene Pollano and Sea Quills** (Cape Fear Coast)
REGIONAL REP ROUND UP

NCWN Regional Rep Guidelines

NCWN Regional Reps are volunteers who wish to bring writers together in their part of the state, and encourage membership in the Network.

“Regions” may vary in size, but usually encompass at least one county. Exceptions include high population areas such as Charlotte or Raleigh, where size and density may necessitate a Rep for certain parts of town.

Each Regional Rep will receive complimentary membership in the Network, as long as they meet the following requirements:

√ A Regional Rep should already be a Network member in good standing. (While Reps are welcome to recruit local volunteers to help them, we can only give the ‘Regional Rep’ title—and the complimentary membership—to one member at a time in each region.)

√ Plan, conduct, and promote at least one no-cost writers’ event per month in your region. Examples: open-mike readings, discussion or critique groups, readings by featured writers, writers’ gatherings.

√ Maintain list of NCWN members in your region, sent each month by Network staff. Make sure contact information is up-to-date, and members are receiving Network e-blasts. Send any updates and corrections to the Network staff.

√ Maintain your own list of writers in your region, collected at monthly events. Forward them e-blasts and other relevant news from the Network.

√ Keep supply of Network promotional materials (fliers, newsletters, etc.), and make them available at monthly events, “writerly” locations in your region, other literary events in your region.

√ Contact NCWN members and other writers in your region by e-mail at least once per month. Promote your literary event and others in your region, promote NCWN contests and conferences.

√ Send notice of your regional events to calendar@ncwriters.org for inclusion in the Network’s NC Literary Calendar. Check in with NCWN Executive Director once a month or so; let us know how your events are going—how many members are attending, how many non-members, how much interest you see in the Network, etc.

Any NCWN member interested in volunteering as a Regional Rep should contact Ed Southern, NCWN Executive Director, at ed@ncwriters.org.

...side note

Let’s crunch some numbers from 2011:

163. That’s how many times we doffed our caps and celebrated our members last year. How? Through the Hats Off! section of our website. Hats Off! congratulates our members who have been recently published, won awards, received stellar reviews, and more.

75. That’s how many member books were given the white-hot spotlight on our website. Our Book Buzz section highlights new releases written by our members.

51. That’s how many weekly e-mails we sent out announcing all the places our members were having events—readings, book signings, lectures, and workshops. This e-blast is sent on Thursdays, and all of the events can also be viewed on the NC Literary Calendar on our website, under the “Resources for Writers” tab.

Your regional reps do their best to keep us informed of all the exciting news around the state, but we can’t do it alone! Please let us know when something fantastic happens, or if you know of an event coming up you think other literary-minded folks would be interested in. Even if you’re sure it must already be on our radar, let us know anyway by e-mailing calendar@ncwriters.org.
Thoughts on the Coming Year

BY IAN FINLEY, 2012 PIEDMONT LAUREATE

I am very grateful to the Alamance, Durham, and Orange County Arts Councils, the United Arts Council of Wake County, and the Raleigh Arts Commission, for their creation of the position of Piedmont Laureate, and am humbled they selected me to serve this year. The Laureate serves an important function: to bring literature out of the background, into the community, and connect it with new audiences.

Besides being a writer, I serve as Director of Education at Raleigh’s Burning Coal Theatre Company. As a teacher, I’ve encountered diverse attitudes toward literature: that it’s a luxury to enjoy, a chore to endure, or an obstacle to fear. Personally, I believe it’s a tool: a hammer that builds up communities and the bridges between them. A crowbar we use to escape the prison of the self and understand others. I believe it’s a tool: a hammer that builds up communities and the bridges between them. By the best, this means that a play can be much greater than the sum of its parts, drawing on many different disciplines and requiring the contributions of many artists. It also means that drama is inherently collaborative: there are always many voices to listen to, many points of view to incorporate, many aspirations to fulfill. Drama, then, is community.

This is what I would like to explore: drama as an extension of community, and playwriting as a community effort. Through workshops and readings across the Piedmont, I want to bring drama into the awareness of the public, and provide them with tools to use the form to share their own experiences. I plan to work closely with diverse groups, urban and rural, student and adult, to help them explore their situation, find their voice, and put it on stage. By the end of 2012, I hope to have inspired other writers and to have created an original script, based on the characters and ideas developed by the participants in the workshops.

Few experiences are as powerful as seeing characters and concepts that had only existed in your mind made manifest on stage, given validity by the artistry of others. It’s one of those eye-opening moments that the arts, and only the arts, are capable of producing. In 2012, I hope to share that experience with people throughout the Piedmont, people who may not yet realize they are writers, but who still know they have something to say. That is why drama exists. And why I am so proud to serve as Laureate this year.

NC Poetry on the Bus

Raleigh Review’s NC Poetry On The Bus Campaign, in conjunction with Raleigh’s Capital Area Transit, is now open to poetry submissions by NC poets and writers. We want NC Poetry on the Bus to cover every public bus, train, and subway platform (if we had one) in the state. If you are interested in assisting us in bringing this to your community, please contact Cassandra Mannes at: coordinatingeditor@theraleighreview.org.

Eligibility and our definition of an NC Poet for this campaign: 1. If the poet has residency in the state of North Carolina, the submissions policy is open theme; 2. If the poet lives outside the state and has ties to North Carolina, the poems must have an element of place inside of North Carolina.

Visit www.raleighreview.org/NC_Poetry_on_the_Bus.html to submit.
In December, I went to Mount Airy to visit a historic tobacco warehouse, which has recently been converted into contemporary loft living spaces for working and low-income residents. I had come to lead a writing workshop, co-sponsored by the North Carolina Writers’ Network and the Community Affordable Housing Equity Corporation, or CAHEC. CAHEC is a nonprofit founded in 1992 to help develop affordable rental housing in North Carolina. Today CAHEC operates in ten states, plus the District of Columbia, and has expanded their mission to include tax-credit preservation and community revitalization projects. The Network has an ongoing agreement with CAHEC to provide writing workshops for their residents across the state. Each year, CAHEC selects nine of their residences to host workshops, and the Network provides the instructors.

I’d been asked to prepare something Christmas-y, as it was nearing that holiday. I was not familiar with CAHEC at the time, and could not determine much about the group I would be speaking to, except, of course, that its members would enjoy something to do with the holidays. I came up with a workshop called “Blue Christmas: Conflict and Tension in the Holiday Scene.”

I’d put a lot of energy into my planning, supposing that even novice writers would benefit from a lesson on conflict. We would begin with introductions and then a warm-up exercise that would send them straight into writing about Christmas from memory—favorite carols, movies, ornaments, stories from childhood. Once I had them going, we would talk about scene as the building block of narrative writing. From there, we would begin to focus more pointedly on building tension. I had hand-outs, writing prompts that included colored notecards, Christmas ornaments for inspiration.

Three women showed up at the property manager’s behest. They seemed not to know what they were in for. Whatever it was, it would be fun, they’d no doubt been told. All three were around retirement age. Two were pretty reserved; one seemed timid, while the other seemed more guarded than shy. The third was chatty and warm and had shown up wearing pajamas.

“Is this okay?” she asked.

“Of course,” I said, returning her smile. “I wish I’d worn mine.”

The introductions went well enough. The chatty one happily explained that it was her sister who could most benefit from the workshop, and that she was only there to take notes to share with her later. The sister would be arriving as soon as possible, but it was a shame we would have to start without her. She hoped she would hurry along. The guarded one said she thought it was a calligraphy class. She didn’t think she cared to write down anything personal. She would not need the notepad and pen I offered. She did not plan to write anything at all. The timid one explained that her husband had recently died, and that she was just trying to occupy her time. She had no particular interest in writing.

I scrapped my plans. I wasn’t even sure if I could get them to write at all, calligraphy or anything else.

We talked instead about stories. I shared with them that it had been oral storytelling that had led me to writing. My grandmother had been a great storyteller and that gift had been passed on to my father. I confessed my love of ghost stories and that I had written a book of folktales about haunted lighthouses. One woman, the guarded one, said she’d heard rumors that a ghost haunted the building we were in. A former tobacco warehouse employee, she said, re-telling the story as she’d heard it. One by one, the other women offered up little tidbits about themselves.

“It’s my sister that’s the writer,” the chatty woman said. “I don’t know the first thing about writing. I wouldn’t know where to begin. I worked in a bank all my life. Why, I wouldn’t know where to begin.”

“What did you do at the bank?” I asked.

“Well, I was a loan officer.”

“I bet you met a lot of people there,” I said, “heard a lot of stories. I bet you have lots of things to write about.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23
A group of distinguished North Carolinians will receive the North Carolina Award, the highest civilian honor the state bestows, at 8:00 pm on Thursday, November 10, at the N.C. Museum of History. Honorees this year are Charles E. Hamner, Jr., of Chapel Hill and H. Martin Lancaster, of Raleigh, both for Public Service; Trudy F.C. Mackay, of Raleigh, for Science; Ron Rash, of Cullowhee, for Literature; and Vollis Simpson, of Lucama, and Branford Marsalis, of Durham, both for Fine Arts. The Awards are administered by the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources.

“Each year, the North Carolina Awards are a chance for us to honor men and women who reflect the very best in imagination, exploration, creativity, and humanitarian service,” said Cultural Resources Secretary Linda A. Carlisle.

Ron Rash’s work shows his deep respect for mountain people, language, history, and culture. He is the author of 14 books, which range from novels to collections of short stories to volumes of poetry. The holder of the John Parris Chair in Appalachian Studies at Western Carolina University, Rash has reaped a harvest of prizes, among them the Novello Festival Novel Award, the O. Henry Award, the Sir Walter Raleigh Award, and the Frank O’Connor Award. In 2004 his life and work was the focus of the annual literary festival at Emory and Henry College, and in 2011 he was inducted into the Fellowship of Southern Writers.

Created by the General Assembly in 1961, the North Carolina Awards have been presented annually since 1964. The award recognizes significant contributions to the state and nation in the fields of fine arts, literature, public service and science. For additional information on the North Carolina Awards call 919-807-7389 or 919-807-7256.

An awards committee chaired by Jack Cozort of Raleigh selected recipients from nominations submitted by the public. Other committee members are Selma Fox of Charlotte, Charles Sanders of Durham, Marsha White Warren of Chapel Hill, and Pamela Myers of Asheville. Past recipients include William Friday, Romare Bearden, James Taylor, Gertrude Elion, John Hope Franklin, David Brinkley, Maya Angelou, and Billy Graham. For a complete list of recipients and more about the awards, go to www.ncculture.com.

About the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources
The N.C. Department of Cultural Resources annually serves more than 19 million people through its 27 historic sites, seven history museums, two art museums, the nation’s first state supported symphony orchestra, the State Library, the N.C. Arts Council and the State Archives.

The N.C. Department of Cultural Resources serves as a champion for North Carolina’s creative industry, which employs nearly 300,000 North Carolinians and contributes more than $41 billion to the state’s economy. To learn more visit www.ncculture.com.
Healing hurts. The space between “care” and “cure” is crammed with doctors, hospitals, and treatment plans. Identity shifts when people become patients.

The patient’s voyage has given rise to a popular form of memoir narrating a person’s journey into disease and back toward healing. The body of this work is part-storytelling and part-clinical narrative. The impact of this genre is transparency. These books clarify roles and responsibilities among patients, caregivers, and healthcare professionals. These authors make the compelling case for patients and their caregivers to work together to identify and preserve a space where healing thrives.

Patient narratives describe a diverse array of illnesses, treatments, and cultures. All conspire to support the transparency of experience that extends deep beyond clinical boundaries. When we read this genre, we are immersed in aspects of the non-clinical care of patients. Issues such as the role that emotions play in navigating health crises are given full exploration in this genre. Many writers turn their attention towards the value of human relationships that support healing. Whatever the vantage point, each author who narrates the patient’s journey works to build a counter-narrative that places the patient’s voice as the central figure within the health crisis. It is this sensitivity to the needs of the “whole” patient that we, authors of patients’ journeys, hope will translate into a deeper awareness for all caregivers: those within the clinical settings and those on the home front.

This genre demonstrates that while clinical medicine has been extremely effective in improving the quality of patients’ lives, the patient’s adjunct needs for social, psychological, and spiritual support is critical to successful clinical outcomes. How do we know this is true? Clinical research reveals the significance of non-clinical support systems to patient outcome. In addition to evidence-based medicine, we, as writers and readers, see that the volume of patient narratives keeps growing. Books keep appearing on bookshelves around the country about the journey from illness back to healing. Each story carries within it elements of non-clinical care that helped each patient find his or her footing after life-altering diagnosis or serious illness.

Occasionally heartbreaking, consistently independent, and hauntingly courageous, these patients’ voices describe with eloquence the double helix of human development: the dual shift between person morphing to patient and patient morphing back to person. Each story is carried along in a tide of hope for a better life. Sound familiar? It should. Consider Odysseus’ journey to the underworld. Homer didn’t stop at Book 11. No, it was Odysseus’ journey back home to Ithaca that holds us mesmerized. We all know the storyline: hope disguised as journey makes its way past hell and lives to talk about it.

We are writers, and hope finds voice through our fingertips. We are writers, and hope finds voice through our fingertips. We create characters, tell stories, and build spaces where the impossible manages to breathe. Our roles of spokesperson, commentator, and editor blur effortlessly when we ply our craft. We seek to strengthen our ties to each other to rededicate ourselves to our talents. The transformation tales of person-to-patient and patient-to-person reminds us all that we are not our disease. Our personhood is never fully erased when we become patients.
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Maybe this is you: Right now, today, you have completed a piece of writing, and you still see yourself full of purpose for your writing and with focused energy to spare.

Or, no, that’s not you? Maybe instead, you’ve finished a piece of writing you like—poetry, prose, drama, or some bright original amalgam of them—yet even after reading it to a friend, family member, or someone in your book group or writing group, you have second thoughts, qualms even. “Is this any good?” you wonder. Your mother is enthralled with it, but….. You’ve done your best with the piece, but you’re not sure it’s ready—whatever that means—for primetime: entering it in a competition; sending it off for possible publication; or uploading it on your blog.

If you stand at any of these moments-in-time/place, in any of these quandaries of quality, consider sending the new piece—a story, a group of poems, a novel, a creative nonfiction essay, memoir, biography, journalistic work, scholarly paper, the first act of a play, whatever—to NCWN’s Critiquing & Editing Service for an objective and thoughtful reading/editing by an experienced, professional writer here in the Network, plus:

• A chance to dialogue about your work with established writers and editors of varied backgrounds and areas of expertise. After using the service, one of our members, Reid Wilson, said that “It was unbelievably helpful…. I was totally impressed, and it was well worth the price.”

In 2011, the Network’s critiquers consulted on and edited 25 manuscripts, but we believe that with this communication, we can increase the number of writer-members we assist in improving the quality of their manuscripts in the coming year. As R.W. Emerson wrote, “‘Tis the good reader that makes the good book,” and our critiquers have made careers of being good readers—they are eager and willing to serve you and your writing. Emerson also said, “Our chief want in life is somebody who shall make us do what we can,” and in today’s parlance, that means “…who shall make us do the very best we can!”

There’s nothing as exhilarating as meeting a professional critiquer who, through tough love and mega-encouragement, can help you bring your writing to detailed clarity and enjoyably high quality. Plus, it’s fun to communicate closely with another writer about our field of work.

Here’s what you do to use the Critiquing and Editing Service:

✓ Prepare your manuscript: All manuscripts must be double-spaced, single-sided, with 1-inch margins, and in 12-point font, preferably Times New Roman, no fancy fonts or script. Poetry must be single-spaced with a limit of one poem/page.

✓ Read over the names and editing areas of all our critiquers, then select and indicate in your cover letter to NCWN your first preference plus two alternatives. See the list of critiquers on page 22. If you do not select a first, second, and third choice of critiquer, we will select an appropriate critiquer based on who is available.

✓ Send your manuscript, along with payment in a personal check made out to the North Carolina Writers’ Network and a self-addressed envelope with postage sufficient enough for the critiquer to return your manuscript, to:

NCWN Critiquing Service
P.O. Box 21591
Winston-Salem, NC 27120

✓ Fees: A base fee of $30 must be included in the total amount paid to the Network, plus:

1. Prose/Poetry/Plays/Screenplays (5-page minimum): 5-50 pages—$3/page; each page after that, $2/page. Poems must be single-spaced, with one poem only per page.

2. Manuscript Consultation/Mentoring (done after your manuscript has been critiqued): $50/hour, in person or via phone, with no base fee.

✓ The critiquer will return the manuscript with his/her edits and comments directly to you.

✓ If you have any questions or wish to schedule a consultation, call us at 336-293-8844 or e-mail ed@ncwriters.org.

We hope to hear from you very soon! We’re happy to help send you in the right direction.
NORTH CAROLINA WRITERS’ NETWORK

CRITIQUING and EDITING SERVICE

WRITERS’ NETWORK  The North Carolina Writers’ Network offers an ongoing literary critiquing, editing, and manuscript consultation service for its members. Through this program, developing or emerging writers have the opportunity to open a dialogue about their work with established writers and editors of varying backgrounds and areas of expertise. (For more information and a detailed list of critiquer bios, please visit our Web site at www.ncwriters.org.)

The Network’s roster of critiquers is selected in accordance with the highest standards of excellence, including publication requirements and extensive mentoring and editing experience.

ANN DEAGON—poetry
MAGGI ANN GRACE—fiction, poetry
LUCINDA GREY—fiction, poetry
LINDA HOBSON—fiction, nonfiction
BETSY HUMPHREYS—nonfiction (journalistic or creative)
RICHARD KRAWIEC—fiction, poetry, nonfiction
LLOYD LITTLE—fiction
SUSAN STAFFORD KELLY—line editing, fiction
STEVEN MANCHESTER—line editing, fiction
RUTH MOOSE—fiction, poetry
JACQUELINE OGBURN—children’s fiction

ELIZABETH OLIVER—flash fiction, short fiction, nonfiction, line editing
WILLIAM OLSEN—screenplays
ALICE OSBORN—speculative fiction, fiction, memoir, poetry
SANDRA REDDING—fiction, poetry, nonfiction
AMY ROGERS—fiction, nonfiction
ELLEN SHEPARD—screenplays, plays
MICHAEL SHINN—mystery, nonfiction
ELEANORA E. TATE—children’s fiction
KARYN TRAUT—plays
ROBERT WALLACE—fiction, nonfiction, line editing

Critiquing and Editing Service Fees

Base fee: $30.00

Prose/Poetry/Plays/Screenplays:
5-50 pages — $3.00/page
Each page thereafter — $2.00/page

Manuscript Consultation/Mentoring
$50.00/hr. (in person or via phone)

Postcritique, with no base fee:
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Please send your manuscript, along with payment and a self-addressed envelope with postage sufficient enough for the critiquer to return your manuscript, to: NCWN Critiquing and Editing Service, PO Box 21591, Winston-Salem, NC 27120.

For more information, please contact the Network at 336-293-8844 or at ed@ncwriters.org.
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CAHEC - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

She smiled, and just then her sister arrived. “Oh, but here she is. My sister here has been writing all her life. Even as a child.”

“It’s true,” the sister chimed in. “I had these stories in my head, but I couldn’t write yet, didn’t know the alphabet, you know? So I would go to my sister’s room and ask her to write down what I told her.”

The older sister nodded, smiling proudly.

Unbidden, the other woman, the one who seemed guarded, offered that she might like to write down all that had happened to her. She’d had some bad experiences, things she didn’t want to talk about or even think about, but things, she said, that were important, things that might help someone else. She would do it if it might help someone else, she said.

“Yes,” I told her. “Begin there.”

“I would have to change the names,” she said.

“Of course,” I said. “That’s a good idea.”

The other woman, the one whose husband had died, could not be persuaded to speak much at all. Still, I felt that she was taking it all in, as any close and intent watcher will do.

It was drizzling when I stepped outside, rounding my shoulders over my crate full of handouts and colored notecards. I had come to talk about conflict, but that was stuff for beginners. Conflict these women knew. Permission is what they’d come for.
Founded in 1985, the nonprofit North Carolina Writers’ Network is among the largest statewide literary arts organizations in the country. The Network’s mission is to connect, lead, and promote emerging and established writers through workshops, conferences, readings, literary competitions, a resource center and library, a Critiquing and Editing Service, and a summer writers-in-residence program. Its Center for Business and Technical Writing provides on-site workshops tailored to the specific needs of North Carolina companies. For $75 a year ($55 for seniors and students), members receive a bimonthly newsletter, e-updates, a range of consultation services, and discounts on all Network-sponsored programs and events.

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