Actor, comedian, and writer Nancy Giles provided the keynote at the 39th Annual IWWG Summer Conference at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania, July 15-22. Giles, winner of two Emmy Awards for her on-air commentaries on the acclaimed CBS News Sunday Morning, talked about her career trajectory and the impact of her upbringing and early professional experience in finding her own voice.

Giles toured with Chicago’s famed Second City comedy troupe, was Jay Thomas’ sidekick on his Morning Show on Jammin’ 105 in New York City, and was the announcer and co-host of the cult favorite Fox After Breakfast. She starred in two ABC television series, playing girl GI Frankie Bunsen for three seasons on China Beach and hostile waitress Connie on the sitcom Delta. She had guest roles on The Jury, L.A. Law, Spin City, Law & Order, Dream On, and The Fresh Prince of Bel Air. She appeared in the 1985 Broadway production of the musical Mayor. Giles has offered her social and political perspectives on MSNBC’s Hardball with Chris Matthews, Melissa Harris-Perry, All In with Chris Hayes, Politics Nation with Al Sharpton, and Up with Steve Kornacki. “On topics from politics and race to pop culture and body image, Giles says, “I want to make people laugh, and I want to entertain them, but I also want to... -continued on page 2
**Erie Creative Writing and Poetry Conference...continued from page 1**

other, writing out of that experience.” She adds, “Please bring to the workshop something that has called to you, and you pick up, from nature.”

Marj Hahne will be offering a workshop entitled *Hybrid Lit: To Genre-Bend/Blend/Blur/Bust for Truer Narratives*. Marj quotes poet Philip Schultz in a 2008 interview, “Emotional truth is the reward of digging deeply enough to find the truth about how one really feels, but in order to convey this truth with any force, or artistry, one needs to create a form of expression, and this form determines its own genuine information” (*Five Points*, Vol. 12, No. 2). She explains, “We’ll survey the prose poem, flash fiction, flash nonfiction, haibun, zuihitsu, the lyric essay, surreal memoir, and the graphic poem and essay to elicit fresher ways of seeing and saying the scenes and stories that compose your life.”

Both workshops will be offered twice, once in the morning and once in the afternoon.

The event is $95 for nonmembers, $75 for members, and $45 for students, and includes a luncheon catered by *Make It Fabulous*. In addition, any member of the IWWG can participate in a book fair to be held during lunchtime. For more information, see the flyer on page 3.

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**Nancy Giles...continued from page 1**

provoke thought and discussion.” Giles is a funny, perceptive, and provocative observer of today’s world.

Longtime Guild member Heather Cariou reached out to Giles, a personal friend, to invite her to the Conference. Giles delighted her audience by staying for three days, joining the Guild, and promising to make next year’s conference a priority. According to one conference participant, “Nancy Giles was a great choice. Her message to us was relevant as writers and as women in this very complicated, very challenging world.”

If you honor the complexity of your own life — if you grant us entry into moments that hold shame or hurt or heat, and if you’re willing to follow that heat, to feel out where all the small fires burn, then your readers will trust you. They’ll find flashes of themselves. … I’m interested in essays that follow the infinitude of a private life toward the infinitude of public experience. I’m wary of seeking this resonance by extracting some easy moral from the grit and complication of personal particularity: love hurts, time heals, always look on the bright side. Instead, I’m drawn to essays that allow the messy threads of grief or incomprehension to remain ragged, to direct our gazes outward.

The International Women’s Writing Guild

Presents

Flagship City

Creative Writing and Poetry Conference

Saturday, November 5, 2016

Erie Art Museum

411 State Street, Erie, PA 16501

Use the E. Fifth St. at State St. Entrance

Through the efforts of Guild member Marisa Moks-Unger, Poet Laureate of Erie County, the IWWG will offer this one-day event which will feature two workshops directed by poet and memoirist Myra Shapiro, and poet and essayist Marj Hahne. The workshops are appropriate for all skill levels of women age 18 and older.

Myra Shapiro - Poet and Memoirist

Myra Shapiro is the author of three collections of poetry: I’ll See You Thursday, in Greenwich Village We Talk of Love, and 12 Floors Above the Earth. She has also written a memoir, Four Sublets: Becoming a Poet in New York.

Myra, born in the Bronx, returned to New York City after 45 years in Georgia and Tennessee, where she married, raised two daughters, and worked as a librarian and English teacher. She was awarded the New School’s Dylan Thomas Poetry Award, named a finalist for the Poetry Society of America’s Robert H. Winner Memorial Award, and nominated for a Pushcart Award. She serves on the Board of Directors at Poets House as well as teaches poetry for the International Women’s Writing Guild.

Marj Hahne - Poet and Essayist

Marj Hahne is a freelance editor and writing teacher from Longmont, Colorado. A 2015 MFA graduate from the Rainier Writing Workshop, she has performed and taught at over 100 venues around the country, as well as been featured on public radio and television programs.

Her poems have been published in Paterson Literary Review, Painted Bride Quarterly, Mad Poets Review, and Schuylkill Valley Journal of the Arts, as well as in the anthologies Burn Rush the Page: A Def Poetry Jam, An Eye For An Eye Makes The Whole World Blind: Poets On 9/11, Off the Cuffs: Poetry by and about the police. Marj’s poems have also appeared in several art exhibits, as well as been incorporated in the work of visual artists and dancers. She has a poetry CD titled natspeak.

Keynote Speaker

Marisa Moks-Unger
Poet Laureate of Erie County, PA

Conference Fee

Members $75
Non-Members $95
Students $45
Includes lunch catered by Make It Fabulous
Cancellation Policy: full refund minus $25 admin fee through October 21st
no refund after October 22nd

Schedule

9:00 a.m. Registration and coffee
9:30 a.m. Welcome and Introduction to The Guild
10:00 a.m. Workshops – Myra Shapiro and Marj Hahne
12:00 p.m. Lunch and Keynote by Erie County Poet Laureate Marisa Moks-Unger
1:00 p.m. Book Fair
2:00 p.m. Workshops - Myra Shapiro and Marj Hahne, Groups Switch
4:00 p.m. Open Readings
5:15 p.m. Closing

Register now! Space is limited!

Registration Opens on September 28th
Click here to register and/or visit http://www.iwwg.org

Members of IWGG are invited to participate in a book fair to be held during lunchtime.
Participants will also have the opportunity to share the work created at that day’s workshops at a late afternoon open mic reading.
Meet the 2016 Summer Conference Scholarship Recipients

The Spirited Woman Empowerment Scholarship

The Spirited Woman, founded by writer Nancy Mills in 2001, is a women’s empowerment community dedicated to supporting women to express their spirited woman selves. In 2012, Mills established The Spirited Woman Foundation, which makes donations to nonprofits to “help heal and support women through actions of empowerment.” This year, the Foundation offered the Spirited Woman Empowerment Scholarship to help a woman attend the IWWG Summer Conference. The recipient, Karen Devaney of Sacramento, California, tells us, “For the past ten years, I have wanted to attend the IWWG summer writing conference but for a sundry of reasons was unable. One of the biggest hurdles was finances…[W]hen I read that I was being awarded the Spirited Woman scholarship, I literally leapt for joy…This is an exciting opportunity, and I am honored [to] have the great fortune to learn from and engage with prolific women writers as well as those, like myself, still carving out a name for themselves. I remain committed to my work and feel very grateful to finally attend the IWWG Summer Conference.” Find Karen’s “Ode to a Conference” in Giving Voice, on page 30.

The Livingkindness Foundation Scholarship

The Livingkindness Foundation, founded by IWWG member Jan Phillips, is a global network of activists and grassroots philanthropists transforming creative potential into compassionate action. The Foundation offered a full scholarship this year to “a woman who is using her creativity in the service of a better world.” Recipient Constance Garcia-Barrio of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, says, “The scholarship means an exceptional chance to meet and learn from accomplished women writers. This generous gift will equip me with crucial skills, such as blogging, and promote the growth and serendipity that I could find only in a supportive community.”

The Jordan Lee Ulrich Remembrance Scholarship

IWWG member Lisa Ulrich lost her daughter, Jordan Lee, to cystic fibrosis a day after her 23rd birthday in 2013. When Lisa couldn’t attend this year’s Summer Conference, she decided to donate her registration fee to support another woman writer, in Jordan’s memory. Recipient Shawn Jackson of St. Petersburg, Florida, says, “I am so thankful for being granted a full scholarship to attend this year’s conference. I had paid to attend the conference earlier this year, just in case ‘something’ happened; that way, if something unexpected DID happen, at least my conference and travel would be covered. Well, something did happen. I lost my job, and everything I had planned in advance had to be canceled. I was heartbroken, so much so that I couldn’t even place the call myself. My husband, Mike, called for me…The scholarship posted, but I hesitated to apply because I thought I didn’t have a shot at getting it. I thought others who were more deserving would get it over me. Luckily for me, I have two cheerleaders, Mike and Angela. They reminded of my worth, and they encouraged me to apply, and I was granted the scholarship. YIPPIE!! Being granted this scholarship lets me attend this year as an actual member. What I mean is, last year I was a newbie member, and I hung back in the shadows. This year, my name is recognizable, and I don’t get to hide, which means I have to be bolder and resist my introverted side. Telling everyone ‘Thank you’ doesn’t seem like enough. A gazillion thank you’s from the bottom of my heart.”
EVALUATION REPORT
from the
2016 IWWG Summer Conference

The most important thing that I experienced was writing, which sounds comical coming from a writer. But the willingness to start again and again and again as a beginner, no matter how many years that I've been a professional writer, was an awe-inspiring experience for me. Each instructor, each participant, each event held some piece of a mosaic that made up a beautiful image of the week. To take home prompts, ideas of activism, models of rituals, and ways to enhance my output through play was a prayer answered as a gift of sheer abundance. And for that I am truly blessed.

Summer Conference Participant

The single most important thing (I learned or experienced)? I have to choose just one? Joan Nichols' class on writing a scene made the process come to life for me. For the first time, I wrote the first draft of a complete scene in a fifteen-minute free-write! I've always marveled at those who could do it, and I did it! Rewrites to follow...Jan Gary's class on narrative arc of memoir explained to my left-brained self how the story of a life is told in an intelligent, cohesive manner. I came away with ideas for a writing project that provide fodder for a potential mosaic of memoir pieces. If I have to choose one event, it would be the laughter shared with good friends. The deep-belly, resounding laughter that comes from mutual respect, love, and really funny women!

Summer Conference Participant
The participants and workshop leaders at the 39th Annual IWWG Summer Conference were asked to complete an online survey about three weeks after the close of the conference. A total of 92 individuals, or 64.3% of conference participants, responded to the survey. This high response rate makes the results "generalizable," meaning that we can assume the responses to be true overall for conference participants. (A response rate of less than 60% would be true only for those taking the survey.)

We share here some of the highlights from the evaluation, beginning with conference logistics. Mean responses on a Likert Scale of 1 to 4 (with 1 = very easy and 4 = very difficult) ranged from 3.7 to 3.8, indicating that the check-in process at Muhlenberg, getting to and from workshops, and getting assistance when needed were very easy.

Thank you again to "ALL" the incredible persons at the desk who were present and pleasant all week, taking questions and simply going out of their way to make things JUST right!

- Conference Participant

**The Registration Process**

![Graph showing mean responses on a Likert Scale of 1 to 4](image)

Scale of 1-4, with 1 = very difficult and 4 = very easy; n = number of respondents

We share here some of the highlights from the evaluation, beginning with conference logistics. Mean responses on a Likert Scale of 1 to 4 (with 1=very easy and 4=very difficult) ranged from 3.7 to 3.8, indicating that the check-in process at Muhlenberg, getting to and from workshops, and getting assistance when needed were very easy.

Conference participants said:

- **Having people at the registration desk at all times was an incredible help—a great luxury for a full-week conference.**
- **LOVED THIS VENUE—the dorm, the dining hall, the workshop and other spaces. Loved that so much of what we did was in one place!!!**
- **Everyone was super-friendly. I am directionally challenged so it helpful to have someone literally walk me to my first workshop and explain the various areas.**
The Opening Ceremony

The Opening Ceremony is a time to learn about the week, hear a keynote speaker, have workshop leaders provide brief descriptions of the week’s offerings, and have an opportunity to network with others.

“Housekeeping information” about the facility and the structure of the week received a mean rating of 3.7 on a 4-point scale, as did the keynote address by Nancy Giles and the description of the workshops by the workshop leaders. The lowest rating was given to the opportunity to network with others after the ceremony. While a few people felt that the ceremony went too long, that it failed to include enough ritual, and that workshop descriptions were redundant given the availability of written materials, others very much appreciated hearing and seeing the keynote speaker and workshop leaders.

Conference participants said:

◆ Please bring Nancy Giles back! The best keynote speaker I’ve ever heard. I attended a few workshops I never would have if not for the workshop leader selling it to me at the Opening Ceremony. And that was great fun!

◆ I loved opening night. Great tone set from the get-go. Nancy Giles was a great choice. Her message to us was relevant as writers and as women in this very complicated, very challenging world. It was helpful to hear each workshop leader in person, because I was able to get a vibe from each of them that was far more useful than just reading their descriptions in the book (don’t stop producing the book, however—how great it is to have that as a reference throughout the week)...And thank you for being diligent about housekeeping information—it always answers questions I have already in my head but never seem to ask anyone!

◆ It felt a bit too long at times, but I know how hard it is to pack all the info in that needs to be said, and to keep everyone’s remarks within time limits. I might try for a shorter keynote next year, as that seems like the easiest place to trim a few minutes. (If you need to, you could call it “kickoff” or “opening” remarks or something, which might give the speaker an indication that their remarks should be shorter rather than longer.) Having said that, I was so glad to hear Nancy Giles, and even more thrilled that she participated in the conference.

◆ I thought the opening went well...But I do wish there was something of ritual or spirit to mark that as we begin the conference we are entering the sacred space of creativity and that we are each/all embarking on a journey.

It was wonderful. The description of the workshops was extremely valuable—I ended up taking workshops I hadn’t planned to take based on the descriptions and I am so grateful that I didn’t miss out on them. The descriptions were much more helpful coming straight from the leaders than from the written materials.
The Venue

This was The Guild’s first year at beautiful Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Conference participants were asked to rate the quality of the venue—the dorms, the dining hall, the classrooms.

Two types of dorm rooms were available to participants. In Taylor Residence Hall, participants could opt to have a double room with private bath, or pay extra to turn the double room into a single with private bath. In Robertson and South, participants could have a private room in a suite of four rooms that shared a bath, a kitchenette with refrigerator and microwave, and a sitting area. Each floor of these dorms also had gathering places.

On a 4-point Likert Scale, with 1=not at all satisfied and 4=very satisfied, participants rated the accessibility of the dorms to registration, classrooms, and dining at 3.4, cleanliness of the dorms at 3.6, and the general ambiance of the dorms at 3.2. Participants were most dissatisfied with temperature control in the dorms, finding the rooms very cold on the first few nights. (In fact, conference staff purchased and sold blankets at cost to conference participants; most people later donated these blankets to member Kathleen A. O’Shea’s women’s shelter.)

Conference participants said:

♦ Frigid temps in dorms were a serious problem first two nights; very workable after that. To have to buy a blanket on site is extreme! A mattress pad and the option of additional blankets, pillows, towels would be ideal if possible.

♦ I should have realized this ahead of time (as dorm rooms are, well, dorm rooms), but it would have been nice to have a heads-up about the lack of lamps in the dorms. It was nice to have the "hang out" space of the lounges in the dorms. Thank you for your responsiveness during the conference to the challenge of it being too cold in the dorms.

♦ The ambiance was exactly what I expected for a dorm—clean and sufficient!

♦ No complaints considering the cost!

♦ The quad arrangement was wonderful. Being able to adjust one’s own AC was wonderful HAVING AC was life-saving, and wonderful. I liked the design of four rooms down a hall. I liked having a place to meet and greet in the quad. I LIKED everything in Robertson!

♦ I totally loved the lounge areas, where a group of us would hang out every night. Great to have a fridge. But I need to bring a mattress pad and a blanket for next year. And earplugs! The acoustics in the room weren’t great.

♦ It’s a dorm. I could not have expected more or better. There was nothing terrible nor anything that IWWG needed to do to make it better. For the cost, it was fine.

I write for those women who do not speak, for those who do not have a voice because they were so terrified, because we are taught to respect fear more than ourselves. We’ve been taught that silence would save us, but it won’t.

- Audre Lourde
Dining

Muhlenberg’s dining hall is one of the top-rated in the country for the selection and quality of food, and this was reflected in the ratings given by conference participants. Participants rated the quality of the food at 3.8 on a 4.0 scale. Quantity of food received a 3.9 rating, and variety of food received a 3.6 rating. (Because we were the only group eating on campus during the first three days of the conference, choices were somewhat more limited than later in the week, when we were joined by a large group of international students.) Cleanliness of the dining room received a rating of 3.9.

Conference participants said:

♦ The food was so great it was a challenge not to overeat without realizing it! Wonderful options for veggie and healthy eating.

♦ Fabulous selections and the staff were incredibly hospitable from the start to the finish of our event.

♦ Eating in that “refectory” was an aesthetic gift: the wood ceiling, the high two-story windows, the view, the agreeable “hostess” at the desk, the thought that went into “take-away cups” for coffee. Loved it.

♦ The dining room rocked. Food was great quality, good variety and the people there were so nice and professional. It especially rocked when I found out I could get coffee from the little setup actually in the dining hall, and get carry-out cups.

♦ I gained three pounds. I really enjoyed the food...too much.

♦ Outstanding warmth from staff, beautiful dining room with outside option. Best ever for The Guild.

Muhlenberg Student Ambassadors

Carl (right, top) and Mark (right, bottom) were Muhlenberg students assigned to The Guild as special ambassadors. They assisted conference participants with registration; they carted luggage for physically challenged participants (even though that wasn’t part of their official responsibilities); and they answered questions and linked us to resources, as needed.

Peninah Ingabire (bottom) is an international student from Rwanda who is mentored by IWWG member and workshop leader Pamela Varkony. Peninah joined us to answer questions about the college and gave a tour, as well.

A special thanks to these very kind, very professional, and very patient young people—as well as the many other students and staff who assisted us at various times over the course of the week.
Monday Night “Open Studio” with Suzi Banks Baum

Monday night is traditionally our “free night,” but this year Suzi Banks Baum offered an Open Studio focused on “mail art” for those looking for creative stimulation. Mail art is a medium of expression and connection. This was an opportunity to play with up-cycled materials to create one-of-a-kind mail-able art in the good company of our IWWG sisterhood. Jan Phillips and friends provided a spontaneous serenade and sing-along—the perfect antidote to the intensity of the writing week.

Conference participants said:

♦ It was so fun, especially when we were serenaded to by the Guild Sister Singers! Great way to relax and get to know people who practice different genres!

♦ The Open Salon was a brilliant idea! Sharing scissors and glue sticks was so much fun and the impromptu a capella ensemble was a bonus for the ears! Please include again next year!

♦ I enjoyed the “openness” of the hours, with Jan’s group singing and people moving around. I know some important conversations happened over the art making and that people who might not have otherwise met, did. That was very satisfying to witness. I would do this again or support someone else to offer something like it.

♦ This was a perfect event for our Monday night off. It was laid-back, enjoyable, and a lot of fun. It also provided a great venue for spontaneous connecting through songs and laughter. Please continue to offer this in the future; it is wonderful!

♦ The publicness (and lack of other things going on) meant a lot of people who were not participating stopped in and talked loudly (and others sang loudly) which was disruptive to concentration. This was a problem of it being the night off, perhaps, as well. Also some were able to sit close to all the materials, others had to get up to get each thing—might have been better to bunch some tables together into a big block?
In response to the news of the police shootings in Baton Rouge and at the request of some conference participants, Connie Garcia-Barrio offered to facilitate an open discussion about race. The discussion involved about 40 women, and took place on Tuesday night in the Light Lounge after Open Readings. Participants rated having the opportunity for discussion on a timely and potentially controversial discussion at 3.8 on a 4.0 scale, the ability of the facilitator to honor differing opinions and points of view at 3.6, and the overall value of this type of discussion at 3.6. Over four out of five participants (84.2%) indicated they would like to see discussions on timely topics of this sort offered at future conferences; 15.8% were unsure. The Guild would like to express its appreciation to Connie Garcia-Barrio for her willingness to step into the role of facilitator with no prep time and very little notice.

Conference participants said:

♦ I really appreciated the intent behind this, and I think it's important to create spaces for this type of discussion....I would have appreciated some centering/meditation as part of it, to keep us in our own bodies, and a suggestion or mandate to speak only from our own experience, something like that...I came away feeling drained. Still I'm glad the attempt was made.

♦ Through my choices in scheduling, I was unable to attend any of the social justice workshops. This discussion really helped put voice to that need to meet with other concerned women to collect ideas and to come up with some possible solutions. What I did not like was the fact that some of the women were still consumed with fear and really struggled with being able to understand the issue from another’s perspective.

♦ I didn’t speak but I thoroughly enjoyed listening and thought it was a great opportunity for discussion and connection.

♦ I thought we were going to talk about the Baton Rouge and Dallas shootings, and possibly come to some analysis based on who we were—women, writers—and what a feminist understanding could add to making sense of what happened, and how IWWG could specifically respond...I was somewhat disappointed with the binary approach—black and white, quite literally. I think if The Guild wants to offer an anti-oppression workshop as part of its track, that would be great, as would other facilitated conversations in which members can speak heart-to-heart. It just didn’t work for me, maybe because I’ve had hundreds of these conversations, and I actually wanted to go much deeper than we did.

♦ Connie Garcia-Barrio did an outstanding job with an almost impossible task. Put me back to similar conversations in the sixties. The more task-oriented among us got very impatient with the seeming lack of immediate conclusions reached. But it is the very fact that these conversations are undertaken at all, especially in the beginning, that are both remarkable and of almost immeasurable valuable. I commend Connie’s courage, integrity, and her open heart.
Performing Your Ten-Minute Play with Kelly DuMar

Over the past decade, the 10-minute play has become a regular feature of theatre companies and festivals around the US, offering both novice and experienced playwrights an opportunity to see their writing performed. In Kelly DuMar’s workshop, participants developed a working draft of a ten-minute play. During a specially scheduled additional session (open to all conference attendees), volunteer actors read the plays in a special performance at the Red Door Lounge that drew an audience of over 50 conference participants. Feedback suggests this very special workshop was a winner.

Both participants and audience members were asked about their satisfaction with the venue, having their production staged, getting to see the work of peers staged, and the timing of performances. On a 4-point scale, with 1=not at all satisfactory and 4=very satisfactory, 49 participants and audience members rated the venue (the Red Door Lounge) at a mean of 3.7. Ten workshop participants discussed getting to have their production staged, with a satisfaction score of 4.0. A total of 48 individuals responded about getting the chance to see the work that their peers developed, and rated it at 3.9. Finally, the mean for the timing of the production (after dinner, before Open Readings) was given a mean score of 3.8.
Performing Your Ten-Minute Play with Kelly DuMar

Conference participants said:

◆ Different and very entertaining. Even though I'm not interested in playwriting, this was a good event to attend.

◆ The plays and the players were very impressive! I enjoyed all of the plays! Such quality in so short a time, wonderful!

◆ Much as I've appreciated the memoir workshops by Susan and earlier years by Maureen and critical advice from Judy, what has really changed and helped my approach to writing have been last two years' monologue/playwriting workshops by Kelly. PLEASE CONTINUE.

◆ Perhaps prepare more seating in advance towards the back of the room so we don't have to be disturbed by latecomers. Any chance of getting mics on the performers?

◆ This was fantastic! It was moving, funny, and beautiful. I really enjoyed watching these readings and would love to see this in the future as well.

◆ This was so much fun. Great writers, great actors. Made me want to take the class.

◆ I am in awe at the quality of each of the works. Kudos to Kelly and to her writers. Please offer it again; I'd like to try it next year!

◆ The performances were an incredible opportunity for all involved! Bravo! Brava!

◆ Give it a better stage, with better seating. If it was done on the same stage as the Open Readings, I think it would have been more comfortable for the audience, and possibly easier to hear as well.

◆ The sound system was not good in the Red Door so it was hard to hear all the words. Maybe the cause was the round room so it depended where one sat and where the actors were facing.

◆ Chuck Bergman is a saint.*

*(Editor’s note: Linda Bergman [Screenwriting] was accompanied to the conference by her husband, Chuck Bergman, who helped us with setup on registration day, then discreetly retreated to his dorm room to work for the week. When asked by the 10-Minute Play performers to assist with the performances, he gamely agreed. (Chuck is an actor, among many other gifts.) Chuck’s good nature and generosity was so contagious, he was invited to Closing Night by popular acclaim, where he was proclaimed “an honorary woman.” The unique Mr. Bergman understood and appreciated the compliment fully.)
The Book Fairs

Two book fairs were held, one on Sunday evening and one on Thursday evening, both over the dinner hour in the Light Lounge, which is the reception area for the conference room in which Open Readings were held. Any IWWG member in good standing can sell her books at any conference or event sponsored by The Guild, regardless of whether she is teaching or presenting in that particular venue. Participants are allowed to sell books and mixed-media items (e.g., note cards, CDs). Nearly 40 women participated in this year’s book fairs, and 31 of them responded to the evaluation survey.

![Bar chart showing ratings](chart.png)

Participants rated the venue at 3.9 on a 4-point Likert Scale. They also rated the amount of table space provided at 3.9. (Conference organizers assign space randomly in order to ensure a fair distribution of space.) The timing of the book fair (over the dinner hour and before Open Readings) received a slightly lower rating, at 3.6.

Several participants indicated they would like to see the Thursday evening book fair eliminated, as it tends to be poorly attended. Others were opposed to this, because it effectively bars people who arrive on Monday from participating. A few individuals advocated for allowing the sale of items other than books or mixed media items that incorporate women’s words—for example, jewelry, craft items, and clothing/accessories.

Conference participants said:

- Would have liked it to be an evening event outside dinner hour.
- Thank you for providing us this service.
- Consider changing the book fair to one night, if we decide to change conference schedule so there are no three-day workshops the second part of the week.

Writing is really a way of thinking—not just feeling but thinking about things that are disparate, unresolved, mysterious, problematic or just sweet.

- Toni Morrison
I was told I could only bring books. I also sell note cards and small photo prints. Other people DID bring small "arty" items to sell and I would have appreciated knowing that would be OK to do. (And if it is not OK, I would like to see it made OK—as long as the vendor is able to fit whatever she brought into the space given without impinging on the space of another vendor.)

The best space yet...in 26 conferences!!!

Only one book fair is needed—the second one was not attended, so should be eliminated

I don't think a Thursday book fair worked very well, so close to the end of the festival—but I'm glad it didn't conflict with open staged readings on Wednesday, which worked great. I suggest we move the second book fair to Tuesday dinner or Wednesday or Thursday lunch.

I was only at the conference Friday-Tuesday a.m., so I was only at the first of these. I thought it went well. I did not mind that it overlapped dinner, but would have liked more "free" post-dinner time available, as quite a few people had only just started to go about and look at books when it was time for the Sunday readings. Others also mentioned this to me. And after the readings, when we could pick up our books, a number of people wanted to see mine, so I unpacked (but it was somewhat chaotic then), which is again a sign that the time conflicting with dinner without enough added time after had been an issue. But in general, I thought the book sale was well organized and very fair.

I would like to see a return to a full marketplace. Many women used to finance their attendance by bringing their jewelry, prints and weaving to sell. It attracted more participants who THEN bought books also. It was also at a dedicated time between supper and the evening program, so it was also better attended.

I have 10 books for sale. I share a table with a woman who has one book. We have equal space. A question for Solomon...

I appreciated the organizers taking care of the books; putting the cartons out and then collecting them for the next fair. Thank you.

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No black woman writer in this culture can write “too much.” Indeed, no woman writer can write “too much”...No woman has ever written enough.

- bell hooks
It is traditional to incorporate some form of ritual into Closing Night to mark the ending of our time together. This year’s ending included a public thank-you to the wonderful dining room staff, who were brought on stage and given a standing ovation. It also included words from the conference scholarship recipients, Karen Devaney, Constance Garcia-Barrio, and Shawn Jackson. Member Denise (Deni) Trach contributed artistic keepsakes that members could take home. While most survey respondents liked many aspects of the Closing Ceremony, most found it too short, and wanted to see it reflect more music, more ritual, and more “right brain” activity. In addition, respondents were disappointed in the lack of a meeting space in which wine and cheese could be served, and participants gather to socialize after the event.

Conference participants said:

♦ I haven’t been to this conference in years, but I remember a lot of pageantry and joy on the closing night, so I was expecting more. On the one hand, I appreciated the ceremony’s brevity, but it felt dry. How magical it would have been to make a circle and really see each other while we sang, chanted, drummed, something like that.

♦ What we did—going forward, etc.—was just fine, and the singing was great, as always. The ceremony lacked a deep sense of ritual, connection, joy. Partly the venue, perhaps? Felt more like a business meeting with everyone singing, then going forward, then leaving—with no place to gather and share deeply afterward, either, that really added to the frustration! Yes, we tried to gather in the lounge, but it ended up being little clumps of people really ready to be joyful together with no music, no wine—more like a networking time at a professional conference than a party of our writers’ family. So: more ritual in the ceremony; a different place to hold it, perhaps; and definitely a gathering place for the community afterwards!

♦ Maybe pass out handkerchiefs so we could dry our tears?

♦ In the past if Jan sang a song, the lyrics were handed out. Also, it was about as minimalistic as former closings were overblown. So, finding middle ground may be good. Maybe greater celebration can be given to the grant recipients? I thought that the stones Deni decorated were a lovely touch! The closing just didn’t seem to flow as well as the rest of the week’s activities. Also, if the last night of the book sale was perhaps Wednesday, the Light Lounge area could be a place for women to go directly out to and have refreshments and mingle. There was a lot of congestion with people just standing around. The evening ended so abruptly that I couldn’t believe it was over so fast.

It felt marvelous to be with other women unafraid to care deeply about the state of the world, to cry freely, and to be challenged to dig deeper in my writing and share in such a safe place.

Summer Conference participant
Closing Night (continued)

◆ Closing Night was great! I love the tribute to the staff at Muhlenberg College! We really need to figure out a way to keep participants together afterwards, but I'm sure that will be addressed in conference planning for next year.
◆ It was all beautiful! If anything, maybe a huge circle could be a lovely addition something that incorporates are union.
◆ Again, it would have been lovely to all be together afterwards, in one setting, and with wine and cheese!
◆ Perhaps more time with the photos, time to thank all—and a more organized party afterward with music. Jan's song and singing added a lot as well as the beautifully painted mementos. Overall it was a lovely, fitting close!
◆ I thought it was a nice way for women to part after six days of seeing each other around or in class...The singing/remembrance ceremony was very moving.
◆ It seemed short (although in the past some have been too long) and not as heart-warming a send-off as in years past.
◆ What was done, was done well. It lacked a sense of connection and honoring of the friendships—previous and new. The song was very nice and the exit gifts very nice. But when it was done, I felt—"Is that it?" A closing party would have been a nice energetic "A great time was had by all" final celebration.
◆ Everyone gathering in one place after the closing ritual would have helped solidify the entire conference experience.
◆ Nothing. It was fine as it was. I do wish we could have seen a list of attendees and their home states, even if it was just by first name. Also would have appreciated some email addresses if people were willing to share them.
◆ Nothing! It was magical, meaningful, emotional and lovely. Don't change a thing—let's do it all again!
◆ The closing night was lovely and meaningful in its own right, but more music would have added something to it. I thought maybe drummers or guitarists could have been a good addition. But after a long week, a brief but significant closing was more than fine! To have an early night was not a bad thing at all. To have something tangible to take away with me and feel a sense of participation was incredibly meaningful. Denise Trach gave us a wonderful gift in offering us her tokens.
◆ I liked the brevity, that everyone could participate, and that we took home a small, tangible keepsake.
◆ I love it. Be sure you keep the laughter.

After all those years as a woman hearing “not thin enough, not pretty enough, not smart enough, not this enough, not that enough,” almost overnight I woke up one morning and thought, “I am enough.”

- Anna Quindlen
Conference participants were asked for one major improvement they would like to see in future conferences. In general, respondents wanted to see an easier-to-read grid of workshop offerings, a community gathering space in the evenings where wine and snacks can be served to facilitate networking, better temperature control and acoustics in classrooms, a what-to-bring list in the registration packet, and better control of the classroom environment when participants tend to monopolize.

Conference participants said:

♦ The schedule in the conference brochure was very hard to understand. A simple daily grid would be much easier to follow.

♦ A community gathering space in the evenings where we can drink wine/beer, have music on occasion and dance, where it's not fluorescent lighting—where we can connect more deeply, both one-on-one and in fluid groups.

♦ Perhaps not offer so many options at one time. Especially not so many of the same genre at same time.

♦ I'm sure you've heard all about the temperature issues. It was the first year at this venue, so some things couldn't have been anticipated.

♦ Ask the college to post clear, easy-to-find signage. As a commuter, I wasted 30 minutes trying to find the correct building for registration.

♦ I think we must figure out a way to create that physical community space that allows us to join together. The GQ lounge was a start, but it's not quite right, and the Red Door Lounge didn't seem so friendly once we were there. I think everything went beautifully for our first time at Muhlenberg College and look forward to returning in 2017.

♦ I would like to see more women of color in IWWG and at the conference. I understand from talking with people who have been to other recent IWWG conferences that this is happening slowly and that there was more diversity at this conference. I would like to see it keep going in that direction. I would also like to have more of the spiritual nature of creativity addressed in our big audience gatherings. That is something that the "old time" IWWG conferences had that this one did not have much of....I was grateful that we were given space to do the memorial ritual for Stephanie Alston-Nero...that WAS a spiritual piece and many people that knew Stephanie and her work responded positively to this impromptu event.

♦ The only thing I would say is to incorporate movement—a drum circle, dance your words, or yoga. Being that I come from a dance/yoga background, it really bonds people despite agility or experience. Getting out of the head and into the body to free up creative space.

♦ I honestly can’t say there is anything to be improved on.
Improvements (continued)

- Just having a laundry list of items we may need for next year; a better area to display messages.
- More time! I do like the more relaxed pace of the conference with only four workshops a day, but there are so many good ones, I want to get to them all!...Overall an excellent job was done! Thank you for all your hard work—and patience—it was a wonderful conference!
- The acoustics in some of the rooms was a problem. Not all instructors made an effort to project their voices despite ample requests, and some preferred to avoid the microphone when one was available.
- Perhaps charter a bus from Port Authority to the College.
- The conference is weighted toward memoir and social justice...There should be more fiction classes to balance things out. Also more mixed-media. Make sure you continue to bring new instructors in.
- We need to have classes on writing query letters and getting an agent; and an agent fair, I think, would attract more attendees.
- I did miss a space where attendees might come together and unwind with a glass of wine before retiring, but I understand we need to respect Muhlenberg's rules on that. In every other way the venue so met our needs.
- Address issues around hearing loss. I have much to share and many suggestions to make that would make the conference so much more accessible and therefore so much more engaging and enjoyable and also so much more enriching for those with hearing loss.
- A thorough "What to Bring" suggested list that would've saved folks from purchasing blankets.
- Maybe some more innovative ideas for classes...Some instructors stick to what is comfortable instead of also learning/sharing new ideas. Possibly have two strands of study: one based on craft and one based on people who simply want to write and share.
- Make sure that the workshop leaders don't let some of the participants run on too long.
- As a first-time participant in the conference, I felt the return of those “high school” feelings of being on the outside looking in. I met several smart and creative women at the conference, but overall the group seemed to fall into cliques of ‘old friends’ who've been attending these events for decades. It could have felt more inclusive than it did. I was disappointed.
- A student should not be allowed to read "the same work" repeatedly in different classes. It is boring to the rest of us. There are many other voices (perhaps less aggressive) who deserve to be heard. One student read the same excerpt from her novel in four different classes I attended.
- I don’t have any suggestions. The course selections were great, the instructors amazing, the magical energy present.
- Commuted but did eat one meal in the dining room—and landed at a table where everyone knew everyone. Although everyone was nice enough, I still felt a bit like a fifth wheel. Not sure how to fix this kind of thing.
It felt marvelous to be with other women unafraid to care deeply about the state of the world, to cry freely and be challenged to dig deeper in my writing and share in such a safe place.

My huge takeaway is that putting my voice out into the world is not selfish indulgence or an exercise in ego. Rather, it is my gift and obligation, to share with others my journey thus far—and they need my words as much as I have needed those of the women writers who went before me! This is about connecting with life as it is expressed through each other. And my part is to stand up, open my mouth and my heart with joy and vigor and a wicked chuckle!

Feedback—from workshop leaders and peers—helped reinforce my wobbly confidence in my own creativity and worth. When Jan Phillips confronted me—"Why are you keeping your poetry from me?"—that was a powerful moment. What? I have an obligation to share what I write with the world? That was a totally foreign concept for me.

How important it is to have an ongoing sisterhood of writers in my life.

As a first-timer, I learned that the IWWG is one of the warmest, supportive and most welcoming groups I have ever met. I’ll be back. Thanks.

Encouragement and that I have a support of sisters—the wisdom of other women that gave me permission to use my gifts!

I was astonished by the creativity and courage of women from all walks of life who came together to create, but especially to support and encourage others regardless of their progress in the lifelong journey of writing. As always, I loved the classes and critique sessions. The open readings are always a highlight. As a writer who spends too much time alone, to be among the community of writers once a year and to be recognized as such is truly a miracle! Also learned a lot about the publishing journey from fellow participants.

Personally, it was transformative! I left with a sense of accomplishment and most importantly, I know what to do next with my projects.

What wonderful writers and human beings these women are. I attended all the open mic readings, which were very well run by the way, and as one woman after another got up to read—women of all shapes and sizes, ages and ethnicities, and all other categories we use to separate one from another—I was struck by the skill and sincerity of each, speaking her truth in her own voice—women I might otherwise pass in the street without ever suspecting the complicated, questioning, striving selves I was moving among.

Teamwork—strong feeling of togetherness and acceptance.

The supportive, inspiring, moving writing community of women.

Friendship. Helpful members and instructors. Feeling part of a community.
I felt the inspiration and camaraderie of more than a hundred women lifting me on the wings of their rising words.

Impressed with all the accomplished women I met. Inspired to keep on writing, despite rejections.

I experienced the magic that I have been hearing about for 15 years. This was not just a writing experience—it was a spiritual experience, a religious experience, a communion of sisterhood; it was a lovefest, and it was life changing!

That I am a writer who belongs to her tribe!!! And my tribe is at The Guild!!!

Every woman should have such an opportunity to express and explore her inner self.

Incredibly nourishing place! The workshop leaders put so much heart into their teaching and offer a rich smorgasbord of experiences. I know where I’ll be next summer!

I recommend this conference to other women writers passionately! It has connection with other women writers that is priceless, an encouragement of the soul that is life-affirming, a validation of my own life and work that I need to continue in what creates meaning for me. The craft we learn is deep and so practical. The Guild Summer Conference is nourishing our work, our community, our lives from the roots to the sky. We need this so much!

Very rich, supportive learning environment and community. I am also so happy that there is a specific track on Writing for Social Justice.

The IWWG Summer Conference is the most supportive writing conference I have ever known. It is a place where it is not only safe to be a woman and a writer, but where you are encouraged to be whatever kind of woman you are, writing whatever it is you need to write.

This is a non-threatening and supportive environment in which to write, whether you’re just starting or already seasoned. Plus, the sisterhood is great even if you don’t have major aspirations to publish anything.

Writing is a solitary business, and, although many of us enjoy solitude, being among fellow writers—who are interested in our work, who are supportive, and who share their experiences openly with us—is truly a gift. And the inspiration I feel during and after the conference has led to some of the best writing I’ve ever done. The renewed energy lasts for months!

It was inspiring and encouraging and has already resulted in me doing more writing and sending it out into the world. I am open to improving my work and also willing to search harder for my truth so I can stand in it with confidence. I already had a voice, but I am fine-tuning it based on the many things I learned at the conference.

I would recommend it, because it is life-changing and the absolute best place to be if you are a creative woman looking for other creative women to bond with and learn from. The IWWG not only makes you a better writer, it makes you a better person and it enriches your life exponentially.
A Warm Thank You to the Summer Conference Workshop Leaders!

POETRY

**June Gould, Ph.D.,** is the author of *The Writer in All of Us: Improving Your Writing through Childhood Memories* (E.P. Dutton); *Beyond the Margins: Rethinking the Art and Craft of Writing*; co-author of a book of Holocaust poetry, *Counting the Stones*; and author of the novel *In the Shadow of Trains*. June has given readings and signings at The 92nd Street Y (NY), The Holocaust Museum (Washington, DC), the Jewish Museum and Yeshiva Museums (NY), and at libraries, synagogues, churches, universities, and bookstores throughout the USA, and in Greece and Canada. She has been an IWWG workshop leader for over 28 years. She gives ongoing writing workshops in New York City at Poets House and weekend writing conferences at the Guest House, Chester, CT. June also facilitates and leads book groups. She has published poetry in *Dasein*, *Pearl*, *The Talismen*, *The Great American Poetry Show*, and *The Jewish Women’s Literary Annual*, among others.

**Marj Hahne** is a freelance editor and writing teacher, a 2015 M.F.A. graduate from the Rainier Writing Workshop, and the founder-director of The Avocado Sisterhood, an online community for women and girl writers to study the craft of writing and generate and share new writing. She has performed and taught at over 100 venues around the country, as well as been featured on public radio and television programs. Her poems have appeared in literary journals, anthologies, art exhibits, and dance performances.

**Lisa Hase-Jackson** is the editor of 200 New Mexico Poems and ZingaraPoet.net. She teaches poetry and English composition at the College of Charleston in Charleston, South Carolina. She received her M.A. in English from Kansas State University and her M.F.A. in Creative Writing from Converse College in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Her award-winning poems are widely published and can be found in such literary journals as *Kansas City Voices*, *Pilgrimage*, *As/Us*, and *Fall Lines*. Her manuscript of poetry is coming soon to a publisher near you.

**Linda Leedy Schneider**, winner of the Contemporary American Poetry Prize, is a political activist, poetry and writing mentor, and psychotherapist, and was a former faculty member at Aquinas College and Kendall College of Art and Design. Her poetry received a Readers’ Choice Award from Pedestal Magazine and was nominated for Pushcart Prizes. Linda facilitates workshops nationally, including The Manhattan Writing Workshop, which she founded and has led since 2008. Published in hundreds of literary magazines, including The Pedestal Magazine, Rattle, The Sow’s Ear, and Journal of American Poetry, Linda has written six collections of poetry, including *Some Days: Poetry of a Psychotherapist* (Plain View Press), and has edited two collections of poetry written by poets whom she has mentored: *Mentor’s Bouquet* (Finishing Line Press) and *Poems from 84th Street* (Pudding House Publications). Linda believes a regular writing ritual leads to discovery, authenticity, and personal growth.

**Myra Shapiro** has published poems and stories in many periodicals and anthologies, including The Best American Poetry. *Her books of poetry include* *I’ll See You Thursday* and, most recently, *12 Floors Above the Earth*. *She is also the author of a memoir*, *Four Sublets: Becoming a Poet in New York*. *She is devoted to both solitude and community and serves on the board of Poets House.*
**Lisa Acerbo** is a high school teacher and adjunct instructor at the college level, holding an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership. No Trouble at All is her third novel. Her first novel about zombies, vampires, and romance, Apocalipstick, was published in 2013, followed by a young-adult science fiction novel titled Remote in 2014. In addition, she has contributed to local newspapers, news, and travel blogs, including The Patch and Hollywood Scriptwriter.

**Lynne Barrett** is the author of the story collections Magpies (Gold Medal, Florida Book Awards), The Secret Names of Women, and The Land of Go. She edited Tigertail: Florida Flash and co-edited Birth: A Literary Companion. She has received the Edgar Award for best mystery story and a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship. Her fiction can be found in Fort Lauderdale Magazine, Trouble in the Heartland: Stories Inspired by the Songs of Bruce Springsteen, Miami Noir, Wraparound South, Ellery Queen’s Mystery Magazine, Delta Blues, One Year to a Writing Life, and many other journals and anthologies. She teaches in the M.F.A. program at Florida International University and is editor of The Florida Book Review.

**Joan Kane Nichols** writes for both children and adults. Her fiction and nonfiction for young people include the (out-of-print) middle-grade novels All But the Right Folks and No Room for a Dog and the YA biography Mary Shelley: Frankenstein’s Creator, which the New York Public Library named a Notable Book for Teens. For adults, she’s published in The Drum and Terrain, and has won a Barbara Deming/Money for Women award, an MWA-NY’S novel-in-progress award, and a Philadelphia Writers Conference Contemporary Short Story award, and was a finalist at the 2013 Nashville Mystery Writers Conference for A Novel by Dickens, a literary-mystery-in-progress. She received a MA/MPhil in British and American Literature from Columbia University and is a member of SCBWI (Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators), the Mystery Writers of America, AWP, and the Dickens Fellowship.

**Cathleen O’Connor**, Ph.D. is a metaphysician, best-selling author, speaker, and intuitive coach. She is the author of several books: the 2014 Amazon International Best-Sellers 365 Days of Angel Prayers and High Heels on the Hamster Wheel (Balboa Press, 2013), The Everything Law of Attraction Dream Dictionary (Adams Media, 2010), and co-author of the 2015 Amazon best-seller The Energy of Happiness (Happy Publishing). Cathleen has been quoted in the Huffington Post and featured as an expert work-life balance source in various publications, including Canada’s Alive Magazine. Cathleen has offered video teaching (livestream) for the Learning Annex and has lectured and taught workshops at many venues, including Omega Institute, Wainwright House, the Professional Women of Putnam, and Over40Females. Cathleen co-hosted a radio show with celebrity psychotherapist Sherry Gaba from 2012-2014, interviewing authors and experts on a variety of topics for an offshoot of CBS radio.

**Paula Chaffee Scardamalia**, dream consultant for People Magazine (Country), is a book coach and a dream and tarot intuitive. Since 1999, Paula has taught writers how to use intuitive tools like dreams and tarot to write stories from the deepest part of their imagination. She’s taught at small private workshops on the East Coast, at both national and regional Romance Writers of America conferences, and at the 2014 San Diego University Writers Conference. She leads intimate writing and dream retreats. Paula publishes a weekly e-newsletter on writing, dreams, and tarot, and is the
Suzi Banks Baum inspires community wherever she goes. From Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, Suzi, a writer, maker, and mother, is devoted to daily creative practices. She teaches the Powder Keg Sessions writing workshops for women, produces “Out of the Mouths of Babes: An Evening of Mothers Writing to Others” and a host of other soulful art experiences. Suzi helps others discover their own best resources, themselves. Learn more about her writing, visual art, and workshop offerings at www.suzibanksbaum.com.

Heather Summerhayes Cariou holds a B.F.A. in Theatre/Performance and is a recent graduate of the Master’s program in Narrative Medicine at Columbia University. She is a private poet, and the published author of Sixty-five Roses: A Sister's Memoir (Globe and Mail Best 100 Books of 2006). She worked professionally as an actor for over 20 years, and has facilitated memoir workshops in Toronto, Dublin, Thunder Bay, Winnipeg, and New York.

Joy Ross Davis is a college English professor with a Ph.D. in Creative Writing, who retired in 2005 to care for her mother, who suffered from dementia. As a release, the author began to document some of the more humorous and poignant moments as a full-time caregiver. These became articles, which were published in a local newspaper. Later, they were compiled into a memoir entitled Mother, Can You Hear Me? In addition to writing and teaching, she has worked as a travel writer and photographer in Ireland. To date, she has written and published two novels and six novellas. She also has appeared in Southern Writers Magazine.

Janice Gary is the author of Short Leash: A Memoir of Dog Walking and Deliverance and is an award-winning creative nonfiction writer, writing coach, and teacher. The recipient of two Nautilus Book Awards, the Eric Hoffer Prize, and the Sarton Memoir Award, and a fellowship at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, she teaches in the Masters of Liberal Arts program at Arizona State University and conducts memoir workshops at The Writer’s Center (Washington, DC). She has also presented at the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP), Nonfiction Now, the NYC Jung Foundation, and other writing-centered conferences on women’s writing issues, trauma and memoir, and Jungian approaches to writing life story. Her book, Reeling In the Years: A Memoir Writing Guide, is forthcoming.

Maureen Murdock, Ph.D., M.F.T., has taught creative writing for the past 25 years at the UCLA Extension Writers’ Program, where she received the Outstanding Teacher Award in 1995. She teaches memoir classes weekly in Santa Barbara and leads workshops for women internationally. Murdock is the author of Unreliable Truth: On Memoir and Memory, a guide to memoir writing, as well as The Heroine’s Journey: Woman’s Quest for Wholeness; Fathers’ Daughters: Breaking the Ties that Bind; Spinning Inward: Using Guided Imagery with Children; Monday Morning Memoirs: Women in the Second Half of Life; and The Heroine’s Journey Workbook. She recently published a Kindle short entitled The Emergence of Bipolar Disorder: A Mother’s Perspective. Her blog about creativity, mental illness, and the criminal justice system can be found at www.maureenmurdockblog.com. Her website is www.maureenmurdock.com.
A Pulitzer Prize nominee, activist, social reform advocate, expert on women on death row, former nun, and lecturer, Kathleen A. O’Shea is the author of books and poetry that have received critical acclaim, including Women and the Death Penalty in the United States 1900-1998 and Women on the Row: Revelations from Both Sides of the Bars.

Eunice Scarfe designed the Women’s Writing Institute at the U of Alberta (Canada) and taught there for 20 years, receiving the first award given for Innovation in Lifelong Learning. She has facilitated women writers through her company Saga Seminars since completing her M.A. (creative writing/fiction) and has introduced her Blank Page method to writers from the Yukon to Maine, from Fielding Institute to Harvard Medical School. Her writing has been supported by Canada Council; her prize-winning short stories have appeared in journals and anthologies, such as Prism, Event, Best Stories in Canada, and Malahat Review.

Susan Tiberghien, American writer living in Geneva, Switzerland, has published numerous narrative essays in journals and anthologies, plus five nonfiction books: two memoirs, Looking for Gold: A Year in Jungian Analysis and Circling to the Center: A Woman’s Encounter with Silent Prayer; the highly appreciated writing book One Year to a Writing Life; plus two new titles, Side by Side: Writing Your Love Story and Footsteps: In Love with a Frenchman. Each spring she teaches at Bethesda Writer’s Center, Hudson Valley Writers’ Center, Grub Street, and several CG Jung Centers on the East Coast. She directs and teaches for the Geneva Writers’ Group, an association of 250 international writers.

Amy Wu spent eighteen years in the newsroom before moving into higher education in 2009. She has worked at Time Magazine and the Rochester Democrat & Chronicle, and has written for the New York Times and Wall Street Journal. She spent six years working in Hong Kong, widely reporting with the Asia-Pacific region. From 2011-2013, she was a full-time journalism lecturer at Hong Kong’s Shue Yan University, where she taught social media/mobile journalism. Since 2013, she has been a research assistant at the Merrill College of Journalism at the University of Maryland, while pursuing her Ph.D. and also writing for the South China Morning Post and the Huffington Post. She majored in history at NYU and earned her master’s degree in journalism from Columbia University. She speaks fluent Mandarin.

Lisa Freedman divides her time between writing, teaching, and coaching (http://lfwritingcoach.com/). She weaves meditation into these practices because it connects us to our deep wisdom and the clarity and confidence to express it. Her prose and poetry appear in Satya Magazine: The Long View Anniversary Issue and Grabbing the Apple: An Anthology of New York Women Poets, as well as Art & Understanding: 20th Anniversary Anthology and POZ Magazine, among others. She has received residencies and awards from Blue Mountain Center, Soul Mountain, and the National Arts Club. She is a proud co-founder of Poets against Xenophobia. She received her MFA in Creative Writing from the New School, where she now teaches.

I have not ceased being fearful, but I have ceased to let fear control me. I have accepted fear as a part of life, specifically the fear of change and the fear of the unknown, and I have gone ahead despite the pounding in my hear that says: turn back.

- Erica Jong
Geri Lennon is a writer with hands-on experience in world health as well as tropical and infectious disease. She served on Project Hope in Nicaragua, where she taught. As a writer and multimedia specialist, she consulted in the US and several developing countries worldwide, including multilingual training projects for the Center for Disease Control and other international entities. Continuing her dedication to advancing human rights, Ms. Lennon has also served as an archivist at the UN Tribunal for Rwanda in Tanzania and filmed a work-in-progress (video doc) for three tribal women in Kenya entitled Can You Hear Me, I’m Dying, a powerful piece on the path of AIDS. Lennon shared an award with her co-producer in the Top 100 Multimedia Producers (AV Multimedia Producer Magazine).

Mennonite by birth, mystic by nature, Shawndra Miller is a writer, energy worker, and community organizer who lives in Indianapolis. She writes about changemakers at the leading edge of eco-agriculture for Acres USA and Farm Indiana, among other periodicals, and blogs about the community resilience movement at shawndramiller.com. A certified ThetaHealer, she works with clients and teaches workshops on self-healing, helping people release old patterns and connect to Divine guidance. Her lyric essays and poetry have appeared in Confrontation Magazine, The Boiler Journal, and The Lavender Review. She is currently working on a nonfiction book that links her healing journey to wider societal healing, represented by a farm built atop the buried remains of a 19th-century women’s mental institution.

Miriam Stein’s social justice/social action writings—op-eds, letters-to-the-editor, and press releases—and personal essays have appeared in local and national publications, including the Boston Globe, Christian Science Monitor and Hadassah Magazine. An M.S.W. social worker, she is also an advocacy consultant, speaker, and trainer. Stein is the author of Make Your Voice Matter With Lawmakers: No Experience Necessary, a user-friendly handbook for people who want to advocate for social justice. She has over three decades of experience in advocacy, including Director of Governmental Affairs, National Association of Social Workers, Massachusetts Chapter; Director of Communications, Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition; Advocacy Consultant and Workshop Leader at the interfaith Advocacy Network to End Family Homelessness, Concord, MA; and Co-chair of the Diversity Task Group, Arlington, MA. She is the co-founder of the Boston area Social Justice Writing Group, part of the National Writers Union.

Pamela Varkony writes what she knows. Her nonfiction topics range from politics to women’s empowerment, from small town and rural Americana to historical perspectives. Pamela’s view of the human condition has appeared in the editorials of major newspapers, feature stories of national magazines, and as PBS and NPR on-air commentaries. An award-winning writer, recognized by the Pennsylvania Women’s Press Association for “Excellence in Journalism,” and a much requested speaker, Pamela has used her platform to advocate for women’s rights around the world, including fact-finding missions to Afghanistan. Born and raised in rural Haycock Township, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, Pamela often weaves the lessons learned and characters encountered on those back country roads throughout her stories. Her father used to say she grew up like “a wild forest creature.” Pamela believes that early life filled with peace and freedom, combined with a deep love of homeland and family, is her lifetime muse.

I write for those women who do not speak, for those who do not have a voice because they were so terrified, because we are taught to respect fear more than ourselves. We’ve been taught that silence would save us, but it won’t.

-Audre Lorde
A screenwriter by trade, **Linda Bergman** has been paid to write twenty-four films, five of which have been produced. She’s best known for writing family drama and strong women’s stories: The Jessica Savitch Story (Lifetime), The Pearl Buck Story (ABC), The Barbara Mandrell Story (CBS), and Matters of The Heart (USA). Her films have been nominated for an Emmy, an Access Award, The Alpha Award for Excellence In Children’s Programming, and the prestigious Writers Guild Award. In college, she was hired by Twentieth Century Fox to train in script, casting, film production, and post-production. After three years at Fox, Bergman joined ABC’s Movies for Television development team and, some 100 movies later, was promoted to Assistant to the President of MGM Television, then Director of Program Development/series and movies. She has two books, So You Think Your Life’s a Movie: Ten Steps to a Script That Sells and the recently published So You Think Your Life’s A Movie: The Sequel.

**Writing as Performance**

**Kelly DuMar** is a playwright and poet from the Boston area whose recent workshop presentations include the Massachusetts Poetry Festival, the International Women’s Writing Guild, the Power of Words Conference, True Story Theater, Playback North America, and the New England Theatre Conference. She’s author of a nonfiction book, Before You Forget: The Wisdom of Writing Diaries for Your Children, and won the Lit House Press Poetry Chapbook Award for All These Cures. Her poems are published in dozens of literary journals and her award-winning plays have been produced around the US and Canada and are published by dramatic publishers. Kelly is a past president of Playwrights’ Platform, Boston, where she led play development activities for many years. Kelly currently serves on the Board of the International Women’s Writing Guild. She founded and produces the Our Voices Festival of Women Playwrights at Wellesley College, now in its 10th year.

**Dorothy Randall Gray** is author of the acclaimed bestseller Soul Between The Lines: Freeing Your Creative Spirit Through Writing (Avon/HarperCollins); as well as Muse Blues; The Passion Collection; Family, Woman: Rituals for Daily Living; Taste of Tamarinda; and her latest book of poetry, Sharing the Same Sky. She is a former National Public Radio commentator and Hunter College Poet-in-Residence, and present Executive Director of Women Writers & Artists Matrix. Her popular writing and empowerment workshops have inspired thousands throughout the US and abroad. Dorothy is an award-winning artist and global activist who has shared the dais with the Dalai Lama. She has served as a consultant to the United Nations, a delegate to UNESCO, and a keynote speaker at regional and international conferences.

**Jan Phillips** is a writer, teacher, photographer, and activist. Her workshops provoke thought, evoke spirit, and inspire action. She has made a one-woman peace pilgrimage around the world, travelled across the country as a photojournalist, co-founded Syracuse Cultural Workers (publishers of artwork for peace and justice), and founded Livingkindness Foundation, which has built a computerized learning center in a Nigerian village. She has taught with Jane Goodall, performed with Pete Seeger, and sung to Gladys Knight. Jan is the author of ten award-winning books and publisher of the photo-memoir Born Gay. Her books include No Ordinary Time, Finding the On-Ramp to Your Spiritual Path, The Art of Original Thinking: The Making of a Thought Leader, Divining the Body, Marry Your Muse, God Is at Eye Level, Making Peace, and A Waist Is a Terrible Thing to Mind. Her latest book, FLASH: Why Creativity Changes Everything, is currently being pitched to publishers.
Judith Prest is a published poet, photographer, mixed-media artist, and creativity coach; poetry is her first art. In her former life, she was a school social worker. Judith’s poetry has appeared in six anthologies and several literary journals, and she has published two collections of poetry, Sailing On Spirit Wind (1998) and Late Day Light (2011) and one chapbook, The Geography of Loss (2006, which pre-dates Patty Digh’s book of the same title). Judith has taught poetry, creative writing, visual journaling, collage, clay work, SoulCollage®, and a number of other expressive arts workshops over the years, including at IWWG conferences in 2010 and 2011 (SoulCollage® and writing). She has also given workshops at Women’s Voices/Women’s Vision (2015) and at Women Writers and Artists Matrix (SoulCollage®, poetry and collage, and expressive painting). She holds certificates in Creativity Coaching and Expressive Arts from NYEA in Albany, NY.

Carren Strock, equally at home with a pen and paper, a paintbrush and canvas, needle and thread, or hammer and nails, is a Renaissance woman. She is the author of the ground-breaking book on a previously undiscussed topic, Married Women Who Love Women, which is now in its second edition. She is also the author of A Writer’s Journey: What to Know Before, During, and After Writing a Book and a mystery, In the Shadow of the Wonder Wheel. Her newest book, Tangled Ribbons, a lesbian paranormal romance, came out in 2015. Her artwork has been honored in both regional and international art shows and has been exhibited at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery. Her photographs have appeared in architectural magazines, and her articles have appeared in numerous publications in the United States and abroad.

Mary Beth Coudal is an award-winning journalist, blogger, and copywriter. Her essays have appeared in the New York Times, Salon.com, and Self magazine. She’s a high school English teacher and managing editor of Response Magazine. On Mary Beth’s WordPress blog, To Pursue Happiness, she asks the big questions and looks for the big answers in her pursuit of happiness. For fun, Coudal performs improv comedy and makes short comedy films.

Jessica Tyner Mehta, is the author of The Last Exotic Petting Zoo (shortlisted for a Pulitzer Prize) and What Makes an Always, as well as 100 Ways to Make $100K with Your English Degree. She is the founder of MehtaFor, a writing company that serves a variety of clients, including Fortune 500 enterprises and major media outlets. Her company received two national awards for Startup of the Year in 2015. Jessica received a Writers in the Schools residency from the Oregon Literary Arts Council for 2015-16. As a member of the Cherokee Nation, Jessica offers complimentary writing and editing services through her company to Native American students and nonprofits based in the Pacific Northwest. She received her master’s degree in writing from Portland State University, and established The Jessica Tyner Scholarship Fund in 2013.

I will not have my life narrowed down. I will not bow down to somebody else’s whim or someone else’s ignorance.

- bell hooks
Anne Anthony is a full-time writer living in Chapel Hill, NC, and serves as the Orange County representative to the North Carolina Writers Network. Her interview of author Marjorie Hudson was published in the 2016 issue of the North Carolina Literary Review and addresses the influence and encouragement a writer receives in the company of other writers.

Former teacher B. Lynn Goodwin is the owner of Writer Advice (www.writeradvice.com), which celebrated its 18th year last October. She’s also the author of You Want Me to Do WHAT?: Journaling for Caregivers (Tate Publishing). Her stories and articles have appeared in Voices of Caregivers, Hip Mama, the Oakland Tribune, the Contra Costa Times, the Danville Weekly, Staying Sane When You’re Dieting, Small Press Review, Dramatics Magazine, Thickjam.com, Friction Literary Journal, Inspire Me Today, and The Sun. This year she’s been published in Writing After Retirement: Tips by Successful Retired Writers, Small Miracles from Beyond: Dreams, Visions and Signs that Link Us to the Other Side, and True Words. She conducts workshops and writes reviews for Story Circle Network (www.storycircle.org), and runs Writer Advice’s Manuscript Consultation Service (http://www.writeradvice.com/manuscriptconsultation.html). Her young adult novel, Talent, was published in 2015. She’s currently drafting a memoir about getting married for the first time at age 62.

Lisa Irish has masters’ degrees in education and theology, and has taught high school, college, and adult students. Trained as a chaplain, Lisa ministered in acute hospital care, long-term care, staff support, and a bereavement program. Further training in Retreat and Spiritual Direction has led Lisa to follow a contemplative path in her own life and in journeying with others. As a spiritual director, Lisa supports the mystery of each individual’s experience. Lisa’s relationship with writing began with journaling and memoir to untangle the memories of childhood. Currently, she writes a monthly “Glimmer” to share her journey of staying in the Light. Her first book, Grieving with a Grateful Heart, was published in January 2016. A second book, Grieving: The Sacred Art, will come out in November through Skylight Paths Publishing. Lisa facilitated her salon with Lisa Freedman (see Lisa’s bio under Social Justice).

Elizabeth Kann, M.D., M.P.H., is the co-author of the New York Times bestselling children’s picture books Pinkalicious and Purplicious, and the co-playwright and co-lyricist of Pinkalicious: The Musical which opened in New York City in 2007 and has played in numerous places around the country and internationally. Her humorous personal essays have appeared in a variety of publications, including the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and the Chicken Soup for the Soul and Chocolate for the Soul series. Her website and blog address is elizabethkann.com, and you can find her on Twitter at @ElizabethKann.

Giving Voice: Member Voices Heard

*Giving Voice*—short memoir pieces on a specific topic—is a new feature of Network. Contributors are asked to write a piece of flash memoir or creative nonfiction on a topic that is published in advance. This month’s topic was Trust. On occasion, we elect to include a piece that exceeds the specified 250-word limit. We did so again in this issue when Karen Devaney, one of this year’s scholarship recipients to the Summer Conference, wrote “Ode to a Conference.” Karen’s expressions of trust and confidence in the remarkable membership of the IWWG could have been included elsewhere in Network, but seemed a perfect fit here. Thank you to those who submitted.

### Trusting in Spirit

*spir·it* /noun – the nonphysical part of a person that is the seat of emotions and character; the soul: psyche, (inner) self, inner being, essence, motivating force (*Oxford Dictionaries*)

I trust in the creative power of spirit. I extend my finger antennas into its known unknown, evoking, inviting words onto paper. I trust they will convey, communicate, and connect with the soul of another.

I trust spirit to call forth the fragrant past, the voracious present, the frenetic future—characters in my novel, painful poetics, and distant memories traveling miles to reach my mind.

I believe spirit is the key that opens the door, the hand on the handle, the light that shines on the other side of it. It is the divine source in all its seasons, the chant that calls every sentence and scenario into being.

There are times when I feel like my words can’t find me, when the blank page taps its impatient fingers on my desk, or I’m in my Wadsworth moment and “the world is too much with me.” When this happens I have to remember how to plug myself into the divine source again—meditate, take a walk, be still, visit the sky, pray, listen to birds, help someone, play music, have a good laugh, talk to the trees, allow the writing to exhale.

I trust that everything I’ve ever wanted or needed to write is already waiting for me. All I have to do is ask spirit, show up, and do the work. This is how I write. This is what I teach. This is how I live.

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Dorothy Randall Gray

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In Dog We Trust

Trust yourself, then you will know how to live.

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust: Part One* (1808)


I think I’ve been trying not to die. My whole life. I think I’ve been, as my friend Jan says, rehearsing for catastrophe. Duck and cover. Stop, drop, and roll. Steer into the skid. Swim parallel to the shore.

I wear a one-piece Speedo because I don’t trust the waves. Not even the waves at the Groton Municipal Pool. My first summer as a lifeguard, Jay Fitz watched me swim my laps when he wasn’t mowing the park grass or fixing the locker-room plumbing. Jay was my first kiss, not counting the Red Cross manikin. Shake and shout, circulation, airway, breathing.

I don’t trust a man who can’t kiss without having to lick my tonsils. Bouncer rarely licks me, even when I smooch his snout. Probably due to his breeding, his high prey drive, his alpha-wolf history. Bella, on the other hand/paw, licks, licks, licks. She doesn’t trust another language.

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Giving Voice...continued

Here. Sit. Stay.

Today, Bella lay in my lap while I listened to a guided meditation. Later, when I walked Bouncer in the mountains, we both ate the unbroken snow.

Marj Hahne

Ode to a Conference

There are epiphanies in our lives that jolt us out of mediocrity regardless if we are ready. Circumstances that either nudge or shove us in the direction destiny ordained us to go. As a young mother, pushing chubby toddlers on swings, changing diapers, working as a nurse to sustain an income, I knew my time would eventually show up. Most days back then, usually too exhausted to write, I made up children’s songs and sang them to my daughters, then stories and little plays for their school, then essays for class. I clawed my way back to college and one autumn afternoon walked out of my writing professor’s office in tears. She had validated my work and thought my stories worthy of publication. It was the first time anyone had said that to me. Life, though, kept hurling obstacles; some I dodged, but not all. Finally, years after completing my B.F.A. in Theatre, I went back for an M.F.A. in Creative Writing. That is when I discovered IWWG.

I would read about the IWWG conference and yearn to be there—hobnobbing with profound women writers, listening to workshop presenters, learning. Every year I would vow to go, then some financial catastrophe would arise and—poof—there went my savings, and I’d commit anew to the next year. Ten years later, in 2016, I tentatively applied for The Spirited Woman Empowerment Scholarship, with not much confidence in receiving it. I was gleeefully wrong. My neighbors thought something was amiss from the sound of my screams floating through the windows. I was thrilled beyond words!

When I arrived Saturday evening, harried and haggard-looking from a planes-train-and-automobile journey, I was mesmerized by the gorgeous campus and the changing hues of the sky. Greeted with open arms by a participant, “Are you Karen?” I practically sobbed, “Yes!” Off I went to my dorm; unbeknownst to me, I had dynamic, wise, gusty women roommates whom I would stay up late with the following eves. After a quick change and a splash of water on my face, I raced over to hear a few of the final readings that night. One particularly riveting piece stayed with me, and I learned later that Constance Garcia-Barrio, the author, was a scholarship recipient, as well. From Philadelphia, she was awarded the Livingkindness Foundation Scholarship for her work as a creative artist who uses her talents to mold a more just world. What an honor to know her! Shawn Jackson, the third scholarship recipient (The Jordan Lee Ulrich Remembrance Scholarship), was equally

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Submission Guidelines

Giving Voice—flash memoir pieces and personal essays on topics specified in advance—is a new feature of Network. Topics for the remainder of 2016 are listed below. Upcoming topics and the submission dates are specified below. Preferred length: 250 words or less. Please indicate if you wish us to publish your piece anonymously. Send submissions to: iwwgmembernews@gmail.com.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
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<td>Race Relations</td>
<td>November 15</td>
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<td>Out of the Silence</td>
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<td>A Funny Thing Happened</td>
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- Francesca Lia Block

Just like any woman...we weave our stories out of our bodies, some of us through our children, or our art; some do it just by living. It's all the same.
I experienced the magic that I have been hearing about for 15 years. This was not just a writing experience—it was a spiritual experience, a religious experience, a communion of sisterhood; it was a lovefest, and it was life-changing!

Summer Conference participant

amazing, and all three of us cried when we were presented on stage Sunday evening.

Sunday morning, although physically tired, I was mentally exhilarated and popped out of bed ready to go. After coffee and a banana, I raced off to my first workshop, Cathleen O’Connor’s Irresistible First Chapters. There was a plethora of writing tools I’d somehow misplaced in my own practice and found them in Cathleen’s class. What a thrill to sit in a room filled with talented female writers, sharing their ideas and works—I felt like I did when I took my first college course—elated, privileged. Regardless that I have written two novels, this workshop emboldened me to try different approaches with my third novel (far from finished), Between the Vines. It brewed new ideas and ways to approach my characters. I left floating on a conference cloud, cuddling my notes.

After Cathleen’s workshop, I hurried to Kelly DuMar’s Writing and Producing Your Ten-Minute Play. Being a theatre person, I knew I would enjoy this class—I just didn’t know how much. All of the women in the workshop brought hilarious, poignant, emotionally charged pieces to work on. We bonded as a group, and when it came to Wednesday eve, the mini performances went without a hitch. When you expose your work, it can often be scary—but not with these ladies. In this class was a microcosm of the conference—a haven where for the first time in a long time, I felt as if I fit in. Felt safe. Felt fearless. That evening I had the privilege of playing in four of the pieces. The support and love I received from everyone literally made me cry. The validation was such a powerful gift. We all know as women artists, often families and well-meaning friends don’t provide that. In fact, they can be downright mean giving advice when not requested. But at the conference, I was afloat in a sea of loving genuine women who empowered and renewed one another. It was life-changing!

All of the workshops I attended roused my commitment to writing. They also reaffirmed that by encouraging others to use creativity, we can heal, inspire, and change cultural stigmas. Marj Hahne’s Poetry Critique, Eunice Scarfe’s Blank Page, and all the others I was able to take for at least one day filled my spirit and engaged my mind. I felt a bond with all of the women in the workshops and beyond (talking in passing or in the ladies’ room!), each one with a story unique yet somehow interconnected with the female experience.

Besides the enticing workshops were the night gatherings, the mealtime conversations, the yoga sessions under the trees (I taught three days of yoga as a way of giving back to the community for this enormous opportunity). The moonlit nights where a rogue group of us shared intimate life stories and conversed about our pain, our loves and losses, our dreams and visions. Every woman I met left me marveling with a tale of a life-changing experience. Powerful women who dared to show their vulnerable side, dared to be genuine. There were women from all walks of life, all ages and backgrounds, a breathing collection of energy with the strength to transform and enlighten.

The closing ceremony truly spoke to the scholarship I received—we gathered for the last night as a force of spirited women—empowered and renewed by our commitment to our work and to each other. The conference will be a yearly pilgrimage, a place to gather for camaraderie, a place to revel in creativity and to step off life’s demanding merry-go-round.

The IWWG 2016 Summer Conference was, indeed, another milestone in my life that took me to a new vista point, a place where I am feeling closer to the top of the mountain, where I have a more panoramic view of my possibilities. My pledge is to continue onward writing women’s stories, in sundry genres, giving voice to the diverse sisterhood that illustrates our power to prevail.
From the Mouths of (the) Agents:
Wisdom Shared at the Spring Big Apple

As usual, several agents joined us at the Spring Big Apple Conference to hear ten-minute pitches from our writers hoping to gain an agent and an added voice in the ever more competitive publishing race. And the big news: This year two of our writers succeeded in doing just that.

On a broader level, however, everyone in the audience Sunday afternoon gained valuable advice from the mouths of these five agents; who, before heading to the pitch sessions, took part in a moderated discussion of advice from the trenches, including what agents wish writers knew more about. They candidly real-world insight, and demonstrated a real desire to help struggling writers learn to pitch more effectively.

Here are some of the takeaways:

1. If you are writing memoir, personal narrative, likely even other types of non-fiction, your “must read” is Vivian Gornick’s *The Situation and the Story*. It is about the distance and skills a reliable narrator needs to shape the experience, transform the event, deliver the wisdom the reader—and the agent!—wants and needs. This was a unanimous recommendation.

2. Do the grunt work before you ever bring your work to a publishing house or agent. This means hiring an editor who is not your best friend. Consider hiring other professional help, such as a copy editor, cover designer, developmental editor, and possibly a public relations advisor. Be able to demonstrate that you have made yourself highly visible (having a platform): a Facebook following above 5,000, a string of podcasts, a large Twitter group, previous publications, speeches given. None of the agents seem to be particularly sold by having a blog, especially if you have not produced a number of entries over time and have few fans. You are demonstrating you have taken your work and its entry into the broader world seriously. Having a winning personality, an articulate presence that demonstrates you can sell yourself, is also a plus. So prep for a pitch session carefully. And smile.

3. Working with an agent is a partnership, not a handoff. Above all, they emphasized that they don’t have the time to guide you through these things; it’s not their job. It’s yours.

4. Everyone on the panel emphasized that there is still a market for good books and an agent can play a critical role in finding the right placement for that book, especially with more prominent publishing houses.

The IWWG is grateful to the agents who, each year, take time to conduct pitch sessions, advise our writers, and open windows into the world of publishing. This year the four agents and one public relations professional who gave us their time also gave generously of their wisdom and their desire to be of help. We all grew on Sunday afternoon.

Incredibly nourishing place! The workshop leaders put so much heart into their teaching and offer a rich smorgasbord of experiences. I know where I’ll be next summer!

Summer Conference participant

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Write what disturbs you, what you fear, what you have not been willing to speak about. Be willing to be split open.

- Natalie Goldberg
**Writing Circle Announcements and Requests**

So what is a “Writing Circle”?

Once called the “IWWG Kitchen Table,” a “Writing Circle” describes local gatherings of women writers who meet on a weekly, biweekly, or monthly basis to share their work in a mutually supportive environment. The IWWG promotes local Writing Circles by publishing information submitted to us, as well as requests by members looking to either join an existing group or form a new group.

**Current Writing Circles**

**Columbus, Ohio**

November 5; December 3

10:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Karl Road Branch Library, 5590 Karl Rd.

Free and open to all. We offer writers a supportive environment for writing, reading, and gentle critiquing. Each participant may share her writing. Bring four to five copies of the work you’d like to have critiqued. Contact Jeanne Marlowe for dates.

Jeanne Marlowe; jamarlowe@juno.com; (614) 476-8802

**Slingerlands, NY**

Our Kitchen Table meets the second Wednesday of the month, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Contact me for information on location. This group is limited to IWWG members. We have an OPEN meeting (Women Who Write) on fourth Wednesdays. We follow the IWWG experience regarding support and critiques. Bring a piece you’re working on to read. All interaction is supportive and encouraging.

Carol Bluestein; carol@carolbluestein.com

**Seeking a Writing Circle**

**Astoria, New York**

Looking to facilitate a writing circle.

Rosalyn Will; rosawill33@aol.com

**Boise, Idaho**

Is there an IWWG writers’ group in Boise, Idaho? I would be interested in joining.

Bev Clark; jimedclark@q.com

**Buffalo/Rochester, New York**

I am interested in joining a poetry group in the Buffalo/Rochester, NY area. I would prefer not to facilitate, but will do so if no one else volunteers.

Sharon Larsen; shar@empacc.net

**Davis, California**

I am interested in joining a writing group in or near Davis, CA, if there are any that are currently accepting new writers.

Robyn Plante; revrobyn@gmail.com

**Huntington, New York**

Returning member looking to facilitate a writing circle.

Jeanine Boubli; jeanineboubli@gmail.com; (917) 991-9340

**New Jersey/New York**

I live in New Jersey but would be willing to go to NYC to join or start a group for fiction.

Joan Regen-Ramirez; writejr1044@gmail.com

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*The only reason we write—well, the only reason why I write; maybe I shouldn’t generalize—is so that I can find out something about myself. Writers have this narcissistic obsession about how we got to be who we are. I have to understand my ancestors—my father, his mother and her mother—to understand who I am. It all leads back to the narcissistic pleasure of discovering yourself ... it’s like an archaeologist discovering little scraps of preserved fabric, and you have to reconstruct what they were wearing by looking in a microscope at little fibers. That’s how I feel, as if all I have is tatters, a name and very sketchy things about ancestors—sometimes not even a name, especially for the women; they’re so anonymous that a woman gets lost within a generation or two.*

- Sandra Cisneros,
  *The Missouri Review*, 2002
Writing Circles...continued

River Ridge, Louisiana
I would like to start a writers’ group in my area and the Zip Code is 70123. I live in River Ridge, near New Orleans. I invite other writers or budding writers in this area (New Orleans, Metairie, Kenner, etc.) who are interested to get in touch.
Kekelwa Nyaywa, kenyaywa@gmail.com

San Diego, California
I was at Kitchen Tables ages ago, and they were so useful! Now I am in San Diego; love the climate, but there aren’t IWWG Kitchen Tables! I’d love to hear of one.
Angel Joan; ilovetodoweddings@yahoo.com

Sarasota, Florida
I am interested in joining or starting a Kitchen Table writers’ group. I write memoir and nonfiction short stories, and am working on a book.
Patricia Moore; phfmoore@yahoo.com

Seattle, Washington
I’d like to join a writers’ group in Seattle. My genres are fiction and creative nonfiction.
Nancy Peacock; nbpeacock@gmail.com

Southern Westchester County, NY
Looking to facilitate a writing circle.
Lyn Halper; llynhalper@aol.com

Southfield, Michigan
Looking for group to join, or willing to facilitate.
Gwendolyn Gordon; mothergor@gmail.com

Stratford, Connecticut
Monthly group at Act 11 Counseling
Cynthia Russell, Ph.D.; psynnie@aol.com; (203) 377-2421

Toms River, New Jersey
I would like to join a Kitchen Table in the Jersey Shores area. I’m in Toms River, NJ, but would consider the Ocean/Monmouth Counties area.
Pat Van; pvan8gwy@aol.com

Washington, D.C.
Wants to join writing circle in the D.C. area.
Patricia Bochi; patriciabochi@gmail.com

Waterbury, Connecticut
I am interested in joining a writing circle in my area.
Joan Russell; jr81568@gmail.com; (203) 575-0907

Westfield, New Jersey
I’m looking for something in the Westfield, NJ area, zip 07080.
Susan Wagner; swagner001@gmail.com

Woodstock, Virginia
I’m looking for a local IWWG Writing Circle to join. My genres are short story and novel. I am also looking for an IWWG writing circle online.
Shi Chung Park; lisabc@shentel.net

Fiction is an act of willfulness, a deliberate effort to reconceive, to rearrange, to reconstitute nothing short of reality itself. Even among the most reluctant and doubtful of writers, this willfulness must emerge.
Being a writer means taking the leap from listening to saying, ‘Listen to me.’

Jhumpa Lahiri
**NETWORK**

**HOT OFF THE PRESSES!**

**Althea C. Rudolph**

*EGG: Chicken*

*Chicken* is the first volume of the book collection *EGG*, introducing unborn baby animals in a fun, interesting way to children under the age of 6.

https://www.createspace.com/6018177


CreateSpace, January 2016

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**Kekelwa Nyaywa**

*Under the Fig Tree*

*Under the Fig Tree* is a children’s book set in Zambia, about Sepo, a ten-year-old boy who travels to a city far away from his village to spend his school holiday with his cousins, uncle, and auntie. Within a week, he becomes bored because his cousins and their friends from a nearby shanty town spend hours making toys from wire to sell to tourists. Despite the children’s attempts to teach Sepo how to make toys, he’s not interested. Instead, as they make toys, he tells them a story about a boy who saved the people in his village from a terrorizing giant that lived in the surrounding forest.

East African Educational Publishers Ltd, Nairobi, Kenya, May 2016

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**Karen Devaney**

*Artista by the Sea*

Juliana, a nurse and talented artist, finds her life turned inside out when a trip to Italy unfolds a family secret, and she is flung into a world she never knew existed. *Artista by the Sea* is a female-driven narrative packed with hilarious characters that influence and torment Juliana.

www.karendevaney.net

Wisdom House Press, January 2016

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**Roselee Blooston**

*Dying in Dubai: A Memoir of Marriage, Mourning, and the Middle East*

*Dying in Dubai* is a memoir of love, loss, reckoning, and renewal, set against the backdrop of a Rodeo Drive-on-Mars desert city. After the sudden death of her beloved husband, Blooston takes a 15-day journey through a profoundly disorienting environment, and an inner journey over the next 13 months through the equally foreign terrain of grief. The Middle East becomes the catalyst for a life-altering confrontation with her partner, her marriage, and ultimately herself.

Apprentice House Press, October 2016
Member News and Correspondence

Guild Member Named Poet Laureate

Marisa Moks-Unger has been named the Erie County Poet Laureate for 2016-2017. Marisa and eleven other local poets applied for the Poet Laureate designation this year. A five-member jury scored their written poems, their community project idea, and their public reading. The new Erie Poet Laureate will be awarded a $7,500 grant, which provides a $3,000 stipend to the poet and $4,500 to carry out a project to help bring poetry to the people of Erie County.

The Erie County Government, in cooperation with Edinboro University, Gannon University, Mercyhurst University, and Penn State Behrend, started the Poet Laureate Initiative in 2009. The Initiative has received recognition for its impact on the arts in our region, receiving the Pennsylvania County Commissioners Association County Arts Award in 2011 and the National Association of Counties National Arts Award in 2012. The Poet Laureate Initiative is a means by which the community can be exposed to exceptional poetry. The Erie County Poet Laureate is an ambassador for poetry who builds greater awareness of and appreciation for the art form in her community.

Marisa is the author of a collection of chapbook-length poetry, Mud and Stars (NightBallet Press, Cleveland, 2015). Her work appears in such publications as Midwestern Gothic Literary Magazine, Pressure Press Poetry, Hesler Street Fair Poetry Anthology, Guide to Kulchur Creative Journal, and Dwelling in Possibility: Voices of Erie County. She has read at such venues as The Nuyorican Poets’ Café and Stark Open Mic (New York City); the S.O.U.L. Collaborative of Creative Art Series (Detroit, Michigan); The Deep Cleveland Poetry Series, Mahal’s, and Bistro 70 (Cleveland, Ohio); and Women of Word, Poetry in the Park, Poetry at Presque Isle, Poets’ Hall, and PACA (Erie, Pennsylvania).

She organizes and co-organizes events, including Piece of Cake and 100 Thousand Poets for Change, to enable others to give voice to social justice issues. Her poetry is often an ekphrastic response to other art forms, including photography, fine art, and pop art. She is largely influenced by the works of Ella Wheeler Wilcox, William Butler Yeats, and Carl Sandburg.

Moks-Unger holds an M.A. in English from Gannon University and earned a B.A. from the University of Central Florida in Orlando, where she majored in English with an emphasis in Creative Writing. She is a former secondary English teacher in the City of Erie School District. Currently, she is the owner of an Internet startup called We Write It Right, a full-service writing and editing company based in Erie, Pennsylvania. In addition, she is a published journalist, essayist, and travel writer.

A longtime member of The Guild, Marisa serves as the IWWG area representative, where she facilitates monthly meet-ups and organizes regional writing retreats.

Editor’s note: Our congratulations to Marisa on her appointment as Poet Laureate of Erie County, and our thanks to her for organizing a regional conference in Erie to support The Guild and to promote creative writing among all residents of her community. For more information on the November 5 conference, turn to page 3.

Midlife Is the New Feisty

Sharon Olivia Blumberg and Marie Murphy Duess are among the 45 authors from the U.S. and Canada whose blog posts, selected from 200+ entries, appear in the anthology Feisty after 45: The Best Blogs from Midlife Women, published by Mill Park Publishing of Eagle, Idaho. Topics include humor, inspiration, travel, and caregiving.

Writing saved me from the sin and inconvenience of violence.

- Alice Walker
Multi-Arts in Columbus, Ohio
4th Saturdays: A Time to Honor Our Individual Journeys, 12–1:30 pm; JungHaus, 59 W. Third Ave.; free for members of IWWG, the Interfaith Association of Central Ohio (www.iaco.org), the Jung Association of Central Ohio (jungcentralohio.org). Share 3–5 minutes of your photography, art, music, dance, dreams, or writing, or simply enjoy what emerges from informal multimedia group process when we express what matters to us, enriching understanding of our diverse and common humanity.
Jeanne Marlowe
jamarlowe@juno.com; (614) 476-8802

Keeping Promises
Jill Rath, of Eustis, Florida, is thrilled to share that she has found the perfect way to combine her passion for, and decades of experience in, photography with her faith. Her first book, The Promises of God, will be published by Christian Faith Publishing later this year. As a new IWWG member, Jill’s first writing conference (ever!) was the 2015 Summer Conference. Her time there solidified her vision of how she wanted to share her talent with the world.

Mastering the Art of Communication
Kristin Rath, IWWG’s Director of Operations, was accepted by Columbia University to pursue a Master of Science degree in Strategic Communications. This executive-level program focuses on the critical thinking, analysis, and practical skills essential to developing and implementing communications strategies that advance an organization’s goals and mission. Kristin looks forward to applying what she learns to benefit IWWG and its members!

a.k.a. The Dame
I am a new member in the midst of writing a women’s fiction novel about a slow-bloomer coming-of-age. Hence, I launched The Dame Blog (www.thedameblog.com), a humor blog for the ladies. Please check it out and let me know how I can join your member blogs and websites. Thank you for creating a place for women authors to tap into one another!
Sarah Frank (S.J. Musgraves)

Pro Volunteer

Down and Up the East Coast
Linda (L.M.) Davies was one of fifteen poets whose words merged with images created by fifteen visual artists into printed posters, for “Broadsides: Poetry off the Shelf,” a reading held on January 28, at the Alliance for the Arts, in Fort Myers, FL. Illustrator and cartoonist Doug MacGregor created the poster for Linda’s poem “A Dangerous Silence.” On May 14, Linda read her prose piece “Sound Avenue” at Dan’s Papers Literary Salon, held at the Southampton Arts Center, in Southampton Village, NY. She continues to lead writing and creativity workshops, and will launch her website soon.

Red-Carpet Reflections
Lori Howell, of San Jose, CA, thanks the IWWG for the many ways it has directed, guided, and encouraged her in her writing career. Her murder mystery novel, Reflections, has won screenplay script awards from the Hollywood Boulevard Film Festival, Hollywood International Moving Picture and Film Festival, and Los Angeles Independent Film Festival, and has also scored Official Selections Acceptance in other film festivals. In January 2017, Lori will walk the red carpet to receive an award from the Hollywood International Film Moving Picture and Film Festival, which will open doors to film producers and directors as well as publishers for her current novels-in-progress. Lori will be featured in Women of Distinction Magazine (http://womenofdistinction.net/); and this fall, she plans to launch writing workshops, so anyone interested in attending those can contact Lori at (831) 238-3125 or lhowell@montereybay.com. http://lhowell.19.wix.com/scriptreflections http://www.inawritersmind.com

Looking for a Writer
I was a member in the 90’s and the IWWG changed my life! I have recently renewed my membership with you. I wrote a memoir a few years ago (Not So Black and White) and am working on a new book with my daughters. I also work one on-one-with writers who also want to share their stories but need support and guidance. I am in search of one more writer to take on. Interested writers can contact me at www.alexiswilson.com.
Strategic Convening Charts Future Course of IWWG

From September 9 through 11, Friday evening through Sunday afternoon, eleven members of the IWWG Board and Advisory Circle convened at Judy Huge’s Cape Cod home and worked intensely to imagine and plan The Guild and her future. In a word, that future means honoring the guiding principles that have kept us human and strong for over 40 years, while expanding the ways we will support women writers across the country, around the world, throughout the whole year.

Working under the guiding hand of member and strategic planner Laura Kieley, each woman led discussion and action planning for one of the sessions: branding to vision to finance, staffing, international bridge-building, marketing to communication. The group spent considerable energy on identifying what The Guild offers uniquely and how to translate this most vividly through a website and online presence.

By defining the IWWG as a unique home for women writers, the group realized we are defined by both our traditional face-to-face conferences and our print materials and can, as well, come to be distinguished by expanded online support and connection to members throughout the year, in places near and far, rural and urban, local and international.

Some of the ideas we are exploring:

♦ Making our summer conferences even more focused on the needs expressed by our members in reviews and conversations.
♦ Developing more virtual writers’ groups based on genre and other special interests.

Participants in the Convening included Raquel Arrechea, Kelly DuMar, Dorothy Randall Gray, Marj Hahne, Judy Huge, Laura Kieley, Dixie King, Cathleen O’Connor, Hope Player, Jan Phillips, and Pamela Varkony. This talented group of women brought expertise in strategic planning, branding, marketing, programming, accounting, and social media to the table. Special teleconferences were held with Suzi Banks Baum and Emily McKhann.

Create dangerously, for people who read dangerously.... [Write] knowing in part that no matter how trivial your words may seem, someday, somewhere, someone may risk his or her life to read them.

- Edwidge Danticat

- continued on page 40
IWWG Boston Retreat Makes Magic

On April 30, 2016, over fifty women writers met in Medfield, MA, for the first Boston Regional IWWG—Writing from Your Life Retreat. IWWG presenters included Susan Tiberghien, Kelly DuMar, and Judy Adourian, whose workshops offered professional and personal insights into writing memoir, monologue, and poetry. The gathering included IWWG members and many nonmembers who were inspired to join.

This one-day writing retreat was so successful, the Second Annual Boston Writing from Your Life Retreat is being planned to include workshops with Susan Tiberghien, Kelly DuMar, and Maureen Murdoch, and will take place on Saturday, May 6, 2017, at the Montrose School, Medfield, MA. Registration is always discounted for IWWG members, who also have the opportunity to participate in the onsite book fair. Registration will open in January.

Convening—continued from page 39

♦ Using member ambassadors already working with women artists and writers in other countries to open connections with those writers and share mutual support.
♦ Creating a more robust, attractive, easy-to-maneuver, and interactive website that invites more creative connection among members.
♦ Offering more regional conferences and support for local writers’ circles.
♦ Providing greater access for our members to agents, editors, and publishing options.

From start to finish, the women of The Guild contributed their time and energy, working together in the inclusive, open, collaborative spirit that has marked our shared journey. In this process, we have identified, and are now adding details on, how to put into practice even more ways to empower women’s words to come out of our souls and into the world.

I learned to trust other women writers to share their truth and appreciated hearing their voices. I had three truly affirming experiences: 1) Reading a piece of my work on Tuesday night made me nervous, but I was so warmly received and complimented by so many afterward and in following days, that I felt empowered! 2) Having one-on-one meetings with two of my workshop leaders was extremely helpful and encouraging. Both times I felt heard and trusted that they shared their truth with me. 3) Even though I did not know a soul at this conference, I felt like I came away having made some brief, but sincere friendships.

Summer Conference Participant
WOMEN WRITERS AND ARTISTS MATRIX
Autumn Anniversary Weekend Retreat, November 4-6
Skidmore College, Bolton Hall, Saratoga Springs, NY
$250.00

Marni Gillard
Storytell Your Life

June S. Gould, Ph.D.
What Are Women Writing about Anyway?

Ginny Scavuzzo:
Color It Wow! Beauty & Magic of Alcohol Inks (pictured)

ArtPlayShop:
Back by popular demand! We’re making it bigger and better. Enjoy our all-day open studio and play with collage, bookmaking, fabric painting, beadwork, yarn portraits, sewing, mandala coloring books, dollmaking, acrylic paints & more. We’ll also have a sewing machine and typewriter!

WWAM Weekend Retreats Feature:
• 2.5-Hour Workshop Intensives
• Wine & Cheese Evening Readings
• Small Classes
• Networking Lunch
• Complimentary Gifts
• WWAMarketplace for Books, Art, Crafts, Etc.
• Conversation & Creativity Dinner with Shamanic MC Amejo Amyot

Registration Begins September 1 Day- and Dinner-Only Rates Available

Further Info: 845.661.7625 WriteArtMatrix@aol.com www.WWAMatrix.com

Energy. Motion. Flow~ The Beauty of Alcohol Inks: experience this magic. A Workshop ...better said, a Playshop. No experience necessary to play. Do you believe in magic? I hope so, or if not, that you will believe after you experience alcohol inks. Creating an alcohol ink abstract on tile is so much fun as you watch your creation unfold before your eyes. The inks are rich and beautiful. They are easy-flowing and spontaneous. Each finished tile is an unique piece of art that can be beautifully displayed on a small easel.

Come. Let’s play together!
In search of the ancestral, whether physically or spiritually, was a mission that consumed the being of Stephanie Alston-Nero. Her poetry resonated with this quest, her healing was empowered by it, and the ancestral was the narrative thread that governed her days.

Born on June 20, 1954 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Stephanie Hortensia was the fifth child of eleven. Like her mother, Margaret Morris, she was a Gemini, so they shared a special bond and supported each other, no matter the cause or issue. Stephanie was a devoted sister to all her siblings and was especially influential in the lives of her younger siblings and brothers.

A sojourning poet, performer, visual artist, and educator, Stephanie originated a form of healing using ancient shamanic practices, ritual, and modern modalities that successfully address ancestral wounds and personal healing. She was dedicated, through her work, to help end suffering in this world and beyond. Her books, *Kiss Me On My Face of God: Ancestral Poems* and *In Wild Violet Shrine*, testify to her belief in prayer, meditation, and healing.

A graduate of Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio, Stephanie worked from Saratoga Springs to Swaziland. She was a cast member of *Sheila’s Day*, which toured the United States and South Africa. She taught Theatre Arts to many young people, encouraging confidence and self-esteem. Stephanie was a member of and taught for The International Women’s Writing Guild, and was a member of the Actors’ Equity Association. She called on the wisdom of the arts for planetary healing and personal peace. She and her husband, Mikel, established Stone Feather Retreat in upstate New York and welcomed many unable to afford alternative healing services in a natural environment. She offered free healing sessions to veterans and others exposed to violence and trauma. She also taught EFT techniques to nurses. Her giving lives on!

Stephanie brought a light into this world that can never be duplicated or extinguished. A blessing to many, she will be missed and her memory cherished.

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The Ancestors Send a Breed of Light

Our realm can barely carry
They dream us in the clear light
Within their ashes lay our lives
A miracle of tongue and room
Their wisdoms sprout in us
A feast of hard-earned blooms

They move through us a living altar
Preach the sermon of the forgotten
With the flare of the first peach

They congregate beside us on spokes of Light
In the axis of our every breath

In episodes of vertigo
We sense their steep love

Like ruins they refuse to go away
They know no ravage that is new
They never die
Their worlds cross over worlds
Our bloodlines bend into their stories

Near violets
I sense their fragile breathing
The flush of spring
Pregnant in our every breath

One day my face will join them
Like jewels
In a river of rainwater
Among the roots and relic gems
Beyond
The need for soil
On newborn shoots of roses
Multiplying seed
In the sight of those
I will always be
As the seed
Of their
Becoming

Stephanie Alston-Nero
*In Wild Violet Shrine*
The IWWG Member Advantage

Women have returned to Guild events for 40 years, with a joyful camaraderie that has built a sisterhood unlike any other. You are welcome, no matter your level of experience. Here you can learn the craft of writing and be supported in special ways as you learn. You will have the freedom to express your own writing dreams in an atmosphere of acceptance. The energy created here is contagious. Your own voice will gain the power to join the chorus. **Women get brave here.** The isolation felt when writing alone will vanish as you find the sisters who have been missing in your life. **With women who share your passion, you can create lifelong bonds of friendship, all across the world.** Not yet a member?

**What are the perks of membership?**

**Many! And the list is growing:**

- Advance notice of and discounts on all our events and conferences
- Public listings of your published books and author website/blog on our site
- Promotion of your publications and news in our member newsletter, *Network*, and in our open newsletter, *Your Latest Page*
- Access to our members-only Facebook page
- Links to upcoming contests and submission opportunities
- Support for the development of local writing groups
- Member Forum

**Coming Soon! Member-only access to:**

- Online courses and events
- Direct contact with published member authors
- Member directory
- Special offers from other organizations and companies

**Annual membership (USD)**  $55.00  
($90 for Canada and Mexico/$105 for Europe)

**Go to** [www.iwwg.org](http://www.iwwg.org) **to become a member or to find out more!**

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*Network* is a quarterly, members-only publication of The International Women’s Writing Guild. Members receive *Network* electronically and can opt to have a hard copy mailed, as well.

Correspondence, notification of publications, and submissions to *Giving Voice* should be sent to [iwwgmembernews@gmail.com](mailto:iwwgmembernews@gmail.com).

Questions about membership or conference registration can be addressed to Marj Hahne, Interim Operations Manager, at [iwwgquestions@gmail.com](mailto:iwwgquestions@gmail.com). Other questions may be addressed to Dixie King, Executive Director, at dking@tlcprofessionals.com.
The IWWG, founded in 1976, is a network for the personal and professional empowerment of women through writing and is open to all regardless of portfolio. As such, it has established a remarkable record of achievement in the publishing world, as well as in circles where lifelong learning and personal transformation are valued for their own sake. The Guild nurtures and supports holistic thinking by recognizing the logic of the heart—the ability to perceive the subtle interconnections between people, events, and emotions—alongside conventional logic. To learn more about us, visit our website at www.IWWG.org.

SAVE THE DATE!

The 40th Annual IWWG Summer Conference will be held at Muhlenberg College, July 7-14, 2017

About the Summer Conference...

I was astonished by the creativity and courage of women from all walks of life, who came together to create but especially to support and encourage others regardless of their progress in the lifelong journey of writing. As always, I loved the classes and critique sessions. The open readings are always a highlight. As a writer who spends too much time alone, to be among the community of writers once a year and to be recognized as such is truly a miracle! Also learned a lot about the publishing journey from fellow participants.

-2016 Summer Conference Participant