CAAWC, NCWN Celebrate Milestone Anniversaries at Spring Conference

GREENSBORO—Fellowship. Learning. Support. These principles are at the heart of the Carolina African-American Writers’ Collective, and they happen to be central tenets of the North Carolina Writers’ Network as well.

NCWN, which turns thirty-five this year, will host its 2020 Spring Conference on Saturday, April 18, at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Registration is open.

—Continued on Page 14
The Writers’ Network News is produced with the generous support of the following organizations:

The Writers’ Network News welcomes letters and contributions from readers and prints them as space permits and at the discretion of the editor. Send your comments, questions, and suggestions to: Editor, Writers’ Network News, c/o NCWN, PO Box 21591, Winston-Salem, NC 27120 or calendar@ncwriters.org. Published items may be edited for clarity and length.
A
fter attending the North Carolina Writers’ Network Squire Summer Writing Workshops last summer, I became its biggest fan and told Ed Southern I’d do whatever I could to help promote it in the future. And here I am, fulfilling that offer with this issue’s editorial from the board. Happy to give back.

I always wanted to take a writing class with my colleague Alex Albright, who is a font of knowledge about my adopted home state. But editing the North Carolina Literary Review is a full-time job—on top of the full-time job of being a professor—so finding the time to audit just never seemed to happen. When Alex retired, I figured I’d missed my chance. But then Ed asked if I could help at the Squire Summer Writing Workshops last summer, since it was being held in Greenville. Well, as long as I was going to be there helping out, I thought I’d go ahead and take a class. The fates aligned: Alex was hired to teach the creative nonfiction class.

I had not taken a creative writing workshop in about thirty-five years—not since my undergraduate days at LSU—and I’d never taken a creative nonfiction class. Indeed, I am new to writing in this genre, after some thirty years as a literary scholar.

My workshop with Alex did not disappoint. By the time he finished his rounds of questioning us about ourselves, our writing projects, and our short- and long-term writing goals during the first session of the first day, we were all familiar enough with each other’s projects to enhance our critiques of the writing samples we’d read. We also felt well-acquainted with each other, which perhaps put us at ease as we prepared to give and take suggestions on something as close to our hearts as our writing. Furthermore, I was pleased to realize, every person in the class had a thoroughly thought-out project, even if we were at various stages, from I’ve been thinking about this a long time, and want to get started writing, and the writing sample I had to turn in when I signed up made me finally do so to I’ve got a book-length manuscript but haven’t shown it to anyone and just want to know if people will want to read it—and every step in between.

One of the questions Alex asked during that first session was about what, specifically, we each wanted to get out of the weekend, and by weekend’s end, I had, indeed, gotten what I told him my goal was. Back when I first met Alex, I asked him about the term creative nonfiction, which
Many writers began the 2010s excited about social media.

If we sometimes found it distracting, or had to disable our ethernet ports with superglue, *a la* Jonathan Franzen, in order to get our writing done, many of us also felt social media opened us to a wider community of writers and, perhaps more importantly, readers.

Suddenly, we could envision a market where agents and traditional publishers weren’t necessary. Authors could sell their books directly to readers online.

For a while, this was true. Self-publishing was the Wild West in the early 2010s. Some self-published authors were making nice retirement incomes; that *Fifty Shades* lady and *The Martian* guy sold their stories to Hollywood; e-books seemed like the reading format of the future, with no ceiling in terms of market share; and self-published authors could sell their e-books dirt cheap and still make a tidy profit, which wasn’t possible for most authors published the traditional way.

Social media proved an effective marketing tool.

Of course, this Utopian vision of self-publishing proved overly optimistic. Eventually, this market became crowded, too. The tricks of the trade used by indie pioneers were less effective; if anything, the slew of self-published material proved the necessity of editors and publishing professionals; and the market share for e-books capped out—and continues to hold steady—at about 20 percent.

I’ve sat on more than my share of panels about social media and the book business. (Sigh—I’d kill to sit on a panel about Sacred Harp Singing, for example, but so far no one’s ever invited me.) I’ve also attended probably more than my fair share. And the advice we—I—gave back at the beginning of the last decade still holds true, for indie and traditionally published authors alike.

Pick a social media platform you enjoy and stick with it.

Don’t try to do it all, or you’ll do it all poorly.

And your writing has to come first.

Social media is not writing, although we can sometimes trick ourselves into thinking it is. It’s not even reading. Not really. Not the kind of careful writing and deep reading required of us if we want to achieve excellence and take the next steps in our writing careers.

—Continued on Page 43
A Letter From The Executive Director

by Ed Southern, Executive Director

Last month, we were audited.

The following week, our board and staff had an all-day strategic planning session.

Those were some of the most exciting days in the Network’s now thirty-five-year history.

Stop it. I’m serious.

Both the audit and the strategic plan were overdue, and thrilling—not in and of themselves (I have not been kicked in the head . . . lately), but for the foundation they’re laying, the door they’re opening.

They are pieces of the same process: our effort to determine what exactly the Network has been and is, so that we can have a clearer idea of what the Network might become.

“The world is always changing” long has been banal, and now it’s an understatement. Parts of the world are drowning, others are burning. By the time I reach retirement age, the borders of our state likely will not be where they are now, the sites of some of my fondest memories nothing but shoals or ash.

What will the North Carolina Writers’ Network look like then, when North Carolina no longer looks the same? Who will the Network be, when our founding generation has passed, our heroes no longer here writing, teaching, inspiring us? How can we best serve the writers who will take their places, the writers just now publishing their debut works, or just now mustering up the courage to put pen to paper (or finger to keyboard or screen)?

We—the Network’s current leaders—have set ourselves the task of figuring that out, knowing that we can’t, really. The best we can do is give ourselves the freedom to keep trying to figure that out, to keep adapting, by figuring out and keeping tight to our essential self, our best story, our mission:

The North Carolina Writers’ Network connects, promotes, and serves the writers of this state. We provide education in the craft and business of writing, opportunities for recognition and critique of literary work, resources for writers at all stages of development, support for and advocacy of the literary heritage of North Carolina, and a community for those who write. The North Carolina Writers’ Network believes that writing is necessary both for self-expression and a healthy community, that well-written words can connect people across time and distance, and that the deeply satisfying experiences of writing and reading should be available to everyone.
We have a few non-negotiables. We will remain as open and accessible as we can to as many writers as we can, not just in North Carolina but throughout the nation and world, no matter their skills or experience or goals. We will remain a champion for North Carolina’s remarkable literary tradition, and a gathering place for its literary community. We will remain a source for the three essentials that writers always will need: excellence, opportunity, and community.

How we go about all that, though, will remain to be seen…and heard, as we seek out voices we have not heard before…and tried, as we experiment and adapt and evolve.

Whatever we do will be an evolution, not a revolution: a marathon, not a sprint. As we seek new directions, we will seek to remain true to our essence and mission, so that whatever its geography, North Carolina will remain the Writingest State.

---

Travel with Lucia Peel Powe in her long and busy journey from Macon, Georgia, to the Miss America Pageant to Romper Room in Greenville, N.C. — and beyond — in this collection of reminiscences, wry observations, and essays that span nearly nine decades.

In these pages, you will meet:
- A famous actor
- A stuttering wedding singer
- Baby Jesus as a light bulb
- Ezra Pound’s nurse
- A wisecracking priest
- Several beauty queens
- 4 daughters
- 3 stepdaughters
- 2 husbands

“Lucia's [voice] comes to her naturally, imbuing her stories with authenticity, sensitivity, humility and hard-won wisdom.”
— Doug Marlette, author of The Bridge and Magic Time

$12.99 per copy
Available from the Regular Bookshop in Durham, (919) 286-2700, and at Amazon.com

All profits will go to Kidznotes (http://Kidznotes.org)
“Changing lives through participation in youth orchestras, bands and choirs”

To schedule a reading by the author, call Mrs. Powe at (919) 384-2943.
When I say technology, I may mean computers, software, or “that Twitter thing.” It all seems like magic. Yet I am a consumer and a creator of culture as a writer, and my success is determined by how I embrace the opportunities offered by technology.

Cultural technologies are the mechanisms that make culture happen, and writing sits at the intersection of innovation. Let me offer a historical perspective.

The Chinese invention of paper in 105 CE made governance easier across provinces and created their cultural renaissance. Much later, in 1440, Johannes Gutenberg in Germany created the movable type printing press, and that made possible the dissemination of longform writing in Europe. The freer, cheaper circulation of ideas helped spread the Renaissance across Europe.

By the 1500s, printers had discovered they sold more books if they printed in the vernacular, the language common people spoke, rather than in an official language read by only the upper class. This particularly capitalistic move offered an efficient and public way to communicate shared ideas to a large number of people and democratized the art of expression.

Thomas Paine’s writings during the American Revolution offered a variation on that theme. His 1776 pamphlet *Common Sense* was the first published perspective to recommend that the British colonies in North America might be better off as an independent nation with its own egalitarian government. Paine put into everyday words a sentiment felt across young America, and 500,000 copies of *Common Sense* sold within the first year of publication in a country with only 2.5 million people.

These elements enshrined the role of writers (and the press) in civic life, and demonstrated that culture expands when creatives embrace emerging technology.

Today, global literacy rate is now 90 percent, and the ability to read and write is taken for granted. Between social media and self-publishing technology, anyone can publish anything, and someone on the other side of the world can read it. No idea feels truly new anymore.

This is the grand democratization of language and communication.

—Continued on Page 42
**Spring Conference 2020 Complete Schedule**

- April 18, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

## Saturday, April 18

8:00–9:00 am  
Registration Open

8:30 am – 5:00 pm  
Exhibit Tables and Book Sales Open

9:00–10:00 am

**Keynote Celebration of the Carolina African-American Writers’ Collective**

In February 1995, poet Lenard D. Moore and other North Carolina African-American writers began meeting in Moore’s home for fellowship, learning, and support, forming an enduring organization composed of many now-prominent writers in the state and throughout the country. Collectively, the CAAWC writers have published more than sixty books of prose and poetry, gained prominence as professors and authors, and received wide-ranging recognition. Moore and three longtime active members of the collective—Dr. L. Teresa Church, Bridgette A. Lacy, and Crystal Simone Smith—will chronicle the history of this organization and will read excerpts from their forthcoming anthology, *All the Songs We Sing: Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Carolina African-American Writers’ Collective.*

Please submit up to 1,500 sequential words from a single work, along with your current CV in a separate attachment, on the same day that you register for the conference. Submissions should be saved in an MS Word document, using double-spaced 12-point Times New Roman font, with numbered pages, and sent as an attachment to masterclass@ncwriters.org. The Word document's file name should include your own last name, and your name and the title of each poem should appear on the submission itself. If accepted into the Master Class, your submitted work will be shared with other Master Class registrants.

Each registrant should be ready to handle the intensive instruction and atmosphere of the Master Class.

10:30 am – 12:00 pm  
**Session I**

**Messing Up Good: Fiction Master Class with Xhenet Aliu**

Many of us seek to produce writing that our readers will recognize as beautiful: seamless structure, lush language, elegant and universal themes. Sometimes, however, the most striking work is the unrecognizable beautiful; stories that still us with misfit imagery; conspicuously crude prose; or disjointed narrative structures. This class will focus on macro and micro methods of unperturbing our stories, with discussions on why and when we might consider such effects and how to deploy them in ways that serve our work without sabotaging it.

Please submit three poems, totaling no more than five pages, on the same day that you register for the conference, along with your current CV in a separate attachment. Poems should be saved in a single MS Word document, using single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, and sent as an attachment to masterclass@ncwriters.org. The Word document's file name should include your own last name, and your name and the title of each poem should appear on the submission. If accepted into the Master Class, your submitted work will be shared with other Master Class registrants.

Each registrant should be ready to handle the intensive instruction and atmosphere of the Master Class.

**The Art of Writing Memoir: CNF Master Class with Randal O’Wain**

We all have a story inside of us that is itching to be shared with others, and as nonfiction writers, we have the drive to put these memories on paper. How do we reconstruct the past and all of the messy components of life onto the page? How do we breathe personality into the people we love, and how do we illustrate the settings and landscapes that made us who we are so that a reader can experience
these meaningful life events with compassion and empathy?

During our workshop period, we will practice the foundations of writing memoir artfully through exercises and readings that exemplify compelling narrative persona, vivid imagery, sensory details, and turn anecdotes into satisfying narratives that are relatable and fulfilled.

Please submit up to 1,500 sequential words from a single work, along with your current CV in a separate attachment, on the same day that you register for the conference. Submissions should be saved in an MS Word document, using double-spaced 12-point Times New Roman font, with numbered pages, and sent as an attachment to masterclass@ncwriters.org. The Word document’s file name should include your own last name, and the title of the work and your name should appear on the submission itself. If accepted into the Master Class, your submitted work will be shared with other Master Class registrants.

Each registrant should be ready to handle the intensive instruction and atmosphere of the Master Class.

____________________________
Narrative Medicine: Stories of Illness and the Power of Reflective Writing with Aimee Mepham

This session will provide a brief introduction to the field of narrative medicine—the scholarly and clinical movement that centers the power of story in health care—and the wide-ranging ways it can be practiced by writers who are patients, caregivers, or simply want to explore the connection between writing and healing. We will read and discuss select short pieces about health and illness, followed by practicing several reflective writing prompts/exercises that allow writers to explore their relationship with writing's therapeutic potential.

More than Meaning (poetry) with Timothy O’Keefe

For many people, learning to read poetry is tantamount to becoming a word detective—one is taught to look for signs and clues in order to arrive at the “deep meaning” of the poem. Or, worse yet, they attempt to translate “what the poet was really trying to say.” This class will explore poetic approaches to the doing of a poem—the poem as an event on the page—instead of focusing on the traditional markers of meaning (symbol, metaphor, allusion, etc.). The goal is not to dispense with meaning altogether, but to reposition it as just one of many experiences the poem can present to an attentive reader.

____________________________
Make a Scene: Emotional Building Blocks of Fiction with Quinn Dalton

What is a scene? How do you know when you need one? How do you get “in” and “out” of it? Through discussion and in-class exercises you’ll understand the necessary elements of scenes, how they are built, and how to use them to propel your story.

____________________________
Public Speaking for Writers with Cameron Kent

Are you one of those people who is uncomfortable with public speaking? Many writers are. It can be daunting, but if you want to market your writing and sell more books, then you need to be able to talk effectively to people at book launches, book clubs, and even pitch meetings. Cameron Kent will teach you how to prepare your remarks, overcome your nervousness, and successfully deliver your speech to groups of people large and small.

12:00–1:15 pm
Lunch with an Author
(or lunch on your own)

Sign up to have lunch with a small group of fellow registrants and one of our conference instructors. This is a great opportunity to talk shop with an experienced writer in a relaxed, informal setting. Lunch options and beverages will be provided to those who pre-register.

Pre-registration is required for Lunch with an Author; there will be no on-site registration for this program.

____________________________
1:15–2:15 pm
Faculty Readings

2:30–4:00 pm
Session II

Messing Up Good: Fiction Master Class (cont.) with Xhenet Aliu

Continued; see above for description
investigate the stuff of nouns, both liv-
unspeakable to the concrete. We will
demonstrate how to get from the
poems with actual objects. These poets

Bishop, and Clifton, we will explore
imagery. Following the lead of Plath,
This workshop focuses primarily on

____________________________
preserve it for future writing.

and create a personalized idea cluster to
practice, we will outline a new story
story, character, setting, and theme. To
develop and preserve new ideas, ask

parallel tracks need to be in perfect
balance. We will learn how to create and
use hybrid outlines—combining writ-
and graphic elements—as scaffolds
to develop and preserve new ideas, ask
questions about plot, save editing time,
and control all components of writing:
story, character, setting, and theme. To
practice, we will outline a new story
and create a personalized idea cluster to
preserve it for future writing.

Crowded House: Imagery in Poetry
with Jennie Malboeuf
This workshop focuses primarily on
imagery. Following the lead of Plath,
Bishop, and Clifton, we will explore
how to ornament and enhance our
poems with actual objects. These poets
will demonstrate how to get from the
unspeakable to the concrete. We will
investigate the stuff of nouns, both liv-
ing (like animals) and inanimate (like
furniture). By the end of workshop, stu-
dents will have filled their stanzas (little
rooms) with a heavy hoard of things.
The goal is to make our poems have
weight; let’s ground these airy creations.

Now Look at What You Have Done:
Poetry Master Class (cont.) with
Stuart Dischell
Continued; see above for description

____________________________
The Art of Writing Memoir:
CNF Master Class (cont.) with
Randal O’Wain
Continued; see above for description

Planning Your Creativity: Hybrid
Outlines for 21st Century Writing
(all genres) with Jorge D. Cortese
Most writers are inspired to write a
novel starting with a single idea or
scene. And they are frequently told that
writing is a linear, spontaneous process,
not unlike reading, and that outlining
would stifle their creativity. The result-
ing process can disregard the complex-
ities of a finalized manuscript, where
parallel tracks need to be in perfect
balance. We will learn how to create and
use hybrid outlines—combining writ-
and graphic elements—as scaffolds
to develop and preserve new ideas, ask
questions about plot, save editing time,
and control all components of writing:
story, character, setting, and theme. To
practice, we will outline a new story
and create a personalized idea cluster to
preserve it for future writing.

Writing Your Life: Turning
Personal Stories into Universal
Narratives with Bridgette A. Lacy
Bridgette A. Lacy writes about the big
and small moments of life, ranging
from losing her sense of smell to a brain
tumor to crafting essays on Sunday
Dinner. Join her for a ninety-minute
creative nonfiction class, where she’ll
discuss turning our private moments
into literary gold. To make readers con-
nect to our story, our work must show
the turmoil, the joy, and those private
moments that resonate in our own lives.
During her class, she will share some
techniques for focusing our life stories
and fine-tuning them for publication.

What a Long Strange Trip: From
Manuscript to Finished Book with
Robin Miura and Lynn York
So, you’ve finished your manuscript,
and miraculously you’ve found a
publisher. What happens next? In this
workshop, two leaders from Blair, a
Durham-based nonprofit press, will
guide you along the perilous and
winding path to publication. They’ll
discuss ideas for working with an
editor, understanding your publishing
team, considering the design for your
book, handling the copyediting and
proofreading process, building your
fan base, participating in the marketing
plan for your book, becoming an
advocate for yourself and your book,
budgeting time and resources for the
endeavor, managing your expectations,
and preparing to enjoy every step of
the crazy process. Between the two of
them, your guides for this workshop
have found themselves in the roles
of author, agent, editor, copyeditor,
proofreader, marketer, and sales rep, so
this workshop will be a mix of nuts-
and-bolts advice, war stories, and best
practices—with plenty of time reserved
for responding to your questions.

4:00–5:00 pm
Open Mic
Sign up at the conference registration
table if you would like to share your
work. Only twenty-four reading slots
of five minutes each will be available,
first-come, first-served.

5:00–6:00 pm
Slush Pile Live!
Slush Pile Live! will offer both poetry
and prose in two rooms so that more
attendees have a chance to receive
feedback on their writing. Have you
ever wondered what goes through
an editor’s mind as he or she reads
through a stack of unsolicited sub-
missions?
Here’s your chance to find out.
Beginning at 4:00 pm, attendees may
derop off either 300 words of prose
or one page of poetry in the room of
their choice (prose and poetry will be
read in both MHRA rooms 1214 and
1215). The author’s name should not
appear on the manuscript.
Then, at 5:00 pm, a panel of editors
will listen to the submissions being
read out loud and raise their hand
when they hear something that would
make them stop reading if the piece
were being submitted to their publica-
tion. The editors will discuss what they
did and did not like about the sample,
offering constructive feedback on the
manuscript itself and the submission process. All anonymous—all live! (Authors can reveal themselves at the end, but only if they want to.)

Those interested in having their anonymous submission read should bring a hard copy of up to 300 words of prose from a single work or one page of poetry (40-line max) to one of the Slush Pile Live! rooms. Submissions should be double-spaced, 12-point, Times New Roman font. No names should appear on the submissions. But if submitting prose, do specify the genre.

More “More Seats” Scholarships for 2020

Once again, thanks to a generous but anonymous matching donor, NCWN will offer more “More Seats” Scholarships to allow writers from underserved communities to attend the NCWN 2020 Spring Conference.

Each More Seats (as in, “More Seats at the Table”) scholarship will cover the full cost of conference registration, including a Lunch with an Author session at midday, as well as one year of Network membership—a total value of nearly $200.

Selection criteria will focus on commitment to writing, rather than degrees or publications.

To apply, send a current CV—with contact information and a list of any work, education, publications, or other relevant literary experiences or achievements—and a Statement of Writing Intent of no more than 1,000 words to scholarships@ncwriters.org. The deadline to apply is midnight on Friday, March 27.

Mail-In Registration Form

NCWN Spring Conference  
Saturday, April 18, 2020  
MHRA Building, UNC-Greensboro

Complete this form and mail with your payment to:

NCWN SC Registration  
PO Box 21591  
Winston-Salem NC 27120

First Name ________________  
Last Name ________________

Address ____________________  
City __________________________  
State _______ Zip ___________

County __________________________

Home Phone _____________________  
Office Phone______________________

Cell Phone _______________________

E-mail Address ___________________

Conference Sessions  
Please select a choice for each session. If you are applying to a Master Class, you still must select a back-up choice for each session, in case you do not get into the Master Class.

Saturday, April 18 - 10:30 am to 12:00 pm Session I

Saturday, April 18 - 2:30 to 4:00 pm Session II

Early-Registration Fees  
Please select the appropriate conference cost:

____ $99 Member Cost

____ $179 One-Year Membership + Member Cost

____ $150 Non-Member Cost

____ $20 Master Class Application Fee

_____ I have included a check, made out to “NCWN SC Registration”

_____ I prefer to pay by credit card:

___ Visa ___ MasterCard ___ Discover

Name on Card ______________________

Card Number ______________________

Expiration ____/____
Xhenet Aliu’s novel, *Brass*, was awarded the 2018 Georgia Author of the Year First Novel Prize, was a Barnes & Noble “Discover Great New Writers” selection, was long-listed for the 2018 Center for Fiction First Book Prize, and was named a best book of the year by numerous outlets, including *Entertainment Weekly*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *Real Simple*, and *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. Her debut fiction collection, *Domesticated Wild Things*, won the Prairie Schooner Book Prize in Fiction. Aliu’s writing has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, *Glimmer Train*, *Hobart*, *American Short Fiction*, *Lenny*, *LitHub*, *Buzzfeed*, and elsewhere, and she has received a grant from the Elizabeth George Foundation, and a fellowship from the Djerassi Resident Artists Program, among other awards. She is an assistant professor of Creative Writing at the UNC-Greensboro and has previously worked as an academic librarian, private investigator, waitress, and secretary.

Dr. L. Teresa Church has been a member of the Carolina African American Writers’ Collective since 1995. Her writings have appeared in publications such as *Simply Haiku*, *The Heron’s Nest*, *Obsidian: Literature in the African Diaspora*, *Solo Café*, *Nocturnes: (Re)view of the Literary Arts*, *African American Review*, *North Carolina Literary Review*; her chapbooks *Hand-Me-Down Calicos* and *Beyond the Water Dance*; and *One Window’s Light: A Collection of Haiku*.

Jorge D. Cortese is an award-winning scientist and educator. He wrote a regular column for a nationwide newspaper, *The Scientist*, developed projects for major publishing houses, and created innovative strategies to blend online and classroom teaching. He received the 2015 literary award of The Writers’ Workshop of Asheville and published his first novel, *The Sound of a Broken Chain*, in 2018. His second novel, *The Watchtowers*, will be released in 2020. He writes science fiction echoing magical realism and obsesses about time, fate, and the future of humanity. After generously pinning a world map, he settled in Durham and now serves as the NCWN’s Regional Rep for Durham County.

Quinn Dalton is the author of two story collections and two novels, most recently *Midnight Bowling*. She also co-authored *The Infinity of You & Me* under the pen name JQ Coyle with award-winning novelist and poet Julianna Baggott. Dalton has taught creative writing at UNC-Chapel Hill, UNC-Greensboro, and Wake Forest, and has published numerous articles on the publishing business and writing craft. Her Spring NCWN course, “Make A Scene,” is based on her editing experience and a resulting article of the same name.
**Spring Conference 2020 Faculty Biographies**

**Stuart Dischell**  
Is the author of *Good Hope Road* (Viking), a National Poetry Series Selection, *Evenings & Avenues* (Penguin), *Dig Safe* (Penguin), *Backwards Days* (Penguin), and *Children with Enemies* (Chicago), the pamphlets *Animate Earth* and *Touch Monkey*, and the chapbook *Standing on Z* (Unicorn). His poems have appeared in *The Atlantic*, *Agni*, *The New Republic*, *Slate*, *Kenyon Review*, *Ploughshares*, and anthologies including *Essential Poems*, *Hammer and Blaze*, *Pushcart Prize*, and *Good Poems*. A recipient of awards from the NEA, the North Carolina Arts Council, and the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, he has taught poetry and literature at Boston University, New Mexico State University, the Warren Wilson Low Residency MFA Program, the Sarah Lawrence Summer Seminars, and the Palm Beach Poetry Festival. He is a professor in the MFA Program in Creative Writing at the University of North Carolina Greensboro.

**Cameron Kent**  
is a member of the North Carolina Association of Broadcasters Hall of Fame. He retired from television broadcasting in December of 2016 after thirty-two years at WXII-12 News in Winston-Salem, working as a street reporter, sports anchor, and then the main News Anchor for the last twenty-two years of his career. He was nominated for fourteen Emmy Awards for journalism, including three times as best news writer, and won an Emmy for his reporting on the Pentagon after 9/11. Cameron has published five novels: *The Road to Devotion*, *When the Ravens Die*, *Make Me Disappear*, *The Sea is Silent*, and *Mayor Molly*. His other writing credits include four films which have aired on NBC, HBO, Lifetime, and at the American Film Institute.

**Bridgette A. Lacy**  
is an award-winning journalist and author. She served as a longtime features writer for *The News & Observer* in Raleigh. She's the author of *Sunday Dinner*, part of the Savor the South series by UNC Press and a finalist for the Pat Conroy Cookbook Prize. Lacy is also a contributor to *The Carolina Table: North Carolina Writers on Food* (Eno Publishers, 2016) and *27 Views of Raleigh: The City of Oaks in Prose & Poetry* (Eno Publishers, 2013). Her work has appeared in *Our State Magazine*, *Salt*, and *O.Henry*.

**Jennie Malboeuf**  
is the author of *God had a body*, forthcoming from Indiana University Press in Spring, 2020. Her poems are found in *Crazyhorse*, *The Gettysburg Review*, *The Southern Review*, *The Harvard Review*, *VQR*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *ZYZZYVA*. Born and raised in Kentucky, she teaches at Guilford College in Greensboro and is the recipient of a 2020 NC Arts Council fellowship.
### Aimee Mepham

is Assistant Director of the Humanities Institute at Wake Forest University where she is co-chair of the Story, Health, & Healing initiative. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Washington University in St. Louis and has taught writing workshops at Indiana University, Washington University in St. Louis, Wake Forest University, and Salem College. She is also the Creative Nonfiction Editor of Snapdragon: A Journal of Art & Healing. Her work has appeared in Meridian, River Styx, and Hobart, among others, and has also been performed twice by Liars’ League NYC, a live literary journal featuring professionally trained actors reading original short stories by writers.

### Robin Miura

is the Senior Editor and Associate Publisher of Blair, a nonprofit press based in Durham. She has worked in publishing for twenty years, first as a production editor for Oxford University Press and later as a freelance editor, proofreader, publishing consultant, and writing coach for publishing companies and individual authors. She has worked with all types of books, but her passion is literary fiction and creative nonfiction. She is also a founding editor of the online magazine South Writ Large.

### Lenard D. Moore

is an internationally acclaimed poet and anthologist. He is a U.S. Army Veteran. Moore is the author of The Geography of Jazz, A Temple Looming, Desert Storm: A Brief History, Forever Home, and The Open Eye. He is the editor for One Window’s Light: A Collection of Haiku. He is the founder and executive director of the Carolina African American Writers’ Collective and the Executive Chairman of the North Carolina Haiku Society. He was the first African American president of the Haiku Society of America. His awards include the North Carolina Award for Literature and the Haiku Museum of Tokyo Award. He teaches African American literature and creative writing at the University of Mount Olive where he is the poet-in-residence.

### Timothy O’Keefe

**Spring Conference 2020 Faculty Biographies**

**M. Randal O’Wain**

is the author of *Meander Belt: Family, Loss, and Coming of Age in the Working Class South* (Nebraska, 2019) and the short-story collection *Hallelujah Station* (Autumn House, 2020). He is an Assistant Teaching Professor at UNC-Chapel Hill and a National Endowment of the Arts Fellow at Alderson Federal Correction Institute in West Virginia.

---

**Crystal Simone Smith**

is the author of two poetry chapbooks, *Routes Home* (Finishing Line Press, 2013) and *Running Music* (Longleaf Press, 2014). She is also the author of *Wildflowers: Haiku, Senryu, and Haibun* (2016). Her work has appeared in numerous journals including: *Callaloo, Nimrod, Barrow Street, and African American Review*. She is an alumna of the Callaloo Creative Writing Workshop and the Yale Summer Writers Conference. She is also the founder of Backbone Press.

---

**Lynn York**

is the Publisher of Blair, a nonprofit press based in Durham. She is the author of two novels: *The Piano Teacher* (Plume) and *The Sweet Life* (Plume), a Booksense Notable Book. She holds a BA in English from Duke and an MBA/MA from UT-Austin. She began her career as a college textbook rep and has also worked in telecommunications and satellite television industries. She began working as a volunteer with Carolina Wren Press in 2013, and, with Robin Miura, founded the Lee Smith Novel Prize. She has taught writing workshops at Duke’s Osher Institute, NC State University, High Point University, the North Carolina Writers’ Network, and elsewhere. She has served on the Board of Directors of the NC Arts Council, the NC Art Society, and Carolina Wren Press (now Blair).
The Keynote Celebration will feature four CAAWC writers—founder Lenard D. Moore; Dr. L. Teresa Church; Bridgette A. Lacy; and Crystal Simone Smith—as they chronicle the history of the organization and read passages from *All the Songs We Sing: Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Carolina African-American Writers’ Collective* (Blair, 2020).

Founded in 1985, the North Carolina Writers’ Network will celebrate its 35th anniversary throughout the year.

The Poetry Master Class, “Now Look at What You Have Done,” will be led by Stuart Dischell, author of *Good Hope Road* (Viking), a National Poetry Series Selection, and four other poetry collections. He is a professor in the MFA Program in Creative Writing at UNC-Greensboro.

Other poetic options include “More than Meaning” with Timothy O’Keefe, whose collection *You Are the Phenomenology* won the 2017 Jupiter Prize for Poetry, and “Crowded House: Imagery in Poetry” with Jennie Malboeuf, author of the forthcoming collection *God had a body*.

Xhenet Aliu will lead the Master Class in Fiction, “Messing Up Good.” Aliu’s novel *Brass* won the 2018 Georgia Author of the Year First Novel Prize; was a Barnes & Noble “Discover Great New Writers” selection; and was named a best book of the year by several national media outlets.

For fiction writers wanting more variety, Quinn Dalton will lead “Make a Scene.” Dalton is the author of four books, including *Midnight Bowling* and *Bulletproof Girl*.

Randal O’Wain will lead the Creative Nonfiction Master Class, “Our Memories and Our Words: The Art of Writing Memoir.” O’Wain, a National Endowment of the Arts Fellow at Alderson Federal Correction Institute in West Virginia, is the author of *Meander Belt: Family, Loss, and Coming of Age in the Working Class South* (Nebraska, 2019).

Writers who prefer truth to fiction also may choose “Narrative Medicine” with Aimee Mepham and “Writing Your Life: Turning Personal Stories into Universal Narratives” with Bridgette A. Lacy, a longtime features writer for *The News & Observer* in Raleigh and author of *Sunday Dinner* (UNC Press), a finalist for the Pat Conroy Cookbook Prize.

No conference would be complete without options for those ready to take their book to market, including “Public Speaking for Writers” with Cameron Kent and “From Manuscript to Finished Book” with Blair editors Robin Miura and Lynn York.

Kent is a member of the North Carolina Association of Broadcasters Hall of Fame and won an Emmy for his reporting on the Pentagon after 9/11. Blair is a Durham-based press that publishes diverse fiction, poetry, and nonfiction about the American South and beyond.
There’s even a class for those who write across genres: learn the value of foresight with “Planning Your Creativity: Hybrid Outlines for 21st Century Writing” with the NCWN Regional Rep for Durham County and speculative fiction author Jorge D.Cortese.

In addition, guaranteed to help attendees build the intestinal fortitude necessary to weather the furious storms of publishing, NCWN will host its sixth “Slush Pile Live!”

During this favorite program, poetry and prose will be read aloud in two rooms in front of panels of editors and publishers, who will raise their hands as soon as they hear something in the pieces that would make them stop reading if they came across the submission in a slush pile. Many attendees have commented how much they learn in this hour of rapid-fire tidbits of wisdom and common sense.

Familiar features remain, including faculty readings, an open mic for conference participants, an exhibit hall packed with publishers and literary organizations, and “Lunch with an Author,” where conferencegoers can spend less time waiting in line and more time talking with the author of their choice. Spaces in “Lunch with an Author” are limited and are first-come, first-served. Preregistration and an additional fee are also required for this offering.

Spring Conference is sponsored in part by UNCG’s Creative Writing Program, which will provide coffee for conference-goers during registration and check-in. Other sponsors include the North Carolina Arts Council.

Learn more and register at www.ncwriters.org.

—Stuart Dischell, Poetry Master Class

—Randal O’Wain, Creative Nonfiction Master Class
Brunswick, Columbus, Horry (SC)
Joan Leotta, Regional Rep, joanleotta@atmc.net

When: The first Tuesday of the month, 1:00 pm (in March, 2nd Tuesday)
Where: Brunswick County Library SW Branch, 9400 Ocean Hwy W, Carolina Shores

In January, we began with a talk on planning. Joan Leotta spoke on the concept of selecting a word for the year to guide our writing vision and goals for the year. With permission, we used some planning materials from writer Nicole Gulotta. We set the calendar through June. We welcomed three new writers in December, people who had heard about it from others in the group. Many credit our meetings with helping them find critique partners and learn techniques for writing and marketing that helped them in their work. Other speakers have included JoAnn Matthews and Lennie DiGregorio.

Buncombe
by Lee Stockdale, Regional Rep, leelawsonstockdale@gmail.com

Asheville Writers
When: First Thursday of the month, 6:00-7:30 pm
Where: The BLOCK off Biltmore, 39 S. Market St., Asheville

Autumn activities were punctuated by the wildly fabulous NCWN 2019 Fall Conference right here in our own Asheville, aka “The Paris of the South.” Happily, a number of new local NCWN members signed up at the Conference, some of whom have already availed themselves of the loud excitement of a monthly meet-up. Loud because next to us in the room at December’s open mic was an LGBTQ Democrats Meet and Greet, while behind us, Jeff, the drummer for Ruby’s Blues Trio, was testing his bass drum for that night’s gig. Not to be deterred, but in fact spurred on and pushed to higher creative limits by the cacophony that is Asheville, aka “The Paris of the South,” fully all of the nine attendees read original poetry, fiction, or creative nonfiction. (A tribute to the group’s friendly spirit: it was able to persuade two writers who brought work, but were too shy at first to share it, to read. In both cases, their work knocked the group out.)

Cabarrus-Rowan Writers’ Night Out / Open Mic
Website: https://www.facebook.com/groups/1936971126391810

Cape Fear Coast
by Christine Moughamian, Regional Rep, cmoughamian@yahoo.com
When: One Saturday a month (TBA), 12:30-1:30 pm
Where: NE Regional Branch Library, 1241 Military Cutoff Rd., Wilmington
Website: https://www.meetup.com/writers-618/

The Wilmington Write to Publish Group Meetup
Do you write fiction, nonfiction, poetry? Whatever your genre and level, join us and participate in our Open Mics, Presentations, and Panels with bestselling authors, agents, editors, publishers, and representatives from writing associations. There is no fee to attend. Great coffee, other beverages, and pastries are available off the menu. Join colleagues for a fun-filled writers’ night out.

Cabarrus-Rowan
by Vincent James Vezza, Regional Rep, vincent.vezza@gmail.com

When: Fourth Thursday of the month, 6:30 pm
Where: French Express Internet and Cyber Cafe, 2087 Dale Earnhardt, Jr., Blvd. (at Rt. 29, around the corner from Planet Fitness), Kannapolis / https://www.facebook.com/FrenchExpressNC
and Q&A sessions. Christine Moughamian, award-winning memoirist and organizer of The Wilmington Write to Publish Group Meetup, facilitates our events for added networking and friendship building. Come join us, it’s exciting!

____________________________
Chatham-Lee

Carol Phillips, Regional Rep, calsea@gmail.com

When: Second Saturday of the month, 1:00 pm

Where: Greek Kouzina Café, 964 East St., Pittsboro

Pittsboro Writers’ Morning Out

Big changes came to Chatham-Lee Counties last year. Our first and only Regional Rep, the instigator and champion of Writers’ Morning Out, Al Manning, retired. Thankfully, he is staying around as “Regional Rep Emeritus” to provide wisdom, wit, and continuity to this decade-old gathering of writers. We plan to continue Al’s example of encouraging writers of all genres by presenting programs focusing on what inspires us as writers (and conversely, what doesn’t). We will, of course, hold our poem-a-day celebration in April, Ultra Flash Fiction contest in August, Slush Pile! in October, and Holiday Open Mic in December.

____________________________
Clay

Glenda Beall, Regional Rep, glendabeall@msn.com

When: Third Wednesday of the Month, 10:30 am -12:00 pm (March-December)

Where: Moss Memorial Library, 26 Anderson St., Hayefville

Coffee with the Poets and Writers

This free morning poetry reading, hosted by Joan M. Howard, is open to the public. Poets and prose writers are invited from Georgia and North Carolina by Glenda Beall to read their work for approximately twenty minutes each. Usually there are two speakers. The event is advertised in a number of local papers by Carroll Taylor. We also offer an open mic at the end of the session where the audience is encouraged to read their own work for approximately three minutes each. Coffee and cookies are served and door prizes given. In December, members celebrate with a Christmas party. The event is very successful with attendance as high as twenty-seven participants.

____________________________
Durham-Orange

Jorge D. Cortese, Durham County Regional Rep, cortesejd@gmail.com

Linda Janssen, Regional Rep, janssenla@gmail.com

When: One night a month, 6:00-8:00 pm

Where: Chapel Hill Public Library, 100 Library Dr., Chapel Hill OR Regional Branches of Durham County Libraries

Orange and Durham County Regional Reps Linda Janssen and Jorge D. Cortese co-host a joint, monthly writing event for writers of all levels, ages, genres, and interests, which is free and open to the general public. Drawing on the immense pool of talent residing in our state, recent presenters have included distinguished NC Poet Laureates, and award-winning, bestselling authors such as Carrie Knowles, Jaki Shelton Green, Barbara Claypole White, Eryk Pruitt, Scott Reintgen, Valerie Nieman, Alice Osborn, and a panel of NC publishers. Upcoming events will include Nancy Peacock, Dawn Reno Langley, Brian Biswas, Maureen Kadish Sherbondy, and a panel of NC short-story writers. Our workshops cover fiction and nonfiction, with topics as varied as editing for a story’s heart, publishing with traditional or small presses, creating unforgettable characters, understanding dialogue and diction, scene crafting, writing documentary poetry, and reviewing children’s fiction. We also host panels to learn from local experts in different areas of writing and publishing (agents, publishers, lawyers, marketing and social media gurus, etc.) These events have been running continuously for five years. E-mail janssenla@gmail.com if you wish to join our “Friends of the Workshops” e-mail list for NCWN members from other counties, as well as any acquaintances of yours who
are interested, including past NCWN members or those interested in checking out NCWN.

____________________________

**Georgia**

Maren O. Mitchell, Regional Rep, marenomitchell@gmail.com

*When:* Third Tuesday of the month, 2:00-4:00 pm

*Where:* Mountain Regional Public Library, 698 Miller St., Young Harris, GA

**Room for Poetry**

This daytime poetry critique is open to the adult public, fee-free. Participants share knowledge and experience, bringing copies of a poem. To participate, contact Maren O. Mitchell. Poems are critiqued without any prefacing or comments by the poet while the poem is read, then discussed. We share “favorite” poems and present mini-lectures on forms. To learn about journals, we have begun bringing those in which we have been published. A separate class was held on “Submissions.” The librarian has offered the use of a recording studio. There must have been a need for this group as there have been from six to fourteen attendees each month from two Georgia counties and two NC counties. Chocolate is served at all meetings!

____________________________

**Guilford**

Carla Harper, Regional Rep  
carla@west65inc.com

*When:* Second Mondays of the month, 6:30-8:00 pm

*Where:* Scuppernong Books, 304 S. Elm St., Greensboro

**Harnett-Johnston-Sampson**

Sarah A. Spencer, Regional Rep, saspen0104@embarqmail.com

*When:* Saturdays, 11:00 am, monthly

*Where:* Various locations

The Harnett, Johnston, and Sampson County Regional meetings in Lillington have been diverse this past year. We had members Lora Kempa, Jackie Tart Tew, and Jean Heller speak to our group on different aspects of writing professionally. Elizabeth Earp spoke to our group about how to write children’s books, after attending a class on the subject. We welcome new participants and volunteer speakers. At our last meeting of 2019, we met at Nonna’s Italian Restaurant in Lillington and enjoyed lunch when Jean Heller came to speak to us. It has been a busy year. We usually meet on the last Saturday in the month, unless we schedule to accommodate a speaker. Contact Sarah for details.

____________________________

**Haywood**

Merry Elrick, Regional Rep, merryelrick@mac.com

*When:* Second Tuesday of the month, 12:00 pm

*Where:* Panacea Coffee House, 66 Commerce St. - Frog Level, Waynesville

NCWN-West and Mountain Writers of NC welcome all writers across all genres of all experience levels. Our monthly meetings feature an eclectic mix of events, from speakers to open mics to just sitting around talking about our writing experiences. Meeting topics cover all aspects of writing from developing our craft to the business of writing.

____________________________

**Henderson**

Meagan Lucas, Regional Co-Rep, meagan.lucas@gmail.com

Charlie Wilkinson, Regional Co-Rep, edensvc@aol.com

**Bleeding Lessons**

*When:* The first Wednesday of the month, 6:00-7:30 pm

*Where:* The Black Bear Coffee Shop, 318 N. Main St., Hendersonville

A topical presentation followed by a group discussion/writing exercise and sharing.

**In the Company of Writers**

*When:* The second Wednesday of the month, 6:30-9:00 pm

*Where:* The Brandy Bar, 504 7th Ave. E, Hendersonville

The evening showcases featured writers and poets reading from their work and then engaging in spirited discussion with the audience, followed by an open mic, with live music before the featured writers, during the break, and after the open mic.
Literary Open Mic

When: The third Monday of the month (please check for changes due to holidays that fall on Mondays), 6:00-7:30 pm
Where: Kaplan Auditorium at the Hendersonville Library, 301 N. Washington St., Hendersonville

There is a time allotment for prose and poetry readers, so please check with us to ensure that your work will fit in its time frame. Sign up to read from 5:30-6:00 pm.

Wake
Alice Osborn, Regional Rep, alice@aliceosborn.com

Wonderland Book Club

When: Last Friday of the month, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Where: Quail Ridge Books, North Hills, 4209-100 Lassiter Mill Rd., Raleigh

Wonderland Book Club
Are you thirsting for a stimulating morning of book and writing craft discussion with talented North Carolina authors? Join us at Wonderland Book Club, the only book club in Raleigh where you can meet the author after reading their book. We have a fantastic line-up of live authors (that means no Skyping) promised from now until December, 2021. Wonderland Book Club is the ever-popular, engaging, and writer-focused Wake County Regional get-together of the North Carolina Writers’ Network, featuring discussion-heavy books and their authors. Quail Ridge Books is a brand-new location for us, and we’re thrilled Quail Ridge is now hosting us. After our meeting, we enjoy lunch with the author at Vivace, a popular Italian restaurant, a few doors down.

Using her first name, “Alice,” as inspiration, Alice started this daytime book club in 2008 to encourage outside-your-genre reading and to encourage stimulating book talk. Now they learn not only about the writing craft from live visiting authors, but also about publishing, time management, marketing, and branding. Over the years, many WBC members have become featured authors themselves.

Want to join Wonderland Book Club? It’s easy! Sign up for free at http://meetup.com/wonderlandbookclub to view the schedule and book/author information. Even if you don’t sign up beforehand, we want you to come anyway for the fun and fellowship. Finishing the book is encouraged, but not required.

WBC is currently seeking authors for 2022. Email Alice at alice@aliceosborn.com if you’re interested!

2020 Wonderland Book Club Featured Authors:

- Jan 31, AJ Mayhew, Tomorrow’s Bread
- Feb 28, Marianna Crane, Stories from the Tenth Floor Clinic
- March 27, W. Jason Miller, Langston Hughes
- April 24, Tricia Wilson, Adopting Grace
- May 29, Jorge D. Cortese, The Watchtowers
- June 26, NO BOOK—Enjoy the month off!
- July 31, Iris Yang (Qing Yang), Will of a Tiger
- Aug 28, Val Nieman, To the Bones **field trip to Scuppernong Books in Greensboro**
- Sept 25, Elaine Neil Orr, Swimming Between Worlds
- Oct 30, Joanna Evans, Sinai Unhinged
- Nov 13, Discover a Classic: Herman Melville, Moby Dick with Steve Mitchell of Scuppernong Books and author of Cloud Diary facilitating
- Dec 4, Leslie Tall Manning, Knock on Wood ©

Find Your Regional Rep:
www.NCWriters.org/index.php/our-members/regional-reps
How do you use technology?

71% use a computer to write our first drafts;

20% still use only a pen and paper.

Literary apps & blogs
...proved not as popular with respondents. Less than half follow any kind of literary blogs at all, and only a quarter use a literary app, Grammarly being the most popular.

7% use no kind of social media at all!

Of those who do use social media:

- 87% have a Facebook account
- 62% use LinkedIn
- 51% use Twitter
- 47% use Instagram
- 27% have a Pinterest account

“As membership chair of a national writing organization, I am continually astonished by the lack of computer skills many hopeful writers possess. Age is not an excuse (I’m 62—if I can keep up, anyone can). People who cannot navigate Track Changes; participate in a webinar; track their submissions; etc. are incredibly disadvantaged in their efforts to be published. Thanks for focusing on the importance of technology to the writing community.”

—Anonymous survey respondent

We asked, you answered.
Technology Survey Results!

Of the 229 respondents...

57% use no kind of technology to organize their reading

68% have read an e-book in the past year

70% have attended an online class or webinar

44% have listened to an audiobook in the past year

95% have a Submittable account

89% have listened to a podcast in the past year

“As a twenty-five-year-old, I tend to see technology as a bonus to my writing—the internet is great for answering the random questions that pop up while writing, and being able to type gets my writing out so much faster. However, I still hand-write a lot of my character notes and story plots—for some reason it’s easier to visualize and understand (I sometimes use a whiteboard). As for reading, however, I don’t utilize any tech except Goodreads. I prefer physical books to virtual ones and prefer to read rather than listen to books.”

—Anonymous survey respondent

What are some of the most popular websites?

PW.org: 32%
LitHub.org: 23%
AWPWriter.org 14%
NCWriters.org: 76%*

Facebook groups are by far the most popular way for writers to find community online. Of course, nearly as many find their communities only in person (41%) as find it on Facebook (51%).

*Aw, thanks y’all!
My sixteen-year-old, an aspiring writer, occasionally pulls out our old typewriter. There’s something satisfying in the thwack and ding.

The romance of this quickly wears off.

My kids are digital natives. They take for granted there’s a tech tool for everything. They’re quick to try, quick to adopt, quick to discard.

We who grew up pre-iPhone are less likely to seek a tech solution for something we already do, maybe because early computer apps were expensive, the learning curves high. Today apps are cheap, and many are dead simple, which means the barrier to entry is attitude.

If you have a problem, and you’re willing to experiment, there’s an app for that. Here are some of my favorites.

**PROBLEM:** I have notes scattered everywhere; I lose track of my ideas.

**SOLUTION:** Capture and collect.

*Capturing* combines tech and no-tech. Carry a paper notebook, index cards, or Post-it notes. On your phone, keep a note-taking app and a voice recorder.

*Collecting* what you’ve captured is both habit and mechanism. Weekly, say, transfer what you captured to an app that lets you organize:

- Microsoft OneNote: multi-level organization, free, auto sync between devices
- Apple Notes: Simple, free, auto sync to all Apple devices
- Evernote: complex but popular, free version with limits or premium
- Simplenote: free, syncs across devices

**Tip:** Select one (or at most two) apps of any type and use only those.

**PROBLEM:** Word processing software (Microsoft Word, Apple Pages, Google Docs) isn’t designed for long works.

**SOLUTION:** Select a writing app made for writers.

There are many popular choices, but my personal favorite is Scrivener, created by a writer for writers. Scrivener is multiple things:

- *a writing app:* the place where you put down the words;
Tech Toolkit for Writers

- a container: a box into which you store all your scenes, chapters, research, notes, web links, images, ideas, and so on;
- an organizing tool: a way to keep all your chapters and scenes (and versions of those chapters and scenes) orderly, with simple drag-and-drop reorganization.

Ultimately, Scrivener solves all the problems that plague Word/Pages/Docs, including the difficulty of managing a long-evolving book that has thousands of words, dozens of scenes, and countless versions. It has a learning curve and too many features, so the trick to quick success is to focus only on the six or eight key functions.

**Tip:** Most apps have free trials so you can play before you have to pay.

**PROBLEMS:** I don’t type quickly or well; I experience pain when typing.

**SOLUTION:** Write without typing.

Not long ago, both dictation and transcription were expensive. No more. You’ll have to clean up the transcription afterward, but hey, it’s just like editing, right?

**Dictation (speech to text):**
- Dragon: expensive, Windows only, but very high accuracy;
- Apple Dictation (built into Mac and iOS): in any app that handles text, click the microphone button or press the access keys (in Mac, go to System Preferences > Accessibility to set up the access command);
- Windows Dictation: press Windows logo key + H to open the dictation toolbar;

**Transcription (recorded speech to text):** using a voice recorder as suggested above? Don’t transcribe yourself: let the Otter app do it, 600 minutes/month free.

**PROBLEM:** Look, something shiny!

**SOLUTION:** A combination of best practices and nice apps.

First, remove distractions. My kids refuse to believe in this, but you should. Close e-mail, silence notifications, disconnect from WiFi, put your phone in another room—or try Freedom, which blocks apps and browsers for a time period you specify. To hide screen distractions, use your word processor’s focus...
As e-books have gained popularity with readers and become a necessity for publishers, a misconception continues to permeate our business concerning the costs associated with the publication of e-books versus that of physical books and the ultimate value of said formats to one’s bottom line.

Certainly, there are some differences, but generally, the costs are quite similar, and the same or similar consideration goes into publishing both formats.

Below (page 26) is a look at hypothetical costs for each format. This is not meant to be representative of true costs. While the amounts or costs are hypothetical, the expenditure categories are not.

The chart is meant to show which costs are shared by the two formats, as well as which costs may be unique to either format. The chart is not intended to represent all known costs relative to the publication of either format, but rather a list of the most common costs associated with each.

In the example provided on page 26, the cost to publish an e-book is about 30 percent less than the cost to publish a paperback. Shared costs are those which may be incurred only once if both formats are published, meaning once one incurs that particular cost for one format, one will not incur the same cost again for the additional format.

As shown by the sample publication budget, publishing is not an inexpensive prospect. There are some who will manage to do so on a smaller budget than that which is depicted, and others who may do so with an even larger budget. How expensive publishing can get may depend on how many rounds of edits a work undergoes and how in-depth those edits are. Another factor affecting costs is the amount of art to be included in the work. Costs also can be impacted by whether the physical format is hardcover or paperback. Hardcovers are exponentially more costly to publish and have their own set of unique expenditures. They also share some expenditures with the e-book, paperback, and audio versions of the work in question.
Figuring out the costs to publish each format is an important first step when deciding which formats to publish and how to appropriately price your formats for the retail and wholesale markets.

Also, remember that while the aforementioned costs are associated with publication specifically, there are additional costs associated with the acquisition of the intellectual property, warehousing physical books, shipping physical books, delivering digital files, storage of digital files, storage of print files, marketing, PR, etc.

Traditionally, e-books have been viewed as a secondary format, a supplement almost, to physical formats, which have become increasingly more expensive to produce. And even as many publishers are moving slowly toward a low-to-no inventory model, the cost to print per unit remains at an all-time high. This makes the profit margin on print books smaller and smaller year after year.

Now that publishers and writers can put their books into the world without the need to invest in physical formats, the initial cost to publish or become published is less than it was in the not-so-distant past. As you can see however, this is not due to a decrease in the quality of the e-book product over the physical product, but rather the unique costs associated with expenditures outside of the publisher or writer’s control, such as the cost of paper, for example.

And, while the publication of any book has both its joys and challenges, understanding what may be required to publish both e-books and paperbacks will save anyone who endeavors to publish a lot of headaches and overspending in the long run.

Even for a writer who may be traditionally published, understanding what goes into the publication of one's work will be key to communicating effectively with one’s publisher and/or agent about the business of not only being published, but being published well. ☺

GEORGIA MCBRIDE is the owner of Georgia McBride Media Group, home of Month9Books, Swoon Romance, and Tantrum Books. She is also the founder of #YALitchat. Georgia McBride Media Group titles have sold to Audible, Blackstone, ListenUP!, and Tantor Media, and have been licensed by Scholastic Book Fairs and Junior Library Guild. Some titles have sold to Korea, Turkey, France, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Denmark, Hungary, Czech Republic, and China. Georgia McBride Media Group titles have received starred reviews from Kirkus Reviews, Publishers Weekly, and School Library Journal, and a few have been nominated for the Kirkus Prize.
### NEED FOR PHYSICAL FORMATS IS EVOLVING

#### A SAMPLE PUBLICATION BUDGET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure</th>
<th>Paperback</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>e-book</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Legend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Editorial</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>5000</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>5000</td>
<td>S=Shared Expense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Layout and Design</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>UTF=Unique to Format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>Y=Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cover Art</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>N=No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barcode</td>
<td>UTF</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISBN</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rights and Permissions</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print Layout and Design</td>
<td>UTF</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print Production and Preflight Checks</td>
<td>UTF</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Test/Proof</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print Cover Design</td>
<td>UTF</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Thumbnail Design</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Jacket Copywriting</td>
<td>UTF</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Description Copywriting</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cost</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>10600</td>
<td></td>
<td>7700</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ack in 2014, it dawned on me that all the cool/weird and experimental books I liked to read weren’t adapted into audiobooks. At the time, I still consumed most of my books in print, but it seemed a little unfair that people who preferred audiobooks, or needed audiobooks (including but not limited to the visually-impaired, the dyslexic, etc.) didn’t have access to them. After all, one could argue (I would argue) that independent, or this rebellious fringe literature, often becomes our most valuable.

We had no idea what we were doing at the time, but the initial idea was to produce books we thought were different and amazing but that also were overlooked by the big audiobook houses. I simply used to see a book that interested me and reach out to the author. The first recording we did under The Talking Book moniker was F250 by the great Bud Smith. He took a chance on us, and we’re forever grateful. If you haven’t read his work, you are missing out on a much better life.

Now it’s 2020, and The Talking Book is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit audiobook publisher and pro studio. We’re located in the heart of Asheville, just over by The River Arts District. Most of the nonprofit’s primary duties are carried out by our talented studio director, Dave Burr, and me. It is our continued hope to record and publish awesome writing by innovative authors from independent publishers.

We are also home to Asheville’s only audiobook recording studio and have produced more than 100 audiobooks to date for all sorts of authors and publishers. We produce books with professional voice actors as well as authors who want to narrate their own work.

We’ve been incredibly lucky to have had the support and trust of all these insanely talented writers, publishers, narrators, and agents. The narrators are the lifeblood. I cannot say this enough.

We also have a podcast where we publish excerpts of authors reading new work called The Talking Book Podcast. Please check it out.

Someone once asked me why we do it, so I came up with the following list:

1. Stories make people more empathetic. We need that now, more than ever.
2. Audio is the fastest-growing segment in publishing and gets more stories in front of new people who love and need them.

3. There are tons of amazing, weird books with little to no representation in audio.

4. Modern neuroscience shows that both reading and listening to books activates the same parts of the brain with the same intensity.

5. There is a rich, literary history in audiobooks and recording the spoken word. We want to help bring that back.

6. It’s cool and we like it. You’ll like it too.

For more info check out www.thetalkingbook.org, and feel free to write the publisher kris@talkingbook.pub.

KRIS HARTRUM is the founder and publisher of The Talking Book, a 501(c)3 non-profit audiobook publisher of indie literature. His stories have appeared in The Nervous Breakdown, New York Tyrant, Hobart, Pulp, Entropy Mag, and elsewhere.
As artists, we can’t decide the fate of our careers or output. Everything unfolds only when we remain curious.

The Dirty Spoon started as an online food and beverage journal in 2013 by Editor-in-Chief Jonathan Ammons and artistic director Katrin Dohse. “Journal” is a nice way of saying “blog.” Jon was a friend of mine, and because he struggles with dyslexia, I offered to help him edit the personal stories he wrote. It only took me a few minutes to clean up his long blog posts, and besides, I enjoyed the work. I found myself engrossed each time I read a piece: rich descriptions of eating breakfast in Miami; camping at a pork-themed festival in Virginia; nostalgic ruminations over past lovers and past meals. Soon, I became part of the team and took on a new role: Editor-at-Large. We wanted to find more stories outside of ourselves, push the boundaries of our little online blog even further. That became my job: to seek these culinary narratives out, and to invite the best of those narratives in.

Today, The Dirty Spoon features stories from the chefs, cooks, bakers, bartenders, artists, thinkers, and makers who shape what we consume. Each month, we publish a few select essays and interviews, along with custom illustrations by local artists.

Jon and I never meant to start a radio show from our literary journal. But we were avid listeners of This American Life, so we thought: why not start something like this, but with, you know, food and maybe some more music?

In 2018, The Dirty Spoon debuted the first season of the “Dirty Spoon Radio Hour” on 103.7 WPVM FM in Asheville, giving makers even more ways to tell their stories through intricately developed audio collages. I’ve been lucky to read and publish essays by amazing debut talent as well as celebrated writers, including Michael Twitty (The Cooking Gene); Chris Scott (Birdman); chef William Dissen (The Market Place); Ronni Lundy (Victuals); Piper J. Daniels (Ladies Lazarus); and Jeffrey Morgenthaler (The Bar Book).

Jon is the tech whiz, and I am the editor whiz; we count ourselves lucky to have complementary skillsets and often remark that we were meant to make this show and produce this journal together. We don’t know what the next season holds, and we can’t wait to find out.

When others ask me, “Should I start a podcast?” my answer is, “Absolutely not, unless....”
Here’s why: podcasting is a game of patience. It’s the task of recording way too much footage and settling for way too little of it to fit in a clean forty-two minutes. It’s the art of holding your own breath, listening and waiting for that perfect line on which to end the show and leave the listener with an emotion that will resonate. It’s the labor of tiny movements: pause, play, record, reverse, fast forward, cut, copy, export.

But that’s why podcasting may be perfect for writers. You practice the same art at your desk: the same painstaking editing, the same formatting to shape the story. And you get to share storytelling in a whole new way. I knew we were onto something when a listener came up to me and said, “I parked in my driveway and finished listening to the show. I couldn’t move.” That’s the power of our writers’ work being published in another media format: it holds people where they are.

CATHERINE CAMPBELL is an award-nominated writer, editor, and book critic. Her work appears in *The New York Times, Writer’s Digest, The Millions, The Rumpus, Kenyon Review, McSweeney’s, Ploughshares online*, and elsewhere. Since 2006, Catherine’s professional book industry work has included bookselling, marketing for a rare book company and marketing and public relations for authors. She lives in Asheville with her husband, the poet Brandon Amico.
I’m a longtime advocate of using technology to build community and help writers feel supported.

So much of our work as writers is invisible, filled with micro-decisions that are unnamed, unseen, and unrewarded. In the long years between drafts and publications, revisions and rejections, how can a writer ascertain where they are in terms of growth and improvement? How can a writer keep the faith, gauge the “so what” factor of their own work, and revise with confidence?

So many writers I mentor are asking these questions, and too many of them are at risk of getting into ruts by acting as their own biggest bullies. But bullying doesn’t help sustain a writing practice, and it certainly doesn’t deepen craft and community—two things I care about most. As soon as I point this out to a group of clients, someone inevitably asks about accountability. When I tell them accountability can’t be taught via deadlines on a syllabus or word-count goals, they get a little squirmy. Isn’t that what I’m supposed to be teaching them—in one writer’s words—“how to get sh*t done”?

I believe their actual need is to be seen and understood, especially when it comes to those invisible micro-decisions made as a writer drafts new pages or deeply revises. This is why all my programs include opportunities for writers in the community to do just that. It’s my sneaky way of making them think they’re learning how to “get sh*t done,” when what I’m really doing is helping them experience the value of shared vulnerability and fluid definitions of success...and from there, how that experience can positively influence their creativity and productivity.

Whether it’s writing live together, in silence, via Zoom video streaming; freewriting in our journals to a shared prompt during a webinar; or posting our first paragraphs, favorite sentences, and “darlings we killed” in a chat box, what happens is that writers start worrying less about harsh goals and instead focus on the validation they experience by being uplifted in their community.

“I was surprised how much my creativity increased and by how much I enjoyed writing time during the Zoom webinar, not to mention the ideas and confidence all of this generated. . . . There was enough face-to-face interaction, with plenty of time for exploration and reflection.”
As the above quote taken from an anonymous, end-of-class survey after one of my courses shows, a technology platform alone can’t create community. But by using that platform to encourage creative thinking and considerate communication, together, tech and writers can soar.

I’ve already mentioned one of the applications I use to bring together writers from all over the country (and even from several continents): Zoom, a livestreaming application.

Another application I’m using to help writers dive deep into understanding and applying story structure is Loom, a screen capturing application that allows me to share craft writing concepts as applied to specific fiction and nonfiction examples. It also gives space for participants to comment and react to the lesson, with timestamps, as it progresses. We then meet at a pre-arranged time using Zoom, later, and debrief the lesson they interacted with on Loom. In less than a month using these two programs, my Monthly Mentees, learning from me in my seven-month program, are completely accustomed to the tech and focused on integrating writing into their lives more than ever before.

As they meet their goals and form literary friendships, something else is also going on. These writers start to experience what “being seen and understood” actually feels like. Using simple, two-minute debrief exercises, one-word chatbox responses, or even a few surveys, my clients slow down enough to actually feel the satisfaction of our time spent in the community. Using Zoom and Loom, we can be our messy, beautiful, talented, stuck, or flowing selves and we can see we’re not alone in that. Which is why I don’t critique writing in our community; none of us do.

We are there to see and understand one another by sharing two critical things: the practice of writing and applying thinking to language. From this foundation, deep connection is possible. Our community thrives, and so do our words—no matter the distance.

KATEY SCHULTZ is the author of *Flashes of War*, which *The Daily Beast* praised as an “ambitious and fearless” collection, and *Still Come Home*, a novel, both published by Loyola University Maryland. Honors for her work include The Linda Flowers Literary Award, the Doris Betts Fiction Prize, IndieFab Book of the Year, five Pushcart nominations, a nomination to *Best American Short Stories*, and writing fellowships in eight states. She lives in Celo, North Carolina, and is the founder of Maximum Impact, a transformative mentoring service for creative writers that has been recognized by both CNBC and the What Works Network. Learn more at www.kateyschultz.com.
“‘What would a computer cost me?’” Wendell Berry asks mid-way through his 1988 essay “Why I Am Not Going to Buy a Computer.” It’s a question I’ve never answered for myself, but it’s 2020, the actual future envisioned by our ancestors, and therefore a fine season to take account.

I bought my first computer in 2001 for 1,000 inflation-adjusted dollars, in satisfaction of my college’s computer ownership requirement. That’s one way of considering the question, but Berry’s essay is interested in a different kind of stuff. While he does consider the dollar cost of buying a computer (his delightful answer to how much it would cost: “More money, for one thing, than I can afford, and more than I wish to pay to people whom I do not admire”), Berry’s main concerns are humanist, moral, and practical. Could he rationalize deepening his reliance on the energy industry? Would he support utopia-peddling computer manufacturers? Would he improve his writing in any way by using a computer? No, no, no. On this, he is firm; in a 2019 interview with the Christian Science Monitor, Berry continues to reject technology of the type many of us use without ever asking, “What is the cost, any cost, of this stuff?”

I am obliged, I think, by the present nature of the economy, to observe the following: to generally forego a desktop, laptop, or smartphone is to partake in a form of luxury that is not available to everyone. (And meditate for a moment on the hollowness of these computer words! The sound of the word “desktop” is the sound of the English language giving up. Picturing the word as I say it aloud, I experience actual disappointment.) Like access to reliable transportation, these items are often required equipment for professional employment because employers expect workers to equip themselves for peak productivity. Side hustles and small businesses would not be possible without the kind of computer technology that has made it possible for one worker in 2020 to do what required a few workers in 1970. Of course, it is not a coincidence that worker wages have stagnated in the same interim.

Amplified productivity, then, is the assured benefit that often covers the costs of a computer—and it is a luxury to not have to be productive on someone else’s terms. Berry’s writing process seems leisurely; it begins with a hand-written draft that is then typed and marked up by his wife. One imagines this as the sort of basically decent and dignified process that writers hope to discover at a summer residency. Although Berry has written more than eighty books this way (while running a farm!), aspiring writers who juggle multiple part-time jobs and have no support in
their writing process cannot afford that kind of time.

The loss of his writing process—manuscript, comments from his partner, typescript—a process Berry says he treasures, is, to him, a hypothetical cost of computer use. The way a blank computer screen urges the writer to just write something already and the implicit connection between quantity and quality promoted by this imperative are actual costs I perceive in my own use of a computer. What else has using a computer cost me? It may be impossible to know at this point, nineteen years in. But I am aware of one thing it has not cost: the opportunity to write by hand.

Just a few months after I purchased my first computer, I began keeping a handwritten journal, and I have continued the habit with fair regularity into the present day. I have covered 3,632 pages in journals that range in size from 5” x 8” to 12.5” x 9.5”. Great works, they are not, but many days of my life have been spent writing in them.

Why didn’t I save the days and write the journal on a computer? Practical answers—a paper journal is mobile, will suffer no hard drive failures, will potentially make the person who writes in it appear more thoughtful than he is—do not satisfy. The reason lies in the way it feels to watch a thought become a sentence at the stately velocity of pen on paper. The feeling of writing by hand a thought I’m in the process of discovering is, to use Berry’s word, one that I treasure.

ANDREW SAULTERS is the editor of Unicorn Press, a small press that operates out of Greensboro, NC. He teaches freshman writing at Guilford College.

Save the Date!

North Carolina Writers’ Network

2020 Fall Conference

November 13-15, 2020

Sheraton Imperial
4700 Emperor Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27703
919-941-5050
My father and I arrived early among the autumn colors, with the hope of becoming better writers.

For me, this was my second trip to an NCWN Fall Conference, but it was the first for my father and writing partner, Humberto.

Our first stop on Friday was the Pre-Conference Tailgate led by A.K. Benninghofen of the Flatiron Writers Room. This quaint house in the mountains of Asheville was filled with passionate writers. Each of us settled into the ambiance of the conference, and soon everyone was scratching away on notebook paper, eager to jot down our impromptu stories built from photographs we drew at random.

While the main purpose of the conference was to learn and network, I found more joy and deeper meaning in making friends with aspiring writers on our same journey. As we sat inventing stories and sharing them back and forth, I could tell that the people who traveled from near and far were just as passionate and excited as we were to learn more about our craft and ourselves.

We returned across town to the conference venue in time for the Welcome Reception and Keynote Conversation. Charles Frazier, author of Cold Mountain, and most recently Varina, who had been announced only two weeks before after a scheduling change, talked at length with Margaret D. Bauer, editor of the North Carolina Literary Review. I walked away from the program with inestimable knowledge and a signed copy of Cold Mountain to remember the occasion.

Saturday morning, my father and I attended the conference breakfast and headed off to our respective courses. We decided to divide the classes as a team, and in doing so, we not only got to take away more great information, but enjoy the different styles of the instructors. Sessions not only covered the many elements of writing, but examined everything from genre types to all the ins and outs of the publishing world, in formats such as lectures, panels, and open discussions.

To complete the day’s activities, after dinner, participants were encouraged to share their work in the open mic sessions. Sharing with and listening to others gave everyone involved a greater sense of community and an opportunity to showcase their writing.

Saturday fed into Sunday and the morning sessions and Closing Conversation.
As writers, we tend to focus on the writing portion of the industry, but at the NCWN 2019 Fall Conference, the outstanding part about the variety of courses offered was that we could learn about the wide array of issues and areas of all aspects of the industry. Invariably, no one hesitated to share what they knew, and the learning was communal.

I can confirm that both my father and I were delighted with the trip to attend the NCWN 2019 Fall Conference. It was an excellent experience, and because of it, we will make the trip every year that we can.

D & H CANCIO is a father-and-son writing team based in Miami, Florida. Together, they are working on their first novel, *Bound by Will*, their first in planned a five-novel series as well as the expanded Lock & Lock universe. Humberto Cancio Jr. (Father) is an AV rated lawyer who has practiced Civil law for over forty years since graduating from the University of Florida Law school in 1978, while David Cancio has worked in banking, pharmaceuticals, and data analytics since graduating from NC State in 2013. Humberto lives in Miami while David lives in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Congratulations to **Jasmine Kumalah**, winner of the 2019 Sally Buckner Emerging Writers' Fellowship!

This fellowship awards $500, a one-year membership to NCWN, and a scholarship to the NCWN Fall Conference.

**Next Deadline: June 30**

*Submissions open May 1*
Every organization has a Resident Curmudgeon, and sadly, the time has come for us to say goodbye to ours.

Al Manning has stepped down from both the North Carolina Writers’ Network Board of Trustees and from his position as Regional Rep for Chatham and Lee Counties.

Al joined the Board of Trustees in 2007 and had served as a Regional Rep since the program’s inception in 2009.

As Rep, he founded Pittsboro’s Writers’ Morning Out, which will continue to meet monthly under the guidance of Carol Phillips and Rick Bylina, at Greek Kouzina in Pittsboro, at 1:00 pm on the third Saturday of the month. The group meets for lively conversation about the craft and business of writing and will usually welcome a guest speaker. (Visit www.pittsboro-wmo.blogspot.com for updates or see page 17 of this issue.)

Al is the author of the collection Curmudgeon’s Nursery Rhymes, which retells classic fables from a more—curmudgeonly—point of view. The collection came about when a writer friend, who also happened to be writing about nursery rhymes, challenged Al to write his own.

For years, Al sponsored the Open Mic at the North Carolina Writers’ Network Fall Conferences—because the Network needed sponsors, yes, but also because he believes in the importance of building and maintaining thriving literary communities.

Al has lived in sixteen different places during his life, many a result of his serving twenty-one years in the U.S. Navy. Raised in southwest Oklahoma, Al moved to North Carolina in 1981, which puts him over the twenty-five-year requirement to be officially considered a Tar Heel (at least in the Piedmont—it’s thirty in the mountains).

The North Carolina Writers’ Network would like to stand with all the writers, readers, and literary professionals who have benefited from Al’s generosity and sage wisdom over the years to say, “thank you.”

Once a fixture behind the registration table at both Spring and Fall Conferences, we hope Al will continue to hang around and keep all of us on the straight and narrow.

In the meantime, anybody know a good curmudgeon looking for a home? We’re in the market.

Happy Trails, Al.
Five writers—a beloved poet, novelist, scholar, and literary citizen; the author of a literary blockbuster; an award-winning chronicler of the coast, who is also an internationally-renowned musician; a short-story writer who led UNC’s creative writing program to national prominence; and one of the most prolific and honored children’s writers in America—will enter the North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame this fall.

Anthony S. Abbott, Charles Frazier, Bland Simpson, the late Max Steele, and Carole Boston Weatherford will join the sixty-five inductees currently enshrined in an October ceremony at the Weymouth Center in Southern Pines, where the NCLHOF is housed.

The North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame celebrates and promotes the state’s rich literary heritage by commemorating its leading authors and encouraging the continued flourishing of great literature. Inductions are held every other year. A list of inductees, as well as samples of their work and video clips of past inductions, can be found online at www.nclhof.org.

The winner of the 2015 North Carolina Award for Literature, **Anthony S. Abbott** is the author of seven books of poetry, two novels, and four books of literary criticism. He joined the English department of Davidson College in 1964, becoming Charles A. Dana Professor of English in 1990. His other prizes include the Brockman-Campbell Book Award and the Novello Literary Award. Abbott also has served as president of the Charlotte Writers Club, the NC Poetry Society, and the NC Writers’ Network.

**Charles Frazier** grew up in the mountains of Western North Carolina. *Cold Mountain* (1997), his highly-acclaimed first novel, was an international bestseller, won the National Book Award in 1997, and was adapted into an Academy Award-winning film by Anthony Minghella in 2003. His next three novels—*Thirteen Moons*, *Nightwoods*, and *Varina*—all were *New York Times* bestsellers, as well.

**Bland Simpson** is Kenan Distinguished Professor of English & Creative Writing at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and has played piano with the Red Clay Ramblers since 1986. His books include *The Great Dismal*, *The Mystery of Beautiful Nell Cropsey*, *Into the Sound Country*, *Ghost Ship*
of Diamond Shoals, The Coasts of Carolina, Two Captains from Carolina, and Little Rivers & Waterway Tales, and his theatrical collaborations include Diamond Studs, Hot Grog, Life on the Mississippi, King Mackerel & The Blues Are Running, Cool Spring, Tar Heel Voices, Kudzu, and Fool Moon. Simpson’s awards include the North Carolina Award for Fine Arts (2005) and the NC Humanities Council’s John Tyler Caldwell Award in the Humanities (2017).

After World War II service in the Army Air Corps, Max Steele graduated from UNC-Chapel Hill in 1946, later studying French language and literature at the Sorbonne while serving as advisory editor to The Paris Review. His only novel, Debby, won both the Harper Prize and the Mayflower Award in 1950, but he was best-known for his short stories, collected in four volumes. He began teaching at UNC in 1956, and retired in 1988, seventeen years before his death.

Baltimore-born and -raised, Carole Boston Weatherford composed her first poem in first grade and dictated the verse to her mother on the ride home from school. Her father, a high school printing teacher, printed some of her early poems on index cards. Since her literary debut with Juneteenth Jamboree in 1995, Weatherford’s books have received three Caldecott Honors, two NAACP Image Awards, an SCBWI Golden Kite Award, a Coretta Scott King Author Honor, and many other honors. Weatherford has received the Ragan-Rubin Award from the North Carolina English Teachers Association and the North Carolina Award for Literature. She is a professor at Fayetteville State University.

The North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame was founded in 1996, under the leadership of poet laureate Sam Ragan, and is a program of the North Carolina Writers’ Network. Since 2008, the Network and the Weymouth Center collaborate with the North Carolina Center for the Book, the North Carolina Humanities Council, and the North Carolina Collection of the Wilson Library at UNC-Chapel Hill to produce the induction ceremony and to promote the NCLHOF and North Carolina’s literary heritage.

For more information, visit the NC Literary Hall of Fame at www.nclhof.org or the North Carolina Writers’ Network at www.ncwriters.org.
he taught regularly at ECU. At the time, I was unfamiliar with the term. His short response was using the tools of fiction to write nonfiction—memoir, essay. “Turn the lights on in the room,” he said. And what kind of lighting is it? Lamps? An overhead light? Sun coming through the windows? He also talked about moving the “character” from place to place, physically—i.e., how does he or she move from one room to another as the story proceeds? Where are the doors? What furniture has to be stepped around?

I was a literary scholar at the time of these early conversations with Alex, having given up my youthful dream of being a novelist when I graduated from LSU and then discovered my enjoyment for writing about writers during my subsequent master’s program. I would not have guessed then that I would turn to writing memoir later in my career. And still, his remarks stuck with me all these years when I was too busy to sit in on his classes.

So when it was my turn to tell him and my fellow Squire workshop attendees what I wanted out of the Squire weekend, I did not hesitate: I can see all that is happening in the essays about my life that I’m writing, because I lived them. I want to know if my reader can see it. Have I turned the lights on so that you can see the rooms, and am I recording the people’s movements believably?

And sure enough, I was not quite doing so—yet. Alex pushed my description of my grandmother’s kitchen to include more specifics, just to give one specific outcome from the weekend. His questions prompted memories related to the essay, which I have since incorporated into it.

Besides coming away from that weekend with several new writer friends, who I hope will submit their essays to NCLR’s Alex Albright Creative Nonfiction Prize competition at some point, I returned home inspired to dive into the essay we’d workshopped, put some wallpaper up and furnish the room, convey the smells of the cooking in the kitchen and of the old furniture once in my grandmother’s house, now in my own. I pull out a drawer of her antique dresser in my guest room, where I’ve stored

Left: Dinner at the 2018 Squire Summer Writing Workshops.
Facing page: The Creative Nonfiction Class at the 2019 Squire Summer Writing Workshops
her old tablecloths, and ask myself, how do I describe that scent, which lingers and inspires more details that will help my reader to see what my mind’s eye can see?

I was also inspired by Alex’s technique for that first session, which I used in the Southern literature seminar I taught last semester. Round and round the room I went the first two days of class, asking them questions about their goals, short- and long-term, in my class and at ECU in general, giving the students time to read the first book we would discuss. And by the time we dove into that first discussion, they were comfortable with me and with each other. And what a semester it was!

In the middle of which, I enrolled in another creative nonfiction workshop, Jeremy Jones’ master class at the NCWN 2019 Fall Conference. Different style, same results: new writer acquaintances, writing goals reached, revision inspired by feedback from Jeremy and my fellow students.

I’ll be back, and I hope you will join me.

In the meantime, please join me in giving back: renew your membership, encourage a writing friend to join, and donate what you can to the Network. Let’s help the Network continue to attract such stellar teachers with stipends that compensate them more generously for the incredible amount of time these writers put into preparing for these weekends—time, I remind you, that takes them away from their own writing.

As a board member, I am familiar with the budget, and I know that the Network pays instructors as much as they can. All of us on the board and administration of this organization appreciate the writers’ generosity with their time and talent, and we all strive toward matching their munificence.

MARGARET D. BAUER is the editor of the North Carolina Literary Review (and she encourages Network members to submit to NCLR’s creative writing competitions, to propose interviews with writers, and to write book reviews for NCLR). The author of four books on Southern writers, she is now writing creative nonfiction, mainly memoir. Her personal essays have been published in storySouth, Deep South, Cold Mountain Review, New Madrid, and (forthcoming) in Eclectica.
On the flip side, there is the constant oversaturation of ideas. Good work can get lost in the deluge. To be a widely read author, one must have the resources to be a successful marketer, and that process isn’t democratic at all.

There are ways, however, to make technology work for you as a writer.

The boom in handheld technology, like video cameras and digital audio, makes podcasting and videography accessible to anyone willing to learn. More writers are incorporating video and audio into our work, sharing audio snippets of chapters online, collaborating with musicians, or producing unique video trailers to launch our books.

The most accessible technology of all, social media, can also be our ally. New York-based author Laurie Stone landed a book deal based on her Facebook posts.

Laurie worked as an arts staff writer at The Village Voice for more than two decades. In 2016, she deliberately decided to use social media as an artistic forum. After all, social media functions as the contemporary vernacular, the language of everyday people, free from the hierarchy of the traditional publishing ecosystem. Laurie posted on Facebook well-written commentary about the #MeToo movement, cultural critiques of new TV shows, her thoughts on cancel culture and feminism. The posts caught the attention of a North Carolina editor who had judged her fiction through a Press 53 contest (another NC connection), and he approached her about turning her posts into a book of essays.

Everything is Personal: Notes on Now came out in January, 2020, from Scuppernong Editions, with blurbs from New York Times bestselling authors and staff writers at The New Yorker.

Writers can be successful when we know how to engage with technology, both in our writing practice and in reaching our audiences. Be it revolutionary pamphlets or the long reach of a Twitter feed, technology honors culture only to the extent that writers are able to put ideas into words. Technology merely expands the possibilities for writers to do our work: to be the translators of the human experience.
Of course, no matter how you voted in 2016, it’s impossible to view social media with quite the same Pollyanna filter we used earlier that decade. In the beginning, if social media was connecting us to a broader literary community, if it was kind of fun to reunite with high school classmates and binge-watch Vines of their cats, it also was—and largely remains—an airbrushed version of those people’s lives, of our own lives.

And that’s before we reached our current culture of fake news and data mining and the numerous “friend” requests I get on Facebook from young women I’ve never met with empty accounts, hoping to... what? I really have no idea.

As we roll into the roaring twenties, authenticity will be rewarded.

Don’t be that author who posts about your book three times a day. Instead, find subjects you enjoy and spend the majority of your time posting and responding to posts about those passions.

Be genuine. Be funny if you can. And sure, toss in a glowing review of your book or a notice about an upcoming reading every now and then, but don’t be that gal.

You know the one I’m talking about.

The one you snoozed on Facebook for thirty days and muted on Twitter.

(Don’t feel guilty. The great thing is, she’ll never know.)

In this issue of The Writers’ Network News, we look at many different kinds of technology used by writers. Don’t miss the results of a poll we ran in the fall on pages 20-21.

There’s a writing software round-up by Charlotte Lit’s Paul Reali; a publisher’s perspective on e-books by Georgia McBride, founder of the Georgia McBride Media Group; articles on audiobooks, podcasts, and much more.

Ten years from now, no doubt we’ll laugh about how quaint some of the things in this issue seem. Maybe we’ll marvel that way back at the start of the decade, 44 percent of our membership had listened to an audiobook in the past year. Maybe that will seem like impossibly many, or way too few.

That’s the joy of technology, and its baseline challenge. It’s always changing, ever-evolving, its power best understood in hindsight.

As are we. ☺
interface (Focus Mode in Word, Composition Mode in Scrivener).

Second, trust the tomato. I’m a big fan of the Pomodoro Technique, which is twenty-five minutes of dedicated focus, followed by a five-minute break—then repeated for as many sessions as you need. You could do this with your phone’s timer but shouldn’t, since you have to keep resetting it. Instead, pick up Focus Keeper or a similar app designed for the task.

PROBLEM: I make mistakes.

SOLUTION: Checkers and helper apps.

Spell check is not all there is. There are other sophisticated helper tools available—though none is a complete substitute for human editing, and none are foolproof.

Checkers for Spelling, Grammar, and Proofreading. These find the easy stuff that your eye overlooks, and most writing apps have them built-in. Alternately, there are more powerful external options, including Grammarly and Hemingway.

Helpers for Style and Grammar. These go a level higher and look for other kinds of errors, such as passive voice, over-used words, cliché, writing quirks, and much more. Two favorites: ProWriting Aid and AutoCrit.

PAUL REALI is co-founder of Charlotte Lit, a nonprofit literary arts center that educates and engages writers and readers and builds community through literature. He is the co-author of Creativity Rising, a why-to and how-to guide to creative problem solving adopted by colleges across the U.S. and Canada. His fiction has been awarded first place in the Elizabeth Simpson Smith and Ruth Moose Flash Fiction competitions, and he received a Regional Artist Project Grant from Charlotte’s Arts & Science Council in 2018.

Save the Date!

NORTH CAROLINA LITERARY HALL OF FAME

Induction Ceremony

Sunday, October 11, 2020

Weymouth Center for the Arts & Humanities
555 E. Connecticut Ave.
Southern Pines, NC 28387
910-692-6261
NORTH CAROLINA WRITERS’ NETWORK

CRITIQUING and EDITING SERVICE

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

Our critiquers are selected according to high criteria, including extensive publication and/or editing experience. For more information and a detailed list of critiquer bios, please visit www.ncwriters.org.

KAREN M. ALLEY—nonfiction, fiction
ELLEN BACHE — line editing, fiction
GREGG CUSICK—fiction (flash, short, long)
GOLDA FRIED—fiction, screenplays
ERIC GLAWE—screenplays
KATHY GOODKIN—poetry
LINDA HOBSON—fiction, nonfiction
VIRGINIA HOLMAN—nonfiction, fiction
BETSY HUMPHREYS—nonfiction (journalistic or creative)
SUSAN STAFFORD KELLY—line editing, fiction
STEPHEN KIRK—fiction, nonfiction
DAWN RENO LANGLEY—line editing, fiction, nonfiction

STEVEN MANCHESTER—line editing, fiction
JEN MCCONNEL—children’s, MG, YA, NA
RUTH MOOSE — fiction, poetry
ELIZABETH OLIVER—flash fiction, short fiction, nonfiction, line editing
ALICE OSBORN—speculative fiction, fiction, memoir, poetry
A.D. REED—nonfiction, fiction
AMY ROGERS—fiction, nonfiction
DEBRA SIMON—line editing, nonfiction, fiction
ELEANORA E. TATE—children’s fiction, YA
ROBERT WALLACE—fiction, nonfiction
TAMRA WILSON—fiction, nonfiction

Critiquing and Editing Service Fees

Base fee: Prose/Poetry/Plays/Screenplays: Manuscript Consultation/Mentoring
$30.00 5–50 pages — $3.00/page (Postcritique, with no base fee):
Each page thereafter — $2.00/page $50.00/hr. (in person or via phone)

How to send your manuscript: All prose manuscripts should be double-spaced, single-sided, with 1-inch margins and in 12-point Times New Roman font. Poetry must be single-spaced with a limit of only one poem per page.

Please indicate your first preference plus two backups for a critiquer. Otherwise, we will select an appropriate critiquer based on availability.

Please send your manuscript, along with payment and a self-addressed envelope with postage sufficient enough for the critiquer to return your manuscript, to NCWN Critiquing and Editing Service, PO Box 21591, Winston-Salem, NC 27120.

For more information, please contact the Network at (336) 293-8844 or at ed@ncwriters.org.
Founded in 1985, the nonprofit North Carolina Writers’ Network is among the largest statewide literary arts organizations in the country. The Network’s mission is to connect, lead, and promote emerging and established writers through workshops, conferences, readings, literary competitions, online resources and services, a Critiquing and Editing Service, and more. Its Center for Business and Technical Writing provides on-site workshops tailored to the specific needs of North Carolina companies. For $75 a year ($55 for seniors and students), members receive a newsletter, weekly e-updates, a range of resources and services, and discounts on all Network-sponsored programs and events.