

PEN IN HAND

MARYLAND WRITERS' ASSOCIATION

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ally@ambitiousenterprises.com
Historian: Jack Noone

MWA is a non-profit association dedicated to the art, craft and business of writing for professional and aspiring writers. Annual dues \$35; student \$25.

The MWA Anthology Update

The Maryland Writers' Association hopes for an Anthology of members' work has come back to life in the hands of editor Allyson Peltier.

Ally speaks with enthusiasm about the project. One of its purposes, she says, is to provide a showcase for MWA's talented writers. Over 100 entries include science fiction, fantasy, memoir, literary fiction, poetry and essay.

The intention is chose the best of these to produce a book-length anthology. Publishing options include printing by a small local press—or a print-on-demand press. It will be unveiled at the Baltimore Book Festival this Fall.

Ally says, "The anthology will be an ego boost for the members who are included, and a boost for all members to see that there is all this talent

within MWA. It will encourage those who aren't chosen to keep working. It will raise a little money for MWA. Writers will get publishing credit to add to their resumes, but it won't necessarily bring exposure to agents and publishers."

Ally says that editing is her strength. Before arriving in our area, she worked as an editor for several small presses and then spent four years with Simon and Schuster in New York City acquiring and editing books. Once here, she chanced to read an on-line article for *Writers Weekly* by MWA member Eric Goodman. When she followed the link to Eric's website she learned that he was an MWA member and soon joined the newly formed Baltimore Chapter.

Ally sums up the anthology this way: "I think that putting-together all these works will create a sense of community and

pride among all our members and peers. I hope everyone will be excited by seeing all this talent."

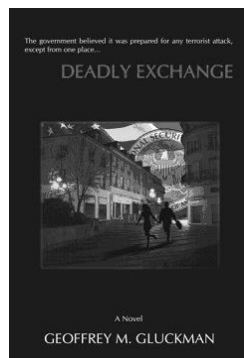


You can help. Create a title and subtitle for the Anthology. Include the words Maryland Writers Association and make it clear that it's a collection of work by Maryland writers.
ally@ambitiousenterprises.com

Ally Peltier has her own freelance business, working with and coaching writers to make their works publisher- or agent-ready.

www.ambitiousenterprises.com

Don't Neglect the Facts: Advice from Geoffrey Gluckman



Author Geoffrey M. Gluckman advised MWA writers to use research to lend authenticity to their writing when he spoke at an MWAB meeting last fall. In his espionage thriller *Deadly Exchange* he used his experiences in training as a federal agent and recruitment by the CIA to back up his fiction.

In a conversation with PIH this January, Geoff told us that he visited every location used in his novel. He went to the Arc de Triomphe in Paris to get the feel of the site and plot an explosion. He had to see the Jefferson Memorial in Washington for himself—it's the setting for the pivotal scene in the story.

continued on page 2

PEN IN HAND*Submission Guidelines*

Topics: writing or publishing tips or experiences that would benefit other members; how-to advice for writers; interviews with MWA guest speakers; short-short stories; poetry; articles regarding upcoming events of interest to our members.

Word limit: 100 for events; 200-250 for all others

Payment: Your story in print

Editing: PIH reserves the right to edit for length, grammar and spelling as appropriate. Publication depends on timeliness, professionalism and space.

Submission Requirements:

You must be an MWA member. Put your unformatted text in the body of an email message. Add a brief bio. Put PIH in the subject line and send to:

sonialinebaugh@hotmail.com

Submissions and questions are accepted on an ongoing basis.

Gluckman

continued from page one

Geoff explained, “The book operates on several levels. It explores the identity of the individual as well as the national identity. The heroine draws inspiration from the words written in stone at the Memorial. She is liberating herself from the tyranny of the conditioned self into the freedom of the inner self. Espionage makes a good vehicle for the comparison.”

It was a challenge to pin down some facts of the story. “The topic of ultra-low frequencies [used as a method of mind control in the book] were classified when I started writing. I got confirmation for my theories from a federal agent I happened to sit next to on an airplane.”

The most important thing Geoff stresses about facts is to check everything twice—using different sources. Be especially careful of internet sources where misinformation easily travels from site to site.

In addition to Deadly Exchange, Geoffrey M. Gluckman’s work appears in the anthology Teen Angst. He is a feature writer for publications like Iron Horse Magazine and Law Enforcement Technology. He is also an international lecturer on the physiology of brain function. He developed and teaches a muscle education system for health professionals.



Hey, You!
HELP ERIC SPREAD THE
WRITING WORD

Tell him what media sources you use so he can add those newspapers, magazines, websites, radio and television sources to our MWA media list. Tell Eric.
edgewriter@gmail.com

WANT E-NEWSWIRE?

Stay in the know with MWA’s e-NewsWire which is emailed to consenting members twice each month. It has the latest on news, meetings, events, member successes, contests and calls for submissions.

Contact the mailing list administrator Scott Morrow
scottdmorrow@hotmail.com

E-NewsWire is sent from
info@marylandwriters.com.

Make sure you mark that address as safe.

BE IN THE KNOW.

The President’s Message

By Ann Arbaugh

Are you excited about the upcoming MWA Conference? I know I’m excited and a little nervous as it is my first as a Board Member and President. Some of you are nervous because you plan to meet with an agent or editor. I spoke with Melanie Rigney at last year’s conference and she gave me a few suggestions for those of you worrying about the agent/editor sessions.

Practice! Find a writing buddy whose

opinion you trust or respect. Let them be the “agent” and conduct a mock session. This is similar to a job interview or a first date.

Dress appropriately. You don’t need a tie and suit. A business casual look with good grooming will give you a professional appearance.

Be on time. You only have a few minutes to sell your product. When your time is up be sure to thank the agent/editor and leave without delay. Show that you

President's Message continued...

respect both their time and the next person's time.

If you are meeting with an editor, be sure you're ready for questions and criticisms. You cannot be married to each word as it is written. The editor's job is to refine and revise. Consider practice sessions with a writing professional prior to the conference. Seek out other writers or writing professors at local colleges.

Above all, remember that what you have and what the agent/editor is seeking may be two different things. Don't be discouraged. Try another editor or agent. Try another piece of writing or another style.

Good luck . I look forward to seeing you on May 2 and 3 in Linthicum, Maryland.

*Readers Respond: Memoir*

Readers responded to our exploration of memoir writing in the November issue of Pen in Hand. If you missed it, look under publications at the MWA website www.marylandwriters.org.

~ Dear PIH Editor,

I thought the articles on memoir writing were interesting. However, I would like to add two very good references and a comment. First the references: You mentioned *Writing Well*. William Zinsser also wrote *Writing About Your Life*, which is part memoir of his career and part suggestions for writing your own memoir, and *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir*.

Both books were very helpful while I was writing my own memoir, *Alaska Stories: A Memoir* which I published in 2006. I, too, relied heavily on my journals which I wrote during the four years I lived in Alaska, but even more informative were the letters I wrote to my sister, Sandra, who lived in Washington state. She has kept all of my letters and sent me four large mailing packages of letters I wrote to her while I was in Alaska. Those had details I never bothered to put into my journal, such as the fact that my kayak

was 14 feet, nine inches long and weighed 35 pounds!

Wishing you and all of the MWA members a great 2008.

Margret Kingrey

A long-time MWA member, Margret currently lives and writes in Massachusetts.

~ Dear PIH Editor,

I wish to thank you and everyone who contributed to the Pen In Hand discussion of memoir writing - great tips and awesome information coming from MWA members. I look forward to reading some of their work.

I have persevered with my memoir, *Suddenly an Angel* and it is now in cover production. Hopefully I have passed most of the stumbling blocks and hoops of fire. I have begun my next piece of writing.

Joanne Alloway

Apologies: PIH referred to "Jane" Alloway in the November issue. It's "Joanne."

MWA Critique Groups

Fiction

Prince George's County: Contact Yvonne at Yvoniks@aol.com.
Columbia. Full. No new members at this time.

Scriptwriting

Annapolis: Contact jandjfields@aol.com

Creative/Literary Nonfiction

Baltimore Area: Contact Lauren at autumnleaves1997@aol.com

Looking for a critique group?

Coordinator Joya Fields will help you find the right group or start a new one. jandjfields@aol.com

Your Feedback Is Welcome

Speak up. Tell us if Pen in Hand articles are helpful to you. Send a letter to the Editor or continue our discussions on writing with a short article of your own. Published authors are especially encouraged to write, but we're also interested in those who've found roadblocks to publishing.

If you'd like us to explore another theme, let us know that too. The idea is to match *Pen in Hand* to the needs and interests of our members.

Editor Sonia Linebaugh
sonialinebaugh@hotmail.com

PS If it doesn't say PIH or MWA in the subject line, I'll probably delete it without opening. ;-)

NOVEL CONTEST DEADLINE LOOMS

FEBRUARY 28 IS THE LAST DAY TO MAIL YOUR ENTRY FOR THE 2008 MWA NOVEL CONTEST.

In keeping with MWA's ideals, the goal of the contest is to encourage and develop authors by providing a reputable literary critique and contest experience. An award from our contest is a bona fide seal of approval from an incorporated group of professional and published writers. As such, it is well suited for drawing the attention of editors and agents to your work.

Our method is to run the MWA Novel Contest as if it were the "front office" of a literary agency or publishing house. The submission package is patterned on the materials commonly requested by an agent or editor in response to a successful query letter. MWA contest coordinators screen

and cull submissions following the same criteria used by agents and editors. Our contest judges critique and score the entry's effectiveness in meeting a standardized set of novel style and content criteria. Unlike an agency or publishing house, the MWA Novel Contest will provide participants with detailed and well-intentioned feedback about their submission(s). Besides the initial screeners, each submission is critiqued by at least two contest judges. Every aspect of your submission is evaluated, and the detailed evaluation results will be sent to you in the SASE.

Each entry must be a completed, English Language, book-length (at least 50,000

words), unpublished work of fiction that is not currently under contract by an agent or publisher.

Membership in MWA is NOT a requirement.

Prizes will be awarded at the MWA meeting on June 11, 2008.

Find complete guidelines and formatting instructions at www.marylandwriters.org

If you have any questions, send an email with the Subject: "MWA Novel Contest" to the contest coordinator Mary Beth Creighton: mbcreighton@clearviewcatv.net

NOTE From Mary Beth: Emails that lack a proper subject line will be deleted unread.

Novel Contest Quick Facts

Deadline: February 28, 2008

Entry Fee: \$37 per submission for MWA members; \$40 per submission for non-members.

Categories: Action/Adventure/Horror Mainstream/Literary Mystery/Suspense/Thriller Romance/Historical Science Fiction/Fantasy/Speculative

Prizes: Grand Prize \$150. First place in each category \$100. Second place in each category \$50. All entrants will receive two judges' critiques of their submission.

Complete guidelines and formatting instructions www.marylandwriters.org

SHORT WORKS CONTEST NAMES JUDGES

Coordinator Kerry Dunnington has announced the judges for the MWA Short Works Contest.

Christine Stewart is an artist-in-residence with Creative Alliance, where she leads the Write Here, Write Now workshops. She has an M.A. and M.F.A. in creative writing and poetry, is the recipient of a Ruth Lilly Fellowship, and a Pushcart Prize nominee. Her work is published include *Poetry, Ploughshares, Blackbird, and The Cortland Review*. She is a recipient of an Individual Artist Grant in Fiction from the Maryland State Arts Council.

Poet **Joyce S. Brown's** works have appeared in *Poetry, Yankee, The Tennessee Quarterly, The Christian Science Monitor, The American Scholar*, and many other journals. Her book *Call and Answer* is a collaboration with local artist Mary Swann. She taught fiction and poetry writing in the Johns Hopkins Writing Seminars and served as poetry editor for *Baltimore's City Paper*.

Geoffrey Becker is the author of *Dangerous Men*, a collection of short stories which won the Drue Heinz Literature Prize, and the novel *Bluestown*. A past winner of an NEA fellowship, the Nelson

Algren Award, and the GLCA prize for best first book of fiction, his stories appear in literary magazines, and anthologies like *The Best American Short Stories*. He teaches at Towson University, where he directs the Masters in Professional Writing program.

The deadline for submitting short poetry, fiction, non-fiction and editorial essays is to the Short Works Contest is March 14, 2008.

Questions? Contact Kerry Dunnington at thisbookcooks@verizon.net

Short Works Contest Quick Facts

Deadline March 14, 2008

Fee: \$13 per entry for members ; \$16 for non-members

Categories: Poetry: up to 30 lines Short Fiction: to 3000 words Creative Non-Fiction: to 3000 words Essay: to 3000 words

Prizes First Prize: \$100; Second Prize: \$75; Third Prize: \$50 . Announced and awarded at the MWA Meeting on June 11, 2008.

Before you send your entry, check out the guidelines and rules at www.marylandwriters.org.

Conference 2008 Featured Speakers

Peter E. Abresch:

Memoir Writing

Easy strategies for writing life stories for family and publication. Peter Abresch is the author of the Elderhostel Mysteries Series and the non-fiction *Easy Reading Writing*. He publishes a free online newsletter on fiction writing called *BookMarc*.

[Editor's Note: See page 6 of *Pen in Hand*.]

Ann Bracken:

Journaling: The "Write" Way to Begin

Stuck? Journal a solution! Jump-start all of your writing projects using finely honed journaling tools. Ann offers practical demonstrations and discussion of six journaling techniques. Ann owns The Possibility Project, a journal coaching practice using writing in creative ways for positive change resulting in a fuller, richer life.

Patricia Fry:

How to Write a Successful Book Proposal in 8 Easy Steps

Learn how to write the right book for the right audience and build promotion into your book while creating a book proposal that sells. Patricia Fry is a career writer and the author of 27 books, including *The Right Way to Write, Publish, and Sell Your Book*.

Dana Kollman:

Forensic Science – Its Not What You See on TV!

Hollywood has a knack for making everything look exciting and enticing and the field of crime scene investigation is no exception. Listen as Dana tells you the realities of the field and how truth is truly stranger than fiction. Dana is a former CSI with the Baltimore County Police Department. She currently teaches anthropology and criminal justice courses at Towson University.

Diane Marquette:

Creative Book Marketing

Use classic promotional methods as

well as resourceful and clever techniques to get your published book into the hands of your readers. Diane Marquette has three published novels, as well as 150 regionally and nationally published articles, and coordinates the annual Bay to Ocean Writers Conference.

Lisa L. Spahr:

Coaching for Writers: What Keeps You Up at Night?

This writer's workshop is driven by YOU. The coach will cover topics such as: finding the time to write and writing to publish rather than writing to keep writing. Lisa Spahr is a psychologist, author, entrepreneur, and life coach.

Marcia Talley: *Demystifying the*

Mystery: Tips on Writing Crime Fiction

From "where do you get your ideas?" to the final "The End," a concise discussion of the roles of plot, character, and dialogue in the modern mystery novel, with tips on point-of-view and planting clues for the aspiring mystery writer. A question and answer period follows. Includes bibliography and tip sheet handouts. Marcia Talley is the multi-award-winning author of six Hannah Ives mysteries, including *This Enemy Town* and *Through the Darkness*. She is editor/contributor to *Naked Came the Phoenix* and *I'd Kill for That*. Her prize-winning short stories appear in more than a dozen collections.

Patricia Valdata:

Patricia Valdata writes poetry, fiction, and nonfiction. Her publications include a poetry chapbook, *Looking for Bivalve*, and a novel, *Crosswind*. She received an MFA in writing from Goddard College in 1991. She received Maryland State Arts Council Individual Artist Awards for poetry in 2001 and 2003. Her work has appeared most recently in *North American Review*, *Voices in Wartime*, *Icarus*, and *Tattoo Highway*. She works as a freelance writer, editor, and writing instructor.

Gregg Wilhelm:

The Publishing Matrix: What's the Best Publishing Option for You?

Explore the editorial, marketing, and economic aspects of the four primary ways a writer can usher her manuscript into publication. It takes research and legwork, and an ability to transition from introverted artist to extroverted self-promoter. "The End" is only the beginning. Gregg Wilhelm is President and CEO of CityLit Project. He has been in the book publishing business for 15 years and serves as director and editor-in-chief at the student-staffed Apprentice House, based at Loyola College, where he also teaches courses on publishing.

Other featured speakers are **Richard White: *Writer Beware*** and **Cynthia Polansky**.

More Experts At the Conference

Publishing Poetry

Ann Shalaski, poet, author of *World Made of Glass* and judge of several poetry contests

Bob Arthur, publisher of San Francisco Bay Press, author and playwright

Bill Glose, poet, author of *The Human Touch* and former editor of *Virginia Adversaria*

Editors

Jane Frutchey

Melanie Rigney

Beth Rubin

Marketing Panelists

Austin Camacho

Eric Goodman

Writing for the Spoken Word

Jill Earl

PLAN TO VOLUNTEER AT THE 2008 CONFERENCE?

Check out these new Guidelines

Conference Chair Denise Camacho has set new guidelines for the volunteer program at the 2008 MWA Conference. In the past there has been some miscommunication about whether or not volunteers can attend the conference free of charge. Denise hopes that the guidelines will answer any questions about what volunteers should expect.

Volunteer qualifications and guidelines:

1. Volunteers get a special conference rate of \$55, which is the per person fee that the MWA is required to pay to the venue. This fee covers attendance as a working volunteer, breakfast, lunch (Keynote speaker) and the networking social. These alone are worth more than the price of admission.

2. Volunteers will be allowed to attend at least one session, but maybe not their first choice.

3. Volunteers should arrive at 7am, and be ready to work on their assignments throughout the day.

4. Volunteers may be expected to sit or stand for long periods of time, although we try to assign jobs that are not physically taxing to any one individual.

5. Volunteers must have excellent communication skills.

Volunteer assignments include:

1. Registration table (7 am—8:30am) Must be able to multi-task and sit for a minimum of 3 hours.

2. Information table (all day, beginning at 8 am) – Must be a good communicator.

3. Bookstore (two-hour shift) - money handling may be required.

4. Room monitor for break-out sessions (one per room). Must be able to introduce session speakers and manage the flow of traffic before and after each session for timely clearing of the room space.

5. Hall monitor to assist attendees to get to the correct room or session in a timely manner. Must have a good grasp of the schedule and room assignments.

Volunteers are expected to assist with clean up of their respective areas.

Questions? Contact Denise Camacho at dbcamacho@hotmail.com.

Peter Abresch on Writing Fiction: The Writing Tripod



It takes three things, like the legs of a tripod, for a novel to stand. Plot. Characterization. Writing. A literary work might be read

for the pure joy of the way words are strung together, but if we eliminate plot, it goes nowhere and we have no story. If we drop characterization, we can have a good story line and good writing, but with characters no one cares about. Good plot and good characters, but poor writing and who will plow through it? In "Russia House" John Le Carre says, "Spying is waiting."

Well, folks, writing is rewriting. It's taking that garbage and making it into something that is sparse and crystal clear, conveying mood and sight and sound and taste and feel, using no more words than are absolutely necessary,

and squeezing out the fat to leave a rich, simmering broth. It is the soup that blends the flavors of plot and characterization as surely as if they were chicken and garlic.

Anything that stumbles or doesn't ring true will have to be gone over again and again until it stands, or we can count on a rejection. Which we'll probably get anyway.

I'm telling you all this because I wish I had known it 25 years ago. Have I said this before? I believe I had good plots, but I had no idea about characterization. I had no one to sit me down and point out why my hero was a stick figure, or how to make my sentences flow.

That's what we're trying to do on this writing journey. We can point out all the

things that go into a good story, but no one can teach us how to write that story. Each of us has to develop our own craft.

I can show you some dance steps, but the casual weekend ballroomer will

never be able to star in a ballet without practicing again and again and again and again.

Good writing is rewriting again and again and again, until plot and characterization come into sharp focus.

I wish I had known this 25 years ago.

BookMarc© Peter E. Abresch, MWA member and author of the *James P. Dandy*

Elderhostel mysteries, an IMBA Best Seller www.elderhostelmysteries.com

Listen to Peter's first podcast book, "If They Ask for a Hand, Only Give Them a Finger," to see if he practices what he preaches.

www.podiobooks.com/title/if-they-ask

Maryland Writers' Association 20th Annual Conference

"We Write Because We Must!"

Conference Center at the
Maritime Institute of Technology
692 Maritime Boulevard
Linthicum Heights, MD 21090

Friday, May 2, 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm & Saturday, May 3, 7:30 am to 6:30 pm

Join us for our 20th annual Maryland Writers' Association's annual conference, which gives writers the opportunity to hone their craft in sessions led by established authors, instructors, and experts. Sessions are for everyone; beginners and published writers alike in a wide range of subjects. Come explore the many worlds of writing with us.



Keynote Speaker

Thomas F. Monteleone has been a professional writer since 1972, and a four-time winner of the Bram Stoker Award. More than 100 of his short stories have been published in magazines and anthologies. His stories have been nominated for many awards, and have appeared in many best-of-the-year compilations. His notorious column of opinion and entertainment, *The Mothers And Fathers Italian Association*, currently appears in *Cemetery Dance* magazine. He is the editor of seven anthologies, including the highly acclaimed *Borderlands* series edited with his wife, Elizabeth. *Borderlands 5* won a Bram Stoker Award in 2003.

Editor's Panel and Anniversary Dinner

We have enlisted the advice and expertise of some of the best freelance editors in Maryland to kick off this year's conference with an informative and lively **Editor's Panel** on Friday evening following the anniversary dinner. They will also be available for **individual critique sessions** on Saturday, so be sure to sign up to have your work critiqued by one of these talented experts.

See a complete list of speakers and agents at www.marylandwriters.org (updated often).



Registration Form

** indicates required information*

***Name:** _____ **Phone:** _____

***Address:** _____

***City:** _____ ***State:** _____ ***Zip:** _____ **E-mail:** _____

*Type of registration:

- Member \$130**
- Non-member \$160**
- Student \$75 (Bring your student ID to the conference)**
- Anniversary Dinner registration (\$30) **Anniversary Dinner is FREE with Maritime Institute hotel registration!**
- Agent and/or editor critique (\$30/each)

Check #: _____ *Total dollar amount \$ _____

Mail Registration Form and Check to:

Maryland Writers' Association
Annual Conference Registration
2800 Gibbons Ave
Baltimore, MD 21214



PO Box 142
Annapolis, MD 21404

Non-Profit
Bulk Rate
Permit No. 211
Arnold, MD
21012

Pen in Hand

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MWA 20TH ANNIVERSARY WRITERS CONFERENCE MAY 2-3, 2008

REGISTER ONLINE NOW!!

Friday, May 2, 6pm to 9pm
Dinner and Editor's Panel
Melanie Rigney, Beth Rubin,
Jane Frutchey

Saturday, May 3, 8am-6:30pm

Keynote Speaker
Thomas F. Monteleone

Workshops & Sessions for
beginners & published writers

Conference Center
Maritime Institute of Technology
692 Maritime Boulevard
Linthicum Heights, MD 21090

Meetings

MWA

Meets Second Wednesday
of each Month
7:30pm, unless noted

WHERE: Chesapeake Arts Center
194 Hammonds Lane
Brooklyn Park

February 13

Topic to be announced

MWA Website

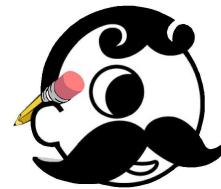
www.marylandwriters.org

MWA & MWAB Meetings

are open to writers and those
interested in writing .

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Always FREE to MWA members
Free for first-time non-members
\$5 for subsequent attendance



MWAB

(Baltimore Chapter)
Meets Fourth Monday of
each Month
7:00pm, unless noted
WHERE: Moveable

February 25

Attorney Ben Roca talks about copyright.

The Baltimore location of this moveable
feast will be announced on the Chapter web-
site.

~

At the January meeting, chapter member Ian
Hochberg, president of High Mountain
Signs, debuted handsome new signs featur-
ing the Baltimore icon Mr. Boh, with permis-
sion from Natty Boh's trademark owner.

Baltimore Chapter President: Paul Lagasse
paul@seeingthroughclouds.com

Baltimore Chapter website
www.mwabaltimore.org