

PEN IN HAND

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MARYLAND WRITERS' ASSOCIATION

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The MWA President's Message

By Sonia Linebaugh

Dear MWA Members,

Hopefully you've noticed that MWA's communications systems have been going through some big changes. We're finally about set.

Print is not dead! *Pen in Hand* will continue to keep you informed, educated and connected. You can get it in the mail, on our website or (soon) through a link on MWA Announcements.

PIH Editor Nancy O. Greene has set a publication schedule for four times per year. She's signing up a few intrepid reporters to keep us all informed about matters of interest to writers across Maryland. If you want to join them for a gig asking questions of authors, writers and publishers and write the answers in short articles for *PIH*, contact Nancy. If you want to quiz MWA officers or members on their latest insights or actions and report in print, Nancy is the person to talk to.

Digital communication is very much alive! You're already getting messages from Yahoo Announcements and you can sign up for MWA's Yahoo Discussion Group.

As an MWA member you've been automatically enrolled for the MWA Yahoo Announcement Group. This replaces e-News as our way to keep you informed on short notice about Chapter meetings,

opportunities to sell your books at an MWA sponsored table or booth. 'Tis the season, so read the announcements to find out when, where, how, and who to contact.

On the other hand, the MWA Yahoo Discussion Group is the place for you to tell all of us about your writing events, your successes, your questions and your answers. Sign up and get connected with the 300 other writers in our community. Don't forget MWA Facebook and Twitter. As always you'll find the information and links you need at www.MarylandWriters.org.

Our four chapters are in full swing with socials or guest speakers scheduled every month. Our 23 critique groups are helping writers improve their craft every week. Our Short Works Contest and Novel Contest have a deadline of February 15. Plans for the Spring Writers' Conference on April 24 are gaining momentum. A project dedicated to forming a teen writing club is in its early stages.

There are so many opportunities to find success through involvement with other writers and writing professionals. MWA works when we work together.

Keep writing. Keep in touch.

Sonia Linebaugh, MWA President



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Submission Guidelines

Topics: Writing, 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: Up to 200 for events; 300-1000 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: anngf@hotmail.com

Submissions and questions are accepted on an ongoing basis.

Your Feedback Is Welcome

Speak up. Tell us if *Pen in Hand* articles are helpful to you. Send a letter to the Editor, or write a short article of your own.

Our goal is to match *Pen in Hand* to the needs and interests of our members. If you'd like us to explore a particular theme, let us know.

Editor: Nancy O. Greene
anngf@hotmail.com

P.S. If your e-mail message doesn't say "PIH" or "MWA" in the subject line, it will probably be deleted unread. ;-)

2009 BALTIMORE BOOK FESTIVAL IN REVIEW

By Paul Lagasse

Baltimore's annual celebration of the literary arts, the Baltimore Book Festival, took place from September 25-27 in beautiful Mount Vernon Square near downtown. Once again, the Baltimore chapter was pleased to host the MWA

and the Baltimore Chapter I want to thank each one of our guest authors and tent volunteers who gave so generously of their time and energy to represent MWA and their own work over the weekend:



Fernando Quijano III and Valerie Shane as Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky at the "For Crying Out Loud" Baltimore Book Festival reading in the CityLit tent.

Guest authors: Deborah Edelman, Janet Ruck, Pat Valdata, Louise Harris, Joan Lehmann, Debbi Mack, Rosemary and Larry Mild, Karla Bullock, Sherry Bosley, Joe Guion, Barbara Morrison, Ellen Nibali, Michele Hartlove, Sonia Linebaugh, L.M. Preston

Tent volunteers: Angela Collins, Howard Stiefel, Ally Peltier, Gary Lester, and Scott and Sherry Morrow

tent, located as usual at the foot of the park's iconic Washington Monument (which was built before the one on the Mall in DC, incidentally). A constant stream of visitors -- readers, writers, and the generally book-curious -- dropped in to meet our featured guest authors; peruse and buy members' books and MWA's anthology, *New Lines from the Old Line State*; pick up a brochure; join our mailing lists; and commiserate with volunteers about the joys and challenges of the writing life.

Speaking of which, on behalf of MWA

This year, Friday was a full day, unlike previous years when the festival kicked off in the late afternoon. However Saturday was just like last year -- the festival's designated Rain Day, though fortunately much less torrential than 2008's memorable deluge. On Sunday, it was back to clear blue skies and crisp breezes. On all three days, MWA members featured prominently throughout the three-day festival in the authors' tent as well as on the reading stages. Events in which MWA members participated included the Poets Ink Workshop and the MSAC

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2009 BALTIMORE BOOK FESTIVAL IN REVIEW

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Poetry Reading on Friday, open mics on Saturday, and readings by Lit & Art at the Watermark participants on Sunday.

On Sunday evening, MWA Baltimore Chapter helped close out the book festival with a memorable new twist on an old classic. Traditionally, MWAB's co-sponsor CityLit Project offers us an hour-long slot on its anchor stage in which we feature members reading from their own works. But this year, we decided to try something proposed by Fernando Quijano III, writer and director of the popular "For Crying Out Loud" reading series – in-character and in-costume readings from celebrity memoirs! Fernando and Valerie Shane read Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky (with cigar!), MWA President Sonia Linebaugh read Gertrude Stein (with a plate of brownies!), Shirley Brewer read Steve Martin (with a plaid jacket and bow tie!), Cyclops owner Andy Rubin read Kaye Ballard recalling her friendship with Bette Davis (with no props!), and Tim Reed of Charles Street Development Corporation read Arnold Schwarzenegger (with nothing but Speedos and socks!). The readings stopped passersby in their tracks and hijacked their complete attention. And when Tim finished his reading with some flexing, the cheering, screaming, and clapping nearly brought down the tent.

What a way to wrap up three days of literary celebrations! Now just imagine how we're going to top that NEXT year . . .

Paul Lagasse writes freelance from his home in Baltimore. He is also President of MWA's Baltimore Chapter.

Eric D. Goodman at the "Lit & Art at the Watermark" reading.



Angela Render at the "Lit & Art at the Watermark" reading.

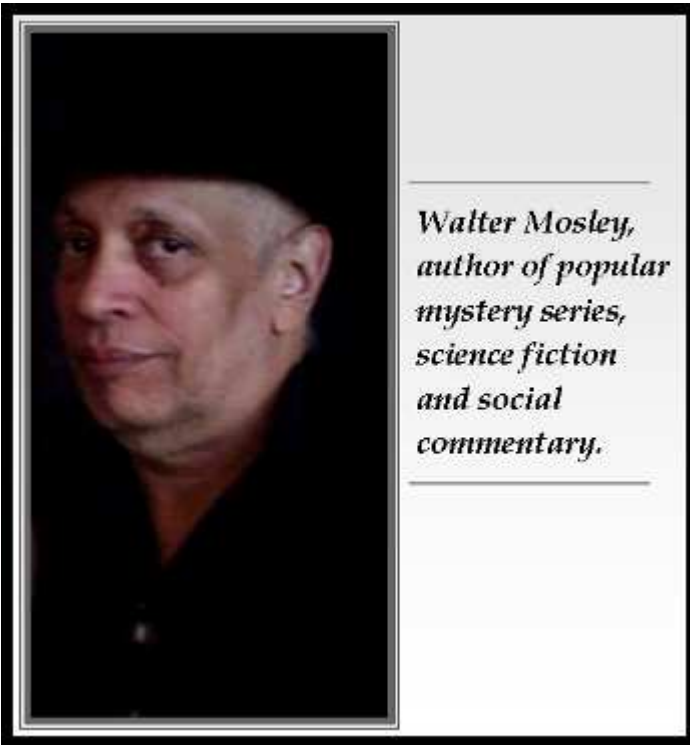


Andy Rubin, owner of the independent bookstore Cyclops, reading at the CityLit Stage.



An Interview with Walter Mosley

By Nancy O. Greene



Walter Mosley is a bestselling author and is well-known for his “Easy Rawlins” mystery series—particularly *Devil in a Blue Dress*, which was made into a film starring Denzel Washington. But he’s also written science fiction; social commentary; and “This Year You Write Your Novel,” a well received book of advice for writers.

NG: You recently wrote a book on how to write a novel in a year, and I wanted to know how the process has changed for you from when you started writing or when you were working towards getting your big break. Now that you’ve achieved great success and tour and do interviews, is your writing schedule different or is it pretty much the same?

WM: It’s the same. I’ve never done character outlines. I just sit down and just start writing. I’ll have an idea, think it might be interesting to explore, come up with a sentence and start writing. All the other stuff comes in rewriting. Every once in a while I’ll outline a novel, but mostly I just

start with an idea.

NG: Some writers talk about writer’s block, or anxiety they face with getting the words onto the page. Have you ever dealt with that, and if so, what do you do to overcome it?

WM: (laughs) I feel so bad answering your questions. No, I’ve never had writer’s block or really encountered writing anxiety. For instance, I just finished a book and gave it to my agent. We were talking the other day, and she said that it’s not controversial but maybe the kind of book that some people might be outraged by, and she loved it. And once she said that I realized that I might have been worried about it, because I was really happy when she told me she loved it. But while I wasn’t unaware of any feelings about the work when writing, I was just writing the book.

One of the things about being a writer is that it’s a craft as well as an art. And to be on top of your craft you have to do it every day; if you’re a runner you have to run every day. If you’re a blacksmith, you have to work at it every day. If you don’t do it for a while you get rusty and you have anxiety or blocks. I’m not saying that there aren’t other reasons that people have this. But I have written every day for twenty years.

NG: Can you tell me a bit about your new book?

WM: *The Long Fall* is a new mystery series, and I think it’s interesting. It’s different. Rather than being set in L.A. it’s in New York; rather than being in the near past it’s in the present. It’s a mystery, and it was a great deal of fun for me. Rather than talking about the life of my relatives and my father’s family, I’m talking about my family.

NG: You’ve also written science fiction and you’ve talked a lot about black characters and writers in science fiction, or the lack thereof, and now that there are more good writers of science fiction that are black, and other good writers that

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An Interview with Walter Mosley

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have well-rounded characters of various ethnicities in their work, why do you think there's still a problem diversity in science fiction in that respect, or is there still as much of an issue?

WM: Really? Of science fiction? I wasn't aware of that.

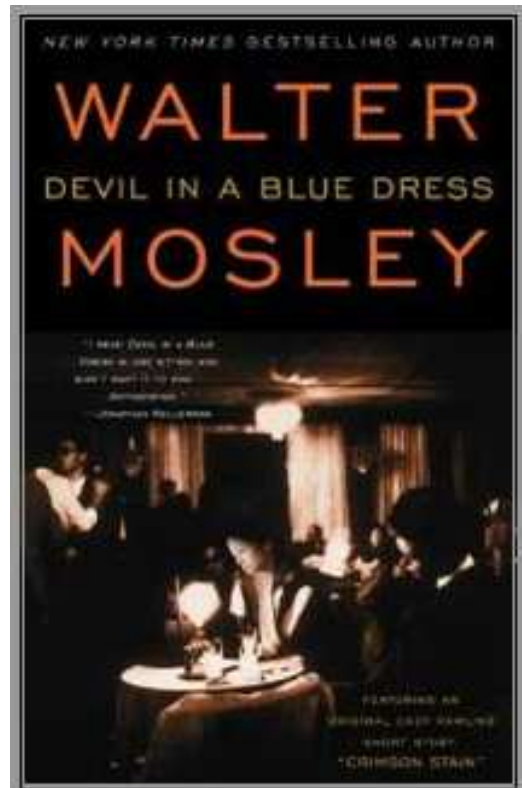
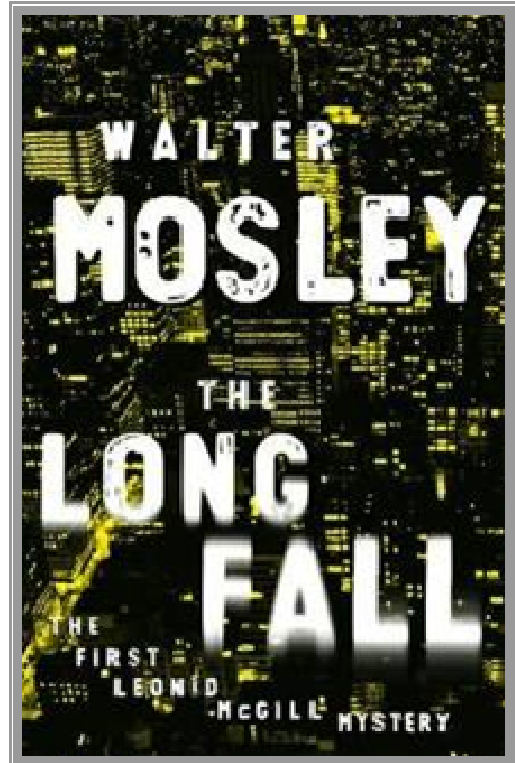
NG: Mostly in small press and short fiction, but some in mainstream publishing as well.

WM: Well—being very board about the genre— there's Steven Barnes and Tananarive Due, Octavia Butler, who unfortunately died. There probably should be more since we're avid readers of science fiction. Samuel Delany is arguably one of the greatest science fiction writers the world has ever created. (laughs) Well, let me amend that statement, just a little bit. He's arguably one of the greatest writers America has ever created, and he's also a science fiction writer. So there should be more that are well-known, and I don't really know why there aren't.

NG: I heard about something recently, that in Nigeria they wanted to ban District 9, that it wasn't well received.

WM: Well, it's different and controversial, and sometimes that's an issue. I just wrote a series of six novellas called *On the Bus to Oblivion*. The only thing they have in common is that in each a black man destroys the world. People are reluctant to publish it, but we'll publish it in one way or another.

Visit www.waltermosley.com to read an excerpt of *The Long Fall* and for more information on Walter Mosley's other works.



Baltimore Book Festival Photo Gallery



Paul Lagasse



Paul Lagasse at the CityLit Project Stage.



Gertrude Stein

Schwar

Above: Sonia Linebaugh and Tim Reed as Gertrude Stein and Arnold Schwarzenegger at the "For Crying Out Loud" CityLit reading. Top Right: Pat Valdata and Joan Lehmann Speak to a Reader.



Tim Reed Reading as Arnold Schwarzenegger at the CityLit Stage.



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MWA is a non-profit association dedicated to the art, craft and business of writing. Both professionals and aspiring writers are welcome. Annual dues are \$35; student \$25. Published items remain property of the author. MWA also publishes e-Newswire, a compilation of opportunities and achievements of interest to writers.

MWA Meetings, Events and Announcements

Save the Date!

The Maryland Writers' Association's 2010 Conference will be held April 24 at the Baltimore Marriott Hunt Valley Inn, just off I-83 and about 6 blocks from the Light Rail. Conference cost is \$135 for MWA members; \$145 for non-members; \$75 for students. Read MWA's Yahoo Announcements for information about the keynote speaker and presenters.

An awards dinner celebrating the winners of MWA's writing contests follows at 6 pm. The cost is additional.

We currently are seeking individual and corporate sponsors for the Conference and Dinner. If you have any suggestions, please contact Patti Rosenberg at pattirosenberg@hotmail.com.

A strong and talented committee is working diligently to make this conference the best yet. Stay tuned for more information! Meanwhile, get out your new calendars and mark the date in red.

Contact: Diane Booth, Conference Chair – booth@ix.netcom.com.