

Schedule of the 2009 Alabama Writers' Conclave Conference and Annual Meeting

Hilton Birmingham Perimeter Park Birmingham, Alabama

Friday July 17

- 5:00 PM **Hotel check-in (at front desk) and conference registration (in conference area).**
- 6:30-7:30 **Buffet supper** (Shelby Room)
- 7:30-7:45 break
- 7:45-8:45 **STEPS**, an original play written and performed by members of Mississippi Writers Guild that puts *Faulkner, Welty, Tennessee Williams and other Southern Writers together on the steps of a brownstone in New York City.* (Jefferson Room)
- 8:45-9:00 break
- 9:00- **Open Mic, featuring local contributors of *MOTIF: an Anthology of Writings about Music*, edited by Marianne Worthington.** (Jefferson Room) All conference attendees invited to participate. 5 minutes max per person. **bring something to read!*

Saturday July 18

- 7:30-9:00 AM Registration and continental breakfast (in conference area).
- 8:00 AM- 6:00 PM **Bookstore open.** (Perimeter Room)
- 8:30-9:30 **Fiction** (Lakeman): *The Five "Cs" of Character Development*
Does your protagonist stand out from the pack -- or is she in danger of getting lost in her own story? We'll investigate five basic techniques for making characters active -- Contrast, Choice, Contradictions, Consequences, and Change -- as well as exploding the unhelpful myths that main characters must be "likable," "motivated," or "redeemed" in order to engage the reader.
- Poetry** (Huggins): *Beginnings, with an Occasional Foray into Titles*
*How do you know where to start? How do you know that where you start your poem is indeed the right place to start? Can titles "start" a poem? We'll explore these and other questions through discussion and example and work on beginnings. **Bring a poem of your own or someone else's that has an effective beginning. Alternatively, bring a poem that does not have an effective beginning.***
- 9:30-9:45 break
- 9:45-10:45 **Novel** (Duncan): *Creating Conflict* – *Get your character up a tree, then throw rocks at her. Explore ways to raise the stakes and build narrative tension.*
- Nonfiction** (Ballard): *The Basics of Creative Nonfiction* – *From journalism to personal essays to blogs, the term "nonfiction" covers a wide range. Explore the different genres, and learn techniques through writing exercises to jumpstart your own nonfiction writing.*
- 10:45-11:00 break
- 11:00-12:00 **Writer in Residence Gin Phillips - Making History Come Alive**
- 12:00-1:30 lunch on your own. There is an excellent restaurant in the hotel as well as

many restaurants within walking distance (Cracker Barrel, TGIF, Taziki's Greek Fare, Pablo's Black Pearl Asian Cuisine, Johnny Ray's BBQ and others).

1:30-2:30 **Fiction** (Lakeman): ***Putting Supporting Characters to Work*** -It takes more than a great hero or a memorable villain. Understanding how secondary characters function is essential to keeping a story rich, colorful...and focused. Drawing on classic stories for reference, this workshop will examine five common types -- the mirror, the subtagonist, the witness, the sacrificial lamb, and the audience character -- and demonstrate how each one serves to clarify our understanding of the protagonist.

Poetry (Huggins): ***(Listening to a) Voice***-We'll consider voice, that most elusive (and I don't mean illusive) and most misunderstood of all qualities that distinguishes one poet or one poem from another. What is voice? What does it mean? How do poets get it? Poets can learn much from fiction writers, so a brief sidetrip into fiction may be in order. Point of view, POV, persona--learn to use them, and find your voice.

2:30-2:45 break

2:45-3:45 **Novel** (Duncan): ***Seeing What You Said*** – Explore a draft of (or notes about) your story to find what lies beneath. Learn to ask questions that will help you uncover your novel's theme, conflict, plot, and structure.

Nonfiction (Ballard): ***Tell it Straight*** – Through examples of work of contemporary nonfiction writers and through writing and revision exercises, learn tips for creating compelling nonfiction.

3:45-4:00 break

4:00-6:00 Formal Manuscript Critiques (Cahaba 1 Room) and Informal Manuscript Critiques (in bar area)

4:00-5:00 ****BONUS WORKSHOP** for those not participating in Critiques: ***Putting Together a Book for Publication*** with Editor of Negative Capability Press and Alabama's Poet Laureate **Sue Walker** (Cahaba 2 Room)

7:00-9:00 Annual Grace Gravlee Banquet (Shelby Room) with keynote address by Gin Phillips

Sunday, July 19

7:30-9:00 AM Registration and continental breakfast (in conference area).

8:30-9:30 **Fiction** (Lakeman): ***The Art of the Reveal*** -A successful reveal -- the "a-ha!" moment when the reader finally learns a secret, solves a mystery, or gets a jaw-dropping surprise -- is worth all the trouble it can take to achieve. Understanding the different types of reveals, and how to keep them from falling flat, is the subject of this workshop. Dangerous curves ahead!

Poetry (Huggins): ***Location, Location, Location***--Place is important not only in real estate but in poetry. Without place, a sense of place, the poem (any poem) trails off into insignificance, no matter how good the beginning or distinctive the voice. We'll discuss place in this workshop and discover ways to use place to enrich our poems.

9:30-9:45 break

9:45-10:45 **Novel** (Duncan): ***Start As Close to the End As Possible*** – Find the best place to start your novel and explore ways to work in back story.

Nonfiction (Ballard): ***Rev Up Your Travel Writing*** – Learn about the different types of travel writing, and how to find, research, write and submit the stories newspaper and magazine travel editors want to publish, and readers want to read.

10:45-11:00 break

11:00-12:30 Annual Meeting and **Contest Awards!** (Cahaba Room) Farewell.