

# WRITER'S INK

## THE WRITER'S WORKSHOP OF BLOOMINGDALE

### FEBRUARY 2010

#### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Our February workshops will be on February 13<sup>th</sup> and February 27<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 a.m. until noon.

Format rules are: Minimum, 12-pt. font and double spaced with one-inch margins on all sides.

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#### SIMILE SPOTLIGHT

“He lifted his paddle out of the water and watched the drops fall from it **like diamonds sparkling in the sun.**”

The ropes cut cruelly into her skin – old skin, translucent, with a network of veins **like the cracked surface of the blue Chinese export platters hanging on the wall above the sideboard.**”

Source:

Page, Katherine Hall. *The Body in the Bookcase*. Twilight. 1998. Pp. 9 and 12.

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#### COLUMN TWO PERSONALS

(Please send any Column Two Personals submissions to my e-mail address for inclusion in the next month's newsletter.)

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#### MIXED-UP METAPHORS

(From Capitol Hill politicians)

The sacred cows have come home to roost with a vengeance.

Milwaukee is the golden egg that the rest of the state wants to milk.

These hemorrhoids are a real pain in the neck.

The slowdown is accelerating.

That snake-in-the-grass is barking up the wrong tree.

It's time to swallow the bullet.

The sword of Damocles is hanging over Pandora's box.

It's as easy as falling off a piece of cake.

Source:

Lederer, Richard. *Anguished English*. Wyrick and Company. 1987. Pp. 78-79.

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## CHARACTER OBSERVATIONS

(These guidelines are for writing children's books, but I feel they apply to all writing.)

As you create and shape and refine your character's actions and reactions, keep the following guidelines in mind:

- **Validate confusion:** Every child at one time or another has been confused when dealing with school or siblings, parents or friends. Use that confusion to create depth in your character. The push-pull of opposing feelings creates drama in a character's emotional life and texture in her social life.
- **Celebrate inconsistency:** Consistent people are boring people. Flashes of temper in a kind person and moments of kindness in a cranky person create surprises for the reader. Look for the contradictions in your characters and use them to create complexity in their lives.
- **Ignore the truth:** Whenever we model a character on a real person, we run the risk of sacrificing the inherent drama of the story to stick to the facts. When it comes to story, ditch the real-life prototype to find the essential truth of the character.

Source:

Lamb, Nancy. "Character Observations." *Writer's Digest*. Nov./Dec. 2006. P. 98.

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## INSIDE WRITING AND PUBLISHING

Rosanne Gulisano—Creating a Memoir: The Basics of Writing your Life Story. Saturday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2:00 p.m. Helen Plum Memorial Library. To register, contact Adult Services: 630-627-0316.

Craig Hickman—Research for Nonfiction Writing. Tuesday February 9<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m. Hinsdale Public Library. To register, contact Circulation Services: 630-986-1976.

Ilene Cooper—The Ins and Outs and Ups and Downs of Writing for Kids. Villa Park Public Library. Saturday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2:00 p.m. To register, contact the Check Out Desk: 630-834-1164.

Sharon Woodhouse—What a Publisher Wants to See. Bartlett Public Library. Tuesday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 7:00 p.m. To register, contact Adult Services: 630-837-3560.

Please take advantage of these free seminars that your real estate taxes pay for. Even if it is not about your chosen genre, keep an open mind. Brochures are available in the Blue Book.

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## IS THERE A CON IN THAT CONTEST?

Watch out for these signs that a (writing) contest might not be worth your time:

- Having to pay additional fees for publication, editing, representation or publicity.
- Contests that run weekly or monthly where the “prize” is merely being published on an obscure website.
- Having to buy the anthology your work is published in.
- Everyone “wins” (no matter how bad the work), or no one wins.

Source:

Cook, Amy. “The *Truth* About Writing Contests.” *Writer’s Digest*. Aug. 2006. P. 55.

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## ALL ABOUT ALLITERATION

The **cacophonous canine chorus** **continued** as the door opened.”

“I wondered if the police had uncovered that interesting little fact – and whether they, too, considered the **lizard-loving Lothario** a suspect.” (compound adjective, too.)

Source:

Baxter, Cynthia. *Monkey See, Monkey Die*. Bantam Books. 2008. Pp.187 and 205.

## INSIDE WRITING AND PUBLISHING

By: Jill Speilman

On January 23, Marc Heiden gave a presentation on travel writing as part of the Inside Writing and Publishing series at the Bloomingdale Public Library. Heiden fell into travel writing while teaching English in Japan. Wandering around the country in his spare time, he collected enough information to write a travel guide about Hiroshima for [Wikitravel Press](#) and later wrote another guide about Chicago.

Heiden began by discussing writing travel guidebooks, which he described as “fun, but a slog.” He said that while there are many websites that contain people’s opinions about a travel experience, opinions are cheap and the pertinent details people need are scattered. For an effective guidebook, “details are needed more than wit and wisdom.” After the initial fun of learning a place, managing details for travel guides is difficult. His Hiroshima guidebook took about five months working alone, while the Chicago guide took eight months working with a co-editor. Heiden did not know whether travel writing expenses are tax deductible; a disappointment to many attendees.

Heiden provided many helpful hints for developing a guidebook, including: writing about places that provide the greatest cultural experience, including public transit information, assuming the visitor has no knowledge, and belaboring the details. He discussed how to select restaurants for review, how to review

hotels, and how to promote your guidebook, just to name a few. These tips were very helpful.

Travel essays—about your unique travel experience—are another travel writing area. Michael Palin, Rick Steves, and Anthony Bourdain are examples of successful travel experience writers. People read or watch them because they like their personalities. The market for travel itineraries is also promising, with one- to-three-day plans in demand for travelers with no time to make their own agendas. Aspiring essay and itinerary writers can work to establish their own voice through blogs, in flight magazines, and local tourist council publications.

Lastly, your work has a better chance of being published if you take your own photos. If photography is a challenge, try using photos from Flickr, Wikipedia, or other Internet sites with permission. Focus on the place and avoid using people in your photos. Another plus—you might consider publishing your own photos on Flickr and Picasa. By assigning keywords (subject, place, etc.) to the photos, prospective publishers can easily find them and possibly contact you for publishing permission.

## [KEEP WRITING!](#)

From: Mary Ann Fristoe  
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