Her Heart Beats Poetry:  
An Interview with IWWG Instructor Myra Shapiro

by Kristin Rath

My first introduction to Myra Shapiro was at IWWG’s 2012 Summer Conference at Yale. In our short conversation, as I led the way to her assigned dorm on check-in day, we found commonalities in place—Tennessee (she raised a family in Chattanooga; I attended university in Nashville)—and in our current residence of New York City. I was instantly drawn to this quick-humored woman with a lively step and a southern tinged accent that belied her Bronx, New York origins.

I entered her classroom that week with an adolescent experience of poetry, but exited with a deep appreciation for the genre and some valuable tools upon which I have continued to build. Although I didn’t realize it at the time, that was the beginning of my poetry life. I not only unearthed my need to write poetry, I established the goal of bringing poetic language into everything I write.

-continued on Page 20

Just a Word from the Director

by Dixie L. King, Ph.D.

I attended my first IWWG Summer Conference in 1999 at the urging of a friend who had been attending for years and who told me it would be a transformative experience. Uh-huh. I was skeptical and it was a big commitment—traveling across country, using a substantial portion of my vacation time, and adding to my credit card debt. But I had started writing again after a twenty-year hiatus, and I was tired of playing it safe. I decided to take the chance that this wouldn’t be a colossal waste of time and money.

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So What Did You Think?

Evaluation Results from the 38th Annual Summer Conference

The 117 participants and workshop leaders at the 38th Annual IWWG Summer Conference were asked to complete an online survey about three weeks after the close of the conference. A total of 79 individuals, or 67.5% of conference participants responded to the survey. This high response rate makes the results “generalizable,” meaning that we can assume the responses to be true overall for conference participants. (A response rate of less than 60% would be true only for those taking the survey.)

What was the single most important thing you learned or experienced at the Summer Conference?

The support, camaraderie and affirmation of other women writers. The joy of listening and telling. The deep satisfaction of being heard, and bearing witness to others. I am always given a chance to see myself, and my writing, with fresh eyes at the IWWG Summer Conference...I go back to the world refreshed and with a new perspective; feeling restored in my intentions and abilities, both personal and professional.

- Survey Respondent

Well, they say, "You can’t go home again." but we did. This was a perfect distillation of the best of the best that IWWG has to offer. I am rejuvenated, reawakened and blissful. Thank you for all that you have done to recreate our home.

- Barbara Hyde Haber

Participants at the Opening Ceremony

We share here some of the highlights from the evaluation, beginning with the ease of conference logistics. Survey responses indicated that registering for the conference, the check-in process at Wisdom House, getting to and from workshops, and getting assistance when they needed it were relative easy to navigate.
Great opening! Loved Dorothy Randall Gray’s empowerment activity of drumming & singing. It let us really connect to each other’s spirit & the spirit of the conference! The introductions by each workshop leader was very useful. It let us get a nice insight into their objectives for workshop, with the added touch of getting to share their enthusiasm for it. The wine & cheese social afterwards was fun way to meet other attendees & the workshop leaders, & make some new connections & renew others. Only thing was, I had so much fun, I just made it back to the dorm before it was locked.

- Survey Respondent

The Opening Ceremony

“Housekeeping information” about the facility and the structure of the week received the highest mean rating at 3.78 (on a scale of 1 to 4). Workshop descriptions by workshop leaders were also very popular, with a rating of 3.75. On opening night, we were invited by our keynote speaker to "Get our Howl On" and we did! Survey respondents agreed she was quite charming, but several suggested we consider a speaker who is familiar to the Guild.

Just the right amount of motivation and bonding without being overwhelming. I liked the balance of warmth and professionalism. Also, just the right length after a long journey to CT.

- Survey Respondent
This year, I began to understand that my writing is more powerful than I knew when I heard those empathetic gasps and murmurs from my listeners while reading my free writes aloud. For myself, I learned to begin with my breath, to come fully into my body and to write from that grounding in truth--then wait to be amazed! Coming back, over and over, to telling one’s own truth and being willing to receive others’ truth with respect, wonder, interested curiosity--this is what it’s all about. It gives me the courage to keep writing. The Guild Summer Conference is an amazingly safe, supportive, and nurturing environment to tell the truth and be received with respect as a writer, wherever we are in our journey. It is amazing how there is nourishment for writers at all levels, from novice to experienced!

-Survey Respondent
And mille grazie a tutti for the conference. It is easily the most valuable conference I have ever attended (and I have attended dozens on many topics owing to a job I once had). I'm still not sure how or why that should be...Many conferences have gifted workshop leaders, interested and interesting participants, etc... but I have never seen the ingredients meld into a whole ecology of grace, support, theory, practice and amazing fellowship... or should I say womanship... as that which occurred at Wisdom House! IWWG may indeed require different space, but I doubt we will ever use a venue that is better named for our purposes. I am so grateful and deliriously happy that I decided to attend.

- Pat Topitzer
New Haven, Connecticut

I learned that the spirit of the Guild is alive and well! It was wonderful to see women return to the conference after years of absence, including myself. This community of women is supportive in a way that no other organization understands. The net of safety, compassion, and camaraderie provides a motivation to step outside your boundaries and challenge yourself. The energy is tangible, palpable, and addictive. I’m thrilled that the IWWG is rebounding and throwing off its light again.

Survey Respondent
The Salons

This year, a new feature was introduced at the conference: the Salon. Salons are informal discussion sessions, led by workshop leaders and facilitated by Suzi Banks Baum. Topics included “Culture: The Hidden Aspect of Memoir,” with Maureen Murdock; “Writing Workshops to Serve the Needs of Older Adults,” with Susan Tiberghien; “The Art of Writing, Telling, and Playing Back Personal Stories,” with Kelly DuMar; “Flickering Moments: Springboards to Finding Your Own Writing Prompts,” with June Gould; and “The New Era of Publishing: How to Own Your Future,” with guest April Eberhardt. On the final day of the conference, Suzi facilitated a salon “popcorn” session to discuss how to keep the conference momentum going at home. The salons were a popular new addition to the conference. The only significant complaint: that the salons were offered at the same time as the equally popular critique sessions.

Participants’ Comments

• I attended two...Susan’s and Maureen’s were both excellent. Susan’s generated more than discussion - it produced ACTIONS the participants agreed to take to change the world. Maureen’s discussion opened minds and hearts to an important issue - cultural diversity and the conscious and unconscious way we approach the world from our cultural assumptions.

• Not only did I learn a lot about the topic in each salon, I also learned a lot about my fellow writers. The salons revealed a glimpse of the wealth of knowledge and experience in our Guild.

• The salon idea was well received. Maureen’s discussion about culture was lively. April gave us great information about the new era of publishing. Kelly’s workshop was interactive and opened a door for creativity that we had not seen before. June's discussion about glimmers set off a spark of poetry in me...I think these were a wondrous addition to the schedule...

• I attended the session on writing workshops for older adults. Fascinating discussion; lots of fabulous information; great energy! ...Lots of riches here for someone who has the time, energy, and resources to pursue moving forward in this important area!

• What an amazing and beneficial addition to the conference. Thanks for adding it!!
The Town Hall Meeting

Traditionally, Monday evening at the week-long Summer Conference is “free time,” with no open readings or other scheduled activities. It a time for participants to catch up on missed sleep, to write, to spend quiet time, or to enjoy relaxed social time with other conference participants. This year, we offered an alternative: the first of what we hope will be an annual Town Hall Meeting. The meeting was designed to elicit input from members regarding the future direction of the Guild. Information gathered will be used by the Board of Directors and Advisory Circle during its annual Strategic Planning session in October. Nearly forty members participated. See pages 16-18 for what they had to say about topics ranging from membership to marketing, and fundraising to events planning. Generally, the feedback about the process was very positive.

Critically important for everyone to have a chance to have their point of view heard and represented going forward! Great array of topics (once fundraising was added). I especially liked the way the process built ownership of next steps moving forward into the evening.

-Survey Respondent

Satisfaction with the Town Hall Meeting

(4=Very Satisfied)

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<th>Satisfaction</th>
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<tr>
<td>The opportunity to make your voice heard on topics related to the Guild’s future (n=31)</td>
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<td>The breadth of topics covered (n=31)</td>
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<td>The facilitator’s skill in facilitating the process (n=31)</td>
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<td>The overall design of the Town Hall meeting (n=31)</td>
<td>3.68</td>
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I really enjoyed the innovative process for collecting ideas and reactions. I felt it was open to flaws, like when one participant put all of her dots on the suggestion for a regional meeting in PA, making it appear there was widespread popularity. But what process is perfect? This one was lively and enlivening, and probably stirred up some new thinking.

-Survey Respondent
The Closing Ceremony

Long-time IWWG member and workshop leader Zita Christian put together the closing ceremony with the able assistance of Carol Chaput, an artist and IWWG member who produced the wonderful “wisdom stones,” each with a unique owl face. Ninety-two percent (92%) of participants were somewhat satisfied or very satisfied with the closing ceremony. Comments focused on appreciation of Carol’s generosity in producing the owls, and Zita’s skill in integrating spirituality into the ceremony in a way that did not offend anyone’s belief system.

**Satisfaction with Closing Ceremony**

(n=50)

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Participants’ Comments

- The closing ritual was amazing. It brought beautiful closure to one of the best weeks of my life. My little owl is a treasure and a constant reminder that I need to work. Thanks to all.

- Loved that each of us received a tangible representation of wisdom to take home with us! It was great to be able to choose our own owl rock, even though that took awhile. And truly awesome that we were each given an original work of art--so generous on the part of the artist!

- All of us together in solemn but joyful contemplation of each other and ourselves as creative women. The closeness of that bond was palpable in the room. Carol Chaput’s owl stones were a lovely and very tangible reminder of how we must be firm as stone and wise as owls in our lives and in our choices. I’m particularly grateful for the work and thought Carol put into this part of the ceremony. My quirky owl spoke to me the moment I spotted her on the table. She sits on my desk now and will stay there as a reminder of the wisdom I’ve gained from my Guild sisters over our many years together and the wisdom that grows in me as well.

- I was so emotional I don’t have a clear memory to answer this question. Unlike some of our IWWG closings, this was well-organized, meaningful and not overly long. The event hit all the right notes as far as I was concerned.

- Suddenly, I’m at a loss for words.
Participants who stayed overnight at Wisdom House were asked about their experience being in residence. In general, people were very happy with Wisdom House—with one key exception. The absence of air conditioning in bedrooms and the limitations of air conditioning units in the meeting rooms constituted the biggest complaint about the facility, followed by the limited number of private rooms and private baths. Several participants also wanted more variety in the food choices offered.

Participants’ Comments

- Wisdom House holds such a sense of calm centeredness, a reverence for women and for the artist at work that is deeply nourishing and heartening. Absolutely love it! That said, it was pretty warm several nights, although I did just fine with the ceiling fan directly over my bed.

- I was amazed the whole time by the huge amounts of historical archives on the walls of Wisdom House. It was inspiring and educational. I also enjoyed their book store with honor system, the cozy sun rooms at each end, the phenomenally beautiful pool, the frequent coffee and watering holes, and the excellent food.

- Pool hours were too limited - it was a great way to take a break and unwind.

- It was so cool to have a “roomie” and talk late, share meals in the dining hall, and run into and greet other attendees on our way to wherever. Walks in the garden or labyrinth, talks after a workshop, at meals, the socials, were all moments savored.

- I felt comfortable and safe at Wisdom House, and appreciated the atmosphere that the staff seeks to create there, very much. Felt it suited the needs of the conference well, too.

- Stressless. Ideally, I want very much to be in my own room while I’m working at a conference, particularly. But I only had to share for half the week and it was fine.
Evaluation Results...continued

When asked, “Would you recommend the IWWG Summer Conference to other women writers?”, a remarkable 98.7% of survey respondents answered, “Yes.” When asked why or why not, they gave a variety of answers, but most revolved around the quality of the workshops and the positive support from workshop leaders and other participants.

Why Participants Say They’d Recommend the Summer Conference to other Women Writers:

- I found the quality of all workshop presenters and the friendliness and generosity of all attendees very supportive to me as a newcomer. You can tell that people enjoy real creative community support through IWWG.

- There is nothing like this – you can work with your writing at whatever level you choose, themes come through that are unexpected, the teachers are top-notch. I already have a friend that wants to come next year!

- Community is essential to writers, and especially the company of other women writers is essential for us. The camaraderie and support at this conference are unparalleled, and the workshops are so instructive and inspiring.

- This year I began to understand that I am doing other women writers a grave disservice by not letting them know how much the Guild Summer Conference can help them grow in craft, courage, and confidence. Yes, it may be a stretch to secure the resources they need to attend—but they really cannot afford not to come if they really want to write in this lifetime. The time is now! I have become a shameless advocate for this conference, and I’m proud of it!
This is a gathering of women writers only. That by itself is a reason to attend. I've presented at many writers' conferences and the "culture" of a coed gathering is significantly different from this all-women venue. There is a level of freedom of expression that is possible when we are all women together. This is especially true for women who may be more reticent and unaccustomed to speaking their minds and hearts in public. As women together we know how to help the quieter ones among us find their voices and speak with them. Some of us may believe we've all been liberated beyond this reticence and can speak out anywhere whether there are men in the room or not. In my experience that simply isn't true. The Guild Summer Conference is a uniquely safe place for women to break their silence. Or to speak more loudly and firmly than ever before. That is - as I see it - the thing that makes this conference different from other conferences. I also believe more should be said about this particular aspect of uniqueness as the Guild spreads the word about future gatherings.

It's empowering! The IWWG conference has something for every woman, because we all have stories and we all benefit from sharing that story.... Sometimes we need technique, sometimes inspiration, or maybe the compassion that such a nurturing collection of "wild" women will provide to us to find our voice. I was blessed to have three lovely, amazing days of the conference, & actually....really...had 'withdrawal' for several days after returning home!

It is an inspirational and motivational experience. It's like summer camp for grown women and we all deserve that chance to step out of our stressful lives for one week a year and spend time with other women and ourselves. Plus we learn a lot!!!

Here is what I tell people: You will meet the most wonderful supportive writing-sisters you have ever encountered. If you come once you will be back.

Because it's life-changing—and I know so many women who say their lives need to change. I've never found a conference or class or group that can jump-start that change —or sustain it year to year —the way the IWWG Summer Conference does...
There was such gracious, caring support from anyone I met. I learned so much about writing and what I could do. I can’t imagine how anyone could attend that conference and not come away with new knowledge and enthusiasm to continue to write.

-Survey Respondent

The joy of being back--the people, the workshop leaders, the outlook for the Guild--plus a new sense of transparency and inclusion. A happy, healthy, heart-filled and head-filling conference. Can’t wait for next year!

-Survey Respondent

I reconnected with the spirit that makes IWWG one-of-a-kind in the world, as well as with the power it has to empower women and our creativity and voice. I feel the deepest appreciation for those who went the distance to ensure the Guild is still here, through all of the ups and downs.

-Survey Respondent
It was my first visit and I thought being a newbie that I would feel and be treated like an outsider. The opposite happened. I was welcomed and encouraged to join groups. By the end of day one, I no longer felt like a visitor.

- Survey Respondent

Having missed the last few conferences and fearing that the Guild as I remembered it from years of attending conferences was no more, I was heartened that it is indeed alive and well and can continue to sustain our writing souls. What a thrill that was. It was as if I had never left.

- Survey Respondent

I felt like I was accepted into a community, respected for who I am at the core. I went in wondering who I was and came out knowing I am a poet and a writer.

- Survey Respondent

Writing in community consistently leads women writers to access their deepest truest words.

- Survey Respondent
Areas of Improvement

Survey respondents were asked for one major area of improvement they would recommend. Responses included those related to venue (improved air conditioning, greater variety in the food choices, more private rooms), transportation, the integration of more social time into the day, and the difficulty of scheduling conflicts. Other suggestions included needing to build more diversity within the organization and at the conference, and a suggestion to assign mentors to individuals coming to the conference for the first time.

Participants’ Comments

- I would like to have more interesting food with greater variety from meal to meal.
- Arrange reliable access to printers and copiers, as part of a leadership/support team so that no one person has to be bled dry to make this amazing conference work for everyone else.
- Transportation to and from the conference was awkward. But the organizers realize this and will work at changing the situation - if not next year then the year after.
- Bring in more writers of color.
- Have a good option for exercise. The pool was not open anytime when I could use it.
- Maybe a few more planned breaks & social/networking time slots so we can 'soak' in all the great information and people. I didn’t want to miss anything but, like many others, could’ve used more time to rest and reflect.
- I would like to see some way to organize more writing time. I also think a formalized mentoring program could be launched at one of these conferences.
- Include a non-writing session for relaxation, such as arts and crafts, or yoga.
- Maybe not schedule the salons at the same time as the critiques!
- Provide a "mentor" for first time attendees.
- Have a workshop on writing nonfiction that is not memoir related.
Plans to Attend the 2016 Summer Conference

A remarkable 87% of respondents indicated that they are considering coming to the 2016 Summer Conference. No respondent indicated that they were not planning to come; 13% were unsure. In most cases, those who indicated they were unsure indicated that cost and family obligations were potential barriers.

The very best part of the Summer Conference is the opportunity to spend time with other women writers focusing on our art, writing. No wait, the very best part is listening to the amazing works that pour from writers at the open readings. Or no, the very best part is a class where the instructor teaches something that blows away the place where I was stuck, and sets me back on the writing road. Okay, the very best part is reading my work to a loving audience who congratulates me and buys my book!

-Survey Participant

What a sacred, wonderful, warm, hilarious, exhausting and miraculous experience AND I’ll do it all again. I recommend this conference to anyone who has guts of thunder and the heart of a lady lion and can bivouac for four to six days nonstop. My writing is strengthened by the loving hands of all who helped along the way. Thank you IWWG and thank you all. I am still in awe.

-Survey Respondent
GIVING VOICE:
The First Ever IWWG Town Hall Meeting

Participants at the 2015 IWWG Summer Conference in Litchfield, Connecticut, July 24-31, were invited to give up their highly valued and traditional “Monday night off” in order to attend the Guild’s first Town Hall Meeting. Facilitated by Dixie King, the meeting was an opportunity to get feedback from members regarding critical areas of need and interest in moving the Guild forward. Outcomes, participants were told, would be used by the Board of Directors and the Advisory Circle as source material for strategic planning during their second annual day-long retreat in October.

Nearly forty women generously gave up their “night off” to participate in the meeting.

Groups were formed at “brainstorming” stations around the auditorium, each of which was devoted to one of nine key topic areas: fundraising, member services, social media, communications to members, products, publications, marketing, regional conferences, and the Summer Conference. Each group initially was given eight minutes to brainstorm as many suggestions for change/improvement as possible. Groups were told to select a scribe and not to debate the brainstorm—simply to chart every suggestion made, no matter how “out there” it might be. At the end of eight minutes, groups were asked to move clockwise around the room to the next station. This time they were given seven minutes to read through what the group before them had written, and to add to it. At the end of seven minutes, they rotated to the next station with a minute less for brainstorming, and so forth, until everyone had a chance to give input at each station.

During the next part of the activity, participants were given a set of round green stickers and asked to go around the room individually and to place their stickers on those key suggestions that they felt should receive top priority. (Participants were told they could not trade, barter, steal, sell or tear their stickers in half...no matter how tempted. Apparently some were tempted!) One caveat: participants were not limited in the number of stickers they could post in any one area. In at least two cases, we were shamefacedly informed later that all of that person’s stickers were placed on one priority area—skewing the results. For this reason, we suggest that you read through the outcomes with a grain of salt! Nevertheless, participants provided the Board and Advisory Circle (none of whom were allowed to participate directly in the activity) with innovative and exciting ideas to consider as we plan for the future.

You can read through the outcomes on pages 17 and 18. Have suggestions of your own? We are eager to hear them! Write us at iwwgmembernews@gmail.com, and in the Subject line write: Town Hall Meeting.

Please get your feedback to us before our Strategic Planning Retreat, scheduled for October 17, 2015.
Outcomes from the Town Hall Meeting

I was impressed by how well organized the meeting was and how effective the process of getting things recorded and tabulated was. I’ve been in way too many meetings when people talked in circles for much too long and accomplished very little. This was a terrific alternative. Keep up the good work.

-Survey Participant
## Social Media

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## The Summer Conference

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**Locations**

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## Products

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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Video/audiotaped workshops for sale with a portion to go to teacher &amp; a portion to IWWG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>No products/this is a waste of money!</td>
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<td>IWWG notebook/journals</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Tote bags</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Calendar with IWWG events</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Promotions like t-shirts; anthologies; invite artist to do painting; T-shirt; scarves; hoodies; IWWG pens, flashlights, notecards;</td>
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<td>Mugs, water bottles, gift certificates, auction, bookmarks, greeting and/or holiday cards, candle, annual conference poster</td>
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**The Summer Conference**

This IWWG Summer Conference was the best one I’ve been to since becoming a member in 2009. Pivotal moments for me occurred in Suzie Banks Baum’s Mapping Motherhood regarding imagery and writing that spilled over into the work I did in other classes. And, too, Mel Ryane’s rigorous class has already begun to increase my value as an author who is prepared, practiced and has presented professional readings with a greater degree of confidence and conviction in the quality of my craft. Finally, Zita’s closing program was meaningful. Her attention to detail created a safe dwelling place to allow our collective wisdom to rise.

*Marisa Moks-Unger*

This was my seventh or eighth Conference. I retired on April 1 and had so many things to do, both before and after I officially retired, I’d gotten away from my journal and taking time to just sit and write. The women who attend the Summer Conference are bold, interesting, interested and awesome. Absorbing their energy helped to restore my own. I’ve come home with a better attitude and everyday making time for my love of words. Many thanks.

*Diana Graham*

The IWWG Conference gave me courage and confidence as well as nuts and bolts. What a pleasure to be in the company of so many intelligent and encouraging women.

*B. Lynn Goodwin*

The Summer Conference 2015 was a homecoming for me as I returned to the conference after too many years away. It was an exhilarating week for me, in classes and out. I renewed existing friendships and planted the seeds of new ones. I wrote stuff that pleased me and heard other women write and read well and bravely. I intend to be back in 2016.

*Tanya Russ*

My creative spirit was again at home at the 2015 IWWG conference where connections with both longstanding and new members thrived. Splendid changes are happening in the Guild! These were evident in the creative flow of writing, the evening readings, the professional workshops, the efforts of devoted directors and staff, and the strength and wisdom of our community. I am thrilled for the future of the IWWG!

*Anna Bozena Bowen*

This was my first conference with IWWG – and won’t be my last! The experience was exhilaratingly intense; the classes were rich; the instructors were helpful and encouraging; and the women were friendly, funny, helpful, intelligent and so open to me – a newcomer. Thank you for a wonderful, exhausting three days!

*Pat Mooney*

The conference was great! I particularly loved the addition of the salons. I was amazed at the community service mentioned by our members in Susan’s salon. I got a lot of ideas as to how I might focus my efforts. June’s "Flickers" were inspirational. Suzi’s "Popcorn" salon sent me away with lots of ideas for my own writing and how to carry the conference home with me.

*Debby Miller*

I have to admit that it’s been about 47 years since I had the “college dorm” experience. Whew! So glad that I didn’t have to contend with the issues of a freshman. But rather a whole new—and quite refreshing experience of women of the same frame of mind—knowing what they want in life—the fullness of thought coming to fruition. I have to admit—an amazing experience of learning, diversity and sisterhood.

*I try to write parts for women that are as complicated and interesting as women actually are.*

*Nora Ephron*

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Participants from Kelly DuMar’s workshop take a bow after sharing short, one-woman performance pieces at the 2015 Summer Conference.

*continued on page 30*
Myra’s influence on the lives of many aspiring writers like myself has been profound. As a long-time IWWG faculty member, she has mentored and inspired dozens of women writers—many of whom return year after year to continue working with her. So, it was a delight to have a chance to interview her recently, in advance of this year’s Summer Conference, to understand more about the influences and ideas that shape her poetry and teaching.

One of her most important influences is place, and the one at which we met is especially so: Poet’s House, a national poetry library and literary center at the southern tip of Manhattan. In a room with a view of the Statue of Liberty, chatting poetry with the woman who had contributed to unlocking my poetic freedom…well, the congruence of time and place was not lost on me.

Undeniably, poetry and Myra made a wonderful match—once they discovered each other. Myra’s awareness that she is a poet didn’t come until she was in her mid-forties. Like another IWWG instructor, Susan Tiberghien, (see Kelly DuMar’s interview earlier this year in the Spring 2015 Network), her chance at building a writer’s life materialized after her children left home and domestic demands lessoned. Once Myra realized she could be a writer, her life dramatically changed into “the life that fits.” When I asked if she could write in any genre and be wildly successful, what it would be, she replied, “Poetry. It just suits me. It’s not about the content. It’s the world it places me in.”

Living A Writer’s Life

As the author of two books of poetry, a memoir, and many pieces that have appeared in literary journals and anthologies such as The Best American Poetry...continued from page 1

Her Heart Beats Poetry...continued from page 1

“Going back to poetry increases our ability to hear what’s going on. It slows us down. That’s so important to know what you’re tasting.”

-Myra Shapiro

The Alteration of Love

by Myra Shapiro

I was crying—I mean
tears came—about love,
old love, long marriage
spilling past impediments of
who wants what for dinner or
in the bedroom—ins and outs
my father’s coarse humor

made a joke of: you put it in,
you pull it out, the story’s over,
only in Yiddish it rhymed,
words I don’t recall. Over,
he is. So is my mother. We
were never to be them.
Now they want me
to stop crying. I was trying
to say something about love—
how one day one of us
will disappear. That’s when
my eyes hauled up the sea,
and my mother and father came
to make a child of me.

-from Rattle #43, Spring 2014
Tribute to Love Poems

“Poetry. It just suits me. It’s not about the content. It’s the world it places me in.”

Living A Writer’s Life

As the author of two books of poetry, a memoir, and many pieces that have appeared in literary journals and anthologies such as The Best American Poetry...continued on page 3
Press, 1996). The two bonded through their similar qualities, one of which was scrappiness. Myra recounted one example of the dynamic discussions she and Bly had over her poetry:

“[Robert said:] ‘Why don’t you put in something about your child here?’ And I said, ‘I can’t do that….I cannot write anything that is scary that might happen because I wrote it.’ Well, he listened to that. And he talked about it later. He said, ‘Myra feels the power of words to the extent that she thinks if she writes it, it will become so. And so she wouldn’t let me talk her into writing that.’ I wouldn’t dare write anything that would put a person in jeopardy….And he understood. That was a wonderful thing because he could listen.”

Listening is a skill enhanced by studying poetry, which Myra considers essential in this highly visual world.

“Going back to poetry increases our ability to hear what’s going on. It slows us down. That’s so important to know what you’re tasting.” A lesson all writers could use, for inviting every one of our senses into our craft will inevitably result in richer writing.

Listening is a key aspect in Myra’s workshops. For every Summer Conference session, she brings in a poem for the group to read together every day. “Poetry forces you to use the word you mean to use,” Myra explained. “Not just in meaning, but in sound.” Hearing those poems read out loud results in a greater understanding than only silently reading it on the page. By the end of the week, the class is reciting the poem by heart, which Myra believes is of great value. “A poem is embodied. When you memorize a poem, you’re taking in the breath of the poet.”

[At the 2015 Summer Conference, Myra used Robert Bly’s poem, “The Black Hen” for the daily class reading workshop.]

The (Old) Age of Inspiration
What inspires Myra’s poems these days? Old age. “Now, I’m obsessed by old age,” says Myra, who was never consciously concerned about getting older until recently.

“I have a poem that starts, ‘My job is to live’ and that was always the case. What’s next, what’s next, what’s going on now, what’s next….So it surprises me… and it doesn’t surprise me because I’m getting old, so no wonder. If you can open your eyes at all, you’re going to realize one of these days you’re going to die. No kidding! But that’s how it feels. Surprise! No kidding! You mean Galway Kinnell died last October? If Galway Kinnell could die, I can die. I can’t believe it!”
Myra writes about what is happening to her and what she experiences through all senses. So it is natural that she is bringing her awareness of and questions about growing (chronologically) older into her poetry. “Now, [old age] is real. And what is it about? And what do I think about it? And how does it feel to think about it? And what does it want of me? What am I supposed to do about it? That’s what’s coming into the poems.”

One such poem—that placed in the top four in the 2014 River Styx International Poetry Contest—talks about how she’s living this time of older age with her husband, titled, “Put the Kettle On.” Myra explained:

“It’s about putting the kettle on and asking my husband if he wants tea in the evening. He’s not a tea drinker and I never used to ask him but he’s begun to say yes,” Myra said with a laugh.

“The second stanza starts with, ‘It’s an old marriage’ and [goes on about] how we’re beginning to merge. It starts with the tea... and ends with, ‘...the new year. March/ is here, and we’re living it.’”

Another of her poems that addresses her age is “In a Room at the Marriott Marquis” (June, Rattle #48). Myra wrote the poem about being in a room high up in NYC’s Marriott Marquis hotel looking down at the activity of Time Square: “To die/ in Times Square/ is a fact to contemplate/ since I am old and here/ on 44th Street in a vast hotel/ 40 floors above the earth.”

While Myra observed some people “sitting fixed like a star” in the square below, she had the thought, “stars never die.” In the finished poem, she declares instead, “There is no death. Wake up!”

While humor is a common thread in her poetry, she also addresses the sadness of loss that accompanies older age. One example is “The Alteration of Love” (Rattle #43, Spring 2014 Tribute to Love Poems), which is accompanied by a recording of Myra reading the poem.

Legacy of a Well-Lived Life
I asked Myra what impact she wanted her poems to have on readers, what legacy she hoped to leave behind.

“That I lived,” she replied with no hesitation. “That I was lucky to live now, not my mother’s time.... it’s what I wrote in the beginning of Four Sublets, I owe this book to the Women’s Movement. That the Women’s Movement happened when I could take advantage of it. When the world could be different so I could be different and give myself the life that fits.”

The women of Myra’s time—no matter how smart or energetic they were—couldn’t take for granted the opportunities and new life/career choices that became available. Women gained the vision to see their roles differently. Myra realizes how hard it is for younger generations to understand the importance and gains of the Women’s
Movement, and the struggles women writers such as Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton had to face, their work deemed too personal and domestic (usually by male critics). “I feel very lucky to have lived at this time and I want my writing to convey that. To tell its story.”

Myra has accomplished that goal. Even if I hadn’t the pleasure of knowing her face-to-face from my years at IWWG, I would still feel I knew her. Myra’s spirit is in her poetry.

“It’s alright to be whatever kind of poet you are passionate about being, and for me… I call [myself] ‘A poet with a life.’ Whatever is happening in that life that I think is good to convey… whatever conveys a life that happens to be my life…. I don’t shy away from the personal and maybe I wish it could be even more honest than it is, but, you know, I’m not over with yet so maybe that’s what one tries for—to be better and better at what matters, to get stronger and stronger. What matters to me may not matter to the next person, but you count on it mattering to enough people that it matters.”

Isn’t that what we all strive for as writers? That our words mean something? That others connect to us? That we matter?

This is why IWWG is home for me, Myra, and the many others who make up our community of women who write. It’s not just about the quality of our instructors and workshops. It’s about the connection among women where everyone’s voice matters. Women who value words, value your words. Women who are experienced in their writing believe in your ability. Women who have lived, recognize you have lived and have something to say.

We all have something to say. The risk of honest, intimate writing is that people will know who you are. This can also be the greatest reward. To write is to be brave. So write on. And, as Myra Shapiro shows us, seek out the poetry in life.

[For more about Myra’s latest book, 12 Floors Above the Earth (Antrim House, 2012), including samples of her poetry, visit http://antrimhousebooks.com/shapiro.html]

Kristin Rath, originally from Florida, has loved living in New York City for 15 years. She has a background in Communications, East Asian Studies, and Japanese language. In addition to her work with IWWG as Director of Operations, she is a freelance consultant and holistic health and wellness writer for online websites, including her own site Words Are Food. Kristin is well into writing her first novel, and is also working on a memoir that she was inspired to start during her first IWWG conference. Following Myra’s workshop at the 2014 Summer Conference, Kristin wrote a poem that was published by an online magazine, The Voices Project.

“...the Women’s Movement happened when I could take advantage of it.
When the world could be different so I could be different and give myself the life that fits.”

- Myra Shapiro
I still remember every workshop from that first year, although many have blurred into one another over the years since. Jan Phillips, Pat Carr, Susan Tiberghien, Eunice Scarfe—what an all-star cast. Critiques, the open readings, late-night chats and hours of homework completed in the wee hours; I don’t think I slept more than twelve hours over the course of seven days. No drug could have gotten me higher than the joy I got out of each and every moment of that conference. I couldn’t wait to come back the next year, though I warned myself that I couldn’t expect the experience to be the same. And I was right. It wasn’t the same.

It was better.

Still, if anyone had told me on the first day of that first conference (1) that I would rewrite an entire novel over the next year based on Pat Carr’s feedback about voice and “showing versus telling,” or (2) that sixteen years later I would be asked to step into the role of Executive Director—well, you know the cliché. The truth is, we can never anticipate where we are going to land when we decide to take a chance.

The Guild has been through some tough times over the past few years, and very nearly didn’t make it financially through 2014. At the end of the 2014 Summer Conference, the Board met with a group of long-time members and instructors to make a huge decision: do we give it another year and see if we can resurrect what we love most about the Guild, or do we close the figurative doors on something that has meant so much to so many?

I had done some survey work for the Guild and I was teaching my first workshop, so I was invited to sit in on that meeting. Judy Huge stepped up to the plate and offered to act in the role of Executive Director for one year at no pay if someone would join her as a co-director. Susan Tiberghien turned around and asked, “Dixie, would you be willing?”

I was struggling with the recent deaths of three family members and a close friend over an eight-month period, and a health issue. I knew I was ready for change in my life, but I wasn’t prepared for it to happen so quickly. I really had to think hard before agreeing.

What a gift it turned out to be to work with Judy, the Board, the Advisory Circle, and our marvelous members over the past year! I’ve never before worked with any group (of women and/or men) in which there was such strong, positive, powerful support for a shared vision. That is why we are where we are today—back on track with more excitement and enthusiasm than ever. It has very much taken a village.

Take a look at some of our recent successes:

• Our membership has grown over 40% in the past year.

• We successfully held the first “California Dreaming” regional conference in partnership with Antioch University Los Angeles in March 2015. We are not only planning another “California Dreaming” in 2016, we also are planning our first regional conference in Florida this winter, as well as our usual spring Big Apple. A community college in Phoenix is interested in partnering with us for a possible regional conference in 2016, as well.

• As you can see from the evaluation results in this issue of the Network, we had a fabulous experience at the 2015 Summer Conference. We had 96 attendees, 21 workshop directors, and some amazing evaluations. The feedback has been
literally stunning. Nearly every respondent indicated they plan to attend next year’s conference.

- A new Board has been formed, with Judy Huge as Board President. Our current Board includes President Judy, Anna Murray as Vice President, Hope Player as Treasurer, Raquel Arrechea as Secretary, and Lynne Barrett and me as members. The Board will be voting on three potential new members at the next Board meeting later this month.

- We are 90% certain that we have a venue at a private college for the 2016 Summer Conference (and, we hope, for beyond), but we cannot yet announce it. This is because we are waiting on Plant Operations at the college to confirm that no maintenance will be scheduled for the buildings we plan to use. We will have a definitive answer on the buildings by the last week of September, and can then make an announcement. We are very excited about the potential of this new venue for meeting all our needs and becoming our permanent home.

- We have an amazing Advisory Circle comprised of the Board and long-term IWWG instructors and members who have worked tirelessly over the past year, providing money, resources, and expertise to keep the Guild alive and functioning as we made our way forward through the past difficult year.

- The first IWWG Town Hall Meeting convened at the 2015 Summer Conference. Nearly forty women participated and provided feedback regarding the future direction of the Guild. Results can be found on page 16. This feedback will form the foundation of the Advisory Circle’s second annual Strategic Planning Session in October.

I speak for both myself and the Advisory Circle in saying that we are all committed to the kind of change that will preserve the best that the Guild has always been, while moving us forward to demonstrate our relevance for the many women writers out there, young and not-so-young, who don’t yet know about us. Our financial wellbeing, although improved, remains tenuous. We have our work cut out for us in determining our direction over the next critical year. We welcome your active involvement in that process.

Finally, I have to say just how honored I am to have a role in helping sustain and grow the IWWG. This organization has meant the world to me, and it is a privilege to give back to it. Here’s to another amazing year!

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*A man once asked me ... how I managed in my books to write such natural conversation between men when they were by themselves..."I shouldn’t have expected a woman (meaning me) to have been able to make it so convincing."

I replied that I had coped with this difficult problem by making my men talk, as far as possible, like ordinary human beings. This aspect of the matter seemed to surprise the other speaker; he said no more, but took it away to chew it over. One of these days it may quite likely occur to him that women, as well as men, when left to themselves, talk very much like human beings also.

-Dorothy L. Sayers

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Revision is not going back and fussing around, but going forward into the highly complex and satisfying process of creation.

-May Sarton
Author Wisdom: Avoiding the Trap of “Authorpreneurship”

by Jan Lisa Huttner

At the Spring Big Apple, Jan Lisa Huttner participated in the Author’s Panel. The questions posed by panel moderator Judy Huge led to reflections and a blog by Jan on the price—in time, money, and distraction—that can strip self-publishing authors of their precious writing time.

From roughly 1983 to 2002, I worked as a Healthcare Computer Consultant. So basically this was from the dawn of hospital information systems (when people first started getting computer-generated bills) up until the dot-com/dot bomb era.

At the tail end of my Healthcare Computer Consulting career in 2001—when everyone was wondering what would come after the big Y2K push—the buzz around me was this: “Bandwidth is really cheap, so all the money will be going to go into content.”

I believed this; why wouldn't I? And that assumption—call it "Conventional Wisdom"—definitely influenced me when I decided to give up my road-warrior life and make the switch to freelance writing.

It made sense to me. I was living in metropolitan Chicago back then, and every time I turned around, I saw a new Borders bookstore popping up. All these new Borders! All these new Barnes & Nobles! And they all had "content" in them: They were filled with books, magazines, and DVDs with "extras." I didn't question it. I just thought: "Well, someone must get paid something for creating all this content..." Right? Of course right!

So even though I knew for sure that I wouldn't get paid as much as a writer as I had made as a Healthcare Computer Consultant, I still thought: “There must be an income path here.”

So how do I answer Question #1: What surprised you?

What surprised me—what continues to surprise me—is how fast the publishing world has changed in the past decade. The market is forcing people en masse from staff positions into freelance roles. As a result, all these people are now pitching their own areas of expertise.

Here are some of the services I have purchased as a self-publishing author in the past few years: cover design, photo clearance, writing coach, text editor, text uploader, press kit preparation, press kit pitching (after learning the hard way that press kit preparation and press kit pitching are different areas of expertise), logo design, the development of graphic and collateral materials, etc., etc.

People are pitching their own areas of expertise, meaning they are looking for new ways to use the same skills that they used to provide to publishing companies, newspapers and/or magazines before they were "downsized." But now all these services have been farmed out, and they are offered "freelance."

The problem is that nobody overlaps. You—the writer—must be the "command and control" center for all these different areas of

-continued on page 32
HOT OFF THE PRESSES!

Robin Alpern and Elise Mallison
writing my heart out: a personal, literary, & photographic tapestry: Provincetown 1983-84
In 1983 Elise Mallison left her job, friends and home to spend eight months in Provincetown, MA. For the first time in her 29 years, she dared to make a lifelong passion for art the center of her life. As a student at Freehand learning community of women writers and photographers, Elise tried out new art forms, confronted fears and learned life lessons. She recorded all of it in letters, poems, short stories, journal entries, essays and a dream diary. writing my heart out is her collection, three decades later, of the ripest, juiciest writings. They will inspire all who wish to lead a passionate life.

CreateSpace, July 2015

Carol Bluestein
Seduction: Love, Loss, Leverage, Murder
In SEDUCTION, author Rachel Allen reunites with Ted, the man who saved her life from a brutal rapist years before. A wealthy philanthropist with international connections, Ted harbors a dangerous personal agenda. Because of Rachel’s and Ted's high profile work for human rights, both are invited to serve on a presidential think tank that convenes at an isolated cabin in the Adirondack Mountains. It is here, in the midst of an FBI investigation, that Rachel recognizes the depth of Ted's skewed sense of love and patriotism, forcing her to face her worst fears. With many lives at stake, a terrified Rachel must fight for her own life, love, and country.

C.L. Bluestein Books, July 2015

Judith Boss
Deception Island
While at an archaeology dig in Afghanistan, Rachel St. Claire, an evolutionary anthropologist, comes across a pendant with strange shifting symbols. Not long after, she receives an urgent call from a colleague who insists that she come with her and her nephew, a handsome polar geophysicist, to Antarctica to examine an unusual body that was found in an ice cave. Little does Rachel know that a trusted friend is part of a group of bioterrorists who are engaged in genetic experiments in an abandoned World War II Nazi base under the Antarctic ice and who are after the pendant—and Rachel.

The Wild Rose Press, Inc., March 2015

Claudia Chapline
Moving Out of the Frame
On art from the studio to the community, including modern dance, art performance, installation, feminism, public art – a must for anyone interested in feminism and the arts. Written in a reader friendly style with many illustrations, an inspiration for dancers, artists, and creative people of all ages. Falling Up the Stairs, Chapline’s first memoir was called by Leda Sanford, “a little masterpiece.”

Norfolk Press, June 2015
Valerie Christopher

The Bridge Paradigm: A Spiritual Path to Un-Fooling Ourselves and Social Responsibility

An expansion of consciousness through psychological and developmental mine fields we all must negotiate and conquer. Recognizing the harm in blind ignorance and the need for civil revamping, this will resonate with anyone who embraces healing what hurts us as a society—reconstructing our cultural perspective and achieving social reliability.

Lulu Publishing, January 2015

Valerie Christopher

I Am Not a Minority! I’m Part of the Majority!

Children must be inspired to celebrate their unique place in our world. No race should be associated with a word that suggests little or less. With rhyming text, this uplifting, delightful story promotes unity, offers encouragement, promise, and confidence in young ones—inspiring them to dream big with equal expectations.

Lulu Publishing, April 2015

Diane Dettmann

Courageous Footsteps: A WWII Novel

Courageous Footsteps is a Young Adult historical novel about two teenagers, Yasu and Haro Sakamoto, who, along with their family, are imprisoned in a Japanese internment camp during WWII. Surrounded by barbwire fences, Yasu and her brother struggle to make sense out of their young lives. They long to return to the life they enjoyed in Glenville, California, but instead are forced to endure hardships and make choices that will change their lives forever.

Outskirts Press, June 2015

Chris Eboch

You Can Write for Children

In this book, you will learn: How to explore the wide variety of age ranges, genres, and styles in writing stories, articles and books for young people. How to find ideas. How to develop an idea into a story, article, or book. The basics of character development, plot, setting, and theme – and some advanced elements. How to use point of view, dialogue, and thoughts. How to edit your work and get critiques. Where to learn more on various subjects. Whether you’re just starting out or have some experience, this book will make you a better writer – and encourage you to have fun!

Pig River Press, June 2015
Wendy Karasin
*The Moon to Play With: A Daughter’s Journey through Love, Loss, and the Power of Presence*
This inspirational memoir travels one woman's road to generational adulthood as she resists, then embraces, her parents' aging and eventual deaths. Wendy Karasin's descriptive passages offer readers the opportunity to experience the normalcy and enormity of what happens in her life. As Wendy is pushed into a caregiving role that grows exponentially, she must surrender to an inability to alter her parents' fate. Her pain morphs from engagement to acceptance, and ultimately compassion. The experiences that unravel her also transform her. With seventy-nine million baby boomers and forty million seniors, the imperative requirement for conscious end-of-life conversation has arrived.

*Balboa Press, April 2015*

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Gerda Walz-Michaels
*Stone Walls*
To be balanced, at peace in two worlds, requires connection, and Gerda Walz-Michaels’ poems insist on it. *Stone Walls* begins and ends with the ocean over which "There is a bridge . . ./ that nobody can destroy." In a poem about a beautiful confirmation gift from the poet’s German childhood we come to her American daughter’s Bat Mitzvah. It is the future “tasted” when she "steered courageously" to Brittany years before with her young sons. Back and forth we are in the presence of waves rising not in threat but in welcome.

*Antrim House Books, 2015*

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Veronica Picone
*Tesoró: The Treasured Life of a Discarded Daughter*
Just seventeen when she is ordered to leave home, Picone is thrust into the social and political upheaval of 1960’s New York with no place to belong. Through her eyes we experience the world of a woman who moves through decades forging a life and career, living within miles of the family that won’t have her. When Alzheimer’s erases her mother’s grudge, their delicate reunion begins, unearthing a shocking secret kept from Picone since birth. Working against time, she chooses to become her mother’s caretaker and rebuild connections with her fractured family.

*CreateSpace & Amazon, 2015*

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Ruth Steinberg
*Shadows, Echoes, Memories: Poems by Ruth Steinberg*
The Shadows and Echoes are those cast by the history of the poet’s family in pre-WW II Vienna. The Memories are those of her loves, fears, reflections. The subjects range from personal history to aging to politics and travel, with specific details and images in clear, poetic language.

*Infinity Publishing, May 2015*
War is what happens when language fails.
- Margaret Atwood

**Member News and Correspondence** - continued from page 19

Everyone was on the same team. And as you know, that does not happen very often with a group of almost 100 women!! What can you expect? Serious teaching/training…wisdom…sharing and lots of tears perhaps in finding out how awesome you really are…laughter, admiration for those whose space you share. And most of all: THANK YOU IWWG for caring enough to put on the VERY BEST for all of us!

-Jill Rath

What I took away from the conference this year is much like the past two years that I attended: the sense of acceptance and sisterhood. However, this year it was different for me because it was the year I transcended my pain that always colored my writing, and I was able to reflect more humorously on my past. This metamorphosis of self and writing is directly attributed to the women of the IWWG; it would have never happened without the support, love, encouragement and HONOR that each woman gives the other in our organization. I am wildly happy and free and the best me EVER when I am with all of you.

-Deni Trach

The beauty and peace of Wisdom House, the inspiration of our teachers and the loving support of fellow IWWG members made it an extraordinary week. The warmth and the depth of our sharing are pearls on that strand of a very precious something that I will cherish forever.

-Heidi Rain

IWWG is a guild, and that is important. There are a lot of writing conferences, but a women’s writing guild is unique, and powerful. We all benefit from having Guild, like in medieval times. And appreciate masters of the craft, like Pat Carr, teaching new generations of apprentices, some of whom, in turn, will become masters and so pass on the carefully learned standards. That’s the crucial thing about our organization, which should not be overlooked in the rush to modernize.

-Scotty Ross

**Note from the director:** Scotty and I had a discussion at the Summer Conference about the push to “make the Guild more relevant” to younger women and more diverse groups. She reminded me that we don’t want to become so wrapped up in “becoming relevant” that we lose our focus on what’s best—and most relevant—about the Guild: the concrete skills we are able to learn from a remarkable cadre of women writers who share their expertise with us so generously. Rock on, Scotty. Let’s aim for both—because skills ARE relevant, more than ever.

**Other News**

Marilyn June Janson’s poem, “Be Gone,” was accepted for publication in BLUEGUITAR Magazine.com. She won an award for her memoir piece, “Survival Instincts.” It will appear in the Summer 2015 WomensWriters.com hard copy and online anthology.

Janice Gary has been named a Finalist for the 2015 May Sarton Award for Memoir for her book, Short Leash: A Memoir Of Dog Walking and Deliverance, published by Michigan State University Press. The book is also the recipient of two 2014 Silver Nautilus Awards and the 2014 Eric Hoffer Award for Memoir.

Nancy Andres, Tucson member of the IWWG, is happy to share that her feature article, “15 One Minute Health Boosters,” was published in the Aug/Sept 2015 issue of a new online wellness magazine, It’s Your Life. You can read it at http://goo.gl/dSH.

Ellen Ziegler’s article “Removing Invisible Splinters” (increasing writer productivity) is published in the prestigious “2016 Writers Market.” Members can purchase it, at discount, online (a great source for publishing markets, agents, etc.) writersdigest@writerscommunity.com.

B. Lynn Goodwin had an article published in GoodHousekeeping.com while at the IWWG Summer Conference in Litchfield, CT. She says, “Such a great experience to be with writers while getting published.” Her young adult novel, Talent, will be out on November 1. If you would like an ARC in exchange for an honest review on Amazon and BYN that you would post on
November 1, please email her at Lgood67334@comcast.net.

Sharon Blumberg shares that her essay titled Summer Monsters, a humorous, nostalgic piece about her experiences with her two children at amusement parks over the summers, was accepted into the Mid-Life Anthology, Feisty After 45, by publisher, Elaine Ambrose, of Mill Park Publishing. Sharon was one of 30 authors out of 210 to be chosen for this paperback/e-book. It will be published in the Spring of 2016.

Anna Bowen was interviewed by Joanna Brown, panel moderator for Paths to Publishing at this year’s WriteAngles conference. Check it out at writeanglesconference.com.

Deborah Siegel Staunton writes on the IWWG Members-only Facebook page that she just received her second publication acceptance in a week. “The Drive In” will be published in the next issue of Meat for Tea: The Valley Review. That’s one good week!


Women Who Submit seeks to empower women writers by creating physical and virtual spaces for sharing information, supporting and encouraging literary submissions, and clarifying the submission and publication process. For additional information, go to womenwhosubmitlit.wordpress.com.

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Contests and Submissions

Cahaba River Literary Short Story Competition. Closing date: October 31, 2015. Short stories may be on “Home for the Holidays” and should not have been previously published, or posted on a website or blog. Stories should also not be under consideration for publication or accepted for publication elsewhere. Please include your name, address, and contact information on the cover letter and front page of the entry. Please include a short bio at the end of the manuscript. Length: Maximum 1500 words per story. Entry Fees: $15.00 for 1 story, $25.00 for 2 stories, $40.00 for 3 stories. (You may enter as many stories as you wish – with the applicable fees.) Prizes: First: $200.00, Second: $75.00, Third: $50.00. https://cahabariverliteraryjournal.wordpress.com.

Sable Books is publishing an anthology addressing the subject of violence against women. We are seeking poems on all themes related to this issue (i.e., origins, personal stories, recovery, advocacy, prevention, survival, etc.). Proximity is calling for submissions on “Home.” The focus is true stories with home as a theme; stories that touch on but go beyond home as a physical space to explore its mental, emotional, and even spiritual aspects. Submissions must be previously unpublished and submitted in one of the following categories: long-form (6,000 words max), mid-range (2,000 words max), flash (500 words max), or photo essay/multimedia. Multiple submissions and alternative forms of true stories are welcome and encouraged. Submit at http://www.proximitymagazine.org/submissions. Deadline is September 30.

Extract(s): Daily Dose of Lit is looking for submissions of poems, stories, and book reviews, as well as excerpts from upcoming novels, memoirs, and poetry and story collections. http://dailydoseoflit.com/submit-to-extracts/.

Six Hens features true stories about the moments that define and redefine—places and events that changed what the writer believes in, changed how they see their place in the world, and changed them. Submissions should be previously unpublished and are limited to 2,000 words. Deadline is November 9. http://www.sixhens.com/index.php#submissions.


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Poetry isn’t a profession; it’s a way of life. It’s an empty basket; you put your life into it and make something out of that.”

-Mary Oliver
expertise... And nobody really has a clue what is going to happen tomorrow.

Question #2: What do you wish you had known starting out?

I wish I had known that I was not becoming a writer; I wish I had known that I was becoming an "authorpreneur."

What is an authorpreneur? "An author who creates a written product, participates in creating their own brand and actively promotes that brand through a variety of outlets."

http://thefutureofink.com/author-or-authorpreneur/; http://smartauthorsites.com/2015/02/19/5-ways-go-author-authorpreneur/

Question #3: What advice would you give?

My advice is to stay skeptical when people pitch their "solutions," and continue to follow your own star. Nobody--nobody!--really has a clue what is going to happen tomorrow, so don't let anyone convince you otherwise on your own dime.

But most important, do not let all your time be sucked up in authorpreneurship. If you want to be a writer, then you must make sure you keep making time to

Avoiding the Trap of Authorpreneurship...continued from page 26

The best time for planning a book is while you're doing the dishes.

- Agatha Christie

Carren Strock

Tangled Ribbons

Unexplained sexual longings, and fragments of unidentified images, consume Jenna's Earth-life, and she dies with those haunting questions unanswered—but for her, death is not the end. Although Jenna finds herself on the Celestial Tableland—a land of Spirits—her existence is interwoven with Bev's, a woman in her last Earth incarnation. Bev helped Jenna to die, and now Jenna must help Bev to meet Anne, her soul mate, as the two women are destined to become a Perfect Pairing. But Cornelia, a vengeful Spirit, will stop at nothing to destroy this pairing.

Fantastic Books, April 2015

M.C. Torres

See You at The Crossroads

A forcefully compelling story about bigotry, hypocrisy, determination, regrets, forgiveness, and love. This heart wrenching story begins with the death of an estranged mother and the phone call that changes Christine Solo's life forever.

Page Publishing, April 2015

NETWORK

HOT OFF THE PRESSES! - continued from page 29
Contests and Submissions—continued from page 31

The Writer Magazine includes a list of upcoming contests. Submitted by public but reviewed by magazine staff. Fee to submit. http://www.writermag.com/writing-resources/contents. The Writer is dedicated to expanding and supporting the work of professional and aspiring writers with a straightforward presentation of industry information, writing instruction and professional and personal motivation. In the pages of our magazine, writers share experiences, expertise, struggles, advice, successes and suggestions. Our editors are interested in query letters on concrete topics written by emerging and experienced writers in all genres. We are looking for clear takeaway for our readers: What can they learn to improve their writing or advance their careers? What how-to tips and strategies will accomplish this? Queries should be sent by e-mail to Alicia Anstead, editor-in-chief at aanstead@writermag.com or Meredith Quinn, associate editor at mquinn@madavor.com. Please include your name, phone number and a short bio.

BinderCon is accepting submissions for the March 19-20 BinderCon LA. Proposals are being solicited for panels and workshops “that will inspire, motivate, and empower women and gender non-conforming writers at all stages of their careers,” with an emphasis on appeal to a diverse community of writers: creative, journalistic, academic, and film/TV. Deadline November 15. See the website for online submissions: www.BinderCon.com.

Editor’s Note: For regular postings of Contests and Calls for Submission, visit the IWWG Members Facebook page. You must be a current IWWG member to access this page! Problems getting to the page? Write iwwgquestions.com, and Kristin Rath will walk you through the process.

A New Network Feature: Members Giving Voice

Got something to say? Don’t we all? But now you have a place to say it.

The next few issues of the Network will have a section dedicated to members giving voice about a topic that will be announced in the previous issue. Submissions should be no longer than 150 words. By submitting your piece, you are acknowledging our right to edit for punctuation and space. You, the writer, will retain all rights to your work. All submissions must be original and must not have been published elsewhere—yet.

So what’s the topic for the Fall 2015 Network?
“Giving Voice,” of course.

To “give voice to” something is to take a stance. To make a statement. To state a truth. To take a chance. To render yourself vulnerable. When was the first time that you claimed your voice—that is, gave voice to yourself? Or perhaps you’ve mentored someone in finding her voice...As long as you can demonstrate that it fits the topic, you can write about any aspect of “giving voice.”

Keep in mind that space is limited in the Network, and we won’t be able to take all submissions. This won’t, however, be the only time you have an opportunity to submit to the Network in the future—and what you write here may well provide the impetus for submitting elsewhere.

Submit your piece as an email attachment in Word. Keep the length to 150 words or less. Please proof your work carefully. Send it to: iwwgmembernews@gmail.com. On the Subject line, put the phrase “Giving Voice.” Failing to follow these instructions will result in us not reading your work this time around. Deadline for submission: October 9, 2015. Let us hear your voice!
Women Writers & Artists Matrix
AWESOME AUTUMN INTIMATE RETREAT
November 6-8, Saratoga Springs, NY

MORNING MEDITATION & Dinner Salon Shamanic Siren of Ceremonies
Amejo Amyot

MAPPING A WOMAN’S LIFE: Directing Our Pens into Past, Present, Future
Marilyn Zembo Day

MEMORY, SECRETS & IMMORTALITY: a Crucible for Creativity
Ione

WRITING ALOUD: The Act & Art of Writing
Eunice Scarfe

SAORI WEAVING
Barbara Sinacore

Retreat Features: Friday Dinner Salon 2.5 hour Intensive Art and Writing Workshops
Morning Meditation Networking Lunch
Wine & Cheese Saturday Night Readings WWAMarketplace
Complimentary Gift Keepsakes

Weekend $250.00  Saturday Only $120.00:  Sunday Only $110.00:  Dinner Salon $35.00
EARLY BIRD SPECIAL! Entire WWAM Weekend Only $235.00 until October 6th
Space is Limited - Register NOW!

Join us as we begin our 6th year of offering intimate, intensive retreats. We’ve arranged for discounted hotel rooms, three fabulous writing teachers, an incredible weaving workshop, evening readings, a marketplace for your books and other items, and the priceless company of women like you. We believe there are not enough intimate spaces where kindred evolutionary creative women can meet, engage in meaningful conversations, and share inspired artistic experiences. We limit the number of attendees so we can maintain just this kind of atmosphere. So, come join us in this autumn season of transformation. We’ll leave the light on for you.

For complete workshop descriptions, teacher bios, schedules, accommodation information, debit and credit card payments please visit our website:
www.WWAMatrix.com

For checks, please make payable to the Heartland Institute and mail to:
WWAM, PO Box 2494, Wilton NY 12831
Retreat Coordinator: Debbie 845.661.7625  WWAM East 518.557.7307  WWAM West 323.325.2949
**IWWG Central Ohio Community** is meeting October 3, November 7, and December 5 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Karl Road Branch Library, 5590 Karl Rd. (North of Morse Rd.), in the Meeting Room. Free and open to all. We offer writers a supportive environment for writing, reading, and gentle critiquing. Each participant has an opportunity to share her writing and other work. You may read or bring copies of work you’d like to have critiqued. Some of us give better feedback when we see a copy; usually 4-5 copies are enough for us to share. For more information, contact Bonnie Abbott, babbott001@columbus.rr.com, or Jeanne Marlowe, jamarlowe@juno.com, 614-476-8802.

For members of the Central Ohio IWWG only: September 26, October 24, and November 28 (4th Saturday, 12-1:30 p.m.: A Time to Honor our Individual Journeys, JungHaus, 59 W. Third Ave., Columbus OH 43201. A space for asking questions and hearing different perspectives. Communicating is more than writing. Bring your photography, art, music, dance, dream, writing (3-5 minutes) or simply enjoy what emerges from informal multimedia group process when we express what matters to us. Free for members of the Interfaith Association of Central Ohio, the Jung Association of Central Ohio, and the IWWG. All three groups bring exemplary practices that honor diversity and enrich understanding of our common humanity. For more information, contact Bonnie Abbott, babbott001@columbus.rr.com, or Jeanne Marlowe, jamarlowe@juno.com, 614-476-8802.
Building a community of women who write...

The IWWG, founded in 1976, is a network for the personal and professional empowerment of women through writing and open to all regardless of portfolio. As such, it has established a remarkable record of achievement in the publishing world, as well as in circles where lifelong learning and personal transformation are valued for their own sake. The Guild nurtures and supports holistic thinking by recognizing the logic of the heart—the ability to perceive the subtle interconnections between people, events and emotions alongside conventional logic. To learn more about us, visit our website at www.IWWG.org.

About the 2015 Summer Conference

I am grateful for so many aspects of this conference... the quality and depth of the workshops, the openness and responsiveness of all involved. Workshop leaders, IWWG "staff", and, of course, the other participants. This was my fourth IWWG conference... I have been trying to distill exactly why I found this one to be the most valuable and exciting. Many of the workshops I attended were offered by people that I had experienced before. In fact that is why I decided to come. It may have something to do with the fact that this is the first IWWG conference where I 'boarded' at the facility, so, of course, I had much more access to and exposure to everyone else involved. But I have spoken to many others, both at the conference and subsequently and we all agree that this one was special. At the risk of being rather imprecise, I would say that all of the above just melded into an ecology of grace. Wisdom House indeed!

-Survey Respondent