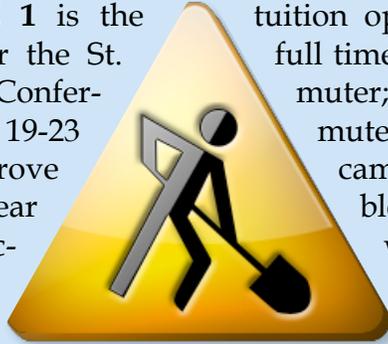


ST. DAVIDS D-DAY IS JUNE 1!

Yep, that's right! **JUNE 1** is the deadline to register for the St. Davids Christian Writers' Conference, which will be June 19-23 at Grove City College in Grove City, Pa. Our theme this year is "Writers Under Construction," for we are constantly being built and rebuilt by our Maker. (And the college campus is getting a facelift as well, but don't worry about that; we'll have a golf cart again this year to help folks who need a little assistance getting from place to place.)

Here's what to do:

- Visit www.stdavidswriters.com/registration.html.
- Complete the boxes for name, address, and e-mail address and select your



tuition option (full time on campus; full time commuter; single-day commuter; or single morning class commuter), and, if you are staying on campus, your room option (double or single). Also indicate whether you're purchasing a tutorial.

- Let us know whether this will be your first time with us, your writing level, and your main area of writing interest.

- Indicate whether you want to buy a photo session.

- Complete your preference on conference photos.

- Mark your payment option, and hit "Send e-mail." You then will be directed to a page where you can pay (via PayPal) a \$100 deposit or your total. You'll receive an e-mail receipt shortly. Or, if you choose to pay by check or pay by credit card, we will e-mail you an invoice. To guarantee your spot, your invoice must be paid within 14 days of when you receive it.

Beat the crowd and save! If you pay in full before May 15, you get a \$10 discount. Those who have not paid in full by June 1 will pay an additional \$25.

Please note: No refunds can be given for cancellations after June 9.

DECISIONS, DECISIONS!

Ever wish you could be in two places at the same time? It's a common wish at the St. Davids conference.

Interested in fiction writing or self-publishing? Check out the courses taught

continued on next page

KEY ST. DAVIDS DATES

- **April 30:** Deadline for scholarship and Writers' Colony applications.
- **May 12:** Contest entries must be postmarked.
- **May 15:** Pay your full registration fee by this date and get \$10 off. Deadline for writers retreat and children's writers retreat applications.
- **June 1:** Deadline to register and pay in full or provide a \$100 deposit; those who applied for the writers retreat and children's writers retreat will be notified if they have been selected.
- **After June 1:** \$25 late fee for those who have not paid in full.
- **June 9:** Last day to cancel and receive a refund.
- **June 19-23:** Conference time!

continued from p. 1

by **Austin Camacho** (www.ascamacho.com), author of the Hannibal Jones mystery series and the author of or a contributor to more than a dozen other books. Austin also will be our Tuesday night keynote speaker.



If poetry's your passion, you'll want to attend **Barbara Crooker's** (www.barbaracrooker.com) classes. Barbara has had four poetry books published, and her poems have appeared in multiple magazines and anthologies. She has been both a Grammy awards finalist and a Pushcart Prize nominee.



Mary Ann Dioro (www.maryanndiorio.com), whose articles have appeared in more than 100 national periodicals, is a triple threat. Her courses will focus on writing for children; life management for writers; and, as she puts it, "writing with pizzazz!"



Scriptwriter, director, producer and actress **Zena Dell Lowe** (www.skirtfilms.com), who wowed the conference



two years ago, is back to share her knowledge with sessions on storytelling and the three-act structure; the essential elements of character; the seven levels of meaning in story; set-ups and pay-offs; and what it means to be a Christian artist.

Is your manuscript good... but not great? Consider applying for the writers retreat. **Melanie Rigney** (www.editorforyou.com), the former editor of *Writer's Digest* magazine and owner of a publishing consultancy, will facilitate constructive critique among attend-

ees. (Please note: Those accepted will attend *all* sessions of the writers retreat. It is not possible to attend a single session. For more on how to apply, please visit www.stdavidswriters.com/rigney2.html.)



If this writing thing is new to you, please don't be intimidated! Melanie, with an assist from *Time of Singing* publisher (www.timeofsinging.com) and college instructor **Lora Zill**, will guide you through two sessions on finding yourself as a writer.

Susan Reith Swan really knows her stuff when it comes to children's writing. This youth librarian has been editor of *Story Friends* and an instructor for the Institute of Children's Literature. If you've been published or are moving toward publication in this genre, consider applying for the children's writers retreat. (Please note: Those accepted will attend *all* sessions of the retreat. It is not possible to attend a single session. For more on how to apply, please visit www.stdavidswriters.com/swan.html.)



Last and certainly not least, **Jim Watkins** (www.jameswatkins.com), a longtime St. Davids friend and the author, co-author,

or editor of 16 books and thousands of articles, will tickle your funny bone with his humor writing lessons; show you how to make the most of the Internet as a writer; and help us all understand the three "stages" through which authors connect with their audiences.

You'll find a complete schedule for the conference at www.stdavidswriters.com/workshops.html (and in your registration packet!).



WHAT MAKES ST. DAVIDS SPECIAL?

We hope you'll find it's the people, from the warm welcome you'll receive at the registration desk to the help you'll be given taking your luggage back to your car when you leave. But there are some other special things about us:

- Association member Tonya Wilhelm, a professional photographer (www.wilhelm-photography.com/), will provide a limited photo session at a deeply discounted rate of \$129 on a first-come, first-served basis. Sign up when you register.
- You can choose to work one-on-one for a half hour with a qualified private tutor on non-fiction, memoir, feature stories, fiction, devotions, or poetry for \$35. See www.stdavidswriters.com/information.html for more information.
- One of the highlights of the conference is the Great St. Davids Auction. Bring homemade goods or quality (or not-so-quality but funny) items to donate. Proceeds go to finance the good work going on at St. Davids, primarily our scholarship program.
- Your admission to our Friday evening awards banquet is included in your registration. You can bring along family members or friends for \$20 each.
- You are welcome to join us at chapel each morning and meditations each evening.
- Besides the retreats, which are for writers preparing for publication, we offer free peer critique groups in a variety of styles during the conference.
- We invite you to bring your work to share at a conferee "open mike" session and to listen to the faculty during a literary coffeehouse event.

MONEY FOR NOTHING

Okay, not *exactly* for nothing—for the St. Davids Christian Writers' Conference! We offer a limited number of work-study scholarships that typically cover tuition. The conferee then pays for his or her own room and board and helps out during the conference.



In addition, people involved in full-time Christian ministry or members of their immediate families may qualify for the Karl Marque tuition scholarship. In addition, the Berger-Minshull tuition scholarship aims to encourage writers to polish their work and move toward publication.

The deadline to apply for scholarships is **April 30**. See www.stdavidswriters.com/scholarships.html for details.

IT'S CONTEST TIME!

Attending the St. Davids conference has its privileges ... and one of them is entering the conference writing competition. While winners are announced at the Friday night banquet, entries are due much earlier: They must be post-marked by **May 12** and sent to Janyce Brawn at 105 Hilltop Rd., Edinboro, PA 16412.

First, second and third places receive small cash awards. The judges, who are experienced writers, do not always award all prizes in all the categories. While judges are encouraged to comment on entries, the contest is not a critiquing service.

Categories include humorous poetry; serious poetry; sudden/flash fiction; adult/young adult/mid-grade first chapter; persuasive non-fiction; informative nonfiction; picture book; personal experience feature; humor; and devotional. For contest rules and more information, please visit www.stdavidswriters.com/contests.html.

Director's Column: Lora Zill

"I WILL ARISE AND GO NOW"

I went and bought a little Coleman tent. When I was a kid, my family went camping for vacations. That's about as cheap as you can get with five kids. For years we used an Army green pole tent, then when my dad got tired of sleeping on the ground, "graduated" to a pop up camper. But we kids kept using that old tent, pitching it in our backyard and sleeping in it summers until it got holes and my mom threw it out. Now I have to get a mat for under my sleeping bag. The ground is harder than I remember!

I bought this tent because I remember the special January weekend Mel and I spent in the St. Benedictine Monastery cabins in the woods near Erie. There was no wireless internet or cell phone service that I remember. The silence was big and filled me. After an emotionally intense year, I needed the space to catch my breath. Since then, I've recognized the need to get away from my regular routine more often. I need to create space to think, pause, enjoy a change of scenery, maybe even do some writing.

I use the St. Davids conference for that same reason. Even though I direct the conference, it is still a time of refreshment for me. I've always thought of it as a working vacation with a bunch of friends.

I know many of the same functions of the conference can be found online: information about writing, classes through "webinars," critique groups through Google Docs or other means, networking through LinkedIn or Facebook. I've done all of those and more. So why go to a conference?

Because we need to get away. Because we need to remind ourselves that we are bigger than all the things that fill our lives. We can leave them for a while. They'll take care of themselves. Because we crave human contact with other like-minded individuals. Because at St. Davids I am cared for, nurtured, and treated with respect and kindness in the closest (and best) kind of networking. Because maybe if I have a need, someone I see face to face will reach out and grab my hand, and in that graceful gesture, I'll remember how much I am cared for. I'll regain the peace and strength to go on.

William Butler Yeats wrote about gaining peace and strength from going to a lake, Innisfree. So I will arise and go now, and go to Pymatuning and a small tent pitch there, with my kayak by my side. But I will also reach out for God's touch through His people. So I'll see you all at St. Davids.

President's Column: Linda M. Au

I NEVER MET A DEADLINE I DIDN'T LIKE

"A perfect method for adding drama to life is to wait until the deadline looms large."

—Alyce P. Cornyn-Selby

Deadlines are my friend. I've known this about myself for decades: that I work best when I have a finite "end date" for my work, whether it's proofreading for a client, typesetting this newsletter, or writing. It's why I submit more of my work to contests than to agents and editors. (The first real writing contest I entered — on a whim — netted me first place and \$2,000.)

But writing my novel and writing my second humor book have no deadlines. Which means, of course, they're the *last* things I do on any given

day. Which means, of course, I'm nodding off in my Ovaltine before I ever write a word.

If you subscribe to the maxim that hard work pays off someday but procrastination pays off now, and you're tired of applying that to your sagging writing career, I urge you to start small: with a contest deadline.

Come to St. Davids. Enter the contests (deadline May 12!). Force yourself to get something — anything! — in the mail. Tell yourself it's not as bad as querying agents, since you'll never get a rejection slip if you lose. All you'll get is a little silence and the names of the people who did win. It's not so bad, really. And, you just might surprise yourself and win once in a while. It's worked for me.

WE'RE EVERYWHERE!



Keep in touch with your St. Davids friends all year long. "Like" us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/pages/St-Davids-Christian-Writers-Association/140153497943 ... and follow us on Twitter (twitter.com/StDavids-Writers).

And don't forget about the Web site: www.stdavidswriters.com.

ATTENTION, TREASURE HUNTERS!

By Nancy E. James

Going, going, gone! ... and I'm not talking about the Great St. Davids Auction. During this year's conference, I plan to stake out a table in the lounge of HAL (Hall of Arts and Letters) and cover it with old, older, and *very old* copies of the *Upper Case*. These will be there for conferees to take away – if you find an article, poem, picture, report, or whatever, that you would like to keep.

I will also set out a bunch of photos from various conferences of previous years. These, too, will be for the taking, if you see your own face or photos of friends, roommates, favorite instructors, or memorable events that you want to remember. (For the most part, I won't know which year a photo is from, so don't ask me!)

This will be your last chance! At the end of the conference all of these newsletters and photos will disappear into Recyclespace. So look for signs identifying the table in HAL (and bring your tote bag). See you at Grove City!



START YOUR OWN COLONY!

Do you need time away from the demands of everyday life to finish your manuscript? The Writers' Colony might be just what you need. Those interested in participating must have a proven track record with significant publishing accomplishments, and must have attended the conference as a full-time conferee at least once in the past three years. Participation is limited to three to five fellows per conference.

Fellows do not attend classes during the day (they may attend evening activities), and therefore pay only room and board plus \$50. Scholarship assistance is not available. For more information about the Writers' Colony and how to apply, please visit www.stdavidswriters.com/colony.html.

HELP ST. DAVIDS! SHOP AT AMAZON.COM!

Did you know you can "donate" to the St. Davids Christian Writers Association each time you shop at Amazon? Here's how it works: Just visit www.stdavidswriters.com/bookstore.html and click on the "Powered by Amazon" button. You'll be redirected to Amazon.com to make your purchase – and St. Davids will get a small percentage of the total, even though you won't be charged a penny more than if you'd simply gone to Amazon.com. What a deal! Don't forget to update your Amazon.com bookmark while you're there!

Another cool thing – you don't have to be a SDCWA member to use the button, so please encourage your friends, family, coworkers, and strangers on the street to visit our site to place an Amazon order.



The Brag Board

Are we proud of what we've accomplished with our writing? You bet! Don't hide that light under a bushel basket!

- **Bonnie Rose Hudson** joined The Old Schoolhouse's team of Star Contributors in February, writing various activities and projects, as well as helping to develop some new ideas for the membership-only section of the popular homeschooling publication's Web site (thehomeschoolmagazine.com). One of the new ideas has grown into a team project of which Bonnie is a part, and will be turned into an e-book (and potentially, a series of e-books) in the coming months. Bonnie will be listed as a contributing writer. The title of this project (and e-book) is *Everyday Easels*, exploring art and art appreciation through the lens of various other subjects such as history, writing, vocabulary, science, geography, and others.

- **Joan Leotta** placed a story on burnbridge.net and turned in her first novel, *Giulia Goes to War*, for a four-book contract with Desert Breeze. The book, volume 1 in the Legion of Honor series, will be available in July.

- **Nancy E. James** and **Shirley Stevens** each had poems (12 for Nancy E. and 22 for Shirley) in The Pittsburgh Poetry Society's recent anthology *The Potter's Wheel*.

- **Nancy E. James** recently received awards for three poems: Judge's First Place for "Persona Non Grata" in the Pittsburgh Poetry Society's contest for November 2011; Judge's Second Honorable Mention for "Akemashite: A New Day Dawns" in the PPS contest for December 2011; and First Place for "On the Telephone Helpline" in the Winter 2011/2012 *Time of Singing* contest.

- **Rick Nowlin** had two pieces published

in the Pittsburgh *Post-Gazette's* Saturday Diary column: "Grandma was the blues" on July 23, and "Derrick Bell: a family friend with whom I disagreed," a reference to his namesake, on Oct.



22. Rick also had a letter published in the November/December issue of *PRISM*, the magazine of Evangelicals for Social Action.

- **Robyne Parrish** sold her novella *Jezebel's Curse Part I* to Wild Child Publishing.



- **Melanie Rigney** and **Lora Zill** were among the judges for the Independent Book

Publishers Association's prestigious Ben Franklin Awards. Melanie also was a judge for the annual Cooperative Communicators Association competition. CCA is comprised of professional communicators who work for farm cooperatives and other agricultural concerns.

- **Melanie Rigney** was among the speakers at the February 2012 sold-out Bay to Ocean Writers' Conference in Wye Mills, Md., and will be on faculty for the June 2013 North Wildwood (N.J.) Beach Writers' Conference.

- **Jan Sady** had a story published in *Country Woman*.

- **Lora Zill's** poem "St. Matthew's Cathedral, Washington, D.C." will be published in *The Penwood Review* this fall. Lora also reviewed a college composition textbook for a major academic publisher.

COULD YOUR WRITING SAVE A LIFE?

By Bonnie Rose Hudson



Angry men bent on death. She broke the law, and she must die. The scene has been repeated in Pakistan, Indonesia, and the eighth chapter of John.

In countries around the world, Christians break the law by sharing the hope of Jesus with someone trying to live without him. I recently interviewed Darcie Gill, who serves with Voice of the Martyrs. She confirmed what I have read – Christian persecution is greater now than it has ever been. She said, “China has a saying, ‘It’s always snowing someplace in China.’ So, that’s what it’s like with Christian persecution. It’s always taking place someplace.”

What Jesus said in John 8 saved a woman’s life. Could he use our writing to do the same?

REACHING OUR AUDIENCE

Darcie has what she calls the “neatest job in the world.” She meets with Christians in hostile nations, sharing aid and encouragement. Then, she brings their stories back to the free church, being the “person uniting both.”

Is there a way we can be writers who unite both? How do we connect a story about a mother in a foreign place to a soccer mom in suburban America?

The first step is realizing our persecuted brothers and sisters are just like us. They must choose every day to grow to become more like Christ, just as we must. We all face the same issues, such as forgiveness.

Darcie shared the story of a widow in Colombia. The woman’s husband had pastored for a few years in a guerilla-held area before he was killed. Voice of the Martyrs worked with her and her two-year-old daughter, help-

ing them with basic needs and employment. When they asked the woman what her future plans were, she answered that “she wanted to go back and share the gospel with those who had taken her husband.” She realized she “could give them something even her husband couldn’t give. She could forgive them. This woman realized the greatest gift she could give was forgiveness. And it would open an opportunity for the gospel with them.”

REACHING OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Darcie also shared about Prisoner Alert, a way individuals can become involved in the life of an imprisoned Christian. Prisoner Alert provides all you need to write and send a letter to a brother or sister in jail.

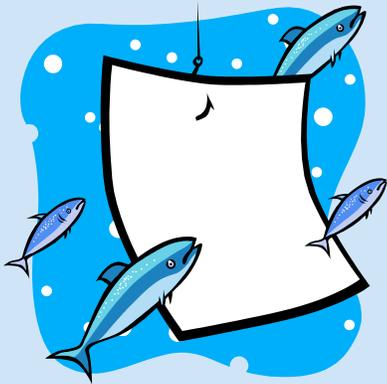
But I asked her if writing a letter can really make a difference. She quickly answered, “My goodness, yes,” and told me the story of an imprisoned pastor who had been beaten so brutally he faced kidney problems. Christians responded with thousands of letters. The guards stopped beating him and got him medical help.

What about times the prison officials don’t deliver the letters? Someone still reads them, and God uses them to change hearts.

REACHING OUR WORLD

As we read the stories of our brothers and sisters who are suffering, we take to heart the command in Hebrews to remember the persecuted. As we share their stories with our readers, we may see hearts changed. What Jesus said changed an angry crowd ready to stone a woman into people who put down the stones and walked away. His words saved a life. My prayer is that God will use ours to do the same.

For more information on Voice of the Martyrs, Prisoner Alert, or to request a speaker to address your church or writing group, please visit www.persecution.com.



GONE BLOGGIN' ...

St. Davids Christian Writers Association members spread the SWord across the Internet. Check in and see what your brothers and sisters in Christ are thinking about:

- **Linda M. Au**, *The Other Side of the Desk*: www.lindamaubooks.com
- **Roberta Brosius**, *Wit, Words, & the Word*: www.robtabrosius.blogspot.com
- **Angie Kay Dilmore**, *The Trials and Triumphs of a Transplant...from 'Burgh to Bayou*: www.angiekaydilmore.blogspot.com
- **Bonnie Rose Hudson**, *His Hand in History: From Pennsylvania to Pakistan and Beyond*, www.writebonnierose.com
- **Michele Huey**, • *God, Me, and a Cup of Tea*: michelehuey.com; ; *Christian Writers Page*, offering information, instruction, inspiration and insight into the world of freelance writing: www.christianwriterspage.blogspot.com
- **Jessica Johnston**, *Memoirs of a White Trash Mom*: www.memoirsofawhitetrashmom.blogspot.com
- **Susan Lower**, *Tender-Hearted, Life Changing, Wholesome Fiction*: www.susanlower.com
- **Mollie Lyon**, *Miss Mollie's Musings*, www.missmolliesmusings.blogspot.com
- **Fara Reed**, *Fair to Middlin'*: www.faratomidlinn.blogspot.com
- **Melanie Rigney**, *About writing, faith, and life in the '50s*: www.melanierigney.com
- **Jan Sady**: www.jansady422.wordpress.com
- **Anne Siegrist**, *Meanwhile, Back at the Farm*: www.annesiegrist.wordpress.com
- **JoEllen Smith**: www.cocooncreationsgallery-joellen.blogspot.com/
- **Charlotte Snead**: *Charlotte's Readers*, www.charlottesreaders.com
- **Vickie Price Taylor**, *Write Along the Way*: www.vickiepricetaylor.wordpress.com

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Submit copy to melanie@melanierigney.com

Former conferees and members who have been receiving the newsletter by snail mail will continue to receive it by e-mail, as long as we have a current e-mail address. To update your address, e-mail Linda Au at: linda@lindamaubooks.com.

All rights revert to author or artist after one-time publication in the *Upper Case*.

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