

LOAVES & FISHES, CRAFT & MARKETING

LEARN ALL ABOUT IT AT OUR CONFERENCE
JUNE 18-22!



The 56th annual St. Davids Christian Writers' Conference is shaping up to be one of the best ever! We are ahead of our usual registration pace, so don't get left out! Visit <http://stdavidswriters.com/registration.html> to let us know you're coming... and save \$10 by paying in full by **May 15**. (If you are not paid in full by **June 1**, a late fee of \$25 will be added to your bill.) Payment may be made via PayPal, credit card, or check.

The 2013 faculty includes:



• **Hana Haatainen Caye**, the author of more than twenty children's books and principal for a copywriting and voiceover business.

• **Eva Marie Everson**,

author of more than twenty-five books published by Baker/Revell, Thomas Nelson, Broadman & Holman, and others, who will teach the dynamics of fiction writing through film analysis.



• **Marjorie Maddox**, the Pushcart Prize nominated-author of hundreds of poems, stories, essays, and children's books who will teach several workshops on poetry writing. Marjorie also welcomes fiction writers!



• **Barbara Hibsichman**, who wowed our conference a few years ago with her keynote address. Barbara will lead beginners in the nuts and bolts of preparing a manuscript for possible publica-

tion and teach a course on writing and selling inspirational articles.

• **Kathy Ide**, who matches authors, publishers, & agents with professional freelance editors/proofreaders through the Christian Editor Network and the Christian Manuscript Critique Service.



Kathy will lead a mentoring clinic and will discuss how to write, format, and market scripts for skits, sketches, monologues, one-acts, and full-length plays.

• **Susan King**, associate editor of



The Upper Room daily devotional guide, will offer a major morning workshop on writing devotionals for all writing levels, both for the market in general and for *The Upper Room*, the world's largest daily de-

votional guide.

And of course, we'll have all the fellowship you could ask for with the Great St. Davids Auction, open mike, chapel, evening devotions, and more!

THE
UPPER
CASE

IS WRITING THE IMPOSSIBLE MISSION?

BONNIE ROSE HUDSON

As another conference season approaches, we pack our laptops, notebooks, and Post-it notes and hit the road or the skies for a day or a week of inspiration and education. Mixed in with the encouragement and edification, however, are less appealing realities. Changing markets, a depressed economy, and the small percent of manuscripts that see publication, not to mention agents, queries, verb tense, and point-of-view all present roadblocks to the path we once felt sure we were called to take. We find ourselves asking, "Is writing the impossible mission?"

I love watching the old television show *Mission: Impossible* starring Peter Graves. The heroes, the suspense, the music. Round any corner and find adventure and intrigue. Who among us hasn't secretly pictured ourselves as the dashing Jim Phelps or Cinnamon Carter?

Then we ask ourselves: how can I ever hope to compare? An elite handful of men and women called on to save the world. What chance do I have of being one of them?

But there is another team of men and women called to be part of this impossible mission. Their roles are less glamorous, but no less vital. The couriers. The ones called on to deliver



the message. In almost every episode, someone was called on to deliver the message. Without them, the heroes would have never learned what they were called to do.

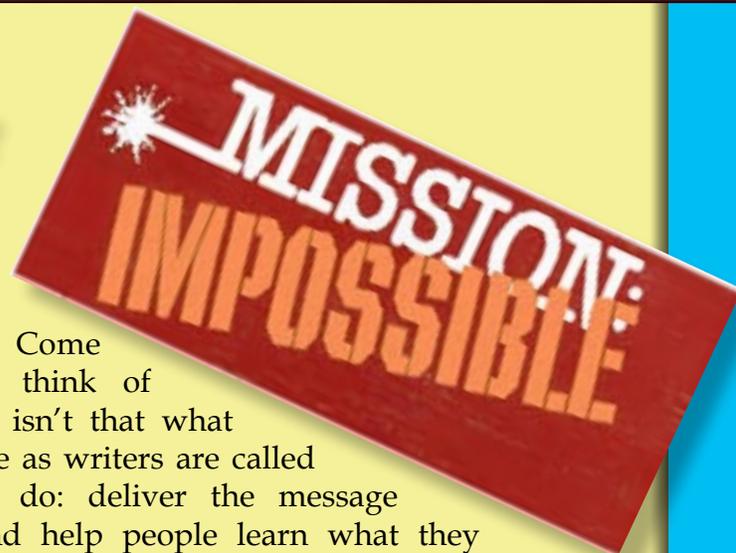
Come to think of it, isn't that what we as writers are called to do: deliver the message and help people learn what they are called to do? Our television couriers were entrusted with vital information. They received the call and delivered the message as they went about their daily routines. They were trusted to ensure that the right person received it, and they diligently watched for the person for whom the message was intended.

As Christian writers, we are called on to be trustworthy bearers of the best news ever shared with humanity. We are often called as we carry out our daily routines, and we are seldom called to abandon our daily life. We must vigilantly watch for whom we are called to minister to and share the message with them, no matter who they are or how they arrive.

There is one other thing I've noticed about those couriers. For every mission, a unique courier with a unique ability to deliver the message was chosen. The people called were as unique as the missions themselves.

Is writing the impossible mission? I suppose it depends on what part you want to play. If you are looking to be among the elite, to live a life full of suspense and glamour, perhaps it is. But if you are looking to be a part of delivering the best message the world has ever heard, God is always looking for more couriers.

*Bonnie Rose is a writer who lives in central Pennsylvania. Please visit her Web site at www.writebonnierose.com and her blog for kids, *Exploring with Jake*, at <http://writebonnierose.wordpress.com>.*



VICKIE PRICE TAYLOR: OUR NEW ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Vickie Price Taylor, assistant director for the 2013 conference, is one busy woman. She describes herself as a teacher, writer, wife, and mom. "The first thing you need to know about me is that I love all things fiction," Vickie says on her blog, vickiepricetaylor.wordpress.com. "I read it, write it, analyze it, teach it. It's the one subject I never grow tired of, and any time I can



find a way to incorporate it into my day, I am happy."

Vickie and her husband, Barry, live in Wheeling, West Virginia. They have a son, Joshua, and a daughter, Hope.

Vickie, who also is the St. Davids association vice president, succeeds Melanie Rigney, who regrettably resigned in April. A permanent assistant director will be selected this summer.

YOU CAN GET MAIL!

When was the last time your snail mail box contained anything beyond bills and "to resident" offers of new home construction or restaurant discounts? Well, that is about to change. Former St. Davids President Marjie Stewart has launched The Snail Mail Project. Just go to <http://www.facebook.com/pages/>

[The-Snail-Mail-Project/430269470386467?ref=stream](http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Snail-Mail-Project/430269470386467?ref=stream) and message Marjie (also known as Max) that you'd like to get a card or letter. That's it! No cost to you, and your name won't be sold.



GET READY FOR THE GREAT ST. DAVIDS AUCTION!



One of the highlights of conference week is Thursday night's Great St. Davids auction. The proceeds go to finance the good work going on at St. Davids,

primarily our scholarship program for writers who need financial help to spend the week with us. If possible, please bring something to contribute – regifting items, gently used items, homemade crafts or foods. And – bring along your wallet or credit/debit card!

THE ST. DAVIDS—AMAZON CONNECTION

Here's a way to give to St. Davids without costing you anything. Before you visit Amazon.com, go to <http://stdavidswriters.com/bookstore.html> and click on "Powered by Amazon." The St. Davids Christian Writers' Association then gets a small percentage of any purchase – not just books! In 2012, we made more on this link than we did at the conference bookstore! So think St. Davids... then Amazon... and ask your family and friends to do the same.



Director's Column: Lora Zill

OF FELLOWSHIP, ERUDITE OR OTHERWISE

I clipped a photo from the *New York Times* and taped it to my wall beside a yellowed photo of Mary Chapin Carpenter and a black and white of Joe Paterno I can't bring myself to remove. (Why? Maybe to remind me of a glorious past and the terrible consequences of not exercising leadership when it mattered most?)

Now Gene Siskel and Roger Ebert peer over my shoulder. They partnered in hosting television programs devoted to film criticism. Ebert passed away recently, so the media, blogosphere, and Twitter have exploded with tributes and reflections of what Siskel & Ebert (and then, after Siskel passed away, Ebert & Roeper) meant to culture, film and film criticism.

But those two men speak of more universal ideas:

1) They brought "highbrow" film criticism to everyman. Ebert, by design, wasn't an erudite writer. But he was a serious one with specific goals in mind. He showed film buffs how to think about criteria when evaluating film, and that it was all right to judge for themselves. Ebert broadened the audience for film art by giving people "permission" to think critically about it.

I wrestle with sounding "highbrow" in my writing. That's my training and where I spend half my working life. But sounding erudite isn't how to reach a broad audience. (In fact, it is often a cover for not knowing what you're talking about!) I want to enlarge the base of engagement (is that a highbrow phrase?) for criti-

cally thinking about creativity, faith, and the arts (including writing). Can I discover the language and shape it to interpret and illuminate those processes? I'll try.

2) More importantly, Siskel and Ebert speak of friendship. During an appearance on the Johnny Carson Show, Ebert turned to Siskel and said he loved him. To publicly express your affection for a friend was quite radical back in the day. (I still get choked up at *The Wrath of Khan* when Spock gives himself to save the Enterprise and tells Jim, "I have been, and shall always be, your friend.") Siskel and Ebert trusted each other enough to feud over their passion: movies. To find true friends that you love deeply and who love you in return and who you feel safe enough with to launch into debate and disagreement is one of life's sweetest joys. Too many of my past friendships were based on avoiding conflict. My criteria have expanded beyond "niceness," however important that quality is. Connection, even

if it means mud, grass stains, and sweat, is what feeds me now.

Later, during his debilitating illness, Ebert said how much he missed Siskel and that he thought about him every day. I think about my friends just about every day too. You may not always know it, but you inspire and challenge me to pursue the gifts God has given me. So to my best friends, and my friends in the ever-growing St. Davids family, a big "thumbs up." I'm glad you are in my life.



FROM YOUR HEART TO THEIRS

Hey writers! Here's your chance to get published—and inspire. *Penned from the Heart*, whose former editors include St. Davids friends Jana Carman and Gloria Clover, is looking for submissions for its 2014 edition. The deadline is **Aug. 1**.

Penned from the Heart is a book of 365 daily non-denominational devotions that can be used in any year. It is published around Thanksgiving by Son-Rise Publications, New Wilmington, Pennsylvania.

Devotions can be either prose or poetry (verse or free-verse). Devotions should be 225 words or fewer. Poems should be no more than 20 lines, counting spaces between stanzas. Insights, prayers, and anecdotes that proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ or build the Body of Christ through encouragement, inspiration, or teaching are encouraged. Readers should find something to apply to their own lives.

Formal format of opening Scripture and closing prayer is not required, but certainly accept-

able. Please include a title. When quoting Scripture, please indicate the version in this way: NIV, KJV, NASB, MSG (*The Message*), etc. Include a brief bio, your Web site and e-mail address. It is helpful to submit your devotion in Arial 10 (Arial 9 bold & italic for Scripture passages).

Son-Rise Publications asks for one-time rights for the volume in which your work appears. Previously published devotions, as well as original works, are accepted if you own the copyright. Reprint rights are given when supplied by the author. Payment for the inclusion of your work in *Penned from the Heart* is a free copy of the volume in which your work appears, and the opportunity to buy other copies at a discounted rate. For examples of past accepted devotions, visit www.gloriaclover.com.

Submissions and questions may be sent to editor Marilyn Nutter: nutter4penned@gmail.com.

President's Column: Linda M. Au

A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE

Spring has not only sprung here in western Pennsylvania, it's also bounced, leapt, jumped, vaulted, and boinged. My yard alone looks as if a few Crayola products exploded in midair over my house. Not that I'm complaining. I never complain about spring or autumn—the two seasons when I'm not freezing or sweating. Plus, I'm not allergic to anything, and I can sit on my back patio with some lemonade and a good book and inhale the floral fragrances all around me (including the neighbor's dryer sheets).

But several of my friends suffer miserably from their allergies when spring hits. They can take the scent of lilacs in small doses, at best. They plod through their workdays with stuffy noses, congested heads, and itchy, watery eyes. (And now I sound like a medication commercial.)

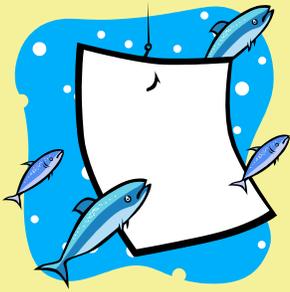
Same beautiful weather, different reactions.

Seeing my friends endure spring while I wallow in it gives me the perspective I need to appreciate more fully what God has given me. I learn not to take my functioning nasal passages for granted.

I find daily joy in small things. I go out of my way to find something every spring day that helps me sing God's praises. My sense of gratitude increases.

And, so, I hope, does my sensitivity. While my friends remain sensitive to blooms and blossoms, I pray to become sensitive to those around me who need healing. Some need relief from allergies, and the best I can do is pray and shift my perspective. But others need relief from sorrow or sadness, all year long, and perhaps my writing can give them perspective. Perhaps the best I can do in the immediate future is to remember why I write and to push onward with my projects. Perhaps someone out there feels overwhelmed right now and needs a little lighthearted perspective. Just for a moment. Perhaps I can help someone emotionally congested to breathe freely and happily, even for a few minutes.

The more my perspective and my focus remain on God and what He does, the more easily that will come through in my writing—no matter what I'm writing today. Perhaps it's even a short column for a newsletter ...



Gone Bloggin' ...

A SAMPLING FROM ST. DAVIDS MEMBERS' BLOGS

"Obligations, chores, family issues, work problems, medical scares... all get in the way of our relationship with God (and others too) instead of drawing us closer. We tend to draw into ourselves when we're overwhelmed or confused or scared. "How can I get myself out of this" mentality. Here's the thing: we CAN'T usually. But He can."

— Susan Middlesworth Fairchild
The Rural Spoon and Dish
(<http://theruralspoon.blogspot.com>)

"Yesterday, my husband put a sign on the front door for us all to see before we go out the door. 'Lowers—Friendly.' When I asked him why he put that up, he said, 'Because we need to teach our children Godly characteristics.'"

— Susan Lower
Horses. Heroes. Hope.
(<http://susanlower.com>)

"It says something about the state of our society when seven people can sit in the back room of a coffee shop and write... and attract the stares of the other patrons and even the attention of the local newspaper. The seven of us are all writing feverishly and yet we're making more noise than most of the patrons in the main room combined. How can this be, you ask, if the writers aren't talking but are only writing their brains out?"

— Linda M. Au,
The Other Side of the Desk
(<http://www.lindamaubooks.com>)

"No one wants to be a Pharisee. They were harsh, unloving, unforgiving. They killed prophets and they spent an incredible amount of time baiting Jesus in an attempt to trip him up. Jesus offered Grace, the Pharisees demanded obedience. Jesus offered forgiveness, the Pharisees demanded consequences. And yet, the road to

Pharisee Land is hard to avoid. Even our gut reaction to Pharisees may make us accidental Pharisees. Is it OK to judge those that believe (and expect of others) that life should be extra hard in order to be accepted by God?"

— Amy Weiss Mable,
Pentrioloquist
(<http://thepentrioloquist.blogspot.com>)

"We've already established that conflict is at the heart of compelling fiction. Since we deal with conflict daily, we find hope in seeing others triumph in spite of it. But conflict for conflict's sake is not enough to keep an audience engaged. If you doubt that, consider how many times you've turned your television off when politicians start mudslinging."

— Vickie Price Taylor,
BookMarks
(<http://vickiepricetaylor.wordpress.com>)

"When I was a teenager, my hometown was gifted with a copy of Michelangelo's David. After much controversy, it was erected (no pun intended) without a fig leaf over his private parts. 'Look at his eyes,' my father liked to say when we'd go by the statute, which was often since my grandmother lived nearby. 'Michelangelo captured him at the exact moment he knew he could take Goliath.' But that wasn't when I fell in love with David."

— Melanie Rigney
(<http://www.melanierigney.com/blog>)

"Am I perfect? NO! God's still working on me, and He will be until I leave this world to join Him. My part is to listen to His Spirit speak to me through His word, strive to be like Him, and to share the message of his Gospel with others. He continues to teach me daily."

— Jan Sady
(<http://jansady422.wordpress.com>)

The Brag Board

Please note: This department is limited to news from St. Davids Christian Writers' Association members. You are a member if you attended conference the previous year... or if you are a dues-paying member of the association. To join, please visit the Web site. Consult your tax professional; your dues may be tax deductible.

Janyce Brawn had twelve illustrations in the spring issue of *Time of Singing* poetry magazine.

Crystal Hayduk had two devotionals published in the 2013 edition of *Penned from the Heart*. She also had a nonfiction story published in the anthology *Falling in Love with You* (Oaktara Publishing). In addition, Heritage Newspapers has published about three articles per month from Crystal, including "Baby surprises mom, dad by being born at home," which was linked to by the *Ann Arbor News* and <http://todaybabyworld.com>, and was followed by WXYZ-TV news out of Detroit.

Bonnie Hellum's op-ed piece appeared in the March 21 edition of the *Albany, New York, Times-Union*. She recently formed an accountability/critique group with Ellen Cohen and Pat Johnson.

Bonnie Rose Hudson is now a full-time editorial assistant for <http://>

SchoolhouseTeachers.com, where she continues to write, edit, and develop curriculum. Bonnie also is a part-time editorial assistant for *The Old Schoolhouse* magazine. For the magazine, she coauthored an interview feature of attempted abortion survivor Gianna Jessen; published an e-book, *The Story of Energy*; and started a series of Little House Legacy columns. In addition, Bonnie published a series of curriculum called "Asia: Its People and History" and will start a second series on Asia history in June.

Lora Zill launched The Blue Collar Artist (<http://thebluecollarartist.com>), a site that explores what creativity means in the life of the faithful. Lora also co-authored a chapter in *Teaching Creatively and Teaching Creativity* (Springer Science+Business Media), an academic textbook. In addition, her poem "St. Matthew's Cathedral, Washington, D.C." appeared in *The Penwood Review* last fall and her poems "Far Enough" and "After Berry Picking" appeared in *Totem* 2013, Gannon University's literary magazine. (Lora's daughter, Holly, also has a poem in the issue.) Lora also had an article in the March issue of *The Christian Communicator* and an editorial about the country's fiscal crisis in the *Meadville Tribune* in December. The *Tribune* also published a lifestyle feature on her in January.

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President: Linda M. Au

Conference Director: Lora Zill

The Upper Case Editor: Melanie Rigney **The Upper Case Layout:** Linda M. Au

Submit copy to linda@lindamaubooks.com

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