

A FREE intensive creative writing skills workshop

Sponsored by the West Virginia Division of Culture and History
and the West Virginia Library Commission

Writers' Toolkit



SATURDAY, MARCH 2

9 - 9:45 a.m. – REGISTRATION (Pre-registration not necessary)

10 a.m. - Noon – MORNING SESSIONS

Library Commission Training Room

Cat Pleska

Cat Pleska teaches writing at West Virginia State University and is the director of the university's Writing Center. The essayist for West Virginia Public radio with more than 30 essays aired to date, also is a regular contributor to *Wonderful West Virginia* magazine and has several articles published in state and regional journals. She is the editor of *Fed From the*

Blade, an anthology that comprises the work of West Virginia Writers, Inc. members. She is a sixth generation West Virginian and is proud to note in her ancestry a great great great uncle, Livery Hodges, who served in the Union Army during the Civil War.

Mapping Memoir: Family life placed in time, history and geography

This year West Virginia celebrates its 150th birthday. What better way to join the party than to mine family archives to discover ancestors and to map your heritage? Perhaps a relative served in the Civil War or was involved in the quest for statehood. Maybe they were early settlers here or elsewhere. Well-known writer Jamaica Kincaid once described her origins: "I am from Antigua, from volcanic soil, from the British and slavery, and from a freed people." Kincaid's quote prompted me to think: how would I describe my rich and

layered history in West Virginia? We aren't just who we are today: we are also our family history; we are the character of the land where we and our ancestors were born. This workshop will help you find a way to write about those long ago but essential family members in your history. Come explore your heritage and begin a family memoir. Please bring family photos, etchings, maps, diaries, letters, journals, official documents and artifacts to use in writing your memoir.

Library Commission Reference Room

Anna Smucker

Anna Egan Smucker is the author of *No Star Nights*, which received an International Reading Association Children's Book Award in 1990. Her other books include *Outside the Window*, *A History of West Virginia*, *To Keep the South Manitous Light*, *The Life of Saint Brigid*, and a new picture book titled *Golden Delicious: A Cinderella Apple Story* about the discovery of the Golden Delicious apple in Clay County, West Virginia. Forthcoming is a picture book co-authored with West Virginia Poet Laureate Marc Harshman

about Frank Lloyd Wright's iconic house Fallingwater that is due out in 2014 from Roaring Brook Press, a division of Macmillan. Her poems have appeared in several anthologies. The 2005 recipient of a West Virginia Arts Commission Artist Fellowship Award in Children's Literature, Anna makes her home in Bridgeport, West Virginia. Besides writing, she does author presentations and conducts writing workshops throughout the country.

Writing History - Your Own!

Using the author's book *No Star Nights* as a model, you will work through several fun writing exercises that tap into your

own life experiences. You will be amazed at the writing you produce.

SATURDAY, MARCH 2

10 a.m. - Noon – MORNING SESSIONS

Norman L. Fagan West Virginia State Theater

Pete Kosky

Pete Kosky is a musician and songwriter from Charleston, West Virginia. Growing up in the Kanawha Valley, he was exposed to traditional music at an early age and was naturally drawn to traditional ballads and folk songs. Kosky, who

is known for writing original songs in the traditional style, began writing songs in high school. Many of his songs draw heavily on West Virginia history. In 2002, he won fifth place at the first annual Mountain Stage NewSong Contest.

Songwriting in the Folk Tradition

This workshop will focus on songwriting with an emphasis on the influence of traditional balladry and folk songs. The use of the folk process to adapt traditional melodies and themes to original lyrics as well as the use of alternative gui-

tar tunings will be discussed. Though all songwriters use different approaches to writing, Kosky will share and discuss what inspires and nourishes his songwriting.

Green Room

Robin Taylor

Robin Taylor is the program director for ExploreWV Geo-Challenge, an enthusiast group formed by the West Virginia Department of Education and the Arts to promote tourism and educate people about West Virginia's rich history. She,

her husband and son have been avidly geocaching since December 2005, and have found more than 1,200 geocaches. ExploreWV GeoChallenge runs three geocaching challenges that include 62 geocaches placed across West Virginia.

What in the world is geocaching?

You may have heard people talk about it. There are now merit badges related to it. You might even know people who do it, but what is geocaching? Come to this workshop and discover what this rapid-growing phenomenon is all about. One of the most family-friendly activities you can get involved in, geocaches are placed all over the world, ranging from extremely easy-to-find containers to containers that re-

quire more skill and stealth. This workshop will consist of a Power Point presentation that teaches the intricacies of geocaching and a hands-on demonstration of different types and sizes of containers used in geocaching. Participants also will gain experience using handheld GPS units to find geocaches hidden nearby.

Noon – 1 p.m. Great Hall – Networking and book sales

**BRING A
BAG LUNCH**

Norman L. Fagan West Virginia State Theater

PANEL DISCUSSION with all presenters

1 - 1:45 p.m.

J.P. Myrick, moderator

Library Development Director for the West Virginia Library Commission

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SATURDAY, MARCH 2

2 - 4 p.m. – AFTERNOON SESSIONS

Library Commission Training Room

Mary Glass

Mary Spaniol Glass is a family history consultant for the Buckhannon Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and has presented workshops on family history research to various groups. The mother of eight children and grandmother of 25 children has been involved in family history work for more than 40 years. She is a retired school teacher who taught physics and chemistry and worked with gifted students in Kanawha, Cabell and Lewis counties. Glass

received the Ashland Teacher Achievement Award and was recognized as a Lewis County Teacher of the Year. She earned degrees from West Virginia University and Marshall University and has pursued additional post-graduate courses. A Kanawha County native, she resides with her husband in Buckhannon, West Virginia, where she continues to research and write family histories for extended family members.

Using original documents in writing family histories

Everyone has a story to tell, but nuggets of information can be found in many documents that would bring greater understanding and depth to the tale. Whether writing for a publication, family or personal satisfaction, an exploration of original documents can enhance any work. Many have a compelling desire to learn about their past and share it with

others. Left unrecorded, many of these stories would be lost. This workshop will explain what documents are available, where to find them, and how to organize them into a format for others to read. Participants are encouraged to bring family documents and information to the workshop.

Library Commission Reference Room

Anna Smucker - See bio from morning session

West Virginia History - A Treasure Trove for Writers

The author of *Golden Delicious: A Cinderella Apple Story* will show how she (and you!) can take a piece of our state's

history and turn it into a picture book.

Norman L. Fagan West Virginia State Theater

Pete Kosky - See bio from morning session

Writing Songs about History

This workshop will focus on writing songs about historical places and events by boiling down a historical event to its least common denominator in order to rewrite the event in verse and create a song. Kosky will use numerous examples

he has written about various events in American, Mexican, and West Virginia history. Bring your favorite story from history and perhaps you will leave with a new song!

Green Room

Robin Taylor - See bio and course description from morning session

What in the world is geocaching?