

Dear friends,

I would like to invite you to come to Belton for the annual UMHB Writers' Festival, January 7-10, 2009. We have an exciting and entertaining slate of events this year.

Main Events

This year we will have a Coffee House and Open Mic event on Wednesday evening. This event will be a special celebration of all the folks with new books and publications this year. We will have a special recognition of Alan Berecka's new book, *The Comic Flaw*, published by Neil Ellis Orts (NeoNuma Arts). We encourage everyone to bring books to sell and sign.

Jeanne Murray Walker from the University of Delaware will deliver the George Nixon Memorial Lecture on Thursday evening at 7:00. As most of you know, she is a celebrated, award-winning poet and playwright. She was an editor of poetry for *Christianity and Literature* for twenty years, and serves on the editorial board of both *Shenandoah* and *Image*. She has a new volume of poetry due out in February, her sixth book of poems. She will lead the master poetry workshop for a group of twelve poets (see details below to apply for the master workshops).

Friday evening, we will have dinner followed by a special concert featuring *Still on the Hill*. Donna Stjerna and Kelly Mulhollan will also present a songwriting workshop Friday morning. Saturday morning Donna and Kelly will illustrate the songwriting process by working with us in an impromptu writing session. You will be able bring your best or favorite lines of poetry and listen to Donna and Kelly as they transform the lines into song.

Helen Kwiatkowski will offer an art workshop Wednesday afternoon. Her exact plan is still a mystery to everyone but Roxy, but if you have ever been to one of her book-making, collage-generating, or collaborative painting workshops, you know it will be worth your time.

Registration

We will keep our registration rates the same as last year--\$100 for the full conference. You can help me by recruiting some friends and colleagues to join us this year. As in the past, full registration will include all activities (readings, workshops, refreshments, and dinner). Single day registration is \$40, and any individual event is \$20. A limited number of scholarships are available to assist individuals.

Propose a Reading or a Workshop

If you wish to present a reading of your work (poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction, non-fiction) or conduct a workshop, please send a proposal to me via email as soon as possible, at least before October 15th. Proposals to read should include a sample of your work for consideration. Proposals for workshops should include enough description that I can make a fair assessment of the activity. If you wish to read on Wednesday at the Coffee House and Open Mic, let me know. After I get a clear idea of the number of people wishing to read, I'll divvy up the time accordingly, but you probably will have time for two to three poems.

Apply for a seat in the Master Workshops

To apply for Jeanne's poetry workshop, you should submit a brief biography and two fairly representative pieces of your poetry, plus the specific poem you would like to work on during the class. Members in the class will receive a copy of your work as part of the workshop. Application materials should be sent by email to Audell at ashelburne@umhb.edu as soon as possible. To participate in either Helen's art workshop or Donna and Kelly's, email Audell and let him know you are interested in it.

Call me at 254-295-4561 or email me at ashelburne@umhb.edu if you have any questions. We're looking forward to seeing you in January.

Sincerely,

Audell