

The Seventh Week

clarion west writers workshop · spring 2012

INTERVIEW

Rachel Swirsky: Communities of Choice

BY NISI SHAWL '92



Photo by Julie Randall

Rachel Swirsky '05 won the 2010 Nebula for her deftly disturbing novella “The Lady Who Plucked Red Flowers Beneath the Queen’s Window”, and took third place in the 2008 Rhyslings for her poem “The Oracle on River Street”. She has also been nominated multiple times for the field’s most prestigious awards, including the Hugo; Nebula; Theodore Sturgeon; Locus; and James Tiptree, Jr. Her novelette “Fields of Gold” is a current Hugo nominee. A cofounder of the podcast webzine PodCastle, which she edited from 2008 through 2010, Swirsky blogs with wit and verve on LiveJournal at <http://rachel-swirsky.livejournal.com/>.

In your Nebula Award–winning story, “The Lady Who Plucked Red Flowers Beneath the Queen’s Window”, an accomplished magician confronts a magical system very different than her own. Does magic exist? Do you have any ideas about how it might work?

I’m a materialist so, by definition, I think that if something like magic existed, it wouldn’t actually be magic. It would just be something else that happens in the universe, like gravity and the way that all kinds of tiny creatures cooperate in order to keep our digestive systems functioning, and other things that are both very cool and ultimately material.

Do you have what we called during my year an “audience of choice?”

It changes depending on what the work is. Sometimes I want to talk to people who are having specific political conversations, or people who read different kinds of things, or I just want to make someone—anyone—laugh.

My mother is often in my head as I write. She’s an intelligent, educated, binge-reading librarian—but she doesn’t have an academic eye for fiction, as I do after all the reading-about-writing I’ve done. I want to make sure that most of my stories are comprehensible to my mother. I don’t mind being that obscure and referential from time to time—but by and large, I feel like that’s my bottom line for accessibility. More accessible is fine. But I want my mother to be able to understand what I’m writing.

What did you enjoy most about founding and editing PodCastle? What was hardest about that work?

I loved reading and finding stories. I wasn’t much keen on the politics.

You’ve published short fiction, short nonfiction, and poetry—brief forms calling for great rigor. Are you interested in storytelling in other media?

The theater is one of my first loves. I did playwriting in college, but I haven’t yet discovered a way to write something for the stage that’s really good.



► **You attended both Clarion West and the Iowa Writers' Workshop. Can you compare the two experiences? Under what circumstances would you advise others to do what you did?**

Clarion West was a much more intensive program than Iowa: Six weeks with six instructors. Eighteen people. One house. For me, the intensity created an extremely immersive and transformative experience. I expected Iowa to be the same, but of course it wasn't; no one could sustain that level of intensity for two years.

If people are looking to go to an MFA program after Clarion West, I think there are a few common, compelling reasons to do so. The first one is writing time. I think this is one of the major reasons anyone goes to an MFA program at all—it affords you some time (hopefully, though not always, funded—Iowa is funded) where you can work on writing as your full-time job.

Second: Do you want to teach? Having an MFA is not sufficient to get you a college teaching job, but it's usually (not always) necessary.

Third: Would you really like to get an alternate perspective on how writing works? Most MFA programs are going to feature aesthetics which emphasize different building blocks than genre fiction, and most are going to feature professors who have different points of view on how the writing life and writing priorities should work than the majority of genre writers. It can be really useful to learn those tools (which tend to take more care about, for instance, characterization) and consider those points of view.

One of your CW instructors was Octavia E. Butler. Was her presence in the 2005 lineup part of why you applied?

Absolutely. I started reading Octavia Butler when I was very little, because her books were on my parents' science fiction shelf, which stood, laden with *Asimov's* magazine and many novels from the



Seventies and the Eighties, by the door in their room. As a kid, my favorite book of hers was *Wild Seed*—superpowers! And also a palpable sense of Anyanwu's culture and history, stretching back so far.

As a teenager, I loved *Parable of the Sower* most. I identified with Lauren's growing awareness of the world around her, and her deep desire to make it a fairer, better place, her yearning for something more (change, the stars), and her concrete steps toward trying to make that happen by establishing an intentional community.

These days, I love *Lilith's Brood* best because of its tenderness and ambiguity, the ways in which the alien and the self converge and create both disintegration and new kinds of love, the complicated decisions that people make and how they try to live with them.

I didn't particularly connect personally with Octavia Butler at the workshop. She was tired due to her medication, and she fell asleep while writing her critique of my submission story (I still have that crit and I adore it). But I felt just so privileged to be in the room with her. I kept looking up at her and she was lecturing and thinking, "Oh my God. This woman wrote *Parable of the Sower*. *This woman*."

In the seven years since you attended CW, have you found yourself coming to belong to a community of writers?

A lot of my friends are writers at this point because so many of the people that I meet are writers. I love knowing all these people who are enthusiastic about books. I also love that writers have a tendency to be very eclectic in their experiences and their interests, so that you can sit down and have conversations about really obscure things you might not otherwise hear about.

Many of the people I became friends with when we were all proto-creators are starting to flourish, and it's amazing to see that happen.

Do you have advice for our incoming class of 2012?

Have fun. Don't stress about whether you're "good enough." You're in the workshop. You're good enough. Absorb what you can. Spend time with your classmates, because cultivating relationships with them is possibly the most important thing you'll do during the workshop. Don't put more pressure on yourself than you can handle. This six weeks is an intensive part of learning to be a writer, but the learning will continue in weeks seven, eight, nine.... It's the start of something. Not the ending. ♦



Message From the Chair

BY KELLEY ESKRIDGE

There's a whirlwind of activity in Seattle: the staff and board of Clarion West working like dervishes to prepare for the talented class of 2012. We're readying their mornings of workshops; afternoons of writing, reading, and critiquing; evenings of conversation and connection; and long nights at the computer because the story is due tomorrow and it just won't come together....

We're preparing to welcome seven stellar instructors whose expertise will help students break their work down, turn it inside out, and then soar higher than ever before. These experienced professionals all have diverse perspectives on the art, craft, and business of writing which will allow every student to envision their own path to a professional career.

We're nailing down the details for our summer reading series, where brilliant writers will read, speak, answer questions, and share themselves and their marvelous work with the public.

We're streamlining systems for our annual Write-a-thon, during which hundreds of writers around the world join in solidarity with the workshop class, writing for six weeks to raise money for Clarion West. Hundreds of thousands of words of

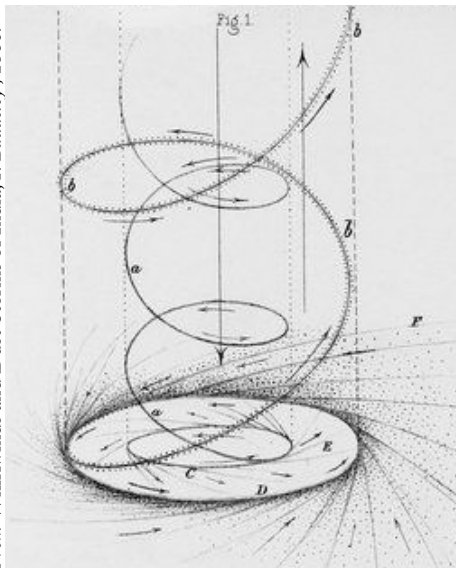
new work come out of the Write-a-thon each summer, generated by the commitment of writers, the generosity of sponsors, and the cheerleading and support of the extraordinary Clarion West community.

We're well underway with our 2012 slate of one-day writing workshops in Seattle, which will give a focused taste of the Clarion West experience to more than a hundred writers this year, and provide many talented professionals the chance to share their skills and knowledge with students.

And we're working behind the scenes to make sure that Clarion West continues to be the organization you expect: passionate about the mission, committed to inclusion and collaboration, responsibly managed, and always (always!) grateful to every single one of you who make up our community of alumni, applicants, instructors, volunteers, staff, board members, donors, readers, party hosts, and more. All that we do happens because of your commitment, engagement, and support.

As I write this, there are blue skies over Seattle. That's exciting—it's been a while. But still, I feel the whirlwind. Summer is coming. ♦

From Whirlwinds and Dust Storms of India, P. Baddaley, 1860.





Clarion West One-Day Workshops

BY DAVIS B. FOX

Clarion West's One-Day Workshop series started last fall as a pilot program to offer the CW experience to a larger number of emerging writers, especially those not able to take six weeks for the intensive summer workshop. Since then, the series has proven to be very popular and now has become one of our ongoing programs. The One-Day Workshops are offered during the academic year on Sundays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the University Bookstore close to the University of Washington campus. Workshop fees range from \$125–140, with class size generally limited to 12–15 students.

Instructors are noted educators and authors in speculative fiction from the Greater Seattle area and beyond. We're extremely grateful to Molly Gloss, Mark Teppo, Nancy Kress, Richard Paul Russo, Kat Richardson, Nicola Griffith, and Cat Rambo for leading the workshops this past fall, winter, and spring.

Nearly 100 aspiring authors have registered for the first seven workshops. While the majority resides close to Seattle, many workshop participants have come from central Washington, Oregon, northern California, and British Columbia.

We're currently putting together our fall 2012 One-Day Workshops series, which you'll be able to see at the CW website soon. We'll continue to have instructors with national reputations and offer topics of interest to a wide variety of writers. The workshops fill up fast, so don't hesitate to sign up when the registration period begins.

Many thanks to University Bookstore for its help in making the series a success, as well as to the Washington State Arts Committee and the National Endowment for the Arts for generous financial support. ♦

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WORKSHOP DIRECTOR

Stories and Heroes

By LESLIE HOWLE '85

It's finally spring, and Neile Graham, Workshop Administrator, and I have exploded from the comparative quiet of winter into full-tilt action, much like the daffodil bulbs in my yard suddenly went from tight green shoots to yellow flowers nodding in the breeze. As you can imagine, given our stellar line-up of well-known instructors, submissions nearly tripled this winter. Additional writers were called in to read submissions, and a second wave relieved them when applications kept rolling in. Thank you, readers, you are all heroes!

Neile's computer must have been smoking by the time she entered all the submission data and emailed acknowledgements to applicants. Due to the nature of the work, applicant data entry is a one-person job, and this year, that person went more than a couple nights without sleep as she kicked out three times the usual amount of work in about the same amount of time. Neile is a hero too. We gave her a well-deserved certificate for a massage to make sure she's still in one piece for the actual workshop this summer.

One of the very best things about being a part of the Clarion West community for twenty-eight years is that I've been able to watch it grow and change. At its core is a shared passion for creating and reading stories, and we are all experiencing and contributing to CW's own ever-unfolding story. Cool, huh? Everyone who has taught at the workshop, lived and breathed stories there for six weeks, worked or volunteered, read submissions, collated manuscripts, participated in the Write-a-thon, or donated money is co-creating the CW story every day.

Everyone who steps forward to take on

a job, serves on a committee, or volunteers for the Clarion West board adds his or her own unique stamp to the gestalt of who we are. Whenever someone posts about a story or novel, a great review or award nomination, or a new baby, it impacts the story of what this community is.

Reading SF as a kid changed my worldview. Stories gave me a broader perspective on humanity as a whole and raised questions I never encountered in school. That's why I still read and write speculative fiction. That's why I love working with all of the amazing people who continue to do this work: those who tell quiet, powerful stories or ask "what if?" and make astonishing leaps of imagination.

Next year, our 30th workshop will take place. It represents thirty years of tireless energy by a pyramid of people who have done all they can to enable this work. This kind of intense writers' workshop experience can be challenging, and every summer we learn more about how to better support the writers who take the leap. I view the approaching anniversary with a mixture of awe and pride. We did it. We all did it, from Vonda N. McIntyre shouldering the responsibility of bringing the workshop to Seattle after her Clarion, Pennsylvania experience with Robin Scott Wilson in 1970, to all those who now make it happen and sustain it. You are all unsung heroes.

I look forward to meeting our new students soon and to the new chapter of the CW story that our instructors—Mary Rosenblum, Stephen Graham Jones, George R. R. Martin, Connie Willis, Kelly Link, Gavin Grant, and Chuck Palahniuk—will create with them. ♦



TREASURER

Time and Money

BY SUSAN GOSSMAN

Last summer's Write-a-thon was a major contributor to our 2011 income. I love the idea of raising money by encouraging writers to write. I hope you'll be able to participate. Due to the Write-a-thon, the hard work and skilled management of past and present board members, our excellent paid professionals, our smart and dedicated volunteers, and our enthusiastic community of donors, Clarion West is a financially stable nonprofit organization.

If we want to remain financially stable, it is critical that we continue our efforts to raise money.

Our expenses have increased, though at a slower rate than the current rise in our income. The 2012 budget includes making ongoing payments to our professional staff, hiring instructors, renting the sorority house, paying for instructor travel, publicity, and mundane but necessary items such as insurance, copying supplies, and PayPal fees. Unrestricted donations and tuition payments help us meet these needs.

This year's budget also includes a record amount of scholarships paid to students. Each year, eleven to fifteen students request financial assistance for six weeks of room, board, and classes—and sometimes for airfare to and from Seattle. Many of them barely make ends meet with full- and part-time jobs, and their difficulties are compounded by the loss of income caused by taking time off from work to attend the workshop. This summer, students will receive full scholarships, substantial partial scholarships, and small scholarships that cover about twenty percent of their tuition. We are deeply grateful to the generous individuals and organizations that make this possible.

Finally, I would like to mention that if you are fortunate enough to own stock with substantial gains, please consider donating stock to CW. If you do not want to sell

a stock with large capital gains, donating it will allow you to avoid paying capital gains tax on the donated stock. If you still like the stock, replace what you donated with the same stock at the current market price. This will increase your cost basis, thereby reducing your capital gains tax. For example, if you bought Apple at \$100 a share and replaced the donated stock with Apple shares at the current market price of \$615 (as of 3/27/12), then your cost basis at the time of sale will be \$615 rather than \$100. You will also benefit from the tax deduction received by all charitable donations.

Most importantly, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that your stock donation will help support one of the world's best workshops for talented speculative fiction writers. Please send an email to Davis Fox at davis_fox@clarionwest.org if you have questions and/or are interested in donating stock. ♦

SUMMARY FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2011, BUDGET FOR 2012

	Actual 2011	Budget 2012
Income		
Unrestricted donations	39,662	38,000
Scholarship donations	16,292	20,400
Matching funds	1,538	4,000
Petrey Fellowship	1,800	1,800
Amazon Grant	25,000	25,000
Grants	6,250	6,000
Tuition/dorm costs paid by students	57,600	64,100
Tuition/dorm costs paid by scholarship	-18,000	-27,600
One-Day Workshops Income	6,180	12,000
Readings Income	0	11,000
Other Income	4,035	5,100
Total Income	\$140,356	\$159,800
Expenses		
Readings	3,846	6,900
The Seventh Week	2,456	2,950
Administration	40,221	50,900
Workshop	63,106	65,635
One-Day Workshops Expense	3,039	8,000
Fundraising	17,018	13,800
Total Expenses	\$129,687	\$148,185
Annual Surplus	\$10,670	\$11,615



Living with Louise

BY ARINN DEMBO '90

“Louise, wake up. Please, wake up.”

I reach out, as gently as desperation allows, and put my hand on her shoulder. I'd like to shake her hard, God knows. I'd like to grab the cocoon of sheets that she has wrapped around her plump loveliness and yank so hard that she spins like a top. I'd like to grab her by her beautiful bare brown shoulders and shake her until her teeth rattle. But Louise doesn't like that; Louise doesn't like that at all. And I have learned to fear her, after thirty years.

“I have an article due, baby.” I hear the carefully prepared pillow-fluff of my own voice. I sound like a phone sex operator, but buried under that caressing warmth there is an edge of raw, naked pleading, and we both know it. I hate it, and I hate her, not least for turning me into this soft-voiced, mollycoddling, enabling, codependent wretch.

She makes a petulant sound of protest, face down on the bed. Her glossy black curls are spread out in a beam of early afternoon sunlight, tumbling over her shoulder and out over the white sheets like a storm on the Great Plains. Her hair shines with unnatural depth, cracking the light into prismatic glory, the wings of a black angel. She's a cousin to the angels, in fact, a creature of the celestial sphere—but you wouldn't know it, to see her drink.

“What did you say?” I know what she said, of course. Asking her to repeat it is just a ploy to tease her farther into a waking state.

A twitch of muscle, and she raises her lovely cheek from the bed high enough to say, more loudly, “όχι.”

No.

She knows that I don't really speak Greek. This is a sign that she will be especially difficult today, and internally I cringe, even as I turn up the charm.

“Σας Παρακαλώ, Louisa.” *I'm begging you.* One of the few Greek phrases I know by heart. “Ludovika, *cara mia*, please, please, please wake up.”

“No.” She still sounds like a spoiled child, but she is really awake now, throwing off the fog of stupefaction that always follows a night of debauchery. She speaks English to acknowledge my humility, and

I bend and kiss her between the shoulder blades, touching my lips to softness beyond silk. Somehow I resist the mad urge to sink my teeth into her perfect, caramel flesh. If she leaves me, I will die. Or worse yet, I'll have to get a real job.

As always, her body surprises me with its chill. She's cool as marble, despite the living warmth of her appearance. As always, I marvel at the madmen over the centuries who have mistaken a thing like Louise, or one of her sisters, for a mortal woman.

“I made coffee for you. I bought you a muffin. Please, come write something. We have a deadline.”

She says something unprintable about my deadline—the deadlines are always mine, never “ours”—but she rolls over. Her impossible lashes remain closed, black in the cup of her exquisite cheekbone, but her plush honeydew lips part to say, “What kind of muffin?”

“The kind you especially like. The Hawaii Five-O with the pineapple and the carrots.”

Her lips curve. For a lovely creature, she really can be stupidly perverse. “What if I want chocolate today?” Her voice is mock-sulking, softly accented, playful; she has worked a great deal in Europe, but her most recent favorite was a Mexican. She still looks and sounds like his ideal woman, though he's been rotting in his grave for years.

“Then I will go get you chocolate.”

“What if I want the chocolate with bananas?”

“Then I will get you the chocolate with bananas. Do you want the chocolate with bananas?” If it would get the bitch out of bed, let's face it, I would fetch a pail of the headwaters of the Nile for her.

Eyes open at last, she looks up at me with sparkling amusement. “No. I want the Hawaii.” Her iris shifts color from moment to moment. Amber now, translucent golden-red in the afternoon light.

“I have to have it done by tomorrow morning.”

She sighs. “You always say that.”

“It's always true.”

“What is it this time?”

“Nothing much. Just a little article for the Clarion West people.”

▶ Louise sits up again, more interested. She has fond memories of Clarion West. “Are we writing for him? The boy with the pretty blond hair?”

I grit my teeth. More than twenty years have passed; the boy with the pretty blond hair is now long since a man. He’s middle-aged, has a PhD in neuroscience and lives on the other side of the continent. While he is certainly a Clarion West graduate, he has long since cut his hair. Louise is immortal but selective in her memory, unfortunately—to her he will always be the mad, shaggy, golden boy who drank Sharkleberry Kool-Aid and vodka and dumped a garbage can full of water onto Brooks Peck during a water fight in the Clarion West dorm.

“No, we are writing for the other nice people. They have a newsletter and run a Write-a-thon every summer to help pay for photocopying, coffee, sugar cookies, and scholarships for new students.”

Louise rolls her eyes. “And what is this article about?”

“They said the piece should be about deadlines, and how I use the Clarion West Write-a-thon to finish stories.”

“Well, that sounds boring as hell.” She rises from the bed, wrapping herself in the consular *togatus* of her bed sheet, and strides imperiously to the desk. “Why would they ask you of all people to write about deadlines? You only wrote four stories in six weeks.”

I ease into the chair and put my fingers on the keys. “I’ve improved since then. And... one of them was long.”

She shakes her storm of curls disgustingly. “Maybe you should have written up outlines for a dozen stories before the workshop started. Then I could have picked which ones I wanted to work on as we went.”

Hiding an insidious smile, typing all the while, I fire back without missing a keystroke. “Since when will you work from an outline?”

“I won’t. If I tell myself the story in advance, there’s not a lot of point in all your typing, is there? I already know how it goes.” She unwraps her muffin with sharp golden nails. “Still, might work with some other Muse, *neb*? And there must have

been some way that we could have done more work. I haven’t changed, but we’re doing better now, yes?”

“We miss deadlines all the time.”

“You set so many of them that I’m always busy. I can’t miss them all.” Her pearly teeth sink into Hawaii Five-O.

I suppress a smile. “Maybe I’ve learned a little something over the years.”

She gives me a playful kick, and before long we’re laughing, and arguing over the best way to describe her teeth. “Pearly razors,” she insists, despite my assertion that no one will buy it; the whole point of a pearl is that it can’t be sharp. “It’s poetic license, dumbass!”

I do love Louise. I know she’s a drunk and a reprobate and a glutton for every kind of sensual excess. I know she’s not the single-minded, hatchet-faced, whip-wielding Puritan that flogs Stephen King every day, and will probably lash him until he finally drops dead in the traces in front of her plow. And I know that she’s lazy and self-indulgent and far too easily distracted by politics, poetry, and Facebook.

Nevertheless, I am grateful to her, for the things she shows me, for the things she allows me to do and see. Louise supported my family with freelance gigs until we could make a decent day job out of writing. She’s helped me through school, paid my bills, helped me make friends, and gotten me laid more times than I would care to admit. It’s true, she sometimes screws me over too, like when she couldn’t stop making me laugh at the dean of my college delivering a speech at my graduation—despite the fact that I was sitting in the first row. Or like all those times that she just couldn’t let an argument go, and insisted that we could “win the Internet.”

On the other hand, I’ve also seen Muses who burned all the poetry out of their partners before they were twenty-one, and left them to rot. Ludovika (Louise is just easier to say) is not the worst of the breed by a long shot.

You just have to learn to live with her. Keep her busy. Give her so many deadlines to meet that missing a few allows her to feel that she’s nobody’s mule...but doesn’t create a disaster for me.

The Clarion West Write-a-thon is

perfect for that. She still feels guilty that she didn’t finish six stories in 1990, when we attended the workshop. So once a year, for six weeks in a row, I can make her focus on getting out a piece of fiction to all my Clarion West supporters—preferably something that I know they haven’t seen before. In 2011, we did so well that I decided to put together a short story collection with a couple of new pieces in it.

Also, sometimes I lie.

This article is actually due April 1st, which is five days away.

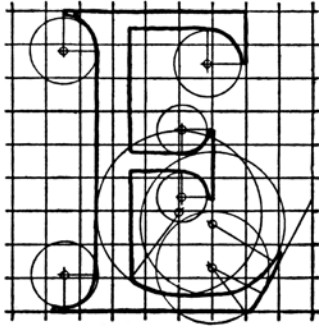
I told her it had to be done before she could go home and watch TV. ♦



Arinn Dembo and her Muse, Ludovika, graduated from CW in 1990, and have been arguing ever since. The resulting short fiction and poetry have appeared in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, *H.P. Lovecraft’s Magazine of Horror*, *The Vancouver Courier*, and a few anthologies and literary magazines. Since 2004, she has been the lead writer of Kerberos Productions, an independent game development studio in Vancouver, BC. *The Deacon’s Tale*, her first novel set in the universe of the popular SF strategy franchise *Sword of the Stars*, was published in October 2011. Two collections of her shorter work, *Monsoon and Other Stories* and *Seeing Red*, will be released in 2012.

We are always looking for interesting topics related to writing or the business of writing for feature articles in The Seventh Week. If you have an idea or would like to contribute an article, please contact the editor at eugene_myers@clarionwest.org.

courtesy from oldbooks.org



Executive Corner

BY DAVIS B. FOX

Many things contribute to a nonprofit organization's success: a compelling mission, dedicated board, talented staff, active alumni, committed volunteers, generous donors, financial stability, and a respected reputation in the community. All of those elements are in place at Clarion West. As we reach the midpoint of the 2012 season, our 29th consecutive year of operation, we can rest assured that Clarion West is on a secure path into the future.

In February and March, a record number of emerging writers applied to the summer workshop; in just a few short weeks we will welcome eighteen of them to Seattle to begin the six-week program. We're making this transformational experience possible for many of them with more scholarship aid than ever before.



photo by Leslie Horvath 2010

GEORGE R. R. MARTIN

This summer, for the first time, two of our Tuesday evening readings will be held in Town Hall Seattle to accommodate the large crowds expected for George R. R. Martin on July 3 and Chuck Palahniuk on July 24. Our other Tuesday readings, on June 19 and 26, and July 10 and 17, will continue with our good friends at the University Bookstore. You'll be receiving information on the entire reading series soon.

We're able to sustain ourselves with the generous support of institutional and in-



photo by Leslie Horvath

CHUCK PALAHNIUK

dividual donors. We're happy to announce that Amazon.com, our largest supporter, has renewed its generous commitment to us for 2012. The city, county, state, and national arts commissions have all contributed this year for various programs, ranging from our summer reading series to our new one-day workshops, which attracted more than 100 aspiring writers during the academic year. (Please see the article on the One-Day Workshops on page 4.)

We're also grateful for the continuing support of the Carl Brandon Society, Norwescon, the Susan C. Petrey Scholarship Fund, the Gordon Dickson Memorial Scholarship Fund, and Potlatch, as well as new funding from Arisia and from Renovation, the 2011 World Science Fiction Convention. As always, we're extremely appreciative of the hundreds of loyal alumni and fans who so generously contribute to Clarion West each and every year.

Thanks to all for making Clarion West such a great organization. I look forward to seeing many of you this summer. ♦



TOWN HALL SEATTLE

CW People

STUDENTS, INSTRUCTORS, AND VOLUNTEERS CHECK IN

[Editor's note: For this issue, alumni were invited to share what motivates them to write. If you have a suggestion for a future newsletter topic, please send it to eugene_myers@clarionwest.org.]

STUDENTS

1971

I'm pleased to announce that I have a story in *Summer Gothic*, an anthology of Alabama ghost stories. (The anthology is available from the publisher and on Amazon. They promise e-reader versions soon.) It's not a SFWA-qualified market, but I'm happy to be published again after a long dry spell.

Lin (Nielsen) Cochran, '71 & '72

1972

The anthology *Like Water for Quarks*, edited by myself and Elton Elliott, former editor of *Science Fiction Review*, has been accepted for representation by the Barbara Bova Literary Agency, now directed by Ben Bova. We are as delighted as we are honored. I have a story, "This Other Place", in the anthology *Gears and Levers*, edited by Phyllis Irene Radford, and a story, "Days of Thunder", in the *Norwescon* program book. Also, and happily, a new edition of *Mr. Magic Realism* is coming out soon from Eraserhead Press. And I won a round trip, first class ticket for two on Amtrak to San Francisco.

In regard to some of the topics mentioned for discussion, I can't say enough about the book *The Artist's Way* by Julia Cameron as an endless source of perspective on art which is so helpful. A quote out of the book by Chekhov is taped to my printer on my desk: "If you want to work on your art, work on your life." To have background issues, be they family of origin or otherwise, is pretty much "the human condition," but if they aren't addressed, like ghosts, they have a nasty habit of coming back to haunt you. And believe me, they will. But when they are addressed, we not only become better artists, but we tend to become better people. Sounds like a deal to me!

Bruce Taylor

1973



SCENE FROM *UNDEFEATED*

T.J. Martin, my former Fairhaven College student (Western Washington University) and now Oscar winner, premiered his documentary film *Undeclared* at Seattle's Landmark Varsity Theater on March 30. An American Culture Studies major, T.J., 32 years old and from Seattle, has become the first African American to win an Oscar for a full length film—thus overtaking such contenders as John Singleton and the fabulous Spike Lee. Some highlights:

- I got to watch T.J. address students at Fairhaven College and talk about the connections between his education and his filmmaking.
- I got to hold his Oscar!
- I got to see/witness his film about a black football team from a high school in apartheid-like Memphis, Tennessee.

Now for an update on some of my forthcoming work:

- Eileen Gunn's review of my third poetry chapbook, *Promised Lands: Poems From The Sovereign Of Dishpan Sonnets* (2010), for the *Cascadia Subduction Zone* (Aqueduct Press). Look for it at WisCon. For a thumbnail about the book, try this web profile from Seattle's Artist Trust: http://artisttrust.org/index.php/award-winners/artist-profile/jt_stewart
- Also from Aqueduct Press: two poems, "Ceremony" and "Say My Name", in *Moment of Change*, an anthology of boundary-crossing poems edited by Rose Lemberg. Look for it at WisCon.

I'm looking ahead to our next Clarion West for its 29th summer in Seattle. OMG! As co-founders of CW, little did Marilyn Holt nor I dream that we would one day have such a _____ (you fill in the blank)!

JT Stewart

1984

I find myself in the position of having to finish four big writing projects by fall: a movie novelization, a nonfiction guide to a popular book series, a novel based on the *Leverage* TV series, and probably another *Star Trek* book. I'm also writing copy for a line of collectible *Star Trek* postage stamps. All of this should keep me busy through the summer, but I'm still hoping to attend the Shore Leave convention outside Baltimore this August. Alas, no *Norwescon* this year.

Regarding the topic of the week, tight deadlines don't really allow me to workshop or beta-test my stories, but I do obsessively cruise the Internet in search of reviews and comments on my latest works. Sometimes they do give me an impression of what is working and what isn't quite so much. A really perceptive review can add to the voices at the back of my head—and maybe spur me to do better next time.

Greg Cox



► I have a novelette-length story called “Am I Free to Go?” forthcoming from Tor.com. And I am gearing up to do new publishing projects using the PULP online publishing system that was created by the Subutai Corporation as the infrastructure for Neal Stephenson & Greg Bear’s collaborative novel, *The Mongoliad*. My initial projects will involve hard character SF, hard SF by women, and SF drama. People wanting more information can reach me at kathryn.cramer@gmail.com.

Also, we have a bookstore in Westport, NY.

Kathryn Cramer

1987

Last year was the most prolific writing year of my life—which isn’t saying much compared to a lot of other writers, but for me it was a lot. (I plan to beat that record this year.) The four relatively major works I wrote in 2011 were a diverse bunch: a 4,300-word essay on the Tokyo String Quartet (published on Classical Net); an as-yet unsold 4,300-word short story exploring the divides between waking, dreaming, and myriad alterities; a 4,300-word essay (I have no explanation as to why that word-length kept recurring!) about my acquaintance with Joanna Russ (published twice, at full length in the December 2011 issue of *The New York Review of Science Fiction*, and in shorter form, among many other homages to Russ, in issue 18 of the Hugo-nominated fanzine *Chunga*), and an 8,000-word prolegomenon, “The First Woman on Mars”, published as a limited-run chapbook by Incunabula and already out of print.

Last month, I sold the rights to an extended version of the Mars piece to *White Fungus*, a beautifully-printed English-language art journal published in Taiwan and distributed worldwide. This year so far, I’ve written an incendiary short play about the 12-year-old William Shakespeare (under submission at a Manhattan theater company for their annual New Short Play Festival), and am now concentrating all my energies on completing (as publisher, editor, and art director) the long-awaited,

museum-quality new edition of John Crowley’s *Little, Big*. When that’s finally wrapped in a couple of months, I look forward to spending the rest of the year writing a book of my own.

Ron Drummond

My new scholarly book, *Critical Discourses of the Fantastic, 1712–1831*, now available from Ashgate, discovers the early arguments and definitions of fantasy literature as an emergent genre. It’s meant for anyone who wants to know how this all got started, so maybe someone will want to check it out. I have completed a draft of a YA novel and am working on a supernatural mystery, so I hope the next published book will be fiction.

David Sandner

1989



TONY DANIEL

My new SF book, *Guardian of Night*, came out in February from Baen. It was critiqued in first draft by Clarion West alums Lauren Dixon and Lucas Johnson, who are part of my writing group, so any problems with the book you can take up with them!

I was the editor GOH at Radcon in Pasco in February, too, and saw Patrick Swenson, Nisi Shawl, Bruce Taylor, and many Seattleites I haven’t run into in years. Wonderful to connect with them again.

Tony Daniel



I feel like I’ve been on a roll recently: My novel *Isles of the Forsaken* came out in August 2011, and the sequel, *Ison of the Isles*, appears in April 2012. Together, they comprise a single, hard-hitting fantasy novel about love and sacrifice in a time of revolution. At the same time, my novella “The Ice Owl” is on the ballot for a Nebula Award, which has been very exciting and gratifying (thank you, anyone out there who nominated it!). And best of all, I finished my history of the American Revolution on the frontier, which has been keeping me from writing SF for two years. I look forward eagerly to getting back where I belong—in the future.

Carolyn Ives Gilman

1990

My military SF novel *The Deacon’s Tale* is receiving some nice reviews. I’ve released a collection of short fiction and poetry, *Monsoon and Other Stories*, which incorporates some of the work I’ve published in magazines over the last twenty years. I have a second collection of essays and fiction about violence, feminism, and music coming up as well: *Seeing Red* should be out in the summer. As a side project, I am putting together an Illustrated Classics Series of my favorite SF, fantasy, and horror for Kthonia Press.

My latest sales have been to the new editor of *Weird Tales*, who has picked up a novella and a couple of reviews. I continue to work days as the lead writer at Kerberos Productions, and as the lead designer of an unannounced horror game.

Arinn Dembo



► 1992

I'm currently enjoying the release of my second novel, *Seattle Sleuth* (Rhemalda Publishing, March 2012), a mystery set in 1921. My first novel (*Immortal Quest*, Edge SF) was a trade paperback only; this second one is available in both paperback and e-book formats, which is new territory. E-books have never felt like "real" books to me. I don't own an e-reader, but I've been hearing from folks who do have them, and they seem to enjoy reading my mystery novel just as much as a "real" book, so I guess the only true difference is that I can't sign their copies.



Despite the fun of having another book out, I don't foresee any more in the future. I've been returning more and more to my first creative love, painting. I completed a certificate program in scientific illustration a few years back and was fortunate to be able to illustrate a book of nature essays back in 2009 (*In My Nature: A Birder's Year at the Montlake Fill*, by Constance Sidles).

I found that experience more satisfying than novel writing, and I even enjoyed the publication part more than that of my own books. I discovered that the publicity/marketing side of books is not to my liking. Giving readings and interviews, creating a web "presence," trying to get people interested in my novels—these things caused me a great deal of stress. I'm just not an extrovert, and I haven't got a single entrepreneurial gene in my body. But when I participated in the readings that the author did for the book that I illustrated, the pressure was off and I had a great time.

So I am returning to painting/illustrating more and more, and not writing. I guess I am gafiating from the writing world—and I'm okay with that. I'm glad I had a chance to have my writing published, and now I'm ready to move on. Not everyone makes a career out of writing, and not every writer stays passionate, and sometimes it's simply time to let it go.

Alexandra Mackenzie



The news for my class is resoundingly sad: We've lost Mark Bourne, a fine and fabulous writer, a delightful human being, and a rousing inspiration to us, his colleagues. Mark died the morning of February 25, 2012. He had previously had a narrow escape, and this time he was not spared. We were not spared.

Mark is survived by family, friends, and many wonderful stories. At a recent celebration of his life, his literary executor, Janna Silverstein, read "The Case of the Detective's Smile".

You can find an official obituary online at <http://markbourne.com/Personal.htm>, and you can view a photo montage created for his memorial service at <http://youtube.com/watch?v=JinLU9R348>. Several CW '92 classmates contributed to the obituary at right.

Nisi Shawl

A Clarion West scholarship has been created in Mark's name. If you'd like to donate, visit the **Mark Bourne Clarion West Scholarship Fund's** Web site at <http://mbcwsf.weebly.com/index.html>.

AN APPRECIATION OF MARK BOURNE

BY AMY WOLF, DANIEL MARCUS,
GENE BOSTWICK, TODD
MCCAFFREY, AND
TOM MARCINKO

In an instant, four words can destroy the world and remake it in a wholly different and utterly wrong way. Mark Bourne is dead. Our friend, our colleague in the SFF writing biz, our classmate at Clarion West 1992, and one of the best writers and surely the most upbeat and supportive of us. The workshop made us better writers, but it didn't give us the words to describe the magnitude of this tragedy.

Twenty years later, we still remember very clearly Mark's generosity of spirit as one of the focal points of our group. He made Clarion West doable for many of us with his positivism, kindness, and humor. Mark's enthusiasm helped more than one of us bounce back from a panning critique, or a spell of writer's block. His love of the genre and his joy in storytelling were infectious, and his encyclopedic knowledge of science fiction, movies, Monty Python, Groucho Marx, and the Firesign Theatre put us in awe. His love and knowledge of Sherlock Holmes and Shakespeare guaranteed that every Shakespeare play and Sherlock-related work we've seen since the workshop has caused us to wonder whether Mark would like it. His knowledge of science, and his ability to convey it, helped us all keep it real. And during the workshop and in the years since, as we read Mark's fiction, written with a style that threatened to rival both Mark Twain and Ray Bradbury, we waited for the day when we'd see Mark get Hugos, Nebulas, and movie deals. He was that good.

Mark saw a bright future. We wish he hadn't gone there so soon.



► 1996

I have just been offered a two-book deal from Orion: I'm writing far future fantasy/space opera for that and tinkering with genre boundaries a little bit. I lurk on various blogs and SF writer groups online, but have retreated from most Internet participation for the time being. I'm going to Eastercon, which is great as I'll see lots of old friends next week and that will keep me going for a long while. Trying to write short stories for two nice markets at the moment—why oh why is this so much harder than the novel length stuff??? But it is.

I'd love to know who's doing what from my class (Judy and Robert, I already know a little about your adventures thanks to the group post). In personal terms, I'm happier and fatter than I used to be, although they don't necessarily go together :)

Justina Robson

1998



ERIC M. WITCHEY

Damon Knight, may he rest in peace, once told me that nobody can plan their career. He told me that people try, but things never work out the way we plan. Since my Clarion West experience in 1998, nothing has gone as planned—and it's been wonderful! My publications have resulted in experiences like teaching writing in Crete and Guadalajara. My stories have appeared in countries I didn't know existed. One of

my novels appeared only in Poland in Polish, but it sold 50,000 copies. I've walked the red carpet in Hollywood, seen my stories appear in anthologies along with tales from my idols, and published articles on writing in both of the two largest writing magazines in the United States. My literary stories have appeared in anthologies, taken a second place in the *Writer's Digest* contest, and won a finalist position in the Eric Hoffer Prose Award. IFD Publishing, a small press many in the SFF community will recognize, has decided to publish a few of my contemporary fantasy and science fiction novels. The first, *Beyond the Serpent's Heart*, is now available for sale for all e-reader platforms. The second, currently titled *Coyote Canyon Invasion*, will appear in April of 2012. Fourteen years out from Clarion West, I can say that nothing has gone according to plan. Thank God for that. My plan wouldn't have given me nearly as much joy as what has actually happened.

Eric M. Witchey

1999

My novel, *Redwood and Wildfire*, won the 2011 James Tiptree Award. I am also the GOH at WisCon (the con where the Tiptree is awarded) this year, a happy coincidence.

I am working every part of my body to the bone to finish my next novel, *Will Do Magic for Small Change*. I am inspired by all the people who never give up.

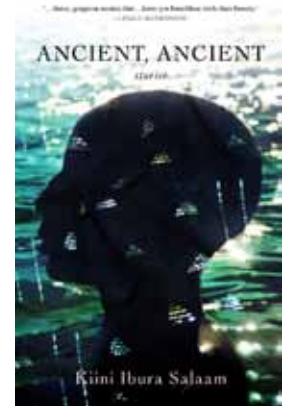
Andrea Hairston

I've been awarded a Fulbright fellowship to Luxembourg. I'll do a little teaching at the U of Luxembourg, and while I'm there, I'll write a chapter of my next (scholarly) book, a chapter focusing on Tintin during the occupation years.

Joe Sutliff Sanders

I am having a great growth spurt. I bought an apartment in June of last year, and in May, Aqueduct Press is publishing my first book—a collection of short stories called *Ancient, Ancient*. CW volunteer/supporter Nisi Shawl wrote the introduction. Thank you, Nisi! CW 2001 instructors Nalo Hopkinson and Jack Womack contributed book blurbs. Thank you, Nalo and Jack! I'm looking forward to more magic in the coming year—perhaps a hidden inheritance that I am fated to discover on my life travels; an amazing international journey; and an unforeseen spurt in creative productivity that creates a new painting series or a new book. I'll take it all!

Kiini Ibura Salaam



2002

I've just completed my first novel, which is currently out with the heroes of my fantastic pro crit group, *Written in Blood*. Though this one is a caper/thriller with the slightest tinge of the fantastic, the next one (outlining now) features legends and immortals. I'm also delighted to report that my nonfiction book, *Aegean Dream*, is enjoying robust sales on Kindle, especially in the UK, regularly vying for the number one spot in Kindle Nonfiction>Greece and Travel>Greece categories.

Ten years after my own Clarion West, I'm still in contact with about half the class, with three members—Traci Morganfield, Doug Sharp, and Genevieve Williams, part of my writers' group.

Dario Ciriello



► 2004

My story “Love Gaia, Live Green” takes the cover in the April 2012 issue of *Penumbra* (Animals theme, <http://penumbra.musapublishing.com>). Many thanks to the former Fangs of God for their critiques! I’ve also been hard at work as the 2012 Rhysling Awards chair for the Science Fiction Poetry Association (<http://sfpoetry.com/rhysling.html>). I love poetry, especially speculative poetry, and I’ve always wanted to help with the Rhyslings; I’ve really been learning a lot as a result. *The 2012 Rhysling Anthology* will be published by the Science Fiction Poetry Association in cooperation with Hadrosaur Productions in late spring. Finally, the Kickstarter funding for the *Scheherazade’s Façade* anthology, edited by Michael M. Jones (<http://michaelmjones.com/wordpress/scheherazades-facade>), has been successful, and I’m looking forward to seeing my story “Going Dark” alongside those of the other wonderful authors! (Many thanks to Fangs of God for this one, as well!)

Lyn C. A. Gardner

2005

My biggest and best news of late is that my first novel, *Fair Coin*, was just published by Pyr in March. It’s a science fiction young adult adventure, and so far the reviews have been pretty good. Not that I’m obsessing over them or anything. Folks may remember that I finished the first draft of this one back in the 2007 Write-a-thon; no one ever said publishing moves quickly! (If someone did, she was lying.) You can find out more about the book and its upcoming sequel, *Quantum Coin*, at Facebook (<http://facebook.com/flipthecoin>) or my website (<http://ecmyers.net>).

The Write-a-thon was a terrific motivation for me to complete *Fair Coin*, its sequel, and a whole bunch of short stories. In general, the SFF and YA community—especially my critique group, Altered Fluid—has been invaluable at keeping me writing and working toward publication. Everyone’s successes and productivity can be incredibly inspiring, and sharing setbacks and frustrations also helps when



things aren’t going so well. I often blog or tweet (<http://twitter.com/ecmyers>) about my writing progress, to hold myself accountable for my output, celebrate milestones, and hopefully to encourage others that hard work, talent, and a bit of luck really can result in achieving our dreams.

Eugene Myers

I recently found out I’ve been nominated for a Nebula for my novelette “The Migratory Patterns of Dancers”. I couldn’t be more thrilled! This story was published in *Giganotosaurus*, edited by Ann Leckie, another Clarion West alum. I’ve also recently acquired a literary agent for my dystopic SF young adult novel about the cure for schizophrenia and its unusual side effects.

Katherine Sparrow

2006

My coolest Clarion West-related news is that my classmate Caroline M. Joachim and I wrote our first collaboration story together (“Flash Bang Remember”) and sold it to *Lightspeed*. I also have stories forthcoming this year in *Beneath Ceaseless Skies* and *Daily Science Fiction*.

I’m also very excited for my debut novel, *Ironskin* (October, Tor)—it now has a gorgeous cover and an ISBN and everything! I’ve been working on the sequel, which is due out in 2013. We’re moving locally, to a beautiful old fixer house, and the baby is now fifteen months, so it’s been busy.

I’ve also been narrating a lot of stories for Podcastle and Escape Pod and so on, and I fell in love with podcasting. So I’m doing a 2012 flash podcast project called *Toasted Cake* (<http://www.toastedcake.com>). I’ve run (or will) a bunch of stories from CW’ers, including Cat Rambo, Katie Sparrow, and Rachel Swirsky. (Wait,

that sounds like I’m only running the ’05 class....) I’m open for subs in April, but if you read this after the window has closed and you think you have something I might like, feel free to email me. Or, just come check it out.

Had a great time at the San Diego World Fantasy and I’m hoping to make the one in Toronto!

Tina Connolly



TINA CONNOLLY

After moving four times in the last five years, my husband and I bought a house in Seattle and we’re hoping to stay put for a long time. Eventually we might even finish unpacking the boxes that are sitting in the basement. Between fixing up the house and chasing after my two-year-old, I haven’t had much time for writing, but I do have a few bits of news to announce.

A couple of my stories have appeared in *Daily Science Fiction* (“Shades of Orange” and “Deathbed”). One of the stories I wrote at Clarion West (“Time to Say Goodnight”) was selected for inclusion in Jason Sanford’s anthology *Million Writers Award: The Best Online Science Fiction and Fantasy* (June 2012).

I also have two stories coming out in *Lightspeed* in the near future: “Mothership” and “Flash Bang Remember”. The latter is a collaboration with my Clarion West classmate Tina Connolly. Tina also recently podcast my story “Pageant Girls” as part of her podcast-a-week project for 2012—check it out at <http://www.toastedcake.com>.

Caroline M. Joachim



► 2008



The Clarion West Class of 2008 held their first reunion at a gorgeous San Diego beach house during the World Fantasy Convention in October. Classmates gathered together from as close as California and as far away as Australia. During the reunion, the class enjoyed lounging on the beach; gorging on recursive baked goods prepared by talented class bakers; critiquing each other's stories; having breakfast with their Week 4 instructor and World Fantasy Convention 2011 Toastmaster, Connie Willis; discussing current writing projects; partying at the convention; and reading "The Eye of Argon"—the worst science fiction story ever written—aloud to one another over breakfast. They hope to reunite again soon.

Marguerite Croft

Clarion West 2008 enjoyed a fantastic five-day reunion, mostly thanks to the hard work of our classmate Pam Rentz. Fourteen of our eighteen classmates showed up to San Diego's World Fantasy Con last year—Carol Ryles flew in from Australia, and I managed to make it from Vietnam. A bunch of us shared a beach house, while others stayed at the convention hotel. Personally, it was my first convention, so I had a great time checking out the events, cheering my classmates on, meeting authors I admire (including one of our CW instructors), and, in a small way, recapturing the intensity of my CW weeks. Some of my classmates—the more career-oriented ones—planned their schedule like surgery, while others lolled on the beach, or baked, or held critiquing sessions of recent work.

I could fill this message with in-jokes and memories, but this isn't a yearbook entry. Suffice it to say that a good time was had by all, and that keeping in touch with the friends you made at CW can provide inspiration, consolation, and opportunity. I'm lucky in that I can count all of my classmates as friends, even some four years after those intense, delirious, transformative weeks. Here's looking forward to another class reunion.

Owen Salisbury

2009

My story "Surviving the eBookalypse" was published in *Escape Pod* in January. This was my Week 4 story.

Randy Henderson,
<http://randy-henderson.com>

2011



CORINNE DUYVIS

I'm from the 2011 class, and I have a bit of publication news. Since the last newsletter, I've published one of my Clarion West application stories, "Eight", in the November 14 issue of *Strange Horizons*. I also sold my Week 6 story, "The Applause of Others", to *FISH*, an anthology by Dagan Books. The book should be out this spring.

As far as motivation goes: I have a large number of beta readers I swap my novels with, and discussing my work with them does wonders, but what keeps me writing is knowing that every day of work I put in brings me closer to my goal. That goal

can be finishing my latest novel, querying agents, going on submission to editors, seeing my work published.... Whatever it is, I set a deadline and go for it.

Corinne Duyvis

INSTRUCTORS

My backlist is available in e-book form at Book View Cafe, of which I'm a founding member: <http://bookviewcafe.com>

We're in the midst of testing a shiny new e-bookstore which I hope will be up and running when *The Seventh Week* is out.

I'm working on *Curve of the World*—it's about half finished at 100,000 words. Yikes.

In the meantime, flash fiction:

"Supreme Court of the United States Defines Personhood" (<http://tinyurl.com/flash-scotus-personhood>)

"A Seven-Question Quiz on Domestic Tranquility" (<http://tinyurl.com/seven-question>)

"Virginia General Assembly Twitter Novel" (<http://tinyurl.com/compressed-novel>)

Vonda N. McIntyre, Clarion (PA) '70, CW administrator 1971-73, CW Instructor '84, '90)



▶ My Nebula-nominated novella, “Ghosts Doing the Orange Dance”, will be published in an expanded, illustrated version, with notes by John Crowley and Liz Hand, as a limited-edition chapbook by PS Publishing, in the UK, in July.

My post-apocalyptic pseudo-Norse psuedo-Edda, “Ragnarok”, is up for the 2011 Rhysling prize.

My steampunk ghost story, “Myster-ies of the Old Quarter”, will be reprinted in the new Prime Books *Year’s Best Dark Fantasy and Horror*.

But most important, I’ve written a Forgotten Realms D&D novel called *The Rose of Sarifal*, under the pseudonym Paulina Claiborne. It’s my best novel to date, I think, and the pub date is May of this year.

Paul Park, ’98, ’00, ’02, ’06, ’08, ’11

It’s going to be a busy spring for me. In April, I go to China to research my next novel. Then in May I’ll be in Yekaterinburg for Aelita, Russia’s oldest science fiction



MICHAEL SWANWICK

convention. Meanwhile, I’m working on my next two novels, a dozen stories, and several pieces of nonfiction. My most recent novel, *Dancing With Bears*, is currently on the stands, and in a year or so I should have enough new short fiction for another collection.

I motivate myself by putting the titles of everything I’m working on and all the

projects I hope to find time to get to on Post-it notes by my desk. They remind me that the faster I get them all written the sooner I’ll be able to get to some newer projects that I very much want to write. It wasn’t always like this—when I was young, the ideas came slowly and reluctantly. But with experience, the ideas come more readily. So if anybody reading this is wondering how to get more ideas, the answer is simple: Type faster.

Michael Swanwick, ’94, ’95, ’05

Send in your updates for the Alumni News section of the Clarion West website! Recent publications, upcoming readings, interviews—if you have writing-related news, we want to hear about it. E-mail your latest news to cwAlumniNews@gmail.com. Please use the subject “Alumni News,” and be sure to include the year you attended CW. ♦

photos by Vicki Saunders



RANDY HENDERSON, CW ’09, PRACTICES KEYBOARD INCANTATIONS

Write-a-thon Coming



CLOCKWISE: CLARION WEST ALUMNI LUCAS JOHNSON, LAUREN DIXON, EMILY SKAFTUN, AND RASHIDA J. SMITH GET READY.



Clarion West
Writers Workshop