

University of Dayton APRIL 5-7, 2018

"You can write!"

Three little words

English professor
Brother Tom Price

changed

my

life

ERMA BOMBECK

About the workshop

umorist Erma Bombeck is one of America's most celebrated writers. For those who grew up with Erma's columns hanging on our refrigerator doors, we always felt as though she could be our next-door neighbor. Her writing captured the foibles of family life in a way that made us laugh at ourselves.

The University of Dayton held the first Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop in 2000 as a one-time event to commemorate the Bombeck family's gift of Erma's papers to her alma mater.

We thought a writers' workshop in Erma's name would be an outstanding tribute to her legacy. Erma's famous friends — columnist Art Buchwald, "Family Circus" cartoonist Bil Keane and author and Equal Rights Amendment ad-

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vocate Liz Carpenter - headlined the event. It proved to be so popular (and so much fun) that we decided to offer it again.

And the rest is history. Today, writers inspired by Erma's humor and humanity gather every other year to laugh and learn from the likes of Dave

Barry, Garrison Keillor, Phil Donahue, Nancy Cartwright, Don Novello, Leonard Pitts, Gail Collins, Alan Zweibel and Lisa Scottoline. The event always sells out without a marketing brochure or a single

ad. It draws new and established writers from around the nation and beyond. It is the only workshop in the country devoted to both humor and human interest writing.

The personal involvement of the Bombeck family makes the event memorable and sets it apart from the myriad of other writers' workshops offered across the country.

The workshop is a labor of love. It's run on a shoestring budget by University of Dayton staff, professors and volunteers. The University of Dayton's Alumni Association underwrites the cost of scholarships that allows University students to attend for free. In 2004, University of Dayton alumnus Ralph Hamberg '56 and his wife, Cindy gave a \$100,000 gift to start a workshop endowment fund in memory of her cousin, Brother Tom

> Price, S.M. This University of Dayton English professor first told Erma "three little words" of encouragement, "You can write."

The Hamberg family, the Bombeck family and other supporters continue to contribute to the endowment fund. which allows the University of Dayton to keep the workshop affordable.

This effort to honor Erma Bombeck's legacy goes beyond the writers' workshop.

The workshop has spawned a blog (humorwriters.org); an online museum (ErmaBombeckCollection.com): a documentary produced by ThinkTV and distributed nationally through American















Public Television; an international writing competition co-hosted by the Washington-Centerville (Ohio) Public Library; a humorist-in-residence program; a humor anthology; an Ohio historical marker on campus; a monthly e-newsletter; a Facebook page; Twitter and Instagram feeds; and an active online discussion group. In 2010, CBS Sunday Morning With Charles Osgood aired a Mother's Day trib-

ute to Erma Bombeck, using the workshop as a backdrop for the piece.

Our mission is simple: to encourage and inspire writers in the same way Erma Bombeck found encouragement and inspiration at the University of Dayton.

Our mantra is timeless: "You can write!"

Welcome to the University of Dayton's Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop.

A special welcome

Bombeck Writers' Work-shop!
You are part of history.
No other workshop has
sold out as quickly as this one — just under five hours, a new record.

elcome to the 2018 Erma

Writers' Workshop University

This is our 10th workshop, and we're celebrating with a stellar program.

Six sessions will be offered during most time slots. Simply choose which ones you want to attend. Most sessions will be offered twice. For the final session on Saturday,

all attendees are invited to "Pitchapalooza," billed as American Idol for books (only kinder and gentler). It's back by popular demand after rave reviews.

In response to a survey of attendees, we have created more workshops in the craft of writing, getting your work published and successfully using new media to market yourself. Some workshops are tailored for writers of all levels of experience. Others are geared to more advanced writers.

Some features:

■ The funny and gracious Patricia Wynn Brown returns as emcee. A performer and writer, she has been involved in some capacity with every workshop since day one. We call her our Mistress of Mayhem.

■ We will honor the inaugural winners of A Hotel Room of One's Own: The Erma Bombeck | Anna Lefler Humoristin-Residence Program and the winners of the Erma Bombeck Writing Competition. In all, more than 1,000 writers entered these two competitions. More than 100 established writers served as volunteer judges, with the finalist entries judged by Alan Zweibel, Laraine Newman, Dave Barry and Bonnie Jo Campbell.

■ More than 60 brave, funny writers signed up to perform at the popular Attendee Stand-Up

Comedy Night. We randomly picked a dozen. Comedian Wendy Liebman will choose another three people from the hilarious writers she meets in her stand-up comedy boot camp. Wendy's boot camp and an add-on workshop in stand-up comedy performance are open to

anyone who wants to learn writing techniques to make their stories funnier — not just those interested in performing at the close of the workshop on Saturday night.

At the Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop, you will discover inspiring faculty who are approachable and encouraging. You will laugh and learn in an atmosphere that's supportive to writers of all levels.

Most importantly, you will hear the words Erma first heard at the University of Dayton: "You can write!"

A tribute to Bill Bombeck

imagine there's a grand reunion going on right now."

The words of daughter Betsy Bombeck

brought a smile to those gathered at a Phoenix chapel to celebrate the life of Bill Bombeck. In March, the family held a private graveside service at Dayton's Woodland

Cemetery, where Erma Bombeck is also buried.

Dayton-born educator and widower of the celebrated humorist, Bill died Jan. 12 after a bout with pneumonia. He was 90.

In Bill's honor, we lovingly dedicate the 2018 Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop. He will be remembered for his humor, humility, generosity,

genuineness and love for family.

In 2000, Bill invited a few of his famous friends — columnist Art Buchwald, "Family Circus" cartoonist and neighbor Bil Keane and Equal Rights Amendment advocate Liz Carpenter — to campus to launch the inaugural workshop

and give Erma's papers to the University of Dayton, where the couple met.

As he presented boxes of Erma's columns and correspondence, he quipped, "Sometimes I feel like Prince Philip." The audience erupted in laughter.

Over the years, he gently and consis-

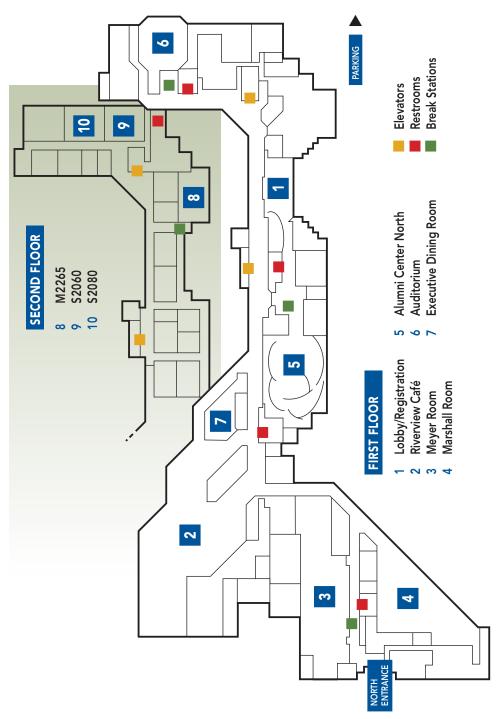
tently encouraged writers to find their own voices, not try to be the next Erma Bombeck.

In an essay shortly after Bill's death, workshop emcee Pat Wynn Brown wrote, "He made me feel the same way Gregory Peck, playing Atticus Finch, made me feel when I first saw the movie To Kill a Mockingbird. That feeling: affirmation. ... After Mr. Bombeck spoke at the first confer-

ence, I walked up and introduced myself and told him I was a writer. He told me the secret of success was to keep at it, keep working, and write about my own view and not to try to be anyone else. He spoke directly to me as though he had all the time in the world to encourage an unknown writer."

This workshop, in Erma's name, is part of Bill's legacy. We'll always be grateful for his support — and enduring belief in the workshop's ability to encourage and inspire writers.

Map of 1700 South Patterson Building



Wednesday, April 4

Special pre-workshop event, free and open to the public

7 p.m. Erma Bombeck Writing Competition Awards Ceremony

Emcee: Betsy Bombeck Centerville Library 111 W. Spring Valley Rd. Centerville, OH 45458

Thursday, April 5

2 to 5:30 p.m. Attendee sign-in

Marriott at the University of Dayton Lobby

3 to 5 p.m. **Get Your Book Published!** (advance registration required)

Stewart Boardroom (room #270)
Marriott at the University of Dayton

4 to 6 p.m. Networking reception

Marriott at the University of Dayton, Tradewinds

(cash bar)

4 to 9 p.m. EBWW bookstore open

Marriott at the University of Dayton Foyer

6 p.m. Welcome dinner with keynote Liza Donnelly

Marriott at the University of Dayton Ballroom

Dinner program includes a special tribute to the late Bill Bombeck and recognition of the two winners of the inaugural A Hotel Room of One's Own: Erma Bombeck | Anna Lefler Humorist-in-Residence Program.

8 p.m. **Book signing with Liza Donnelly**

Marriott at the University of Dayton Foyer

Dessert reception Tradewinds (cash bar)

9 p.m. Erma Bombeck Writing Competition essay readings

Marriott at the University of Dayton Ballroom

Friday, April 6

7 to 8:30 a.m. (loop) Shuttle bus from Marriott at the University of Dayton

to 1700 South Patterson Building on River Campus

7:30 to 9 a.m. Attendee sign-in (lobby of 1700 South Patterson Building)

Continental breakfast (Riverview Café)

7:45 to 8:45 a.m. **Speed Dating for Writers** (advance registration required)

Executive Dining Room

Get Your Book Published! (advance registration required)

Deeds Conference Room, Alumni Center

9 to 10:15 a.m. — Six concurrent sessions (choose one)

Secrets to Getting Published in Magazines That Editors Won't Tell

You (But I Will!) - Zachary Petit

Auditorium — This session also offered Saturday at 2 p.m.

Wit, Wisdom and a Good Naked Workshop — Joni Cole

Alumni Center North — This session also offered Saturday at 9 a.m.

Maximize Your Funny: Strategies for Busting the Humor Block — Dr. Mark Shatz

Marshall Room — This session also offered Friday at 3:30 p.m.

10 Top Lessons Learned From 10 Years Interviewing Bestselling

Authors — Jessica Strawser (one time only) Meyer Room

Developing the Writer's Eye — Katrina Kittle

M2265 — This session also offered Friday at 3:30 p.m.

Create Vivid, Believable People, Places and Scenes in Fiction or

NonFiction — Sharon Short (one time only)

S2060

Break

10:30 to 11:45 a.m. — Six concurrent sessions (choose one)

Write Without the Fight: Free Your Writing From Doubt and Delay — Julia Roberts

Auditorium — This session also offered Saturday at 10:30 a.m.

Memoir Boot Camp — Marion Winik

Alumni Center North — This session also offered Saturday at 10:30 a.m.

It's Okay to Laugh: How to Use Humor in the Dark Places - Lauretta Hannon

Marshall Room — This session also offered Saturday at 9 a.m.

What's the Real Deal? Uncovering the Best Publishing Options for Your Book — Panel moderated by Dr. Nancy Berk, featuring David **Braughler, Donna Cavanagh and Cindy Ratzlaff** (one time only) Meyer Room

So, What's Your Website Done for You Lately? — Tracy Beckerman and Anne Parris (one time only)

M2265

Developing Voice and Style — Susan Pohlman

S2060 — This session also offered Saturday at 9 a.m.

Break

Lunch with keynote Karen Walrond Noon to 1:30 p.m.

Riverview Café

Break and book signing with Karen Walrond 1:30 to 2 p.m.

2 to 3:15 p.m. — Six concurrent sessions (choose one)

Stand-Up Comedy Boot Camp — Wendy Liebman (one time only)

Auditorium

How to Uncover Your Own Voice and Get it Down on Paper

— Kathy Kinney and Cindy Ratzlaff (one time only)

Alumni Center North

The Comfortable Chair: Bringing Humor to the Personal Essay - Dinty W. Moore

Marshall Room — This session also offered Saturday at 2 p.m.

Ask the Agents — Panel moderated by Jessica Strawser, featuring Lauren Abramo, Kate McKean and Saba Sulaiman

Meyer Room — This session also offered Saturday at 9 a.m.

Write a Query Letter That Gets Manuscript and Proposal Requests — Jane Friedman (one time only)

M2265

MORE FRIDAY WORKSHOP SESSIONS



Friday, April 6

The F Word: Feminist Comic Writers Who Inspire Us — Peter Marino

S2060 — This session also offered Saturday at 2 p.m.

Break

3:30 to 4:45 p.m. — Six concurrent sessions (choose one)

 ${\bf Sit\text{-}Down\ Comedy:\ Tweet\ Like\ a\ Stand\ Up\ and\ Kill\ It\ on\ Social\ Media}$

Joel Madison

Alumni Center North — This session also offered Saturday at 10:30 a.m.

Their, There, They're: A Guide to Improving Communication and

Using Words Goodly — Leighann Lord (one time only)

Auditorium

Maximize Your Funny: Strategies for Busting the Humor Block

- Dr. Mark Shatz

Marshall Room — This session also offered Friday at 9 a.m.

Landing a Book Deal: Creative Ways to Grow Your Brand

- Jessica Murnane

M2265 — This session also offered Saturday at 2 p.m.

Inspired: The Art of Writing with Humor and Heart — T. Faye Griffin

Meyer Room — This session also offered Saturday at 10:30 a.m.

Developing the Writer's Eye — Katrina Kittle

S2060 — This session also offered Friday at 9 a.m.

3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Shuttle buses to Marriott at the University of Dayton (loop)

5 to 5:45 p.m. **Get Your Book Published!** (advance registration required)

Stewart Boardroom (room #270)
Marriott at the University of Dayton

5 to 11 p.m. EBWW bookstore open

Marriott at the University of Dayton Foyer

6 p.m. Dinner with keynote Rita Davenport

Marriott at the University of Dayton Ballroom

Dinner program includes recognition of the winners of the

Erma Bombeck Writing Competition.

8:30 to 10 p.m. Book signing with Rita Davenport and all workshop presenters

Marriott at the University of Dayton, Tradewinds

(cash bar)

Saturday, April 7

Shuttle bus from Marriott at the University of Dayton to 1700 South 7 to 8:30 a.m. (loop)

Patterson Building on River Campus

Continental breakfast (Riverview Café) 7:30 to 9 a.m.

7:45 to 8:45 a.m. **Speed Dating for Writers** (advance registration required)

Executive Dining Room

Get Your Book Published! (advance registration required)

Deeds Conference Room, Alumni Center

9 to 10:15 a.m. — Six concurrent sessions (choose one)

How to Build an Effective Author Website — Jane Friedman

(one time only) Auditorium

Wit, Wisdom and a Good Naked Workshop — Joni Cole

Alumni Center North — This session also offered Friday at 9 a.m.

It's Okay to Laugh: How to Use Humor in the Dark Places — Lauretta Hannon

Marshall Room — This session also offered Friday at 10:30 a.m.

How to Get Published Successfully — Arielle Eckstut and

David Henry Sterry (one time only)

Meyer Room

Developing Voice and Style — Susan Pohlman

S2060 — This session also offered Friday at 10:30 a.m.

Ask the Agents - Panel moderated by Sharon Short, featuring Lauren Abramo, Kate McKean and Saba Sulaiman

M2265 — This session also offered Friday at 2 p.m.

Break

MORE SATURDAY WORKSHOP SESSIONS



Saturday, April 7

10:30 to 11:45 a.m. — Six concurrent sessions (choose one)

Write Without the Fight: Free Your Writing From Doubt and Delay - Julia Roberts

Auditorium — This session also offered Friday at 10:30 a.m.

Memoir Boot Camp — Marion Winik

Alumni Center North — This session also offered Friday at 10:30 a.m.

Inspired: The Art of Writing with Humor and Heart — T. Faye Griffin

Marshall Room — This session also offered Friday at 3:30 p.m.

Drag Races, Detours and Destinations: Finding the Power in Your Creative Journey — Panel moderated by Dr. Nancy Berk, featuring Kathy Kinney, Katrina Kittle, Leighann Lord and **Jessica Murnane** (one time only)

Meyer Room

Sit-Down Comedy: Tweet Like a Stand Up and Kill it on Social Media Joel Madison

M2265 — This session also offered Friday at 3:30 p.m.

How to Grow Your Facebook Fan Page — Tracy Beckerman and Anne Parris (one time only)

S2060

Break

Noon to 1:30 p.m. **Lunch with keynote John Grogan**

Riverview Café

Break and book signing with John Grogan 1:30 to 2 p.m.

2 to 3:15 p.m. — Six concurrent sessions (choose one)

It's a Brand New Brand YOU World: Why Authors MUST Treat Themselves and Their Books as Brands — Even Before Publication - Cindy Ratzlaff (one time only)

Auditorium

Secrets to Getting Published in Magazines That Editors Won't Tell You (But I Will!) - Zachary Petit

Alumni Center North — This session also offered Friday at 9 a.m.

The Comfortable Chair: Bringing Humor to the Personal Essay - Dinty W. Moore

Marshall Room — This session also offered Friday at 2 p.m.

Stand-Up Comedy Performance — Wendy Liebman (one time only)

Meyer Room

The F Word: Feminist Comics Who Inspire Us — Peter Marino

M2265 — This session also offered Friday at 2 p.m.

Landing a Book Deal: Creative Ways to Grow Your Brand

- Jessica Murnane

S2060 — This session also offered Friday at 3:30 p.m.

Break

3:30 to 5 p.m. Pitchapalooza — American Idol for Books — Arielle Eckstut and

David Henry Sterry (open to all attendees)

Riverview Café

3:30 to 4:30 p.m. **Speed Dating for Writers** (advance registration required)

Executive Dining Room

3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Shuttle buses to Marriott at the University of Dayton (loop).

After 4 p.m., shuttle buses will pick up at **north** entrance of

1700 South Patterson Building.

5:15 to 6:15 p.m. **Get Your Book Published!** (advance registration required)

Stewart Boardroom (room #270)
Marriott at the University of Dayton

5:15 p.m. Shuttle bus to University of Dayton main campus, photo opportunity

at Erma Bombeck historical marker and memorial tree (pick up at **front**

entrance of 1700 South Patterson Building)

5 to 9:30 p.m. EBWW bookstore open

Marriott at the University of Dayton Foyer

6:30 to 8:30 p.m. **Dinner with keynote Monica Piper**

Marriott at the University of Dayton Ballroom

Dinner program includes conversation with Jennifer Joplin, actress portraying "Erma" in upcoming Human Race Theatre production of

Frma Bombeck: At Wit's End.

8:30 to 9:30 p.m. **Photo Booth**

Marriott at the University of Dayton Foyer

(cash bar)

9:30 to 11 p.m. Attendee Stand-Up Comedy Night, with emcee Wendy Liebman

Marriott at the University of Dayton Ballroom

SPECIAL FEATURES

10 Top Lessons Learned From 10 Years of Interviewing Bestselling Authors

Jessica Strawser

Jessica Strawser, editor-at-large for Writer's Digest magazine, distills best-in-class writing and process advice from her Writer's Digest conversations with the likes of David Sedaris, Alice Walker, David Baldacci, Lisa Scottoline, Lisa Gardner and others.

Offered Friday at 9 a.m.

Drag Races, Detours and Destinations: Finding the Power in Your Creative Journey

Panel moderated by Dr. Nancy Berk, featuring Kathy Kinney, Katrina Kittle, Leighann Lord and Jessica Murnane

Creative success rarely happens overnight. Ask any "overnight sensation," and they will remind you of the years of hard work that led up to those late-night shows and paparazzi moments. So how do you know when you're in the right place? Is it best to tiptoe or dive into the experience? When do you embrace or ignore the critics? And what about shifting gears? Is dreaming big ever a detriment? This panel will help you identify strengths and weaknesses, look at your obstacles in new ways and discover alternative shifts and strategies to give you power and options on your writing journey and beyond.

Offered Saturday at 10:30 a.m.

Their, There, They're: A Guide to Improving Communication and Using Words Goodly

Leighann Lord

Do you have a love/hate relationship with the English language? Are you annoyed by acronyms? Humbled by homonyms? Does punctuation make you panic? You're not alone. First

words, last words, magic words, bad words. Logophile (word lover) Leighann Lord takes attendees on a fun frolic through the land of word nerdery, exploring the power that language has to hurt and heal; entertain and inspire. And why sometimes, even for professional speakers and writers, our communication efforts can fail. But fear not! In this fun refresher, Leighann will show you:

- The importance of text, tone and body language
- Why subtext and context matter
- Why autocorrect is not your friend
- Why you should not ignore Microsoft Word's "red" and "green" lines
- The three things you should do before you hit send
- The most important question to ask before you hit send
- Five great resources literally at your fingertips

Attendees will take away a renewed appreciation for the English language and concrete tools on how to use it better.

■ Offered Friday at 3:30 p.m.

Speed Dating for Writers (advance registration required)

Moderated by Tracy Beckerman

Back by popular demand. Need encouragement or advice? Seasoned writers, marketers and agents will answer your questions and share writing and publishing tips. It's based on a speed-dating model that allows writers to learn a variety of perspectives from the pros in a short amount of time.

■ Offered Friday and Saturday at 7:45 a.m. and Saturday at 3:30 p.m.

Get Your Book Published! (one-on-one consultations, advance registration required)

David Braughler and Donna Cavanagh Struggling to decide between hybrid publishing and hands-on DIY publishing? Unsure of how to handle ISBNs, copyrights and the Library of Congress? And what about getting your book into libraries and bookstores? From the mechanics of publishing to the realities of marketing and distribution, publishing experts David Braughler and Donna Cavanagh are available to meet individually with writers to discuss the questions you should be asking yourself before publishing your book.

■ Offered Thursday 3 p.m., Friday and Saturday 7:45 a.m., Friday 5 p.m and Saturday 5:15 p.m.

PUBLISHING

Pitchapalooza — American Idol for Books

(one time only, enter your name at the event)

Arielle Eckstut and David Henry Sterry

Pitchapalooza is American Idol for books (only kinder and gentler). Twenty writers will be selected at random to pitch their books. Writers get one minute to make their best pitch. A panel of judges will help these writers, and everyone in the audience, improve their pitches. Judges critique everything from idea to style to potential in the marketplace and much more. Authors and audience come away with concrete advice as well as a greater understanding of the ins and outs of the publishing industry. Whether you're pitching yourself, or simply listening to trained professionals critique other writers, Pitchapalooza is educational and entertaining for everyone. From Los Angeles to New York City, and many stops along the way, Pitchapalooza has consistently drawn standingroom-only crowds, press and blog coverage, and the kind of bookstore buzz reserved for celebrity authors. At the end of Pitchapalooza, the judges will pick a winner. The winner receives an introduction to an agent or publisher appropriate for his/her book. Numerous authors have received publishing deals due to Pitchapalooza. Bonus: Anyone who buys a copy of The Essential Guide to Getting Your Book Published will be entitled to a free webinar in which they will get their pitch critiqued live by The Book Doctors.

Offered Saturday at 3:30 p.m.

Secrets to Getting Published in Magazines That Editors Won't Tell You (But I Will!)

Zachary Petit

In this candid, brutally honest and genuinely funny session, author and editor-in-chief Zachary Petit breaks down the many critical ins and outs of writing for magazines, including the ways in which magazine editors can be divas, how to get their attention, get published and begin a successful freelance career.

Offered Friday at 9 a.m. and Saturday at 2 p.m.

Ask the Agents

Panel moderated by Jessica Strawser or Sharon Short, featuring Lauren Abramo, Kate McKean and Saba Sulaiman

This Q&A with a panel of agents provides you with an opportunity to find out what agents look for in sample chapters, what makes them stop reading, what they can do for self-published authors, what they want to hear during a live pitch and much more. You'll get the chance to ask the agents about any topic, from platform and marketing to self-publishing and series writing. Whether you're writing for children or adults, fiction or nonfiction, these agents can answer your questions.

Offered Friday at 2 p.m. and Saturday at 9 a.m.

What's the Real Deal? Uncovering the Best Publishing Options for Your Book

Panel moderated by Dr. Nancy Berk, featuring David Braughler, Donna Cavanagh and Cindy Ratzlaff

It's ready and waiting — all your amazing book needs is a great publisher. But in the everchanging writing world with many publishing and promotional options, do you know how to identify your best match? This panel will cover the pros and cons of traditional and independent publishing, the fascinating overlaps and gaps, and strategies, tips and tricks to maximize your publishing success.

Offered Friday at 10:30 a.m.

Landing a Book Deal: Creative Ways to Grow Your Brand

Jessica Murnane

Erma Bombeck quipped, "I have always felt cookbooks were fiction, and the most beautiful words in the English language were 'room

service." Jessica Murnane landed a cookbook deal because food helped her heal — and she had a story to tell. She'll share how she went from "landing page to finding a publisher." Her workshop will cover the importance of a "hook" and a sharable concept when pitching, proposing and writing a book; positioning yourself as an expert (even if you're still technically a beginner); meeting your audience where they are; and growing your brand before and after getting the deal.

■ Offered Friday at 3:30 p.m. and Saturday at 2 p.m.

How to Get Published Successfully

Arielle Eckstut and David Henry Sterry

It is the greatest time in history to be a writer. The barriers have been torn down, and now anyone can get published. But to get published successfully is a whole other matter. Arielle Eckstut and David Henry Sterry take you through the entire publishing process. This step-by-step, soup-to-nuts workshop will remove the smoke and mirrors from the murky world of publishing and give writers a compass and map to a successfully published book. Topics include:

- Choosing the right idea
- Creating a blockbuster title
- Crafting an attention-getting pitch
- Putting together a proposal/manuscript
- Finding the right agent/publisher
- Self-publishing effectively with e-books, print-on-demand or traditional printing
- Developing sales, marketing and publicity savvy
- Producing a video book trailer and helping it go viral
- Building a following through social media
- Offered Saturday at 9 a.m.

Write a Query Letter That Gets Manuscript and Proposal Requests

Jane Friedman

If you've written your query like a pro, then you should be getting requests from agents and publishers for more material about 50 percent of the time. Learn the essential elements of any query, across all genres, and how to avoid the common mistakes that plague and sabotage your best efforts. By the end of the session, you'll know how to seduce an agent or editor by showing off the best aspects of your work (rather than explaining it to death) — plus you'll learn to uncover potential flaws in your work that run more than query deep.

Offered Friday at 2 p.m.

CRAFT OF WRITING

Memoir Boot Camp

Marion Winik

In this hands-on workshop writers will explore a step-by-step process of turning a memory into a crafted essay. A series of prompts will break this mysterious transformation into bite-sized tasks, from choosing what to write about to developing characters, setting and dialogue, to thinking about theme, structure and organization. Participants will give each other feedback along the way and all walk out with the first draft of a short essay. Marion Winik also will share some insights about the ethics of writing about your family and friends and about the uses of both research and imagination in memoir.

■ Offered Friday and Saturday at 10:30 a.m.

Wit, Wisdom and a Good Naked Workshop

Joni Cole

Don't worry, there'll be no shedding of clothes, but this lively, interactive session will expose the creative process in all its glory. Come prepared to write in response to guided prompts, and share aloud your efforts for inspiration and appreciation. Takeaways: insights into how to confront the dreaded blank page, and how to nurture a more productive, positive creative process. Bring something to write on and leave any self-doubts at the door.

Offered Friday and Saturday at 9 a.m.

Write Without the Fight: Free Your Writing From Doubt and Delay

Julia Roberts

This workshop takes participants through five steps to see and master their resistance within the creative process. (See it, Name it, Claim It, Tame It, Live it.) Geared for beginning writers, though appropriate for all who struggle with writer's block. Take-aways include:

- Knowing exactly what you do without being aware that causes your resistance
- The one mind-tool that is right for you to get over the hump and just write
- How to choose your best collaborators and work with the right people
- Offered Friday and Saturday at 10:30 a.m.

How to Uncover Your Own Voice and Get It Down on Paper

Kathy Kinney and Cindy Ratzlaff

Using a series of improvisational writing techniques and a simple kitchen timer, this hands-on workshop will help you get past your self-criticism, reveal your unique voice and help you incorporate that voice into your writing. You'll learn how to use your voice to paint a clear picture for readers, helping them experience who you are, where you are, who you are to the others in your scene and what makes this day so important in the story. Come prepared to write without self-editing and to give your imagination a good workout.

Offered Friday at 2 p.m.

Developing the Writer's Eye

Katrina Kittle

To be a great writer, you need to do three things: write a lot, read a lot and pay attention. This class is all about that paying attention part. Paying attention takes practice and training because our culture doesn't value it. (Our culture values filling up every second of spare time and

attention with devices and being "productive"). Whether you're an experienced writer who needs your ideas energized or a beginner who wants to develop better habits and skills, this class will focus your observation skills as well as your ability to capture those observations in writing. A series of exercises will stoke your creativity, fan your senses and wake up your figurative language. This will be an inspiring, energizing class developing your artistic mindfulness and curiosity.

Offered Friday at 9 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.

The F Word: Feminist Comic Writers Who Inspire Us

Peter Marino

How does outstanding feminist humor lead to better writing? In this workshop, you will focus on three iconic humorists — Nora Ephron, Fran Lebowitz and Tina Fey — and one writer's writer, novelist Anne Lamott. Attendees will experiment with a writing exercise devised by Lamott, which is remarkably effective at unleashing creativity.

Offered Friday and Saturday at 2 p.m.

Developing Voice and Style Susan Pohlman

An agent once told Susan Pohlman that the one thing she looks for in a submission is a solid sense of voice. Craft can be taught, editors can be hired, but voice is the real deal. A command of voice and style proclaims to the readers that you can be trusted to lead them on a worthwhile journey to a place of truth. This interactive workshop will clarify the definition of voice and equip you with specific tools to develop your own distinct writing style. Come ready to write and have some fun!

■ Offered Friday at 10:30 a.m. and Saturday at 9 a.m.

Create Vivid, Believable People, Places and Scenes in Fiction or Nonfiction

Sharon Short

Through a mix of examples and writing exercises, writers will learn how to create compelling descriptions without stopping action, slowing pace or overwhelming readers. Techniques include bringing the senses to life, using simile and metaphor, creating context, mastering dialogue tags, describing action and knowing the difference between scene and narrative — or show and tell — and when to use which style most effectively.

Offered Friday at 9 a.m.

HUMOR WRITING

The Comfortable Chair: Bringing Humor to the Personal Essay

Dinty W. Moore

Humor on the page is a delicate flower, and there is nothing quite so awkward as watching it wilt. This interactive workshop will explore the basics of using humor effectively in the personal essay and in nonfiction writing generally, including the use of juxtaposition, irony, understatement and exaggeration. You will examine a few sterling examples and then pull out your pens and notebooks to try it for yourselves. We will laugh, too, along the way. For those bothered by delayed gratification, here's a preview: The best humor sneaks up on you.

Offered Friday and Saturday at 2 p.m.

Maximize Your Funny: Strategies for Busting the Humor Block

Dr. Mark Shatz

Funny writing demands funny thinking. Yet, humor block happens frequently, and it ain't fun or funny. Fortunately, a number of brainstorming strategies and creativity techniques can help bust humor block. This "minds-on" workshop will identify the obstacles that prevent writers from being funny and explore ways to overcome humor block. By completing an integrated series of thinking and writing exercises, participants will learn how to maximize their funny.

Offered Friday at 9 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.

Inspired: The Art of Writing with Humor and Heart

T. Faye Griffin

This lighthearted and highly interactive workshop is an entertaining primer on the rapidly growing genre of inspirational humor writing. Audio and visual materials will be employed to engage participants in fun and thought-

provoking writing exercises, readings and gentle critiques.

■ Offered Friday at 3:30 p.m. and Saturday at 10:30 a.m.

It's Okay to Laugh: How to Use Humor in the Dark Places

Lauretta Hannon

This workshop examines how to use humor when dealing with painful material. In this wildly interactive workshop, participants will do exercises such as six-word memoirs and then share them with the class. The session aims to open writers up to parts of their story they thought were better left unmentioned. There will be much cackling in this session and probably a few tears as well.

Offered Friday at 10:30 a.m. and Saturday at 9 a.m.

Stand-Up Comedy Boot Camp Wendy Liebman

Learn the basics of stand-up comedy. Nationally known stand-up comic Wendy Liebman will share writing techniques to make your stories funnier — and ways to deliver them to get a laugh. The workshop is open to stand-up performers and anyone who wants to learn the techniques for writing and performing stand-up comedy. Come prepared to laugh and scribble down your own hilarious ideas. A dozen comedians will be selected in advance to perform at Stand-Up Night. Wendy will choose an additional three from the hilarious writers she meets in the workshop.

Offered Friday at 2 p.m.

Stand-Up Comedy Performance Wendy Liebman

A bonus session. Comedy writers of all experience levels will learn writing and performance techniques from Wendy Liebman, veteran stand-up comic and producer of "Locally Grown Comedy," a monthly show in Los Angeles

featuring the best stand ups around. Bring your most hilarious 2-3 minutes of comedy to perform and receive advice in a supportive environment. Hone the set you'll perform at Stand-Up Comedy Night. Open to all budding comedians wanting to learn more about the nuts and bolts of comedy performance and looking for pointers.

Offered Saturday at 2 p.m.

MARKETING AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Sit-Down Comedy: Tweet Like a Stand Up and Kill it on Social Media

Joel Madison

Joel Madison wants to help you be funnier online. Are your tweets tired? Does your Facebook fall flat? In this hands-on session, you'll learn the tricks of the joke-writing trade from a pro. Under Joel's guidance, you'll refine your comedic online voice by "punching up" your own tweets and posts. Then you'll create new posts from scratch. You'll walk out with skills that will take your social media presence to the next level. Remember: you may not hear the spit-takes out in Internet-land, but that doesn't mean they're not happening.

■ Offered Friday at 3:30 p.m. and Saturday at 10:30 a.m.

It's a Brand New Brand YOU World: Why Authors MUST Treat Themselves and Their Books as Brands — Even Before Publication

Cindy Ratzlaff

You are the brand, and every book you write is a brand extension. Developing a personal author brand will save you time, money and frustration as you move from the writing phase to the marketing phase of your book — and help you attract a large following of passionate readers who are truly interested in your books. Cindy Ratzlaff will share the exact tips, tools and strategies she has used to help best-selling authors create their own personal brands, promote their

books through a set of massive, branded social platforms and drive sales — all without compromising their privacy or engaging in hardcore selling. You'll come away from this workshop with a step-by-step guide to developing your own personal author brand and a checklist of action items you can take immediately to build your own brand and position your social influence for rapid growth.

Offered Saturday at 2 p.m.

How to Build an Effective Author Website Jane Friedman

If you want to find success as a writer — whether through traditional publishing or self-publishing — you need a website. It's critical for effective marketing (online and offline), as well as long-term career growth. Whether your website is one day old or 10 years old, you want to make sure the resources that you've put into your site will pay off with more readers and lead to more sales and opportunities for your career. Learn best practices for design and content, the most important visual areas to focus on, plus search-based strategies to help bring readers to your door. No need to be a techie or understand jargon — this session speaks to all skill levels.

Offered Saturday at 9 a.m.

So, What's Your Website Done for You Lately?

Tracy Beckerman and Anne Parris

Is your website really doing all that it can to attract an audience? If you're putting all your effort into your content, but not enough into your web tools, you may just be shouting into the void. In this tip- and trick-laden session, Tracy Beckerman and Anne Parris will select the websites of three session attendees (submitted in advance) and do live website reviews while telling you how to make your website work harder for you.

Offered Friday at 10:30 a.m.

How to Grow Your Facebook Fan Page

Tracy Beckerman and Anne Parris

Many people wonder why they may have 1,000 Facebook fan page followers but only a tenth of their fans actually see their posts. Facebook can be an incredibly powerful tool for promoting your blog and getting more eyeballs on your work, but you have to know how to be Facebook savvy and use its tools to engage more people with the right content at the right time. In this session you'll learn why you should:

- Share video that's already on Facebook, rather than from YouTube or another platform
- Create and use memes
- Use the Native Scheduler function to schedule your posts
- Share 20 percent of your own material and 80 percent of other people's stuff
- And lots more tips for increasing the number following your fan page and the number Facebook chooses to share your posts with.
- Offered Saturday at 10:30 a.m.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

LIZA DONNELLY

Liza Donnelly is a writer and award-winning cartoonist with *The New Yorker* magazine and resident cartoonist for CBS News. Her drawings



and writing can also be seen in The New York Times, Medium, Forbes, Politico and other major publications. She is the creator of a new digital visual reporting/editorial cartooning style called live-drawing.

She was the first cartoonist to be granted access on location to live-draw the Academy Awards: she has also live-drawn the Grammys, Tonys, 2018 Winter Olympics, the 2016 Democratic Convention and more. Her innovative approach to reporting and commenting on events has been covered by CBS News, NBC News, Ad Week, USA Today, Watch Magazine and People Magazine. An extensive traveler, she has received several international awards for her editorial cartoons. An accomplished public speaker, she has been a cultural envoy for the U.S. State Department, traveling the world to speak about freedom of speech and women's rights. Her TED talk was translated into 38 languages and viewed over one million times. Along with her husband Michael Maslin, she was profiled on CBS Sunday Morning, has been a guest on numerous podcasts, television and radio shows, and has been interviewed for many publications. Liza is the recipient of an honorary Ph.D. from the University of Connecticut and has taught at Vassar College and the School of Visual Arts in New York City. She is the author/ editor of 18 books. Her latest book. Women On Men. was a finalist for the Thurber Prize for American Humor, Liza is a charter member of the international project, Cartooning for Peace. She lives in New York.

RITA DAVENPORT

Rita Davenport is an award-winning TV producer, host, author, inspirational humorist and



world-renowned entrepreneur. She's the author of four best-selling books, including *Making Time, Making Money* and her newest hit, *Funny Side Up*, which was recently published by *Success* magazine. In all, her

books have sold more than two million copies. Viewed in more than 32 million homes on her television shows Success Strategies and Laugh Your Way to Success, Rita is a gifted messenger with the power to empower and entertain audiences worldwide. She is an internationally recognized expert in the principles of success, secrets of network marketing, time management methods, goal-setting techniques, creative thinking, and building self-esteem and confidence. She has been featured in national publications ranging from Forbes and The Wall Street Journal to People and Success magazine and has appeared on the Today Show, Good Morning America, The Regis Philbin Show and Kathie Lee & Hoda, among countless other television and radio programs. Having shared the stage with John Maxwell, Tony Robbins, Sir Richard Branson, Les Brown, Daren Hardy (and Erma Bombeck), Rita was elected to the National Speakers Association's Hall of Fame. She received a Council of Peers Award and earned designation as a Certified Speaking Professional, distinctions held by only 3 percent of national speakers.

JOHN GROGAN

John Grogan is the author of the international #1 bestseller Marley & Me: Life and Love with



the World's Worst Dog, which has sold six million copies in more than 30 languages and was turned into a major motion picture starring Owen Wilson and Jennifer Aniston. He also is the author of the

national bestseller *The Longest Trip Home: A Memoir* and of numerous children's books. A native of Detroit, he spent 20 years as a journalist and newspaper columnist in Michigan, Florida and, most recently, at *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. His popular, award-winning column was known for its blend of humor, warmth and pathos. John is an adjunct professor of creative narrative nonfiction writing at Lehigh University. In his free time, he enjoys gardening, backpacking and sailing. He and his wife, Jenny, live with their two surprisingly calm Labrador Retrievers in Pennsylvania's Lehigh Valley.

KAREN WALROND

Karen Walrond is an attorney, speaker,



photographer, author and leadership coach. She is the creative mind behind the award-winning website Chookooloonks.com, which features travel, art, food and life and serves as an inspira-

tional source for living with intention, creativity and adventure. Her work, described as "all about connection, creativity, determination and resonance that we all experience, if only we look for the light," has been featured on CNN.com, USA Today, Good Housekeeping and Wondertime magazines, among others. She has appeared on PBS and The Oprah Winfrey

Show. Her bestselling book, The Beauty of Different, is a chronicle of imagery and portraiture, combined with written essays and observations on the concept that what makes us different makes us beautiful — and may even be the source of our superpowers. Her soon-to-bepubished book, Make Light, shares the stories of people who make it their mission to thrive out loud by pursuing passions, new businesses and breathtaking adventures, inspiring us all to hone our minds, bodies and spirits in ways that allow us to change our worlds. She's a certified Daring Way facilitator, trained in Brené Brown's work on vulnerability, courage, empathy and worthiness. Her keynote talks and workshops include these concepts, specifically addressing how vulnerability — the ability to show up in the midst of uncertainty, risk and emotional exposure — is the strongest measure of courage that we have, courage which can help foster innovation and creativity.

MONICA PIPER

Monica Piper is an Emmy Award-winning com-



edy writer and stand-up comic. She has written for sit-coms Roseanne, Mad About You and Veronica's Closet, and was the head writer of the #1 children's animated series Rugrats. She also developed and wrote

series for Nickelodeon, Disney and Cartoon Network. She starred in her own Showtime Network special, No, Monica... Just You, and was nominated by the American Comedy Awards as one of the top five female comedians in the country. She is proud to be an artist-in-residence with the Jewish Women's Theatre of Los Angeles. Her critically acclaimed one-woman play, Not That Jewish, drew sell-out crowds in Los Angeles, before its hit seven-month run Off Broadway. When she's not touring with

Faculty

the show, she works in the corporate world as a motivational comedian. As a breast cancer survivor, she inspires audiences everywhere to lose the stress and find the funny. She began her career as a high school English teacher. While finding it rewarding, she had to move on: "I couldn't handle the money and prestige." She lives in Santa Monica with her son, Jake, whom she loves and adores "almost every day."

EMCEE

PATRICIA WYNN BROWN

Patricia Wynn Brown is a performer, producer



and author of two books,
Hair-A-Baloo: The Revealing
Comedy and Tragedy on Top of
Your Head and Momma Culpa:
One Mother Comes Clean and
Makes Her Maternal Confession. Pat has performed her

humor-memoir Hair Theater® shows across the U.S. She is a featured humorist in a PBS documentary, A Legacy of Laughter, about the life and work of Erma Bombeck. She also is a three-time winner of the James Thurber Summer Writing Contest. Her DVD featuring women who have lost their hair to chemotherapy is called The Hairdo Monologues: When Monsieur Chemo Styles Her Hair. Pat's work and shows currently focus on trauma and the healing power of stories, laughter and hijinks. This includes shows and projects at the Ohio Reformatory for Women and a new memoir performance piece, *The Beat Goes On*, with dancer Karen Bell, where these two "women of a certain age" explain their staying power through movement, melodies and mayhem.

PRESENTERS

LAUREN E. ABRAMO

Lauren E. Abramo joined Dystel, Goderich &



Bourret in 2005 after receiving degrees in English at NYU and Irish Studies at NUI Galway. As vice president and subsidiary rights director for the agency, she sells foreign and audio rights, and she also main-

tains a small client list. Her interests include humorous middle-grade and contemporary YA on the children's side and upmarket commercial fiction and well-paced literary fiction on the adult side. She's also interested in adult narrative nonfiction, especially pop culture, psychology, pop science, reportage, media and contemporary culture, with a strong focus on books about social justice. In nonfiction she has a strong preference for interdisciplinary approaches, and in all categories she's especially interested in underrepresented voices. Born in New York City and raised not far outside it, she now lives in Brooklyn.

TRACY BECKERMAN

Tracy Beckerman began writing after moving



with her family from New York City to the New Jersey suburbs as a way to find herself and share a few laughs about the endless sea of malls, minivans and coordinated tennis outfits. What started out as a single

column for a New Jersey newspaper, "Lost in Suburbia" is now nationally syndicated in more than 550 markets, reaching more than 23 million readers in 36 states. Tracy has written two books and has contributed to three anthologies and is working on her third memoir. In her latest

book, Lost in Suburbia: A Momoir: How I Got Pregnant, Lost Myself and Got My Cool Back in the New Jersey Suburbs, she divulges her funny and heartwarming missteps in parenting and daily life. Tracy also has appeared on numerous television programs, including The Today Show and CBS Early Show, and has contributed to such online sites as Huffington Post, Working Mother and Blogher. She credits the Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop with helping her find her funny bone and discover her passion for writing.

DR. NANCY BERK

Armed with a Ph.D. from Vanderbilt University and the skills of a therapist, professor, re-



searcher and clinical psychologist, Dr. Nancy Berk weaves her traditional training into a unique brand of humor, writing and collaboration that has landed her an award-winning magazine column, a celebrity

podcast, a book with a feature film cameo, and an online entertainment and advice column for *Parade* magazine. A multimedia content creator/producer and celebrity and PR favorite, she is known for her skilled and sensitive interviewing, vision and ability to incorporate subtle humor in her conversations, shows and stories. She is hopeful that her constant conversations with Oscar, Grammy and Emmy Award winners and Rock and Roll Hall of Famers will one day impress her kids. A finalist in the 2016 Stand Up Pittsburgh comedy competition, Nancy is also an adjunct associate professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine. Seriously.

DAVID BRAUGHLER

David Braughler is the founder and CEO of



Braughler Books. He works with authors, organizations and executives to help them turn their stories and expertise into published books. Over the last six years, he's worked individually with more than 200 authors

on nearly 300 titles. David has partnered with authors in the U.S., Spain and Australia on books ranging from self-help and memoirs to business topics and personal essays. He's a frequent speaker at regional and national conferences.

DONNA CAVANAGH

Donna Cavanagh is founder of HumorOutcasts .com and the partner publishing company, HumorOutcasts Press, which expanded to include the labels Shorehouse Books and Corner Office Books



so authors of all genres would be represented. Donna launched HumorOutcasts.com as an outlet for writers to showcase their work in a world that offered few avenues for humor. The site now features the

creative talents of more than 100 aspiring and accomplished writers, TV and movie producers, filmmakers, comics and authors from all over the world. A former journalist, Donna has published her syndicated columns in *First* magazine, *USA Today* and other national media. She has penned four humor books: *Reality: Fantasy's Evil Twin; Try and Avoid the Speed Bumps; A Canine's Guide to the Good Life* (which she wrote with her dogs Frankie and Lulu); and the USA Books Contest finalist *Life On the Off Ramp*. Donna hopes her latest book, *How to Write and Share Humor: Techniques to Tickle Funny Bones and Win Fans*, will encourage writers to embrace and show off their humor talents.

JONI B. COLE

Joni B. Cole is the author of the newly released



Good Naked: Reflections on How to Write More, Write Better, and Be Happier. The Writer magazine describes her as "part teacher, part cheerleader and part laugh-out-loud humorist." Poets & Writers

listed the book among its "Best Books on Writing." Her book *Toxic Feedback: Helping Writers Survive and Thrive* is "strongly recommended" for students and teachers by *Library Journal.*Joni also is the author of the humor collection, *Another Bad-Dog Book: Essays on Life, Love and Neurotic Human Behavior.* She serves on the faculty at the New Hampshire Institute of Art and teaches in several MFA programs, conferences and her own Writer's Center in White River Junction, Vermont.

ARIELLE ECKSTUT

Arielle Eckstut is co-founder of The Book Doctors. She is the author of nine books, including



The Secret Language of Color: The Science, Nature, History, Culture and Beauty of Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue & Violet. She is also an agent-atlarge at the Levine Greenberg Rostan Literary Agency, where

for more than 20 years, she has been helping hundreds of talented writers become published authors. Lastly, Arielle co-founded the iconic company, LittleMissMatched, and grew it from a tiny operation into a leading national brand, which now has stores from coast to coast, everywhere from Disneyland to Disney World to Fifth Avenue in New York City.

JANE FRIEDMAN

Jane Friedman has 20 years of experience in the publishing industry, with expertise in digital media strategy for authors and publish-



ers. She's the co-founder of *The Hot Sheet*, the essential publishing industry newsletter for authors, and has previously worked for F+W Media and the *Virginia Quarterly Review*. In addition to being a

columnist with Publishers Weekly and a professor with The Great Courses, she maintains an award-winning blog for writers at JaneFriedman.com. In 2017, in partnership with The Authors Guild, she helped produce The Authors Guild Guide to E-Publishing and presented a series of webinars for "The Digital Age Author: Best Practices in Marketing, Promotion and Reader Engagement." She has delivered keynotes and presentations at hundreds of events around the world, including the San Francisco Writers Conference, The Muse & The Marketplace, BookExpo America, Frankfurt Book Fair and Digital Book World. She's also served on panels for the National Endowment for the Arts and the Creative Work Fund, and has held positions as a professor of writing, media and publishing at the University of Cincinnati and University of Virginia. Jane's newest book is The Business of Being a Writer (University of Chicago Press, March 2018).

T. FAYE GRIFFIN

T. Faye Griffin is an award-winning humorist



and best-selling author who has put words into the mouths of Academy Award winners, comedians, politicians and everyday folks. From A&E to BET to PBS, she has amassed an impressive list of writing cred-

its that include the landmark comedy series In Living Color. A respected writing coach and conference speaker, T. Faye has appeared on FOX, COZI-TV, The WORD Network and BET.

LAURETTA HANNON

Southern Living Magazine calls Lauretta Hannon "the funniest woman in Georgia." A best-



selling author, Huffington Post blogger, speaker, performer and teacher, she wrote The Cracker Queen — A Memoir of a Jagged, Joyful Life and has been a commentator on National Public Radio's All Things

Considered, where her stories have reached 25 million listeners. Her memoir became a bestseller three weeks after its release and was named one of the Top 25 Books All Georgians Should Read by the Georgia Center for the Book.

KATHY KINNEY



Kathy Kinney, who may best be known for her iconic role as "Mimi" on the ABC hit series *The Drew Carey Show*, has appeared in dozens of TV shows and movies. She is the co-author, along with her

friend Cindy Ratzlaff, of three books, Queen of Your Own Life: The Grown-up Woman's Guide to Claiming Happiness and Getting the Life You Deserve; Queenisms: 101 Jolts of Inspiration; and Queen of Your Own Life: If Not Now, When? She is the star and co-producer of the award-winning website for children MrsP.com, which promotes creativity, literacy and the joy of reading. She is also an education ambassador for Skype. With her background in improvisational comedy, she has performed extensively in Las Vegas at the MGM Grand, Caesars Palace and the Mirage with Drew Carey and the Improv All-Stars as well as tours with the USO in Saudi Arabia, Iraq and the Persian Gulf.

KATRINA KITTLE

Katrina Kittle is the author of five novels

— Traveling Light; Two Truths and a



Lie; The Kindness of Strangers; The Blessings of the Animals; and Reasons to Be Happy. The Kindness of Strangers won the 2006 Great Lakes Book Award for Fiction. Katrina teaches creative writ-

ing workshops from third graders to retirement communities, focusing on craft and motivation (and is especially good at jumpstarting stalled writers). She teaches in the Dayton-Cincinnati area through Word's Worth Writing Center, offers manuscript consultations and is a public speaker. She lives near Dayton, Ohio, with her wonderful fella, and their sweet beagle and odd cat; has a thing for goats, gardening and going barefoot; and is totally addicted to coffee, pedicures and movies.

WENDY LIEBMAN

Wendy Liebman took a class called "How to be a Stand-up Comedian" at the Cambridge Center for Adult Education in 1985. Since then



she's performed on Carson, Letterman, Leno, Fallon, Kimmel, Ferguson and Hollywood Squares, and in clubs throughout North America. Wendy has done specials for HBO, Comedy Central and Showtime, and was

a semi-finalist on NBC's America's Got Talent (season 9). She lives in Los Angeles with her funny family and dogs, and produces Locally Grown Comedy, a monthly show featuring the best stand-ups around, at The E Spot Lounge in Studio City. She directed and stars in the DVD, Wendy Liebman: Taller on TV.

LEIGHANN LORD

A stand-up comedian, author, commentator and keynote speaker, Leighann Lord is the author



of five e-books, including Dict Jokes: Alternate Definitions for Words You've Probably Never Heard of But Will Definitely Never Forget, Volumes 1 & 2. Her latest book, Real Women Do It Standing Up: Stories From

the Career of a Very Funny Lady, has been called "witty and unexpectedly vulnerable." She is the creator of the blog and podcast, "People with Parents," where she writes and talks about suddenly being the caretaker of two elderly parents, which is severely cutting into her regularly scheduled midlife crisis. In addition to performing her own material, she was a writer for the Chris Rock Show and pens the syndicated humor column "The Urban Erma." She has been seen on ABC, AspireTV, BBC, CBC, Comedy Comedy, Gospel Music Channel, HBO, Lifetime TV, NBC, SiTV and VH1. She brings a blend of humor and pop culture as a co-host of the StarTalk Radio

Show with Neil deGrasse Tyson on SiriusXM. She received the NYC Black Comedy Award for "The Most Thought Provoking Black Female Comic." Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. named her one of the Northeast Region's Significant Seven for her contribution in the field of entertainment. And for two consecutive years, she was Harlem Week's official comedian. (The only other comedian in Harlem Week's history to earn that distinction was Richard Pryor.)

JOEL MADISON

Joel Madison has been working in comedy since



forever, having done stand up from 1987-1992, when he started writing for television. During his stand-up days, he wrote for numerous other stand ups including Rosanne Barr — who gave him his first TV writing gig.

He has gone on to write and create a lot of content that makes audiences laugh, most recently the HBO hit series *Crashing*.

PETER MARINO

Peter Marino is an emeritus English professor at SUNY Adirondack. His young adult novels, *Dough*



Boy and Magic and Misery, were nominated for the ALA Round Table's Rainbow Books Bibliography and the American Library Association's Best Books for Young Adults, the latter included on Booklist's Top 10

Romance Fiction for Youth. His play, Ralph Smith of Schenectady, New York's Coming-Out-to-His-Wife Options, was produced in the 9th Annual New York City 15 Minute Play Festival and the Samuel French Short Play Festival, and was published by Mason's Road, a literary and arts journal. Another one act, The Good Samaritan, won first place in SlamBoston!

KATE MCKEAN

Kate McKean is vice president at Howard Morhaim Literary Agency and an adjunct



professor at New York University. She earned a master's degree in fiction writing at the University of Southern Mississippi and began her publishing career at the University Press of Florida. She has worked

with New York Times' best-selling authors in a wide variety of genres, including Mallory Ortberg's Texts from Jane Eyre, Madeleine Roux's YA horror series Asylum and Brittany Gibbons' memoir Fat Girl Walking. For adults, she is primarily interested in contemporary romance, contemporary women's fiction, literary fiction, historical fiction set in the 20th century, high fantasy, magical realism and science fiction. For children, she is looking for projects in middle grade and young adult in the areas of thriller, horror, romance, LGBTQ issues, contemporary fiction, sports, magical realism, fantasy and science fiction. In non-fiction, for adults or children/teens, she represents books by authors with demonstrable platforms in the areas of pop culture, memoir, sports, food writing, humor, design, creativity and craft.

DINTY W. MOORE



Dinty W. Moore is author of The Story Cure: A Book Doctor's Pain-Free Guide to Finishing Your Novel or Memoir, the memoir Between Panic & Desire and many other books. He has published

essays and stories in The Southern Review, The Georgia Review, Harpers, The New York Times Sunday Magazine, Arts & Letters, The *Normal School* and elsewhere. A professor of nonfiction writing at Ohio University, Dinty edits *Brevity*, an online journal of flash nonfiction, and is deathly afraid of polar bears.

JESSICA MURNANE

Jessica Murnane is a women's health advocate, podcast host and author of *One Part*



Plant. Through her innovative and creative approach to wellness, Jessica has contributed to and appeared in countless magazines and websites, including Bon Appetit, People, Mind Body Green,

The Coveteur, Food52 and Pop Sugar and has spoken at Apple, SXSW, Wanderlust and Taste Talks. She interviews some of the biggest names in food, lifestyle and design on the popular "One Part Podcast," which landed on the iTunes New and Noteworthy section after just three weeks.

ANNE PARRIS



Blogger, marketer, middleaged lady, Anne Parris helps people with the behind-thescenes part of being creative on the Internet. She is a partner in Midlife Boulevard,

a lifestyle site for women, and the BAM Conference, a blogging conference for women in midlife.

ZACHARY PETIT

Zachary Petit is the content director of the HOW+PRINT brands, editor-in-chief of the award-winning national magazine *PRINT*, a



freelance journalist and a lifelong literary and design nerd. Formerly, he was the senior managing editor of HOW magazine and PRINT, the longtime managing editor of Writer's Digest magazine and

executive editor of several related newsstand titles. Alongside the thousands of articles he has penned as a staff writer and editor, his words regularly appear in National Geographic Kids and have also popped up in the pages of National Geographic, Mental_Floss, Melissa Rossi's What Every American Should Know book series, McSweeney's Internet Tendency and many other outlets. He is the author of The Essential Guide to Freelance Writina: How to Write. Work and Thrive On Your Own Terms and Treat Ideas Like Cats. He co-wrote A Year of Writing Prompts: 366 Story Ideas for Honing Your Craft and Eliminating Writer's Block. He sometimes says he's from Cincinnati, but in reality he hails from Northern Kentucky, a one-minute jaunt across the Ohio River. (Given his proclivity for bourbon, let's just go with Kentucky.)

SUSAN POHLMAN



Susan Pohlman is an author, editor/writing coach, and retreat leader from Phoenix, Arizona. Her memoir, *Halfway to Each Other*, was the winner in the Relationships category and runner-up in the Memoir

category of the 2010 Next Generation Indie Book Awards. It was shortlisted for the 2010 Inspy Awards. She has written six short films for the Baltimore 48 Hour Film Project, and her essays have been published in *The Washington Times*, *Family Digest*, *The Family*, *Raising Arizona Kids*, *Guideposts Magazine*, *Homelife Magazine*, *Arizona Parenting*, *The Review Review*, *Goodhousekeeping.com*, *Italiannotebook.com*, *The Mid* and *The Sunlight Press*. A graduate of the University of Dayton, Susan is currently working on a collection of essays and a middle-grade novel.

CINDY RATZLAFF

Cindy Ratzlaff is the president of Brand New Brand You, Inc., a brand marketing and com-



munications consulting firm specializing in results-driven social engagement solutions for authors, publishers and entrepreneurs. She is a 29-year veteran of the book publishing industry, having

held executive positions at both Simon & Schuster and Rodale Inc. Cindy is a published author and guest columnist, having written for *Business Insider, Oprah.com* and other national publications. She speaks nationally on the topics of personal branding, marketing strategies, community building, social media strategy, marketing platforms and marketing campaigns. *Forbes* named her one of the Top Women Entrepreneurs to Follow on Twitter, and Ad Age named her to the *Ad Age* Marketing 50 list.

JULIA ROBERTS

Julia Roberts helps writers predict and prevent their own forms of writer's block.



Julia is a certified creativity coach, who holds a master's degree in Creative Studies from Buffalo State College/SUNY. She mixes science (the why of it) with coaching techniques (the woo of it) to

help writers just write — with less downtime, doubt and delay. She also has written three books, including Sex, Lies & Creativity — Gender Differences in Creative Thinking, and developed assessment, training and coaching programs to help writers better understand the universal creative process and how they fit or fight that process.

SABA SULAIMAN

Saba Sulaiman is an associate agent at Talcott Notch Literary Services, a boutique agency in



Milford, Connecticut. She's looking to build her client list in a variety of genres. Captivating storytelling with characters who are smart and weird and wonderful and engage in meaningful

relationships that evolve over time is what makes her world spin. She's an unapologetic advocate for all things Bollywood and she really, really just loves soup.

DR. MARK SHATZ

Dr. Mark Shatz is the author of a top-selling



humor-writing book, *Comedy Writing Secrets* (third edition). As an award-winning professor of psychology at Ohio University-Zanesville, he teaches humor writing and conducts research on the

benefits of humor. Mark is a popular public speaker with extensive experience working with writers, including presentations at the Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop and the Writer's Digest Annual Conference.

SHARON SHORT

Sharon Short, executive director of the Antioch Writers' Workshop at the University



of Dayton, has written the coming-of-age novel My One Square Inch of Alaska (Penguin Plume); two mystery series; and a collection of humorous essays. Under her pen name, Jess Montgom-

ery, she is the author of an historical mystery series set in 1920s Appalachian Ohio, featuring a female sheriff, to be published by Minotaur Books starting in 2019. She is the recipient of an Ohio Arts Council individual artist's grant, a Montgomery County (Ohio) Arts and Cultural District Literary Artist Fellowship, and was the 2014 John E. Nance Writer-in-Residence at Thurber House in Columbus, Ohio. Sharon is also the Literary Life columnist for the *Dayton Daily News* and an adjunct instructor/mentor in the low-residency MFA program in Writing Popular Fiction at Seton Hill University in Pennsylvania.

DAVID HENRY STERRY

David Henry Sterry is co-founder of The Book Doctors. He is the author of 16 books on a



wide variety of subjects, from memoir to middle-grade fiction, sports to reference. His work has been translated into more than a dozen languages, optioned by Hollywood, and appeared on the cover of the

Sunday New York Times Book Review. He is a regular contributor to The Huffington Post. Before writing professionally, David was a comic and an actor. His one-man show, based on his memoir, Chicken, was named the number one show in the United Kingdom for its entire run at the Edinburgh Theatre Festival, Fringe by The Independent.

JESSICA STRAWSER

Jessica Strawser is the editor-at-large at Writer's Digest magazine, where she served as edi-



torial director for nearly a decade and became known for her in-depth cover interviews with such wide-reaching talents as David Sedaris, Alice Walker, David Baldacci, Patricia Cornwell and Anne Tyler.

She the author of the novels Almost Missed You, named to Barnes & Noble's Best New Fiction shortlist upon its March 2017 release, and Not That I Could Tell, new in March 2018 (and set near the EBWW's Dayton home, in Yellow Springs). She has written for The New York Times' Modern Love section, Publishers Weekly and other fine venues, and lives with her husband and two children in Cincinnati.

MARION WINIK

Marion Winik is a professor in the MFA program at the University of Baltimore and the author of nine books, among them *First Comes*



Love, The Glen Rock Book of the Dead, Highs in the Low Fifties and The Lunch-Box Chronicles. Her column "Bohemian Rhapsody" appears monthly at BaltimoreFishbowl.com, and her essays and

articles have been published in *The New York Times Magazine, The Sun, The Utne Reader* and *Salon*, among others. She reviews books for *Newsday, People, Kirkus Reviews* and her Baltimore NPR program, *The Weekly Reader*. Her 15 years of commentaries for *All Things Considered* are collected at npr.org.



Take Home a Glass Full of Memories — And Support the Workshop

Erma merchandise is offered exclusively through the University of Dayton Bookstore, available throughout the workshop. All proceeds benefit the Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop Endowment Fund, which helps keep the workshop affordable for writers.

- The popular Erma wine glass (\$9.99 or two for \$16)
- Three coffee mugs, with inspirational Erma quotes (\$12.99 each or two for \$20)
- Limited-edition Liza Donnelly commemorative cartoon (\$16.99)
- Set of 12 notecards with such favorite Erma quotes as "If you can't make it better, you can laugh at it." (\$10)
- Short- and long-sleeved Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop T-shirts (\$19.99, \$24.99)
- Short-sleeved "He who laughs...lasts" T-shirt (\$22.99)
- Welcome to the Dayton Riviera! postcards (\$.50 or three for \$1)

Parking and shuttles

Free parking is available at the Marriott at the University of Dayton and the 1700 South Patterson Building, where attendees can park in visitor spaces. For events at the Marriott, please park in the U1 lot, unless you are a hotel guest.

Buckeye Charter shuttles will run periodically between the Marriott and the 1700 South Patterson Building, which is located on the same road. It's a 15- to 20-minute walk via South Patterson Boulevard.

The Buckeye shuttles are white and will have a sign in the window saying "Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop."

If you have transportation issues or need to return to the hotel during the day, please visit the workshop's information table in the lobby in the 1700 South Patterson Building.

Ground transportation to and from the airport

Transportation is available from the Dayton International Airport to the Marriott at the University of Dayton, 1414 S. Patterson Blvd.

Attendees can call Charter Vans (937-898-4043) to arrange pick-up (must call 24 hours in advance to let them know the time and how many people you have). To travel to the Marriott at the University of Dayton, per-person prices are \$33 for one passenger, \$17 for two and \$15 for three or more. These rates do not include tax.

Transportation also is available from Clean Cab Ohio (937-242-8779). The flat-rate fare is \$38, which includes tax. (Please request the special Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop rate. The normal fare is \$43.) The cabs seat four to six people. Arrangements can be made in advance by phone or by emailing cleancabohio@yahoo.com. You must make arrangements two hours or more in advance.

Uber is also available. The estimated rates range from \$21 to \$27 for uberX and \$32 to \$42 for uberXL per ride.

Friday, April 6

7 to 8:30 a.m. Shuttle buses looping from the Marriott at the University of

Dayton to the 1700 South Patterson Building on River Campus

All workshop activities held before 6 p.m. take place at the University of Dayton River Campus. If you need transportation from River Campus back to the Marriott between shuttle hours, please see the information desk.

3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Shuttle buses looping from the 1700 South Patterson Building on

River Campus to Marriott at the University of Dayton

Saturday, April 7

7 to 8:30 a.m. Shuttle buses looping from Marriott at the University of Dayton

to the 1700 South Patterson Building on River Campus

All workshop activities held before 6 p.m. take place at the University of Dayton River Campus. If you need transportation from River Campus back to the Marriott between shuttle hours, please see the information desk.

3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Shuttle buses looping from the 1700 South Patterson Building on

River Campus to Marriott at the University of Dayton

5:15 p.m. Shuttle bus to University of Dayton main campus (from 1700

South Patterson Building) for photo opportunity at Erma

Bombeck historical marker and memorial tree

Shuttle buses after Pitchapalooza will pick up from the **north** entrance of the 1700 South Patterson Building on River Campus closest to the Meyer Room.

Shuttle bus to University of Dayton main campus, photo opportunity at Erma Bombeck historical marker and memorial tree will pick up at **front** entrance of the 1700 South Patterson Building on River Campus.

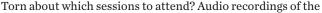
Continuing Education Units

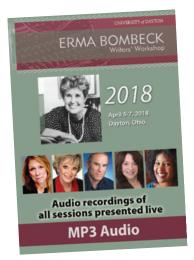
About earning Continuing Education Units (CEUs)

The Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop has been approved by the University of Dayton for 1.2 CEUs (Continuing Education Units). The CEU is an internationally recognized documentation of continuing education in a non-credit program. CEUs are based on the number of contact hours taken for a course. CEUs cannot be applied toward a degree program. Earned CEUs may be useful in maintaining certification or licensure. They may also be useful in documenting continuing professional education for an employer. Only those workshop participants who attend every scheduled hour of the workshop are eligible to receive CEUs.

If you would like to earn CEUs for the Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop, fill out the form in your attendee packet and turn it in at the registration booth after the Saturday evening dinner event. Forms must be turned in on Saturday evening and may not be mailed after the workshop. There is no additional fee to earn CEUs.

Purchasing workshop recordings





entire workshop* are available. By ordering during the workshop, you will receive the 2018 Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop MP3 CD-ROM package for the discount price of \$99. Individual sessions also will be available for sale on a CD (\$15) or as an MP3 download (\$10). The full set of recordings will be available for order after the workshop for \$139.

To order recordings:

- Bring the order form included in your workshop tote bag to the Fleetwood Media table in the 1700 South Patterson Building.
- Mail or fax the order form to Fleetwood Media.
- Visit www.fleetwoodonsite.com/erma after you get home.

Workshop recordings are provided by:

Fleetwood On-Site Conference Recording 202 Blossom Street Extension, Suite 1 Lynn, MA 01901 800-353-1830 (phone) 781-599-2440 (fax) www.fleetwoodonsite.com/erma

^{*} Please note that a few speakers have requested that their sessions not be recorded.

2018 Erma Bombeck Writing Competition

First-place winners

Here is the best work of writers who entered the 2018 Erma Bombeck Writing Competition. The competition, sponsored every two years by the Washington-Centerville Public Library in Centerville, Ohio, has over the years drawn thousands of hopeful entries, submissions inspired by Erma Bombeck's humor and humanity.

For more information, go to http://www.wclibrary.info/erma/index.asp.

First place, human interest, global

The Gift By Julie Watson

Wildwood, Missouri

"Oh, and she hates men with facial hair."

My son was on the floor, making the kind of noises a kid makes when he or she is being trampled by the affection of a dog. Meanwhile, I tried to reconcile his joy with the things I was learning about the animal — quirks that made her sound less like a family pet and more like a long-term inmate at a women's prison. The rescue volunteer softened each red flag with phrases like Oh, by the way and Not a big deal, but—.

"Before I forget, don't bring her in in the morning until she has two bowel movements. Always two."

Shortly after hearing "She was locked in a bathroom for two years, so she's weird about baths," I made up my mind. Adorable though she was, this dog was crazier than a soup sandwich.

The beast placed a paw on each of my son's shoulders and frosted his face with excitable dog spit. Again he collapsed in giggles. As if they both felt the rejection coming, they looked at me like a pair of doe-eyed urchins who'd just met the villain in a Disney movie.

The volunteer must have felt it, too. "She's highly food-motivated, so she learns quickly."

Finally, some common ground. I tugged at my jacket, its seams suffering from my own food motivation, and reconsidered. Thirty minutes later, over the wailing objections of my better judgment, we did it. Poppy was ours.

Poppy had a few quirks the shelter neglected to mention. Like oh, by the way, she will bark at everything that qualifies as a sound, including the microwave. Or one more thing, she is better at getting into trash cans than most teenage boys. And just so you know, it's excruciating to wait for anything to have two bowel movements.

One morning, we were only one poop in when my patience ran out. Just as I was wondering what kind of food would motivate her to hurry up, Poppy darted away.

My darkest inclinations crept in. Dogs run away all the time, I thought. My better nature tried to push through, but was drowned out by the siren call of a life free from poop tracking. Good was losing. Then, a sudden rustling of leaves and Poppy was trotting toward me, the lifeless body of a squirrel clamped firmly in her jaws. She presented the gift at my feet, a prize from one food lover to another.

It was a moment that didn't require words, an assurance that she'd protect me from all men with beards and the microwaves they tried to use. Oh by the way, it said, it's good to be home.



Julie Watson works in marketing and communications by day and writes novels and short stories by night. Her greatest joys include embarrassing her children, 19 and 11, hot date nights at the bookstore with her husband, and anthropomorphizing the family's two dogs, Sky and Poppy. At the age of 13,

her grandmother introduced her to Erma's work, and life has been hilarious ever since.

First place, human interest, local

The Longest Journey By Sarah Hunt

Cincinnati, Ohio

When I chose a cross country road trip for our summer vacation like the ones I took as a child, I imagined a life-changing journey. In reality, we weren't out of the neighborhood before my two boys asked when we'd stop for lunch.

I persisted, despite blank stares in response to my lecture on the Westward Expansion. I ignored endless whining. I crafted sandwiches on my lap. I refereed pointless arguments about the color of the sky and the fate of Pluto. I fixed a pair of cheap headphones repeatedly.

At the two-day mark, when we'd been locked in the van for approximately 800 hours, a stretch of time interrupted only by being locked in a cheap hotel, "Are we there yet?" had morphed into dark existentialism: "Will the dog remember who we are if we ever get home?"

By New Mexico, the atmosphere in our prison-on-wheels had become downright grim. "What if we die in the desert?" the 8-year-old piped up from the back seat. "Would anyone find us?" The 10-year-old looked up from his "Grossology" science book and helpfully added, "Well, first our bodies would bloat and possibly explode."

I kept a mental tally of how much bottled water was left. Just in case. "Why is it so HOT?" the 8-year-old cried. "How is anyone even alive here??" he asked total strangers at a waterless, desert rest area. The rattlesnake warning signs didn't improve our collective spirit, though it was either this threat or peeing into a sandy hole that led to a quick stop.

Eventually, we found water again - a friend's swimming pool.

Forget the Grand Canyon's majesty, standing in four states at once, or summertime snow on a misty Colorado mountain. There was swimming.

"This is everything," mused the 8-year-old from his floating lounge chair, umbrella drink in hand.

That was it. I clenched my margarita glass a little too tightly and took a shaky, angry breath.

"You know, we have swimming pools in Ohio..." I began, prepared to launch into a guilt-infused tirade against my ungrateful children and road-weary spouse.

But then my little family looked up from the water, the relentless Arizona sun beating down on their wet, beaming faces. I paused the tirade.

In that moment, I knew why my own father had dragged our family back and forth across the country despite all the backseat complaining. It was the journey, yes, but it was also overcoming the journey. Together.

It was time to let go of what I'd thought this experience was supposed to look like and embrace our imperfect reality, the threat of rattlesnakes be damned.

"Just let me get my suit," I said.



Sarah Hunt is mom to two "Calvin-inspired" boys, wife of one similar husband and a freelance writer. She recently launched Storybuzz, a communications firm that partners with organizations and individuals to define, enhance and amplify the message they want to share with the world.

Her freelance work can be found in Venue, Cincinnati Parent, Between the Lines, LEAD, PrideSource, Brain, Mother and in various dark corners of the web.

It's My Mortal Coil, and I'll Laugh If I Want To By Susan Keller

Dingmans Ferry, Pennsylvania

I've started planning my funeral. No, I am not dying. I cancelled my Netflix subscription so I need something to do.

My children, both in their 20s, find this horrifying. I'd like to think they can't live without my love and guidance, but that's delusional. They're old enough to find food and shelter. Both know how to operate a car and a washing machine. One knows how to change a toilet paper roll. But neither knows how to make my mac-n-cheese; losing me would trigger an existential crisis. A good mother might make it a priority to teach them the recipe.

Instead, I showed my daughter how to plant my ashes with a seed to turn me into a tree. She reminded me she's killed every plant I ever gave her. Fair point. She'd have to constantly explain a dead philodendron to guests.

She called to tell me there is a place that turns cremains into diamond rings. Great idea, I said, until she loses the ring. She didn't appreciate my dramatization of her in tearful hysterics, explaining to mall security that she set me down while trying on clothes and she is certain somebody stole me. She hung up before I got to the part about the pawn shop.

I said I want party favors, like a wedding — everyone gets a tiny jar filled with candy or something. Nobody wants the stupid favor, but they take them home, put them on a hutch and throw them away after a few years. It's tradition. I've instructed my kids to fill 200 jars with my ashes. (Granted, 200 is ambitious; I can't get six people to show up for a dinner party.) Giggling, I visualize the mortified expressions when people are told what's in the jars and there's no polite way to refuse to take me home with them.

I'm also amused by the ensuing crisis of conscience I am gifting everyone who will one day stand in front of a trash compactor, wanting to get rid of my grotesque party favor but fearing eternal damnation.

My son, who inherited my sense of humor, thought this was pretty funny. My daughter started googling "adult onset psychosis."

He doesn't know the life insurance lapsed, so he isn't as put off by the notion of my passing. He came up with the idea of propping a selfie stick in my casket and turning on the Facebook "live" feature so that hundreds will see my lifeless body under the caption, "(___) is live now." I love that kid so much it hurts.

Of course, I love them both. Just not enough to show them how to make the mac-n-cheese.

Not just yet.



Susan Keller is an unpublished writer who has been chronicling her aberrant life and thought processes on Facebook for years, to the amusement (and chagrin) of friends. She raised two fabulous children who arrived at adulthood with all fingers and toes intact. Now she splits her time between

cleaning houses for money, writing for laughs, and dreaming of the day the two switch places.

Another Day, Another Swatch By Jeff Kennedy

Columbus, Ohio

A few weeks ago, my wife Sharon caught me completely off guard with the question that no man wants to hear.

"Honey, don't you think it's about time we did something different with the bathroom?"

Now, as your typical guy, I could go years without moving a couch cushion or a magazine, let alone walls.

Immediately, my mind races. Does the toilet flush? Check. Does the faucet still leak? Nope. We fixed that months ago. Is there anything growing in the shower? As far as I can tell, no. I say "as far as I can tell" because to me the shower is the most intimate place in our house. It's the one space where I spend 100 percent of my time naked and without my glasses. This means that my wife could rent it out to a bunch of hobbits and, as long as they were quiet and kept to themselves, I'd never know until a new *Lord of the Rings* movie came out featuring an overweight, naked Irishman.

"So, what do you want to change?"

A couple hours later, I'm in a store filled with color samples, each one ever so slightly more bluish-greenish than the next one. Sharon waves a paint chip under my nose.

"What do you think of this one?"

"I like green."

"It's Poseidon."

"I didn't recognize him without the trident."

Sharon rolls her eyes and wanders off muttering under her breath and I do what I always do in these situations. I sit down in a comfy chair off to the side and try to strike up a conversation with the guy next to me who's engrossed in Facebook on his iPhone while his wife is sifting through hundreds of equally similar, but ever so slightly different, red paint samples.

"What are you in for?"

It soon becomes clear that Sharon has quite the project in mind, moving the toilet, the shower, and inexplicably the ceiling. There will be new fixtures (all with brand names that contain no vowels), new tile (in a color I'd call light yellow, but Sherwin-Williams would probably call something like "sad omelet") and a home equity loan that makes me weak in the knees.

We have a couple of architect friends do the design work and call a contractor friend to come over to give an estimate. (Why are all our friends employed in making home improvements?) After listening to Sharon spend half an hour describing the project, I finally pop the question to our contractor.

"How much is this going to cost?"

His answer is the classic line from Animal House.

"My advice to you is to start drinking heavily."



Jeff Kennedy is a central Ohio author and playwright. His theatrical works have received readings and productions throughout the U.S. Jeff is a two-time winner of the James Thurber "My Life and Hard Times" writing contest and a member of the Dramatists Guild. In order to pay the bills,

Jeff spends his days toiling as a strategic analytics manager with JP Morgan Chase.

A Hotel Room of One's Own

oom service. An omelet bar. The sun rising over the Great Miami River or, as some affectionately call it, the Dayton Riviera. What writer wouldn't want to spend two all-expenses-paid, blissful weeks at a hotel in Dayton, Ohio? Yes, a hotel. It's the ultimate gift — the luxury of time to write.

That's the premise behind the newly launched "A Hotel Room of One's Own: The Erma Bombeck | Anna Lefler Humorist-in-Residence Program" at the Marriott at the University of Dayton.

Samantha Schoech, a writer, copywriter

and editor from San Francisco, says her "go-to fantasy" is a "long, relaxed stay in a hotel and a Do Not Disturb sign." Karen Chee, a comedy writer and performer in New York City, envisions Dayton as "idyllic" because it lacks "frantic, stressful distractions." They are the inaugural winners of a residency that drew applications from 401

hopeful writers in 44 states, the District of Columbia and five other countries.

"I'm so impressed with all of the finalists' submissions, and our two winners are just outstanding," said Anna Lefler, a Los Angeles-based novelist and comedy writer who underwrote and helped launch the program. "And it's all upside for these two ladies because while serving as humoristsin-residence, they might also score a side gig as cater-waiters for the Marriott."

Schoech is writing a collection of humorous essays, People Really Like Me, described as "the story of a middle-aged feminist bumbling through a middle-class adulthood filled with the usual signposts: kids, husband, mortgage and a medical marijuana prescription. It's David Sedaris meets Amy Schumer. In Target, With a yeast infection."

Chee's proposed book, I Probably Have Salmonella, "illuminates the quiet hilarity and joy found in everyday life. From stories about getting kicked off a farm to tripping in front of my favorite Senator, this book will read like a conversation with a new, awkward



best friend who's maybe a little bit too honest."

Both winners reflect the aim of the residency to give a creative boost to emerging humor writers. Chee wants to "carry on the mantle as a woman in comedy writing," while Schoech, a lifelong Erma Bombeck fan, wants to coax her book along after "perhaps a hot bath and room service."

Laugh Out Loud humor anthology

he great humorist Erma Bombeck observed, "When humor goes, there goes civilization."
Allia Zobel Nolan took that advice to heart and reached out to women humorists for their best funny coming-of-age essays for Laugh Out Loud: 40 Women Humorists Celebrate Then and Now... Before We Forget.

Published in association with the University of Dayton's Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop for release during its 10th anniversary workshop, the anthology also will be available on Amazon for \$14.99. A number of the essayists will be on hand to sign copies at the workshop, with a portion of the proceeds benefitting the workshop's endowment fund.

Betsy Bombeck says her mother would have loved Laugh Out Loud, calling it "the kind of collection that honors her sense of the ridiculous and shines a bril-

liant spotlight on the inane. The stories in this book reflect a philosophy she always believed: 'If you can't make it better, you can laugh at it.'"

Nolan describes the anthology as "a record of when we were young and when we were old," reflecting a storehouse of hilarious memories.

"I wrote down my experiences in the past lane and solicited help from some pretty funny ladies, writers who've been there and done that, who graciously offered to share stories about their first kiss, their fixation with disco dancing, their tanning machine fiascos, the stigma of wearing patent-leather shoes, and the fact that they once believed in flower power, making love not war, and being suspicious of anyone over 30," said Nolan, a former senior editor at Reader's Digest Children's Publishing, who now writes titles "from the Divine to the feline" from her office home in Con-

necticut.

Fast forward to today, a time when some of the essavists have traded mood rings for menopause. "More funny ladies came forth to share episodes like an ex-husband's cremation ceremony, a 'You-don't-lookanything-likeyou-do-on-thesingles'-site' dating experience, the art of surviving a millennium office, the battle of the bulge,

LAUGH
40 Women Humorists
OUT
Celebrate Then and Nou
LOUD
...Before We Forget

By Allia Zobel Nolan
with Contributions from Erms Bombeck Writers' Workshop

and more," she said.

The book is one of two new initiatives launched by the workshop this year. More than 400 writers competed for two writer's residencies through "A Hotel Room of One's Own: The Erma Bombeck | Anna Lefler Humorist-in-Residence Program.

"It's our mission to encourage and support writers," said Teri Rizvi, founder and director of the Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop. "This book provides a creative avenue for some very funny, gifted writers."

The Human Race Theatre Company

presents



Erma Bombecke At Wit's End

by **Allison Engel** and **Margaret Engel**

featuring **Jennifer Joplin** as "Erma Bombeck" directed by **Heather N. Powell**

APRIL 19 - MAY 13, 2018

in The Caryl D. Philips Creativity Center 116 N. Jefferson St. Downtown Dayton

Dayton's own Erma Bombeck takes center stage in this touching one-woman comedy about the literary icon whose candid commentary on life as a woman, spouse and mother made her the champion of suburban housewives everywhere and her newspaper columns a mainstay on kitchen refrigerators for over thirty years. Full of personal anecdotes and sprinkled with plenty of Bombeck's famous one-liners, it's a charming biography that proves "if you can't make it better, you can laugh at it."

April 19 – 22 preview performances benefit the Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop!

VIP tickets for Thursday, April 19's 8:00 p.m. first preview are \$50. (Includes a post-show reception with Ms. Joplin at Uno Pizzeria & Grill.

Join us for light refreshments and a cash bar.)

Tickets for the Friday and Saturday 8:00 p.m. shows and Sunday 2:00 p.m. matinee are \$30.



TICKETS ARE LIMITED. ORDER NOW!

By phone: **937-228-3630** Online: **www.ticketcenterstage.com** In person: Schuster Center Box Office Open Mon - Fri: 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Use promo code ERMA18 when you order.

Seating in the 50-seat Philips Creativity Center is general admission.

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"Humor writers all have something in common. We share part of our personal and private lives that few other writers share."



—ERMA BOMBECK

When humor
goes , there goes
civilization.
—Егма Вомвеск

I believe everything of any importance in this world has been brought about by dreamers, visionaries who see beyond the first step. —Erma Bombeco

	Sieze the moment. Remember all those women on the Titantic who waved off the dessert cart. —Erma Bombec

Guilt: the gift that keeps on giving. —ERMA BOMBECK

When I stand
before God at the
end of my life, I
would hope that
I would not have
a single bit of talent left, and
could say, "I used
everything you
gave me."
—Erma Вомвесн
51
*

It takes a lot of
courage to show
your dreams to
someone else.
—Erma Вомвеск
1

My theory on housework
is, if the item
doesn't multiply,
smell, catch on fire or block
the refrigerator
door, let it be. No
one cares. Why should you?
—ERMA BOMBEC

	There is a thin line that separates laughter and pain, comedy and tragedy, humor and hurt. —ERMA BOMBECK

There is nothi
more miserabl in the world
than to arrive
in paradise and look like your
passport photo —Erma Bomb

He who laughs
lasts.
—ERMA ВОМВЕСК
<u> </u>

Housework is a treadmill from futility to oblivion with stop offs at tedium and counter productivity. —Erma Bombeo

If you can't
make it better,
you can laugh
at it.
—Erma Вомвеск
—ERWA DOMBECK

I've seen kids
ride bicycles, run
play ball, set up
a camp, swing,
fight a war, swim
and race for eight
hours, yet have to be driven to the
garbage can.
— Егма Вомвесн

In two decades
I've lost a total
of 789 pounds. I
should be hanging
from a charm
bracelet.
—Erma Bombeck

Writing a
column was
what I could do. I
was too old for a
paper route, too
young for Social
Security and too
tired for an affair.
—Екма Вомвеск

The Erma Bombeck
Writers' Workshop
at the
University of Dayton
is sponsored by



Alumni Association



Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop Endowment

created by Ralph and Cindy Price Hamberg in memory of her cousin Brother Tom Price, S.M.









College of Arts and Sciences









RENTAL & STAGING





