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**TALENTED WRITERS, RESPECTED AGENTS ARE FACULTY FOR  
CHUCKANUT WRITERS CONFERENCE**

**Bellingham, WA, April 30, 2012** – The National Book Award. The American Book Award. The Pen Faulkner. The Washington State Book Award. The Grub Street prize. These are among the prestigious writing honors received by the talented faculty of the 2012 Chuckanut Writers Conference, to be held Friday and Saturday, June 22-23 at Whatcom Community College in Bellingham, WA. The 2<sup>nd</sup> annual conference, with the theme *Inspiration into Action*, is a joint venture of WCC's Community and Continuing Education and Village Books of Bellingham. The intensive craft-focused, cross-genre symposium is designed to inspire writers of all experience levels by spotlighting both talented authors who are distinguished writing teachers, and respected agents who will share industry insights and hear pitches.

“One of the strengths of the Chuckanut Writers Conference is that attendees have a real opportunity to interact with and to learn from these talented writers and agents,” says WCC's Linda Howson, conference chairperson.

Conference faculty member Alice Acheson adds, “Writers work in isolation with little feedback. Attending writers' conferences is invaluable and one of the best ways writers can spread the word about their writing. You will learn valuable insights from professionals and have the opportunity to “pitch” your book to fellow writers and presenters. One of those people may be “the” person to further your project by offering to read your proposal, suggest someone who might help, or provide advice that could unlock the problem that has been stalling the development of your manuscript. For sure, you will broaden your understanding of this fascinating industry in which Everything Has Changed, and Nothing Is New.”

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**Poet Jeremy Voigt**, 2011 inaugural conference faculty member, will be the 2012 emcee. Voigt's work has appeared in *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Willow Springs*, *Washington Square*, and other magazines. His chapbook *Neither Rising nor Falling* was published fall 2009. His poetry has been featured on Garrison Keillor's *Writer's Almanac*. He is the co-founder and editor for *Conversations Across Borders*, a philanthropic online literary magazine. He teaches English at Whatcom Community College and Burlington-Edison High School.

**The writing faculty at the second annual conference are:**

**Alice Acheson**: Alice Acheson draws on decades working with large and small publishers, negotiating book contracts, selling subsidiary rights, and editing and publicizing books. She won a *Literary Market Place* Outside Services Award for Advertising, Promotion, and Publicity, and numerous titles she publicized landed on *The New York Times* bestseller list (four simultaneously).

**Sherman Alexie**: Author, poet, and screenwriter, Sherman Alexie, was named one of *The New Yorker's* 20 top writers for the 21st century. His latest books include *Flight*, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (a 2007 National Book Award winner in Young People's Literature), and *Face* (his first full collection of poems in nine years). His 2009 collection of short stories, *War Dances*, won the PEN Faulkner Award.

**Erica Bauermeister**: Erica Bauermeister is the best-selling author of two novels, *The School of Essential Ingredients* and *Joy For Beginners*. She is also the co-author of two reader's guides: *500 Great Books by Women* and *Let's Hear It For the Girls*. She has a PhD from the University of Washington, and has taught both there and at Antioch University.

**Sheila Bender**: Sheila Bender has authored over a dozen books, including *Creative Writing DeMystified*, *Writing and Publishing Personal Essays*, *A New Theology: Turning to Poetry in a Time of Grief* and *A Year in the Life: Journaling for Self-Discovery*. She is founder of WritingItReal.com, a resource and instructional site for writers.

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**Wendy Call:** Wendy Call has served as Writer in Residence at universities, high schools, art centers, a public hospital, and a national park. She co-edited *Telling True Stories: A Nonfiction Writers' Guide*. Her narrative nonfiction book *No Word for Welcome* won Grub Street's 2011 National Book Prize for Nonfiction.

**Oliver de la Paz:** Oliver de la Paz is author of three books of poetry: *Names Above Houses* (2000 Crab Orchard Award winner), *Furious Lullaby*, and *Requiem for the Orchard* (2010 Akron Poetry Series Prize). He is the co-editor of *A Face to Meet the Faces: An Anthology of Personal Poetry*. His work also has appeared in *the Southern Review*, *Tin House*, *New England Review* and *Quarterly West*. He teaches English at Western Washington University.

**Samuel Green:** Samuel Green is the inaugural Washington State Poet Laureate, a NEA Fellowship recipient, 37-year Poets-in-the-Schools veteran and professor. His poetry has appeared in hundreds of journals. Among his ten collections of poems are *Vertebrae: Poems 1972-1994* and *The Grace of Necessity*, which won the 2008 Washington State Book Award for Poetry.

**Christina Katz:** Christina Katz is author of *The Writer's Workout*, *Get Known Before the Book Deal*, and *Writer Mama*. A "gentle taskmaster" to hundreds over the past decade, Christina inspires her students to go from unpublished to published, build professional writing career skills and increase their creative confidence over time.

**Laurel Leigh:** Laurel Leigh, MFA, is a writer, teacher, and editor who freelances internationally. Her current projects include a linked story collection about hard-knock folk—the title story, "Shoeless," appeared in *The Sun*—and a guide for parents called *Little Novelist: Nurturing Your Daughter's Writing Life*, represented by InkWell Management.

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**Priscilla Long:** Priscilla Long's science column, "Science Frictions," appears on *The American Scholar* website. She is author of *The Writer's Portable Mentor: A Guide to Art, Craft, and the Writing Life*. Her poems, stories, and creative nonfictions appear widely, and her awards include a national magazine award.

**Frances McCue:** Frances McCue, winner of the 2011 Washington State Book Award for poetry and a 2011 Grub Street National Book Prize (poetry) and 2011 finalist for the Pacific NW Booksellers Award, is a writer, teacher, and arts instigator. From 1996-2006, she was the Founding Director of Richard Hugo House in Seattle. She has two poetry collections, and her nonfiction book, *The Car That Brought You Here Still Runs* was a 2011 Finalist for the Washington State Book Award.

**Naseem Rakha:** Naseem Rakha is an award-winning journalist and international bestselling author of the novel, *The Crying Tree*, which won a 2010 Pacific Northwest Booksellers Award. Her stories have aired on NPR's *All Things Considered*, *Morning Edition*, *Marketplace Radio*, *Christian Science Monitor*, and *Living on Earth*. When Naseem isn't writing, she's reading, knitting, hiking, gardening, collecting rocks, or just watching the seasons roll in and out.

**Nancy Rawles:** Nancy Rawles is a writer, teacher, and award-winning author. Her books deal with issues of race, gender, and class in American culture. She enjoys the vigorous debates surrounding public education, and her latest book, *Miz Sparks Is On Fire And This Ain't No Drill*, explores the challenges of teaching in the public schools. Her book *My Jim* was the 2009 Seattle Reads selection. She won the American Book Award for her novel *Love Like Gumbo*.

**Oona Sherman:** Oona Zoya Sherman has degrees in Creative Writing and in Human Development and Transformative Learning. She combines this background with her experience as an improv performer and teacher, creating workshops tailored to assist students to become creative, bold, productive writers.

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**Betty Scott:** Betty Scott began writing columns for the *Wenatchee World*. As a mom, she put her writing on hold until three years ago when she returned to it. She's been featured at the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> World Poetry Festivals of Canada and one of her poems received Honourable Mention at the 2010 Surrey (BC, Canada) International Writer's Conference. She teaches at Bellingham Technical College and at Whatcom Community College.

**Kathryn Trueblood:** Kathryn Trueblood is the author of *The Baby Lottery* (a 2007 Book Sense Pick), and of *The Sperm Donor's Daughter*. Her stories and articles have appeared in *Poets & Writers Magazine*, *Rain Taxi Review of Books*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Glimmer Train*, and *Zyzyva*, among others. She has worked in editorial for both mainstream and small press publishers—including Random House and the West Coast's first feminist press, Shameless Hussy. She's an Associate Professor of English at WWU.

**Storme Webber:** Internationally nurtured poet, playwright, teacher, and performer Storme Webber creates blues-influenced, socially engaged texts about Two Spirit identity, art activism and the intersection of race, class, gender, sexuality, memory, and spirit. Her performances are an innovative melding of text and acapella vocals. She's featured in the award-winning documentary *Venus Boyz*.

### Literary agents at this year's conference are:

**Elizabeth Kracht:** Elizabeth Kracht, literary agent at Kimberley Cameron & Associates, represents both literary and commercial fiction as well as nonfiction, and brings to the agency experience as a former acquisitions editor, freelance publicist, and writer. She thrives on working closely with authors, and appreciates writing that has depth, an introspective voice, or that offers wisdom for contemporary living. She is compelled by urban and multicultural themes, and loves settings that are characters unto themselves. In fiction, she represents literary, commercial, women's, thrillers, mysteries, and YA with crossover appeal. She is intrigued by untrustworthy narrators, tragic tales of

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**Elizabeth Kracht, continued:**

class and circumstance, and identifies with flawed and quirky yet sterling characters. In nonfiction, she particularly loves voice- or adventure-driven memoir, and other nonfiction projects that contribute to the well-being of the self or others in addition to niche projects that fill holes in the market, offer a fresh approach, or make her laugh. She also has a soft spot for nonfiction heroic pet stories.

**Vickie Motter:** Vickie Motter, literary agent with Andrea Hurst Literary Management, has an editorial background and brings this to her relationship with writers. She values solid writing and strong voices, but a lovable character, be it Katniss or Lola, and an unshakeable plot are musts. Vickie welcomes established authors as well as debut writers and looks to build a long career with both. She is interested in YA, Adult Paranormal/Urban Fantasy, and Nonfiction genres. Her blog, covering all issues of publishing and giving valuable advice to new and seasoned authors, can be found at [www.navigatingtheshlushpile.blogspot.com](http://www.navigatingtheshlushpile.blogspot.com). Vickie graduated from Western Washington University with a BA in English Literature.

**Elizabeth Wales:** Elizabeth Wales of Wales Literary Agency represents writers of quality fiction and nonfiction. Founded in 1990, the Agency is part of a thriving West Coast literary community that has grown up in the last couple of decades as the Internet has collapsed some of the great distances between New York publishing and the rest of the nation. Wales Literary is interested in works of narrative nonfiction and writers of quality fiction. Agency titles have received excellent reviews and national media attention, and have appeared on the *New York Times*, *Publishers Weekly*, and other national bestseller lists. Elizabeth travels at least four times a year “back home” to New York, where she started in publishing at Oxford University Press in 1980. She has also worked at the Strand Bookstore and in trade sales and marketing at Viking Penguin. She is a graduate of Smith College, and did graduate work in American Literature at Columbia University. She is a member of both the Association of Author’s Representatives, Inc. (AAR), the Pacific Northwest Writers Association, and the Author’s Guild.

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The Chuckanut Writers Conference was launched in 2011 to strengthen connections among WCC's talented Community and Continuing Education writing faculty; the region's strong base of published teaching authors; and aspiring writers seeking inspiration and education. Aligned with the conference organizers' shared vision of giving back to the community, a portion of the conference proceeds will benefit the WCC Writing Center. To register and for complete information, visit the conference website at [www.chuckanutwritersconference.com](http://www.chuckanutwritersconference.com). Register by May 15 for the early bird rate of \$229. After May 15, the rate will be \$259. A limited number of reduced-rate student enrollments is available. See the conference website for details.

Conference participants who will need lodging are encouraged to reserve accommodations as soon as possible. The conference dates are during Bellingham's busy summer season when hotels are often fully booked. For more information about the Chuckanut Writers Conference, including travel information, contact Whatcom's Community and Continuing Education at (360) 383-3200 (9 a.m.-5 p.m. PST weekdays), "friend" the conference on Facebook, visit the conference website, or send an email to [comed@whatcom.ctc.edu](mailto:comed@whatcom.ctc.edu).

Whatcom Community College is an accredited, comprehensive two-year college with a committed, accomplished faculty and staff who serve more than 7,600 students quarterly. On its beautiful 71-acre campus in Bellingham, WA, and through on-line courses, Whatcom offers transfer degrees, professional and technical training programs, as well as basic education, job skills and Community and Continuing Education classes. For more information about WCC, visit [www.whatcom.ctc.edu](http://www.whatcom.ctc.edu).

Founded in 1980, Village Books is a community-based, independent bookstore located in the historic Fairhaven district of Bellingham, WA. Its mission is "building community, one book at a time," which it does daily through a dedicated staff, by collaborating with numerous community organizations and through its Literature Live author event series, through which it hosts more than 250 authors each year. Supporting and co-presenting the Chuckanut Writers Conference fits perfectly with Village Books' mission.

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***Note to editor: Author photos and book jackets are available for use in articles. You may download the images from the conference website, [www.chuckanutwritersconference.com/faculty](http://www.chuckanutwritersconference.com/faculty).***