



## WILLAMETTE WRITERS

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*“An organization for published and aspiring writers.”*

### *About Willamette Writers*

Established in 1965, Willamette Writers has over 1,700 active members, 17 Board members, one contracted office manager and dozens of volunteers. It is the largest writers' organization in Oregon and one of the largest in the United States. Headquartered in Portland Oregon, it has four chapters in Oregon: *Southern Oregon* in Medford (est.1997), *Mid-Valley* in Eugene (est. 1998) *Coast* in Newport (est. 2005), and *Salem* (est. 2007).

The organization offers an active program of monthly meetings featuring speakers, a monthly newsletter, weekly e-mail announcements, special seminars and workshops, a library, referral services for critique groups and freelance professionals, and other learning and networking opportunities.

One of the greatest benefits of the organization has become the annual conference, which begins the first Friday in August each year. Members are entitled to a registration discount, and they can volunteer for conference duties in exchange for conference time.

The conference features classes and workshops on all aspects of writing, and opportunities to pitch to literary and film agents and other professionals. There are also opportunities to hone pitching skills, get critique feedback on short manuscripts, and have scenes performed from scripts at the *Writers & Actors Lab*. A number of writers have broken into the industry and sold their first works based on connections made at the conference. Jean Auel met an agent who found a publisher for *Clan of the Cave Bear*; Martha Kay Renfro, a.k.a. M.K. Wren (*King of the Mountain*, *Curiosity Didn't Kill The Cat* and *Multitude of Sins*) and Marc Acito (*How I Paid for College*, *Attack of the Theater People*) also made connections at the Conference.

The Whitcomb Scholarship, established in 2007, offers a number of one-day conference scholarships to college, university and high school writing students and the writing teachers who nominate them. High and middle school students can compete for a chance to have a scene that they have written preformed at the conference Writers & Actors Lab and receive a one-day conference scholarship.

Willamette Writers also supports young people in our communities through its “Books for Kids” program. Founded in 1992, this program distributes over 20,000 books annually to children who might not otherwise have one. As writers, we know it is important to support readers.

“Young Willamette Writers,” a group for students in 5<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> grades, meets during the school year at the same time and place as the adult meetings in Portland. The group has special speakers and projects. In the spring of 2008, it featured a months-long script-writing workshop taught by Cynthia Whitcomb.

We also encourage writing excellence through our various contest and awards programs. The Kay Snow Writing Contest, established in 1973, was named for our founder. The contest now has entries from across the nation, and includes both adult and young writers. There were over 1,000 entries in 2008.

The Kate Herzog Scholarship writing awards are open to students in grades 12 -14. College scholarships and free attendance at the WW conference are awarded each year. Kate Herzog was also a founding member of the organization.

A number of annual awards are chosen by the board each spring: The Distinguished Northwest Writer Award (est. 1988) recognizes noteworthy NW authors with exceptional literary writing. The Lifetime Achievement (est. 1989) goes to honor a NW writer or person in the publishing industry who has demonstrated exceptional achievement in his or her work during a lifetime. The Humanitarian Award (est. 1996) honors a person or organization in the writing field or publishing industry in the NW who has demonstrated exceptional philanthropy in his or her field of work.

Additionally, Willamette Writers forms partnerships with other writers groups such as Oregon Writers Colony in order to serve our writing community best.

*A professional writer is an amateur who didn't quit.  
~ Richard Bach*