

The written word

Writing as a Craft and a Business

The Academy holds its inaugural writing conference

All Write COLUMBIA A select group of experienced and beginning writers took part in All Write Columbia this October, the Academy's first Nonfiction Writing Conference.

The intensive five-day course comprised a mix of virtual and in-person presentations and workshops, as well as talks by acclaimed memoirists, agents, editors and marketing experts who discussed both the craft and the business of writing essays, biography, memoir and narrative nonfiction.

Fostering a community

"The make-up of both the class and faculty reflected our commitment to diversity and an all-encompassing and equal world," says Academy Vice President Madaline Sparks. "The goal was to challenge, inspire and foster a writers' community that will continue beyond the workshops—and to help writers develop both creative skills and marketing savvy." All Write Columbia was made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

The conference concluded with an October 23 wine-and-cheese reception at the Academy, open to the public, where participants shared excerpts of their work. There were also readings by author and conference director Donna Kaz and author and workshop leader Pramila Venkateswaran.

"We're planning to make All Write Columbia an annual event," says Madaline. Next year's focus, she adds, will be on fiction.

Festival of Books postscript

Just Like Old Times The Festival of Books returns in person

FESTIVAL OF BOOKS With the pandemic beginning to show signs of easing its grip, the Academy's

Festival of Books returned in all its glory as an in-person event on Labor Day weekend and drew record crowds.

"The turnout was amazing and beyond our expectations," says David Highfill, who co-chaired the Festival with Wayne Greene and Carl Atkins. "After holding the Festival on line for two years, there was tremendous pent-up enthusiasm for getting back to the Festival as it's always been known."

The Festival is always a major fundraiser for the Academy, with sales of books, CDs, DVDs and vinyl LPs accounting for most of the weekend's proceeds. As in past years, unsold items are donated to under-resourced public school libraries and to non-profit organizations.

Focus on readers and writers

This year's Festival featured an exceptional range of author presentations, the best book sale around and a variety of activities for children. "While the event is geared toward read-

ers, it's also a way to feature and support writers and provide a stage for them to read from and discuss their work," says Carl. Planning and producing the Festival requires a huge investment of time and effort beginning months in advance and continuing through Labor Day weekend. "All of it is the work of more than 100 volunteers who sort books, audio and video media, order supplies, recruit speakers, and ensure the smooth running of a complex event with many moving parts," says David.

In addition, volunteers greet visitors at the door, assist with purchases, serve treats at the Cookbook Café, engage youngsters with reading and art, introduce or converse with authors, and participate in many other ways. "The Festival could not survive without their efforts," says Wayne. "They and our generous sponsors make the event possible."

Festival of Books 2023 is scheduled to begin on Friday, September 1. Stay tuned for updates in the new year.

what's coming up

-  **Writing Workshop**
What's Love Got to Do With It:
Writing From the Right Side of the Brain
Writing workshop with Jamie Cat Callan,
Wednesdays, January 25-February 15, 3pm
-  **Revels**
Annual Winter Revels Party and Dinners
A festive evening of great food and great company
Saturday, February 11
-  **Music At The Academy**
Blues Network Concert Series
"Women in Blues" with Amy Ryan, Jill Burnham &
Thomasina Winslow
Saturday, February 25, 8pm
-  **Book Talk**
Conversation with Jonathan Darman about his new
book, "Becoming FDR: The Personal Crisis that
Made a President"
Sunday, March 5, 2pm
-  **Roots & Shoots**
Steve Katz (former member of Blood, Sweat & Tears)
Concert & Reminiscences
Saturday, March 25, 8pm
-  **Sidewalks of New York: An evening of
original and vintage songs about NYC.**
Alt/Indie artists Rachel Garniez & Erik Della Penna
Saturday, April 22, 8pm

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