

# WRITER'S DIGEST CONFERENCE

## Friday, January 20th, 2012

3:00 pm - 4:00 pm

### **Registration**

Registration will held in the New York Ballroom Foyer. You will be able to pick up your registration packet and all materials needed for the conference.

4:00 pm - 4:50 pm

### **Writing About Yourself in the Digital Age**

A.J. Jacobs, Author

A.J. Jacobs -- author of three New York Times bestsellers about his life -- talks about how to make a living writing about...yourself! You'll learn how to leverage every medium, from books and magazines to Twitter and Facebook. You'll also learn how to generate new ideas in a market flooded with more books than ever and promote yourself without sounding like an egomaniac.

5:00 pm - 5:50 pm

### **Writing the 21st Century Novel**

Donald Maass, Author

What does it mean to write a 21st century novel? Bestselling author and literary agent Donald Maass explains the fine points of just what this intriguing new storytelling model is – a unique marriage of literary quality with pop fiction appeal – and how it works. Don will push you into thinking beyond genre boundaries, outdated styles and “safety zones” to ways of writing fiction that are personal, unique, and contemporary. This fast-paced lecture comes from one of our most popular presenters and promises to illustrate exactly how to craft fiction for the widest audience—without losing your most discerning readers.

6:00 pm - 6:50 pm

### **Pitch Perfect**

Chuck Sambuchino, Author, Editor Guide to Literary Agents

Back by popular demand! This can't miss session will give you insights into exactly what you need to think about as you prepare to pitch your work. If you intend on participating in Saturday's massive Pitch Slam, then this session is crucial to your success. Chuck will provide guidelines for honing your pitch to a razor's edge, help you get comfortable with presenting and give you the confidence you need to make a great impression every time you pitch.

## Saturday, January 21st, 2012

7:00 am - 9:00 am

### **Registration**

Registration will held in the New York Ballroom Foyer. You will be able to pick up your registration packet and all materials needed for the conference.

8:30 am - 8:50 am

9:00 am - 9:50 am

### **Panel: Ask the Editor (Fiction)**

Benjamin LeRoy

Scott Francis, Content Editor, Writer's Digest, F+W Media, Inc

Millicent Bennett, Senior Editor, Free Press

In this special session, we've gathered four publishers who are well known and highly respected for the fiction they publish. Attendees will listen to discussions on what publishers are looking for, how they decide who to publish, what they see as the digital future of fiction, what writers should expect from a publisher once their book gets accepted and much more. The floor will also be open to questions from the audience.

9:00 am - 9:50 am

### **Becoming an Author Entrepreneur: The Business of Being a Writer and Building Your Platform**

Dan Blank, Founder, We Grow Media

To build a career as an author, you have to have an entrepreneurial spirit – you must take charge of connecting with your audience, grow your platform, share your work, encourage sales and earn revenue. This session is for writers with creative vision who also need the business backbone to support their career. Topics to be covered include:

- Embracing the business mindset - how successful entrepreneurs (and writers) think about their careers.
- Market analysis - how to understand those you hope to attract, and your unique differentiator in a crowded marketplace.
- Building an author platform – establishing the credibility you need to build your brand.
- What makes people buy – understanding how your book works as a product and what gets readers to pull the trigger to purchase a book
- Pricing models that work, and how to leverage your body of work to increase sales.
- Measuring success – tips and tricks to find out what is working, and where you are wasting resources.

This session is open to writers of all styles and for those seeking publication by a traditional publisher or through self-publishing.

9:00 am - 9:50 am

### **E-Publishing 101: The Major Services, How They Work, and What You Have to Provide**

Jane Friedman

The publishing world has exploded with new and free opportunities to help you get visibility for your work. New online services can help you publish your work quickly, test market ideas and create a readership—with little to no start-up cost to you. Get a behind-the-scenes tour of these options, how they work, and how writers are using them to move their career forward. While e-publishing doesn't equal instant success, you'll learn:

- How authors have used online tools to increase their visibility and open up other opportunities
- Which instant publishing tools and services are popular, free, and powerful
- What you can expect from these services, and how they make their profit
- How you can instantly make your e-book available for sale on Amazon and other major online retailers—the same places where traditional publishers sell
- When to make your work free and when to charge
- How to determine if you need physical copies to sell and what kind of investment to make in print production
- If and when you're endangering the future potential of your work by making it available for free or online
- How to decide when it's time to seek traditional publishing options
- How to integrate your instant publishing efforts with the rest of your career and online presence

10:00 am - 10:50 am

### **Panel: Ask the Agents**

Chuck Sambuchino, Author, Editor Guide to Literary Agents

Mary Kole, Associate Agent, Andrea Brown Literary Agency  
April Eberhardt  
Diana Fox  
John Willig

Moderated by **Chuck Sambuchino**, this literary agent Q&A provides you with an opportunity to find out what agents really think of query letters, what they look for in sample chapters and what they do—and don't—like to hear during a live pitch. 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.

10:00 am - 10:50 am

**Mailbox Full of Money: Micro-publish Your Way from Beginning to Book Deal**

Christina Katz, Author

The longer the forms you write, the harder it is to convince people to actually read what you already wrote. If you want to fill your inbox with acceptances and your mailbox with checks and write your way to a future book deal, Christina Katz can provide you with a roadmap for how to go from overwhelmed and unpublished, to serially publishing and steadily cashing checks. You want to be read? Micro-publishing is the shorter, cheerier road to publication and pay. Find out how to break your favorite topics into consistent writing projects and reinforce your professional status with every published clip in this fun, interactive session.

10:00 am - 10:50 am

**What Your Teachers Didn't Teach You and How to Escape What They Did**

Don Fry, Independent Writing Coach

In this exciting session, you'll learn how to transcend the rigid "rules" of writing and focus on creating your own writing process, magnifying your existing strengths, while avoiding your weaknesses. Many things drilled into you by teachers and traditional workshop instructors actually inhibit your ability to write powerful non-fiction. In addition, prolific author Don Fry will show you how to create your own unique voice. The end result will be faster, more powerful, and more persuasive writing that arises from who you are and who you want to be.

11:00 am - 11:50 am

**Seven Secrets of Successful Self-Published Authors**

Keith Ogorek, Senior Vice President Global Marketing, Author Solutions

Why is it that some writers are able to reach their publishing goal and market their books successfully while others never get it done?

Keith Ogorek, SVP of marketing for Author Solutions and self published author of two books, shares seven secrets he's learned from his own experience working with hundreds of authors that will help you understand your publishing options and the key things to know about effective marketing. Confused or overwhelmed by the changes in publishing today? This seminar will help you gain clarity about your opportunities, how to take advantage of them, and sell your work once it's published.

11:00 am - 11:50 am

**Marketing for the Promotionally-Challenged Author**

Rob Eagar, CEO, WildFire Marketing

Are you an author who is afraid to promote yourself? Do you think marketing is a waste of time? Do you want to market but feel clueless about the process? Have no fear. Rob Eagar, book marketing expert and author of *Sell Books Like Wildfire* will explain how to get over your insecurities and transform apprehension into positive action. Rob has worked with over 400 authors, including first-time writers and several New York Times bestsellers. His presentation will provide numerous insights to help you:

- • Heighten confidence to market your message
- • Build a memorable brand
- • Grow your author platform

- • Increase your book sales

11:00 am - 11:50 am

**Conflict & Suspense: How to Keep Readers Turning Pages in Any Genre**

James Scott Bell

Conflict, action and suspense pull readers into a story and carry them along until its conclusion. James Scott Bell, author of more than 15 thrillers and classic writing instruction titles *Write Great Fiction: Plot & Structure* and *The Art of War for Writers*, offers proven techniques that will help take your work from ho-hum to dramatic page-turner. You'll learn how to craft scenes, create characters and develop storylines conducive to compelling conflict; how to build tension through different forms of action; and how suspense can carry a story's conflict and action to its dramatic conclusion.

12:00 pm - 12:50 pm

**Lunch (included)**

12:00 pm - 12:50 pm

1:00 pm - 1:50 pm

**Keynote Address: The New World Of Publishing, And What It Means For You.**

Barry Eisler, Author

Barry Eisler, best selling author of the John Rains series of thrillers talks about how authors should approach the business of writing in our increasingly digital age - what's changed, what hasn't, and what writers can do to maximize their chances for success.

2:00 pm - 5:00 pm

**Pitch Slam**

For THREE full hours, the Writer's Digest Writing Conference is host to more than 70 professional literary agents. During that time, you'll be able to pitch to as many of them as you can in three minute sessions. The first 90 seconds of each meeting are for you to pitch your work, be it fiction or nonfiction. The remaining time is for the agent to give his or her immediate feedback on the pitch, along with invaluable suggestions for improving it. When time is called, you move to the next agent on your list.

Who you choose to see is entirely up to you. A list of the agents and the types of work they represent allow you to target the people who are right for your work. And you get to do it over and over again until the THREE hours are up. By the end, your pitch will be honed to a razor's edge. The slam is open to all attendees, so make sure to prep your pitch in advance. Remember, you only have 90 seconds to convey what's so great about your work. Make every second count!

4:00 pm - 4:50 pm

**Sunday, January 22nd, 2012**

8:30 am - 8:50 am

9:00 am - 9:50 am

**Panel: Navigating the World of Self Publishing**

Jane Friedman

Keith Ogorek, Senior Vice President Global Marketing, Author Solutions

Brent Sampson, Chief Executive Officer and Chief Marketing Officer, Outskirts Press

Holly Payne, Novelist/Screenwriter/Writing Coach

Jesse Potash, Founder, PUBSLUSH Press

In this explosive panel, you'll hear a variety of viewpoints and opinions on self-publishing—what many are now calling “indie” publishing. You'll hear the good, the bad, the things to watch out for and the best ways to spend your money—or not. You'll also hear about the latest self-publishing trends and what's coming down the pike. Time will be set aside for an audience Q&A, so as many critical questions get answered as possible.

9:00 am - 9:50 am

**Panel: Hardcore Author Marketing - What to Do to Rise Above in the Digital Age**

Dan Blank, Founder, We Grow Media

Rob Eagar, CEO, WildFire Marketing

Christina Katz, Author

Kate Travers, Digital Marketing Manager, F+W Media, Inc.

You've heard it a hundred times by now: writers have to be marketers, too. They have to have a platform to succeed. And with more and more writers finally coming to terms with these new requirements, the fight for attention becomes even more important. Before, you had to stand out in a relatively quiet room. Now everyone is yelling and screaming for attention. In that environment, what actions make the difference? What really sets you apart, gets your work noticed and drives your sales? Enough with theories, advice and supposition—here is where you'll learn exactly what can get you ahead of the literary pack.

9:00 am - 9:50 am

**How to Blog a Book**

Nina Amir, Nonfiction Editor, Consultant, Book Blogger, Author - CopyWright Communications

How to Blog a Book

Could your blog become the next Julie & Julia? It's possible.

Could your blog propel you into the world of traditional publishing success or provide you with a platform from which to self-publish your books? Yes.

Blogs provide writers with an awesome platform-building tool and a superb way to gain exposure to agents and acquisition editors who search the internet for "proven" ideas. Given the current state of traditional publishing, writers must creatively take their careers into their own hands and take advantage of the technology currently available. The savvy writer, therefore, might want to use blogging as a unique way to not only write a book quickly and easily but to publish and promote it as well -- one post at a time in cyberspace.

In this session you will learn:

- 10 reasons to consider blogging your book
- 6 things you need to do before you blog a book
- How to decide if your blog can become a book
- How to start blogging a book
- 3 "must-do" activities for your blogged book to get discovered

10:00 am - 10:50 am

**Panel: Ask the Editor (Non Fiction)**

Phil Sexton, Publisher and Community Leader Writer's Digest, F+W Media, Inc.

Karen Cooper, Publisher, Adams Media

Michelle Howry, Senior Editor, Touchstone/Simon & Schuster

Meg Leder, Editor, Perigee/Penguin

Donya Dickerson, Senior Editor, McGraw Hill

In this first of two special panels (the second of which focuses on fiction), you'll hear directly from some of the best nonfiction editors in the business exactly how they make decisions about what to publish, who to publish, and why. You'll learn what they look for in an author, how the publishing environment has impacted the way they work, they kind of deals they're willing to make, and more. Want to know what acquisitions editors really think about authors who haven't got a platform? You'll learn about it here. The second half of the discussion will open up to include questions from the audience – an incredible opportunity to pick the brains of the people who decide exactly what – and who – gets published.

10:00 am - 10:50 am

**Writing and Selling Your Memoir**

Paula Balzer, Author

The local bookstore is full of memoirs on nearly every subject these days. How can you give your memoir that extra edge that makes agents want to represent it, editors want to buy it – and most importantly, get audiences clamoring to read it? Writing memoir isn't as simple as telling your personal story. It's about carefully crafting a selected piece of your history using a well-honed voice, an appropriate structure. We'll also talk about simple steps you can take to be a more productive writer.

10:00 am - 10:50 am

**Making Good Ideas Great**

Jack Heffron

In this dynamic session, author, editor and instructor Jack Heffron shows you how to take any idea for a short story or novel, assess its strength and quality, and then improve it. Running your ideas through this process will help improve your chances of publication, ensure heightened reader engagement and help you to develop a body of work that delivers a satisfying read every time. You'll learn how to spot unrealized possibilities in your work, how to build on them and use them to create something truly remarkable.

11:00 am - 11:50 am

**Kidlit Craft and Trends: How to Publish Middle Grade and YA in Today's Hot Children's Market**

Mary Kole, Associate Agent, Andrea Brown Literary Agency

Andrea Brown Literary Agency's Mary Kole reveals what you need to know to write fiction for tween and teen readers. From craft, character, voice, and writing issues, to upcoming trends in the children's marketplace, to preparing and querying your work, you'll hear the latest kidlit scoop.

11:00 am - 11:50 am

**The First 50 Pages (and Why Getting Them Right is the Key to Your Success)**

Jeff Gerke, Founder and Publisher, Marcher Lord Press

The opening fifty pages carry a surprising amount of weight for beginning a novel correctly. You have to engage your reader, introduce your hero, and establish the context of the story. You'll also be presenting the stakes, introducing the antagonist, establishing the hero's desires, starting the main character's inner journey, and getting a ticking time bomb to ticking down. Plus much more. And you want to do all these things without dumping backstory on your reader, misleading your reader, insulting your reader's intelligence, or tipping your hand to your reader. In this class, Jeff shows you how to begin your novel with the skill and intentionality that keeps readers' eyes glued to the page.

11:00 am - 11:50 am

**How to Make Money with Your Writing (Even when the Economy Sucks)**

I.J. Schechter, Author

Sure, everyone's tightening their belts today, from publishers to multinational conglomerates. But they still need people who can tell a story the right way. In fact, good communicators are more valuable today than ever before. In this session, esteemed freelancer and highly sought writing consultant IJ Schechter will tell you why, and how to take advantage.

12:00 pm - 12:50 pm

**Closing Address: The Drive to Write**

Chris Baty

Chris Baty—founder of the largest single writing event in the country, National Novel Writing Month—closes out the 2012 Writer's Digest Conference with a bang. He'll discuss those indefinable qualities that drive us to write, create characters, devise plots and share ideas. He'll also examine the volatile future of publishing and what it means for current and future authors. You'll leave the conference fired up—excited about getting back to work and proud to be a writer!

3:00 pm - 7:00 pm

**Bootcamp Session #1: How to Make A Living as A Freelance Writer(Additional Fees Apply)**

Eric Butterman

Back by popular demand! Freelance writing guru Eric Butterman is here to show you how in this special breakout session that follows the basic writing conference program. You'll learn from actual pitches that sold, get more comfortable with follow-up calls and, most importantly, understand how to GET PAID! You'll also learn how to better organize your business—a good reality check for anyone truly

interested in pursuing the freelance writing life.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Additional Fees apply for this boot camp session. You will be able to add on this session during the registration process.

3:00 pm - 7:00 pm

**Bootcamp Session #2: Plot vs Character - A More Powerful Approach to Writing Great Fiction(Additional Fees Apply)**

Jeff Gerke, Founder and Publisher, Marcher Lord Press

Jeff Gerke's first fiction craft book for Writers Digest Books, Plot Versus Character: A balanced approach to writing great fiction, forms the basis for this 4-hour course. In class we're going to craft a major character (complete with essential attributes, backstory, and transformational arc) and then build a plot around that character, a plot that externalizes the character's inner journey, moves with suspense, and has a reader-satisfying conclusion. Come in with an idea spark; leave with a fully imagined novel just begging to be written. (Before the conference: Select and study a Myers-Briggs temperament for your main character. Resource: keirse.com and others.)

**PLEASE NOTE:** Additional Fees apply for this boot camp session. You will be able to add on this session during the registration process.