

Lineup of Authors Teaching at Conference Features Former Winlock Resident

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Jennifer Lauck
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Our writers' critique group is excited to announce the keynoter for the third annual 2016 Southwest Washington Writers Conference at Centralia College Sept. 17 is a New York Times bestselling author who attended high school in Winlock.

Jennifer Lauck, a talented writing instructor in Portland, has appeared on Oprah, BBC News and "The Rosie O'Donnell Show" while discussing her poignant childhood memoir, "Blackbird," which was translated into 22 languages.

"I couldn't put 'Blackbird' down," said Sandra Crowell of Olympia, a critique group colleague and author of "The Land Called Lewis."

"This writer truly captures the voice of a child as she takes us through tragic conditions without any self-pity. Just when I thought her life couldn't get any worse ... but then, that would be a spoiler! I'm really excited that she's the keynote speaker for our writers conference this year."

Barbara Lewis, who previously worked at the Winlock branch of Timberland Regional Library, said patrons waited eagerly for Lauck's newest memoir.

"The books were terrific," Lewis said. "They were wonderful. Very real. Very gritty. And I loved the way that she rose above everything in the end. She'll be really amazing."

Lauck's second memoir, "Still Waters," discusses her life in a small town she called "St. Helens"

(aka Winlock). During high school, she even waited tables at Spiffy's restaurant at Interstate 5's Exit 68. Her other memoirs are "Show Me the Way" and "Found."

In her keynote, Lauck will discuss "Artistic Perseverance in Six Steps."

"Upon learning that I am a writer, people will often say, 'Oh! Cool. I'm going to write a book someday! It's always been on my bucket list!' I will respond by saying, 'Really? Well, becoming a surgeon is on my bucket list!' Of course, I'm joking. I do not want to be a surgeon, but to me, that is how hard writing truly is on most days."

She also will teach a creative nonfiction workshop on "The Essay in Eight Steps" and a two-part workshop called "Drafts One and Two: Novel or Memoir."

"Writing is lonely, solitary business," Lauck said over the weekend. "Conferences (like the one coming this fall) offer necessary sustenance. I'm honored to be a part of the conversation. I hope writers leave my talks and workshops renewed and even inspired."

In addition to Lauck, Seattle native Mary Daheim, a New York Times and USA Today bestseller of more than 60 novels, will teach two workshops — one on how to become published and another on writing mysteries and character development. Since 1983, she has published seven historical romances, three anthologies, the 30-book Bed & Breakfast series and the 26-book Alpine series.

Leslie Gould, No. 1 bestselling and Christy Award-winning author of 22 novels (including Amish romance), will teach about "Romancing Your Novel." Melanie Dobson, Carol award-winning author of 15 historical, romantic suspense and time-slip novels, will teach her popular workshop on "Writing Historical Fiction for Contemporary Readers." Terri Reed, author of romance and romantic suspense novels, will teach about "The Anatomy of a Well-Layered Story."

As a panel, these three Portland-area authors will also discuss "Navigating the Publishing World."

Young adult and sci-fi author Jill Williamson, of Vancouver, Washington, whose first novel "By Darkness Hid" won a Christy Award, will teach workshops on "Writing Great Villains" and "Punctuation 101."

Marketing expert Veronika Noize, also of Vancouver, will repeat her popular "Marketing Your Work and Yourself" session and a new workshop, "Social Media Strategies & Hacks for Writers." We'll also have two sessions on Indie publishing taught by Kyle Pratt, of Adna; Carolyn McCray, of Centralia; and Oregonian Maggie Lynch (aka Maggie Jaimeson). Poet Jennifer Anne Messing, of Portland, will teach about writing for magazines.

Registration for the conference at Centralia College opens this month. The \$65 early registration fee includes lunch. Starting July 1, the cost increases to \$85. All proceeds benefit

the Fox Theatre.

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