



**Community of Writers
at Squaw Valley
PO Box 1416
Nevada City
CA 95959**

**(530) 470-8440
brett@squawvallewwriters.org**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Please publish before March 1, 2010.

**The Community of Writers at Squaw Valley Announces its 41st
Annual Summer Workshops**

Poetry Workshop: July 17 to 24, 2010

Fiction and Non-Fiction Workshops: August 7 – 14, 2010

Screenwriting Workshop: August 7 – 14, 2010

The Squaw Valley Community of Writers is a literary organization that holds several week-long gatherings of poets, writers, and screenwriters every summer in the Sierra ski area of Squaw Valley. Applications are now open for writers who wish to attend.

The oldest writers conference in the Western United States, it was founded in 1969, a time when the Sewanee and Breadloaf writers conferences – in Tennessee and Vermont, respectively – were the principal venues for young writers seeking instruction and fellowship. Today, the Squaw Valley workshop has enjoyed for many years a prestige equal to those older institutions'. Alumni of the Community of Writers include Pulitzer Prize-winners Michael Chabon and Richard Ford, bestselling novelists such as Anne Rice, Janet Fitch, Alice Sebold, and Amy Tan, and many others of today's well-known literary artists. Poets who have gone on to publish include Kazim Ali, Molly Fisk, and Evie Shockley to name just a few. The workshops are convened in the belief that inexperienced writers can help each other to prosper by

sharing the lore and craft of writing, by seeking the advice of better-established authors, and in particular by close textual criticism of their own stories and poems and screenplays.

The institution was founded over four decades ago by California writers Blair Fuller and Oakley Hall, because they wished to foster a literary culture in the West that would be conversant with the publishing establishment of the East Coast. New York had always dominated the literary scene, and Fuller and Hall, as Californians, felt that the West Coast had been somewhat left out in the cold. It's a testament to the success of their vision that now the West is a home to many of the most eminent American writers, many of them friends and former students of the Community.

Squaw Valley, near Lake Tahoe, was the site of the 1960 Olympic Games – today a world-class ski area – and in the summers it serves as a destination resort for hikers, bicyclists, and outdoor enthusiasts of all kinds. The participants in the Community of Writers live in ski-cabin housing during the weeks of conferences, and convene for workshops in public buildings under the aegis of the Squaw Valley USA ski corporation, which generously furnishes its premises.

This year, the staff for the poetry week will include Kazim Ali, Forrest Gander, Brenda Hillman, Evie Shockley, Dean Young. There are morning workshops in which the poets read to each other the work of the previous twenty-four hours. In the late afternoons the poets gather for a lecture on some aspect of the craft of poetry.

http://www.squawvalleywriters.org/poetry_ws.htm

The teaching staff of the prose program includes literary agents and editors as well as dedicated writers. These include Mark Childress (*Crazy in Alabama*), Glen David Gold (*Carter Beats the Devil*), Sands Hall (*Catching Heaven*), Al Young (former California Poet Laureate); and new staff writers Teresa Jordan, (*Riding the White Horse Home*), ZZ Packer (*Drinking Coffee Elsewhere*), Luis Alberto Urrea (*The Hummingbird's Daughter*). Guest include Diane Johnson (*Le Divorce*), Alice Sebold (*The Lovely Bones*), and Amy Tan (*The Joy Luck Club*). Mornings are devoted to close criticism in small groups, conducted by the writers and agents and editors on staff; afternoons are turned over to public lectures and panels, concerning the techniques of writing as well as the ins and outs of the publishing business. It is the philosophy of the workshop administration that, as writing is a business as well as an art, a working familiarity with commercial

publishing is useful to aspiring writers.

http://www.squawvalleywriters.org/writers_ws.htm

The instructors for the screenwriting section may include Pamela Gray (*Music of the Heart*), Christopher Monger (*Temple Grandin*, for HBO), Judith Rascoe (*Eat a Bowl of Tea*), Tom Rickman (*Coal Miner's Daughter*). The Screenwriting Program focuses on individual attention and work-in-progress, by staff screenwriters and writer/directors. Film clips, lectures and writing exercises are incorporated into daily workshops emphasizing all aspects of craft. This program invites both narrative features and character-driven documentaries.

http://www.squawvalleywriters.org/swriter.htm_ws.

The experience of the week can be a challenging one, for ambitious artists who are exposing their work to the view of their fellows. The convention is devoted to some fun, too, as there is plenty of recreation in the Tahoe area, and it's meant to an informal community. At the end of prose week, by which time a camaraderie has grown among the participants, an informal pageant known as The Follies is performed, where guitars are dragged out, or saxophones or violins, or even fright-wigs, as skits and other performances allow participants to blow off a little steam built-up over an arduous week.

All interested writers and poets are encouraged to apply. No prior publications or academic credits are required; the only criterion for admission is that the applicant submit a sample of his or her original writing, which is evaluated by a panel of judges on the basis of literary merit only. Admissions are competitive, as the ratio of applicants to acceptances is an average of 4-to-1. Some financial aid is available.

For information, visit <http://www.squawvalleywriters.org> and click on "Workshops."

For hi-resolution photographs of the staff writers and poets, the scenery in Squaw Valley, and the workshops, please visit:

<http://www.squawvalleywriters.org/pressroom.html>

and

<http://www.squawvalleywriters.org/images.html>

and

<http://photos.squawvalleywriters.org>

Any further questions, contact Brett Hall Jones, Executive Director:

<mailto:brett@squawvalleywriters.org>.