

Latinidad – March 2007: The Writers Institute

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For more writing opportunities, including calls for submissions, contests and conferences, visit <http://www.marcelalandres.com/> and click on Writing Opportunities.

1. Saludos

While there are countless writing conferences in the U.S., very few cater to Spanish language writers. The Writers Institute is an example of such a conference. While it is not specifically geared towards Latino writers, The Writers Institute has since its inception catered to the particular needs of its Miami community. Whether you write in English or Spanish, The Writers Institute offers invaluable support and instruction. To learn more, read this month's Q&A with Program Coordinator Lissette Mendez.

Helping Latino writers get published,

Marcela Landres

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2. Q&A

Lissette Mendez works as a program coordinator at the Florida Center for the Literary Arts at Miami Dade College. She has published poetry, creative nonfiction, restaurant reviews and articles. Her work has appeared in *Burnt Sugar: Contemporary Cuban Poetry* in English and Spanish, *Kalliope*, and *The Miami Herald's Arts* weekly. She has an MFA in creative writing from Florida International University and is working on a memoir about coming from Cuba during the Mariel Boatlift.

How is the Writer's Institute different from other conferences?

From the very beginning we offered classes in Spanish--we do so as part of our year-round program also--because there are so many people in Miami who feel much more comfortable in Spanish; after all this is creative writing, not business writing. So even if the person is fluent in English, often they want to write their fiction or poetry in Spanish--that is the language in which they can best express emotional complexity.

We are also different in that we are in an urban setting, right in the middle of downtown Miami, so that many of our students are from the area and no longer have to go off in the summers to study with world-class authors. Our visiting students (from other cities/states) love our setting because Miami is so dynamic and the Wolfson Campus, where we are

housed and where the classes take place, is in the middle of everything and is 10 minutes from South Beach and other tourist destinations. When they are not in class or writing students can go to the beach, or go shopping.

What genres are covered?

We try and spice things up. Besides the "bread and butter" fiction, nonfiction and poetry, every year we like to include some specialty classes--last year we had chick lit and this year we have a class on thrillers and crime novels with Ridley Pierson. We've offered travel writing every year and this year a personal favorite we are offering is Revision for Fiction and Nonfiction. Writers really need to get used to understanding that all writing is rewriting.

Which genres are not covered?

This year we are not doing anything with romance or writing for children or teens, but since we vary from year to year probably next year we will offer something along those lines.

Would you recommend the Writers Institute to published as well as unpublished writers? Yes. There is always more to learn, there is always some extra wisdom to glean.

For those writers who are uncertain about attending, how can the Writer's Institute benefit them?

Nick Garnett, who is now my colleague, started taking creative writing classes here a few years ago. He came to the first Writers Institute and met with an agent and though she was not taking any new clients she gave him enough feedback during the meeting that he was able to start a revision. She also recommended another agent who after seeing his revision took him on. They have been working together ever since; he has been revising according to her advice over the past couple of years and his manuscript is now ready, so she is going to start trying to sell it. Other students have written to tell me how much they have learned and how the feedback from the workshops has really helped them improve their work. Many come back year after year. There are almost no "get published quick" stories in the world of writing. I know a lot of excellent writers, some famous and acclaimed, others less well-known, many yet to be published in a big way, and the consensus is that all writing takes time, energy, revision after revision, and lots of reading. And that's what we try to offer here, a support for that kind of work. We bring excellent writers who are also excellent teachers, not just big names for the sake of getting a big name. And these writers offer insight, and teach tricks and offer advice and close reading and if the student-writer is doing his/her part then they will take what the more experienced writer has given them and go home and apply it. But there is a lot of work involved.

3. Upcoming Workshops

WHAT: Marcela Landres will present "Publishing for Latinos" lecture, provide one-on-one manuscript consultations, and participate in the Pitch-o-rama panel at the Writers Institute sponsored by the Florida Center for the Arts. The Writers Institute offers four days of intense creative writing workshops on fiction, nonfiction, poetry, travel writing and the art of revision, as well as manuscript consultations, publishing advice, readings and celebrations. In English and Spanish. Plus two workshops for teenage writers only.

WHEN: March 28-31

WHERE: Wolfson Campus, Miami Dade College, 300 N.E., 2nd Avenue, Miami, FL 33132

TO REGISTER AND FOR MORE INFO: Please visit <http://www.flcenterlitarts.com/>.

QUESTIONS: Contact Lissette Mendez at 305-237-3940 or Nick Garnett at 305-237-3298

Invite me to speak for your organization: <http://www.marcelalandres.com/id49.htm>
List of upcoming workshops: <http://www.marcelalandres.com/id22.htm>

4. Writing Opportunities

When you contact these organizations, please mention that you were referred by the Latinidad® Newsletter. Thank you, and let me know what happens.

CRASH COURSE IN MEMOIR WRITING

Date: Saturday, March 3, 1-4pm

Everybody has a story to tell, but some people make a living sharing theirs.

How do they do it? This three-hour seminar divulges the secrets. In addition to learning good craft techniques--such as character development,

narrative arcs, and description--you'll delve into the business. Instructor Stephanie Elizondo Griest's first memoir "Around the Bloc" (Villard/Random House) won the National

Association of Travel Journalists of America's "Best Travel Book of 2004"

award. Simon & Schuster will publish her second memoir, "Mexican Enough" in 2008, and Travelers' Tales is published her

guidebook "100 Places Every Woman Should Go" in February 2007. For more

information about Stephanie visit <http://www.aroundthebloc.com/>; to register for the class visit

<http://www.mediabistro.com/courses/cache/crs2448.asp>.

TELESEMINAR - LEGAL STRUCTURES AND YOUR BUSINESS: WHAT EVERY ENTREPRENEUR NEEDS TO KNOW

Date: March 13, 2pm EST

Are you a small business owner with questions about which legal structure is best for your business? Do your eyes cross when presented with the many options for incorporating? Are you thinking of forming a partnership but have concerns if it doesn't work out? These questions and more will be addressed during the next Guest Expert Teleseminar by Nancy Marmolejo of Comadre Coaching. Nancy's guest expert, Francisca Gonzalez Baxa, is an attorney with 2 decades of experience advising small business owners, real estate developers, and non-profits. To register visit <http://tinyurl.com/34kgqb>.

BOOK PROMOTION 101

Date: April 14

Registration Deadline: March 31

Guest speakers include author Louis Bayard and Elizabeth Shreve, CEO of Shreve Williams Public Relations and former VP & director of publicity at Henry Holt. Workshop leader Bella Stander is a writer and consultant to the Virginia Festival of the Book and is a member of the Authors Guild, National Book Critics Circle and the National Press Club. For more information, please visit <http://www.bookpromotion101.com/bp101/>.

PETER TAYLOR PRIZE FOR NOVELS

Deadline: April 30

A prize of \$1000 and publication by the University of Tennessee Press is given annually for a novel written by a U.S. citizen. The contest is open to both published and unpublished novelists. For guidelines and more information, please visit <http://www.knoxvillewritersguild.org/>.

HOLLYWOOD BOOK FESTIVAL CALL FOR ENTRIES

Deadline: June 25

The 2007 Hollywood Book Festival has issued a call for entries to its annual program celebrating books that deserve greater recognition from the film, television, game and multimedia communities. The Festival aims to (1) spotlight literature worthy of further consideration by the talent-hungry pipeline of the entertainment industry; and (2) facilitate getting those works into the proper hands for consideration. Grand prize is \$1500 and a flight to Los Angeles for their gala awards ceremony. They will also distribute books to their mailing list of agents, producers, directors, content coordinators and developers. For more information, visit <http://www.hollywoodbookfestival.com/>.

NATIONAL LAMPOON PRESS SEEKS SUBMISSIONS

The National Lampoon is currently accepting pitches, manuscripts and humor book proposals in the spirit and tradition of National Lampoon's quality comedy and satire geared primarily to the 18-34 year-old

male audience. Please send submissions by email, or email attachment to Jude Brown, Acquisition Editor, National Lampoon Press, jude-brown@usa.net

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TRAVELING & TRAVEL WRITING WORKSHOPS

Got wanderlust? Learn the secrets of independent travel and travel writing from Stephanie Elizondo Griest, author of the award-winning memoir "Around the Bloc: My Life in Moscow, Beijing, and Havana" (Villard/Random House, 2004). Her new guidebook, "100 Places Every Woman Should Go," hits bookshelves March 1, and she'll be holding free workshops in the Northeast, Southwest, and West Coast throughout the spring. Check out her Web site for details: http://www.aroundthebloc.com/bloc_party.htm.

NEXT STOP: GROWING UP WILD STYLE IN THE BRONX

Beyond the safety of New York City's news headlines, Next Stop by Ivan Sanchez is a train ride into the heart of the Bronx during the late 80s and early 90s at the height of the crack epidemic. From one stop to the next, these memoirs follow Ivan and his crew of friends on their search for identity and an escape from poverty 'on the come up' in a stark world where street wars and all-night symphonies of crime and drug-fueled mayhem were as routine as the arrival of the Number 4 train. For more information visit <http://tinyurl.com/2hjbcbb>.

PENGUIN SEEKS PUBLICIST

The Young Readers division of Penguin seeks a Publicist. The Publicist will have strong interaction

with high profile authors and will pitch their books to national and regional press. The Publicist will also coordinate national book signing tours and will work on a variety of projects each season. Minimum 2 years' publicity experience; book publicity experience a plus

.

Please email resume, cover letter, and salary requirement to jobs@us.penguin.com. Please indicate the position you are applying for in the subject line.

BARNARD SUMMER IN NEW YORK CITY PROGRAM

Financial Aid Deadline: April 18

Application Deadline: May 1

Get a head start on college life in the world's greatest city. The Barnard Summer in New York City program offers young men and women incredible opportunities to explore this metropolis both in and out of the classroom. To apply and for more information, visit <http://www.barnard.edu/pcp/summer.html>.

NOMINATE WWW.MARCELALANDRES.COM

If you like my web site, please nominate it for next year's Writer's Digest Magazine's "The 101 Best Web Sites for Writers" list. Send nominations to writersdig@fwpubs.com with "101 Best Web Sites" as the subject line and include a brief note explaining how <http://www.marcelalandres.com/> has helped you. Thank you in advance for your support!

CONSULTATIONS

I edit manuscripts, critique proposals and advise on how to launch and maintain a successful writing career. If you are interested in a consultation, please visit <http://www.marcelalandres.com/>, click on Consultations, and follow the instructions.

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"It could be true and never have happened."—Ana Menendez, In Cuba I Was a German Shepherd

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Writer's Digest 101 Best Web Sites for Writers