

## Latinidad™ Newsletter – February 2005: Writing Conferences

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For lists of agents and editors seeking Latino writers, visit [www.marcelalandres.com](http://www.marcelalandres.com) and click on Writing Opportunities.

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### 1. Saludos

Writing conferences are an excellent way for writers to raise their profile in the literary community. The objective is not just to hone your craft, but also to network. Presenters are usually successfully published authors who are potential mentors; fellow attendees may grow up to be book reviewers, contest judges, or critically acclaimed authors who can blurb your book; and, of course, editors and agents attend specifically with the agenda of signing up writers. Highlights from this issue include: an interview with the director of a prominent conference in Q&A; a web site with a comprehensive directory of conferences in Recommendations; and announcements about upcoming conferences of note in Writing Opportunities.

Thanks to all who responded to the Newsletter Survey—I will be in touch with those who provided the most thoughtful and thorough responses to schedule free half-hour consultations.

If you like my web site, [www.marcelalandres.com](http://www.marcelalandres.com), please nominate it for Writer's Digest Magazine's "The Best 101 Websites for Writers" for 2005. Send nominations to [writersdig@fwpubs.com](mailto:writersdig@fwpubs.com) with "101 Sites" in the subject line and include a brief note explaining how the web site has helped you; I thank you in advance for your nominations.

Helping Latino writers get published,

Marcela Landres

[marcelalandres@yahoo.com](mailto:marcelalandres@yahoo.com)

[www.marcelalandres.com](http://www.marcelalandres.com)

### 2. Q&A

Michael Collier has served as the director of the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, Middlebury College since 1994, and is the author of four books of poems, *The Clasp and Other Poems*, *The Folded Heart*, *The Neighbor*, and, most recently, *The Ledge* which was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award and the Los Angeles Times Book Prize. He has received Guggenheim, National Endowment for the Arts, and Thomas

Watson fellowships and a “Discovery”/The Nation Award among others. He is currently a professor of English at the University of Maryland and was a former Poet Laureate of Maryland.

*The Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference is renowned as one of the most prestigious in the nation; for those writers who are not familiar with writing conferences, what specifically distinguishes it from the countless other conferences available to writers?*

Bread Loaf is distinctive for a number of reasons. Founded by Robert Frost and Willa Cather 80 years ago, it’s the oldest writers’ conference in the country and as such it has become one of the United States’ premier literary institutions. The faculty and participants is a kind of “Who’s Who” of American writers, including Katherine Anne Porter, Carson McCullers, Ralph Ellison, Toni Morrison, Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams, Richard Wright, and many others. The size of the Conference makes it distinctive as well. Approximately 250 people participate each year and as a result a tremendous amount of energy develops during the 11 days. Lastly, there is probably no more beautiful place than the Bread Loaf campus; its beauty has a timeless quality, which allows participants to disconnect from their regular life and preoccupations and to disappear fully into the dream of writing.

*Which Latino authors have attended Bread Loaf in the past?*

Until recently, the two most prominent Latina writers who attended Bread Loaf are Julia Alvarez and Judith Ortiz Cofer. In the past few years, Julia Alvarez, Sandra Benitez, Dagoberto Gilb, Barry Lopez, Pablo Medina, Sigrid Nunez, Alberto Rios, and Helena Maria Viramontes have been faculty members. Richard Blanco, Herman Carrillio, Kevin Gonzales, Felicia Luna Lemus, Albert Martinez, Manuel Luis Martinez, Nancy Mendoza, Pablo Peschiera, Ernesto Quinonez, among others, have received various kinds of scholarships to attend the Conference.

We seek to create a diverse environment, one that tries to reflect the wide range of literary activity in the United States.

*Which genres are covered at the conference?*

Bread Loaf concentrates on three genres: poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction.

*Which genres are not covered at the conference?*

Many years ago, Bread Loaf used to have a children’s literature component, but it was determined that the Conference could serve the majority of participants better by focusing on only three areas. There are a number of very fine conferences that include other genres. The Sewanee Writers’ Conference has playwriting, for example.

*What types of financial aid are offered?*

Bread Loaf offers three main kinds of scholarships: work-study scholarships (waiterships), tuition scholarships, and fellowships. The Bread Loaf waiters serve meals in the dining hall and in return for this work fees are covered. We usually receive in the

neighborhood of 600 applications for 25 work-study spots. It is probably the most competitive category of the Conference. Tuition scholars pay for room and board but not tuition which is the greater portion of Bread Loaf fees. Bread Loaf Scholars have begun to publish regularly in journals and magazines but have not yet had a book published. The Conference usually supports 10-15 Scholars. Bread Loaf Fellows must have one but not more than two books publish in the genre they apply in. There are 19-20 Fellows, one per workshop. Fellows have the comprehensive fee paid for and they often act as assistants to the faculty. We also offer a limited number of partial tuition scholarships. These are awarded on the basis of literary promise as are all of the Bread Loaf scholarships.

*In 2004, only 22% of general applicants were accepted; other than honing their craft, what can writers do to increase their chances of being accepted?*

The most important part of a Bread Loaf application is the writing sample. Bread Loaf Admissions Board judges the application on the merits of the writing sample. The Admissions Board also takes notice of applicants who have applied more than once and whose work seems to be growing and improving. So, if you don't get in the first time around, try again!

To apply and for more information, visit: [www.middlebury.edu/blwc](http://www.middlebury.edu/blwc)

Send queries to: Noreen Cargill, Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT 05753, [ncargill@middlebury.edu](mailto:ncargill@middlebury.edu)

More Q&A <http://www.marcelalandres.com/id60.htm>

### 3. Recommendations

The Association of Writers & Writing Programs (AWP) was founded in 1967 to support the growing presence of writers in higher education and thereby foster new generations of writers and new audiences for literature. Included among the many valuable services they offer are: a magazine, The Writer's Chronicle, which lists information on grants, awards, fellowships, web sites, and other publishing opportunities; contests for unpublished writers (for more information see Writing Opportunities below); and a web site, [www.awpwriter.org](http://www.awpwriter.org), which offers a directory of over 100 writing conferences and centers for students, faculty, and individual members who are looking for a particular conference to attend.

Web site <http://www.awpwriter.org/>

Offer a recommendation: [marcelalandres@yahoo.com](mailto:marcelalandres@yahoo.com)

More recommendations: <http://www.marcelalandres.com/id25.htm>

### 4. Author Spotlight

Manuel Luis Martinez, a past Bread Loaf attendee, is a fierce and funny writer. His novel Drift reads like a blue-collar Catcher in the Rye for the Ñ generation. It takes a rare talent to create a character as real yet original as Robert Lomos, a bookish thug (or is it thuggish

bookworm?) who is begging for both a smack upside the head and a hug. Abandoned by unreliable parents, 16-year old Lomos embodies an alarming alienation tempered by an inspiring resiliency. Graced with line after line of powerful writing, *Drift* will anchor itself into your mind long after you stop turning its pages.

*Which author or book inspires you, and why?*

My major influences early on were the usual suspects: Kurt Vonnegut, J.D. Salinger, Joseph Heller, but the writer who inspired me to take up writing was Tomas Rivera. I was an undergraduate at St. Mary's University in San Antonio when I first read “. . . And the Earth Did Not Devour Him.” I remember being taken aback by the realization that Chicanos wrote books about their own experience. My grandparents and father were migrant workers and so Rivera's stories spoke to me in very real, material ways. He gave their stories a kind of legitimacy and social relevance that I had never thought about. Here was literature that I could relate to in a direct way. I began to write in earnest then, believing that maybe my experiences growing up Latino, poor, and on the “wrong side of town” might be important to other people. Rivera is the Chicano Steinbeck, a humanist and a master storyteller who can touch the reader to the core in short, direct passages that taken together pack an emotional wallop that can change the way you see the world. He's an inspiration.

*Why do you love to write?*

I love writing because I love telling stories. My earliest memories revolve around the power of being able to captivate listeners with a tale. My Tia Hortencia, who never married and spent her life taking care of all her nephews and nieces, kept us enthralled with her stories, tales about growing up during the depression, stories about the neighbors and characters who lived in the barrio, the Westside of San Antonio, and of course, bible stories which she embellished and made interesting to restless six and seven year olds. I spoke only Spanish until I started grade school and was mostly ignored. There weren't bilingual programs in those days, at least not at Edgewood Elementary. And I quickly became alienated from the whole school scene. But there was one teacher who took a bit of interest in me and the way that she brought me out of my shell and helped me to begin speaking English, was to ask me to tell her a story. So every morning, instead of staring out the window listlessly, as I did in other classes, I was invited to tell her a story and soon she asked me to tell the class a story. And so it went. I learned very early the power of narrative and of its importance in creating a community and a space in which people feel comfortable in articulating their shared experience. Besides, it beats real work.

*How did you meet your agent?*

My agent is Matt Williams (the Gernert Agency, NY) and I contacted him out of the blue. I read a wonderful book by Stewart O'Nan called *Everyday People* and hoped that since I wrote about similar issues, that his agent might be interested in my work. So I queried him with a short pitch about my novel, *Drift*, and he liked the idea. He's been great. He's got a real sense about what I'm trying to get accomplished, and best of all, he's got a

wonderful and perceptive literary sensibility. That's crucial in an agent. So do your homework. Find an agent that has similar affinities, someone who cares about what you're writing and not just about whether it will sell.

*What is your writing ritual?*

I'm a night owl. I write from about midnight to four or five in the morning. Fortunately, I'm a college professor and so my schedule is flexible enough to allow this. It's about the only time that I feel that everything is "turned off." No one is awake (except for crazy writers or security guards) and I can settle in and focus on imaginary landscapes and fictional characters. That being said, I tend to write in spurts, so that I write intensely for a couple of months and then let the manuscript rest for a while. I find that it gives me the critical distance I need so that I can begin revising. This goes on for about a year or so, and then the novel is born.

*Other than honing their craft, what advice would you give to Latino writers looking to land a book deal?*

That's a tough one because so much luck is involved. I'd say persistence is a definite characteristic of the successful writer (i.e. published). There are a lot of people out there who are going to say, "No, not interested." But the truth is that Latinos are a growing and important segment of the reading population. There's a market out there and if you are writing good stuff, if you just keep sending it around, eventually someone will say "yes." I self-agented my first novel. I did research on which small, literary presses specialized in Latino literature and sent the manuscript around. Bilingual Press, out of Arizona State University, eventually accepted it and did a very nice job with it. Someone in New York noticed and I was eventually able to get the attention of a New York agent and then a NY publisher. This was not an overnight success story. It was ten years in the making and that's why I say, if you believe in your work, keep after it. Stay persistent.

Read reviews:

<http://www.holtzbrinckpublishers.com/academic/Book/BookDisplay.asp?BookKey=740484>

Obtain Drift : [http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0312309953/marcelalandre-20/103-1381768-2933445?dev-t=mason-wrapper%26camp=2025%26link\\_code=xm2](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0312309953/marcelalandre-20/103-1381768-2933445?dev-t=mason-wrapper%26camp=2025%26link_code=xm2)

Click here for more Author Spotlights: <http://www.marcelalandres.com/id58.htm>

## 5. Upcoming Workshops

3/1/05 -- How to Write a Knockout Book Proposal

WHAT: Most proposals are rejected not because the writing is weak, but because the writer failed to provide agents and editors with all the information they need. This is especially true for fiction proposals. Topics discussed include: the true purpose of a

proposal; why 90% of proposals are rejected based on the cover letter alone; and the three most common mistakes writers make when preparing proposals.

WHEN: Tuesday, March 1, 6:45 pm - 9:30 pm

WHERE: The Learning Annex, New York City, NY

REGISTER: Visit <http://www.learningannex.com/> and search for "427DNY"

Invite me to speak for your organization: <http://www.marcelalandres.com/id49.htm>

List of upcoming workshops: <http://www.marcelalandres.com/id22.htm>

## 6. Writing Opportunities

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

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### REMINDER: BREAD LOAF WRITERS CONFERENCE

Financial Aid Application Deadline: March 1

**General Application Deadline: March 19**

**Date: August 17 - 28**

The Bread Loaf Writers' Conference is one of America's most valuable literary institutions. The annual conference includes lectures, craft classes, meetings with editors and agents, readings by faculty and guests, and workshops in poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction. Faculty members include Michael Collier, Amy Hempel, and Patricia Hampl. For an application and complete guidelines visit [www.middlebury.edu/blwc/](http://www.middlebury.edu/blwc/).

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### NATIONAL LATINO WRITERS CONFERENCE

**Date: May 19-21**

Nationally recognized authors, agents and editors will conduct workshops and participate in panel discussions on fiction, poetry, screenwriting, playwriting and memoir. All those who attend will have the opportunity to have three individual appointments with agents, authors and editors. To register and for more information visit <http://www.nhccnm.org/>.

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### SCHOLASTIC EDITORIAL/MARKETING/DESIGN/PROMOTION FELLOWSHIP

**Deadline: February 11**

Scholastic Inc., the global children's publishing and media company and the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) are pleased to invite you to apply for the 2005 Scholastic/CDF Fellows program. The goal of the program is to reach out to a diverse population to increase interest in children's publishing. The five 2005 Scholastic/CDF Fellows will be introduced to the publishing world through an intensive paid internship that will take place at Scholastic Inc. headquarters in New York City. To apply and for more information visit <http://www.childrensdefense.org/internships/scholastic.aspx>. Please

direct queries to Nicholas M. Bassey, Deputy Director, Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools, 202-628-8787, [nbassey@childrensdefense.org](mailto:nbassey@childrensdefense.org), or contact Ms. Tarika Thomas, Scholastic, Inc. Internship Coordinator, 212.389.3609, [tthomas@scholastic.com](mailto:tthomas@scholastic.com).

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#### THE AWP AWARD SERIES

**Deadline: February 28**

The AWP Award Series is an annual competition for the publication of excellent new book-length works of poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction. Winners in the Award Series receive a cash honorarium plus publication of their book. The competition is open to all authors writing in English regardless of nationality or residence.

Donald Hall Prize in Poetry: \$4,000

Judge: Ha Jin

University of Pittsburgh Press

Grace Paley Prize in Short Fiction: \$ 4,000

Judge: Ana Menendez

University of Massachusetts Press

AWP Prize in Creative Nonfiction: \$2,000

Judge: Robin Hemley

University of Georgia Press

AWP Prize in the Novel: \$2,000

Judge: Rikki Ducornet

New Issues Press

For guidelines and more information visit <http://www.awpwriter.org/>.

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#### INTERNSHIPS FOR MINORITIES IN MAGAZINES/BOOKS/TELEVISION

**Deadline: March 1**

The Women's Media Group, a New York City-based non-profit organization, is offering several internships during the summer of 2005 for minority women. Only college juniors need apply. These paid positions are approximately eight weeks in length. The internships will be with national magazines, book publishing houses, and broadcast networks. (Last year, we placed interns with Time Inc., Conde Nast, Bloomberg Financial News, and Random House, Inc., among others.). Housing is not provided and all applicants must be able to secure their own accommodations in the New York City area.

Interviews will be conducted during the months of February and March and applicants will be informed of decisions shortly thereafter. The application should include a resume and a cover letter telling us about yourself, your college studies, and why you are interested in an internship with a media company. For more information about WMG and the internship program, please visit <http://www.womensmediagroup.org/>.

Contact Information: Furaha Norton, Chair, Internship Committee, Women's Media Group, [internship@womensmediagroup.org](mailto:internship@womensmediagroup.org), c/o Oxford University Press, 198 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10016, 212-726-6148

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#### WHIDBEY ISLAND WRITERS' CONFERENCE

**Date: March 4 - 6**

Offers workshops, individual consultations with editors and agents, sample critique sessions, fireside chats with more than 30 published authors, and a writing contest. Presenters include Luis Urrea, Sheila Bender, and Cherry Adair. To register visit [www.writeonwhidbey.com](http://www.writeonwhidbey.com).

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**BOMB MAGAZINE SEEKS FICTION****Deadline: April 1**

First Prize includes \$1,000 honorarium and publication in BOMB Magazine. Final Judge is Patrick McGrath, Please include a \$20 reading fee which includes a free one year subscription to BOMB, a highly-regarded art and culture publication. No more than one story per entry, 20 pages maximum. Simultaneous submissions OK, but no previously published work. Include cover letter and SASE. All entries considered anonymously. Mail all entries to: BOMB Magazine, Annual Fiction Prize, 80 Hanson Place, #703, Brooklyn, NY 11217. For more details, consult our website at [www.bombsite.com/prize.html](http://www.bombsite.com/prize.html) or e-mail us at [info@bombsite.com](mailto:info@bombsite.com).

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**ASJA WRITERS CONFERENCES****Date: April 16-17**

The American Society of Journalists and Authors hosts an annual conference open to nonmembers as well as ASJA members. They present a wide range of workshops, including Self-Publishing and Print-on-Demand, Software for Writers, and Contracts 101. To register and for more information visit <http://www.asja.org/>. There is a discount if you register by March 25.

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**KENYON REVIEW WRITERS WORKSHOP****Date: June 25-July 3**

For poets, fiction writers, and creative nonfiction writers. Includes workshops limited to 12 participants, meetings with instructors, and readings by distinguished faculty including David Baker, Janet McAdams, Jane McCafferty and Rebecca McClanahan. Admissions begin on a rolling basis January 4. For guidelines and more information visit <http://www.kenyonreview.org/>.

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**SEEKING LATINO TV WRITERS**

A leading children's cable network is looking for Latino writer's pitches for a live action children's show starring a 13 year-old Latina actress. They are adamantly seeking writers for story ideas and comedic writers are especially encouraged to come forward. Ideally, they would want someone who could conceptualize and write the story. It does not need to be Latino-themed content, but it must be child appropriate.

They are also looking for a head writer/ lead producer for an animated series. In this case, the writer/producer would be collaborating with a famous personality to drive the show. The series is a comedy about NYC urban youngsters.



If you or anyone you know is interested please contact Maribel La Luz,  
[mlaluz@latinforce.net](mailto:mlaluz@latinforce.net).

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#### ICONOCULTURE SEEKS ASSISTANT EDITOR

Iconoculture is a world-class research and advisory service. Employees work in a virtual environment. The Assistant Editor will gather Latino consumer trend ideas, write and edit articles from approved ideas, and provide administrative backup for the Editor. Must be based on the East Coast, with NYC or NJ preferred. A degree in Journalism or related field with experience in journalistic or trend reporting, preferably in an online or wire-service environment, is what is needed. Please email cover letter, resume to  
[abelardo@iconoculture.com](mailto:abelardo@iconoculture.com).

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#### NOMINATE [WWW.MARCELALANDRES.COM](http://WWW.MARCELALANDRES.COM)

If you like my web site, [www.marcelalandres.com](http://www.marcelalandres.com), please nominate it for Writer's Digest Magazine's "The Best 101 Websites for Writers" for 2005. Send nominations to [writersdig@fwpubs.com](mailto:writersdig@fwpubs.com) with "101 Sites" in the subject line and include a brief note explaining how the web site has helped you; I thank you in advance for your nominations.

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#### CONSULTATIONS

I provide developmental editing for book manuscripts and critiques for book proposals. In addition, I offer strategic advice on how to launch and maintain a successful writing career. If you are interested in a consultation, please fill out the questionnaire here <http://www.marcelalandres.com/id48.htm> or by visiting [www.marcelalandres.com](http://www.marcelalandres.com) and clicking on Consultations.

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#### POST AN ANNOUNCEMENT IN LATINIDAD™

E-mail announcements about contests, calls for submissions, conferences, jobs, book publications, literary events, etc., to [marcelalandres@yahoo.com](mailto:marcelalandres@yahoo.com).

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#### BACK ISSUES

All back issues are available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/marcelalandres/>.

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#### REPRINTS

If you wish to reprint portions of Latinidad™, please credit The Latinidad™ Newsletter and include a link to [www.marcelalandres.com](http://www.marcelalandres.com).

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#### DID YOU LIKE THIS NEWSLETTER?

If so, forward it to friends and colleagues. If not, take the Newsletter Survey on my web site <http://www.marcelalandres.com/id59.htm> and tell me what doesn't work and why.

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

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“The first draft of anything is shitty.”—Ernest Hemingway

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