

HoCoPoLitSo
 Howard County Poetry and Literature Society
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ANNUAL
 REPORT
 FY 2006
 JULY 2005-JUNE 2006

HoCoPoLitSo
 Howard County Poetry & Literature Society
 ENLARGING THE AUDIENCE FOR CONTEMPORARY POETRY & LITERATURE SINCE 1974

Plan to join us!
 Friday, February 9, 2007



20TH YEAR ON THE AIR

HoCoPoLitSo's *The Writing Life*, a cable television series, airs up to five times a week year-round on local educational cable stations. Shows changing monthly are accessible to more than two million Marylanders. This writer-to-writer talk show has been repeatedly funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Maryland Humanities Council, as well as by local sponsors and viewers.

In FY 2006, two new editions were produced at the Howard Community College TV Studio: **Sherman Alexie** hosted by **Edgar Silex** debuted in November 2005, encore in March 2006; and Irish writer **Anne Enright** hosted by **George O'Brien**, debut April 2006.

Encore editions airing during the year included **Stanley Kunitz** hosted by Gregory Orr (1986) in July; **Mary Gordon** talks to Madison Smartt Bell (1995) in August; **Saul Bellow** with students (1986, 2005) in September; **Edward P. Jones** hosted by E. Ethelbert Miller (2005) in October; **Ciaran Carson** with Terence Winch (2003) in December; **Elizabeth Spires** with Michael Collier (2003) in January; **Rita Dove** with Michael Collier (1999) in February; **Mark Strand** hosted by Henry Taylor (1991) in May; and **Carolyn Forché** – Poetry of Witness with Roland Flint in June.

LIVE EVENTS 2007

Paul Muldoon at 8 PM, Friday, February 9, 2007
David Mura at Noon, Wednesday, May 23, 2007

COMING UP THIS WINTER

DECEMBER *Ciaran Carson hosted by Terence Winch*

Irish poet Ciaran Carson, a traditional musician, flutist, tin-whistler, and singer, is hosted by poet and musician Terence Winch. Author of nine books of poetry and five of prose, he reads excerpts from *Last Night's Fun* as well as from his recent translation of Dante's *Inferno*. Mr. Carson was featured at the 25th Annual Evening of Irish Music and Poetry in Columbia in February 2003. (Encore)

JANUARY *Celebrating Josephine Jacobsen*

Three Maryland poets – Lucille Clifton, Michael Collier and Elizabeth Spires – celebrate their distinguished colleague, the late Josephine Jacobsen (1908-2003). A closing segment includes never-before-seen videotape of Ms. Jacobsen, "a simply astonishing poet" (*Baltimore Sun*) reading three poems and talking about poetry during a 1982 Howard County visit. (Not to be confused with her 1995 show, at 88, with Roland Flint.) (Encore 2003)

FEBRUARY *Robert Bly hosted by Cornelius Eady*

Bly, who had authored over 40 books at that time, dedicated this edition of TWL to his poetry which William Stafford says, "enchances your life." A World War II veteran, he talks about the power of the poets of that era that expressed emotions on the subject and the differences he saw with the Vietnam War. Among the poems Bly reads are: "Counting Small Boned Bodies," "Why We Don't Die," and "Ode to My Socks." (Encore 1997)



Sherman Alexie



Edgar Gabriel Silex



Lucille Clifton



Anne Enright

2006 Event Highlights

■ HoCoPoLitSo's 32nd program year opened with Native American poet/novelist **Sherman Alexie** performing to an overflow audience at Howard Community College. His residency was made possible through a partnership with the HCC Book Connection. That evening, a screening of *Smoke Signals*, based upon Alexie's novel *Reservation Blues*, preceded a discussion facilitated by poet and professor **Edgar Gabriel Silex**.

■ In November at the Tai Sophia Institute, four local writers, **Anne Barney, Ann Bracken, Mike Clark** and **Brendan Donegan**, read from their work in "Speaking of Healing."

■ At the 28th *Evening of Irish Music and Poetry*, Event Chair Catherine McLoughlin-Hayes welcomed Dublin author and broadcast journalist **Anne Enright** to The Jim Rouse Theatre in Columbia, MD. His Excellency **Noel Fahey**, Ambassador of Ireland, introduced the evening. A concert of traditional Irish music with musicians from Celtic Thunder and Narrowbacks **Dominick Murray, Linda Hickman, Tony DeMarco, Terry Winch**, and **Jesse Winch**, along with stepdancers **Maura Hodgetts** and **Caitlin Golding**, followed.

■ Pulitzer-Prize winning poet **Maxine Kumin** was unable to attend the scheduled Poetry Month reading. In her place **Linda Pastan**, former Maryland Poet Laureate and winner of the 2003 Ruth Lilly Prize, read with colleague **Jean Nordhaus**.

■ As part of the Columbia Festival of the Arts and in partnership with Howard County Library, HoCoPoLitSo screened *Voices in Wartime*, a documentary that illuminates war through the light of poetry, followed by a panel discussion with local poet **Karen Arnold** and historian **Komozi Woodard**, moderated by education expert Denis Doyle. A residency by pop-up book artist **Robert Sabuda** and The Langston Hughes Project, a multi-media presentation, were also part of the Festival.



Jean Nordhaus



Linda Pastan

20 Years of *The Writing Life*

I've now participated in the production of four episodes of *The Writing Life*, sitting in the HCC TV studio to watch our hosts interview Michael Coady, Edward P. Jones, Sherman Alexie, and Anne Enright. At that point, having arranged the partnership and managed to get the writer to the studio on time (or not – there are good backstories there), there is nothing to do but sit and watch what happens...which is always unexpected, enlightening, inspiring, and often hilarious. The writers and hosts are endearing in their willingness to demystify the idea of The Writer and his or her Life, to laugh at themselves and the eternal optimism that keeps people telling and listening to each other's stories. Mysteriously, however, the more they show us behind the curtain, the greater my esteem, regard, and awe for their art.

HoCoPoLitSo created this rich literary archive, spanning twenty years and over sixty poets and writers, under the direction of Ellen Conroy Kennedy as founding president and *Writing Life* producer. Honored by the National Hometown Video Festival and the BRAVO network's "Art's for Change" Award and awarded funding from the Maryland Humanities Council, the National Endowment for the Arts, The Columbia Foundation, The Columbia Festival of the Arts, The

continued on next page

The Writing Life

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Rouse Company Foundation and Friends of HoCoPoLitSo, the half-hour shows feature unique conversations – moments and insights not reproduced anywhere else – between distinguished writers and their distinguished hosts. Those interviewed could form an anthology of the most well-known and award-winning names in contemporary literature, including Lucille Clifton, Michael Collier, Roland Flint, Linda Pastan, E. Ethelbert Miller, Henry Taylor, Stanley Kunitz, W.S. Merwin, Grace Paley, Richard Wilbur, Amiri Baraka and Philip Levine.

There are no plans to change the successful premise of the show, but you will be seeing updated graphics and other design enhancements in future episodes. And, if you log on our website, www.hocopolitso.org, for information about *The Writing Life* and news of upcoming events, you'll be treated to a site with an entirely fresh and contemporary look and enriched functionality, researched and designed for us pro bono by Howard Community College web design students under the guidance of professor Rose Volynskiy as part of the college's Service Learning program.

Going behind the scenes to tape a *Writing Life* episode evokes the marvelous tension similar to the beginning of a HoCoPoLitSo event, that anticipatory moment when the writer takes the podium. It reminds me of the simple but powerful HoCoPoLitSo mission: basically, invite a great writer to visit us here in Howard County, invite those who love literature to attend, and then get out of the way, and watch the magic.

Tara Hart, Managing Director

Student Audiences

Between October 2005 and March 2006, more than 765 students from Howard County's public high schools discussed the process of writing poetry with Baltimore poet **Kendra Kopelke**, HoCoPoLitSo's 14th poet-in-residence. An Associate Professor of Communications Design and Director of the M.F.A. Program in Creative Writing and Publishing Arts at the University of Baltimore, she has authored two collections of poetry and is co-editor of *Passager*, a national literary journal focusing on writings by new older writers, her work is also included in *When Divas Dance: The Diva Squad Poetry Collection*.



Kendra Kopelke

Kopelke also captivated students of Howard Community College and the Howard County Library Teen Time.

On April 19, the Folger Shakespeare Library's touring quartet "Bill's Buddies" presented scenes from by the Bard to 300 from Burleigh Manor Middle School and Mariotts Ridge High School.

Up and coming poet **Jenny O'Grady** offered a workshop for students of the Glenelg Country School.

For twenty-five years HoCoPoLitSo has awarded prizes to the winners of its *All County Writing Competition* and honored students nominated by their teachers for *Promise and Achievement in Language Arts*. HoCoPoLitSo board members presented book prizes with hand-inscribed bookplates at eleven high school honors assemblies. This year's judges were Virginia Pausch, former Howard High School English department leader; Timothy Singleton of the

Baltimore SUN; and Nora Scanlan, former Howard County high school guidance counselor.

The ten creative writing winners were **Kelly Balkin** (Centennial), **Elizabeth Dobbins** (Centennial), and **Matthew Lehtonen** (Hammond) in the personal essay category; **Justin Landy** (Reservoir), **Owen Greeley** (Hammond) and **Katherine Holtrop** (Reservoir) in the short story category; and in the poetry category, **Gabrielle Boguslaw** (Glenelg), **Laura Messenheimer** (Glenelg), and **Erica Szalkowski** (Hammond); in the playwriting category, **Steven Yenzer** (Centennial).

The honorees were: **Sarah Jawed**, **Rebecca Jonhson** (Atholton), **Kristen Powell**, **Steven Yenzer** (Centennial), **Matthew E. Abbott**, **Laura Messenheimer** (Glenelg), **Christina Frithsen**, **Kelly George** (Hammond), **Bethany Bengfort**, **Katherine Harkness** (Howard), **Alexander Gebhart**, **Emily Wilson** (Long Reach), **Erica Fedor**, **Caroline Kessler** (Marriots Ridge), **Elizabeth Dow**, **Kyle Andrew Goon** (Mt. Hebron), **Rebecca Fieheld**, **Orri Ganel** (Oakland Mills), **Brian Canard**, **Sarah Singer** (Reservoir), **Ashley Haavik**, **Lisa Rosinsky** (River Hill), **Laura Cleveland** and **Alexis Mcnutt** (Wilde Lake).

Seniors **Kyler Evans** (Hammond) and **Emily Loyco** (River Hill) were also awarded books in appreciation as volunteers for their service.

Apart From Programming

Howard Community College provided a work-study student, **Ilyse Reid**, who has transcribed five editions of *The Writing Life*. High School intern **Emily Loyco** from River Hill High School assisted with program designs.

ENDOWMENT GIFTS

Ensure HoCoPoLitSo's FUTURE. Gifts and pledges to the HoCoPoLitSo Fund at the Columbia Foundation from February 1996 to October 15, 2006 are indicated below.

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