2009 NEYWBC WRITER BIO SKETCHES

Paige Ackerson-Kiely is the author of In No One's Land, judged by DA Powell as winner of the 2006 Sawtooth Prize. She has also received awards and fellowships from Poets & Writers, Vermont Community Foundation, The Willlowell Foundation and The Jentel Artist Residency program, among others. Her second book of poems, The Misery Trail, is forthcoming from Ahsahta Press, and she has a novel, Place No Object Here, nearing completion. Paige lives with her family in rural Vermont, where she works at a Wine Store and manages the band Blonde Sorrow.

Phil Baruth is a novelist, and an award-winning commentator for Vermont Public Radio. In addition to Vermont Associated Press awards for commentary on Howard Dean and the effects of 9/11, Philip won a national Public Radio News Directors Award for "Lonesome Jim Does Totally Gnarly," a spoof of Jeffords's split with the GOP. "Birth Rate Blues," his satirical take on Vermont's low fertility stats, shared a 2009 Edward R. Murrow Award in the Overall Excellence category. His last novel, The X President (Bantam, 2003), took this penchant for satire to new lengths: the book follows the desperate attempts of a 109-year-old Bill Clinton to rewrite his historical legacy. His next novel, The Brothers Boswell (Soho, 2009), follows the famous literary friendship between Samuel Johnson and James Boswell, as the two are stalked through eighteenth-century London by Boswell's mad younger brother.

Martha Ackmann is a prize-winning narrative non-fiction writer and journalist whose work has appeared in The New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, the Chicago Tribune and many other newspapers and magazines around the country. She is the author of The Mercy 13: The True Story of Thirteen Women and the Dream of Space Flight (2003), Curveball: Toni Stone's Challenge to Baseball and America (forthcoming 2010) and Vesuvius at Home: The Life, Loves and Mysteries of Emily Dickinson (forthcoming 2011). Ackmann is a fellow in non-fiction at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University. She also teaches in the Spalding University MFA in Writing Program. Visit her website at http://www.marthaackmann.com.

Kathy Blume is a theatrical roustabout and creative provocateur. She has toured her solo shows "The Boycott" and "The Accidental Activist" to over 50 cities in the US, Canada, and UK, receiving an Austin Critics Table nomination and an Outstanding Activist Award from the Vermont Environmental Action Conference. She's been called everything from "Al Gore on crack" to "adorable," and is currently working on a new show about clocks, volcanoes, and saving the world.

Louella Bryant is the author of the book While In Darkness There Is Light (Black Lawrence Press), which won a Southwest Writers Creative Nonfiction Award and chronicles events leading up to the 1974 death of Charlie Dean. She also has two historical novels for young adults and a picture book. Louella's short stories, poems and essays have appeared in various newspapers and anthologies. She teaches in the Spalding University MFA in Writing Program. Visit her website at http://www.louellabryant.com.

Jaed Coffin is the author of A Chant to Soothe Wild Elephants, a memoir which chronicles his time as a Buddhist monk in his mother's native village in Panomsarakram, Thailand. As a 2008 Resident Fellow of The Island Institute, Coffin began a new book, Roughhouse Friday, which documents the year he spent as a middleweight champion in an Alaskan barroom boxing circuit. From Brunswick, Maine, he teaches at University of Southern Maine's Stonecoast MFA in Creative Writing.

Darcie Dennigan's book of poems, Corinna A-Maying the Apocalypse, won the Poets Out Loud Prize and was named best first collection of 2008 by Coldfront Magazine. Googling her will lead you to, among other things (such as her abysmal 10K times and a bad review), her work posted online at the Atlantic Monthly, H_NGM_N, Kenyon Review, Poetry Daily, and Poetry Foundation sites.

Matthew Dickerson is the director of the New England Young Writers’ Conference and the author or co-author of seven books including a novel: The Finnsburg Encounter (1992); a biography: Hammers and Nails: The Life and Music of Mark Heard (2003), and several books about environmental and fantastic literature including From Homer to Harry Potter: A Handbook on Myth and Fantasy (2006) and most recently: Narnia and the Fields of Arbol: the Environmental Vision of C.S.Lewis (2008). He is also a fishing (especially fly-fishing) and outdoors writer who has published frequently in various magazines (Fly Fish America, Eastern Fly Fishing) and newspapers.

Karin Gottshall's first book of poems, Crocus, was published in 2007, and her recent poems appear in Harvard Review, The Virginia Quarterly Review, and Shenandoah. Karin has taught poetry writing at Middlebury College and Interlochen Arts Academy. She currently lives in Middlebury with her husband and two cats.

Sue Halpern is the author of three books of narrative non-fiction and two novels. She is a scholar-in-residence in the Department of English and American Literatures at Middlebury College and the director of the Middlebury Narrative Journalism Fellowship. The movie version of one of her books was recently on PBS, and another has been optioned for film. She is also a travel writer, an occupation that has taken her from the Arctic Circle to the Antarctic, with stops in between.

Joshua Harmon is the author of Scape, a book of poems, and Quinnehtukqut, a novel, which was a finalist for the 2007 Cabell First Novelist Award. His poetry, fiction, and nonfiction have appeared in journals such as Antioch Review, Denver Quarterly, Iowa Review, New England Review, Southern Review, TriQuarterly, and Verse. A graduate of Marlboro College and Cornell University, he has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, and the Dutchess County Arts Council.
BIO SKETCHES CONTINUED

Don Mitchell is the author of four novels, three book-length collections of personal essays, a travel guide to Vermont, over 200 magazine articles and several film scripts. For the past 24 years he has taught “workshop” courses in creative writing at Middlebury College. In his spare time he operates a sheep farm in New Haven, Vermont, where he has designed and constructed over a dozen buildings including the passive solar house where he and his wife (Cheryl) raised two children—one of whom is also now an owner/builder/architect, and the other of whom grew up to become the singer-songwriter Anais Mitchell.

Rita Murphy writes for Random House Children’s Books and is the author of five young adult novels: Bird (2008), Looking for Lucy Buick (2005), Harmony (2002), Black Angels (2001), and Night Flying (2000). She studied writing at the University of Vermont and dance at The Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado. She has been a creative writing instructor at The Monteverde Friends School in Monteverde, Costa Rica, and a guest author in Vermont Public Schools. Rita lives with her husband and son in Burlington, Vermont.

Tom Payne has written a novel about a Vietnamese marine who falls in love with a Kuwaiti princess during the Gulf War and goes AWOL with his surfer dude buddy to rescue her (The Pearl of Kuwait), and a book of ten stories set around the globe (Scar Vegas) that were considered kind of political in a super-liberal way. His stories were published in The New Yorker, Harper's, The New England Review, Playboy and in the O. Henry Award and Pushcart Award anthologies, and Scar Vegas was a finalist for the Pen/Hemingway award. He teaches at the University of New Hampshire, and is a graduate of Princeton and the Columbia MFA program.

Marjorie Ryerson, executive director of Water Music, Inc. (www.water-music.org), is also an award-winning professor, photographer, poet, journalist. She currently is the editorial director for Safer Society Press in Brandon, Vermont. She previously taught non-fiction writing, editing and photography at Castleton State College from 1991 until 2005. She has served as the Visiting Scholar in Creative Writing for Green Mountain College (2006-2007), and as a writing professor for Johnson State College. Ryerson is the 2005 recipient of the international Harry E. Schlenz Medal for public education about water quality, and the 2003 Paul Keough Award for leadership in the water environment. Ryerson is the author of the photography book Water Music; the narrative non-fiction book Companions for the Passage: Stories of the Intimate Privilege of Accompanying the Dying; the poetry collection Curious Pollywogs, Ornery Frogs, and is a contributing writer to the 2007 book Not a Bad Seat in the House.

Robert Siegel is the author of nine books of poetry and fiction. His most recent include A Pentecost of Finches: New and Selected Poems and The Waters Under the Earth. His poetry has received prizes and awards from Poetry, Prairie Schooner, the Ingram Merrill Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts, and other places. Siegel’s fiction includes the award-winning Whalesong trilogy. He has taught at Dartmouth, Princeton, and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where he twice directed the graduate creative writing program and is now Professor Emeritus of English. He and his wife Ann live in Maine.

Martin Steingesser, is "a musician and acrobat, his book Brothers of Morning ablaze with imagination," said poet Laure-Anne Bosselaar. He presents poems in engaging ways, often by heart, sometimes in two voices with another poet, sometimes with music and sign language. His program, the Thinking Heart, based on the writings of a Dutch woman who died in the Holocaust, is "a profoundly moving experience," says Tricia Ryden, Assistant Director, Wiggin Memorial Library, Stratham, NH. "Beautifully done, the combination of voices and cello extraordinary." His poems appear in a broad spectrum, from literary journals like Hanging Loose and A Cappella: Mennonite Voices in Poetry to national magazines like The Sun and The Progressive. Among recent awards, one of his poems was published in New England Review, and in the O. Henry Award and Pushcart Award anthologies.

Ed Webbley, a long time teacher of literature and writing in Vermont and Missouri, has won numerous awards for his poetry and short fiction. A native of St. Johnsbury, VT, he traces his literary interest to long hours spent in the St. Johnsbury Atheneum and to a reading by Galway Kinnell at the junior high the same day the Sox clinched the "Impossible Dream." He is a graduate of the Bread Loaf School of English (MA '91) and currently serves as the principal at Vergennes Union High School.

Alex Wolff is a senior writer at Sports Illustrated. He has taught a seminar called Writing About Sports and the Wider World at Princeton, and written or co-written six books, including the New York Times bestseller Raw Recruits, and Big Game, Small World: A Basketball Adventure, which the Times named a 2002 Notable Book. He lives down the hill from Bread Loaf in Cornwall with his wife, Vanessa, with whom he founded the Vermont Frost Heaves pro basketball team. They have two children, Frank, 7, and Clara, 6.

David Wright’s (http://www.dwpoet.com) poetry, essays and reviews have appeared in print and online in Poetry East, Artful Dodge, Anon, Mars Hill Review, The Christian Century, and The Midwest Quarterly, among many others. His work also appears in the anthology A Cappella: Mennonite Voices in Poetry (U of Iowa Press, 2003). David is the author of the poetry collection A Liturgy for Stones (Cascadia, 2003), and has been awarded an Illinois Arts Council Artist’s Fellowship for Poetry. In collaboration with composer Jim Clemens, David has also published choral compositions and church music. He and his family recently returned to live in Central Illinois after several years in the Chicago area. Since 2001, he has taught writing and literature at Wheaton College.

Dana Yeaton is the recipient of the “New Voice in American Theatre” award from the William Inge Theatre Festival and the Heideman Award from the Actor’s Theatre of Louisville. His comic drama The Big Random: A Road Play was first produced by Vermont Stage Company and is now having its west coast premiere at Sight Unseen Theatre in Los Angeles. Other plays in print include Midwives, Alice in Love, and Mad River Rising, a Vermont drama for which he received the Moss Hart Award. Dana founded the Vermont Young Playwrights Project. He teaches dramatic writing at Middlebury College.