

## Biographies 2009 Presenters

**Lauryn Axelrod** is the Director of Education at Weston Playhouse Theatre Co. and has more than 20 years of experience in arts education, theatre directing and design, as well as new play development. She earned a BA in Theatre at Bennington College. Her theatre training includes the Powerhouse Theatre at Vassar, the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in London, and Harvard University. She studied playwriting with John Ford Noonan and John Patrick Shanley, dramaturgy with Morgan Jenness, directing with Nicholas Martin, and has directed and designed off-Broadway, regionally and internationally.

**Ellen Perry Berkeley** is an award-winning writer and editor, with three staff positions, five books, and many articles and essays to her credit. She has taught writing in various places -- three-credit courses in architectural criticism at some of the nation's leading architecture schools (following her job in NYC as Senior Editor of *The Architectural Forum*), and memoir-writing workshops at libraries, assisted-living facilities, and arts festivals following publication of her much-loved book, *At Grandmother's Table*. She is a 35-year resident of Shaftsbury, VT.

**Ed Cyzewski**, MDiv. Biblical Theological Seminary, works in the nonprofit sector of southwest Vermont and as a freelance writer. He is the author of *Coffeehouse Theology: Reflecting on God in Everyday Life* as well as two accompanying study guides. He contributed the short story "A Bittersweet Land" to the *Southshire Pepper-Pot*. His next book is due out in February 2010.

**Joann Davis** is a publishing veteran who has held positions at Publishers Weekly; Warner Books; William Morrow; and Harper Collins. As an editor, she worked with James Redfield, author of *THE CELESTINE PROPHECY*, as well as Joan Borysenko and Dr. Brian Weiss, among others. Joann is the author of several books, including, *THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE AREN'T THINGS*. Her most recent project--*THE BOOK OF THE SHEPHERD*--is coming from Harper Studio in October.

**Clemma Dawsen** received her B.A. from Bennington College and an MFA in Writing from Goddard College. Dawsen has received numerous awards, including grants from the Vermont Arts Council and the NEA. She recently completed a memoir, *Picked Clean*. She lives in Sandgate and teaches English at Bromley Brook School. She is a founding member of The Greater Manchester Arts Council, and co-founder of the Annual Manchester and the Mountains Poets and Writers Weekend.

**Jeanie Domnarski**-Jeanie has spent the last 20 years as owner/director of a child care program serving children ages 3-6 where she has shared hundreds of books and literacy activities. She teaches at Three Rivers Community College in Norwich, Ct where she is an adjunct faculty member. In addition, Jeanie is a Connecticut approved early childhood consultant and a frequent workshop presenter.

**Tony Eprile**-Fiction writer, novelist; South Africa/USA, is the author of *Temporary Sojourner and Other South African Stories* (1989) and *The Persistence of Memory*

(2004), both of which were New York Times Notable Books of the Year. Eprile has taught at Northwestern University, Williams College, Bennington College, Lesley University, and at the Iowa Writers' Workshop. Visit

**Ted Gilley** is a native of “Southside” Virginia. He has lived in New England for 30 years. His poems and short stories have appeared in *Poetry Northwest*, *Northwest Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *The National Review*, *New England Review*, and many other magazines and anthologies. A NEA grant recipient, Gilley was the winner of the Alehouse Press (San Francisco) national poetry competition in 2008 and was an awarded finalist in *Rattle* magazine’s 2008 annual contest.

**Elena Georgiou** is the author of *Rhapsody of the Naked Immigrants* (forthcoming, Harbor Mountain Press, 2009) and *mercy mercy me* (University of Wisconsin Press). She is also co-editor (with Michael Lassell) of the poetry anthology, *The World In Us* (St. Martin’s Press). Georgiou has won an Astraea Emerging Writers Award, a New York Foundation of the Arts Fellowship, and was a fellow at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. Her recent work appears in *Denver Quarterly*, *BOMB*, *MiPoesia*, *Lumina*, *Spoon River Review*, *Cream City Review*, and *Gargoyle*. She is currently an editor at *Tarpaulin Sky Press* and a member of the faculty in the MFA program at *Goddard College*, Vermont.

**Jesse Haas**-Jessie Haas is the author of 30 books for children, including picture books, novels, poetry and nonfiction. Her books have received awards including the Golden Kite Honor from the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, the Parents' Choice Gold Award, and the Gryphon Award for Transitional Fiction. Two of her books are on *Yankee Magazine's* list of the Best 100 New England Picture Books. She lives with husband Michael J. Daley in a small solar-powered house in Westminister, Vermont.

**Serena Kovalosky**-Serena spent 18 years working in the corporate world. She stepped away from this career path to achieve her personal dream of establishing a business as a professional visual artist. She works in a non-traditional medium (organic sculpture) and uses creative marketing techniques to promote her artwork. She has facilitated co-mentoring groups for artists and writers in Montreal and upstate New York. She is also co-founder and director of “Open Studios of Washington County, NY”.

**Keith Lawrence**- "I developed an interest in the telling of Native American stories through my work as a Boy Scout leader in the early 90's. I have studied Native American culture extensively with a focus on the Iroquois of the New York area, having some ancestry there, and use a number of artifact reproductions to help bring life to the stories and cultural understanding. I have entertained many Cub Scout packs, Cub Scout summer camp and day camp programs, local churches, elder day care as well as local grade schools. I have also performed at Burlington's First Night celebration. I have taught story telling at the University of Scouting, an advanced training session for Scout leaders." Lawrence lives in Burlington, Vermont.

**Beth Anne Meachem** is the Executive Director of the Greater Manchester Arts Council. She is a graduate of Marlboro College and Wesleyan University. For the past 20 years she has been involved in building arts advocacy in Vermont and has worked in the classroom with creative extensions in literature with students of all ages.

**Angela Miller** is a partner in The Miller Agency, located in Manhattan, which has been representing authors in most literary genre since 1990. Miller was editor-in-chief of Simon and Schuster's Trade Paperback Division from 1980 until 1985. In 1986, she founded IMG Literary Group, a division of International Management group, which represents celebrities in sports, music, and television in over twenty countries.

**Christine Mix**-Christine Mix is the children's illustrator for *Write Out of the Oven!* by Josephine Waltz, published by Teacher Ideas Press, personally connects children in grades 5-8 with their favorite literary heroes. A collection of letters and recipes from more than 50 well-known and award-winning children's authors provide insights into their lives, advice to the children who wrote to them, and personal information.

**Rev. Claire North**-Rev. Claire Longtin North is Minister in Residence at Sunderland Union Church, Sunderland, VT and has been a Ceremonialist in the community of Manchester and the Mountains for 13 years. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Goddard College and is working on her first novel, a magical realism Vermont adventure. Claire takes great joy in facilitating the creation of ceremonies and rituals with people who want to use their own words.

**Christian Peet** is the author of *Big American Trip* (Shearsman Books, 2009) and two chapbooks: *The Nines, Book 2* (Interbirth Books, 2009), and *The Nines, Book 1* (Palm Press, 2006). His work appears in the anthology, *A Best Of Fence: The First Nine Years*, and in journals such as *Action Yes*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Octopus Magazine*, *Practice: New Writing + Art*, and *SleepingFish*, among others. He lives in Vermont, where he runs *Tarpaulin Sky Press* ([tarpaulinsky.com](http://tarpaulinsky.com)).

**Rebecca Rupp**-Rebecca Rupp has written eight children's books, with a ninth and tenth on the way. Among these are *The Dragon of Lonely Island*, *The Return of the Dragon* (a DCF selection), *The Waterstone*, *Journey to the Blue Moon*, and - most recently - *Sarah Simpson's Rules for Living*.

**Stephen Sandy's books include** *Netsuke Days* (2008), *The Thread, New and Selected Poems* (1998), *Surface Impressions A Poem in Eight Parts* (2002), *Weathers Permitting* (2005). Sandy was a Lannan Senior Fellow at Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown and held a Rockefeller Foundation residency at Bellagio.

**Abigail Thomas**-Abigail Thomas has written three works of fiction, *Getting Over Tom*, *Herb's Pajamas*, and *An Actual Life*. She has also written the memoirs *Safekeeping* and *A Three Dog Life*, which was chosen one of the best books of 2006 by the Los Angeles Times and the Washington Post, and has been translated into nine languages. She has taught in the MFA Program at The New School, at the Tin House Summer Workshop, The Omega Institute and the Writers at Work program in Utah. Her most recent book is *Thinking About Memoir*, a guide to writing about one's life. She has four children and twelve grandchildren. She is at work on a new non-fiction book about a lifelong friendship.

**Creative Warriors**-*A community of artists & writers dedicated to achieving their highest aspirations.* Creative Warriors is a community of professional and emerging artists, writers and creatives dedicated to promoting their creative work and achieving their highest aspirations. Virtual and real-time groups provide support and motivation as members co-mentor and challenge each other to move forward in their disciplines. Workshops and coaching opportunities offer in-depth information and tools to develop a profitable working practice in the cultural arts.

### **The Children's Literacy Foundation CLiF**

The Children's Literacy Foundation (CLiF) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to nurture a love of reading and writing among children throughout New Hampshire and Vermont. Since 1998 CLiF has served more than 75,000 children in more than 320 communities across every region of the Twin States.

CLiF targets two groups of children from birth to age 12:

1. Children in rural communities where resources are limited
2. Children who are at high risk of growing up with low literacy skills

Through 15 free programs, CLiF serves young readers and writers who have the greatest needs including: children in shelters; children in low-income housing; children of prison inmates; refugee children; migrant children; children from low-income families; children in Head Start; children in communities undergoing severe economic challenges; and many other at-risk youth.

*GMAC and Manchester and the Mountains Poets and Writers Weekend thank **CLiF** for reaching out on our behalf to Jesse Haas.*