



## Take Note

“Writers don’t write from experience. ...  
Writers write from empathy.”

—Nikki Giovanni

## Co-working spaces attract writers

**W**RITERS LOOKING for a quiet place to write—away from the distractions of home and the noise of a café—now have another option. Communal work spaces, or “co-working” spaces, are cropping up worldwide—from Chicago to Moscow to Buenos Aires—and opening their doors to freelancers of all stripes.

Conditions vary, but most co-working spaces offer a desk or cubicle, coffee, copy machine, Internet access—and, maybe most important, a sense of community. Users rent by the hour, day or month. Some communities accept writers only and require an application. At others, writers might work next to Web designers and medical students.

“[It] made me take the writing endeavor more seriously,” says author Maura Conlon-McIvor, who rented a co-working space to write her second book. “Because I’m paying for the space, it forced me to write.”

Eva Schweber, co-founder of Cube-Space in Portland, Ore., attributes the growth of co-working to the changing nature of work. “Companies are using more freelancers, and workers are leaving employment for the flexibility of sole proprietorship.”

Co-working provides freelancers affordability and flexibility. In many spaces, workers buy access to the space but don’t maintain a dedicated desk. Because people work at different times, there’s always an open desk.

Co-working is not for writers who thrive on isolation or the chaos of a café. But for Jeffrey Selin, founder of Writers’ Dojo in Portland, Ore., it made all the difference. “I’m always more productive when I’m surrounded by other writers working their butts off.”

For more details on co-working spaces, visit <http://wiki.coworking.info>.

—Gigi Rosenberg

## WRITER EVENTS

### Conferences

**LEFT COAST CRIME: SAY ALOHA TO MURDER** Waikoloa, Hawaii, March 7-12. The 2009 Left Coast Crime convention, held on the Big Island of Hawaii, is one of the largest crime-fiction conventions in the U.S. This year’s convention features guests of honor Rhys Bowen and Barry Eisler and toastmaster Lee Goldberg. **Contact:** Left Coast Crime, 2625 Alcatraz Ave. #331, Berkeley, CA 94705. LCC09 programming@aol.com. [www.leftcoastcrime.org/2009](http://www.leftcoastcrime.org/2009).

**SAN FRANCISCO WRITERS CONFERENCE** San Francisco, Feb. 13-15. Offers nearly 100 presenters, including Richard North Patterson, Jane Smiley, Lolly Winston, Sheldon Siegel, Carolyn See and Cristina Garcia, plus the chance to attend workshops and panels, and meet and learn from top literary agents and editors from major publishing houses. **Contact:** San Francisco Writers Conference, 1029 Jones St., San Francisco, CA 94109. [sfwriterscon@aol.com](mailto:sfwriterscon@aol.com). [www.sfwriters.org](http://www.sfwriters.org).

### Look for *The Writer* staff and booth in Chicago:

**AWP ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND BOOKFAIR** Chicago, Feb. 11-14. This annual celebration of authors, teachers, small-press publishers, and writing programs and centers features more than 300 lectures, readings, panel discussions and forums, plus opportunities to meet with authors, agents and publishers. **Contact:** The Association of Writers and Writing Programs, George Mason University, MS 1E3, Fairfax, VA 22030. 703-993-4301. [conference@awpwriter.org](mailto:conference@awpwriter.org). [www.awpwriter.org](http://www.awpwriter.org).

### Contests

**THE IOWA REVIEW AWARDS** Submit up to 20 pages of fiction or non-fiction or up to 10 pages of poetry. **Deadline:** Jan. 31. **Entry fee:** \$20 per entry. **Prizes:** \$1,000 to the winner in each category; \$500 to runners-up; publication. **Contact:** *The Iowa Review*, 308 EPB, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242. [www.uiowa.edu/~iareview](http://www.uiowa.edu/~iareview).

**JAMES JONES FIRST NOVEL FELLOWSHIP** Submit a two-page outline and the first 50 pages of an unpublished novel. **Deadline:** March 1. **Entry fee:** \$25 per submission. **Prizes:** \$10,000 for first-place winner; \$750 for two runners-up. **Contact:** James Jones First Novel Fellowship, c/o MA/MFA in Creative Writing, Wilkes University, 84 W. South St., Wilkes-Barre, PA 18766. 570-408-4534. [jamesjonesfirstnovel@wilkes.edu](mailto:jamesjonesfirstnovel@wilkes.edu). [www.wilkes.edu/pages/1159.asp](http://www.wilkes.edu/pages/1159.asp).

**MARY MCCARTHY PRIZE IN SHORT FICTION** Submit 150-250 pages of a collection of short stories or novellas or a short novel. **Deadline:** Feb. 15. **Entry fee:** \$25 per submission. **Prizes:** \$2,000, publication and contract. **Contact:** The Mary McCarthy Prize in Short Fiction, Sarabande Books, Inc. P.O. Box 4456, Louisville, KY 40204. [www.sarabandebooks.org/contest/mary\\_mccarthy\\_prize.html](http://www.sarabandebooks.org/contest/mary_mccarthy_prize.html).

**ROBERT E. LEE WILSON & RUTH I. WILSON POETRY BOOK AWARD** Submit an unpublished book of 48-64 pages of poetry. **Deadline:** March 14. **Entry fee:** \$25 per submission. **Prizes:** \$1,000 and publication. **Contact:** *Margie*, P.O. Box 250, Chesterfield, MO 63006. [margiereview@aol.com](mailto:margiereview@aol.com). [www.margiereview.com](http://www.margiereview.com).