

## 2013 Lakefly Literary Conference Report

### Pre-Conference Events

John Dedakis, a former Wisconsin resident living in Washington, D.C, held two author visits for the Fox Cities Book Festival in April and one program at the Oshkosh Public Library on Thursday, May 9<sup>th</sup>. John said that of all the programs he's ever done, the library program had the most attendance and he was so impressed with our promotional poster, he asked if he could have one.

Apple Blossom sold books at the library event as well as at the Lakefly Literary conference.

Bill Messner-Loebs (illustrator) and Rodney Schroeter (graphic novelist) were also available for pre-conference events. They did a workshop for teens at the Appleton Public Library and a book signing at Power House Comics, also in Appleton.

### Michael Perry and the Long Beds at the Grand Opera House, Friday, May 10

Attendance for Michael Perry's concert was 147, with approximately four of those being complimentary tickets. The ticket price was kept low - \$25 each - to encourage attendance. Other venues who hosted the band have charged \$35 or more.

The Grand Opera House did not share how much it earned in proceeds but previous communication indicated a need to sell 100 tickets to cover operating expenses.

Three factors affected program attendance: the band performed in Appleton three weeks prior to their Oshkosh performance; The Grand Opera House booked a similar but better-known musician the night after Perry; and the lateness in getting the contract signed.

After the Grand Opera House performance, the band played an impromptu jam session at Becket's Restaurant. The attendance was about 25 people.

Perry is interested in returning in 2014 as a speaker or a performer.

### Lakefly Literary Conference Friday, May 10 and May 11<sup>th</sup>

64 people registered for the conference, plus:

17 speakers

10 volunteers

5 lunch guests

**Total attendance = 96**

38 of those attending are current members of the Wisconsin Writers Association.

Of the 64 who registered, 50 did so before April 1<sup>st</sup> (early bird registration fee of \$45). No one registered at the door.

The Best Western Premiere Hotel reported 32 overnight guests; of those, 11 were speakers.

## **Vendors**

On Saturday, a vendor/exhibit area was open in the conference center. There were 18 vendors, including speakers and conference participants who had authored books. The Paperback Tiger Book Store donated discount coupons for attendees and Apple Blossom Books was a vendor. In addition, the literary magazine Glitter Train sent promotional materials and Random House sent a large box of book marks and other promotional handouts featuring their authors and new releases.

Entrance to the exhibit area was free to conference participants and \$5 guest passes were available for the general public to attend the exhibit area only. We sold one guest pass.

## **Contests**

We held three writing contests: Short Story, Flash Fiction (600 words or less) and the Jean Nelson Award (theme was how libraries have made a difference in your life). The contests were restricted to residents of Wisconsin unless attending the conference, and cash prizes for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> places were awarded. There was no entry fee. Twenty-four people entered the contests with a total of 28 entries.

Monique McCourt, 16-years-old and the winner of the \$400 Jean Nelson Award, responded to the news with this:

“THANK YOU SO MUCH!!! This is the first thing I ever won that's more official than hide and seek!!! I love you! I don't know you, you could be a serial killer, but I love you!!! I'll be at the conference, thank you! I'm bringing one person, thank you! Two chicken cordon bleu, please, thank you! Oh, and thank you so so so so much! :) -> no not happy enough -> 8D there!

Three contest winners attended the conference luncheon on Saturday to receive their prize. In addition, winning entries were posted on the conference website: [www.lakeflylit.org/contests](http://www.lakeflylit.org/contests)

## **Conference Review**

The planning committee met for a review of the event on May 15.

We discussed whether to add a No Compete Clause to all contracts to address the issue of speakers and performers participating in the Fox Cities Book Festival. After some discussion, we decided against it, with a possible exception for major authors and keynote speakers which would be decided case by case. The consensus was that is unfair to speakers such as the Wisconsin Poet Laureate and it may have been an advantage in getting speakers who live out of state, such as John DeDakis. In addition, we were aware of the possible conflict when we chose the date and did not see it as a threat to our program.

One of the vendors noted that self-published authors are shut out from three regional book fairs/conference because the venues only accept authors published by a publishing house. We feel this is a market we can tap into, especially with the proliferation of independent and e-book authors.

According to the exit surveys, people found out about the conference through a writing club, library or word of mouth. As a result, we intend to make heavier use of social media and less use of paid advertising.

We do not have the resources to get printed material into every Wisconsin community so the committee decided to target writers living within an 100-mile radius of Oshkosh. We will continue to utilize statewide resources such as the Wisconsin calendar of events and promote the event as a statewide conference, but we will distribute printed materials to a limited geographical area.

The writing contests opened on Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> and closed on March 31. In 2014, we would like to begin accepting submissions beginning Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> in the hopes of attracting more entries.

We are already promoting the 2014 conference through Twitter and Facebook, and continue to get new likes/followers despite the absence of any sponsoring activities. Through social media, we are developing ongoing relationships with participants by sharing items of interest and promoting participants' writing successes.

Based on the workflow of 2013, we have a realistic timetable of deadlines for 2014 that will aid us in the planning and promoting the 2014 conference, including deadlines for booking speakers, ordering printed materials, and accepting registrations.

The survey also provided an opportunity for participants to suggest future speakers and we are actively pursuing three speakers that were mentioned multiple times.

The Wisconsin Writers Association handled online registration/payments for us and we will need to be able to do that ourselves in 2014. To do so may require purchasing software and/or working out an arrangement with the Friends of the Library or the Library to accept online payments.

Our other challenge for 2014 is to find additional funding sources.

## **2013 Lakefly Literary Conference Financial Report**

### **Revenue:**

5158 – Friends of the Library  
500 – Oshkosh Community Foundation Grant  
500 – Oshkosh Grand Opera House  
2500 – Conference Registration Fees  
3337 – Oshkosh Public Library Trust Fund  
**\$11,095**

### **Expenses:**

2500 – Michael Perry and the LongBeds at the Grand  
1000 – prize money for writing contests  
4680 – Oshkosh Convention Center (hotel rooms, conference center rental, food, etc).  
1878 – promotion and advertising  
150 – Tickets to Michael Perry  
227 – website urls for 10 years  
440 – printed materials such as program booklet, etc.  
220 – Misc supplies (conference folders, etc).  
**\$11,095**