

WRITERS: MINE YOUR LIFE FOR LAUGHTER

Combat pandemic fatigue by finding the humor within the chaos

ENTERPRISE — As an antidote to pandemic fatigue, consider joining “Mining Your Life for Laughter,” an online writing workshop led by Bob Balmer Saturday, May 8.

Hosted by Fishtrap, based in Enterprise, the workshop will examine how humor writers have taken incidents from their lives and turned the painful, the absurd, the odd, the embarrassing, the memorable ... into humor.

Fishtrap describes the humor writing workshop like this:

“We will look at what makes people laugh and the fact that what is funny is subjective.

“We will look at the various ways writers convey humor — exaggeration, identification, embarrassment, self-deprecation — and practice them through short writing exercises.

“We will look at structure as a means to convey humor — essay, tale or story.

“Then, to follow James Thurber’s adage — ‘Humor is chaos remembered in tranquility’ — we will sift through

our lives to find our truth in stories, anecdotes and incidents gilded with humor.”

The virtual workshop will run from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Registration is \$120 (\$110 for Fishtrappers — see below). Scholarships may be available.

For more details on the workshop, how to register, and how to access the class, go to www.fishtrap.org/workshop-balmer-may8 or call Fishtrap at 541-426-3623.



BOB BALMER gleans much of his humor-writing material from his and others’ everyday experiences and observations. His first humorous essay was published in the Oregonian in 1992. His work has appeared in numerous publications including The Smithsonian, The Oregonian, The Seattle Times, Golf Illustrated and Willamette Week. It has aired on the radio shows such as The Savvy Traveler and MarketPlace as well as on Oregon Public Radio and Television.

Balmer has an MFA in creative writing from Portland State University, and he attended the Iowa Summer Writing Workshop and the Tin House Summer Writing Workshop at Reed College. In 2017 he took improv and sketch writing classes at Second City Comedy in Chicago.

He has led humor writing workshops at the BARN (Bainbridge Artisan Resource Network) Write in the Harbor, Portland Storytellers Guild, The Oregon Writers Colony, Sitka Center for the Arts and Ecology, The Write on the Sound Writers Conference, The Hoffman Center for the Arts, Mary’s Woods Retirement Center and The Oregon Council Teachers of English Student Writing Festival.

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