



Help celebrate the National Day on Writing

The Capital Area *Writing* Project's

## ***Fall Writing Marathon***

**Sunday, October 18  
1:00 – 3:30 p.m.**

## **Fort Hunter Park**

5300 North Front Street, Harrisburg  
[www.forthunter.org](http://www.forthunter.org)

for all writing project fellows, friends, and writers

Bring a picnic lunch, a blanket or chair, and your journal.

Meet at the Mansion at 1:00 p.m. to form groups  
and receive maps and directions.

Experience the luxury of time to write as you sit along the Susquehanna River,  
near the barn, in the picnic pavilion, under the covered bridge, or by the mansion.  
Then enjoy listening to each other's words before you move to another spot.  
Continue in this manner until the marathon is finished.

**Please contact the Capital Area Writing Project  
Penn State Harrisburg  
717.948.6383 or [pxd9@psu.edu](mailto:pxd9@psu.edu)**

- if you plan to attend
- if you want to attend but can't and want to be there in spirit
  - if you have any questions about our writing marathon



## The Writing Marathon: A Definition

“What is a writing marathon?” people often ask me.

First let me tell you what it isn't. A writing marathon is not running, jogging, or walking 26.2 miles while you gulp water, shed a sweatshirt, ask the first-aid folks for salt, or pass the slower participants as you stay in front of the pacer. It is not runners jostling for a position at the start, nor is it the medal hanging from your neck at the finish. It is not how many minutes per mile you clock, nor is it how many blisters you bandage.

A writing marathon is the act of journal writing with a small group of people who discover new areas for penning their thoughts. It is sitting and writing for a certain amount of time, sharing your piece with your group, and moving to a new location where you repeat the process together. A writing marathon can take place in a morning, an afternoon, or a full day. National Writing Project sites across the country sponsor writing marathons. Some take place in New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia, or Baltimore. Some take place in the mountains, on a lake, at the beach, or in a local garden. Yet others occur in museums, state capitols, art galleries, coffee houses, restaurants, or picnic groves.

The Capital Area Writing Project sponsors annual writing marathons at Hershey Gardens in July and Fort Hunter Park in October. Celebrating the conclusion of the Invitational Summer Institute, our new fellows join our writing community at Hershey Gardens, where we gain inspiration from butterflies, roses, antique autos, and children playing. At Fort Hunter Park, we find our muse in the crisp autumn air, the Susquehanna River, the covered bridge, and the mansion.

Our inspiration for each writing marathon comes from Natalie Goldberg's *Writing Down the Bones*.

Everyone in the group agrees to commit himself or herself for the full time. Then we make up a schedule. For example, a ten-minute writing session, another ten-minute session, a fifteen-minute session, two twenty-minute sessions, and then we finish with a half-hour round of writing. So for the first session, we all write for ten minutes and then go around the room and read what we've written with no comments from anyone....A pause naturally happens after each reader, but we do not say “that was great” or even “I know what you mean.” There is no good or bad, no praise or criticism. We read what we have written and go on to the next person....What usually happens is you stop thinking; you write; you become less and less self-conscious. Everyone is in the same boat, and because no comments are made, you feel freer and freer to write anything you want. (150)

We add our own mix of venues and personalities to create a marathon for CAWP. We simply ask participants to identify themselves as writers by saying, “I am a writer.” We ask that you order something to eat or drink as you sit in a restaurant to write. We ask that you respect your surroundings. If a stranger asks you to identify yourself, reply with “I am a writer.” You'll be pleased with the response. Think of yourself as a writer, for a writing marathon gives you the chance to live the life of a writer for a few hours.

Patricia Darcy Donaldson  
Capital Area Writing Project  
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