Arts Council Readying First Kodiak Writers Conference

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

In August, Kodiak's literary enthusiasts will have an opportunity to sharpen their pencils and skills during a writing conference, hosted by the Kodiak Arts Council. The Emerald Isle 2012 Writers Conference is board member Merissa Koller's brainchild.

"Over the winter the arts council board had a strategic planning session with the woman from the Foraker Group and we were sitting around this big table trying to figure out ways we could branch out into the visual and literary arts," Koller said.

"Because there are lots of poets and writers in town and it's such a beautiful place, it's very inspiring. So my background is in creative writing and so I had this network back in Minnesota, where I'm originally from and now it kind of reaches a little farther. So I kind of went back to my roots and asked a few people that I knew if they'd be interested in coming up and sharing some of the things that they know and their experience in the business with people from Kodiak."

Koller, who is the volunteer coordinator at KMXT, said the conference will take place August 6-11, with a different genre focus each day. Two days are set aside for children's workshops, and the other three will bring in literary guests who have made names for themselves in the respective fields of poetry, screen writing and prose.

Melissa Brandt is a seasoned screen writer who has won numerous awards for her work. She will lead the screen writing workshop and said the intent of each workshop is to introduce people to different forms of writing, and provide an outlet for the creative minds of Kodiak.

-- (Writers Conference 2 :24 "I just want to sort of expose people to the art and craft and genre of screenwriting. And be able to show people what it is, and maybe there is someone out there that is a little bit like me, you know, sitting in a small town and finding themselves really wanting to tell visual stories and finding their passion in what I can show them.")

Joining Brandt is Poet Tria Woods, who will lead the poetry workshop on August 8, and Writer Nate Leboutillier (Le-boo-T-ay), who will direct prose writing on August 10. There will be a closing reception on August 11 at the Kodiak Inn Harbor Room to allow community members to share their work and network with professionals.

Those interested in the conference can register online through the Kodiak Arts Council. The cost is $25 per day, with workshops running from 10 a.m. until 8 p.m. Participants can choose to go to all of the workshops, or select ones that interest them. However, Koller said the fees are for the whole day, so it would make sense to go to all the workshops.

In addition to workshops, the conference will host a writing contest that community members can enter. The deadline for the contest is August 1, but registration for the conference is open until the start date. Details for this and the complete conference schedule are on the arts council's home page at Kodiak arts council dot org.

The event is primarily funded through the Kodiak Arts Council, but in the interest of full disclosure KMXT has also contributed to the event. ###