



**ROPEWALK WRITERS RETREAT
SLATED JUNE 2-7**

NEWS RELEASE

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**For Immediate Release
March 6, 1991**

The third annual RopeWalk Writers Retreat, a week-long conference on creative writing sponsored by the University of Southern Indiana, will be held June 2-7 in New Harmony, Indiana.

Four distinguished authors will conduct the retreat workshops -- two each in fiction and poetry on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday -- with Tuesday and Thursday devoted to participant conferences with faculty and to writing.

Returning to RopeWalk by popular demand from last year's retreat is Heather McHugh, a poetess and Master of Fine Arts faculty member at Warren Wilson College, Swannanoa, North Carolina. A 1989 Guggenheim Fellow, her books of poetry include *Dangers*, *A World of Difference*, *To the Quick*, and *Shades*.

Other RopeWalk faculty members will include:

Stephen Dobyns, professor of English and director of the Creative Writing Program at Syracuse University; author of more than 15 books of poetry and fiction; recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and three National Endowment for the Arts fellowships.

Amy Hempel, faculty member for such programs as Writers at Work, Bread Loaf in Vermont, and the New York State Summer Writers Institute; author of two published collections of stories, *Reasons to Live* and *At the Gates of the Animal Kingdom*; her nonfiction has appeared in *Vanity Fair*, *Vogue*, and other periodicals.

Michael Martone, Fort Wayne native and Indiana University graduate who currently is Briggs Copeland Assistant Professor of Fiction at Harvard; his works include *Fort Wayne is Seventh on Hitler's List*, *Alive and Dead in Indiana*, and *Safety Patrol*; two-time NEA fellow and Ingram Merrill Foundation grant winner. (more)

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The RopeWalk Retreat will be held at the New Harmony Inn and Conference Center in the Posey County community that was the site of two nineteenth century utopian experiments. Dr. Thomas A. Wilhelmus, RopeWalk director and assistant dean of the USI School of Liberal Arts, notes, "The community of New Harmony provides an ideal setting for this event, with its retreat-like atmosphere and its history of creative and intellectual achievement."

"The name of the conference, RopeWalk, identifies with one of the major products made by New Harmony's early inhabitants -- rope," he explained. "The rope walk stretched 1,100 feet from North Street to Steammill Street, where the Ropemakers Shop was located. The Harmonists grew hemp to make rope, stretching it out to dry along the rope walk. They then would put it on stretchers at either end of the walk and twist it together. RopeWalk holds interesting metaphoric connotations for a conference where ideas and experiences are twisted into new artistic cords."

RopeWalk is designed to provide a natural outlet for the talents of writers from southwestern Indiana and the Tri-State. Participants are encouraged to write during the retreat, not simply listen to others talk about writing. Writers also have an opportunity to share information about the type of writing that interests them.

A variety of the retreat's lectures, readings, and receptions will be open to the general public.

April 19 is the deadline to submit manuscripts for the retreat. Tuition is \$275; Indiana residents can get a 10 percent discount. Partial scholarships are available to qualifying writers, with preference given to full-time students. Scholarship information is available from the English Department, University of Southern Indiana, 8600 University Boulevard, Evansville, Indiana 47712. Retreat information and application forms are available from the USI Office of Continuing Education at the previous address or by calling 812/464-1863 or 800/467-8600.