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**Chuckanut Writers Conference Coming to WCC
June 24 and 25, 2011: *Inspiration into Action***

Bellingham, Washington – March 22, 2011 – Writers Gloria Burgess, Clyde W. Ford, Samuel Green, Alex Kuo, Nina Laden, Priscilla Long, Jim Lynch, Brenda Miller, Tom Robbins, Glenn Rockowitz and more will be featured at the inaugural Chuckanut Writers Conference, June 24 and 25, 2011. Located at Whatcom Community College’s scenic campus, the conference with the theme *Inspiration into Action* is a joint venture of WCC’s Community Education and Village Books of Bellingham. Writers can visit www.chuckanutwritersconference.com or contact WCC Community Education at 360-383-3200 to register. Entry fee will be \$215 if registering before May 1, 2011 and \$245 thereafter.

Aligned with WCC Community Education’s and Village Books’ shared vision of giving back to the community, the two-day craft-centered, cross-genre conference is designed to welcome emerging and experienced writers, with a portion of the proceeds earned by the conference going to the Whatcom Literacy Council. Sponsorship opportunities are currently available. Contact conference chairperson Linda Howson at 360.383.3203 to inquire about becoming a sponsor of this inaugural conference.

“Whatcom County has such a rich literary tradition that it makes it the perfect place to have a writers conference. Those of us at Village Books are very pleased and proud to be able to partner with Whatcom Community College in bringing the Chuckanut Writers Conference to life. Over the years we’ve been part of a number of writers conferences and have seen how important they are in encouraging and supporting writers and in connecting them with those who can help them publish. We’re excited about the writers, agents and other presenters who will be involved here. This is turning out to be a first-class conference and we look forward to it thriving and growing,” said Chuck Robinson of Village Books.

“When I hear writers talk about their turning points they often mention conferences where they suddenly learned something valuable about craft or discipline. And it’s not always what they heard so much as how it felt to be surrounded by other determined writers for a couple days. So I’m honored to take part in the first Chuckanut Writers Conference and have high hopes that it will inspire, at least comfort, writers of all ages, talents and interests,” said Jim Lynch of Olympia, award-winning author of *Border Songs* (published by Alfred A. Knopf), *The Highest Tide* (Bloomsbury Publishing), which has been translated in 10 languages, and the

Whatcom READS! 2011 featured author. Lynch will be a keynoter at the conference and also will be featured in a Q&A session on the craft and business of writing.

“Writers conferences are so essential because they bring together Dorothy and The Wizard. Not only do they give writers the chance to get their questions answered but also peek behind the curtain of publishing. As a literary agent, I relish the opportunity to give insight because it not only helps writers immensely, but makes my job easier. The strong interactive nature of the Chuckanut Writers Conference gives everyone—from professionals to novices—the opportunity to teach and learn,” said Bree Ogden, Literary Agent for Seattle-based Martin Literary Management.

“With opportunities ranging from small, hands-on writing workshops to one-on-one conversations with writers and agents, to readings/performances, this conference promises to be one of the best the Northwest will offer this summer,” said Alex Kuo of Anacortes, award-winning author of *Lipstick and Other Stories* (Soho Press) and many more titles including the soon-to-be-released *The Man Who Dammed the Yangtze* (due from Haven Books) and *A Chinaman’s Chance: New and Selected Poems 1960–2010* (due from Wordcraft of Oregon). Kuo will lecture on *Writing Across Cultures* and also will be featured on the distinguished authors panel.

“With writers on budgets and students in mind, the conference is very reasonably priced. Just months ago our talented WCC Community Education writing instructors gathered to brainstorm how we could better serve our community—a region so rich with writers and readers, nationally and internationally recognized authors and active writing groups. At that meeting, the idea of hosting a writers conference featuring distinguished authors and agents was born, leading us to where we are today—inviting writers of all levels to join us on June 24th and June 25th, 2011 to experience all we have prepared for them,” said Linda Howson of Bellingham, conference chairperson and program coordinator for WCC Community Education.

“I think we are doing something important by bringing together this eclectic group of writers to infuse the ongoing conversation about creative written expression,” said Laurel Leigh, of Bellingham, freelance writer, editor and teacher, who will act as the conference emcee.

The Chuckanut Writers Conference has attracted diverse talent and will feature such heralded writers as Gloria Burgess, award-winning author of *Legacy Living* (Executive Excellence Publishing), *Dare to Wear Your Soul on the Outside* (Jossey-Bass), *Journey of the Rose* (Jazz Media) and more titles; Clyde W. Ford, award-winning author of *Whiskey Gulf* (Vanguard Press), *Precious Cargo* (Vanguard Press), *Deuce’s Wild* (Llewellyn) and many more titles; Samuel Green, Washington State’s first Poet Laureate and the award-winning author of *Vertebrae: Poems 1972–1994* (Eastern Washington University Press), *The Grace of Necessity* (Carnegie-Mellon University Press), and co-editor of the award-winning *Brooding Heron Press*, which produces fine, letterpressed volumes; Alex Kuo, three-time National Endowment for the Arts fellowship recipient and award-winning author of *Lipstick and Other Stories* (Soho Press) and many more titles, including *The Man Who Dammed the Yangtze* (due from Haven Books in

March 2011) and *A Chinaman's Chance: New and Selected Poems 1960–2010* (due from Wordcraft of Oregon in February 2011); Nina Laden, award-winning author and illustrator of *Roberto the Insect Architect*, *Romeow & Drooliet*, *Peek-a Who?* (all from Chronicle Books) and many, many more titles; Priscilla Long, award-winning writer and author of *Where the Sun Never Shines* (Paragon House Publishers) and *The Writer's Portable Mentor* (Wallingford Press); Jim Lynch, award-winning author of *Border Songs* (Alfred A. Knopf) and *The Highest Tide* (Bloomsbury Publishing, translated in 10 languages), and the Whatcom READS! 2011 featured author; Brenda Miller, award-winning writer and author of *Blessing of the Animals* (Eastern Washington University Press), *Season of the Body* (Sarabande Books), and co-author of *Tell It Slant* (McGraw-Hill); Tom Robbins, renowned author of *B Is for Beer* (Ecco 2009) and *Jitterbug Perfume*, *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues*, *Villa Incognito*, *Another Roadside Attraction* (all available from Bantam Dell) and many more titles; Glenn Rockowitz, writer, comedian, filmmaker and author of the highly celebrated memoir *Rodeo in Joliet* (Bennett & Hastings); as well as Publisher Rep Kurtis Lowe of Book Travelers West and the writing instructors, all published writers, representing Whatcom Community College and its Community Education program, including memoirist Susan Colleen Browne, author and visual artist Nancy Lou Canyon, lifestyle management and computer topics specialist Dawn Groves, fiction writer and poet Scott Provence, who will return from Nevada to teach a session on flash fiction, poet and essayist Jeremy Voigt, and editor and story craft specialist Laurel Leigh, who will act as conference emcee.

Literary agents including Amy Burkhardt of San Francisco Bay Area–based Kimberley Cameron & Associates, Andrea Hurst of Coupeville–based Andrea Hurst & Associates and Kate Folkers and Bree Ogden of Seattle-based Martin Literary Management will attend the two-day conference to mingle with writers, hear pitches, offer advice and present on the contemporary agents panel.

The conference will launch at noon on Friday, June 24, with featured speakers, panels and multiple breakout craft sessions, extending through an evening of readings by author presenters at WCC's state-of-the-art Heiner Theater. The program will continue Saturday, June 25, with a full day of author presenters and sessions, including additional readings and book signings. The conference will conclude with concurrent open mics for the participants at venues in Bellingham's historic Fairhaven district.

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