

Literary Arts in the Quad Cities

Written by Administrator
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People interested in writing in the Quad Cities might look at the list of organizations that offer classes in dance, music, art, and theatre and wonder: What about me?

For better or worse, there's only one organization in the Quad Cities that offers writing instruction to the community at-large: the Midwest Writing Center.

Most visibly, the organization hosts the David R. Collins Writers' Conference each summer.

But it also offers Out Loud (poetry) and Out Loud Plus (poetry and prose) readings; workshops and classes; a place for critique groups to meet; and one-on-one mentoring relationships. Offerings have ranged from afternoon workshops on interviewing to a three-month class on building a novel. For a schedule or more information, visit the organization's Web site (<http://www.midwestwritingcenter.org>), or call (563) 324-1410.

Members of the Midwest Writing Center can also use the group's office - on the third floor of the Bucktown Center for the Arts in downtown Davenport - as a quiet place to think or write. (Annual membership levels start at \$25.)

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Kate King, the Midwest Writing Center's executive director, said her organization wants to encourage people to write and also to foster appreciation of writing.

She emphasized that you don't need to aspire to the bestseller lists to use the Midwest Writing Center. There are programs, for instance, for youth and for novice writers, as well as for published authors. "I think everybody has a story," King said, and we all need to feel heard and understood. "We all seek legacy and validation," she said.

Outside of the Midwest Writing Center, local libraries all host a variety of programs about reading and writing.

Quad City Arts (<http://www.quadcityarts.com>) will be launching a new reading series called "The Word" this fall. The first reading will be given by Dorothea Lasky.

The organization also publishes a literary magazine, *Buffalo Carp*. Submission guidelines are available at Quad City Arts' Web site. The next issue is scheduled to be published in January.

And this fall, the community will be invited to read *To Kill a Mockingbird* as part of the National Endowment for the Arts' "Big Read" program. The two-month project gets underway the week of September 17 and will feature book discussions, a banned-books reading, mock trials, and more. For more information, call Quad City Arts' Ryan Collins at (309) 793-1213 extension 107.