



PRESS RELEASE

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ARTS COUNCIL ANNOUNCES NEW STATE WRITER LAUREATE 2010-2012.

The Alaska State Council on the Arts has chosen Fairbanks writer Peggy Shumaker as the new Alaska State Writer Laureate 2010-2012. She will serve a two-year term beginning October 1, 2010. She succeeds Homer writer Nancy Lord, State Writer Laureate 2008-2010.

As State Writer Laureate, Shumaker will represent the Council and the State of Alaska in communities, conducting workshops and readings as well as connecting Alaskan writers with each other and with the outside world.

Shumaker is first and foremost a well-respected writer with a distinguished record of publications. She has six full-length collections of poetry, one memoir, *Just Breathe Normally* (University of Nebraska Press, 2007) and two chapbooks. Her work has appeared nationally and internationally in many anthologies and highly respected literary magazines. Her book *Blaze* (Red Hen Press, 2005) is a collection of poetry with paintings by Kesler Woodward.

Anne Hanley, former State Writer Laureate 2002-2004 noted, "Peggy has been editor and cheerleader for many beginning writers, including those, like Seth Kantner, who go on to great careers. She has been a tireless advocate for Alaskan writers, even to publishing some of their work under her own imprint. She is a generous woman who connects with people. She is dignified and thoughtful and undoubtedly has plans for how she would extend the influence of Alaskan writing and Alaskan writers."

Shumaker won a poetry fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, and has served as a poet in residence at the Stadler Center for Poetry at Bucknell and as President of the Board of Directors of the Associated Writing Programs. She is active on the National Advisory Board for the *Prairie Schooner* Book Prizes and the Advisory Board of Red Hen Press. Peggy is a contributing editor of *Alaska Quarterly Review*.

Shumaker is a graduate of the University of Arizona with a BA in English and MFA in Creative Writing. For many years she was writer in residence for the Arizona Commission on the Arts, working with school children, prison inmates, deaf adults, gang members and the elderly.

She came to University of Alaska Fairbanks in 1985 to teach creative writing and literature. Professor emerita at UAF, she currently teaches in the Rainier Writing Workshop, Pacific Lutheran University. During the past 25 years, she has been active mentoring Alaskan writers, traveling for readings and conferences and promoting Alaskan writers and artists. In 2008, Peggy founded Boreal Books (www.borealbooks.org), an imprint of Red Hen Press, to publish literature and fine art from Alaska.

For more information about Peggy Shumaker, or to contact her, please visit her website: <http://peggyshumaker.com>.

For more information on the Alaska State Writer Laureate program, contact the Alaska State Council on the Arts at 907.269.6610, or 1.888.278.7424.

The mission of the Alaska State Council on the Arts (ASCA) is to foster the development of the arts for all Alaskans through education, partnership, grants and services. ASCA is a division of the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, and is governed by eleven council members appointed by the Governor. It is supported with general funds appropriated by the Alaska State Legislature and the National Endowment for the Arts, with additional support for arts education programs from the Rasmuson Foundation.