

Soul of the Story

Henry, Monroe share behind-the-scenes writing methods



New York Times bestselling author, Mary Alice Monroe at home in the Lowcountry of South Carolina.

By Barbara Schneider

New York Times bestselling author Mary Alice Monroe and national bestselling author Patti Callahan Henry will introduce readers to the "Soul of the Story" at a luncheon and discussion on Wednesday, June 7, hosted by Trinity Evangelical Church.

Henry, author of three highly acclaimed novels, believes writers must "dig past the superficial to discover the essence of each story." The authors will share how they – and, in fact, everyone – must nurture creativity.

"It's critical to carve out a sacred space," says Henry, "to honor solitude, embrace experience, and remain attuned to one's surroundings."

Monroe and Henry will explain how – when they open themselves to creativity – powerful changes occur in their lives and in their stories.

"Finding the soul of the story," says Henry, "comes from feeding one's own soul." How has her writing affected her own life? "Each time I thought I was learning something about writing, I was actually learning something about life."

Patti Callahan Henry

When Light Breaks, Henry's newest Lowcountry novel, launched in May by the Center for Southern Literature at the Margaret Mitchell House in Atlanta, is winning more accolades for the author. *When Light Breaks* is one of only four trade books selected for the Summer '06 Readers Club of America.

"Patti Callahan Henry has been compared to every Southern writer, from Anne Rivers Siddons to Pat Conroy. She writes the kind of books the term 'lyrical' was coined to describe, and *When Light Breaks* is no exception," writes reviewer Louisa White in *Fresh Fiction*. "Characters quote



Patti Callahan Henry, author of three nationally acclaimed novels, will discuss "The Soul of the Story" on June 7.

Yeats and talk about matters of the heart, and lush imagery calls the reader to a sandy stretch of South Carolina Lowcountry beach, sun overhead and waves pounding in the background. It's Southern Comfort, straight up, no twist."

Henry's previous novels *Losing the Moon* and *Where the River Runs* received rave reviews from critics and readers and established her reputation as a remarkable and fresh new voice in southern fiction.

A nominee for the Southeastern Independent Booksellers Fiction Novel of the Year, Henry is on the short-list for the Townsend Prize for Fiction. No one who has picked up a Henry novel and turned that first page is surprised by her success – she delivers for her readers.

When Light Breaks, follows Kara Larson, a bride-to-be overwhelmed by the planning of her elaborate wedding to a professional golfer. In the midst of the activity, Kara visits Maeve Mahoney, an elderly nursing home resident, and is profoundly affected in ways never anticipated. As Maeve recounts the rambling story of her first love back in Ireland, Kara is driven to remember her own first love.

Mary Alice Monroe

New York Times and USA Today bestselling author Mary Alice Monroe believes she found her voice through the fiction she writes. Known for her intimate portrayals of women's lives, she seamlessly blends compelling characters, Lowcountry themes and her desire to protect endangered species into stories that matter.

Spring is a busy time for Monroe. *The Beach House* was released in trade paperback in May and *Sweetgrass* will come out in paperback in June.

In *The Beach House*, Monroe tells the story of a mother and daughter that parallels the loggerhead nesting saga on the Isle