Wordsmiths – The Bucks Reading Series with

Michael Martone

Friday, October 22 • 7:30 p.m.

Orangery • Bucks County Community College

Newtown Campus

Michael Martone, author of the AWP Award-winning book The Flatness and Other Landscapes, will be reading from his recent works on Friday, October 22, 2010 at 7:30pm in the Orangery.

Michael Martone’s most recent books are Not Normal, Illinois: Peculiar Fiction from the Flyover, Racing in Place: Collages, Fragments, Postcards, Ruins, a collection of essays, and Double-wide, his collected early stories. Michael Martone, a memoir in contributor’s notes, Unconventions, Writing on Writing, and Rules of Thumb, edited with Susan Neville, were all published recently. Martone is the author of five other books of short fiction including Seeing Eye, Pensées: The Thoughts of Dan Quayle, Fort Wayne Is Seventh on Hitler’s List, Safety Patrol, and Alive and Dead in Indiana. His stories and essays have appeared in Harper’s, Esquire, and other magazines.

Martone has won two Fellowships from the NEA and a grant from the Ingram Merrill Foundation. His stories have won awards in the Italian American fiction contest, the Florida Review Short Story Contest, the Story magazine Short, Short Story Contest, the Margaret Jones Fiction Prize of Black Ice Magazine, and the first World’s Best Short, Short Story Contest. His stories and essays have appeared and been cited in the Pushcart Prize, The Best American Stories, and The Best American Essays anthologies.

Excerpt from The Flatness and Other Landscapes:

They are thinking about Northern Ohio, about Indiana, about the long stretch through Illinois and on into Iowa. It is flat. The geometry of the fields suggests a map as large as the thing it represents. The squared township roads score the axes of coordinates. The cusp of trees on the horizon, the water tower, the elevator are tokens slid there representing ground taken and held. The only dimension marked by z is the state of dreaming as they drive on the interstates meandering in tangents that seek what the railroads, who were here with rulers first, called a water-level route.

There are places in the Midwest that are not like this—-the limestone hills, the loess bluffs, the forest lakes and sand dunes, the rills and knobs and kettles. But the people who only know the place by the driving through it know the flatness...I see them starting out, big-hearted and romantic...They are well-read, and they have a vision as they come out of the green hills and the vista opens up, a true vision now so vast that at night as they drive there are only the farm yard lights that demonstrate plane geometry by their rearranging patterns. And, in the dawn around Sandusky, they have had enough, and they hunker down and drive, looking for the mountains that they know are out there somewhere. They cannot see what is all around them now. A kind of blindness afflicts them, a pathology of the path. The flatness.

Free and open to campus and community.
Sponsored by the BCCC Cultural Affairs Committee and Department of Language and Literature.

For more information 215-968-8156