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ASPEN WRITERS' FOUNDATION AND *ESQUIRE* MAGAZINE TO CO-SPONSOR SHORT SHORT FICTION CONTEST

(August 29, 2011) – Aspen, CO – On September 1st the Aspen Writers' Foundation (AWF) in collaboration with *Esquire* magazine will launch a short short fiction contest entitled "Aspens." In honor of *Esquire's* 78th birthday, contestants are asked to craft a flash fiction piece that is exactly 78 words. This is the first collaboration between the AWF and *Esquire*, the provocatively smart men's magazine, which has been in publication since 1933.

The nationwide contest, which closes October 7th, includes the opportunity for 10 winners to be flown to New York City to participate in a writing workshop taught by National Book Award winner and IMPAC Prize recipient, Colum McCann, author of the best-selling novel *Let the Great World Spin*. The winners will also receive an exclusive invitation to a private party at the *Esquire* penthouse to mingle amongst literary celebrities and publishing industry gurus. The grand-prize winner will be announced at the party in New York and will receive a full-paid scholarship to an advanced fiction workshop during Aspen Summer Words, June 17-22, 2012.

The Aspen Writers' Foundation expects the collaborative contest to help expand its outreach to men ages 25-50 while capitalizing on the increasingly popular genre of flash fiction, a form of fictional literature that is traditionally told in less than 1,000 words.

"For years we've made significant strides in the expansion of our audience demographic," said Lisa Consiglio, executive director of the Aspen Writers' Foundation. "Part of that outreach has included youth in general and young men in particular. To partner with a magazine of *Esquire's* prestige and popularity, particularly among men, validates those efforts and provides new avenues for reaching people of all ages."

In 2007, *Esquire* made an effort to restore the short short storytelling form to the literary world by launching The Napkin Fiction Project. Staffers mailed 250 cocktail napkins to writers across the country and asked them to craft a story on the piece of

small ply. The “Aspens,” contest was modeled after the napkin project and is expected to draw thousands of entries from around the country.

Contestants can submit their short shorts online at www.esquiresubmissions.com. To receive more information about the contest please visit www.aspenwriters.org.

Esquire Magazine is a general-interest lifestyle magazine for sophisticated men. Founded in 1933, *Esquire* offers pieces on diverse topics—from politics and health to fashion and the arts—by the finest journalists and authors working today. The magazine has always been a showcase for writers, beginning with Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald. Today the magazine continues to publish such writers as Tom Wolfe, Norman Mailer, and Gay Talese – and has propelled the careers of Elizabeth Gilbert, Nathan Englander and Benjamin Percy while serving as a launch pad for aspiring writers. The award-winning magazine has won numerous awards for short fiction over the years and has been a finalist for 53 National Magazine Awards, the industry’s highest honor, and has won 14, including the coveted award for “General Excellence” in 2006. *Esquire* is owned by the Hearst Corporation and operated by Hearst Magazines.

The Aspen Writers’ Foundation Founded in Aspen in 1976 as a cutting edge poetry conference and literary magazine, today the Aspen Writers’ Foundation is one of the nation’s leading literary centers and a stage for the world’s most prominent authors. AWF programs employ literature as a tool for provoking thought, broadening perspectives, fostering connections, inspiring creativity, and giving voice. Since 2009, the AWF has partnered with the Aspen Institute, underscoring the highest humanistic ideals of Aspen founder Walter Paepcke: to better understand human challenges by cultivating one’s inner life through the exchange of words, stories, and ideas.

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