

AU alumnus and spy thriller novelist to speak at Writers Workshop

3/29/04

Robert Littell, a 1956 alumnus of Alfred University who has written 14 spy novels including *The Company*, published in 2002, will be among the featured writers for Alfred University's annual Writers' Workshop, a three-day conference that opens Thursday, April 1. Littell began his writing career with his novel, the now legendary spy thriller *The Defection of A.J. Lewinter*. Christopher Lehmann-Haupt of *The New York Times* called it "a perfect little gem, the best Cold War thriller I've read in years," and the praise kept coming with critics hailing Littell as "the American *Le Carré*" (*New York Times*) and raving that his books were "as good as thriller writing gets" (*The Washington Post*). For *The Company*, his 14th novel, Littell created an engrossing, multigenerational, wickedly nostalgic yet utterly candid saga, bringing to life through a host of characters-historical and imagined-the over 40 years of the CIA-"the Company" to insiders. At the heart of the novel is a stunningly conceived mole hunt involving such rivals and allies as the MI6, KGB, and Mossad. Littell appears on a panel with novelist Megan Staffel of Alfred and poet Thomas Krampf of Hinsdale at 4 p.m. Friday in Room 114, Seidlin Hall on the Alfred University campus. The Writers Workshop opens at 8 p.m. Thursday with a poetry reading by Krampf, also in Room 114, Seidlin Hall. At 8 p.m. Friday, Staffel will give a reading of her work in Howell Hall on the AU campus. A series of workshops for registered students on Saturday morning concludes the Writers Workshop.