



COLORADO GOLD
Writers Conference
2023

September 8-10, 2023,
Hyatt Regency Aurora Denver



Celebrating 40 Years of RMFW

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Welcome from RMFW's President



Greetings and welcome to the 2023 Colorado Gold Conference, the premier writers' conference in the Rocky Mountain region, sponsored by Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers (RMFW).

On behalf of the RMFW Board of Directors, Conference Co-Chairs, and Volunteers who bring this conference to life every year, I'm honored to not only welcome you to our annual conference but also to the celebration of RMFW's 40th Anniversary.

You are in for a special treat. During the next three days you'll be exposed to exciting presentations, practical and intimate workshops and panels, and a line-up of great keynote speakers. Plus, you'll get to meet literary agents, editors, and bestselling authors—who have been assembled to give you the most up-to-date information about the

publishing industry, the craft of writing, and state-of-the-art educational sessions—all designed to take your writing journey to the next level of success.

Enjoy your conference and best wishes on your writing journey!

ZJ Czupor
RMFW President

New Attendees – Don't Miss This!

Please accept my special welcome to this year's Colorado Gold Writer's Conference. Every year, first-timers make up at least twenty-five percent of the attendance. For many of those, this will be their first-ever writers' conference. Besides the workshops, you will have the opportunity to network with other writers and industry professionals. RMFW leadership and the membership hope you enjoy the time and accomplish the things you need to move your writing career to the next level.

To that end, may I invite you to two events planned especially for newcomers? First, at 8 p.m. on Thursday, Sept 7 join me for an informal gathering near the fireplace in the hotel lobby. This time will allow you to meet other first-timers before things get going on Friday. Next, at **noon on Friday, Sept. 8, we will have an orientation meeting in Conference Room I.** There, we'll give you tips for navigating the weekend, introduce you to the people you should know, and answer all your questions. There'll be door prizes and a special gift for one lucky someone.

Plus, you can return to Conference Room I after our kick-off speech for an afternoon of **Craft 101 programming** geared specifically for new writers, should that option call out to you. Please plan on joining us.

Kevin Wolf
RMFW Vice President and First-time Attendee Liaison



Special Guests

David Heska Wanbli Weiden, keynote

David Heska Wanbli Weiden, an enrolled citizen of the Sicangu Lakota nation, was named by the New York Times as one of “the most critically acclaimed young novelists working now.” His debut novel, *Winter Counts*, was called a “once-in-a-generation thriller” by the Los Angeles Times, a “worthy addition to the burgeoning canon of indigenous literature” by Library Journal, and one of the “best crime novels of all time” by Parade magazine. His short fiction has appeared in numerous anthologies and has been selected for Best American Mystery and Suspense Stories. He teaches in the low-residency MFA programs at Regis University, the Pan-European MFA program at Cedar Crest College, and at the Lighthouse Writers Workshop in Denver, and is a Professor of Native American Studies and Political Science at Metropolitan State University of Denver.



Kiersten Modglin, keynote

Kiersten Modglin is an Amazon Top 10 bestselling author of domestic and psychological thrillers and a member of International Thriller Writers, Novelists, Inc., and the Alliance of Independent Authors. Kiersten is a KDP Select All-Star and a recipient of ThrillerFix’s Best Psychological Thriller Award, Suspense Magazine’s Best Book of 2021 Award, a 2022 Silver Falchion for Best Suspense, and a 2022 Silver Falchion for Best Overall Book of 2021. She grew up in rural western Kentucky and later relocated to Nashville, Tennessee, where she now lives with her husband, daughter, and their two Boston terriers: Cedric and Georgie. Kiersten’s work has been translated into multiple languages and readers across the world refer to her as ‘The Queen of Twists.’ A Netflix addict, Shonda Rhimes superfan, psychology fanatic, and indoor enthusiast, Kiersten enjoys rainy days spent with her nose in a book.



Angie Hodapp, welcome speaker

Angie Hodapp is the Director of Literary Development at Nelson Literary Agency. She holds a BA in English and secondary education from the University of Northern Colorado and an MA in English and communication development from Colorado State University. A graduate of the Publishing Institute at the University of Denver, she has worked in professional writing, editing, and education for more than twenty years. A frequent presenter at writing conferences and events, and the author of *Query Craft* and *Do You Need a Literary Agent*, she loves helping writers improve their craft and learn about the ever-changing world of publishing.



Agents, Editors, and Scouts



Alec Shane: Writers House

Alec Shane majored in English at Brown University, a degree he put to immediate use by moving to Los Angeles after graduation to become a professional stuntman. Realizing that he prefers books to breakaway glass, he moved to New York City in 2008 to pursue a career in publishing. Alec quickly

found a home at Writers House Literary Agency, where he has been building his list since 2012.

Currently seeking: In fiction, Alec is looking for mystery, thrillers (though he's experiencing terrorist and Russia fatigue at the moment), suspense, horror, historical fiction, literary fiction, and middle grade and young adult fiction. He doesn't want Romance, straight sci-fi, high fantasy, picture books, self-help, women's fiction, food, or memoir. Also adult non-fiction.

Catch Alec during his *"Your Opening Pages: How to Make That First Chapter Stand Out"* workshop, Friday, September 8, at 2:30 PM.



Erica Bauman: Aevitas Creative

Erica Bauman represents a wide variety of authors across middle grade, young adult, and upmarket adult fiction. She is a graduate of Johns Hopkins University and has worked in the publishing industry since 2012. Prior to Aevitas, she worked at Spectrum Literary Agency. Based

in New York, Erica is most interested in commercial novels that feature an exciting premise and lyrical, atmospheric writing; imaginative, genre-blending tales; speculative worlds filled with haunting, quietly wondrous magic; fresh retellings of mythology, ballet, opera, and classic literature; sharply funny rom-coms; graphic novels for all ages; fearless storytellers that tackle big ideas and contemporary issues; and working with and supporting marginalized authors and stories that represent the wide range of humanity.

Currently seeking: Middle Grade; Young Adult; Adult Upmarket, SFF, and Romcom.

Catch Erica during her *Query Letter Workshop*, Sunday, September 10, at 9 AM.



Brenna English-Loeb: Transatlantic Agency

Brenna English-Loeb joined Transatlantic in 2019 after working for several years at Janklow & Nesbit Associates and Writers House, where she had the pleasure of working with New York Times bestselling and award-

winning authors across multiple genres. Brenna grew up in beautiful Upstate New York and studied English and Theatre at Bucknell University.

Currently seeking: Adult and crossover YA science fiction, fantasy, mystery and horror, adult non-fiction.

Catch Brenna during her *"Methods for Visualizing Structure and Pacing"* workshop, Sunday, September 10, at 10 AM.



Kristina Sutton Lennon: Focused Artists

Kristina Sutton Lennon was named a Publisher's Weekly Star Watch Honoree in 2022. As CEO of Focused Artists, which she co-founded, she represents authors and screenwriters. Kristina has also represented clients as a Talent Manager for Citizen Skull

and as a Film/TV Agent for People Store. She recently served as Director of Media Rights for Context Literary Agency. Kristina takes pride in her diverse slate of content and genre agnostic scouting. She earned her MFA from Louisiana State University, and is a proud member of NALIP (National Association of Latino Independent Producers).

Currently seeking: Women's Fiction, Roman-tasy, Sci-Fi/Fantasy, Picture Books, Upmarket



Nikki Terpilowski: Holloway Literary
 Nikki Terpilowski established Holloway Literary in 2011. She represents award-nominated and best-selling authors in romance, southern fiction, mystery and suspense. Nikki is based in North Carolina.

Currently seeking: Romance (small town, historical), suspense and military/political thrillers, lifestyle non-fiction (culinary, hobbies, etc.) YA fantasy and sci-fi, southern fiction, epic historical fiction in the vein of Poldark, magical realism, western fiction.

Catch Nikki during her *“The Mindful Writer: Techniques for Tapping Into Your Inner Creativity”* workshop, Sunday, September 10, at 9 AM.



Patricia Nelson: Marsal Lyon Literary
 Patricia Nelson is a literary agent with Marsal Lyon Literary Agency representing all genres of young adult and middle grade fiction, as well as women’s fiction and romance. Her clients include bestselling and award-winning authors, and her recent sales

include books placed with Penguin Random House, HarperCollins, Macmillan, and Simon & Schuster, among others. She holds master’s degrees from the University of Texas at Austin and the University of Southern California and has previously taught literature and writing at the college level.

Currently seeking: YA fiction (all genres), middle grade fiction (all genres), upmarket fiction, women’s fiction, romance.

Catch Patricia during her *“8 Rookie Submission Mistakes (and how to avoid them)”* workshop, Friday, September 8, at 1:30 PM.



Rebecca Scherer: Jane Rotrosen Agency
 Rebecca Scherer began her publishing career at JRA in 2010 while earning a BA in English Literature, Political Science, and German from the Macaulay Honors College at Hunter. Immediately upon graduating, she was offered the unique

opportunity to work within each department at the agency to gain a deep understanding of the business before going on to become an agent. A lifelong New Yorker with a true head for numbers, Rebecca bridges her taste in literature with her business acumen to comprehensively advocate for her authors.

Currently Seeking: Women’s fiction, crime/mystery, suspense, book club fiction, and upmarket/literary-leaning fiction.

Agent Pitch Sessions

These 10-minute, one-on-one sessions are scheduled in advance based on choices you made at registration and offer conference attendees the chance to pitch their manuscript to participating in-person and virtual agents. Pitch appointments will be provided at registration.

Our Pitch Master, **Jonathan Christian**, will have open hours

10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Friday

to reschedule or potentially schedule new pitches on Friday in front of the Ballroom.

On Saturday, arrive early for your scheduled time to hang out in the pitch lounge in front of the Ballroom, where pitches will take place all day on Saturday between meals.

Thursday Intensive Programs

These classes require pre-registration with an added fee.

8:30-10:15 a.m.
10:15-10:30 a.m.
10:30 a.m. -12:15 p.m.
12:15-1:24 p.m.
1:45-3:30 p.m.
3:30-3:45 p.m.
3:45-5:30 p.m.
5:30-6:30 p.m.

Block One
Coffee and Snacks
Block Two
Buffet Lunch
Block Three
Break
Block Four
Happy Hour in the Borealis

Conference Room I

Intermediate Novel Writing: From Finished to Fabulous

This optional Intensive is for writers who have finished a novel — or two — but want to elevate their craft to create more polished and successful novels in the future. RMFW has brought in writing, editing, and publishing professionals to help these intermediate writers launch themselves into the next stage of their craft.

1. “How to Get Your Plot Working As a Whole” with Rachel Weaver
2. “World as Character: Bringing Your Setting to Life” with Courtney E. Morgan
3. “Main Character Writing: Richer, Rounder, Fuller” with Traci Jones
4. “Let’s Get Intimate: Working With Narrative Distance” with Tiffany Quay Tyson

Conference Room II

Indie Publishing Bootcamp: Learn from the WOTYs

The choice between indie and traditional publishing is more open and personal than ever before. This optional Intensive is for writers with a completed manuscript who are strongly considering indie publishing. All four indie-publishing pros are former RMFW Writers of the Year!

1. “Roll Up Your Sleeves: Doing the Grunt Work of Writing Your Novel” with Amy Rivers
2. “Knowing Your Publishing Options as an Indie Author” with Bernadette Marie
3. “Revision and Editing for Indie Authors” with Stephanie Reisner
4. “Build Your Foundation with Facebook Ads” with Andre Gonzalez



New for 2023, Colorado Gold is using **Sched** for our conference programming, which means there is no visual schedule in this program. See conference programming visually via Sched on our site at rmfw.org/conference-2023-schedule or via the Sched app downloaded on your device.

Via Sched, you can sort our programming by day, by room, by level of class or by teacher, and you can create a custom schedule to keep yourself on track. Search for Sched in your app store.

Happy Birthday, RMFW!

Founded in 1984, Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers celebrates the organization’s 40th anniversary in 2023. In addition to special conference programming, our anniversary committee has collected our history and member memories into a book. *Ruby in the Rockies: Celebrating 40 Years of RMFW* is available starting Sept. 7 on Amazon and in local stores for \$16.99/each. Limited copies are available in the conference bookstore now!

Friday Morning Masterclasses

These classes require pre-registration with an added fee.

8:00 - 11:50 AM

Conference Room I

0 to 60: Fix Problems with Pacing and Rev Things Up

Stant Litore

How do you avoid the slow start, the saggy middle, the unsatisfying ending—and how do you rev up the speed at just the right moments, give just the right amount of pause for breath, and play with readers' expectations in ways that both build suspense and provide a satisfying payoff? Jump into this session for Stant Litore's exhilarating crash course on pacing in fiction.

Conference Room II

How Artists Game System: A Study in Positioning Your Work

Molly McGhee

Back by Popular Demand! The market for books is shrinking. Selling one is even harder now than it was in the past. In this four hour master class we'll look at how to position yourself to sell your work – without sacrificing the boldness of your voice and vision. This is a class that aims to empower authors, build their confidence, and embolden them to approach the book world as they want to, not as is demanded of them.

Conference Room V

Literary Forensics: Reading Like a Writer

Gary McBride

Your favorite authors can teach you how to write your novel once you learn how to read their novels like a writer. This master class introduces you to Literary Forensics techniques that you can apply to any novel with a focus on uncovering techniques you can then apply to your own writing.

Conference Room IV

Smile, You DON'T have to Be on Camera: Video Marketing for Authors

Caitlin Berve

Video is the most powerful marketing medium today, and there are book-loving, reader-filled communities waiting for you. In this workshop, we'll cover how to record and edit with your phone, what matters most when filming, types of videos you can make, and where to upload your content. You'll leave class with a video!

Aurora IV

The Wordsmith's Guide to Voice and Style

Angie Hodapp

An author's distinct writing style and narrative voice tend to develop over time, with equal parts artistic instinct, attention to other authors' mastery, and awareness of genre and audience. In this masterclass, you'll work to discover and develop your own unique writing style as it relates to the types of stories you want to tell and the types of readers you want to reach.

The Colorado Authors League (CAL) supports and promotes its community of published writers while connecting with and adding value to the reading world.

Formed over 90 years ago, published authors become members to:

- Keep up with changes in the craft of writing, publishing, and marketing.
- Gain greater visibility for their writing – CAL is dedicated to promoting its authors and their works.
- Find like-minded people who love writing, and with whom they can trade their knowledge and experience.
- To participate in collaborative books, community projects, contests, and retail booths.

Find out more at coloradoauthors.org.

Now accepting applications from book illustrators and cover designers!



Bookstore Hours

The Bookies has set up shop at our conference! The tables are full of your favorite RMFW members' and conference presenters' works. Whether for entertainment, inspiration or craft instruction, our conference bookstore has you covered. Find them in the **Cafe Lounge** at the following times:

- **Friday, Sept 8:** Noon to 9:30pm
- **Saturday, Sept 9:** 8am to 6:30pm
- **Sunday, Sept 10:** 8am to Noon



Consider helping BookGive, the charitable arm of The Bookies! BookGive donates thousands of books to organizations and facilities all over the Denver metro area. Support them by bringing a book, or books, to donate to BookGive during the conference, or use QR codes posted in the bookstore to donate funds. Learn more at <https://bookgivedenver.org>.

Want to write quietly?

Feeling inspired and need an area to just write? Head to **Conference Room VII**, which is dedicated to quiet writing throughout the conference on Friday afternoon, Saturday, and Sunday morning.

Want to network and chat?

Feeling inspired and need an area to just write? Head to **Conference Room VIII**, which is dedicated to discussions, networking and other non-silent activities on Friday afternoon, Saturday, and Sunday morning.

NOTE: This room becomes the venue for our open mic night on Friday evening.

Newcomers' Welcome and Orientation

12:15-12:50 p.m.

Conference Room I

Kevin Wolf

Welcome, conference newcomers! Join Kevin Wolf for an orientation about what to expect from the conference, how to navigate the schedule and your time, and other pertinent information. Also: door prizes!!

Welcome Ceremony

1-1:20 p.m.

Aurora Ballroom

Special guest, Angie Hodapp

Join us in the main ballroom as we kick off the conference with door prizes, a welcome from our president, and a welcome speech from our special guest, Angie Hodapp. A longtime RMFW member and popular conference presenter, Angie will orient us for the weekend and kick-off our 40th anniversary party.



The Workshops

Note: Beginner, intermediate and professional designations are meant to correspond to the audience's experience with writing, not the topic in question. For example, classes on expertise (like martial arts or the legal system) are classified as beginner level because even novice writers can use the information, even though the workshops might provide expert-level information within their discipline.

- **Beginner:** Introduction of basic concepts, defining common terms, a general overview of a topic, or a focus on getting started.
- **Intermediate:** Attendees at this level know the basics and want to grow further.
- **Advanced:** Attendees at this level are most likely published – either independently or traditionally – and are in need of tools and techniques to put it all together as well as career-level considerations.

These categories are only guides, and you need not have previous knowledge/experience of a topic to attend any workshop. A floor plan can be found at the end of this program.



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Friday Afternoon: 1:30-2:20 p.m

Aurora III

PANEL: Ask A Pro - Hosted by PAA

1 hour - Intermediate

Andre Gonzalez, Stephanie Reisner, Bernadette Marie, and David. R. Slayton

Have you ever wanted to ask a group of professional authors anything about writing/publishing? Join the Professional Authors' Alliance for a casual conversation with four industry pros ready to answer any and all of your questions!

Aurora IV

Know Your Ending - How a Killer Outline Elevates Story

2 hours - Beginner

Rob Samborn

This is the fiction outlining workshop you've been looking for! Perfect for thriller, mystery, fantasy, romance and other genre writers. Take your writing to the next level and rapidly increase your writing time by knowing where you're going with this hands-on class in which you'll learn tools and techniques to create amazing outlines.

Conference Room I

Building the Ark

1 hour - Beginner, Craft 101 track

Shannon Baker

Bless pantsers and their magical powers. For Muggles, this workshop offers a plan. Learn to plot using a four-part structure, including eight milestone scenes. We'll discuss what to put where, the scenes needed to create exciting beginnings, avoid sagging middles, and bring satisfying endings.

Conference Room II

8 Rookie Submission Mistakes (and how to avoid them)

1 hour - Advanced

Patricia Nelson

Learn about common pitfalls of queries and first chapters, along with a crash course in best practices for catching an agent's eye. Whether you're just starting to prepare to seek an agent or are looking to troubleshoot a query that's not working, this class offers tips and tricks to help take your submission materials to the next level.

Conference Room III

Conquering the First Draft

1 hour - Beginner

Ryanne Glenn

Drafting can be hard and a lot of writers struggle with getting words on the page. This workshop will give you tips for making your writing time more efficient, staying motivated through the drafting process, and putting the fun back into drafting.

Conference Room IV

Pacing Pointers: How to Keep Your Scenes from Stalling

1 hour - Intermediate

Kendra Griffin

In this session, we'll discuss horizontal and vertical storytelling techniques, how to identify them, and when to use these modes to improve the pacing and perspective in your scenes.

Conference Room V

Beyond Exposition to the "Live Wire" in Your Story

1 hour - Intermediate

Stant Litore

Finding the "Live Wire" in Your Story is about how we rethink the way that we describe characters, settings, action, and emotions in ways that electrify the reader.

Conference Room VI

Observe, Create, Write

1 hour - Beginner

Peggy Waide

Ideas come to us all the time. But how do you first develop the structure behind the story to avoid floundering. In this workshop, we will start with those moments of inspiration then add basic elements to shape that idea into a workable foundation to keep you from wandering far from your storyline.

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Friday Afternoon: 2:30-3:20 p.m.

Aurora III

Critique Partner Round Up

2 hours - Beginner

Ryanne Glenn

Looking for a critique partner? Come meet others that are looking for you! Meet other writers in an informal, speed dating style gathering.

Aurora IV

Know Your Ending

Second hour

Conference Room I

How to be the Architect of Your World

1 hour - Beginner, Craft 101

Susanne Duff

Many beginning writers struggle with making their worlds interconnect, be symbiotic with all the necessary elements, and overall make sense. A well built world can also help drive plot. This workshop will make them realistic and genuine.

Conference Room II

Query Letter Workshop

1 hour - Intermediate

Erica Baumann

A workshop to discuss what goes into a query letter and how agents utilize them when considering a writer for representation. Discussion will cover all the parts of a query letter, the necessary information an agent is looking for, and how to condense the plot of your novel into a succinct pitch. Attendees can bring their own query letters for group discussion and critique.

Conference Room III

The White Hot Core of Character Motivation

1 hour - Intermediate

Mark Stevens

Stories consist of a series of moments with endless choices. What makes the characters do anything? How does emotion play a role in the choices your characters make? To avoid having a story read like a series of plot points, writers can use the power of the moment.

Conference Room IV

Twist The 5 Love Languages To Develop Characters and Build Tension

1 hour - Intermediate

Kelley Lindberg

The Five Love Languages books introduced 5 ways people express love in any relationship (romantic or non-romantic!). We'll explore the 5 love languages, see published examples, and learn how to use love languages to enhance your characters, deepen their interactions, and build tension in a scene.

Conference Room V

Dialogue and the Back Story Dump

1 hour - Beginner

Bernadette Marie

In this workshop we will explore the use of dialogue to get all of that juicy backstory out into the open without the dreaded info-dump.

ARE YOU A BUSY INDIE AUTHOR? I CAN HELP!



- *Social Media Images**
- *A+ Images**
- *Cover Design**
- *Keywords**
- *Categories**
- *Beta Read with Comments**

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AUTHORASSIST4309@GMAIL.COM

VISIT MY AUTHOR PAGE TO SEE MY WORK.
WWW.AMAZON.COM/AUTHOR/CHARLENETESS



Conference Room VI

Revising Your Novel: Turning Your Word Swamp into a Bellagio Fountain

1 hour - Intermediate

LS Hawker

Your novel's finished! Now comes the hard part--revising. The overwhelming amount of advice out there (not to mention your own self-doubt) can paralyze you into inaction. This workshop will give you a checklist, strategies, and tools to transform your word swamp into a Bellagio fountain.

Reminder:

All conference attendees have agreed to abide by the Colorado Gold Writers Conference Code of Conduct. See full code on pg. 33.

Friday Afternoon: 3:30-4:20 p.m.

Aurora III

Critique Partner Round Up

Second hour

Aurora IV

Tactical Writing

2 hours - Intermediate

Carol Berg and Susan Mackay Smith

Carol Berg and Susan Mackay Smith will provide new perspectives for considering the mysteries and mechanics of the fiction writing craft carefully planned actions for achieving specific ends in fiction.

Conference Room I

Point (of View) Taken

1 hour - Beginner, Craft 101

Laurie Marr Wasmund

Choosing a point of view is a must for any author of fiction. Who is telling the story and why? It isn't always simple to decide. We'll look at the differences between points of view; how to understand the rhetorical situation of a piece; narrative distance; and the importance of voice.

Conference Room II

How to Get Your Book onto Bookstore Shelves

1 hour - Advanced

Joshua Clark

Learn the do's and don'ts for pitching bookstores to get your book on their shelves. Whether you're traditionally or independently published, you'll discover tips and tricks, book requirements, and proper etiquette from an indie bookstore buyer so that your book can get in the hands of more readers.

Conference Room III

Embrace the Power of the Pen, But Write Responsibly

1 hour - Intermediate

Amy Rivers

With great writing comes great responsibility. Whether or not you're writing realistic fiction, every time your book is read, the reader is learning something. Though you may not intend it, and the reader certainly didn't sign up for it, they still gain valuable perspective from fictional novels.

Conference Room IV

Reading Like a Writer I: Understanding Structure

1 hour - Beginner

Gary McBride

We've all heard that reading improves our writing. But *how* we read is just as important as *what* we read. This 1-hour workshop covers Literary Forensics techniques to analyze form and structure, with a focus on discovering techniques we can apply to our own writing.

Conference Room VI

Narrative Distance 101

1 hour - Beginner

Rachel Delaney Craft

Narrative distance is the lens through which readers see your story. Zooming in fully immerses readers in your character's head; zooming out provides a broader, more objective view. This class will teach attendees how to control this lens, scene by scene, to keep readers turning pages.

Friday Afternoon: 4:30-5:20 p.m.

Aurora III

PANEL: Meet the Writer of the Year finalists

ZJ Czupor, Mark Stevens, David R. Slayton, and L.R. Braden

1 hour - Beginner

Meet the finalists for Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers' 2023 Writer of the Year award: L.R. Braden, David R. Slayton, and Mark Stevens. RMFW President ZJ Czupor will host a conversations about their careers and their advice to other writers.

Aurora IV

Tactical Writing

Second hour

Conference Room I

Create Motivated Characters

Peggy Waide

1 hour - Beginner, Craft 101

Ever want to throw a book at the wall because a character's actions made no sense? Believable motivation (the why) is integral to character development. They infiltrate your character's thoughts, decisions, choices and actions. Come discover how to write well-motivated characters for a great read.

Conference Room II

Let's Make Marketing Fun!

1 hour - Advanced

LS Hawker

All you want to do is write. But in order to keep writing, you need to sell books, and your inner toddler stomps its feet at the idea—what fun is that? If you make marketing fun, you'll appease the kid inside, sell more books, and even find yourself looking forward to these tasks.

Conference Room IV


Critique Like a Boss – Tips for Getting the Most from Your Critique Group

1 hour - Beginner

Kelley Lindberg

A constructive, positive critique group can help your story stand out in this ultra-competitive market. Learn the types of critique groups, guidelines for review sessions, tips for being an effective reviewer, and why critiquing others' work is one of the best ways to improve your own skills.


Your One-Stop Publishing Option



Do you desire to publish your work? Starting with your edited Microsoft Word manuscript, we design and format a book cover and interior pages. Then we provide a print PDF that can be submitted to a traditional printer or a print-on-demand service, such as Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) or IngramSpark. Depending on the complexity of your book, we may also be able to convert the print PDF into a reflowable e-book.

For more information, visit our website: elevation-press-books.com

Books We Have Published



Conference Room V

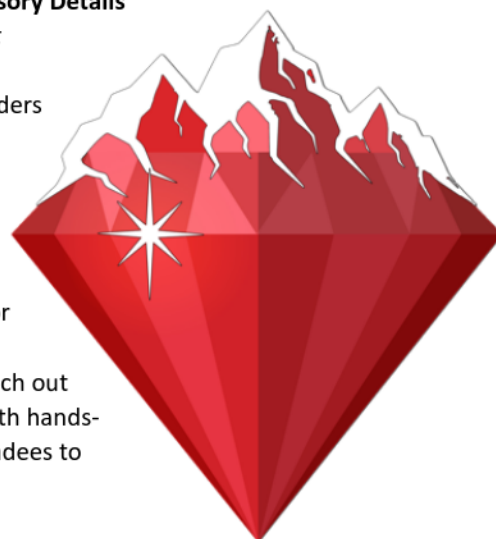
Vivid & Visceral Sensory Details

Rachel Delaney Craft

1 hour - Beginner

To fully immerse readers in your story world, you need to bring it to life with sensory details.

This class will teach simple techniques for writing fresh, vivid descriptions that reach out and grab readers, with hands-on prompts for attendees to practice.



Writer of the Year Banquet and Keynote Address by Kirsten Modglin

6:30-8:30 p.m.
Aurora Ballroom

Friday night's banquet hosted by **Z.J. Czupor** will include:

- Presentation of the PEN Awards by our PAA Liaison, **Andre Gonzalez**
- A speech by the 2023 RMFW Writer of the Year
- A keynote address by Amazon Top 10 author **Kiersten Modglin**.

Be sure to look around the room and find a seat at a hosted table with one of our visiting VIP guests!



Author Signing Event

8:30-10:30 p.m.

*Bookstore Cafe Lounge, Conference Room V and the
Conference Foyer*

After Friday's banquet, the conference bookstore expands into a book fair featuring dozens of local RMFW authors. Buy books and get them signed, meet writers you admire, and chat while you partake from the cash bar.

Writer Open Mic

8:30-10:30 p.m.

Conference Room VIII

Hosted by an RMFW author, this open mic offers a chance to hear first pages from works-in-progress and published novels, or read from your own book or WIP. You'll never find a friendlier audience for a reading than at Colorado Gold!

Saturday: Birds of a Feather

Flock together with fellow writers! Birds of a Feather sessions are informal conversations hosted by an RMFW professional that gather writers who work in the same genre. Ask questions, network, find new friends, and share about the latest developments in publishing and your genre. All these sessions will be in **Boardroom A**.

- 8-8:50 a.m. — Historical Fiction with Laurie Marr Wasmund
- 9-9:50 a.m. — Science Fiction with Todd Leatherman
- 10-10:50 a.m. — Fantasy with Caitlin Berve
- 11-11:50 a.m. — Western with Kevin Wolf
- 1:30-2:20 p.m. — Horror/Thriller with Andre Gonzalez
- 2:30-3:20 p.m. — Young Adult and Middle Grade with TBD
- 3:30-4:20 p.m. — Suspense with L.S. Hawker
- 4:30-5:20 p.m. — Romance with Mariah Ankenman

Saturday Morning: 8-8:50 a.m.

Aurora III

Just a Flesh Wound: How to Write Fantastic Battles

1 hour - Intermediate

TH Leatherman

At the time, the invention of the sword was cutting-edge technology. But what does it take to wield a sword, or a rifle? We'll go into writing believable, engaging fight scenes.

Aurora IV

Screenwriting 101: This Story Would Make a Great Movie!

2 hours - Beginner

Karen A. Lin

Screenwriting is a different beast. But writing a feature-length or short script is not as tough as one might think. Learn how to write a screenplay, about story expectations, hooks, representation, protecting your work, pitching, consultation versus coverage, resources and how the industry works.

Conference Room I

Avoiding Common Mistakes of Self-Publishing

1 hour - Intermediate

Laura VanArendonk Baugh

Today it's simple to publish with the click of a mouse. It's not quite as easy to establish a good writing career. Bad advice about writing, editing, marketing, and relating to fellow authors is everywhere. Let Laura warn you about some of the most common errors.

Conference Room II

Images as beautiful as your words - Photography for Authors

1 hour - Beginner

Nicole Kramer

To remain in the public eye, writers must support multiple social media platforms, and images do that best. We'll create images and experiment with ways to create eye-grabbing content using fast and easy tools you already have. Leave this workshop with post-worthy content!

Conference Room III

Don't Buy a Mansion Just Yet - Managing Your Writing Career for Longevity

1 hour - Intermediate

Stephanie Reisner

Very rarely can authors make money in one genre for an entire career. In this workshop, discover the myriad of ways professional authors can build on, and MAINTAIN a five to six figure writing career for a decade or more.

Conference Room IV

Complications of Culture: Avoiding Cultural Appropriation in the Historical Novel

1 hour - Intermediate

Pamela Nowak

This workshop explores what cultural appropriation is and what it isn't, explores research sources, and discusses how to reconcile differing versions of the truth. It also explores the difficulties in finding cross-cultural voice once the research is done and the writing begins.

Conference Room V

The Writer's Brain Break

1 hour - Beginner

Amy Armstrong

Take some time to de-stress with guided imagery and learn about how to create a self-care plan that incorporates the seven types of rest we all need to feel restored.

Conference Room VI

Create the Writing Life of Your Dreams with the CAN DO Formula

1 hour - Beginner

Claire L. Fishback

Create your writing life! Cultivate a sustainable writing habit without sacrificing the important parts of your life, make the most of your writing time, stop negative thoughts and other interruptions from stealing your time, show up to write no matter how brain dead, tired, or distracted you are!

The advertisement features a dark purple background with a white starburst graphic and the word "VELLUM" in large white letters. Below this, a tablet displays a page from "THE KEY OF THE GARDEN" with a floral illustration and text. To the right, a white envelope with "FOUR martha" written on it is shown. At the bottom, the text "Ebook & Print Easy Formatting On your own" is displayed next to a QR code.

Saturday Morning: 9-9:50 a.m.

Aurora III

PANEL: Censored

1 hour - Beginner

Zl Czupor, Andre Gonzalez, Kelley Lindberg, and Johnny Worthen

Censorship is on the rise. From sensitivity readers, to banned books, to sanitizing classics, the charged political climate is taking a toll on authorship. How is this affecting publishing? What does a writer need to know?

Aurora IV

Screenwriting 101: This Story Would Make a Great Movie!

Second hour

Conference Room I

Success with Standalones

1 hour - Intermediate

Keirsten Modglin

For many authors, we often hear that series are the best (and sometimes only) way to reach readers and build a career. In

The Professional Authors Alliance and PEN Awards

RMFW's Professional Authors Alliance (PAA) is an inclusive, dynamic community for members who are also published authors. Benefits include inclusion in our member book list on our website, an active community forum, event opportunities such as RMFW tables at Fan Expo, possible inclusion in RMFW's "It's a Book" mailer, and opportunities for networking and collaborating with other authors.

To qualify for PAA membership, RMFW members must demonstrate \$250 of royalties or advance payments for traditionally published books or \$1,000 in total retail sales for indie published books.

Once admitted, PAA members are each given a PEN award engraved with their name to celebrate the occasion. For details or to join, email paa@rmfw.org.



this class, you'll learn actionable steps, tips, and tricks to plan, launch, and market standalone novels.

Conference Room II

Using Canva to Up Your Promo Game

1 hour - Advanced

Mariah Ankenman

Ever wonder about those amazing graphics you see authors using to promote their books? Learn how to use Canva to up your promo game and get readers excited about your stories from author Mariah Ankenman.

Conference Room III

Don't Buy a Mansion Just Yet - Managing Your Writing Career for Longevity

Second hour

Conference Room IV

Myths, Ghosts, and Gods: The Divine in Speculative Fiction

1 hour - Beginner

Carol Berg

We'll explore the reasons writers might or might not want to include elements of religion/gods/spirituality in their worldbuilding. We'll cover story elements and how to avoid common pitfalls when developing belief systems that can be very personal to our characters and our readers.

Conference Room V

Viewing Yourself Through the Page: Gaining Perspective for Self-Editing

1 hour - Intermediate

Kendra Griffin

This session will help participants make sound decisions about where to begin editing their WIP and when to ask for help. Most importantly, it will help writers practice some metafictional skills so that we can trick our brains into approaching our own pages with a fresh editing perspective.

Conference Room VI

Opening the Door—Why, When, and How to Write Sex Into Your Stories

1 hour - Beginner

Stacy Gold

Sure, writing sex can be all of that in the beginning. It can also be a ton of fun, and a fantastic tool for deepening your characters and their stories. In this roundtable workshop we'll analyze a few good and bad examples of sex on the page, and I'll share my secrets for writing sex scenes and sexual tension that makes readers salivate.

Saturday Morning: 10-10:50 a.m.

Aurora III

Imagining a world that survives (and thrives) past the climate crisis (Generative Workshop)

1 hour - Beginner

Kate Christensen

The quote “It is easier to imagine the end of the world than imagine the end of capitalism,” is a call to action for writers. Let’s heed it together! Bring your paper and sharpened pencils. Hope for the future is helpful but not required - we’ll create it as we go.

Aurora IV

Writing for Today's Teens

2 hours - Intermediate

Tasha Christensen and Rachel Delaney Craft

How do you write YA when you’re just an A(dult)? In this class, we’ll discuss how to use YA tropes, incorporate diversity, and ensure your slang isn’t dated. We’ll learn how to craft a deep POV and authentic YA voice to give teens the up-close-and-personal reading experience they crave.

Conference Room I

Creating Your New Media Self

1 hour - Beginner

Trai Cartwright

How do you develop the best possible digital storytelling and marketing campaigns to express who you are and connect meaningfully with your audience? In this workshop, we’ll discuss the full range of new media marketing mediums you have available and how very simple it is to get started using them.

Conference Room II

Judging a Book by Its Cover

1 hour - Advanced

Joshua Clark

A book is more than its cover but you might never get the chance to prove that to a reader if they aren't enticed by your cover art. Learn why a good cover is important and what it can do for your book.

Conference Room III

Hard vs Soft Magic Systems

1 hour - Beginner

Ryanne Glenn

Creating your own magical system is a place where your creativity can truly shine; or you might fall into commonly used tropes. By defining magic systems on a spectrum, you can help

advance plots and create compelling themes while keeping your audience riveted.

Conference Room V

It Ain't No Crime

1 hour - Beginner

Shannon Baker

Crime fiction ranks second only to romance as the most popular genre. It’s important to understand craft essentials. We’ll explore what makes a mystery a mystery and readers’ expectations, discuss compelling characters, structuring, pacing, clues and red herrings, point of view, and voice.

Conference Room V

Kill Your Darlings

2 hours - Intermediate

Cynthia Swanson

Stephen King famously said, “Kill your darlings, even when it breaks your egocentric little scribbler’s heart.” We’ll explore writing elements that are painful to remove, although removal can strengthen our writing. If you’re struggling to streamline a manuscript, this workshop is for you!

Conference Room VI

Start Your Publishing Career with Short Fiction

1 hour - Beginner

John M. Campbell

This workshop is for beginning writers interested in using short stories to improve their craft and gain a foothold in publishing. John M. Campbell presents resources for learning your craft, identifying markets for your genre, getting paid, and actually seeing your work in print.

RMFW’s Silent Auction is a long-standing fundraiser for the organization’s youth writer scholarships and general organizational outreach. The tables are stocked with goods and services targeted toward writers and includes memorabilia, gift certificates from sponsors, gift baskets and more. The auction closes at 10 p.m. on Saturday. Winners will be posted on Sunday morning and payment by credit or debit expected by 1 p.m. Sunday.

Saturday Morning: 11-11:50 a.m.

Aurora III

PANEL: First Book Panel

ZJ Czupor, Paulia Hunter, S.M. Dapelo, Kathleen Donnelly, and Natasha Gonzalez

The RMFW President hosts a discussion with members who published their first book in the last year. Learn what the market is like from those currently in the trenches.

Aurora IV

Writing for Today's Teens -

Second hour

Conference Room I

Surviving as an Artist

1 hour - Intermediate

Molly McGhee

In this workshop, McGhee will discuss how to develop and maintain an artistic practice, manage disappointments, track progress, create rituals, and find creative rhythm all in service of completing ambitious projects. McGhee will work with each student to teach them how to tackle common problems like writer's block and the (often suffocating) self-judgment that comes with any creative practice. This talk will be particularly helpful for students who love to write but struggle with their confidence in themselves or feel intimidated by 'ambitious' projects. McGhee will talk about some concrete methods to manage self-doubt, self-hatred, and self-sabotage.

Conference Room II

Working with an Illustrator

1 hour - Beginner

Katy Wood

A lecture on the basics of working with an illustrator for self-publishing projects. How to find illustrators, what sort of contracts to expect, basic pricing guidelines, what information to provide an illustrator, etc.

Conference Room IV

Aliens and Fairies: Writing Believable Non-Human Races

1 hour - Intermediate

TH Leatherman

Aliens always spill their tea because they have flying saucers. Is your alien just another average joe? Is your elf just like every other fairy on the block? Fear not! We have the answer. Come learn how to make your non-human characters pop off the page.

Conference Room V

Kill Your Darlings - Second hour

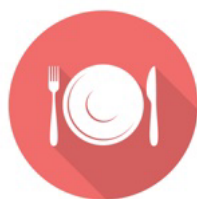
Conference Room VI

Longing Your Short: Tips for Transforming a Short Story into a Novel

1 hour - Intermediate

Bowen Gillings

Short stories provide tight, quick access to characters and narrative. Good ones encapsulate all the working pieces of a novel: voice, setting, story arc, etc. We'll examine what to stretch, what to dig, and what to add to turn your beloved short story into a full length manuscript.



Agent Panel Luncheon

12-1:20 p.m.

Aurora Ballroom



Saturday's buffet lunch will include a panel moderated by RMFW president, ZJ Czupor, and Mira Landry, Conference VIP Liaison. Also, hear from our sister organizations: Pikes Peak Writers and Writing Heights. More door prizes will be announced!

Saturday Afternoon: 1:30-2:20 p.m

Aurora III

PANEL: RMFW Honors Its Founders: An in-person and Zoom panel with the organization's first members

1 hour - Beginner

ZJ Czupor and Pamela Nowak

Happy 40th Anniversary, RMFW! This panel will star several of RMFW's founding members, who will show up in-person and virtually to talk about our history, their careers, and their gathered wisdom.

Aurora IV

Writing War: The Hero's Journey Through Hell

2 hours - Intermediate

Laurie Marr Wasmund

Whether set on Alpha Centauri or 15th century Earth, the war story is a staple of fiction. But what is a war story? Do all war stories, even those opposed to war, glorify it? We'll discuss the elements that define the genre, the problems inherent in it, and the ways to reach a 21st century audience.

Conference Room I

Co-writing: Can it be done and why might you want to?

1 hour - Intermediate

Ashlee Cowles and Danielle Stinson

Co-writing has become popular thanks to the technology that makes it possible. But how do you know if this path is right for you? Team A.D. Rhine will spill all, providing a realistic overview of the benefits and drawbacks, along with practical strategies to make co-writing a rewarding experience.

Conference Room II

Idea to Concept to Premise to Plot

1 hour - Beginner

Angie Hodapp

What is the difference between an idea and a concept? A concept and a premise? Do pantsers (writers who write by the seat of their pants rather than plotting first) really need to worry about developing a concept or premise before they begin drafting, or can they just take their idea and run with it? In this class, we'll demystify these four very different stages of story development with an eye toward helping you write smarter, not harder.

Conference Room III

Word Choice Matters

1 hour - Beginner

Peggy Waide

The suspension of belief a reader makes when reading can be broken with poorly chosen words. On the flip side, the right words will pull your reader deeper into your world. Learn how to make your words story specific so that they evoke emotions and create vivid images with believable characters.

Conference Room IV

How to Write Diverse Characters

1 hour - Intermediate

Caitlin Berve

Today's readers want to read different races, ableness, sexual orientations, and body types. Developing diverse characters outside your life experience can be challenging, fun, and a bit of a risk. So how do you write believable minority characters different from yourself? Find out in this workshop.

Conference Room V

The Art of Writing Romance

1 hour - Beginner

Bernadette Marie

Romance is filled with yummy tropes and reader expectations. As the largest selling genre, we will learn how to write what readers expect.

Conference Room VI

Using Fanfiction to Improve your Writing

1 hour - Beginner

Tasha Christensen

Fanfiction is sometimes looked down on, but it's actually rooted in the most ancient traditions of storytelling. In this class, we'll talk about what fanfic is and how it makes you a better writer. This is a hands-on class with writing exercises, so come prepared for creativity!



Saturday Afternoon: 2:30-3:20 p.m.

Aurora III

Social Justice Techniques in Fiction

2 hours - Beginner

David Heska Wanbli Weiden

In this seminar, social justice literature will be examined as a means for stimulating discussion among readers about issues of inequity, injustice, and inequality in society. Participants will learn practical strategies that can be used to write effectively about social, historical, and political issues while staying focused on the creation of an enthralling and compelling narrative.

Aurora IV

Writing War: The Hero's Journey Through Hell

Second hour

Conference Room I

How to Make a Comic Book and Release It Using Crowdfunding

1 hour - Beginner

Andrew Abarca

Have you always wanted to make your own comic book? This course shows you one method to getting your own single issue comic book created, funded, and printed.

Conference Room II

Finding Your Author Voice (And How It's Different from All the Other Voices in Your Books)

1 hour - Intermediate

Stacy Gold

If you've struggled to find your unique writing voice, or you've ever had people tell you all your characters sound the same, this highly interactive workshop packed with examples and hands-on exercises is for you. Learn easy tips and tricks that work for pantsers, plotters, or anyone in between.

Conference Room III

Don't Bungle the Beginning

1 hour - Intermediate

Susan Mackay Smith

Beginnings are vital. If readers don't get past the first pages, the rest of the novel doesn't matter. The challenge is getting all the necessary elements in the opening simultaneously. Learn to see common errors to avoid them.

Conference Room IV

The Secret Life of Fairy Tales

1 hour - Beginner

Caitlin Berve

To understand the effect fairy tales have today, you have to understand why they were created: secrets, warnings, and entertainment. We will cover the more common fairy tales, their secret messages, and how they have evolved over time.

Conference Room V

Setting as Character

1 hour - Intermediate

Cynthia Swanson

In memorable fiction, a great setting is a character in its own right. How do you make settings unforgettable without getting bogged down in detail? We'll look at novels with memorable settings and dive into key components of creating settings that stay with readers after the last page is turned.

Conference Room VI

Tools of the Pitch: One Line, One Paragraph, One Page

1 hour - Intermediate

Karen A. Lin

Learn to create the most important tools you'll ever use: a captivating log line, an engaging one paragraph summary, and a dynamic one-page synopsis. Summarizing in three different lengths helps you understand your early drafts and tease the tale you've woven to captivate agents and editors.



What is the Jasmine Award?

This service award is named for Jasmine Cresswell, one of the founders of the group now known as RMFW.

Bonus fact: RMFW began in 1983 as a chapter of Romance Writers of America and was founded when it disaffiliated from RWA in 1989.

Saturday Afternoon: 3:30-4:20 p.m.

Aurora III

Social Justice Techniques in Fiction

Second hour

Aurora IV

And...ACTION! Fighting and Fight Scenes 101

2 hours - Beginner

Bowen Gillings

Five-time martial-arts black-belt and award-winning author Bowen Gillings teaches how to write the successful fight scene. Drawing from popular novels, plus role-play and hands-on demonstrations (including audience volunteers!), we'll break down what makes a fight punch off the page.

Conference Room I

Successful Debuts 101 - Avoid Pitfalls and Capitalize on Opportunities

2 hours - Intermediate

Rob Samborn

Are you an indie or small press author gearing up for a debut release? Learn what to do - and what not to do - before a launch.

Conference Room II

Plot Your Story In A Day

1 hour - Beginner

Mariah Ankenman

Do you want to be a plotter or are you a plotter who'd like to hone your plotting skills? Learn from author Mariah Ankenman to plot your basic outline in a day using the W Plot method. Get the bones on the story on the page and avoid writers block.

Conference Room IV

Avoiding the Rabbit Hole: Research in Historical Fiction

1 hour - Beginner

Jason Evans

Do you want to write historical fiction? Don't know where to start? Do you have a great idea but get frustrated with the research? Has the thought of spending money on books to research your novel keeping you from writing it? Then this class is for you! This class is designed to help you guide your research as you write your draft and edit your novel. When we're done, you'll learn what and how to research to get the most appropriate info for your novel.

Conference Room V

Audiobooks really speak to me – How to publish your next book on audio

1 hour - Intermediate

TH Leatherman

You've done what you can to put your books in front of people's eyes, but what about their ears? Audiobooks are a great way to reach your readers on the go. They make your book more accessible. Audiobooks are a great way to reach readers you didn't even know you were missing!

Conference Room VI

Kickstarter for Authors

1 hour - Intermediate

Katy Wood

An introductory lecture for authors on the basics of using Kickstarter to publish their work. Covers the basics of how to plan, market, and execute a crowdfunding campaign, and why crowdfunding may be a good fit.

Saturday Afternoon: 4:30-5:20 p.m.

Aurora III

Healthy Relationships with Writing

1 hour - Beginner

Trai Cartwright

Writing is an internal process filled with rumination, meditation, and magic. It's also entangled with doubt, fear, guilt, and even self-flagellation. We'll look at the nature of our messy relationships, and give insight and ideas for making writing where you connect with the best of your humanity.

Aurora IV

And...ACTION! Fighting and Fight Scenes 101

Second hour

Conference Room I

Successful Debuts 101 - Avoid Pitfalls and Capitalize on Opportunities

Second hour

Conference Room II

S.S.D.D. (Same Story Different Direction)

1 hour - Beginner

Bernadette Marie

They say there are only so many stories out there. So, how do you take the same generic plot and convert it into a Romance, Thriller, or into Science Fiction? Explore the subtle changes that can be made to a plot to fit different genres.

Conference Room IV

Writing Young Adult

1 hour - Beginner

Johnny Worthen

Investigate what makes fiction young adult and also what makes great young adult fiction. From gatekeepers to theme, taboos and responsibilities, it's a time of change and we must embrace it. A class for writers and fans of the genre.

Conference Room V

Writing with a Body Positivity Lens

1 hour - Intermediate

Rachel Dempsey

Do we avoid the f-word? (The three-letter one.) Embrace it? What constitutes body positivity in today's market? This workshop will address current trends in body equity in fiction as well as demonstrate how everything from word choice to world-building has the power to hurt or heal.

Conference Room VI

Copyrights, Trademarks and Protections ... Oh My!

1 hour - Intermediate

Chuck Brownman

Learn the basics of intellectual property law and how to protect the rights to your writing.



Gold Rush Awards Banquet and
Keynote Address by David Heska Wanbli Weiden

6:30-8:30 p.m.

Aurora Ballroom

Saturday evening's banquet will feature the much-awaited announcement of winners in the 2023 Colorado Gold Rush Literary Awards Contest as well as a keynote address by New York Times bestseller David Heska Wanbli Weiden.

- Welcome – Z.J. Czupor
- Jasmine Award announcement
- A Tribute to RMFW's Founders with Suzie Brooks and Pam Nowak
- Colorado Gold Awards - presented by Sue Hinkin & Mindy McIntyre
- Keynote Address – David Heska Wanbli Weiden

Game Night!

8:30-10:30 p.m.

Aurora Ballroom

After Friday's banquet, the conference bookstore expands into a book fair featuring dozens of local RMFW authors. Buy books and get them signed, meet writers you admire, and chat while you partake from the cash bar.

Sunday Morning: 8-8:50 a.m.

Aurora III

Yoga for Writers

1 hour - Beginner

Kate Jonuska

Forget the sticky mat and stretchy pants! This yoga class can be done in your conference clothes and seated in a chair with no previous yoga experience required. Join yoga teacher Kate Jonuska for 50 minutes of stretching and guided meditation geared specifically toward writers of fiction.

Conference Room I

Building a Website in a Weekend for the Technophobic

1 hour - Intermediate

LS Hawker

As an author, having a web presence is crucial in today's online world. Starting a website can be a terrifying thought, especially when you're technophobic. You're not alone. Learn how to create a WordPress website in a weekend without breaking a sweat—or learning how to code.

Conference Room II

Zines: The low-risk way to finding your self-publishing voice

1 hour - Beginner

Kilah Storm

Have you been holding back from self-publishing because you're afraid to use your beloved manuscript as the guinea pig? Zines might be the answer! Discover what a zine is, how easy it is to make one and how they can get you started in marketing, finding your audience and beginning your business.

Conference Room IV

What a Liar! Creating Historical Fiction Characters from Unreliable Sources

1 hour - Intermediate

Pamela Nowak

From research to character development, there is nothing easy about writing about real-life people who were dishonest in their biographies, who hid personal details, or who were dislikeable.

Conference Room VI

Market Your Book with Radio and Podcasts

1 hour - Advanced

Tasha Christensen

Getting on podcasts and radio shows can be an intimidating task. This workshop will show you how to find shows in your niche, how to write an interview pitch, and how to be a memorable and compelling guest. Come learn tricks of the trade from a professional radio producer!

Sunday Morning: 9-9:50 a.m.

Aurora III

PANEL: Independent Publishing – Q&A

1 hour - Intermediate

Andre Gonzalez, TH Leatherman, Stephanie Reisner, Amy Rivers, Bernadette Marie, and ZJ Czupor

Join our panel of professional Independently Published Authors, ask questions, and get valuable inside into what it takes to venture out on your own and publish your work.

Aurora IV

Nothing to Fear: How to Scare Even the Bravest Readers

1 hour - Intermediate

Rachel Dempsey

Every horror/thriller writer dreads the words: "It just wasn't scary." Ensure you'll never hear them again by learning how fear works in the human mind and body and how to translate that feeling to the page with tools like pacing, atmosphere and imagery.

Conference Room I

The Mindful Writer: Techniques for Tapping Into Your Inner Creativity

1 hour - Beginner

Nikki Teropilowski

This class focuses on enhancing writing through mindfulness-based practices. It covers techniques such as creative visualization, manifestation, and flow state, as well as external activities like journaling, meditation, and yoga. Participants will learn how to connect with their intuition, overcome creative blocks, and achieve a state of flow while writing. By the end of the class, participants will have practical skills and strategies to become more mindful and effective writers

Conference Room II

Your Opening Pages: How to Make That First Chapter Stand Out

1 hour - Beginner

Alec Shane

Your opening pages are what agents read first, what acquiring editors read first, and what readers read first. If you want to know what makes a good opener and how to give your book the best chance of that elusive full request, agent Alec Shane will break it down for you. He'll cover what makes for a strong opener, what agents are looking for in opening pages, some pitfalls to avoid, and try to demystify exactly what publishing professionals are thinking when they consider your work.

Sunday Morning: 9-9:50 a.m.

Continued

Conference Room IV

Build an Audience of Superfans

1 hour - Advanced

Kiersten Modglin

We've all heard stories about the elusive "Superfans." They're the readers who buy every book without glancing at the blurb, shout about your work every chance they get, purchase and rock your merch, and look for any opportunity to celebrate your stories. Of course, the biggest question is: how do we find them? In this class, you'll learn how to build an audience of Superfans who will help propel your career to new heights.

Conference Room VI

The Sagging Middle of My Career

1 hour - Advanced

Laura VanArendonk Baugh

You're not a newbie—but you're not quite famous yet. Where do you go from here? We'll talk about setting/re-setting career goals, prioritizing projects, adjusting strategies on the shifting sands of social media, growth beyond "start an email list," and more.

Sunday Morning: 10-10:50 a.m.

Aurora III

PANEL: How AI is Affecting Writers and Writing

1 hour - Beginner

ZJ Czupor, TH Leatherman, Stephanie Reisner, Cath Lauria, and Matthew Woolums Artificial

Intelligence is increasing its presence rapidly. Writers need to understand how it can help and hurt our creativity, productivity and careers.

Aurora IV

Zen Lessons for Writers

1 hour - Beginner

Johnny Worthen

Join author Johnny Worthen for discoveries in eastern philosophy with their application to the life of an author with its many disappointments. Sessions include directed mindfulness meditation and lecture on concepts that directly speak to the writer's journey.

Conference Room I

Methods for Visualizing Structure and Pacing

1 hour - Intermediate

Brenna English-Loeb

Using tools like outlining and synopses in new ways, learn how to better visualize your novel's pacing and structure to make it an even more engaging read. We will discuss how to group the action by section, character and theme to better identify weak spots and under-utilized connections. Please bring pen and paper and any working outline or synopsis you currently have.

Conference Room II

Querying Writer Support Group

1 hour - Intermediate

Amber Herbert

Are you nervous about your pitch appointment? Would you like to talk to other writers about the query trenches, imposter syndrome, or the highs and lows of waiting for that full request or offer of rep? Join us for an informal, attendee-driven discussion.

Conference Room IV

Optimizing Your Amazon Sales Page

1 hour - Advanced

Andre Gonzalez

For many authors, sales are lost on the final stage of the book buying process: the Amazon sales page. We will go section by section of the busy Amazon book page, and dive into what we can do (and can't do) to make the best impression on book shoppers, giving them that final nudge to buy your book!

Conference Room VI

It's All About You: Author Branding Made Less Terrifying

1 hour - Advanced

Amy Rivers

Who knew that writing a book meant you'd have to talk about yourself and your work? All. The. Time. Whether you publish traditionally or independently, you'll be doing a lot of marketing and promotion—not just for your work but also for yourself.

Gold Rush Winners Brunch

11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Aurora Ballroom

Cap off your conference experience at Sunday's brunch, which includes live readings from our Colorado Gold Rush Contest winners and a closing address from RMFW president Z.J. Czuror. Also, an impressive, final door prize: a free conference registration for 2024!



- Welcoming sibling organizations
- Gold Nugget and Jasmine awards
- Silent auction results with Bernadette Soehner
- Colorado Gold Rush Winners' Readings
- Closing Statements and 2024 Conference Giveaway



2023 Colorado Gold Rush Literary Awards

Contest Finalists

Sci-Fi, Fantasy, Speculative Fiction, Horror

- Super Melvin by Duston Anderten
- The Spinster Sisters by Tiffany Coleman
- Cratered by CR Hodges

Mainstream, Literary

- Discipline by Rick Gustafson
- The Deadline by Susie Lindau
- Perfect Fifth by Jennifer & Jessica Slee

Women's Fiction, Romance

- The Magical Art of Seduction by Evon Davis
- Closer Than You Know by Mindy Kinnaman
- Liz Halbert's Next Act by Kim O'Brien

Mystery, Thriller

- Speaking in Tongues by D Gonzales Montano
- Killing Every Alice by JV Reed
- What Survives the Fire by Maria St Louis Sanchez

YA, Middle Grade

- Violet Hart and the Chronicles of Ever by Heidi Kraakevik
- Wrecked Upon These Shores by Kelley JP Lindberg
- Middle of Somewhere by Ann Thurber



RMFW's contest for unpublished writers, the Gold Rush Literary Awards, was born in 1989/90 with four categories: romance, sci-fi, fantasy, and mainstream, and was established to generate funding for organizational programming. The categories have changed along with the industry, but the contest is judged first by RMFW members and then by VIP judges chosen for their expertise in their category. Winners receive \$150, an official certificate, a trophy, and a 10-page reading of their work during a conference luncheon on Sunday. Finalists receive \$50 and an official certificate. Both receive a secondary pitch session at the conference with a participating agent or editor.

Conference Presenters

Conference Special Guest, Molly McGhee



Molly McGhee writes fiction, essays, and teaches in the undergraduate creative writing department at Columbia University. Her debut novel, *Jonathan Abernathy You Are Kind*, is forthcoming from Astra House in late 2023. In addition to writing, Molly has worked in the editorial and digital departments of *Mc-*

Sweeney's and *The Believer* as well as MCD and FSG Originals and as an assistant editor at Diane Williams's *NOON*. Most recently, Molly worked in the editorial department of *Tor* on *The Tor Essentials* series and the instant *New York Times* Bestselling *Atlas Six* series. Details: www.mollymcghee.com.

Andrew Abarca is an engineer by trade working on *Worlds of Fire and Glass*, a funny, riveting YA urban fantasy about a young hard-of-hearing girl trying to prove to herself that she can save her best friend from evil forces in parallel dimensions. Andrew has been reading and learning the craft of writing for five years and likes to write Sci-Fi, mythology, and fantasy in the adult, YA, and MG genres. He lives with his wife and three Boston Terriers in Castle Rock, Colorado. Details: www.apoapsu.com

Bestselling author **Mariah Ankenman** lives in the beautiful Rocky Mountains with her two rambunctious children and loving spouse who is her own personal spell checker when her dyslexia gets the best of her. She loves sharing the skills she's learned over the years to help her fellow authors. To learn more about Mariah and her books follow her on social media or sign up for her newsletter. Details: www.mariahankenman.com

Amy Armstrong loves to dabble with ideas and occasionally gets a good story out of her dabbles. Currently, Amy hosts a monthly YouTube show called *Stories Live!* which features authors reading their own work. Amy managed social media for Pikes Peak Writers and received the Volunteer of the Year Award. She often moderates and sits on panels at MileHi Con, and has presented on grief in story development in the past for RMFW. She writes humorous and salty women's fiction between glasses of wine by night and is a psychotherapist by day. Details: www.amyarmstronglpc.com

Shannon Baker is proud to have been named Writer of the Year by Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers...twice. She writes

mysteries set in the iconic landscapes of the American West, from the Colorado Rockies to the Nebraska prairies, to the deserts of southern Arizona, where she's roamed in rafts and kayaks, backpacked, hiked, cycled, and skied. Despite nearly daily declarations she's giving up writing forever, Baker managed to have published over fourteen novels in three mystery series, two stand-alone suspenses, and a few contemporary romances. She might have moved to the desert on the edge of Tucson, but RMFW will always be her writing family. Details: www.shannon-baker.com

Carol Berg writes epic, mythic, and adventure fantasy novels and short fiction under her own name and her pseudonym, Cate Glass. Her eighteen novels have won national and international awards, including four Colorado Book Awards and the Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Adult Literature. Carol is a regular presenter at writers' conferences and fantasy/sf conventions and is a two-time Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers Writer of the Year. All of this is amazing to a former software engineer who majored in math at Rice University and computer science at the University of Colorado to avoid writing papers. Carol/Cate's most recent work is *A Summoning of Demons*. She lives in Colorado in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Details: www.carolberg.com

Becoming an "overnight writing sensation" after twenty-five-plus years, **Chuck Brownman's** short crime fiction has been published in several anthologies, including the *Eyes of Texas* (Down & Out Press) and Volumes 4 and 5 of the annual *Death Edge Tales* anthology. He's a past winner of the Arizona Mystery Writers Short Story Contest, and was a finalist in the Criminal Element.com short fiction contest. In addition to "Shotgun Honey," his latest stories appear in the *Mysteries to Die for* podcast/anthology (tgwolffcom.wordpress.com) and on the Kings River Life website (www.kingsriverlife.com).

John M. Campbell joined RMFW in 2016 and has been a member of the Aurora critique group ever since. The group offered valuable critiques which improved his writing and in 2021, his short story, "The Tiger and the Waif," won first place in the Writers of the Future contest for the fourth quarter of 2020. As a contest winner, he received a \$1000 prize and earned a spot in the week-long writer's workshop in Hollywood with airfare and hotel paid for. He joined other winners he met at that event to form a publishing company called Calendar of Fools. They created a Kickstarter project to fund their first book, an anthology of short stories called "Inner Workings." In 2022, his story, "Racing the Marineris," was published in the RMFW anthology, *Bizarre Bazaar*. Details: www.JohnMCampbell.com

Trai Cartwright, MFA, is a 30-year entertainment industry veteran and creative writing specialist, and has stepped into the world of psychic mediumship. She teaches, produces, and writes screenplays, and can be found at www.craftwrite.com. While in Los Angeles, she was a screenwriter, independent film producer, and story consultant and development executive for HBO, Paramount Pictures, Universal Studios, New Lines Cinema, and 20th Century Fox. Trai currently teaches screenwriting and creative entrepreneurship for University of Denver's low-residency master's programs, writers groups, conferences and cons, and one-on-one as a development and story editor. She is the producer of several short-form projects and four independent films. She also served as the President of Women in Film and Media Colorado, and currently runs the Denver Screenwriters Meetup (450 members). She also shows people their past lives, clears their stubborn energies and heals their houses, all of which opens the channels to enhanced creativity. Details: www.craftwrite.com

Kate Christensen is a bilingual speech language pathologist, climate activist and writer. She lives in Colorado with her husband, two kids, a high-maintenance dog, six chickens, and a wild garden. I received my master's degree from the University of Colorado in 2005. In 2019 I graduated from the Lighthouse Writers Workshop Book Project. Her joy comes when she can

bridge her varying interests, like helping other speech therapists make the connection between environmental justice and child language development, or gardening with her kids while making up silly poems about worm poop. She's emerging from the darkness of climate despair and writing towards a future where all beings thrive. The first step in building a habitable future is imagining it.

Tasha Christensen believes the best love stories are found in the geekiest places. Her *Itaska High* series chronicles the romantic shenanigans of a high school marching band in Minnesota. When not composing tuba closet make-out scenes, she enjoys performing music, getting way too competitive about board games, and exploring the gorgeous Rocky Mountains. Tasha lives with her husband, daughters, and an overly affectionate dog named after her favorite *Stranger Things* character. Details: www.tashachristensen.com

Josh Clark is a writer, graphic designer, and bookseller. His short fiction has been published by Pikes Peak Writers, Black Hare Press, Trembling with Fear, and received a Silver Honorable Mention in the Writers of the Future Contest. His life is filled with words professionally and recreationally, so if he's not writing or reading you're likely to find him at author events, science fiction conventions, writing conferences, or out

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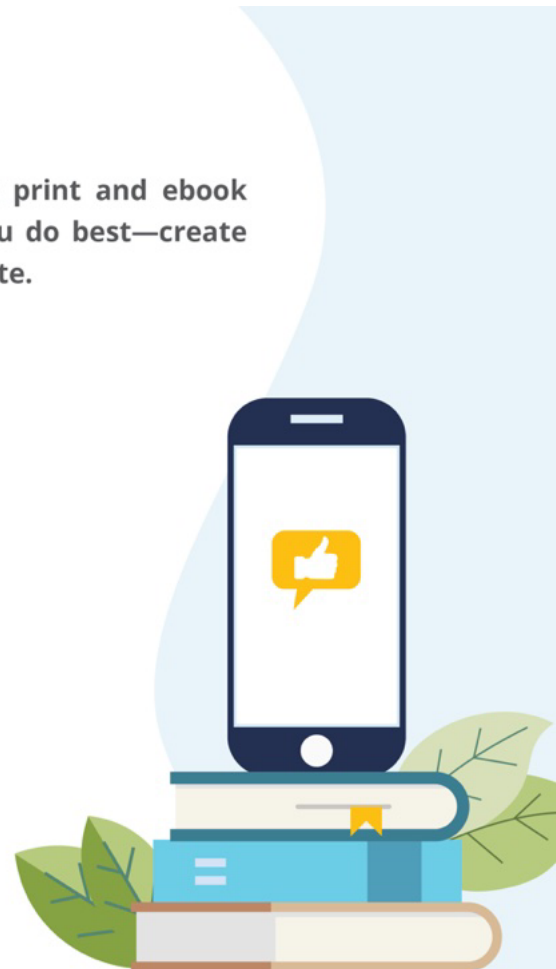


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in nature brainstorming his next novel. You can find him on Twitter @joshofclark.

Rachel Delaney Craft writes YA, MG, and speculative fiction. Her short stories have appeared in publications such as Cricket, Spider, and Cast of Wonders, and her novels have won the Colorado Gold and Zebulon Contests. She also co-edited RMFW's 2020 anthology, *Wild*, a finalist for the Colorado Book Award. She lives and writes in Colorado with two dogs and a succulent collection that is slowly taking over her house. Find her on Twitter @RDCwrites or at www.racheldelaneycraft.com.

Rachel Dempsey is a writer of horror, mystery and thrillers living in Denver. Her short fiction appears or is forthcoming from Shacklebound Books, Brigids Gate Press, Timber Ghost Press and Twenty Bellows. She holds a BFA in Drama and English from NYU'S Tisch, a Master's in Journalism from Georgetown and is pursuing an MFA in Creative Writing from Regis.

Award-winning author **Kathleen Donnelly** has been a handler for Sherlock Hounds Detection Canines—a Colorado-based narcotics K-9 company—since 2005. Enjoying the work and partnership with the dogs, in 2010 Kathleen became part-owner in the company. She loves crafting realism into her fictional stories from her dog-handling experience. Along with working dogs, Kathleen loves and owns two horses. Her love of the mountains came from growing up in Colorado where her father worked for the U.S. Forest Service. She has a B.A. in Journalism from Colorado State University and formerly wrote for *The Berthoud Weekly Surveyor* where she won a Colorado Press Award. Her debut novel, *Chasing Justice*, won a Best Book Award from the American Book Fest. Kathleen lives in Colorado with her husband and all their four-legged friends. Details: www.kathleendonnelly.com.

Sue Duff is an author and award-winning, best-selling author of 11 titles including a five book Fantasy/Sci Fi series *The Weir Chronicles*, has contributed to four anthologies including RMFW's *False Faces*, and has a growing list of published short stories. She has Indie published under CrossWinds Publishing and Wicked Ink Books. Details: www.sueduff.com.

Jason Henry Evans is from Southern California, graduating from UC Santa Barbara in 1996. He moved with his wife to Denver in 2004. After discovering a passion for storytelling, Jason had his first short story published in 2014. Eight short stories, four novels, an editor's credit on an anthology, as well as a collection of short stories of his own, Jason continues to write and publish. In addition, blogged for Pikes Peak Writers and RMFW, while becoming a fixture at local conventions as a panelist. From 2016 to 2018 Jason was the President of Shiny Garden Non-Profit Corporation, an organization that produced

three local conventions: Myth & Legends Con, WhimsyCon, and Hexacon. Details: www.jasonhenryevans.com.

Claire L. Fishback is an author coach and story strategist, a published author, project manager, amazing wife, and dog mom. When not helping other busy authors create the writing lives of their dreams, she writes horror (and more-er) in the Rocky Mountain foothills where she lives with her husband and their pit bull mix, Kira. Details: www.clairefishback.com

Bowen Gillings is an Amazon.com bestselling and award-winning author writing to bring fun back to fiction. His latest release is the humorous paranormal thriller, *Exceptionals*. Bowen has been featured in *Journeys into Possibility* and *Fresh Starts* anthologies, *Allegory* e-zine, and on *Stories Live!* and *Stark Reflections on Writing and Publishing* YouTube channels. Also, he's facilitated workshops for RMFW and Pikes Peak Writers. He is an active member of both organizations plus The League of Utah Writers. Bowen holds five martial arts black belts, is an Army veteran, loves travel, cooking, and a fine adult beverage. Details: www.storiesbybowen.com

Ryanne Glenn started writing short stories when she was ten and was first published in Fruita's local newspaper. She took her first creative writing class in high school, and was inspired to expand her writing into poetry and longer stories. After struggling with depression in her first year at college, she turned back to writing as a healthy outlet for her emotions. She wants to write strong female role models and is excited to share her stories with the world. Ryanne Glenn works in Denver for a digital pathology company. She loves to golf, though after playing for twelve years, her handicap should be much lower than it is. Between writing and classes, she often visits her hometown of Fruita, Colorado to spend time with her family and dog, Captain Carl. Details: www.ryanneglenn.com

Award-winning outdoor romance author **Stacy Gold** would rather be in the middle of nowhere than almost anywhere else. She's run more than 50 rivers in three countries, been heli-dropped into remote ski huts, worked as a ranger for the U.S.D.A. Forest Service, and spent years as a commercial river guide and whitewater kayak instructor. A reformed copywriter and marketing strategist, her last "real job" was Communications Director for a state-wide mountain biking non-profit. When she's not busy playing in the mountains with her husband and happy dogs, Ms. Gold writes about independent, badass women finding love and adventure in the great outdoors. Her latest release, *Wild at Heart*, was a 2022 *Publishers Weekly* Booklife Prize finalist. Details: www.stacygold.com

Andre Gonzalez is the author of all things thriller and horror. He has penned the *Wealth of Time* series and the *Insanity* trilogy. You'll likely find him buried under a long to-do list or his



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three young (and energetic) children. Details: www.andregonzalez.net

Kendra Griffin is a professor, developmental editor, and author who has never met a good dog or a good underdog she didn't love. Kendra has an MA in literature, teaches creative writing for Aims Community College, is a member of RMFW and Borderlands Writers, and edits for Status Quill. She coaches authors of all levels through community programs, local libraries, and professional conferences. Kendra has indie-published three teen novels and currently pens several popular serials on Amazon Vella. Details: www.kendragriffin.com

LS Hawker is the author of the thrillers *The Drowning Game*, *Body and Bone*, *End of the Road*, and *The Throwaways*. *The Drowning Game* is a *USA Today* bestseller and finalist in the ITW Thriller Awards in the Best First Novel category. Her novels have been translated into eight languages. Hawker grew up in suburban Denver and received her B.S. in journalism from the University of Kansas. She had a radio show called "People Are So Stupid," produced fitness videos, and outfitted airports and travel agencies with computer equipment for a major airline. Her extensive media background includes everything from public affairs director at a Denver radio station to television sports intern to website designer. She's got a hilarious trophy

husband, two brilliant daughters, and a massive music collection. She lives in Colorado but considers Kansas her spiritual homeland. Details: www.lshawker.com

Amber Herbert is a published author from Colorado Springs. She holds a BA in English Literature and has worked as an editor for six years. She writes adult high fantasy, science fiction, horror, and contemporary YA. *Lipstick Covered Magnet* was her first novel. She is currently querying her sophomore book, *After Wendy*, and drafting up the first book in her *Doors of Annwyn* trilogy. Details: www.amberherbert.com

Traci L Jones was raised in Denver, Colorado. She has a BA in Psychology from Pomona College and a M.S. in Advertising University of Denver. Her debut novel, *Standing Against the Wind*, was published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux (FSG) in 2006 and won the Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent Award in 2007. FSG would also publish *Finding My Place* (2010) and *Silhouetted by the Blue* (2011). In 2018 she signed with Metamorphosis Literary Agency. Her fourth book, *Ransoming the Captive*, was published by Black Rose Writing in 2022. In 2016, Jones joined the Mile Hi MFA in Creative Writing program at Regis University in Denver, Colorado, where she teaches young adult fiction. In the summer of 2020, she joined Lighthouse Writers Workshop as a YA instructor. She also teaches a YA literature and pop culture class for the University of Colorado at Denver Honors Program. Details: www.traciljones.com

In addition to serving as current RMFW Conference Co-Chair, **Kate Jonuska** is a freelance writer, indie author, and part-time yoga teacher based in Boulder, CO. Her novel, *Transference*, was a finalist for the BookLife Prize and a Denver Post Staff Pick, and she often teaches workshops based on her non-fiction book, *The Dictionary of Fiction Critique*, at Cons and conferences. Find out more at katejonuska.com.

Nicole Kramer is a YA Author in the query trenches with her first novel and working through revisions on her second. She is an alumni of Writing With the Soul and she holds a Masters of Communications and Media Management from Colorado State University. She teaches about social media strategy, content creation, and conviction at conferences, workshops, and retreats. Details: www.nkramerwrites.com

Cath Lauria is a full-time author, editor, and nerd. With over fifty publications under her belt in every genre from romance (as Cari Z) to sci-fi to non-fiction, she's worked through good times, bad times, and even really weird times like we're in right now. As an IP writer, she's worked with Marvel Entertainment, CMON Games, and Arkham Horror, among others. Her latest novel, *Silver Sable: Payback*, came out in March of 2023. Details: www.authorcariz.com

T.H. Leatherman is a writer and humorist from Firestone, Colorado. He enjoys science fiction, fantasy, puns (lots of puns), winemaking, and the Rocky Mountain lifestyle. When not busy writing his next book, he can be found hiking with his wife and two sons or walking his rescued dogs. He has worked as a stockbroker, street performer, and volunteer wrangler. He graduated Summa Cum Laude from Regis University with a degree in Business Management and a minor in Psychology. Details: www.thleatherman.com

Karen A. Lin is a hopeless foodie, award-winning novelist, produced screenwriter and writing coach. Many of her stories are inspired by her experience marrying into a Taiwanese family. *Mu Shu Mac & Cheese* and *American Moon: A Chinese Immigrant Story* are available on Amazon. She, her husband, and their two boys have traveled the world as she researches recipes for a literary cookbook. She teaches for Princess and Celebrity cruise lines and writers conferences in Colorado where she's part of a rich author community. Details: www.karenalbrightlin.com

Kelley J. P. Lindberg writes award-winning fiction for adults and young adults, with stories appearing in literary magazines such as *The Baltimore Review* and *The Citron Review*, anthologies such as RMFW's *Bizarre Bazaar* and *Pikes Peak Writers' Journey into Possibility*, and in the Tellables app for the Amazon Alexa platform. She loves talking about writing with other writers and book lovers, and she leaves her audiences with plenty of "takeaway" information and tips they can use the very next day. When she isn't writing from her home in Colorado, she's traveling as far and as often as she can. Visit her website and blog (and sign up for her newsletter) at www.KelleyLindberg.com.



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Bestselling Author **Bernadette Marie** writes contemporary romances and believes in *Happily Ever After*. The married mother of five believes in love at first sight, quick love, and second chances. An avid martial artist, Bernadette Marie is a certified instructor and holds a second-degree black belt in Tang Soo Do. She loves Tai Chi, traveling to Disney parks, and having lunch with friends. When not writing, or running her own publishing house, Bernadette is probably immersed in a Rom Com, from which she will often quote one-liners. Details: www.bernadette Marie.com

Gary McBride founded and leads Writers Who Read, a monthly workshop for writers in Boulder that by September 2023 will be 53 books and six years old. The group performs Literary Forensics analytical reading on novels published within the past 18 months in order to learn about how they were written in order to apply those techniques to their own writing. Details: www.garyalanmcbride.com/literary-forensics.

Courtney E. Morgan is the author of *The Seven Autopsies of Nora Hanneman*, a finalist for the Ronald Sukenick Innovative Fiction Award. Her writing has also appeared in *Pleiades*, *Lunch Ticket*, *American Book Review*, and others. She is the founding editor of *The Thought Erotic* literary journal on sexuality and gender. Morgan received her MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Colorado, Boulder, where she has also taught. She currently teaches at Lighthouse Writers Workshop, as well as at outreach writing programs in local homeless shelters, hospitals and libraries. She is a writing and creativity coach and teaches personalized in-person and online creativity and writing courses. Morgan is also the Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director of the nonprofit, Sidewalk Poets, bringing empowerment- and healing-oriented writing and storytelling workshops to underserved populations. She is currently working on a literary speculative novel. Details: www.courtneymorgan.com

Pamela Nowak's historical fiction tells the stories of real women whose stories have been forgotten via a deft combination of research and character development. She's won a Will Rogers Gold Medallion and a Laramie Award as well

as being a dual Feathered Quill finalist and a finalist for the NM-AZ Book Award. Her historical romance novels have garnered critical acclaim for her ability to weave fictional relationship stories into historical settings and events and have been awarded a Colorado Book Award, multiple HOLT Medallion Awards, and a WILLA Finalist Award. Pam was also honored as the RMFW Writer of the Year. She has a B.A. in history, is a member of the Paper Lantern Writers, and works part-time as the Executive Director of the Women's Fiction Writers Association. Details: www.pamelanowak.com

Stephanie Reisner makes her living as a full-time writer/publisher and is published both traditionally and independently, but with focus on her successful indie career. With four pen names, she has over 40 published novels in various genres to her credit and even more novellas and short stories. She is the author of the independently published, bestselling *Gilded Lily* series, recently rebranded as the *Doms of Black Lily* series. She is also multi-published in both shorter fiction and non-fiction (with over 50 non-fiction books to her credit). Most of her work is independently published. In 2018, her independent novel *Thirteen Covens: Bloodlines Part One* was a CIPA EVVY Award Winner (2nd Place/Horror) and she is the RMFW 2019-2020 Independent Writer of the Year award recipient. Her books have been nominated for numerous awards and she has a B.A. in Creative Writing from MSUD. She also runs Darkerwood Publishing Group, a micro-press that publishes six additional authors under two successful imprints, DB Publishing (non-fiction) and Midnight Fantasy Press (steamy romance fiction). Details: www.sjreisner.com

A. D. Rhine is the pseudonym of Ashlee Cowles and Danielle Stinson. The authors are united by their military "brat" upbringing, childhood friendship spanning two decades, and love of classical literature. Ashlee holds graduate degrees in medieval history from the University of St. Andrews and theological studies from Duke University. Danielle holds a master of arts in law and diplomacy from Tufts University. Their adult debut *Horses of Fire* is the book they have always dreamt of writing together. Details: www.adrhine.com

Amy Rivers is an award-winning novelist, as well as the Director of Writing Heights Writers Association. She was named 2021 Indie Author of the Year by the Indie Author Project. Her psychological suspense novels incorporate important social issues with a focus on the complexities of human behavior. Her novel, *Stumble & Fall*, is the second book in the *A Legacy of Silence* series. Amy was raised in New Mexico and now lives in Colorado with her husband and children. Details: www.amyrivers.com

Rob Samborn is an award-winning novelist of bestselling historical thrillers, including *The Prisoner of Paradise*, *Painter of the Damned* and *The Swordsman of Venice*. In addition to

being a novelist, Rob is a screenwriter, entrepreneur, and avid traveler. He's been to forty countries, lived in five of them (including Italy) and studied nine languages. As a restless spirit who can't remember the last time he was bored, Rob is on a quest to explore the intricacies of our world and try his hand at a multitude of crafts; he's also an accomplished artist and musician, as well as a budding furniture maker. A native New Yorker who lived in Los Angeles for twenty years, he now makes his home in Denver with his family.

Susan Mackay Smith a.k.a. Mackay Wood, a.k.a. Conan the Grammarian. Susan has been RMFW's contest chair, critique chair, anthology editor for *Broken Links, Mended Lives* (with Jeanne C. Stein and Janet Lane), and president. For a decade, she wrote "Conan the Grammarian" for the *Rocky Mountain Writer*, the then-monthly newsletter. She won the Jasmine Award in 2009 and was honored as a Guiding Member in 2019.

Mark Stevens is the author of *The Fireballer* and five books in The Allison Coil Mystery Series, host of the Rocky Mountain Writer podcast, and previous RMFW Writer of the Year (2016). Details: www.writermarkstevens.com

Kilah Storm is an author, illustrator and professional puppeteer. She has published a zine collection titled *The Canine Bible* and has hundreds of fans who follow her fan fiction *Avatar: Strife and Harmony*. She has built her fan base through fan fiction, zines and puppetry and has been able to take her stories from the Denver Performing Arts Center to comic cons in multiple different states. When not writing or storyboarding her next puppet script, she can be found working at her local bookstore, hiking with her husband and dog or drinking tea. Details: www.kilahstorm.com

Cynthia Swanson is the Denver-based author of the psychological suspense novels *The Bookseller* and *The Glass Forest*. An Indie Next selection, New York Times bestseller, and winner of the WILLA Literary Award, *The Bookseller* is slated to be a motion picture produced by Julia Roberts. Cynthia's second novel, *The Glass Forest*, was noted in Forbes as being one of "Five Novels with a Remarkably Strong Sense of Place." Cynthia's work has been translated into 18 languages. Cynthia is also the editor of the anthology *Denver Noir*, which features dark, morally ambiguous stories set in and around Denver, written by 14 notable literary and mystery authors. Find Cynthia online at www.cynthiaswansonauthor.com and follow her on Facebook (Cynthia Swanson, Author) and Instagram ([cynswanauthor](https://www.instagram.com/cynswanauthor)).

Tiffany Quay Tyson is an award-winning novelist, humor writer, and teacher. She is the author of two novels including *The Past is Never*, winner of the Willie Morris Award for Southern Fiction, the Janet Heidinger Kafka Prize, the Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters Award for Fiction, and the

Mississippi Author Award. Her debut novel, *Three Rivers*, was published in 2015 and was a finalist for the Colorado Book Award and the Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters Award for Fiction. Humor pieces appear in *McSweeney's Internet Tendency*, *The Rumpus* "Funny Women" column, *The Belladonna Comedy*, *The Establishment*, *Slackjaw*, and more. Shorter fiction can be found at *SmokeLong Quarterly*, *The Ilanot Review*, *The Tulane Review*, and elsewhere. Tiffany is a native of Jackson, Mississippi. She is a faculty member at Lighthouse Writers Workshop and was the recipient of the Beacon Award for Teaching Excellence in 2021. She currently lives in Denver, Colorado. Details: www.tiffanyquaytyson.com

Laura VanArendonk Baugh writes award-winning fantasy of many flavors as well as non-fiction. She has summited extinct, dormant, and active volcanoes, but none has yet accepted her sacrifice. She lives in Indiana where she enjoys Dobermans, travel, fair-trade chocolate, and making her imaginary friends fight one another for her own amusement. Find her at www.LauraVAB.com.

#1 Amazon bestselling author **Peggy Waide** entered her first book in the Colorado Gold. The editor offered a contract. She has published four romances with Dorchester. Montlake now publishes her books. She is shopping an amateur sleuth and contemporary romance. She's also been a trainer, coach and speaker.

Laurie Marr Wasmund has worked as an editor, community college instructor, and writing workshop presenter. Her short stories have appeared in magazines such as *Cimarron Review* and *Weber Studies*. She is the author of *My Heart Lies Here*, a novel of the Ludlow Massacre; *Clean Cut: A Romance of the Western Heart*; and the *White Winter* trilogy. The third book of the Trilogy, *To Walk Humbly*, was a 2020 finalist for the Mainstream/Literary award from the Colorado Authors League. It also received a 2020 EVVY third-place award in Historical Fiction from the Colorado Independent Publishers Association. Laurie is currently the Vice President of Colorado Authors League. Details: www.lauriemarrwasmund.com

Rachel Weaver is the author of the novel *Point of Direction*, which *Oprah Magazine* named a Top Ten Book to Pick Up Now. *Point of Direction* was chosen by the American Booksellers Association as a Top Ten Debut for Spring 2014, by IndieBound as an Indie Next List Pick, by *Yoga Journal* as one of their Top Five Suggested Summer Reads and won the 2015 Willa Cather Award for Fiction. Prior to earning her MFA in Writing and Poetics from Naropa University, Rachel worked for the Forest Service in Alaska studying bears, raptors and songbirds. She is on faculty at Regis University's low-residency MFA program, and at Lighthouse Writers Workshop where she won the Beacon Award for Teaching Excellence in 2018. Her work has appeared in *The Sun*, *Gettysburg Review*, *CutBank*, *Blue Mesa*

Review, *River Teeth*, *Alaska Women Speak* and *Fly Fishing New England*. Details: www.rachelweaver.net

Katy L. Wood is a queer author and illustrator from Colorado. She does a mix of traditional and self-publishing. Details: www.katy-l-wood.com

Johnny Worthen is an award-winning, multiple-genre, tie-dye-wearing author, voyager, and damn fine human being! Trained in literary criticism and cultural studies, he writes upmarket fiction, long and short, mentors others where he can, and teaches writing at the University of Utah. His best-selling science fiction series beginning with *Of Kings, Queens & Colonies*, and now with *Of Civilized Saved & Savages* is an epic tale in the vein of Frank Herbert's *Dune*. It is available from Flame Tree Press. Like Johnny's many other titles these are available wherever better books are sold. Details: www.johnnyworthen.com



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The RMFW Colorado Gold Writers Conference is dedicated to providing an inclusive, harassment-free conference experience for everyone regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, age, disability, physical appearance, level of education, or writing experience. We do not tolerate harassment of conference participants in any form. Conference participants violating these rules may be sanctioned or expelled from the conference without a refund at the discretion of the conference organizers.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- Offensive verbal comments or behavior counter to the inclusive spirit of Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers
- Sustained disruption of talks or other events
- Inappropriate physical contact and/or unwelcome attention
- Deliberate intimidation, stalking, or following
- Harassing photography or recording
- Advocating for, or encouraging, any of the above behaviors

Participants asked to stop any harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately. Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers has a zero-tolerance policy. If a participant engages in harassing behavior, Colorado Gold Writers Conference staff retain the right to take any action they deem appropriate, including warning the offender or immediate expulsion from the premises (including virtual platforms) with no refund.

If you are being harassed, notice that someone else is being harassed, or have any other concerns, please contact a member of the Colorado Gold Writers Conference staff immediately. Such staff can be identified on name badges and will make their appearance known/visible on any online platform. You can make a personal report by contacting a Colorado Gold Writers Contest staff member or emailing conference@rmfw.org. This email account will be continuously monitored for the duration of the event.

The Colorado Gold Writers Conference staff will be happy to help participants contact hotel/venue security or local law enforcement, provide security, or otherwise assist those experiencing harassment to feel safe for the duration of the conference. We appreciate your attendance, and more importantly, we value your safety and comfort.

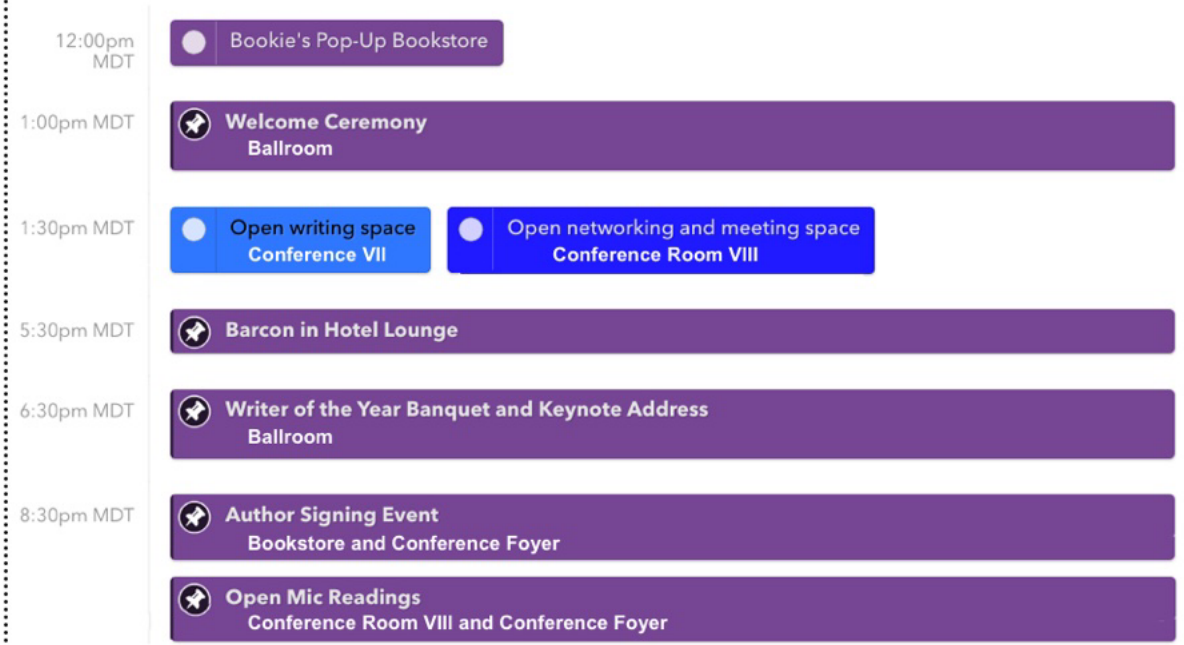
This code of conduct applies to all official Colorado Gold Writers Conference and event spaces (virtual and live), including registration, panels, meetings, book room, hospitality suite, website, and our social media accounts. The code also applies to social events, such as receptions, breakfasts/lunches, ceremonies, auctions, and book signings.

General Programming

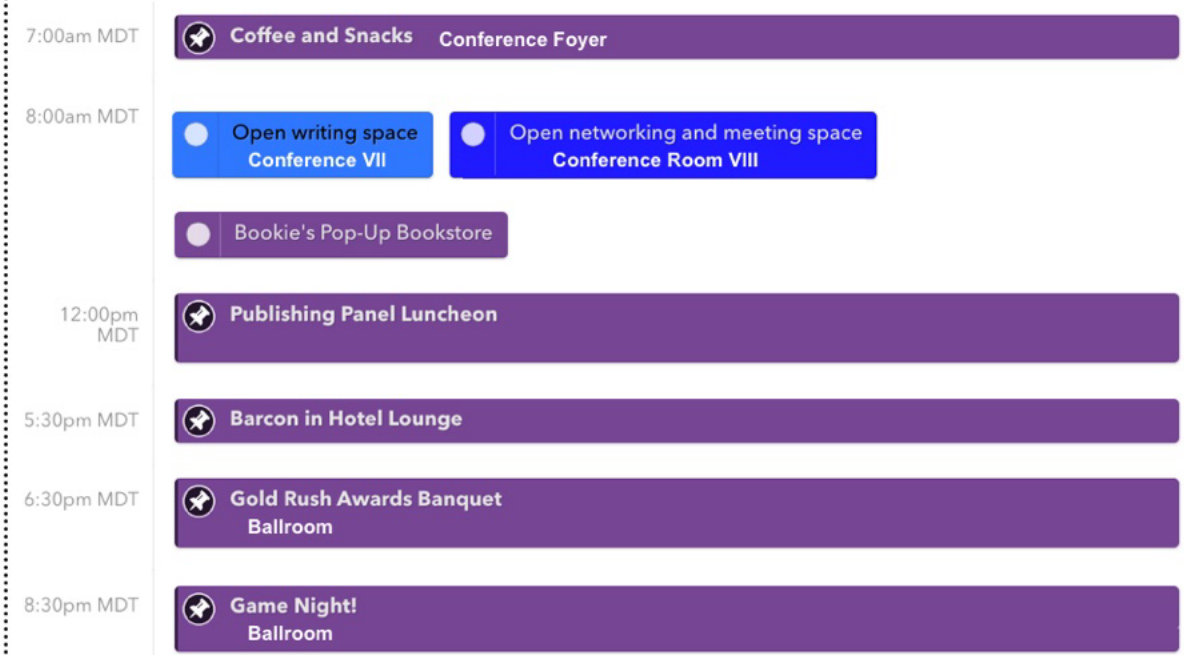
Remember:
A detailed,
sortable, visual
schedule is
available online
or on your
device via:



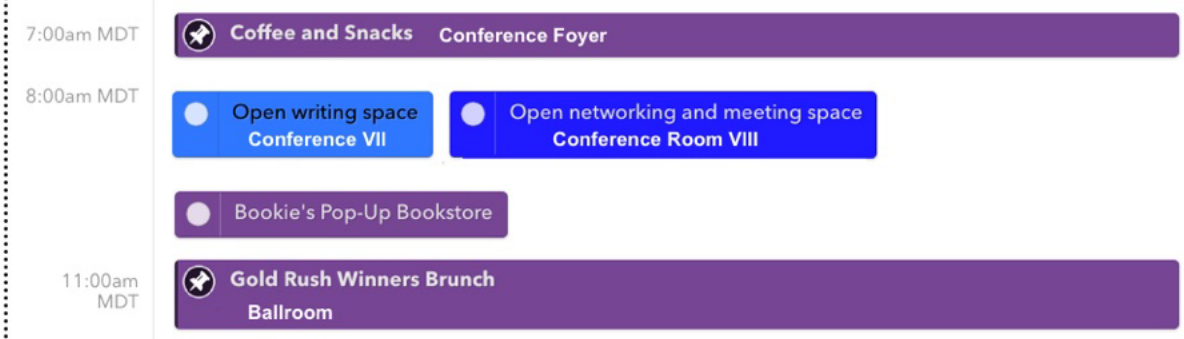
Friday, September 8



Saturday, September 9

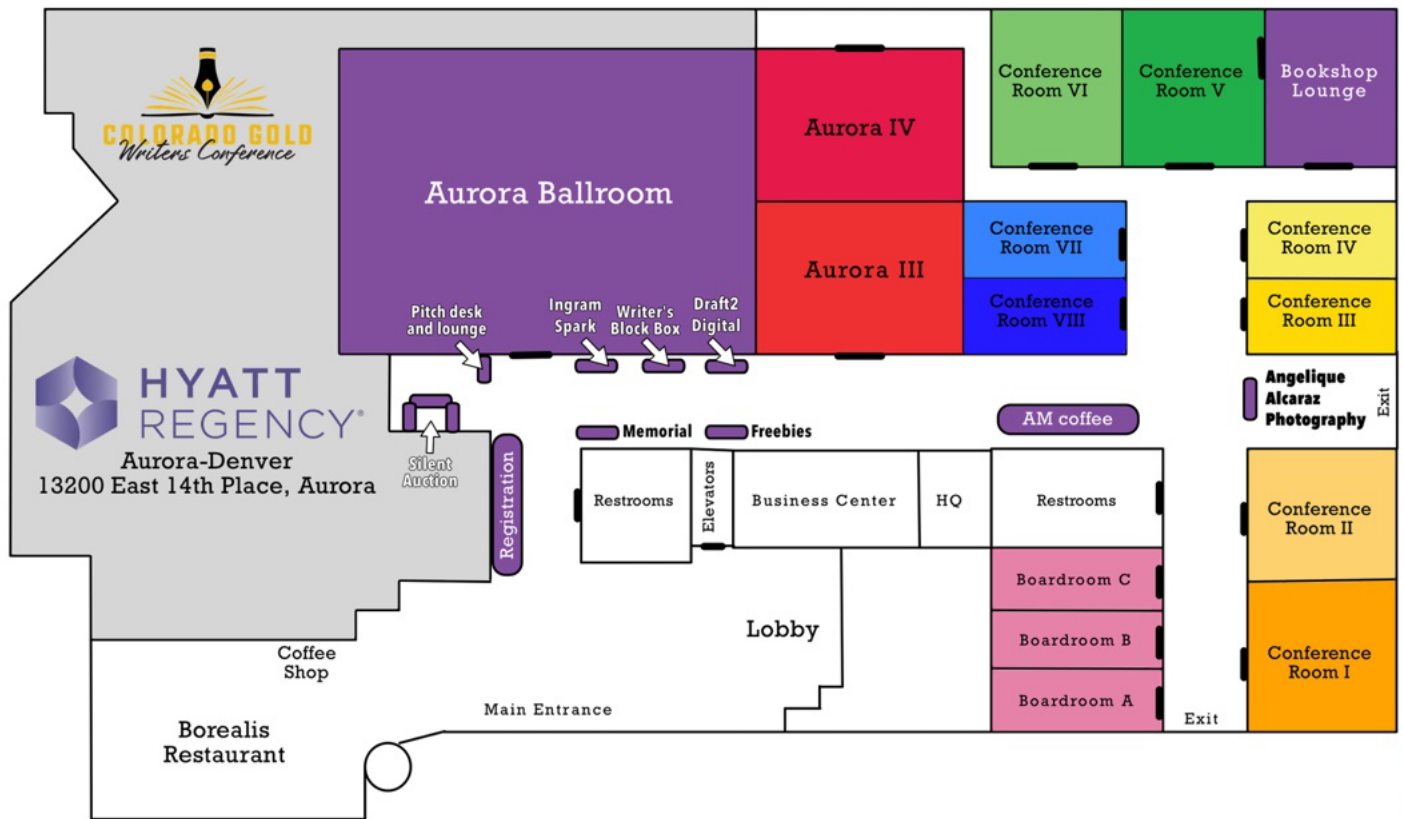


Sunday, September 10





Venue Floor Plan:



Sponsored by:



With many thanks to:

Supporters The Bookies, Colorado Authors League, Elevation Press Books, and Charlene Tess.

Scholarship donors Dani Coleman, Kim Mullen-Kuehl, Amy Rivers, Mark Stevens, Laura VanArendonk Baugh, Saytchyn Maddux-Creech, Pam Chiaro, Danielle Frost, Matthew Woolums, Stephen Wertzbaugher, Bernadette Soehner, Sue Hinkin, Justin Weaver, Arlen Feldman, Elaine Clark, Marilyn Lathrop, Susanne Loeffler, Kelley J. P. Lindberg, Wendy Barnhart, ZJ Czupor, Johanna Levene, Kristin Homer, Paula Hunter Schreiner, Ron Turker, Tyler Wright, Tommy Phillips, Collin Irish, Jason Jacobson, Melissa Clark, Kevin Campbell, Matthew Porter, Susie Lindau, and Kim O'Brien.