



COLORADO GOLD
Writers Conference
2024

September 27-29, 2024
Hyatt Regency Aurora-Denver

The Next Chapter...



proudly hosted by Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers: Rmfw.org

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

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Welcome from RMFW's President!



On behalf of the Board of Directors of Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers, Conference Co-Chairs, and our team of Volunteers, I'd like to welcome you to the 2024 Colorado Gold Conference.

For the past forty-one years, RMFW's Colorado Gold Conference has set the bar for bringing together a vast variety of talented authors and industry professionals to educate, mentor, and encourage authors at all levels. This year we continue this tradition with a diverse selection of workshops aimed at advancing your knowledge of craft, publishing, marketing, and the business of writing. Our keynotes will motivate you to your next level, and our warm hospitality will have you wanting to come back next year.

I personally look forward to meeting each one of you and learning about your writing journey. Enjoy this year's conference, and best wishes for an amazing writing year!

Bernadette Soehner

*President, Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers
2022 Jasmine Award Recipient
2020 Independent Writer of the Year*

To All First-Time Attendees,

Did you know that each year first-timers make up at least twenty-five percent of those attending our workshops, masterclasses, or sharing a table at one of the meals? First-timers are important to us.

Whether you are attending to study your writing craft, learn about independently publishing your novel, network with other writers, or pitch your story to an industry professional, Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers' membership endeavors to do everything we can to ensure first-timers accomplish those goals.

Please join me at 12:15 p.m. on Friday in Conference Room VI for a brief orientation. We'll share some tips for navigating the conference and answer any last-minute questions. There will be door prizes. Also, if you're checking into the hotel on Thursday evening, meet me near the lobby fireplace at 8 p.m. for an informal time together. Take this time to meet other first-timers before things get underway on Friday.



Kevin Wolf

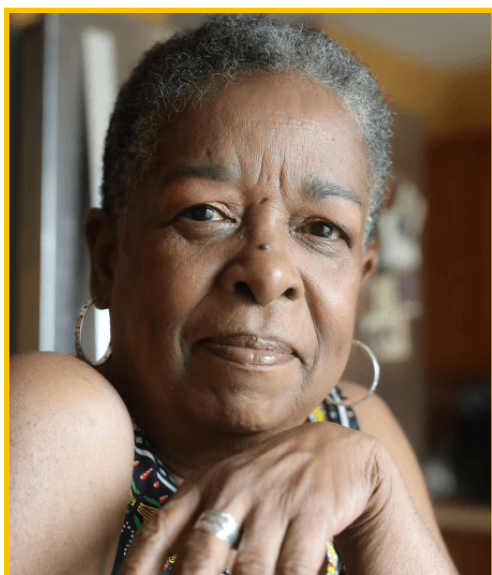
RMFW Vice President and First-time Attendee Liaison

Special Guests

Chuck Wendig, keynote

Chuck Wendig is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Wanderers*, *The Book of Accidents*, *Black River Orchard*, and over two dozen other books for adults and young adults. A finalist for the Astounding Award and an alum of the Sundance Screenwriters Lab, he has also written comics, games, and for film and television. He is known for his blog, *terribleminds*, and books about writing such as *Damn Fine Story* and *Gentle Writing Advice*. He lives in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, with his family.

In addition to his keynote speech on Saturday night, Chuck is hosting a Q&A session called “Help Me, Obi-Wendig, You’re My Only Hope” 11-11:50 a.m. Saturday in Conference Room VI.



Beverly Jenkins, keynote

Beverly Jenkins is the recipient of the 2018 Michigan Author Award by the Michigan Library Association, the 2017 Romance Writers of America Nora Roberts Lifetime Achievement Award, and the 2016 Romantic Times Reviewers’ Choice Award for historical romance. She has been nominated for the NAACP Image Award in Literature and was featured in the documentary *Love Between the Covers* and on *CBS Sunday Morning*. Since the publication of *Night Song* in 1994, she has led the charge for inclusive romance and has been a constant darling of reviewers, fans, and her peers alike, garnering accolades for her work from the likes of *The Wall Street Journal*, *People Magazine*, *NPR*, and the *New York Times*.

In addition to her keynote speech on Friday night, Beverly is presenting the workshop “What Makes a Story a Romance?” 1:30-3:20 p.m. Friday in Conference Room VI.

Mark Stevens, welcome speaker

Mark Stevens writes the Allison Coil Mystery Series, from which *Trampoline* won the Colorado Book Award and The Colorado Authors League Award in 2016. *Buried by the Roan* and *Lake of Fire* were finalists for the same award. Mark was Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers’ Writer of the Year in both 2016 and 2023. He runs the Rocky Mountain Writer podcast and is a frequent contributor to the RMFW blog. He lives in Mancos, Colorado.

In addition to his welcome speech on Friday at 1:30 p.m., Mark is participating in the “Ask A Pro” panel 3:30-4:20 pm. Friday in Conference Room VI, presenting “The Power of Now” 8-8:50 a.m. on Saturday in Conference Room VII, and will take part in “Critiki Room: Live Critique” panel 1:30-3:20 p.m. Saturday in Conference Room VI.



Agents, Editors, and Scouts



Alexandra Grana: Corvisiero Agency

Alexandra Grana represents authors of science fiction, fantasy, and horror for middle grade, young adult, and adult readers. She holds a degree in professional writing from Miami University and a JD from The

University of Toledo College of Law, and now uses her legal background to comprehensively advocate for her authors. Alex is most interested in genre fiction with a speculative edge, fiction that explores our relationship to our environment, and gothic stories of all kinds.

Currently seeking: Science fiction, fantasy, horror, and mysteries/thrillers.



Cathie Hedrick-Armstrong: Marsal Lyon Literary Agency

Cathie Hedrick-Armstrong is a Literary Agent at Marsal Lyon Literary Agency, and is a member of the Association of American Literary Agents (AALA). With

eight years of industry experience and a published author herself, Cathie has been on both sides of the querying process and takes special care to remember how frustrating the agent search can feel. A prolific reader of many genres, Cathie is especially drawn to romance in all categories, and domestic suspense in the vein of Heather Gudenkauf, B.A. Paris, and Ruth Ware. She is also new to fantasy romance, and enjoys bookclub fiction, courtroom drama, cozy mysteries, and the occasional creepy/non-gory horror. Cathie is especially interested in stories by authors from traditionally marginalized communities (i.e. BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and those with neurodiverse experiences).

Currently seeking: Romance, fantasy romance, mysteries and thrillers / YA: fantasy romance, mysteries and thrillers.

Catch Cathie during her workshop “The Quintessential Query,” 3:30-4:20 p.m. Friday in Conference Room VII.



Angie Hodapp: Nelson Agency

As an active member of the Denver literary community, Angie Hodapp has served as a board member for Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers, and she regularly teaches highly regarded writing and publishing workshops,

including at Denver’s prestigious Lighthouse Writers Workshop. She is the author of two nonfiction books for writers: *Do You Need a Literary Agent?* and *Query Craft*. She began her career at NLA in 2011, where she has worked as a reader, contracts manager, and royalties auditor. Currently, she devotes most of her time to literary development. When not working, she writes a little fiction of her own (mostly of the dark variety), teaches and practices Pilates (she’s a Nationally Certified Pilates Teacher with a specialization in exercise for people with neurological conditions), knits (she can’t stop buying yarn), waits on her cat (an adorable tabby named Pluma), and travels the world with her husband.

Currently seeking: Women’s fiction, book club fiction, thriller, Literary/upmarket speculative (sci-fi, fantasy, horror, magical realism), adult and YA romantasy, adult and YA romcom. Highly selective in historical fiction and mystery.

Agent Pitch Sessions

These 10-minute, one-on-one sessions are scheduled based on choices made at registration and offer writers the chance to pitch a manuscript to participating agents and editors. Your pitch appointment time and agent will be in your registration envelope.

Our Pitch Master, Jonathan Rutigliano, will have open hours 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Friday in the Conference Room VIII to reschedule or potentially schedule new pitches.

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



Mira Landry: Corvisiero Literary Agency

Mira Landry is an associate literary agent with Corvisiero Literary Agency, currently acquiring upmarket and literary YA and adult fiction. After a decade building her own

business as a photographer, she's eager to help authors turn their art into a career. As a chair on the Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers' Board of Directors, she's dedicated to building writing and literary communities through events and educational programming, and was co-chair for their Colorado Gold Conference. She has a Bachelors from the University of British Columbia and a Certificate of Creative Writing from Simon Fraser University. She also co-hosts a podcast called Writers Who Read, analyzing recently published books using Literary Forensics.

Currently seeking: Literary and upmarket fiction including general fiction, thriller, light science fiction, urban fantasy/magical realism, speculative, women's fiction, romance, and literary young adult. In non-fiction, essay collections, memoir, and how-to or life advice in sports, mindfulness, feminism, and culture.

Catch Mira during her workshops: "How to Write a Synopsis Without Crying First," 1:30-2:20 p.m. Friday in Conference Room I, and "Commercial, Upmarket or Literary: Analysis of the Differences" 2:30-4:20 p.m. Friday in Conference Room IV.



Rachel Letofsky: CookeMcDermid

Rachel Letofsky is an agent at CookeMcDermid. She specializes in children's literature (middle-grade and YA with some picture books), literary fiction, upmarket fiction, historical fiction, narrative-driven memoir and

quirky non-fiction for adults. Her clients include National and International bestsellers, and nominees and winners for awards such as the Kirkus Prize, the National Book Awards, the Scotiabank Giller Prize, the Governor General's Awards, the Trillium awards, the OLA's Forest of Tree Awards, the BC Book Awards, CBC's Canada Reads, the Sunburst Award, the Canadian Jewish Literary Award, the Lambda Literary Awards, and the Rogers Writers' Trust Awards.

She frequently acts as a judge for writing competitions, and travels throughout North America to writers' festivals and literary events. A transplanted Canadian, Rachel moved to Oregon in 2017. When not traveling or reading, Rachel loves spending time with her family, cooking, gardening, planning for the upcoming alien/zombie invasion, and swimming in lakes and oceans as much as possible.

Currently seeking: Literary, commercial, historical, upmarket fiction, YA, MG, thriller, suspense, mystery, horror, true crime, memoir



Nicole Luongo: Park Row Books

Nicole Luongo is an editor at Park Row Books. She joined the Park Row team in 2021, after working as an Editorial Assistant at Mango Publishing, an independent publisher based in Miami, Florida. Prior to this, she

interned at Foundry Literary & Media and Pegasus Books, and she has experience working as a bookseller. Originally from Madison, Connecticut, Nicole graduated with Distinction from McGill University, where she earned a Joint Honors B.A. in English Literature and International Development.

Currently seeking: Nicole is drawn to voice-driven, contemporary upmarket "book club" fiction featuring strong female protagonists, psychological thrillers that subvert the genre (i.e. unreliable female narrators, female perpetrators, etc.) select coming-of-age stories and select historical fiction, with an emphasis across all genres on amplifying underrepresented voices. While she doesn't acquire genre fiction, she loves genre-adjacent fiction, such as speculative, magical realist (especially when based off cultural folklore) and feminist dystopian fiction. Across all genre subsets, she is on the lookout for Millennial and Gen Z voices, especially those that spark conversation around mental health. In the nonfiction space, Nicole is drawn to standout, accessible narrative nonfiction and compelling memoirs geared towards a female readership.

Free Garage Parking:

If you're staying at the hotel, your room key will scan you in and out of the garage. Otherwise, get a ticket from the Conference Registration Desk to scan yourself in and out without charges.

Thursday Intensive Programs

8-9:50 a.m.	Block One
10-11:50 a.m.	Block Two
12-12:50 p.m.	Lunch
1-2:50 p.m.	Block Three
3-4:50 p.m.	Block Four
5-6 p.m.	Happy Hour (Borealis)

Conference Room I

Trad Publishing Bootcamp

What does it take not only to get a book deal but to build a writing career in today's ever-changing publishing industry? Come find out in this all-day intensive with Angie Hodapp of Nelson Literary Agency. She is the author of two nonfiction books for writers — *Do You Need a Literary Agent?* and *Query Craft* — who knows the process from start to finish.

1. Traditional Publishing Overview
2. Contracts and Royalties: Know Your Rights, Manage Your Money
3. Agents and Editors: Hook 'em Deep and Reel 'em In
4. You Be the Agent: Live Pitch Read

Conference Room II

Genre Fusion

Genre fusion isn't new but with the rise of romantisies, fantasies set in space, and every burgeoning combination in-between it can be challenging for authors to combine their big, genre-spanning ideas successfully.

1. "Auto-Fiction: I is Another" with Andrea Rexilius about fusing fiction and memoir
2. "Effective Genre-Fusing Fiction" with Alexandra Grana, exploring writing and publishing fusions
3. "Genre Fusion and Hybridization: Experimenting with Literary Art Forms" with Hillary Leftwich, fusion fiction and plays, poems, essays, and letters
4. "Love Makes the (Book) World Go 'Round: Romance for Any Genre" with Cindi Myers



Friday Morning Masterclasses

8:00 - 11:50 AM

Conference Room III

Novels 101

Sharon Mignerey

Inspired by *Discovering Story Magic*, developed by Robin Perini and Laura Baker. Great stories have 12 elements this workshop identifies and draws together to create compelling fiction. Participants are encouraged to bring their own work-in-progress to use as a basis for applying the material.

Conference Room IV

How to Self Publish Your Novel on a Budget

Jason Evans & Melissa Koons

Independently published Novels are now the norm. But how does a writer navigate the ins and outs of putting a professional-looking product on the market? More importantly, how does a writer complete this project in a timely manner without being taken advantage of, going crazy, or breaking the bank?

Conference Room VI

Adrenaline Rush: How to Write Suspense Fiction

John Gilstrap

John Gilstrap presents a four-hour-long seminar on the construction of intelligent suspense fiction. Through lively lectures and writing exercises, students get a peek at the skeleton that gives structure to the stories that keep us reading long into the night.

Conference Room VII

Audiobooks: What the Author Needs to Know

Tom Farrell, Susan Brooks & Sydnee Fullmer

With eleven consecutive years of double-digit growth and revenues of 1.79 billion in 2022 (APA Survey, 2023), can you ignore audiobooks any longer? The workshop focuses upon audiobook production. Co-presenter and narrator, Sydnee Fullmer, will give you insight into compelling audiobook narration.

Conference Room VIII

The Middle Edit

Karen Lin

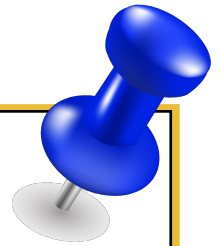
This intensive workshop addresses middle stage edits when you tighten characterization, layer in themes and symbols, mirror chapters, perfect plot threads, scenes, dialogue, narration, style, action, and more. Learn to test your chapters without combing out your voice. Exercises and interaction.

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 **Aurora III** at the following times:

- **Friday, Sept 27:** Noon to 10 p.m.
- **Saturday, Sept 28:** 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.
- **Sunday, Sept 29:** 8 a.m. to Noon



Conference Events and Meals at a Glance

Details about all events in following pages

FRIDAY:

- 1-1:20 p.m. — Welcome Ceremony, Ballroom
- 5:30-6:30 p.m. — Cash Bar, Ballroom Foyer
- 6:30-8:30 p.m. — Writer of the Year Banquet, Ballroom
- 8:30-10:30 p.m. — Author Signings, Bookstore
- 8:30-10:30 p.m. — Open Mic, Conference Room Foyer

SATURDAY:

- Breakfast on your own, coffee provided
- 12-1:20 p.m. — Publishing Panel Luncheon, Ballroom
- 5:30-6:30 — Cash Bar, Ballroom Foyer
- 6:30-8:30 p.m. — Gold Rush Awards Banquet, Ballroom
- 8:30-10:30 p.m. — BarCon, hotel bar and lobby

SUNDAY:

- Breakfast on your own, coffee provided
- 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. — Gold Rush Winners Brunch, Ballroom

PRE-CONFERENCE

Newcomers' Welcome and Orientation

12:15-12:50 p.m.

Conference Room VI

Kevin Wolf

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

THE KICK-OFF!

Welcome Ceremony

1-1:20 p.m.

Aurora Ballroom

Special guest, Mark Stevens

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, Mark Stevens. A longtime RMFW member and two-time Writer of the Year, Mark will kick off our 2024 conference with a short inspirational speech and some basic event information.

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.

- **Everyone:** Content for writers at every stage, from beginners to advanced. These sessions offer insights and techniques useful to all, regardless of experience.
- **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.

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

Conference Room I

How to Write a Synopsis Without Crying First

Mira Landry

1 hour

It doesn't have to be the "Dreaded Synopsis". It can be the efficient, well-written synopsis that highlights your premise and stand-out voice, all without making you want to give up writing. We'll cover a Synopses Writing Recipe using "Rita Hayworth and The Shawshank Redemption" by Stephen King as examples.

Conference Room II

Unslient Screams: Maintaining Voice and POV in Action Scenes

Kendra Griffin

1 hour

Don't let your character lose their voice while running from monsters! We'll go beyond the basics of good action scenes and delve into how we balance action, narration, and perspective as well as use transitions to keep the momentum up.

Conference Room III

Worldbuilding Through Combat

J.E. Zarnofsky

1 hour

Conflict is the backbone of storytelling, and that building tension often erupts into fights. Learn how to utilize combat to reveal more of your world, its characters, and their values.

Conference Room IV

Written in The Blood

Laura Manuel

1 hour

Blood spatter analysis reveals information. An investigator may detect participants' locations, weapons, direction of travel of actors, suspect's handedness, and the 'excitement' of victim. This workshop will primarily focus on the basics revealed to investigators via observation.

Conference Room V

Stories in a Flash

Laurel McHargue

2 hours

Flash Fiction challenges writers to include all elements of a satisfying story but at a greatly reduced word count, leaving consumers with a whirlwind read and a memorable ending. By the end of this workshop, participants will create a work of fiction worthy of editing for possible publication.

Conference Room VI

What Makes a Story a Romance?

A Beginner's Guide to the Most Popular Fiction Genre

Beverly Jenkins

2 hours

What makes Romance a Romance, and why are stories like Gone With The Wind, Anna Karenina, and books by Nicolas Sparks not considered Romance? Join Beverly for an introductory deep dive into the genre, to include subjects like popular tropes, sub genres, characters, themes, readers, writers, the changes the genre has gone through since the early '90s, whether the genre is feminist or not, and why it's the best selling genre in publishing.

Conference Room VII

Horror Comedy Make Your Readers Laugh & Scream

Angela Sylvaine

1 hour

Horror and comedy are both about tension, the build up and the payoff. When we meld the two together, we get the fear of the scare and the release of the laugh. Using recent TV and movies as examples, we'll walk through how to write horror comedy. Learn to leave your readers terrified and giggling.



Colorado Gold is using **Sched** for our conference programming!

Check out Sched on our site at

<https://rmfw.org/2024-colorado-gold-schedule>

Or download **Sched** to your device wherever you get apps.

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

Conference Room I

A Survivor's Guide to Pitching: Before, During, and After the Pitch

Kelley Lindberg

1 hour

Pitching your novel to an agent or editor? Great! But how should you prepare for this nerve-wracking meeting? And what happens afterwards? In this presentation, a pitch survivor reveals secrets of what to do before, during, and after your pitch to take your pitch session from awkward to awesome.

Conference Room II

Mastering Suspense: Crafting Compelling Narratives Regardless of Genre

LS Hawker

1 hour

Suspense isn't just for thrillers—it's a fundamental element that can elevate any work of fiction or nonfiction. It's the element in any story that creates mental uncertainty and variable outcomes that turn your readers into addicts, unable to stop turning pages regardless of your genre.

Are Gremlins running amok in your website?



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Nate@NateHoffelder.com

Conference Room III

Kickstarter 101: What is it? And How Can I Use It?

Caitie Cooper

1 hour

If you're a budding (or experienced) author, you may have heard that Kickstarter is one of the best ways to launch a book. We'll explore what Kickstarter is, how it can fit into your author business, and resources for planning a campaign.

Conference Room IV

Commercial, Upmarket, or Literary: Analysis of the Differences From Line Level to Marketing

Mira Landry

2 hours

It's often said "you know it when you read it", but what is the divide between calling something literary or commercial fiction? How can you determine if your fiction manuscript hits one or the other, or falls in that coveted space of "Upmarket"?

Conference Room V

Stories in a Flash

Laurel McHargue

Second hour

Conference Room VI

What Makes a Story a Romance? A Beginners Guide to the Most Popular Fiction Genre

Beverly Jenkins

Second hour

Conference Room VII

The Truth About Swords & Armory

J.E. Zarnofsky

1 hour

Swords too heavy to swing? Studded leather armor? Pop culture is filled with misconceptions about armored combat throughout the ages. Learn how to defeat these fallacies when it comes to combat, weapons, and armor.

Conference Room VIII

Unleash Your Inner Young Muse: Crafting Middle Grade Magic – A Novel Approach to Writing for Tweens!

Mariko Tatsumoto

2 hours

Bestselling authors like James Patterson, Rick Riordan, and John Grisham are flocking to write MG Books. Learn how it differs from adult books, get past gatekeepers, the essential rules for 8-12 years-olds, the art of choosing the right subject, characters, themes, AND MUCH MORE.

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

Conference Room II

Audiobooks in an AI World

Sandra Murphy

1 hour

Audiobooks are a great way to tap into readers who might not otherwise discover you. But this comes at a price which to offset, some authors are utilizing the cost and time savings offered by artificial intelligence. What is the impact of using AI narration on your copyright, brand, and bottom line?

Conference Room III

Order in The Court

Laura Manuel

2 hours

Court proceedings are presented: Arrest, bail, preliminary hearings, voir dire, the actual trial. Also covered expert witnesses, cross-examination, when hearsay is allowable. One should avoid counterfactual situations, although there can be excitement and plot twists in the proceedings above.

Conference Room IV

Commercial, Upmarket, or Literary: Analysis of the Differences From Line Level to Marketing

Mira Landry

Second hour

Conference Room V

The 5 Sentence Method

Rebecca Thorne

2 hours

Curious about the 5 Sentence plotting method sweeping TikTok? This plotting approach is perfect for pantsers who want to plot, or plotters who want to cut back on extensive outlines. Learn how to choose your book's 5 sentences, then tie them to word count goals for flawless pacing. Simple and easy!

Conference Room VI

Ask A Pro: PAA Panel

Andre Gonzalez, Z.S. Diamanti, Mark Stevens, Stephanie Reisner

1 hour

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!

Conference Room VII

The Quintessential Query

Cathie Hedrick-Armstrong

1 hour

This workshop outlines the dos and don'ts of the query process. It includes (1) an overview of the querying process and how it works, (2) how to find an agent, (3) how to format a query letter, (4) what information should and should not be included in a query letter, (5) and a step-by-step walk-through a sample query letter.

Conference Room VIII

Unleash Your Inner Young Muse: Crafting Middle Grade Magic – A Novel Approach to Writing for Tweens!

Mariko Tatsumoto

Second hour

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 listing in our member book list on our website, an active community forum, opportunities for networking and collaborating with other authors, and much more.

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.



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

Conference Room I

Using Project Management to Write Your Novel

A. Z. Sultana

1 hour

Learn how to organize your writing life using skills and techniques corporations spend millions on to complete their projects. If you can't finish your novel, don't know where to start, or you just want to organize your life like a pro, this class was made for you.

Conference Room II

Intimacy, Consent & Sex in Fiction

Rachael Bush

1 hour

Are you interested in writing better romantic relationships? In this session, you will learn why love, intimacy, and consent go hand in hand to build healthier, happier characters your readers will care about.

Conference Room III

Order in The Court

Laura Manuel

Second hour

Conference Room IV

Keeping It Real: How Much Fiction Belongs in Historical Fiction?

Cynthia Swanson

1 hour

If your details are inaccurate, it will affect the reading experience for certain readers. But can't some details be invented? How do you determine whether to fictionalize or be factual? Writers of historical fiction, mystery/thriller/suspense, or romance set in earlier times, let's talk about it!

Conference Room V

The 5 Sentence Method

Rebecca Thorne

Second hour

Conference Room VI

MFA Talk

Dr. Andrea Rexilius

1 hour

Have you always wondered whether an MFA program is right for you? Not sure about residential versus low-residency options, your writing sample, cover letter, or letters of recommendation? Come to this info. session on all things MFA. We will discuss program models, benefits of an MFA, and more. Participants will have the opportunity to ask as many questions as they'd like.

Conference Room VII

Level Up Your Writing Craft

Carol Berg

1 hour

The first step toward writing success is not brand or publishing choice, but producing a story that engages, satisfies, and delights readers. Let's look at five solid techniques to take our writing to the next level, avoiding common pitfalls and separating our fiction from the common run.

Conference Room VIII

Punched Up Pitches: Better Blurbs and Queries

David R. Slayton

1 hour

Whether you are writing a query letter or back cover copy, it's important to know how to sell your book through a concise, exciting blurb. We'll look at winning examples and techniques to help you write a blurb that sells.

RMF&W'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.

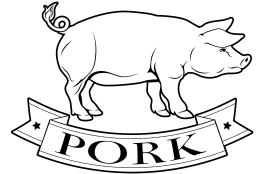
Writer of the Year Banquet and Keynote Address by Beverly Jenkins

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

Friday night's banquet hosted by **Bernadette Soehner** will include:

- Presentation of the PEN Awards by our PAA Liaison, **Andre Gonzalez**
- A speech by the 2024 RMFW Writer of the Year, **Tom Farrell**
- A keynote address by Amazon Top 10 author **Beverly Jenkins**.

Consider finding a seat at a hosted table with one of our visiting VIP guests or RMFW board!



Author Signing Event

8:30-10:30 p.m.
Aurora IV

After Friday's banquet, the conference bookstore expands into a book fair featuring dozens of local RMFW authors as well as our keynote guests, **Chuck Wendig** and **Beverly Jenkins**. 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 Foyer

Hosted by RMFW author and previous Writer of the Year Peggy Wade, 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!

Note:

Please feel free to use the hotel lobby, bar and restaurant as places to write or gather to network.

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

Boardroom A

Birds of a Feather ~ Historical Fiction

Cynthia Swanson

1 hour

Birds of a Feather are casual sessions between writers of the same genre hosted by an RMFW member published in that genre. Attend to ask genre-specific questions, get ideas, and/or make friends.

Conference Room I

The Right Mind For Self-Publishing

Laura VanArendonk Baugh

1 hour

There's never been an easier time to self-publish—and that's great! But with great ease comes great risk of mistakes or assumptions. Better expectations lead to better results! Let's walk through the mindset minefield and talk about how best to approach the fantastic opportunities we have today.

Conference Room II

Writing Scenes With Multiple Characters

Kendra Griffin

1 hour

This session will help participants understand how to craft scenes with multiple characters while also building plot and developing distinct character voices. Help your reader focus on your story, not on figuring out who is speaking!

Conference Room III

Deeper Reading for Deeper Writing

Johnny Worthen

1 hour

Consciously or unconsciously meaning is hidden beneath signs and facades in literature, layered in word choice and focus. Authors can achieve deep depths of intent, layer after layer of meaning, to elevate text to literature. Through example we will explore the possibilities.

Conference Room IV

Unlock Your Story's Inciting Incident

Jacquelin Cangro

1 hour

Do you know the event that kickstarts your story? Do you worry that there isn't enough tension or conflict? In this workshop, we'll review techniques to develop an engaging and compelling inciting incident — the crucial scene that serves as a catalyst for your protagonist.

Conference Room V

How to be an Author on Substack

Z.J. Czupor

1 hour

Jump start or refresh your writing career by publishing your novel or memoir on Substack.com. In this one-hour workshop, attendees will learn all about Substack, how to post your stories, and earn income. Plus, how using this platform can make you a better writer.

Conference Room VI

How to Write Like a Martial Artist

Sarah Reichert

1 hour

Writers will learn basics of self-defense, what happens to a body in a fight, and how to write action that moves the scene and doesn't feel redundant or unrealistic. This class will cover strikes, holds, targeting and basic Jujitsu techniques and how to incorporate them into fight scenes.

Conference Room VII

The Power of Now

Mark Stevens

1 hour

What is the white-hot core of character motivation? What sets your characters in motion? Why does anybody do anything? How does ink on the page make us feel something? How do we build empathy for fictional characters, both good and bad? How do you help readers connect a plausible, grounded story?

Conference Room VIII

Critique Partner Speed Dating

Kate Jonuska, Amber Herbert

Two hours

Whether you're looking for a critique partner, a critique group or simply to network with other writers, the speed dating model is both a fun and effective way to meet new people. Spend five minutes getting to know another writer and their critique needs before moving on to the next in a safe space.

Reminder:

All conference attendees have agreed to abide by the Colorado Gold Writers Conference Code of Conduct. See full code on pg. 34.

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

Boardroom A

Birds of a Feather ~ Science Fiction

Calvin Studzinski

1 hour

Birds of a Feather are casual sessions between writers of the same genre hosted by an RMFW member published in that genre. Attend to ask genre-specific questions, get ideas, and/or make friends.

Conference Room I

Stay Connected to Your Readers: How to Build & Maintain a Successful Newsletter

Kerrie Flanagan

1 hour

In this session, you'll discover powerful techniques to grow and sustain your subscriber list effectively. In just two years, award-winning author, Kerrie Flanagan, took her newsletter list from 50 subscribers to over 5,000. Learn why newsletters are an author's greatest asset and how to grow your list with reader magnets, newsletter swaps, list-building giveaways, and group promotions. Kerrie will also teach you how to create compelling content to keep your readers engaged and how to sustain a strong email list. Whether you're a novice or an experienced author, this session will equip you with essential skills to build a thriving community of engaged readers through your author newsletter.

Conference Room II

Wordsmith's Workshop: Mastering Word Choice

LS Hawker

1 hour

Does all your dialogue begin with "Oh" or "Well"? Do you regularly avoid selecting one vivid word by using five vague ones? Have editors told you your prose needs elevating? Your problem may be poor word choices. But do not despair—it's not fatal. Come to this workshop for the cure.

Conference Room III

Conflict: The Art & Craft of Toil & Trouble

Sharon Migerney

2 hours

All stories are about trouble and the toil required of characters to overcome it. Excellent trouble is at 2 levels: the external story that is measurable with a satisfying ending; the internal story based upon fears and motivations that sets this character's trouble apart from all others.

Conference Room IV

Writers Who Read: Language & Grammar

Gary McBride

1 hour

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 language and grammar found in novels, with a focus on discovering techniques we can apply to our own writing.

Conference Room V

Writing to Theme

Johnny Worthen

1 hour

From the lighthouse of intent, to hard questions, symbols, subplots and echoes, the class will encourage the writer to plumb the depths of meaning, bleed a little, and create multiple strands of meaning in their work. Class will offer concrete examples and methods to tease out your ideas.

Conference Room VI

Developmental Editing Concepts

Miranda Darrow

1 hour

Editing isn't just spelling and commas. Developmental editing looks at "big picture" concepts in your manuscript and tackles topics like plot, pacing, proportion, and POV, as well as character arcs and genre norms. Get an overview of these topics and a behind-the-scenes look at a developmental edit.

Conference Room VII

The Science of Magic

Kim Lajevardi

1 hour

If magic doesn't have consistency and limits, then it can hurt your storytelling more than help it. When readers choose immersion in speculative fiction, they crave both grounding and imagination. Science can provide both.

Conference Room VIII

Critique Partner Speed Dating

Kate Jonuska, Amber Herbert

Second hour

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

Boardroom A

Birds of a Feather ~ Kid Lit

Christina Allen

1 hour

Birds of a Feather are casual sessions between writers of the same genre hosted by an RMFW member published in that genre. Attend to ask genre-specific questions, get ideas, and/or make friends.

Conference Room I

Direct Sales - Is It Right For You?

Stephanie Reisner

1 hour

Direct sales are being touted as one of the best ways to make money for writers, but is it true for your work? In this workshop, we'll talk about the ins and outs of direct sales and you'll find out if it's the right model for your work.

Conference Room II

Back to The Past: Writing Backstory

Laurie Marr Wasmund

1 hour

Backstory can be a powerful tool in fiction, creating empathy with readers. It can also drain the energy from a piece, creating unnecessary complications and confusion. In this session, we'll look at how to choose details from a character's past and smoothly incorporate them into your work.

Conference Room III

Conflict: The Art & Craft of Toll & Trouble

Sharon Migerney

Second hour

Conference Room IV

Showing Emotions on the Page

Peggy Waide

1 hour

Showing emotion creates a strong bond between your characters and readers. We will review core emotions and show how those emotions increase in intensity, depending on the situation. We'll break down ways to write facial expressions, body language and vocals for a more emotional read.

Conference Room V

Marketing in 2024 & Beyond: Leverage Your Assets

Nick Thacker

1 hour

You can write, you can run ads, and you can burn out. What's changed since we started publishing books is the way readers

consume our content. Are you taking full advantage of that? Are you reaching them exactly where they are, with exactly the formats they want? Time to think bigger, broader. Here's how.

Conference Room VI

Illustrating & Publishing Your Book

Rachael Bush

1 hour

In this session, I'll talk about how to organize ideas, research your subject, and turn your idea into a finished project you can publish. Whether you're writing and illustrating a children's book, a textbook, or a comic, the creative process is the same.

Conference Room VII

Memoir Mastery - How to Write Your Story so it Sells

Jennifer S. Wilkov

1 hour

Writers with an incredible personal story often struggle with where to start their tale and how to share it effectively with an agent/publisher/reader. Discover how to present your amazing story, determine where to begin it on the first page, and start using it to attract more readers, agents, producers, publicists, press, and clients.

Conference Room VIII

RMFW's '24 Anthology Panel

Linda Ditchkus, Paul Martz, Ryanne Glenn, Justin Weaver, Susan Schooleman, Laurel McHargue

1 hour

RMFW's new anthology was just released, *Without Brakes: Fingers Crossed*. Want to learn to write, select, and edit short stories? How about self-publish, format, and market? Our panel of co-editors and authors tell all, from production details to how to craft a story destined for the next anthology.

“!”

Have feedback for us?

We encourage all conference-goers to use **Sched** to rate individual workshops and sessions. At conference's end, staff will also distribute a QR code for a general survey.

Please complete that survey to help us improve.

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

Conference Room I

Creativity & The Writer's Mind

Sarah Reichert

1 hour

This class explores how the brain functions and where creativity comes from. Writers in the class will be given methods and tips to re-open their creative minds and foster a lifestyle that gets them into the chair and blooming with ideas.

Conference Room II

Focusing Your Audience

Oliver Blakemore

1 hour

Audience focus techniques with brand marketing profesh and novelist, Oliver Blakemore.

Conference Room III

Let's Get Cozy: Plotting Your Cozy Mystery Series

Stephanie Reisner

1 hour

Even if you're not a plotter, get ready to learn how to plot a great cozy mystery and learn how to drop popular genre tropes into your story line to create a book and series the readers will return for again and again.

Conference Room IV

Improv-ing Your Networking

Sandra Murphy

1 hour

What if networking could actually be fun? Improv helps us navigate the unknown with a sense of play. Join an improv actress for a interactive session of learning a few tried and true tactics so even the most reluctant networker will be able to work a room like the best of 'em!

Conference Room V

How to Use Hollywood Scene Writing Techniques For Your Novel

Kevin Campbell

1 hour

What do we love about a good movie or TV show? Great scenes that move the story along and keep us glued to the screen. This workshop will show you how to use proven screenwriting techniques to write scenes for your novel to ensure that your audience (and agent!) will turn every page.

Conference Room VI

Help Me, Obi-Wendig You're My Only Hope

Chuck Wendig

1 hour

A Q&A where audience members come prepared with questions about their stories or their writing careers (or, one supposes, about LIFE ITSELF if they are so troubled) and Chuck Wendig attempts to answer their questions and grease the wheels of progress. So to speak.

Conference Room VII

Kink & BDSM: Beyond The Stereotypes

Veronica R. Calisto

1 hour

50 Shades gave an impression of kink that irks kinksters as much as Glocks with safeties does gun experts. This session will dispel misunderstandings and answer questions.

Conference Room VIII

Self-Care For Writers

Amy Armstrong

1 hour

It's hard to write fun words others will enjoy if you're not having fun as a writer. We'll clarify what burnout is and what leads to it as well as how you can climb out of it, and create a plan for how to bring more joy and calm to your writing.



Agent Panel Luncheon

12-1:20 p.m.

Aurora Ballroom



Saturday's buffet lunch will include a panel moderated by **Bernadette Soehner**, RMFW President, and **Jon Rutigliano**, Conference VIP Liaison. Also, hear from our sister organizations: Pikes Peak Writers, Writing Heights, League of Utah Writers, Wyoming Writers and Regis University. More door prizes will be announced!

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

Boardroom A

Birds of a Feather ~ Humor

A. Z. Sultana

1 hour

Birds of a Feather are casual sessions between writers of the same genre hosted by an RMFW member published in that genre. Attend to ask genre-specific questions, get ideas, and/or make friends.

Conference Room I

Let's Get Down to Business: How to Start a Business For Your Writing/Editing

Melissa Koons

1 hour

It may seem silly that you need to learn business, taxes, and finances as an author but it is crucial to understand business essentials. All self-published, traditionally published, hybrid authors, and editors must know how to register a business, licenses, and file with the IRS.

Conference Room II

Marketing Your Book to Success: Before, During, & After Publication

Jennifer S. Wilkov

1 hour

Authors know that marketing their books is 100% their responsibility but most don't have the skillset or knowledge to create a winning marketing plan for their project. In this presentation, Jennifer S. Wilkov, the founder of Your Book Is Your Hook, LLC, will show you how to master the art of determining what belongs in your marketing platform – and what doesn't – before, during, and after your book has been published.

Conference Room III

Characterization Through Orientation & Identity

October K Santerelli

2 hours

Writing different genders, gender identities, and sexual orientations can seem like a minefield. But writing LGBTQ+ representation in a respectful manner isn't as scary as it seems. During this workshop, we'll dive into identity spectrums, inherent gender bias in English, and more.

Conference Room IV

Writers Who Read: Layering & Symbolism

Gary McBride

1 hour

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 language and grammar found in novels, with a focus on discovering techniques we can apply to our own writing.

Conference Room V

80,000 Words in a Day

Nick Thacker

1 hour

Write faster, better. Use dictation to smash your word count goals — with a system that's proven to work.

Conference Room VI

Critiki Room: Live Critique

Kate Jonuska, Amber Herbert, Mark Stevens

2 hours

Witness the magic of peer feedback in action as a panel of agents, authors and publishing professionals critique short pieces of fiction submitted in advance. Find out why critique is a valuable tool for writers of all levels — and how the process usually becomes a raucous good time.

Conference Room VII

The Year of 100 Rejections

Sarah Reichert

1 hour

This class will focus on a 100-rejection challenge, how to face and use rejection, how to choose submissions, how to read and follow guidelines, and how to track your submissions. We'll also look at rejections as a tool for improvement and how to separate ourselves and our worth from rejection.

Conference Room VIII

Finding Your Inner Extrovert

David R. Slayton

1 hour

Writing is a lonely process. When it comes time to sell your work, you'll need social skills to help you interact with agents, editors, and readers. This workshop will focus on communication techniques and help you learn to network without burning out.

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

Boardroom A

Birds of a Feather ~ Fantasy

David R. Slayton

1 hour

Birds of a Feather are casual sessions between writers of the same genre hosted by an RMFW member published in that genre. Attend to ask genre-specific questions, get ideas, and/or make friends.

Conference Room I

Building a Platform With Facebook Ads

Andre Gonzalez

1 hour

Many authors believe Facebook Ads no longer work for generating sales. In reality, the platform has become highly competitive thanks to a flood of major corporations. Come learn how to efficiently carve out your space as an author and gain new readers on a platform that still has a billion users.

Conference Room II

Successful TikTok Sales

Z.S. Diamanti

1 hour

TikTok Shop is officially here and people are buying in! Whether you're a debut author trying to come out the gates swinging, or you have a great backlist to offer readers, the time to start sell books on TikTok Shop is now. Come learn the ins and outs of TikTok shop and how to sell loads of books!

Conference Room III

Characterization Through Orientation & Identity

October K Santerelli

Second hour

Conference Room IV

Daemons, Witches, and the Occult (For Writers)

Stephanie Reisner

1 hour

If you're writing supernatural horror, or anything paranormal – chances are you're incorporating some elements of the occult. Learn to blend occult fact with occult fiction without offending actual real-world witches or occult practitioners. Bring your most difficult questions and an open mind.

Conference Room V

How to Show & Sell Books at Events

Laura VanArendonk Baugh

1 hour

Ready to hand sell your at live events like cons, library fairs, festivals, and more? No, you don't need to be pushy, you don't need to be "salesy," and you don't need to give up your soul. Though a midwesterner and congenitally allergic to hard sales, Laura has event success to share with you.

Conference Room VI

Critiki Room: Live Critique

Kate Jonuska, Amber Herbert, Mark Stevens

Second hour

Conference Room VII

Becoming a Plotter

Kim Lajevardi

1 hour

If you've ever set down to write with a pocket full of vibes, you may be a pantsier. But what feels good in the moment can cause you to curl into the fetal position when complicated revisions come knocking. What can a pantsier do? Plot. No, seriously. Let me show you plot is not a four-letter word.

Conference Room VIII

Kid Lit 101

Christina Allen

1 hour

Want to write for kids? Here's everything you'll need to know to get started. This overview of the current children's literature landscape, from picture books to YA, highlights unique considerations for writing, querying, publishing, and marketing kids' books.



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The advertisement features two book covers: 'Digital Poets' by Victoria Law and 'SITH HAPPENS' by Will Hoff-Tarpen. The background is a light purple and pink gradient.

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

Boardroom A

Birds of a Feather ~ Women's Fiction

Bernadette Soehner

1 hour

Birds of a Feather are casual sessions between writers of the same genre hosted by an RMFW member published in that genre. Attend to ask genre-specific questions, get ideas, and/or make friends.

Conference Room I

Ink and Syntax: Mastering Grammar for Fictional Impact

LS Hawker

1 hour

The advent of spell check, grammar check, and AI makes knowing grammar as obsolete as rotary phones, right? Wrong! Grammar's more than a set of rules—it's the backbone of written storytelling. We're not talking never end a sentence with a preposition, we're talking about making your writing sparkle.

Conference Room II

Editing Beyond "Gut Feeling"

Kelley Lindberg

1 hour

Revising your work (or critiquing others') can be overwhelming. Without specific elements to look for, it's easy to fall back on our "gut feel," which is hard to articulate and even harder to trust. Learn to evaluate 17 storytelling aspects to edit and strengthen any manuscript, including your own!

Conference Room III

Going Pro With Your Mad Reading Skillz

Amy Armstrong

2 hours

Do you demolish books? Are your friends constantly hitting you up for book recommendations? You might have superpowers that can lead to book review opportunities, reading for literary magazines and other amazing things. Best of all: these opportunities mean publication and free books.

Conference Room IV

Do "I" or Don't "I"? Using First Person in Fiction

Carol Berg

2 hours

Dramatic and immediate when it's done right, excruciating when it's done poorly, the first person point of view should be a tool in every writer's toolbox. Some popular genres almost demand it. Learn and practice techniques, pleasures, and pitfalls of writing in first person.

Conference Room V

Is Your Book Packaging Hurting Your Sales?

Andre Gonzalez

1 hour

People read your books and love them! So why is it so hard to generate more sales? You must treat your book as a product and understand how it's packaged and presented to potential readers. Come learn how to analyze market trends and how they relate to the product you are offering.

Conference Room VI

Secondary Characters Need Loving, Too

Peggy Waide

1 hour

Secondary characters complete a cast needed for depth in a novel. Each character has a role to play, often working with or against the main characters. Do they help, impede or motivate, or are they a lesser player? Discover how to develop their roles and relationships for a fun and dynamic read.

Conference Room VII

Let's Rewrite a Famous Scene Together

Oliver Blakemore

2 hours

Learn from your heroes. We go into a meticulous study of a single scene from a famous book, interrogating every decision, every word choice, made by the author. Then we see if we can rewrite it.

Conference Room VIII

Conjuring Up The Past: Character Development in Historical Fiction

Laurie Marr Wasmund

2 hours

The writer of historical fiction faces an added element when developing a character: the historical landscape. How do sometimes cataclysmic world events affect a character's everyday life? In this intensive workshop, we will look at the skills needed to create memorable historical characters.



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

Boardroom A

Birds of a Feather ~ Crime/Thriller

Nanette Gamily
1 hour

Conference Room I

Neurodivergency & The Creative Process

October K Santerelli
1 hour
Some of the best creators have ADHD or ASC/D (Autism). But with different brains come different problems — the common writing ‘rules’ sometimes just don’t work! Learn different ways to work more productively and more often, while falling in love with writing all over again – for neurospicy brains.

ARE YOU READY TO SELF-PUBLISH BUT DON'T KNOW HOW?

Through *Mary's Journey*, you can be fully prepared for your self-publishing journey. Her comprehensive step-by-step guide is a time-saving tool for navigating the complexities of self-publishing.

Video 1: Editing, cover design, and pagination.

Video 2: ISBNs, copyright, loglines, and uploading your manuscript.

Visit *Mary's Journey* today at:

www.selfpublishingmarysjourney.com

Conference Room II

Heinlein's Five Rules of Writing

Johnny Worthen
1 hour
A discussion of Robert Heinlein’s famous “Five Rules of Writing.” These pragmatic, practical and practiced directives are for the working author and are the very career-enabling tips. But are they still valid?

Conference Room III

Going Pro With Your Mad Reading Skillz

Amy Armstrong
Second hour

Conference Room IV

Do "I" or Don't "I"? Using First Person in Fiction

Carol Berg
Second hour

Conference Room V

Stacked Promos

LS Hawker
1 hour
Unlock the secrets of strategically coordinated book promotions! You’ll learn to leverage multiple marketing avenues, cultivate an engaged author platform, amplify your book’s visibility, boost sales, and expand your readership.

Conference Room VI

How to Write Compelling Villains

Jason Evans
1 hour
You can write great stories, but if you want to take your writing to the next level, you need a compelling villain. From intergalactic wizards to high school mean girls, a great villain will move your story like no other character can.

Conference Room VII

Let's Rewrite a Famous Scene Together

Oliver Blakemore
Second hour

Conference Room VIII

Conjuring Up The Past: Character Development in Historical Fiction

Laurie Marr Wasmund
Second hour



Gold Rush Awards Banquet and Keynote Address by Chuck Wendig

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



Saturday evening's banquet will feature the announcement of the 2024 Colorado Gold Rush Literary Awards Contest winners as well as a keynote address by New York Times bestseller Chuck Wendig.



- Welcome – Bernadette Soehner
- Colorado Gold Awards - presented by Mira Landry and Rachel Dempsey
- Keynote Address – Chuck Wendig

2024 Colorado Gold Rush Literary Awards Contest Finalists

Mainstream/ Other Fiction

WORN SHOVELS Renita Bradley
DOGS IN MOURNING Molly McFadden
GABRIEL AND MARY Tami LoSasso

Mystery/Thriller

BLACK BUTTERFLY Danielle Zell
THE ALMOST DEATH OF SILLA FOSTER Becky Munyon
KILLING EVERY ALICE J V Reed

SciFi/Fantasy/Horror/Speculative

THE ENTERPRIZE Melissa George
BLOODBATH AT VAMPCON Melodie Lake
HEIR OF BOUDICA Lauren Fulton

Women's Fiction/ Romance

THE ALPHA'S MOONSTONE Meegan Epps
LET'S TAKE THIS OFFLINE Melanie Malaspina
THE GHOST OF YOU LINGERS Melodie Lake

Young Adult/Middle Grade

WORLDS OF FIRE AND GLASS Danaeka Scrimshaw
KISS MY WRENCHES Meegan Dallner
THE RELUCTANT MUSE KELLEY J. P. LINDBERG
THE ULTIMATE SORCERER COMPETITION Kimberly Mallek



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 5-minute 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.

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

Cafe Lounge

Yoga for Authors

Kate Jonuska

1 hour

Forget the sticky mat and special clothes! Everyone is welcome at this chair-based yoga flow, which will warm your body and your mind. Breathing and stretching will be followed by a short guided meditation specifically for writers.

Conference Room I

Scene Construction

Peggy Waide

1 hour

Scenes are the stepping stones of a story that keep the reader turning the page. A character acts and reacts to the other characters on stage, the place or the events to advance the plot and develop character. This workshop will break down all the elements needed to construct a strong scene.

Conference Room II

Emotional Intimacy in Fiction - Your Key to Connecting with Readers

Cindi Myers

1 hour

The emotional connection between your characters and the connection your reader forms with your characters make the difference between a story readers merely enjoy to one they can't forget. In this workshop we'll explore why emotional intimacy matters and how to build it into your stories.

Conference Room III

NaNoWriMo Success and Beyond

Veronica R. Calisto

2 hours

Tips and tricks for succeeding at the challenge of NaNoWriMo that can be applied to any other writing deadlines.

Conference Room IV

Beyond Romance: Crafting Character Relationships That Win Readers

Sarah Reichert

1 hour

This one-hour session will teach the skills to construct dynamic, multi-dimensional connections between characters. We'll delve into leveraging relationships for plot development, creating suspense, emphasizing the role of dialogue, and establishing connections with readers.

Conference Room V

The Faceted Story

Johnny Worthen

1 hour

A presentation about those elements of narrative fiction that lend depth, value and resonance to writing. Examples and techniques will be offered to help shape niches and expand any story into new areas of interest for a greater chance to stand out from the slush pile.

Conference Room VI

How to Work With an Editor

Rachael Bush

1 hour

Whether you've just signed with a publisher or you're submitting to an anthology, this presentation will show you what to expect from your editor, the differences between the types of editors, and will remind you to be patient and professional through it all.

Conference Room VII

Playing God for Fun and Profit - Building Worlds your Readers will Love

Calvin Studzinski

1 hour

Worlds are big, and building them can be daunting. Learn how to build a fantastic setting, whether modifying our world to include magic and dragons, building a new secondary world, or constructing an entire galaxy to explore. What pitfalls do many authors fall into, and how can one avoid them?

Conference Room VIII

Horror Writing 666 (aka 101)

Angela Sylvaine

1 hour

Horror is part of our real world, make it part of your fiction. Readers love to experience dread, gore, and terror, and you can be the one to deliver it. Learn why and how to write stories that terrify!

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.

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

Conference Room I

Professional Marketing

Oliver Blakemore

1 hour

Many authors are new to marketing but it is an established field for other products. Oliver brings his expertise in brand marketing to show how professional techniques that are used to sell anything from concerts to perfume can work for books too.

Conference Room II

Not Your Mother's Tropes: How to Subvert without Alienating Your Readers

Rachel Dempsey

1 hour

Tropes are the building blocks of literary tradition, but the most exciting works of today are often subversive. Using examples and generative writing exercises, we'll explore ways to balance reader expectations with innovation, how to make old familiar conventions fresh without alienating readers.

Conference Room III

NaNoWriMo Success and Beyond

Veronica R. Calisto

Second hour

Conference Room IV

Comedy (Seriously.)

Christina Allen

1 hour

No matter your audience, genre, or format, applying the principles that make comedy writing work can take any project from predictable to un-put-downable! This presentation is geared toward writers of any level of experience, with writing from laugh out loud to deathly dramatic.

Conference Room V

Serial Fiction: If It Worked for Andy Weir, Can It Work for Me?

Z.J. Czupor

1 hour

Serial fiction has been around for more than 200 years and is making a comeback. This advanced program will explore serial fiction's history, current opportunities, and how it might start or jump start your writing career.

Conference Room VI

Professional Authors Alliance (PAA) Meeting

Andre Gonzalez

1 hour

A meeting of all members of RMFW's PAA.

Conference Room VII

Writing with Chronic Illness

October K Santerelli

1 hour

Chronic illness has a way of making us feel like we aren't doing enough, fast enough. This presentation will examine mental health while writing with chronic illness, as well as ergonomics and self-accommodations to keep you writing.

Conference Room VIII

True Crime to Novel: Turn Headline News into Page-Turning Fiction

Nanette Gamaly

1 hour

Ever wonder how to turn an astonishing, newsworthy story into juicy crime fiction? In this workshop, we will talk about how authors turn true crime stories into fiction. Together, we will review examples of contemporary novels and the techniques authors use to make readers turn the page.

VELLUM

Maya

**Ebook & Print
Easy Formatting
On your own**

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

Conference Room I

How to Endure in Your Writing

Jason Evans

1 hour

The art and profession of writing can be a thrilling creative endeavor. It can also break you. What do you do when your writing dreams don't come true? This class will explore the real world issues around being a professional writer.

Conference Room II

Writing about Trauma Without Triggering the Victim

Nanette Gamily

1 hour

Reading about violence and sexual assault is difficult for readers. As authors, we hope to draw readers closer to our characters and their pain. But how can we create empathy with our readers without distressing them?

Conference Room III

Is That Scary? Writing Horror in 2024

Stephanie Reisner

1 hour

What scared people in the late 20th century was totally different than what scares most people today. Learn the current tropes of the genre, as well as how to build tension in stories meant to terrorize the reader and leave them shaken.

Conference Room IV

Techniques and Tools for the Prolific Writer

Cindi Myers

1 hour

If you want to write more and write better, this workshop is for you. Get tips, tools, and techniques for increasing productivity, and balancing the demands of writing with the rest of your life.

Conference Room V

Generating Sales with Facebook Ads

Andre Gonzalez

1 hour

Many authors believe Facebook Ads no longer work for generating sales. In reality, the platform has become highly competitive. Learn how to carve out your space as an author and gain new readers on a platform that still has a billion users.

Conference Room VII

Exoplanetary Exploration - Realistic Methods for Visiting Alien Worlds

Calvin Studzinski

1 hour

Science fiction often resorts to fantastical technologies to reach other stars. Explore the real science we would use to explore exoplanets, the dangers involved, and the restrictions of sub-luminal space travel.

Conference Room VIII

Unlocking Tween Book Marketing: Unique Tactics for Middle Grade Success

Mariko Tatsumoto

1 hour

Is marketing Middle Grade Books the same as for Adult Books? While many strategies overlap, there are exciting opportunities exclusive to MG Books to boost sales. Explore the distinctive approaches that differentiate Tween Book Marketing.



Gold Rush Winners Brunch

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

Aurora Ballroom



Cap off your conference experience at Sunday's brunch and an impressive, final door prize: a free conference registration for 2024!

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Conference Presenters

Note: VIP, agent, and editor bios are located in the front of the program.

Christina Allen (publishing as C.W. Allen) is a Midwestern transplant to rural Utah where she serves as the President-Elect of the League of Utah Writers. She writes long stories for children and short stories for former children. She is also a frequent guest presenter at writing conferences, which helps her procrastinate knuckling down to any actual writing. Her award-winning middle-grade fantasy series *The Falinnheim Chronicles* is out now, with many more stories waiting in the wings.

Amy Armstrong loves to dabble with ideas and occasionally gets a good story out of her dabbles. She loves to read and serves as a volunteer reader for *The Masters Review*. 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.

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. Carol/Cate's most recent work is *A Summoning of Demons*.

Oliver Blakemore has been writing novels since he was twelve. He's written fifteen books, and two of them may even be worth reading. He spent four years as a technical writer and six years in brand marketing as a content writer. His credentials include a hard head and nine Honorable Mentions from the Writers of the Future contest. He currently runs RMFW's newsletter and Front Range Programs events.

Susan Brooks is Editor-in-Chief at *Literary Wanderlust*. She has many years of editorial experience and a master's degree in publishing from George Washington University. She was on the board of directors for Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers and played many roles from 2009 to 2019.

Rachael Bush published her fourth book, *Love on Location*, with The Wild Rose Press in 2018 under her pen name, September Roberts. As September, she writes romance that's smoking hot and always happy ever after. As Rachael, she writes the *Botany for Everyone* series, because everyone should know the basics of botany. When she's not writing, she volunteers as the President of the League of Utah Writers, serves as the Blue Quill chapter president, and builds the app for their conferences.

Veronica R. Calisto (she/her) is an alto, a writer of speculative fiction, and a big nerd. One of those rare Colorado natives, she has a degree in Molecular, Cellular, Developmental Biology and is a two-time American Idol reject. She is the author of several books, including *Diary of a Mad Black Witch* and the first two in the *SparkleTits Chronicles* series. She is also the co-editor of *Bizarre Bazaar*, a finalist for the 2023 Colorado Book Awards in the anthology category.

Kevin Campbell—a 40-year television, film, and education veteran—started his career as a TV news journalist. He produced hundreds of news stories as well as TV commercials, marketing videos, and education/training content. He also

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taught video production for high school and college students. He wrote and produced his first feature film, *Cheerleader Ninjas*, which sold to Lionsgate Entertainment and is now streaming on Tubi, Apple, Amazon Prime, and Philo. In 2008 he worked with “Save the Cat” author Blake Snyder at the Creative Screenwriting Expo in Los Angeles. Kevin was a finalist in the Rocky Mountain Fiction Writer’s Gold Rush Literary Awards in 2021 for his rom-com novel, “Kamikaze Grl.”

Jacquelin Cangro worked at Penguin Random House and Simon & Schuster for more than twenty years. Now, as an independent developmental editor and book coach, she’s reviewed hundreds of novel manuscripts, providing writers with feedback to revise their stories. Her areas of interest include historical, YA, women’s fiction, romance, and upmarket. She teaches creative writing at GrubStreet and The Loft, and she’s presented workshops at writing conferences around the world.

Caitee Cooper is an author, mom, and chocolate enthusiast who loves all things artsy and outdoorsy. She studied psychology, music, and business management at the University of Wyoming and, together with her husband, has helped start and manage several small businesses, including her author business. Caitee currently lives in Cheyenne, Wyoming with her husband, their two young sons, and a mostly feral barn cat.

Z.J. Czupor is immediate past president of Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers and an active member of Mystery Writers of America and International Thriller Writers. In addition to writing monthly columns for *Rogue Women Writers*, his latest thriller, “Cut Right Through Me,” and mystery, “When The Fog Rises” are published at zjames.substack.com. He’s also the author of “THE BIG WEIRD: Haikus in Times of Pandemic and Chaos.” Z.J. is represented by Terrie Wolf, founder and owner of AKA Literary Management.

Miranda Darrow is a freelance editor, #RevPit board member, and writer. After graduating with a degree in English (and then a law degree), she became a practicing attorney but never lost the urge to read and write fiction. Taking an in-house counsel position fifteen years ago allowed her the time to develop her writing and editing skills. She’s a member of the Editorial Freelancers Association, the Professional Editors Network, has a certificate in developmental editing from Jennifer Lawler’s Club Ed, and is a frequent presenter to writing groups. Her logic skills honed as an attorney are an asset in detecting and remedying timeline issues, plot inconsistencies, as well

as pacing and story arc concerns.

Rachel Dempsey is a writer of horror, mystery and thrillers living in Denver. Her short fiction has been published by Shackledbound Books, Brigids Gate Press, Timber Ghost Press and Twenty Bellows (Pushcart nominated, 2023). She holds a BFA in Drama and English from NYU’S Tisch, a Master’s in Journalism from Georgetown and an MFA in Creative Writing from Regis.

Z.S. Diamanti is the award-winning author of the Stone & Sky series, an epic fantasy adventure and the result of his love for fun and fantastical stories. His short works have been published in magazines, literary journals, newspapers, and books. He went to college for a very long time and has far too many pieces of paper on his wall. He is a USAF veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom and worked in ministry for over 10 years before pursuing creative endeavors full-time. He and his wife reside in Colorado with their four children where they enjoy hikes, camping, and tabletop games.

Linda (LV) Ditchkus is the award-winning author of The Sasquatch Series and was published in the 2022 Bizarre Bazaar anthology. She was a team leader and judge for the 2022 Self Published Science Fiction Competition (evaluating 50 of 300 submitted novels) and a judge for the 2022 CCWE Youth Writing Contest. Linda conducted developmental and substantive editing for two of the noncompetitive anthologies published by the Speculative Fiction Writers critique group. Through self-publishing her own books, she is intimately familiar with marketing and set-up with Amazon and Ingram.

Jason Evans has been an active member in the Colorado Writing community for over ten years. He has published four novels, including his debut, *The Gallowglass*, which was released in July of 2019 to much acclaim. He has had a dozen short stories published and has taught writing classes at the Pikes Peak Writers Conference, Denver Pop Culture Con, and the Colorado Gold. His collection of short stories, entitled “Stories I tell my Friends,” will be published later this fall. He is married to The Fetching Mrs. Evans, and together they have one cantankerous cat.

Tom Farrell is RMFW’s 2024 Writer of the Year. He has worked as a golf course starter, a chemist and clerked at City Hall in Chicago while attending law school. He is the author of *The Wager Series*, including *Wager Tough* (Book One), *WagerEasy* (Book Two) and *Wager Smart* (Book Three).



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Kerrie Flanagan (Crave Books) is an accomplished author, writing consultant, instructor, and freelance writer with over 25 years of experience in the publishing industry. As the Event & Outreach Manager for CraveBooks, Kerrie works to connect authors with their readership and organizes CraveBooks writing events, including the Book Ninja Summit. Kerrie is the author of *The Writer's Digest Guide to Magazine Article Writing* and creator of the online course, *Magazine Writing Blueprint*. She has also published twenty-three other books, including three sci-fi/fantasy series' co-authored under the pen name C.G. Harris and two romantic comedies with S.E. Reichert.

Sydnee Fullmer is a professional actor and voice-over artist who specializes in audiobook narration. She has been narrating for just over five years and has produced over 300 audiobooks with over 1 million copies sold. Her emotive, full-voiced narrations have made her one of the most sought after narrators in many romance genres. She is on the rosters of many production companies and publishers and is also the founder and CEO of Bordeaux V.O. and Entertainment INC. Last year she produced over 1000 finished hours of audio for Indie Authors.

Nanette Gamily's debut Native American crime fiction novel, *CRY FOR THE CHILD*, is represented by Josh Getzler at HG Literary. She's an enrolled citizen of the Cherokee Nation, a Tin House Finalist, a Regis University MFA graduate, and a guest blogger for Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers. She is a self-professed true crime junkie who lives in Denver with her husband, daughter, and rescue dog.

John Gilstrap is the New York Times and Thriller Award-winning author of over two dozen thrillers. A frequent speaker at literary events, he has taught writing seminars at dozens of venues, including the Smithsonian and Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers.

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. Ryanne Glenn works in Denver for a digital pathology company. Between writing and classes, she often visits her hometown of Fruita, Colorado to spend time with her family and dog, Captain Carl.

Andre Gonzalez is the author of all things thriller and horror. He and his wife run M4L Publishing, bringing other authors' books to life in the same genres. Andre has been a member of RMFW since 2016, and has served as the liaison for the Professional Authors Alliance since 2019. He oversaw the merger of the former PAL and IPAL groups into the now united PAA. He is the recipient of RMFW's 2021 Independent Writer of the Year Award. You'll likely find him buried under a long to-do list or his three young (and energetic) children.

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, and is a member of RMFW and Borderlands Writers. 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.

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 her extensive media background includes everything from public affairs director at a Denver radio station to television sports intern to website designer.

Amber Herbert is a (mostly) speculative fiction author living in Colorado Springs. She holds a BA in English Literature and has worked as a freelance editor for seven years. *Lipstick Covered Magnet* was her first novel. She is also the current RMFW technology chair and conference admin. When she's not writing or reading, she enjoys baking, playing board games, and watching and critiquing TV and film.

Kate Jonuska is a freelance writer, indie author, and part-time yoga teacher based in Boulder, CO, who also currently serves as Conference Co-Chair. Her novel, *Transference*, was a finalist for the BookLife Prize and a Denver Post Staff Pick, and she often



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teaches workshops based on her non-fiction book, *The Dictionary of Fiction Critique* at Cons and conferences.

Melissa Koons has a passion for books and creative writing. She has won the Editor's Choice Award for both her novel, *Orion's Honor*, and her poetry. Melissa writes in various genres but primarily publishes historical fiction, short story horror, and poetry. Melissa works as a communications professional, tutor, relationship coach, grief coach, tarot reader, and ordained minister. When she's not working, she's taking care of her cats and turtles, and exploring the adventures of life.

Kim Lajevardi is a former teacher who traded the insanity of middle school science for that of working all day, every day with her family. What could go wrong? She's written two upmarket books, both of which have either won or been recognized in Rocky Mountain Fiction Writer's Gold, Pikes Peak's Zebulon, Pacific Northwest Association's contest, and more recently, by the Tucson Festival of Books. Her dragon fantasy book was also recognized by both Pikes Peak's Zebulon and Pacific Northwest Association.

Karen Lin is a pitch and writing coach for award-winning and bestselling authors. She teaches for cruise lines and writers conferences. Many of her stories are inspired by her experience marrying into a Taiwanese family. Food is often a subplot. *Mu Shu Mac & Cheese* and *American Moon: A Chinese Immigrant Story* came out in 2020. She's an award-winning author of shorts, poetry, essays, novels, and for years a monthly column for *BTS Book Reviews*. She was honored to be awarded the Pen Award in 2023 (thus PAA membership) and the Golden Nugget Award in 2016.

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 "take away" 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.

Laura Manuel was a law enforcement officer (LEO) for 21 years in Virginia & Colorado. She was a patrol officer and later an investigator in Person's crimes. Her B.A. was from the University of Michigan, M.A. and Ph.D. from UNC in Psychology. She taught Psychology and Criminal Justice in her 23-year teaching career. Prior to retirement, she established and then directed the first police academy at FRCC.

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. Laurie is currently the Vice President and Membership Chair of Colorado Authors League.

Paul Martz has been an RMFW member since 2018 and was published in the 2020 *Wild: Uncivilized Tales* anthology. His past presentation skills include leading corporate training sessions and technology conference workshops.

Gary McBride produces *Writers Who Read*, a podcast based on the novels covered at *Writers Who Read LIVE!*, a monthly workshop for writers in Boulder that Gary founded in May 2018. *WwR* applies Literary Forensics analytical reading on novels published within the past 18 months in order to learn as

much as possible about how they were constructed so that attendees can apply those techniques to their own writing. By September 2024 Gary and his group will have analyzed 62 novels and counting.

Laurel McHargue—a West Point grad raised near Boston—lives and laughs and publishes and podcasts in the



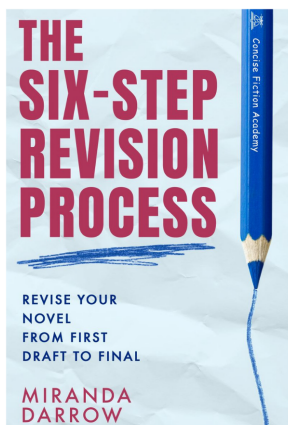
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brehtaking beauty of Colorado's Rocky Mountains. After years as an Army Officer, a mother of two sons, and an English teacher, Laurel abandoned paid employment to concentrate on her creative Muses. She does her best to keep her darker ones hidden, releasing them only when they scream to tell their tastier tales. A multi-genre author, Laurel writes about life, real and imagined, and hosts the podcast Alligator Preserves.

Sharon Mignerey is one of the founding members of RMFW, which has been her writing home since the beginning. She is the author of thirteen novels in romance and women's fiction, and one non-fiction title. She holds an MFA in Writing Popular Fiction. A frequent presenter at local and national writing groups, she loves sharing what she has learned about the art and craft of writing.

Sandra Murphy is an award-winning actress who has narrated over 100 audiobooks across a wide range of genres, authors, and accents. She is sought-after for embodying uncomfortable topics, such as human trafficking, mental health issues and domestic violence. On the lighter side, Sandra has a strong sense of comedic timing and a fierce sarcastic wit, which makes her perfect for quirky sleuths, empowered female heroines, and irreverent non-fiction. Listeners enjoy her "flawless" character work where she "adds just the right amount of flair and drama" to the story.

Cindi Myers became one of the most popular people in eighth grade when she and a friend wrote and illustrated their first romance novel. It would be another couple of decades before Cindi saw her first novel published, but since then she has published over 100 novels — historical and contemporary romance, women's fiction, and romantic suspense. A popular speaker and teacher, Cindi is a former RMFW WOTY, and has won a Colorado Book Award. Over half a million copies of her books have been sold in 17 countries and 16 languages.

Sarah Reichert (S.E. Reichert) is a novelist, poet, blogger, writing mentor, and herder of cats. She's the Youth Coordinator

for the Writing Heights Writers Association. She is also the webmaster for WyoPoets and a member of Wyoming Writers, Inc. Her Sweet Valley Series, a contemporary western romance trilogy, was recently published by 5 Prince Publishing. She also has a well-received paranormal romance series published (The Southtown Harbor Series). Sarah enjoys hiking, gardening, napping on the couch with her pit bull rescue, and practicing martial arts.

Stephanie Reisner is a bestselling and award-winning author, has a B.A. in English from MSUD in English-Creative Writing (1995), and is both traditionally and independently published.

She has been a professional author since 1996 when she landed her first column in a national trade magazine. With over 100 books published, both fiction and nonfiction, under various pen names, she makes her living writing and teaching. She has taught for RMFW, Pikes Peak Writers, and in an independent capacity. She was the 2019-2020 RMFW Independent Writer of the Year and her independently published novel, *Thirteen Covens: Bloodlines Part One* was a 2018 CIPA EVVY award winner.

Andrea Rexilius is the author of *Sister Urn* (Sidebrow, 2019), *New Organism: Essays* (Letter Machine, 2014), *Half of What They Carried Flew Away* (Letter Machine, 2012), and *To Be Human Is To Be A Conversation* (Rescue Press, 2011), as well as the chapbooks, *Séance* (Coconut Books, 2014), *To Be*

Human (Horseless Press, 2010), and *Afterworld* (above/ground press, 2020). She earned an M.F.A. in Creative Writing from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (2005), and a Ph.D. in Literature & Creative Writing from the University of Denver (2010). Andrea is the Program Director for Regis University's Mile-High MFA in Creative Writing. She also teaches in the Poetry Collective at Lighthouse Writers Workshop in Denver, Colorado.

Rebecca Rowley, Colorado author and paralegal, has published five books in humor and women's fiction through her own

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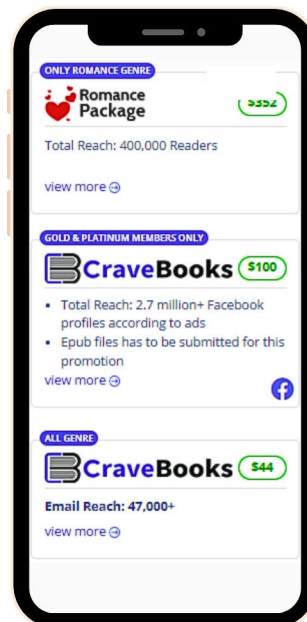
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imprint (Bexly, LLC) and has had multiple short stories featured in anthologies, including two through RMFW. She has worked in law firms and government offices in the areas of contract and business law for over 20 years. She's a contract nerd and comedy enthusiast through and through.

October K Santerelli is a local author from Denver, Colorado. He identifies as queer and disabled, and writes characters that share his life experiences. His works are primarily fantasies, ranging from dark to epic and everything in between. His debut novel, *City of Day (Nightfall, Book 1)* was named GoIndieNow's Cover of the Year 2023. His other works include a YA science fiction in David Brin's *Out of Time* series (*Storm's Eye*), a historic romance short story (*Mi Jaculpo, Hold Your Fire* anthology), and more. He has worked as an LGBTQ+, neurodivergency, and chronic illness sensitivity editor for six years for both traditionally and indie-published authors.

Susan Schooleman (pen name Ceba Onion) wrote for Roseanne Barr way back when shoulder-pads were in style, was a member of the Denver Center Theatre's Playwrights Group, was published by *Self* magazine and Samuel French. She then chucked it all for adventures in parenthood. Three grown kids and a retired math teacher husband later, she has begun inching her way back into the business. Her short stories have been included in three Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers (RMFW) anthologies. She was also a winner in the 2019 RMFW Gold Contest.

David R. Slayton (he/him) grew up in Guthrie, Oklahoma, where finding fantasy novels was pretty challenging and finding fantasy novels with diverse characters was downright impossible. Now he lives in Denver and writes the books he always wanted to read. His debut, *White Trash Warlock*, was a finalist for the Colorado Book Award. In 2015, David founded *Trick or Read*, an initiative to give out books along with candy to children on Halloween as well as uplift lesser-known authors.. His latest release is *Dark Moon, Shallow Sea*, an epic fantasy. David has taught workshops for *Writers Digest*, the *Pikes Peak Writers Conference*, the *League of Utah Writers Quills Conference*, the *Seymour Agency Winter Retreat*, *Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers*, multiple colleges, schools, and libraries.

Mark Stevens is the author of *The Fireballer* and five books in *The Allison Coil Mystery Series*. Short stories in *Ellery Queen*

Mystery Magazine, *Mystery Tribune*, two RMFW anthologies, and others. Host of the *Rocky Mountain Writer* podcast. RMFW Writer of the Year (2016 and 2023). Previous RMFW President. Previous president and current board member with *Rocky Mountain Mystery Writers of America*.

Calvin Studzinski is an award-winning aerospace engineer, amateur historian, role-playing game designer, and aspiring author. As a child, Calvin was an avid reader, consuming the works of Jules Verne and J.R.R. Tolkien with equal voracity, before reading everything he could get his hands on. It seemed only natural to turn his reader's inquisitiveness into a writer's industriousness, and he's finished several full-length novels which he and his agent hope will be published soon. Calvin's novel-writing is shaped by his career as an aerospace engineer and his passionate study of history.

A.Z. Sultana has been writing for ten years. She has a bachelor's in marketing and a master's in library science. She is a PMP-certified IT project manager. She has years of experience teaching basic IT instruction to corporate employees in an online group class setting, including seven years of experience in lead and support project management roles, using her knowledge and hands-on experience to create, facilitate, and implement projects for a Fortune 500 company affecting over 30,000 employees.

Cynthia Swanson is the Denver-based author of the psychological suspense novels *The Bookseller* (an Indie Next selection, *New York Times* bestseller, and winner of the WILLA Literary Award), *The Glass Forest* (*USA Today* bestseller and noted in *Forbes* as being one of "Five Novels with a Remarkably Strong Sense of Place"), and *Anyone But Her*, forthcoming in September 2024. Cynthia's work, which often features historical settings, has been translated into 18 languages. Cynthia is also the editor of the Colorado Book Award-winning anthology *Denver Noir*, which features dark, morally ambiguous stories set in and around Denver, written by 14 notable literary and mystery authors.

Angela Sylvaine is a self-proclaimed cheerful goth who writes speculative fiction and poetry. Her debut novel, *Frost Bite*, a '90s sci-fi horror comedy, and her debut short story collection, *The Dead Spot: Stories of Lost Girls* are out now. Her short fiction and poetry have appeared in or on over fifty anthologies, magazines, and podcasts, including *Southwest Review*, *Apex*, and *The NoSleep Podcast*. She lives in the shadow of the Rocky Mountains with her sweetheart and three creepy cats.

Mariko Tatsumoto emigrated from Japan at the age of eight and was detoured from her love of books by becoming the first Asian woman attorney in Colorado. But she found her way back to writing historical novels. *AYUMI'S VIOLIN*, her Middle

Grade novel, and her YA novel, *SWEPT AWAY*, garnered a total of seven literary awards, including the RMFW's Gold Award, and the Paterson Prize for Books for Young People. After learning to write for young people through the school of hard knocks, she published *HOW TO WRITE A MIDDLE GRADE BOOK KIDS WILL LOVE* so others wouldn't have to. Her adult novel, *BLOSSOMS ON A POISONED SEA*, is based on the same true events that inspired Johnny Depp's film, *Minamata*.

Nick Thacker is a USA Today bestselling author with over forty thrillers published. He owns and operates Conundrum Publishing, *Book Career In A Year*, and runs the write/repeat workshops and writing intensives. In addition, he's built businesses for authors: Author.Email, the only email marketing platform for authors, and RadioWrite.com, the 24/7 writing inspiration radio platform. He's currently the VP of Author Success with Draft2Digital, focusing on getting authors to the next level. His passion is helping authors figure out what their plan is — not just the “what” but also the “how” and the “why.”

Rebecca Thorne has published both traditionally and independently, and uses her social media platform to educate about publishing and writing. She is best known for her sapphic cozy fantasy novel “Can't Spell Treason Without Tea.”

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.

Peggy Waide, #1 Amazon bestselling author, 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 a romantic suspense. She's also been a trainer, personal coach and speaker.

J. Warren Weaver lives in small town Colorado, where he enjoys the bountiful great outdoors with his wife, daughter, and three dogs. When his infant child isn't demanding his complete and undivided attention, he enjoys writing edge of your seat thrillers with thought-provoking twists. J. Warren is the author of the award winning, international bestselling *In the Shadow of a Spy* trilogy.

Jennifer S. Wilkov is a multi #1 international best-selling award-winning author, producer, an award-winning freelance writer, *The Literary Agent Matchmaker™* and a respected book, business and entertainment creative consultant for nearly 20 years. Jennifer was selected as the Top Motivational Speaker, Business Consultant and Best-Selling Author of the Year for

2024 by the International Association of Top Professionals (IAOTP). She supports first-time writers and creators and seasoned authors, screenwriters, scriptwriters and playwrights with the essentials to become a bestseller: a great project, a strong platform and a well-polished pitch, presentation and hook for their book, television project, film, or theater project.

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.

J.E. Zarnofsky is a writer, costumer, larper, and devotee of dark and heartfelt fantasy. Her debut novel, *Tides of Blood*, will be published in 2024 by Raven Cantic Press. Apart from her day job in software, she can be observed in her natural habitats of coffee shops, ice rinks, or medieval(ish) battlefields—armored and ready with her sword or bow.

Thank you to our staff of volunteers!

Including RMFW's Conference Committee:

- **Connie Bauldree and Kate Jonuska**, Conference Co-Chairs
- **Amber Herbert**, Conference Administrator
- **Ryanne Glen**, Volunteer Chair
- **Dani Coleman**, Curriculum Chair
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- **Jon Rutigliano**, VIP Liaison and Pitch Master
- **Matthew Woolums**, Bookstore Chair
- **Sue Duff Loeffler**, Silent Auction Coordinator and Youth Programming Chair
- **Kevin Wolf**, First-Time Attendee Liaison
- **Bernadette Soehner**, RMFW President
- **Oliver Blakemore**, Conference Communications

Would you like to be part of our team of volunteers? Email conference@rmfw.org.



Code of Conduct

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

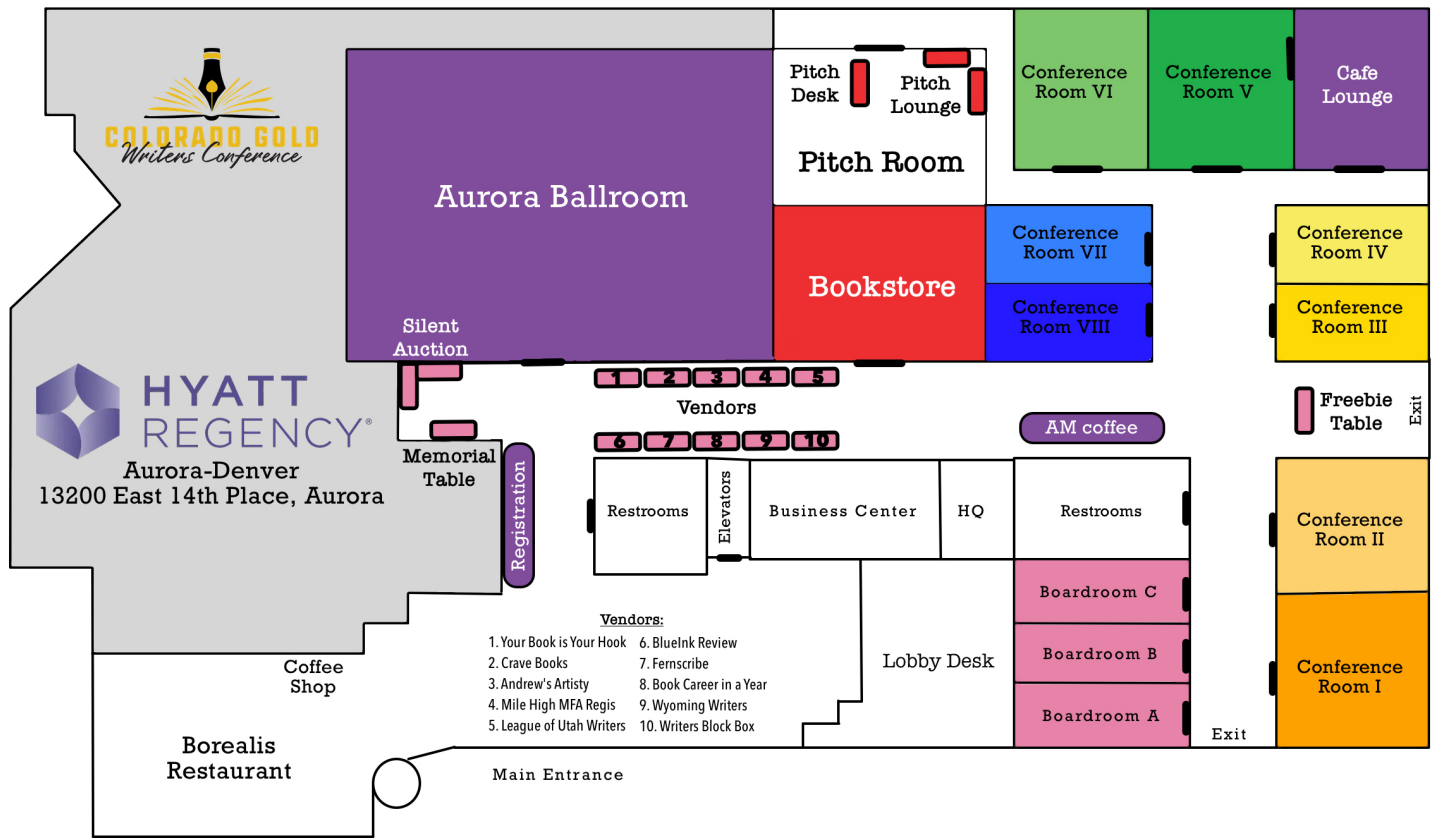
Participants asked to stop any harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately. Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers has a zero-tolerance policy. If a participant engages in harassing behavior, Colorado Gold Writers Conference staff retain the right to take any action they deem appropriate, including 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.

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