

The Report



Bridging the Epic Gap *Virtually*



SPRING 2021 CONFERENCE EDITION

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Be
inspired.

Enter a written
piece inspired by
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More info can
be found on the
OWFI website.

owfi.org/report/prompt

The Report is the newsletter of the Oklahoma Writers' Federation, Inc., and is published three times per year. Submissions should be directed to the newsletter editor.

editor@owfi.org

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Founded in 1968, the Oklahoma Writers' Federation, Inc. (OWFI) is a non-profit federation of writers' groups dedicated to promoting higher standards for the written word. We believe that the literary profession has come of age and merits a fair share of the critical acclaim so generously lavished on other worthwhile arts. OWFI shall seek to coordinate and encourage professional writing within and without its organization and promote the recognition of outstanding contributions to the written language.



From the President

We made it! On behalf of our executive board, dedicated conference chairs, affiliates, members-at-large, and our distinguished faculty, we welcome you to the 52nd annual OWFI Writers Conference, the one that went virtual!

If you're wondering why we are on the 52nd Conference instead of the 53rd, for the first time in OWFI history we had to cancel a conference in 2020. Believe it or not cancelation has loomed at our doorstep before, but this was the first time we faced a worldwide pandemic. Everything changed overnight. The world is slowly healing, and though everyone hoped to meet in person this year, myself included, we are happy to introduce the next best thing: OWFI's first completely virtual conference. If that's not bridging an epic gap, I don't know what is!

We have strived to emulate as much of our in-person experience as possible, including all the favorites: virtual bookstore, silent auction, famous author slideshow, contest winner announcements, buzz sessions, and even agent and editor pitches.

We are excited to provide a wide variety of sessions from craft to marketing, genre fiction to poetry, pitching to publishing, and so much more. Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#) for fun games and networking opportunities with our fellow writers.

So many things have changed this last year, but one thing remains the same. We are OWFI now and forever. Thank you for joining us this year! Please enjoy the conference!

Shelley Pagach, President 2019- 2021.



Meet Your President - Elect: Aleasha Shelnett

Has passion, will travel.

Originally a Texas girl, Aleasha thrives on adventure. She's lived in two countries, visited six others, and can't wait to use her passport again! Adventure at home looks like rooms overflowing with fur babies and boys, nightly dishwasher Tetris tournaments, and the occasional "What's That Smell" championship that occurs when the boys' laundry baskets are overflowing. She currently works as a Special Projects Manager and is a freelance creative—offering graphic design, crafty creations, photography, writing, and editing services.

Aleasha first stepped into OWFI through the side-door, volunteering as a contest category chair before becoming a member-at-large. The next year, she took on the role of 2nd vice president, then moved up to 1st VP/contest coordinator. For the next three years, she collaborated with her fellow officers to streamline and modernize the annual writing contest, breathing new life into tradition, and helping reclaim the reputation this contest has built over many decades. This year, as conference coordinator, she's been applying her love for event planning to the annual gathering of writers, agents, editors and other industry professionals, as they cultivate the craft.

When she's not chasing chaos at home, or speakers for OWFI, Aleasha is still running after adventure—occasionally by plane, train or automobile— but most often between the covers of a great story. Visit her at [The Nutthouse Diaries](#), and inspire her to share her stories more often!



4 Tips for Making the Most of a Virtual Conference

Due to COVID-19, the OWFI conference will be all virtual this year. While I'm lamenting the loss of in-person networking and the opportunity to catch up with old friends, I'm thankful the conference organizers have chosen to make our health and safety a priority.

If you're like me, you may have attended several virtual conferences or workshops by now. But if this is your first time attending a virtual conference, or you feel you don't get as much as you could out of virtual conferences, then this article is for you.

Here are four tips to make the most of a virtual conference.

1. Plan ahead

If you're unfamiliar with the conference platform, check it out before the conference starts. Some platforms require you to create a login and password. If this is the case, you'll want to set it up in advance. You'll also need a strong wi-fi connection and audio.

Make sure you know how to access the sessions through the online platform. And speaking of sessions, check the schedule so that you know what you want to attend and when. Many people peruse the schedule and speaker bios before a live event to maximize their time. Treat this just as you would if you were attending in person.

2. Prioritize the time

Block off your time and give the event the same amount of attention you would for an in-person conference. Keep your family in the loop and let them know when you'll be attending sessions. Consider using a color coordinated system to let your family know when you're available and when you're not. You can use different colored sticky notes or pieces of paper to hang on your door, such as red for "do not disturb" and green for "come on in."

Minimize distractions by keeping your computer at full screen. Many speakers provide handouts, so consider printing them in advance rather than toggling back and forth between the speaker and the notes.

3. Participate in the conference

Even though the OWFI conference is virtual, networking opportunities will still be available. Take advantage of those. Join the OWFI Facebook pages to interact with other members and conference attendees. Participate in discussions and ask questions. One of the best parts of the OWFI conference is meeting fellow writers.

Another opportunity you won't want to miss is pitching

virtually to agents and editors. The OWFI conference provides appointments for you to meet with agents and editors so that you can get your story idea noticed. Make sure to set up online appointments, and practice your pitch beforehand.

4. Embrace the awkward

Let's face it—online events can be awkward! Don't be afraid to participate, ask questions, and attend online social events. We're all still adjusting to this virtual world.

Right now, virtual conferences are more the norm than in-person ones. A virtual conference can be just as rich. The speakers and content for the OWFI conference are the same as what was planned for the in-person conference before COVID-19 wreaked havoc on our plans. By attending the virtual OWFI conference, you'll come away with new friends, knowledge, and skills, and maybe even a book deal. I can't wait to "see" you there! !

Staci Mauney is the author of four devotionals and several short stories. Current OWFI Past President, she co-owns Prestige Prose, a professional editing and writing company. Visit her at prestigepraise.com.



Don't Forget!

You can find all up-to-date information pertaining to the 2021 OWFI Conference on our website! www.owfi.org (check under the dropdown menu 'CONFERENCE')

Meet the Keynote and Keynote Session Info



Alton Carter winner of the 2016 Oklahoma Book Awards for his autobiography *The Boy Who Carried Bricks*, Alton Carter received his bachelor's degree at Oklahoma State University and is using his story to inspire youth and adults to do all they can to "make the world a better place."

He makes his home in Stillwater, Oklahoma with his wife Kristin and their children.

In addition, Alton Carter wrote *Aging Out*. Both books are about his life journey from foster care through adulthood. He has also written two children's books *The Boy Who Dreamed Big* and *The Boy Who Went to the Library*.



OWFI: What's your favorite genre?

Alton Carter. Crime fiction: suspense, thrillers, mystery.

What book have you not read even though it's a classic and you probably should have?

Moby Dick

Whose author fan club would you be the president of?

Sue Grafton.

What is the best writing-related advice you've ever gotten?

Create sympathetic characters and put them in jeopardy. (Mystery writer Leonard Tourney)

What is your favorite thing about conferences?

Spending all morning, afternoon, and evening talking with fellow writers.

You're a super hero. What is your superpower?

Having a snappy comeback at the instant I need it, instead of ten minutes later (okay, this is a wish, not a superpower, but we all need goals).

What is one funny, strange, and/or out-of-the-box thing we should know about you?

In high school, I was a mime. That's more trapped-in-a-box than out-of-the-box, but, yeah. Mime.

Alton's Speaking Sessions:

Keynote, Friday, 7:00 PM: Equip, Adapt, and Respond: Creating Survivors

An inside look at why some people see themselves as victims and provide them with information and tools to reach and change the victim mentality. This first-hand account of the life experiences of someone who aged-out of the foster care system will enlighten and inspire, moving each and every one of us to help create survivors.

Saturday, 2:00 PM: Inspire

Inspiring individuals to use their personal stories and experiences to create a fulfilling environment in the community around them. This workshop will help people find value in what they have been through and use those experiences to create personal ownership in everyday tasks, giving them tools to lay down the burdens that cripple success.



Frequently Asked Questions

An all virtual conference?

Yes! Luckily we can stay connected online.

Any questions?

Check our website often at owfi.org to keep updated on conference news. We also have a very active [Facebook group](#) (search for “Oklahoma Writers’ Federation, Inc. (OWFI)” or find the link on our website). If you have questions that aren’t answered there, contact our president, Shelley Pagach or conference chair, Aleasha Shelnett.

Can we still volunteer?

Volunteering is a great way to network, meet conference faculty, and grow your skills. Just because this year is virtual doesn’t mean we can’t use your help. The opportunities are limited but your help is not!

Virtual shepherds are needed. Shepherds will attend the speaker’s entire session — introduce the speaker and help moderate the Zoom room by admitting attendees and monitoring the chat section for questions. Training will be provided! Contact Shepherd Chair Myloee Yeager for more information or to sign up at scholarships@owfi.org

What platform will the conference use?

If you haven’t used Zoom yet due to the pandemic, you’re in luck; OWFI will be utilizing the platform for the conference.

The internet has a plethora of tutorials on just about every aspect of Zoom. It has been widely used over the past year by many organizations. Use your favorite search engine and ask away. The Zoom website has [test meetings](#), [a support center](#), and [many other helpful videos](#).

How will the Zoom sessions work?

OWFI will be duplicating the in-person conference as much as possible. There will be four virtual rooms on Zoom and each room will have a link assigned to it which will be provided after registration. See the schedule on [pages 8-9](#) to see which rooms the speakers have been assigned. [The OWFI website](#) will have the most current information as the schedule is subject to change.

Is there a Pitch Room?

Yes! A virtual option has been developed. There are nine editors and agents waiting to hear from you! The sign-up form and schedule is nested under the Conference drop-down.

Pitch Session Rules

Pitch sessions are part of the OWFI Conference package. Participants must be registered for the conference PRIOR TO scheduling pitch sessions.

In order to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to pitch, only your first selection is guaranteed. Any other schedule requests will be considered prior to the start of the conference. Please watch your e-mail for confirmation that we received your request (check your junk folder).

Online sign-ups will close at midnight on Wednesday, April 28, 2021.

Please review agent/editor criteria prior to scheduling to ensure the best fit for your work.

Please sign in to your pitch room’s waiting area AT LEAST 5 minutes before your scheduled session time. The moderator will admit you into the meeting room when it’s your turn. Plan extra time for technology challenges. No one will be permitted to enter a session late.

No-shows are disrespectful. Please do not sign up unless you plan to pitch. Remember, no entry will be allowed after the scheduled time.

Sessions will not be permitted to go

over the allotted time. A warning will be given to wrap-up pitches.

Pitch sessions are not guaranteed. As in the real world, editors and agents sometimes get sick, technology fails, and any number of other things may happen. If you registered for a time slot, and that time slot is removed because the agent/editor cannot be present (for whatever reason), then your time slot is lost, and you must re-register for a new time slot. It is important to keep an eye on the schedule for this reason.

Looking for last-minute tips on how to prepare for your pitch? Many thanks to Melissa Ann Singer for sharing [12 Keys to a Better Pitch](#) that you can download from the Pitch Room page.

Who sponsored OWFI this year?

There are many groups and businesses that supported the 2021 conference. Their logos are on the back page of this newsletter. Check out the sponsors and their links via the owfi website. www.owfi.org/conference2021/sponsors. If you want to see your name in this list, it’s not too late to become a sponsor! [Visit our website for more info.](#)

Any tips for attending a virtual conference?

- Block out time! Make sure to work out a schedule to separate home life from conference time.
- Try and minimize distractions. Keep your screen dedicated to the session you are in. Utilize notebook paper or other off-network devices to take notes and keep your focus on task.
- Build in time for snack breaks and other pre-planned meals.
- Remember to stretch and take breaks from your screen during transition times between sessions.
- Make a back-up plan in case of technical difficulties.
- Be an active participant in the sessions you attend. Your mindset can make a most of your experience at the conference.

2021 Pre-Conference

Thursday, April 29



Tamara Grantham, Pre-Conference & Speaker

Tamara is the award-winning author of more than a dozen books and novellas. Book one of the fairytale-retelling trilogy, *The Witch's Tower*, launched as a #1 Amazon bestseller. *Dreamthief*, the first book of her Fairy World MD series, won first place for fantasy in Indiefab's Book of the Year Awards, a Rone award for best New Adult Romance.

Tamara holds a bachelor's degree in English. She has been a featured speaker at numerous writing conferences speaking on the topic of female leads.

Born and raised in Texas, Tamara now lives with her husband and five children in Wichita, Kansas. She rarely has any free time, but when the stars align and she gets a moment to relax, she enjoys reading fantasy novels and watching every Star Wars or Star Trek movie ever made.

Speaking Sessions:

Pre-Conference, Thursday, 6:30 PM

Cracking the Newsletter Code

Do you want a newsletter but don't know where to start? Maybe you have a newsletter but aren't sure what content to send? For beginners and experts alike, award-winning author Tamara Grantham shares her secrets on how to crack the newsletter code. You'll learn how to pick the best newsletter service to fit your budget, find out how to tailor effective emails with highly successful open rates, and discover the top methods for finding subscribers. You'll also learn how to put everything on autopilot so you can get back to doing what you love best—writing! **OPEN TO PUBLIC - \$20**

(Not included in your conference registration. [MUST purchase a separate ticket.](#))

Tickets can be purchased in advance online.

Friday, 10:20 AM, Room A: The First Page: A Guide to Staying Out of the Rejection Pile

Your novel's first page can make or break your entire writing career, but you have no reason to stress! In this class, we'll examine the best ways of catching the attention of agents and editors. You'll learn how to avoid weak opening hooks, how to tighten dialogue, and how to create dynamic characters in engaging settings so you can stay out of the rejection pile.

Help make dreams come true!

Sponsor an OWFI Contest Category.

Full Sponsorships \$105 per category or

Half Sponsorships \$55 per category

All contributions are sincerely appreciated and tax deductible.

Sponsorships can be made online at

www.owfi.org/contest2021/sponsor/

or contact vck@cox.net



OWFI CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Friday, April 30

2021	ROOM A	ROOM B	ROOM C	ROOM D
8:30 – 9:00 AM	President's Welcome Shelley Pagach (Room A)			
9:10 – 10:10 AM	Marcia Preston Women's Fiction	Val Mathews Spotlight on The Wild Rose Press	Lara Lea Allen The Query Process: Who, What, When, and Why	---
10:20 – 11:20 AM	Tamara Grantham The First Page: A Guide To Staying Out of the Rejection Pile	Vivian Zabel Writing For Children Isn't Child's Play	Jennifer Slattery Building a Platform	---
11:30 – 12:30 PM	Keri-Rae Barnum Airport Stores, Book Stores, Chains: What It Takes to Get On the Shelves	Sheree Pruett Hybrid Publishing: How To Find the Right Fit	Dianne McCartney Pitch Perfect	Staci Mauney The Editing Process: Revising Work for Publication (Part I)
12:40 PM	Break			
2:00 – 3:00 PM	HB Berlow History in the Making: The Challenge of Writing Historical Fiction	Traci Ison Schafer Author Productivity	Dr. Marty Ludlum Ask a Lawyer About Copyright and Business Issues	---
3:10 – 4:00 PM	Mary-Lane Kamberg Getting Down to Business	Glenda Galvan Reading, Writing, and Loving Your Book! Why It's Important To Read Out Loud!	Ross Lampert Write That Logline!	---
4:10 – 5:10 PM	Dianne McCartney From the Judge's Point of View: Getting to the Winner's Circle	Maria Veres Publishing Poetry	Dr. Lisa Marotta & Charles Gosset Mindfulness for Creatives and Taming the Inner Critic	---
5:30 PM	Happy Hour: Hosted by Nick Lyon Open to ALL (registered or not). Click here to join.			
7:00 PM	Keynote: Alton Carter Equip, Adapt, and Respond: Creating Survivors (Room A)			
~ 9:00 PM	Buzz Sessions (informal come-and-go chats) Open to ALL (registered or not). Click here to join.			

[Remember to doublecheck the website schedule for the most up-to-date information.](#)



OWFI CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Saturday, May 1

2021	ROOM A	ROOM B	ROOM C	ROOM D
9:10 – 10:10 AM	Staci Mauney The Editing Process: Revising Work for Publication (Part II)	Heather Cashman Writing a Simple Synopsis and Plot Editing in One	Mary-Lane Kamberg Writing Non-Fiction For Young Readers	Dr. Lisa Marotta & Charles Gosset Creating Space For Writing and Self Care
10:20 – 11:20 AM	HB Berlow The Writer's Life: Being a Writer In the "Real World"	Maria Veres Loving Your Limitations: A Hands-on Writing Workshop	Casey Cowan Those Aren't Even Your Judy Pants	Shannon Iwanski The Basics of Writing Comic Books (and Graphic Novels)
11:30 – 12:30 PM	Jessica Reino Submissions 101	Shannon Whittington Your Story and Why It Matters	Dr. Marty Ludlum How Not to Be Sued In 3 Easy Steps	Rene Gutteridge The Low-Down on Screenwriting
12:40 PM	Break			
2:00 – 3:00 PM	Alton Carter Inspire (Room A)			
3:10 – 4:10 PM	Traci Ison Schafer World Building	Jennifer Slattery Growing Your Audience Through Effective Podcasting	Glenda Galvan Respectful Writing Utilizing Oral Histories	Ross Lampert Critique Groups: Finding One That's Right for You
4:10 – 5:10 PM	Rene Gutteridge Interactive Q&A on Screenwriting	Marcia Preston 50 Shades Of Crime Fiction	Patrick von Wiegandt Songwriting Basics	Keri-Rae Barnum Libraries: The Future Of Your Book
5:10 – 5:25 PM	OWFI Board Meeting Officers and Delegates (Room A)			
5:25 – 5:35 PM	General Membership Meeting All members welcome & encouraged to attend. Open to ALL (registered or not). Click here to join.			
5:35 - 6:45 PM	Break			
7:00 PM	Contest Awards Presentation (Announcement of 2022 Keynote Speaker.) Open to ALL (registered or not). Click here to join.			

Author Connection

Time Slots	Friday, April 30
9:00 - 9:30 am	Yvonne Morgan
9:30 - 10:00 am	Tom Schultz
10:00 - 10:20 am	Linda Apple
12:30 - 1:00 pm	Tamara Grantham (Pre-Con Speaker)
1:00 - 1:30 pm	Dianne McCartney (Faculty)
1:30 - 2:00 pm	Ross B. Lampert (Faculty)
3:00 - 3:30 pm	Marcia Preston (Faculty)
3:30 - 4:00 pm	H.B. Berlow (Faculty)
4:00 - 4:20 pm (only 20 mins)	Vivian Zabel (Faculty)
Time Slots	Saturday, May 1
8:30 - 9:00 am	Amy M. Le
10:10 - 10:40 am	Staci Mauney (Faculty)
11:10 - 11:30 am (only 20 mins)	Sheeva Azma
12:30 - 1:00 pm	Maria Veres (Faculty)
1:00 - 1:30 pm	Carolyn B. Leonard
1:30 - 2:00 pm	Susan Kite
3:00 - 3:30 pm	Abhi Sukhdial
5:25 - 5:35 PM	Vivian Zabel (Faculty)

[Click here for the Author Connection Room.](#)
[You will find your password in the email sent from Vck Kennedy.](#)



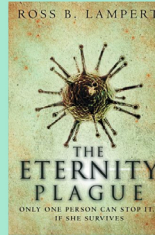
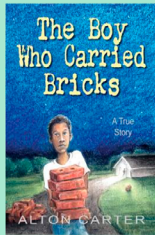
VISIT THE VIRTUAL OWFI CONFERENCE BOOKSTORE

WHERE?

This year's bookstore can be found online.
Find it on the website at owfi.org/conference2021/bookstore

WHAT?

- You'll find
- Books authored by conference speakers
 - OWFI Merch via Redbubble store
 - Books by conference attendees, PUB 2018-21



2021 OWFI Conference

Meet the Faculty & Their Sessions

Do you ever get tongue-tied when you meet a conference speaker you've been looking forward to meeting? Sharing your work with an agent? Dazzling an editor with your wit? *Have no fear!* Read on and learn a little about them, questions we asked them, and learn what sessions they're offering.

Lara Lea Allen, Agent & Speaker



Lara is an acquiring agent at [The Lotts Agency](#) with over 20 years' experience in the industry. Lara began her career in foreign rights before becoming a literary agent. She retains her interest in travel, and keeps an eye towards international rights in all she does.

Born and raised in New England, Lara is a sucker for gothic novels set there or in the deep South, and would love to see unique variations on these themes. Her tastes bend towards gothic horror, or well-told ghost stories without a lot of gore, and mysteries with fun and interesting locations or settings, or time periods. She is also fond of novels set in unexpected locales and for settings that feel like characters themselves. She likes works set in places that are particularly atmospheric and unique. She also likes highlighting people who are outliers—a recent fascination is with 19th century freed black sailors, who chose whaling as a profession in order to escape slave hunters.

Looking for: across all genres, speculative and historical fiction, romantic comedies, and atmospheric magical stories—particularly featuring magic or mythology from non-Western traditions not usually highlighted. Lara likes romantic comedies that feature enemies-to-lovers, or forbidden romances with lots of banter. She also has a soft spot for historical and mythological/fairy tale retellings, particularly lesser-known variations of those.

Also looking for: stories of interesting and independent historical women—explorers and adventurers like Isabella Bird, Octavie Coudreau or Ida Laura Pfeiffer, artists like Lavinia Fontana and Rosa Bonheur, or pirates like Grace O'Malley. A YA or MG based on any of these would be particularly welcome, as would a mystery or adventure series.

What's your favorite genre? I don't have *one* particular favorite, but I do love a good historical mystery, like *Girl Waits with Gun* or anything by Alan Furst, as well as a good gothic romance, like *Rebecca*. I also really like Middle-Grade mysteries—I've been dreaming about a little 10-year-old Hercule Poirot-type character. And I like anything that features favorite subjects: art history, women adventurers (I have a collection on 19th-century female botanists), and World War II spies.

What book have you not read even though it's a classic and you probably should have? *The Catcher in the Rye*. Although I think this is one of those books if you read above the age of 20 you're not going to like it as much. Like the musical Rent (I 100% believe they should, in fact, pay rent.).

Whose author fan club would you be the president of? Shirley Jackson, for one. That's what I'd campaign for, anyway. But maybe also Michael Ondaatje. Does Eleanor Roosevelt count?

What's the best writing-related advice you've ever received? Begin in the middle of the story. Something's happened before the reader comes in. This makes the whole thing more interesting, from the start.

What's your favorite thing about conferences? I do like meeting people and talking to them. I like finding out about their stories.

You're a super hero. What is your superpower? Flying. I'd never want to be invisible or have the ability to read minds—who wants to know what someone else is thinking about you? But being able to go where you want,

above the crowd, sounds tantalizing.

What is one funny, strange, and/or out-of-the-box thing we should know about you? I have a really weird, loud laugh. It sounds like a tittering horse. My friends find me in very large, crowded rooms by listening for it. One told me it'd be great for finding me in deep dark caves (which seems like a likely scenario).

Speaking Session:

Friday, 9:10 AM, Room C: The Query Process: Who, What, When, and Why

Looking for representation can be like online dating. Some folks research the agent of their favorite bestselling authors, casting their nets in their direction. Some do online research, making detailed lists of every agent looking for their genre or subject matter. Others just cast their nets wide, querying as many agents as possible, hoping someone says 'yes'. What actually works?

In this session, we'll discuss what queries work and what definitely don't. We'll cover how agents approach queries depending on the genre and subject, what they expect to know about the author, and what agents are thinking when they read a query, demystifying the query inbox to make the process less stressful and more efficient for everyone.

HB Berlow, Speaker



H.B. studied film-making and creative writing at the University of Miami in the 80s, was involved in the Boston Poetry Scene in the 90s, and was the former president of the Kansas Writer's Association from 2012 to 2013. He is the author of a historical crime fiction series, which includes *Ark City Confidential*, *Secrets of the Righteous*, *Lost in the Plains*, and *From Somewhere in a Dream* published through The Wild Rose Press and currently available on Amazon.

What's your favorite genre? Hard-boiled crime fiction.

What book have you not read even though it's a classic and you probably should have? *Infinite Jest* by David Foster Wallace. (Probably on the retirement book list.).

Whose author fan club would you be the president of? Raymond Chandler. His Marlowe is smooth, slick, and sarcastic; attributes I strive to achieve.

What's the best writing-related advice you've ever received? Write from the home. As a junior in college, I didn't understand what Nobel Laureate Isaac Bashevis Singer meant. As I've grown older, I am more aware of 'who I am as a person and a writer. I've discovered my 'home.'

What's your favorite thing about conferences? Getting together with old friends and making new ones.

You're a super hero. What is your superpower? Making people laugh and helping them forget their troubles for just a little bit. (Hey, maybe I AM a superhero!).

What is one funny, strange, and/or out-of-the-box thing we should know about you? I am an ordained Deist minister who has officiated at nine weddings, the most recent of which was my niece.

Speaking Sessions:

Friday, 2:00 PM, Room A: History in the Making: The Challenge of Writing Historical Fiction

Writing historical fiction is filled with subtle nuances. Enough detail needs to be inserted to provide readers as sense of time and place while at the same time not making the work sound like a term paper. Research is vital in

order to present factual information. The challenges in writing a historical fiction series will be presented as well as guidance to properly research.

Saturday, 10:20 AM, Room A: The Writer's Life: Being a Writer in the "Real World"

Let's face it: we are NOT writers 24/7. We have homes and families and jobs and everything that so-called real people have. How do we achieve balance? This open-ended session will focus on what works for each of us as individuals as we try to place our writing lives in perspective with the "real world."

Heather Cashman, Agent & Speaker



Heather has always loved meeting authors and working on their books as a collaborative partner. She was a professional editor for Cornerstones Literary Consultancy, editing middle grade, young adult, and adult books. She's also helped authors by working as managing director of Pitch Wars, #PitMad, and Pitch Madness, as well as being a Pitch Wars mentor. Before becoming an associate agent at [Storm](#)

[Literary Agency](#), Heather interned for three years at The

Bent Agency and Entangled Publishing. She's helped authors from the pre-query stage to acquisitions, and she's also worked as a freelance editor and consultant for traditional and non-traditional publishing. She's excited to continue helping authors as their agent.

What's your favorite genre? I read in every genre. What grabs me is voice and character in those first pages.

What book have you not read even though it's a classic and you probably should have? *Moby Dick*.

Whose author fan club would you be the president of?

Leigh Bardugo and Maggie Stiefvater—don't make me choose, please!

What's the best writing-related advice you've ever received? Write for yourself first. Edit for everyone else.

What's your favorite thing about conferences? Hearing about everyone's amazing ideas.

You're a super hero. What is your superpower? Downloading a book into my brain and being able to read all the books my heart desires.

What is one funny, strange, and/or out-of-the-box thing we should know about you? 'Should' is a strong word, but here's some fodder for you: I have anxiety around marshmallows because of a childhood...incident.

Speaking Session:

Saturday, 9:10 AM, Room B: Writing a Simple Synopsis & Plot Editing in One

You know so much about your story: the amazing world, the twists and turns, the brilliant characters! How do you get all of that into one page and keep it interesting without being confusing? Literary Agent Heather Cashman will show you easy steps to writing a synopsis for any story. You'll come away with the tools to not only create an expandable synopsis (from one to three pages) but will also have the means of editing your own plot and making sure your manuscript doesn't have any plot holes.

Keri-Rae Barnum, Speaker



Keri is the executive director of New Shelves Books, one of the largest book sales and marketing content providers in the US. With 15 years of extensive marketing experience, Keri is currently enjoying the ability to pair her lifelong love of books with her sales and promotion skills. She believes in helping authors – both self and traditionally published – take their book marketing and author branding to the next level.

She is a trusted authority in book marketing, speaking to numerous writing and publishing groups each year. Her frequent collaborations include being a featured marketing expert on Apex Authors, as well as a regular contributor on [thebookdesigner.com](#).

Her career has been largely focused on working with bookstores and

libraries as well as digital and print-on-demand platforms. She loves teaching authors "the ropes" and spends a large portion of her time working on education and sharing her knowledge with the writing and publishing communities. A favorite venue for this is the New Shelves Books advice vlog, [FreeAdviceFridays.com](#).

Outside of office hours Keri spends her time wrangling her two children and an ancient English bulldog with the help of her husband. A military veteran spouse and avid cook, she enjoys traveling as often as possible, but when she can't hop on a plane, a good book is her favorite escape. Follow Keri on Instagram at [@keribarnum](#) for a glimpse into her other life.

Speaking Sessions:

Friday, 11:30 AM, Room A: Airport Stores, Book Stores, Chains: What it Takes to Get on the Shelves

"What shelves do you want to see your book sitting on?" Quite often the answer is "Costco," "Wal-Mart," "Barnes and Noble," and "My book would be PERFECT for airport stores." If this is you, this session will teach you what it really takes to get into the military, airport, and chain stores you covet. Airport stores, Costco, and supermarkets have very limited shelf space compared to the rent they are being charged. It is a book buyer's job to make sure that those shelves earn their keep. This session will cover:

- A checklist of items you MUST have to even be CONSIDERED for the major chains
- The thresholds you must hit before you present your book to the buyers.
- What wholesalers and companies can help with this process
- How to earn your way onto the chain's shelves through the side door.

Saturday, 4:10 PM, Room D: Libraries: The Future of Your Book

US libraries spend billions of dollars on books every single year. Is your book one of them? Not sure how to make money with libraries? Not sure HOW to sell to libraries? In this session, you'll discover the immense potential of getting your book stocked in a single branch, a multi-venue library system, or even nationwide library distribution. Libraries DO buy books like yours and this session will teach you how authors and small presses can effectively pitch to librarians. Get the full details on how books get into libraries, how to approach librarians, and what materials you need to convince a library to stock your book.

We will cover:

- Why libraries should be one of your top priorities.
- What librarians look for when buying books.
- Why and How to get your titles listed with wholesalers.
- How to sell librarians on both you and your book.
- What to do once the library says 'yes.'

Casey Cowan, Editor & Speaker



Casey is co-founder, president and CEO of [Oghma Creative Media](#), Inc., a Fayetteville-based renaissance press dedicated to rewriting the rules of the publishing industry. Casey is a writer, photographer, and graphic designer who has worked in and around the journalism, printing, and literary fields for more than twenty years. He helps brand, promote, and publish authors, illustrators, artists, and musicians nationwide.

Speaking Session:

Saturday, 10:20 AM, Room C: Those Aren't Even Your Judgy Pants

Despite the old adage of never judging a book by the cover, we all do. As a graphic designer with 25 years of experience, and the designer of somewhere north of 200 books covers, I take a deep dive into what it takes—and what can actually hinder—the design of a great cover.

Glenda Galvan, Speaker



I was born in Coal County, sometimes called Boggy Bottom, Oklahoma. I am Chickasaw by blood and spent the most recent 34 years working for my tribe in the areas of history and culture. 27 years were in a supervisory capacity and presenting several times each year. I am a Master Storyteller, recognized by my tribe and the state of Oklahoma. I am also a certified security officer and have been teaching classes to my peers for several years in museum safety

and security.

I served on numerous museum boards over the years including Oklahoma Museums Association, Mountain-Plains Museum Association, Smithsonian Institution, Institution of Library and Museums Services, Sam Noble Museum of Natural History and others.

I was born into the Fox clan of the Chickasaw Nation and am the clan storyteller for my clan. My family name, Ayakatubby means “to go down and kill” in our language--we were hunters.

I have been published by such organizations as The Smithsonian Institution, National Park Service, Wonderland Press, Chickasaw Press and Chelsea House Publishers. Three of my books have been published in Chickasaw and in English and being traditional tribal stories, I was able to present them at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington D.C. on November 11, 2011. I have traveled often over the years doing traditional storytelling in most of the fifty states, but also in Canada and Mexico. However, my most joyous times are spent with tribal citizens and children. Some of the books have gone on to win state and national awards for which I am quite proud to be a part of, along with the Press and the artist.

My education was received in Kansas, University of Oklahoma and East Central University. I was the first tribal curator, the first repatriation officer for the tribe, a member of the first dance troupe, first tribal employee to oversee the Chickasaw White House Site and the first headquarters site to have a security system installed. I was selected as the Honored One representing the Chickasaw Nation and the state of Oklahoma elders in 2012 through the AARP organization.

I have also shared other cultural knowledge with others, sometimes in a classroom setting, sometimes one on one. Examples are beaded collars, loom beading, free style beading, traditional storytelling, introduction of our elders including enrollees, stomp dance and protocol for women, importance of repatriation and protocol and tribal history.

I have been married to my husband, Tino for 33 years. We have raised two sons and are enjoying three wonderful grandchildren! Besides our grandchildren, we have also been foster parents for several years. We have loved many newborns and toddlers praying always that they return to the loving arms of their natural families. In our tribe, there is no lost child nor any record of a child abandoned by our tribe.

What’s your favorite genre? I enjoy non-fiction material however, true crime also has my attention.

What book have you not read even though it’s a classic and you probably should have? I have tried to read Shakespeare several times in my life and just haven’t been able to finish the book. Several college classes requested we read it, so I did my best, however, ended up reading sections of the book

Whose author fan club would you be the president of? I have learned a great deal from Anne Graham Lotz and Jay Sekulow however if I have to choose one, let’s go with Jay Sekulow. He’s straight and to the point while citing his sources.

What’s the best writing-related advice you’ve ever received? I have been told my books make the reader want to know more about who they are and where they come from.

What’s your favorite thing about conferences? I enjoy networking at conferences! Meeting new people with like interests, different levels and angles of interests and knowledge are both fun and quite helpful.

You’re a super hero. What is your superpower? I never really thought about having a superhero in my life besides family members however, I grew up watching The Wizard of Oz, and Glenda, the Good Witch of the North, was dear to me because she was kind, loved by everyone, and very helpful. My superpower would have to be an abundance of kindness and patience throughout society in a way that it would rub off onto those who just aren’t

“feeling” it!

What is one funny, strange, and/or out-of-the-box thing we should know about you? I am the clan storyteller for my clan (Fox clan/Chickasaw Nation) responsible for carrying our clan stories into the next generation.

Speaking Sessions:

Friday, 3:10 PM, Room B: Reading, Writing, and Loving Your Book! Why It’s Important to Read Out Loud!

There’s more to reading than the pleasures it gives us, research shows that it increases blood flow to different areas of the brain, while more literary reading gives your brain a workout within several complex cognitive functions.

Reading, particularly reading out loud exposes us to other voices, types of writing, other genres and it gives us writing that’s quite different, actually better than our own which helps us improve. Reading, whether the piece is good or bad, can inspire us, even encourage us to continue writing taking our readers to someone else’s real or imaginary world.

As a child growing up on a dairy farm in Kansas, readings by Mother were most anticipated each day. Like most children who were read to, storybooks took each of us to a very exciting and unusual place. We had our library cards, well used, and learned the many genres and took advantage of the time we had with our precious books.

Then, in a few years, we were writing short stories ourselves in a creative writing class. It’s likely we never realized just how much of a role all of the storytelling from our parents and grandparents actually had in keeping our minds focused.

There are actually two ways we can become better writers: read a lot and write a lot. Keep in mind the vocabulary and thinking skills we develop which keeps our brain active. There is research showing reading helps with fluid intelligence, but also with comprehension skills and emotional intelligence, too.

Saturday, 3:10 PM, Room C: Respectful Writing Utilizing Oral Histories

It seems that was the big, most important question and most popular question at any family gathering. By the time I was eight summers old, more questions like, “Can you speak your language?” and “Do you still ride horses to town?” Many questions would be asked of y family and me as we attended the public school from kindergarten until our high school graduation.

As I grew up, some of my most memorable times were when our grandparents told these amazing tribal stories to us, sometimes from their front porch on a warm summer evening and sometimes during the coldest winter night sitting next to a warm cast iron wood stove.

I believe it is critical we understand the value and urgency of utilizing oral history regards to the conservation of our cultures and suggest members of the community or family establish an oral history archive. The greatest danger faced by our communities is not the extinction of its peoples but of its identity and culture.

Oral histories have a powerful social purpose and can provide any interested community with a valuable tool to reconnect with its roots and actively engage with its identifiable history. Lived experiences told by ethnic elders talking about poverty, respect, perseverance, overcoming prejudice, courage in a changing world, and faith would go along way in teaching future generations to hurdle hardships in their own lives. This has also been a way to renew and cement relationships between different generations giving each an opportunity to reach out to each other.

Charles Gosset & Dr. Lisa Marotta, Co-Speakers



Lisa and Charles co-designed a creativity retreat—The Mindful Muse. The popular retreat is now in its fourth year, inviting creatives to spend intentional time focused on the process of art making. Each session is a mini retreat for you to recharge your creative spirit and inspire your muse to come out and play. Choose one or both to give yourself a brain break and refresh your resolve to enjoy the act of creating again.

Dr. Lisa Marotta is a clinical psychologist and author. Her mission is to write healing books for children, her debut book *Suki and Sam* won the 2018 OWFI Best Juvenile Book Award. Subscribe to her blog [Psyched About Life](#) and follow her on Facebook and Instagram [@dr.lisamarotta](#).

Charles Gosset is a *Life Purpose Coach*, singer, songwriter, poet, blogger, and host of the Live Your Purpose Podcast. A lifelong creative himself, Charles's Coaching focuses on empowering passionate difference makers to lead courageous, authentic lives. Find him on Facebook and Instagram [@fullintegrationcoaching](#), and on the web at [fullintegrationcoaching.com](#).

What's your favorite genre? CG: Poetry.

LM: An undergraduate course in children's literature sparked my now longtime love of picture books

What book have you not read even though it's a classic and you probably should have? CG: *Great Expectations*.

LM: *Moby Dick*. Someone spoiled the ending for me, and I am overwhelmed by the space it takes up on a shelf.

Whose author fan club would you be the president of? CG: David Whyte. LM: J. K. Rowling. Her imagination and ninja plotting skills are inspiring.

What's the best writing-related advice you've ever received? CG: Write first. Edit later.

LM: Be persistent.

What's your favorite thing about conferences? CG: Meeting fellow creatives with a passion for words.

LM: I love the schmoozing. This is a welcoming community of wonderful writers. I find it energizing to connect with other creatives.

You're a super hero. What is your superpower? CG: My superpower is inspiring a writer's authentic voice to majestically appear every time they create.

LM: I can nap in under four minutes and wake up 20 minutes later refreshed and perky.

What is one funny, strange, and/or out-of-the-box thing we should know about you? CG: I have a college degree in Forestry and was the first North American to attend an international forestry school in Honduras, where all the instruction was conducted in Spanish.

LM: I have a small but priceless collection of blurry celebrity snapshots that may have been taken without permission.

Speaking Sessions:

Friday, 4:10 PM, Room C: Mindfulness for Creatives and Taming the Inner Critic

Clear the mental clutter with grounding mindfulness exercises. Tame your inner critic and bring out your inner champion! This spirited workshop will add Zen to your writing routine and peace to your self-talk.

Saturday, 9:10 AM, Room D: Creating Space for Writing and Self Care

Envision a hospitable place for your writing, and time in your day to develop a creative lifestyle. Come prepared to imagine the possibilities to spark new habits to sustain your writerly life.

Rene Gutteridge, Speaker



Rene is the award-winning and best-selling author of twenty-four multi-genre novels and is a seasoned collaborator in both fiction and film, with expertise in comedy, drama, suspense and contemporary. She has novelized six screenplays and movies, including *Old Fashioned*, with writer/director Rik Swartzwelder, *Heart of the Country* and *The Ultimate Gift*. Her romantic comedy with screenwriter Cheryl McKay, *Never the Bride*, won the Carol Award in 2010 for Best

Women's Fiction. Some of her suspense titles include *Possession*, *Misery Loves Company*, *Ghost Writer* and *The Storm Series*.

Her indie film, the comedy *SKID*, was deadCenter Film Festival's Best Oklahoma Feature Film Winner in 2015 and also won Best Oklahoma Feature at Red Dirt and Trail Dance. Her novel *My Life as a Doormat* was adapted into a Hallmark film called *Love's Complicated* which premiered in January of 2016 and scored 2.1 million viewers. She is the head writer for Skit Guys Studios.

What's your favorite genre? Narrative non-fiction.

What book have you not read even though it's a classic and you probably

should have? I have not read a single book by Jane Austen...at least of my own will.

Whose author fan club would you be the president of? Laura Hillenbrand or Erik Larson or Annie Jacobsen.

What's the best writing-related advice you've ever received? Throw out your best review and your worst review. You're somewhere in the middle.

What's your favorite thing about conferences? I found my first publishing deal and my agent through a conference. I believe wholeheartedly in their ability to get serious writers where they need to be. I also met some of my closest writing friends at conferences. To me, writer conferences are better than Disney World.

You're a super hero. What is your superpower? Not being exhausted.

What is one funny, strange, and/or out-of-the-box thing we should know about you? I once saved a small child from being kidnapped by a stranger! I also eat a bowl of spaghetti every single Wednesday. These two things are not related. And you said one. I gave two. I'm usually not a rule breaker. I've never even gotten a ticket.

Speaking Sessions:

Saturday, 11:30 AM, Room D: The Low-Down on Screenwriting

Check the [website](#) for the description.

Saturday, 9:10 AM, Room A: Interactive Q&A on Screenwriting

Check the [website](#) for the description.

Shannon Iwanski, Editor & Speaker



Award-winning author, Shannon is the owner and Editor-in-Chief of Inkubus Publishing, an editor for *A Murder of Storytellers*, and a founding member of the critique group *Nevermore Edits*. In 2014, he realized his childhood dream when his debut novel *Ride the Train* was published. Since then, Shannon has published another novel, a short story collection, multiple short stories, five novellas, and four anthologies. When not alternating between cursing and

thanking his overactive muse, he enjoys reading comic books and collecting way too much geeky memorabilia. Shannon lives in Tulsa, OK with his husband, four dogs, two cats, and a bird.

What's your favorite genre? I love sci-fi and dystopia. These two genres tend to focus on the interactions between people and/or species. There's something about that I find fascinating.

What book have you not read even though it's a classic and you probably should have? *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Every time I go to the book store, that title typically pops into my mind. No idea why. Maybe one of these days I'll finally read it and put that tiny, nagging voice in my head to rest.

Whose author fan club would you be the president of? Kevin J. Anderson. He has written some great sci-fi and fantasy novels. His collaboration with Brian Herbert to continue and expand Frank Herbert's *Dune* Universe is some of my favorite works of his.

What's the best writing-related advice you've ever received? My junior high English teacher was friends with author Robert Cormier, who wrote, among other things, *The Chocolate War* and *I Am the Cheese*. She told him about me wanting to be an author, and he wrote a note to me that said (paraphrased), "Stick with it and don't give up." I was young, so of course I didn't give that note the reverence it was due and no longer have it. However, I think about it from time to time, and it gives me the impetus to continue on.

What's your favorite thing about conferences? Meeting and talking to writers and authors. I greatly enjoy the "Aha!" moments where a speaker or fellow attendee says something simple or in a different way from how others say it, and it makes the concept click for me. It's like they've seen into the dark recesses of my mind and discovered exactly how to reach out to me.

You're a super hero. What is your superpower? Telekinesis. The ability to move things with my mind would be helpful and fun. Also, thank you for assuming I would be a superhero and not a super villain.

What is one funny, strange, and/or out-of-the-box thing we should know about you? While I write and read horror, I don't like to watch horror movies unless it is sci-fi horror. My criteria is the more potential it has to be real or plausible, the less likely I am to watch it. If an alien is eating people, sign me up. If a person is killing other people, I'm out.

Speaking Session:

Saturday, 10:20 AM, Room D: The Basics of Writing Comic Books (and Graphic Novels)

Thanks to the Marvel Cinematic Universe, comic books are enjoying a resurgence in popularity. No longer just pulp fodder for the kids with bright colors and larger-than-life superheroes, comic books are branching into new directions with in-depth story lines and content that is winning awards and readers' hearts and imaginations. Whether you've read a million comics or have never picked one up, learn the basics of writing a comic book script, see examples of the script in action, and learn where your best avenue may be to get your work into the hands of readers as you branch out into this new writing opportunity. Click here for handouts.

Mary-Lane Kamberg, Speaker



Mary-Lane is a professional writer with a wide range of experience. As a freelancer she has published hundreds of articles for magazines and newspapers, including such trade publications as *Hydro Review*, *Veterinary Economics*, *Produce Merchandising*, *Transaction Trends*, and *Solid Waste and Power*. She has also published more than 30 juvenile nonfiction books for Rosen YA, Rosen Central, Britannica, Enslow, and Crickhollow Books. She practices Tai Chi and serves as co-leader of the Kansas City Writers Group.

What's your favorite genre? A For writing, I prefer nonfiction, although I also write poetry and some short fiction. For reading, I love suspense, especially novels with international intrigue.

What book have you not read even though it's a classic and you probably should have? *Atlas Shrugged*. Everyone says I will love it!

Whose author fan club would you be the president of? Garth Stein, author of *The Art of Racing in the Rain*.

What's the best writing-related advice you've ever received? Write different genres. Writing techniques are all the same no matter what you write, although some genres emphasize some techniques more than others.

What's your favorite thing about conferences? Hanging out with other writers.

You're a super hero. What is your superpower? Identifying and relating to others' emotions.

What is one funny, strange, and/or out-of-the-box thing we should know about you? I have been kissed by a camel.

Speaking Sessions:

Friday, 3:10 PM, Room A: Getting Down to Business

Trade and association publications are little known outside the industries they serve, but they are usually well supported with advertising and subscriptions. They're unlikely to go out of business suddenly, leaving the writer unhappy and unpaid. Too, once a writer breaks in, he or she is likely to get further assignments. Mary-Lane will tell your conference attendees how to break in and write for these types of publications. She'll cover such topics as finding sources, researching hot topics, and learning industry vocabulary and jargon. Her business articles have appeared in the *Kansas City Star*, *Kansas City Business Journal*, *Hydro Review*, *Produce Merchandising*, *Veterinary Economics*, *Transaction Trends*, and *Women in Business*. Click here for handouts.

Saturday, 9:10 AM, Room C: Writing Non-Fiction for Young Readers

Young adult and middle school readers read to learn, and nonfiction books are where they turn (after the Internet!). Choose a topic, do the research, organize the material and write! Learn how to write for the educational market. Click here for handouts.

Ross B. Lampert, Speaker



Ross has been in love with both science and words—and hence science fiction and fantasy—since at least third grade, when he wrote a one-act SF play. After detours through public school, college, and the Air Force, he returned to writing in, appropriately enough, 2001. Today he blogs, writes training material, poems, and short stories, and crafts novels in southeastern Arizona. He has published two books, *The Eternity Plague*, and its sequel, *Chrysalis*. The final book in the series, *Wild Spread*, is in draft. He co-founded the Cochise Writers' Group in 2007 and leads it today. Among other degrees, he holds a Master of Arts degree in English (with honors), with a creative writing specialization, from the University of Central Oklahoma. You can follow him on his Facebook author page or on Twitter, and check out his web site, where you can sign up for his newsletter, *Eclipse*, and check out his many "Critique Technique" articles.

What's your favorite genre? Science fiction, closely followed by fantasy.

What book have you not read even though it's a classic and you probably should have? Too many to list, sadly. So many books, so little time

Whose author fan club would you be the president of? I've never been a fan-boy, but Hugh Howey's, maybe.

What's the best writing-related advice you've ever received? BICFOK: Butt in chair, fingers on keyboard. Book's not gonna write itself.

What's your favorite thing about conferences? Everyone's an opportunity to learn new things and make new connections.

You're a super hero. What is your superpower? Cloudy clairvoyance: I can see a future, but no guarantees it's *the* future.

What is one funny, strange, and/or out-of-the-box thing we should know about you? That I hate these kinds of questions. Sorry.

Speaking Sessions:

Friday, 3:10 PM, Room C: Write that Logline!

When a potential reader finds your book, whether it's fiction, non-fiction, or memoir, the first things they notice are the cover and the title. The next thing they look at is the story's description. You have one sentence—ONE!—to grab them and get them to click the "Look Inside" link or open the book. That sentence is your logline. One sentence? That sounds hard! Can you do it? Yes! In this workshop, you'll learn the elements of a killer logline, and then create one for your book. Click here for handouts.

Saturday, 3:10 PM, Room D: Critique Groups: Finding One That's Right for You

Should I join a critique group? Where can I find one? How do I know if it's right for me? Not every group is right for every writer, so the answers to these questions and many others can be key to deciding whether any group you do find will help you become a better writer. In this workshop, you'll learn how to determine what you need from a group based on your experience level, genre, goals, etc., where to look for groups, and how to evaluate the ones you find. Click here for handouts.

Dr. Marty Ludlum, Speaker



Marty's day job is an attorney and a Professor of Business Law at the University of Central Oklahoma. He teaches legal studies and international trade law and has published over fifty academic journal articles. He has been twice awarded the designation of Most Distinguished Teacher-Scholar.

Professor Ludlum is active in study abroad programs. He has led study tours to England, Ireland, Italy, Greece, and China. He has also lectured in Finland, Taiwan, and South Korea on international trade and globalization.

Marty's hobbies include travel and magic. He is an award-winning magician of the Oklahoma City Magic Club and is known to kids everywhere as "The Magic Dad."

When not on campus, Marty enjoys time with his family. He is married to his college sweetheart, Kara. They have three children: Bailey, Justin, and

Shan. In 2019, they welcomed their first grandchild, Tommy, who is the center of the universe.

Speaking Sessions:

Friday, 2:00 PM, Room C: Ask a Lawyer about Copyright and Business Issues

Lawyer Marty Ludlum will discuss copyright issues and general legal issues for the business of writing. After his presentation, he will address as many of your questions as time permits. He will also be available to answer your questions at the informal night sessions.

Saturday, 11:30 AM, Room C: How NOT to Be Sued in 3 Easy Steps

Lawsuits are a very real problem writers face. Lawyer Marty Ludlum will discuss simple yet effective ways to reduce your risk of being sued whether you write non-fiction or fiction. After his presentation, he will address as many of your questions as time permits. He will also be available to answer your questions at the informal night sessions.

Val Matthews, Editor & Speaker



Val is a big-hearted, fun-loving editor at [The Wild Rose Press](#), the kinder and gentler publishing house. Recently, she has contracted nine new books, including Mary Cunningham's *Margaritas, Mayhem & Murder* (cozy mystery), Steve Taylor's *Fiddlers Creek* (thriller), and debut author J.A. Nielson's *The Claiming* (YA urban fantasy). Val is accepting pitches for everything from sweet romances to challenging sci-fi. Val also works as a freelance developmental editor

and writing coach at [The Exit 271 Studio](#), editorial services for writers who need love, support, and a kind kick in the pants. There's a quote by Teddy Roosevelt that she loves to share: "Keep your eyes on the stars and your feet on the ground." Good advice for all writers! Fun fact about Val: She's an FAA-certified flight instructor, and in the past, she flew Lear jets for a living. Her Twitter handle is [@EditorVMathews](#).

What's your favorite genre? My favorite genre is Upmarket Fiction that doesn't shy away from humanity's darker psychological sides. However, at The Wild Rose Press, I contract everything from Urban Fantasy to Cozy Detectives to Suspenseful Romance.

What book have you not read even though it's a classic and you probably should have? *Ulysses* by James Joyce.

Whose author fan club would you be the president of? Definitely Margaret Atwood

What's the best writing-related advice you've ever received? Don't be so precious—and possessive—with your writing. After all, it doesn't belong to the author—it belongs to the readers.

What's your favorite thing about conferences? I love seeing the faces of authors light up after one of my interactive workshops and hear them say, "I have a brand new story to write!"

You're a super hero. What is your superpower? The ability to live forever. I want to be around to see all the new technology, breakthroughs, and medical advancements.

What is one funny, strange, and/or out-of-the-box thing we should know about you? I used to be a commercial jet pilot, and I've been an FAA Certified Flight Instructor for over twenty-five years

Speaking Session:

Friday, 9:10 PM, Room B: Spotlight on The Wild Rose Press

Acquisitions Editor Val Matthews shines a spotlight on The Wild Rose Press and answers questions about querying, the submission process, and the state of publishing. The Wild Rose Press is a traditional publisher founded in 2006 by authors for authors. They focus their attention not on the bottom line but rather on keeping a balance between author satisfaction and customer expectation, believing that creating a quality product and taking care of their authors was the only way to publish. Their mission is to create a "garden" where writers would grow. When other small presses have come and gone, The Wild Rose Press has never wavered. It truly is the kinder, gentler publishing house.

Staci Mauney, Speaker



Staci is a freelance writer and editor and award-winning indie author from Oklahoma. She is the co-owner of Prestige Prose, a freelance writing and editing company found at [prestigeprose.com](#). As an author, she has written four devotionals in the Echoes of Joy series, where her Yorkshire terrier, Lilly, is the main character. She volunteers for a variety of organizations in her local community and is a member and past president of the Oklahoma Writers' Federation, Inc. (OWFI).

Speaking Sessions:

Friday, 11:30 AM, Room D: The Editing Process: Revising Your Work for Publication (Part I)

Do you know how to edit your own work? Do you know when it's time to bring in a professional? In this workshop, Staci Mauney will discuss the differences among developmental editing, line editing, copy editing, and proofreading. We'll dive into the self-editing process and discover tips and tricks for revising and editing your own work. We'll also talk about how to ensure your work is ready for self-publication or submission to a traditional agent, editor, or publishing house. Whether you are writing fiction or nonfiction, editing is an essential step that should never be skipped. This workshop contains interactive practice exercises, so be ready to participate! Click here for handouts.

Saturday, 9:10 AM, Room A: The Editing Process: Revising Your Work for Publication (Part II)

In this workshop, Staci Mauney will show you how to take the information you learned in Part I and apply it in a practical, hands-on way. She will provide you with a sample short story and will walk you through the steps of the self-editing process. This workshop will help you discover techniques to polish your stories and present them in the best possible light to your readers. Have your laptop or notebook ready, and be ready to participate! Click here for handouts.

Dianne McCartney, Speaker



Dianne is an award-winning writer, speaker and contest judge from Canon City, Colorado. Her books, *The Road to Justice*, *The Daughter of Death* and *Just One Night*, are suspense and contemporary romance published by The Wild Rose Press. Her fourth book, *Fear the Night*, is available for pre-order now and will be released on June 2, 2021. She has sixty writing awards from contests in Oklahoma and Texas and is a long-standing member of the OWFI and The Rose Rock Writers.

What's your favorite genre? Suspense.

What book have you not read even though it's a classic and you probably should have? *War and Peace* by Tolstoy.

Whose author fan club would you be the president of? The Nora Roberts Fan Club

What's the best writing-related advice you've ever received? Figure out whose advice you should listen to and whose you should ignore.

What's your favorite thing about conferences? It's a great opportunity to meet publishing professionals of every level and interest.

You're a super hero. What is your superpower? Intuition. I always seem to understand things about people that others miss. It can be both helpful and a little disturbing

What is one funny, strange, and/or out-of-the-box thing we should know about you? I used to be a professional horsewoman and was taught by a man who had previously trained horses for the Queen of England.

Speaking Sessions:

Friday, 4:10 PM, Room A: From the Judge's Point of View: Getting to the Winner's Circle

Writing contests are a fun and easy way to learn about the writing process. You get positive feedback, recognition for your work, and a little extra

prize money never hurts. This seminar covers information from a judge's perspective about what we look for that determines a successful entry. Come and hear tips on how to prepare your manuscript in a way that elevates your entry to the top of the stack.

Friday, 11:30 AM, Room C: Pitch Perfect

Pitching is one of the activities in our writing world that fills authors with anxiety. This seminar covers how to research, prepare for and present a pitch that will intrigue agents and editors. Come and join me in learning about how to best prepare for your "sales pitch" in a way that leaves you feeling confident and fully prepared to be successful.

Marcia Preston, Speaker



Marcia has edited two national magazines, taught high school English, served as publications director for the National Cowboy & Western Heritage museum, and freelanced for a long list of publications. Her six previous novels were traditionally published and earned a Mary Higgins Clark Award, an Oklahoma Book Award for Fiction, and four Best Fiction Book awards from OWFI. She's a past president and honorary life member OWFI.

Her newest novel, *The Spiderling*, deals with an 11-year-old girl and her mother who try to build a new life after Kiwi's father is killed in the Iraq war. The story grew mostly out of worry; Marcia's son is career military and served three tours in the Middle East. Her granddaughters grew up as Army brats.

What's your favorite genre? Literary and crime. Even better when it's a literary crime novel!

What book have you not read even though it's a classic and you probably should have? Hate to admit this. *Little Women*.

Whose author fan club would you be the president of? Ann Patchett (*Bell Canto*, *State of Wonder*, *The Dutch House*)

What's the best writing-related advice you've ever received? Stop researching and start writing! You can look up what you need as you go. (I was using research to stall the hard work of starting the book.)

What's your favorite thing about conferences? Visiting & networking with other writers. I always learn something.

You're a super hero. What is your superpower? Talking to the animals. And saving them all!

What is one funny, strange, and/or out-of-the-box thing we should know about you? I'm an amateur lepidopterist. I sometimes raise caterpillars in Mason jars on my kitchen counter top and watch them turn into butterflies.

Speaking Sessions:

Friday, 9:10 AM, Room A: Women's Fiction

Women's fiction is a hot seller. But what's the difference between romance fiction, women's fiction, and "upmarket" fiction? Where do literary novels written by women fit in? Join this session for a lively discussion of the kinds of books women read—and write. Click here for handouts.

Saturday, 4:10 PM, Room B: Fifty Shades of Crime Fiction

The world of mystery/suspense/thriller fiction includes many sub-genres that an aspiring author needs to understand. Marcia will define these categories, along with examples, and offer a modus operandi for the actual writing. Click here for handouts.

Sheree Pruett, Editor & Speaker



Sheree is an Acquisitions Agent for [Covenant Books Publishing Company](#). She has been helping authors realize their publishing dreams for 4 years now. She is a lifetime Okie, born and raised in Duncan before graduating from Oklahoma Christian University in Edmond. She has a diverse background from interior design to the medical field to business ownership. Her passion is people and she strives to help them reach their goals, whatever they might be! She lives with her husband in Oklahoma City and together they have 6 wonderful kids and a

Belgium malinois puppy who keep them on their toes!

What's your favorite genre? Christian/motivation and sci-fi!

What book have you not read even though it's a classic and you probably should have? *The Stand*.

Whose author fan club would you be the president of? Joyce Meyer or Deborah Harness.

What's the best writing-related advice you've ever received? Put your pen in your hand and WRITE!

What's your favorite thing about conferences? LEARNING... always learning.

You're a super hero. What is your superpower? Invisibility!

What is one funny, strange, and/or out-of-the-box thing we should know about you? My maiden name is Clanton... my family was one of the bad cowboy gangs that fought in the OK Corral in Tombstone Arizona. You would think I'd like to read westerns more!!

Speaking Session:

Friday, 11:30 AM, Room B: Hybrid Publishing: Finding the Right Fit

In this session, Sheree Pruett will be talking about some aspects of hybrid publishing you may not have heard before. The publishing world can seem like a scary place to venture into without some knowledge of how it works. There are many options, so let Sheree give you information to help you find your way. Every book is different, every author is different, so make an informed choice for you!

Jessica Reino, Agent & Speaker

Jessica is a senior literary agent at [Metamorphosis Literary Agency](#).



Working for many years as a freelance substantive editor and being a multi-genre author herself, it is no surprise that Jessica has a wide variety of tastes when it comes to storytelling. She's a member of SCBWI New England, The Women's Fiction Writers Association where she was a Webinar Program Leader, and The Editorial Freelancers Association. She has also been a contributor for The Children's Writer's Guild Online Magazine as well as a reviewer for Story Monsters Ink. She has experience as an author coach and freelance editor with Pandamoon Publishing. She also runs a monthly Twitter chat #thewriterszen. Whether the story is tackling tough topics, or serves solely to entertain, Jessica is looking for manuscripts that are well-written with a strong voice in order to make that emotional connection. Jessica is seeking MG, YA, Adult and nonfiction projects.

Speaking Session:

Saturday, 11:30 PM, Room : Submissions 101

Join multi-genre author and Senior Literary Agent Jessica Reino for an overview of the submissions process. In this session, Jessica will talk about the many different publishing routes an author can take and what to put into a submission package.

Traci Ison Shafer, Speaker

Traci is a speaker, panelist, and award-winning author who is actively involved in the writing communities in her current state of Oklahoma and her home state of Ohio. She has a background in science and business and maintains her "day job" as a price analyst for the federal government while continuing to pursue her love of writing.



Traci's writing has earned several awards, including an Independent Publisher Book Award (IPPY) in Science Fiction, National Indie Excellence Awards (NIEAs) in both Science Fiction and New Adult, and Independent Author Network (IAN) Science Fiction

Book of the Year.

When not busy with her government or writing careers, Traci enjoys spending time with her family. More information about Traci and her books can be found at www.traciisonschafer.com.

Speaking Sessions:

Friday, 2:00 PM, Room B: Author Productivity

Traci will share strategies and tips to help you become more productive in your writing life and beyond.

Saturday, 3:10 PM, Room A: World Building

Traci will share things to consider when building your fictional worlds, whether those worlds are set in an alternate future or a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away. She'll also discuss how to approach building your fictional world, how to avoid the biggest world-building mistake writers make, and how to spark story inspiration.

Jennifer Slattery, Speaker

Jennifer, a writer, ministry leader, and national speaker who has addressed women's groups, church groups, Bible studies, and other writers across the nation. She's also a former acquisitions editor with Lighthouse Publishing of the Carolinas. She maintains a devotional



blog found at Jennifer Slattery Lives Out Loud and on Crosswalk, writes for iBelieve and Bible Study Tools, and podcasts for Salem Web Communications. She has a passion for helping women discover, embrace, and live out who they are in Christ. As the founder of Wholly Love Ministries, she and her team partner with churches to facilitate events designed to help women rest in their true worth and live with maximum impact. You can connect with her through her website or on social media.

Speaking Sessions:

Friday, 11:20 AM, Room C: Building a Platform

This class presents ways authors can build and expand their platform from article writing, to guest blogging, easy ways to increase your search engine ratings, speaking, and more. It also addresses the importance of presenting one's best work, maintaining a strong and consistent brand, and creating online content that draws and captivates readers and gets shared. Click here for handouts.

Saturday, 3:10 PM, Room B: Growing Your Audience Through Effective Podcasting

Podcasting has become one of the most effective ways one can expand their audience, develop credibility, and deepen their tribe's loyalty--when done well. When done poorly, however, podcasts can have the opposite effect. It takes wisdom, preparation, intentionality, and competency to create podcasts that attract and captivate listeners. In this workshop, Jennifer Slattery will discuss how one can get started with new and rapidly expanding medium. She will also share ways hosts can create fresh, insightful, and relevant content and prep guests to do the same. Click here for handouts.

Maria Veres, Speaker

Maria is the author of three poetry books. Her most recent collection, *Church People*, was a 2018 Oklahoma Book Award finalist. Her other poetry books include *Wake Up Singing* (2015) and *Waiting for Miracles* (2007). She is a two-time winner of the OWFI Best Book of Poetry Award, and she was a nominee for Oklahoma Poet Laureate in 2018.



Maria has been writing and publishing most of her life, but she came to poetry late. Her first poem was published the week of her fortieth birthday. Since then her work has appeared in many magazines, and she has been a featured reader at poetry events throughout the OKC area. She is a former co-host of the Last Sunday Poetry Reading series at Full Circle Books.

She teaches at Francis Tuttle Technology Center and owns a content writing business. She has served three terms on the OWFI Executive Board. Originally from Colorado, she has lived in the OKC area for 21 years. She loves cats, vegetarian breakfast burritos, nature walks, and OWFI. Visit Maria online at mariapolsonveres.com.

What's your favorite genre? There are so many! Probably YA/middle-grade fantasy.

What book have you not read even though it's a classic and you probably

should have? *War and Peace*.

Whose author fan club would you be the president of? JK Rowling (see #1 above).

What's the best writing-related advice you've ever received? Let go of perfectionism and have fun.

What's your favorite thing about conferences? Getting to see old friends and make new ones.

You're a super hero. What is your superpower? I can become invisible. The conversations I overhear will give me enough writing material for several lifetimes.

What is one funny, strange, and/or out-of-the-box thing we should know about you? I have queen-sized feet--size 11 wide. When I find cute, affordable shoes that actually fit me, I throw a party! Also, I'm right-handed but I write all my poetry with my left hand.

Speaking Sessions:

Friday, 4:10 PM, Room B: Publishing Your Poetry

There's a home out there for your poetry, and this session will help you find it. Learn where to submit your work, how to format and present your poems, and what to expect after you hit "send." We'll also touch on contests, social media publishing, and poetry book publishing. You'll leave with a list of resources and the skills to get your words out into the world. Click here for handouts.

Saturday, 10:20 AM, Room B: Loving Your Limitations: A Hands-On Writing Workshop

No time to write? Surprise yourself by discovering what you can accomplish in just a few minutes. In this session, we'll explore how your limits and challenges can become your greatest sources of strength. The workshop will include lighthearted, hands-on writing exercises. Beginners and experienced writers in all genres are welcome. Come ready to write.

Patrick von Wiegandt, Speaker

Patrick grew up in Hawaii with New York City parents and 8 brothers and sisters. Hearing New York schtick and accents while hanging out with Hawaiian, Japanese and Filipino kids was his normal. From there he moved to Pennsylvania then New York, and finally ended up in Los Angeles where he became an audio engineer, producer, and musician. When he branched out into recording events, concerts, seminars and conferences, giving him a chance to travel He hit the jackpot when he recorded the Maui Writers conference. This led to his involvement with 100's of writer conferences and events -- and he learned to write. Over the next 15 years he I wrote 10 complete screenplays, short stories, a how-to business book, and many songs.



He has written, produced, and recorded songs and musical pieces. His work with musical superstars and Grammy winning writers and musicians in Hollywood gave him an education beyond his dreams. His love of the great classics from the Jazz Age, The Great American Songbook, and the wonderful popular music over the last 100 years has inspired him to record and sing a series of albums called SWANKY -- featuring the songs of Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, Fats Waller, Lennon and McCartney, Johnny Cash, and many more.

What's your favorite genre? History.

What book have you not read even though it's a classic and you probably should have? *Story of Civilization* -- Will & Ariel Durant.

Whose author fan club would you be the president of? C.S. Lewis.

What's the best writing-related advice you've ever received? "Keep writing. The magic happens when you write."

What's your favorite thing about conferences? Learning from everyone. Getting encouraged to stick with it. Finding out that I'm not the only insecure one out there.

You're a super hero. What is your superpower? Super discipline. I can work all day and all night without looking for distractions.

What is one funny, strange, and/or out-of-the-box thing we should know

about you? I grew up in Hawaii with New York City parents and have 8 brothers and sisters, and I've surfed my whole life.

Speaking Session:

Saturday, 4:10 PM, Room C: Songwriting Basics

Got an idea, a melody, a poem, or a musical riff running through your head and want to share it? Patrick von Wiegandt will share his experience on how to go from putting ideas to paper to actually recording – so that you can share your music with others.

Have your ideas, notes, lyrics, jingles, poems, and completed songs ready to go. This will be an interactive class.

Shannon Whittington, Editor & Speaker

Shannon owns [CLC Publishing, LLC](#). After spending several years working for a publisher, the time came to branch out on her own and develop her own business in the literary world. Shannon works with authors from all backgrounds: from teenagers publishing their first novel, to seasoned professionals looking to advance their career by writing and getting published. Shannon is also a wife and mom to two great kids.



What's your favorite genre? I've enjoyed reading since I was 4 years old, and I've always enjoyed reading just about anything I could get my hands on. As far as reading purely for entertainment, I would have to say thrillers are my favorite.

What book have you not read even though it's a classic and you probably should have? *Watership Down*.

Whose author fan club would you be the president of? John Grisham. I've read all of his books, admire his backstory, and reference him often when coaching my author clients.

What's the best writing-related advice you've ever received? That everyone has a story, and every story is worth writing. The best way to keep going is to remember that your story may not be for everyone, but it's for someone.

What's your favorite thing about conferences? All the new collaboration opportunities.

You're a super hero. What is your superpower? Getting people to believe in themselves and their stories.

What is one funny, strange, and/or out-of-the-box thing we should know about you? As a publisher, an out-of-the-box thing I believe wholeheartedly is that writing is an art. Therefore, there's no "standard" as to how a book should be written.

Speaking Session:

Saturday, 11:30 AM, Room B: Your Story and Why it Matters

Shannon will be talking about the power of your story, your why, and how to use that to keep going when the journey gets tough no matter where you are in the process.

Vivian Zabel, Editor & Speaker

As a former English and writing teacher, Vivian heads [4RV Publishing](#). She studied the art of writing for years and is now a professional editor and award-winning author of children's, young adult, and fiction books.



Vivian often presents workshops and sessions at conferences around the nation, including the Alaska Writers Conference and the OWFI conference. She has been a member of OWFI since 2002 and the OWFI Grant Director since 2012. She was honored as the Lifetime Member in 2013.

Looking for: fantasy, science fiction, women's fiction, mystery, suspense, and other genres for the following imprints: tweens and teens, young adult, and fiction, as well as for other well-written books for all ages, fiction and nonfiction. Details can be found at 4rvpublishing.com/submissions.php

What's your favorite genre? To read, my favorite genre is mystery or suspense. For submissions, I like anything that's well-written except graphic

violence or sexual activity.

What book have you not read even though it's a classic and you probably should have? I've never read *War and Peace*, and at this stage of my life, I doubt I will.

Whose author fan club would you be the president of? Where do I begin? I have several authors that are my favorites, and I would gladly be president of their fan clubs: J.A. Jance, Carolyn Hart, William Bernhardt, Merline Lovelace, Stuart Wood, and new favorite author Meg Gardiner.

What's the best writing-related advice you've ever received? I have been giving writing-related advice for so many years that I have to go back in my memory a long way. An English teacher from long, long ago told me that since I planned on being a writer, I needed to know grammar thoroughly. I was amazed anyone knew my "secret" ambition, but I took her advice to heart.

What's your favorite thing about conferences? My favorite thing about conferences is meeting and visiting with people, new friends and old. However, I always learn at least one new writing idea at each conference.

You're a super hero. What is your superpower? My superpower? I guess at this stage of my life my superpower is facing a new day and accomplishing something positive. Even super heroes slow down.

What is one funny, strange, and/or out-of-the-box thing we should know about you? I hate peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. I like peanut butter. I like jelly. I don't like them together, never have.

Speaking Sessions:

Friday, 10:20 AM, Room B: Writing for Children Isn't Child's Play

Many people believe that writing for children is easy, that anyone can do it. Having children or working with children doesn't make a person qualified to write for children. In fact, writing for children is harder than writing for adults because the length of a children's story is shorter: the plot, characters, conflict, and action has to be concise and precise. Also, a child's attention span is shorter. "Writing for Children Isn't Child's Play" will cover some of the necessary components and needs to make a children's book work. Click here for handouts.

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Thank You to All Our Volunteers and Conference Chairs!

Organizing this conference is a huge endeavor that would not be possible without the time and dedication of our OWFI membership. These people enlisted help from their friends and family in order to accomplish their tasks, and we thank them for their help in making this conference a success.

A special thanks to the spouses/partners of all our OWFI officers/staff/volunteers. Without a great support system, much of the time needed for this conference wouldn't happen. It takes a special person to partner with a writer. These individuals are real life heroes/heroines!