COLORADO GOLD
Writers Conference

2026

October 1-4, 2026

Hyatt Regency Aurora/Denver

Harvest Your Inspiration

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Welcome from RMFW's President!

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the volunteers of Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers, I'm delighted you've chosen to spend this weekend with us. Every person who walks through these doors arrives with a different story. Some of you are attending your very first writers conference, wondering what to expect or hoping to find the encouragement to keep going. Others have shelves full of published books and have returned to continue learning, reconnect with friends, and share what you've discovered along the way. Most of us fall somewhere in between.

That's one of the things I love most about this community. We don't gather because we've all reached the same destination—we gather because we believe there's always something new to learn and someone new to meet. The conversations in the hallway can be just as valuable as the workshops. A casual introduction may become a critique partner, a mentor, or a lifelong friend.

If this is your first Colorado Gold Conference, I hope you'll jump in. Introduce yourself. Sit with someone new at lunch. Ask the question you've been debating whether to ask. Every experienced writer you meet once attended a conference for the first time, too. All newcomers are also welcome to join me at our Conference Orientation on Friday from 12:15-12:45 p.m. in Conference Room II for answers to common questions and a chance to win prizes.

As you move through the weekend, I hope you find exactly what you need. It might be a breakthrough in your manuscript, a fresh perspective on publishing, renewed excitement for your writing, or simply the reminder that you don't have to pursue this dream alone. Thank you for being here and for making Colorado Gold the welcoming, generous community it has become. I can't wait to see the stories that grow from the connections made this weekend. Enjoy the conference!

Bernadette Soehner

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

COLORADO GOLD Writers Conference

Special Guests

Stephen Graham Jones, keynote

Stephen Graham Jones is the New York Times bestselling author of nearly thirty novels and collections, and there's some novellas and comic books in there as well. Stephen's been an NEA recipient, has won the Texas Institute of Letters Award for Fiction, the LA Times Ray Bradbury Prize, the Mark Twain American Voice in Literature Award, the British Fantasy Award for Best Horror Novel, the Independent Publishers Award for Multicultural Fiction, WLA's Distinguished Achievement Award, ALA's RUSA Award and Alex Award, the 2023 American Indian Festival of Words Writers Award, the Locus Award, four Bram Stoker Awards, three Shirley Jackson Awards, six This is Horror Awards, and he's been a finalist for the World Fantasy Award, and the Eisner Award.

- Website: stephengrahamjones.com
- Find Stephen on Instagram. Find his books on Bookstore.
- In addition to his keynote speech during Saturday's banquet, Graham Jones will offer a 50-minute Q&A session on Saturday at 11 a.m. in Conference Room VI.

Sarah MacLean, keynote

New York Times, Washington Post & USA Today bestseller Sarah MacLean wrote her first novel on a dare and never looked back. Translated into more than twenty-five languages, the books that make up "The MacLeaniverse" are beloved by readers worldwide. In addition to her novels, Sarah is a leading advocate for the romance genre, speaking widely on its place as a feminist text and a cultural bellwether. A former columnist for the New York Times, the Washington Post and Bustle, she is a founding board member of Authors Against Book Bans and the co-host of the weekly romance podcast, Fated Mates. "Sarah MacLean's books are fierce." — Julia Quinn, #1 New York Times bestselling author of the Bridgerton series

- Website: https://www.sarahmaclean.net/
- Find Sarah on Social Media: Instagram | Facebook
- In addition to her keynote speech during Friday's banquet, MacLean will take part in the panel "Positioning, Pitching, and Platforms" Friday at 4:30 p.m.. in Conference Room VI, teach "Mastering the Art of Great Conflict" Saturday 8-9:50 a.m. in Conference VI, and offer a 50-minute Q&A session Saturday at 2:30 p.m. in Conference VI.

A huge thank you to this year's sponsors:

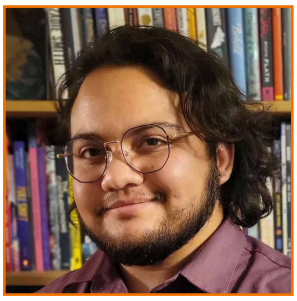
- 5 Prince Publishing
- Ground Crew Editorial
- Ariyana Brummit
- Claire L. Fishback
- DLA Editorial & Consulting
- Gemini Writers Studio
- Iron Gail Ink Collective
- Jennifer S.Wilkov - Your Book Is Your Hook
- Literature & Latte
- Novel Studios
- Spring Cedars LLC
- Steel Bear Editing
- The Author Website Guy
- Wordsmyth Books
- Writing Heights Writers Association

Agents and Editors

Caitlin Blasdell
Liza Dawson Associates
Saturday pitch sessions only

Caitlin Blasdell has been a literary agent with Liza Dawson Associates since 2002 with a focus on commercial fiction. Before becoming an agent, she was a senior editor at HarperCollins Publishers. A graduate of Williams College, she lives in Westchester with her husband, four sons, and ever-expanding perennial garden.

Caitlin specializes in quality commercial fiction including science fiction & fantasy, historical fiction, mysteries, thrillers, romance, and women's fiction. She also handles a few select middle grade and YA authors. She is not the right agent for poetry, nonfiction, or picture books.



Viengsamai Fetters
Erewhon Books
Saturday pitch sessions only

Viengsamai Fetters is an associate editor at Erewhon Books, where they edit fantasy, science fiction, horror, and genre-bending speculative fiction. Viengsamai has worked with authors such as Kalyn Josephson, Foz Meadows, Lee Mandelo, Tlotlo Tsamaase, and Mizuki Tsujimura, and was named a finalist for Publishers Weekly Star Watch in 2025. Originally from Columbus, Ohio, where they worked as a bookseller, Viengsamai is currently located outside Chicago.

Currently seeking: novel-length speculative fiction with heart: thought-provoking science fiction, fantasy, horror, and lightly speculative book club fiction/women's fiction. They are particularly interested in work from underrepresented perspectives. Not a good fit for: children's books & YA; short fiction collections; novellas.

Bowen Gillings
Savvy Literary
Friday night after-dark pitch sessions only

Bowen Gillings joined Savvy Literary in 2025 with nearly a decade of experience as an author and champion of authors. He is an active member of AALA, holds a Master of Education and a Bachelor of Science in Communication. Currently building his list, Bowen seeks to partner with writers who possess a sense of professionalism and a sense of humor. He loves a good story with a strong narrative voice that is both engaging and entertaining.

Currently seeking in fiction: Fantasy (High/Low/Epic/Grimdark/ Noblebright, et al.), Thrillers & Suspense, Action/Adventure, Historical Fiction, Light Sci-Fi, Military Sci-Fi, and witty, humorous voices writing in any of the above. Not a fit for: Romance, Horror, Dystopian, Magical Realism, Cozies, Regency/Romantic Historical Fiction, Women's Fiction, Literary, Contemporary, Hard Sci-Fi where the focus is science and tech over story and character, or any book where the message is more important than the story. All seeking select non-fiction.

Angie Hodapp
Nelson Literary Agency
Friday night after-dark pitch sessions only

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

Looking for: Novel-length fiction for adults and young adults (grades 9-12) only in the following genres: Action/Adventure, Chick Lit, Commercial, Contemporary, Crime/Detective/Police, Family Saga, Fantasy, Historical, Horror, LGBTQ+, Literary, Magical Realism, Multicultural, Mystery, New Adult, Romance, Science Fiction, Suspense, Thriller, Upmarket, Women's Fiction, Young Adult, Young Adult Fantasy.

Nadia Lynch
Talcott Notch
Saturday pitch sessions only

Nadia Lynch is a Junior Literary Agent at Talcott Notch Literary, where she combines her lifelong love of books with precision and attention to detail to help guide authors through their publishing journeys. With a bachelor's

degree in political science and a professional background as a paralegal, she brings experience in contracts and problem-solving to her work as a literary agent, blending structure with the creative energy of the literary world. Since joining Talcott Notch in 2021, Nadia has cherished the opportunity to build a career surrounded by books and storytelling. She finds joy in balancing structure with creativity in a way that feels both natural and rewarding.

Nadia is looking for historical fiction, upmarket fiction, romance, and women's fiction. She is especially drawn to narratives that center resilient, complex female protagonists and explore authentic, layered relationships. She gravitates toward books that push boundaries and broaden perspective, and is always impressed by authors who breathe fresh life into classic tropes.

Sara Megibow
Megibow Literary
Saturday pitch sessions only

Sara Megibow (she/her) is the President and Senior Literary Agent at Megibow Literary Agency out of Broomfield, CO. She has worked in publishing since 2006 and represents New York Times bestselling authors including Rebecca Roanhorse, Margaret Rogerson, Roni Loren, Jaleigh Johnson and Jason M. Hough. Sara specializes in launching debut authors and working on long-term career development and profit strategy with them. She is a graduate of Northwestern University with degrees in Women's Studies, Gender Studies and American History. Always LGBTQIA+ Friendly!

Genres accepted: Picture Book (fiction and nonfiction/ any and all sub-genres), Middle Grade (any and all sub-genres), Young Adult (any and all sub-genres), Romance (any and all sub-genres including romance for the YA market, the New Adult market and the adult market), Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror (any and all sub-genres).

Shelly Romero
Azantian Literary Agency
Saturday pitch sessions only

Shelly Romero is a Honduran-American Associate Agent at Azantian Literary Agency. She began her publishing career at Scholastic, worked at a book packager, and was a freelance editor prior to agenting. Outside of work, she loves watching movies and immediately logging them on her Letterboxd, playing board games (usually with a horror spin), and attending concerts whenever she can. Born and raised in Miami, Florida, she currently resides in New York City.

For Adult: Commercial, Crossover, Horror (once again, all the types of horror please!), Grounded Sci-Fi, Grounded Fantasy, Queer/LGBTQ-centric, Inspired by folklore, BIPOC Stories, Indigenous Stories, Psychological Thrillers, Speculative Fiction, Mixed-Media Formats/"Found Documents." For Children's MG & YA Fiction: Similar to adult genres plus Commercial, Coming-of-Age. Find her online at shellyromero.com.

Arley Sorg
KT Literary
Friday Night After Dark and Saturday pitch sessions

Arley Sorg is an associate agent at KY Literary. He is a Senior Editor at Locus Magazine, book reviewer at Lightspeed magazine, columnist for The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, and interviewer at Clarkesworld Magazine. He is a 2022 Kate Wilhelm Solstice Award recipient and a 2023 Space Cowboy Award recipient. He is also a 2021 and 2022 World Fantasy Award finalist and a 2022, 2023, and 2024 Locus Award finalist for his work as co-Editor-in-Chief at Fantasy Magazine. A 2014 Odyssey Writing Workshop graduate, Arley has spoken at a range of events and taught for a number of programs, including guest critiquing for Odyssey and being the week five instructor for the six-week Clarion West workshop.

He's accepting pitches for adult SFF (broadly speaking), including horror if it has speculative elements of some kind. He's open to works that are speculative/fantastic-ish, including light touches.

Stephanie Stein
Tor
Saturday pitch sessions only

Stephanie Stein is a Senior Editor at Tor Books, where she edits fantasy and science fiction by authors including Ilona Andrews, Evan Leikam, Marie Lu, Maddie Martinez, Annalee Newitz, and Katee Robert. She also works with the Brandon Sanderson team to bring his latest epic worlds to readers' shelves. Previously, she edited a range of acclaimed and bestselling fiction for YA and middle grade readers at HarperCollins Children's Books.

For Tor's family of imprints, she is currently on the hunt for adult science fiction, epic and historical fantasy, romance, and mythology and folklore-inspired reads—with a particular fondness for oddly specific magic, assassins, alternate timelines, dark academia settings, and gods behaving badly.

PRE-CONFERENCE ADD-ON PROGRAMMING: These programs require pre-registration and additional payment.

Full program descriptions and presenter bios are online at **rmfw.org/conference**.

Thursday Intensive Programs

Participants can choose either class offered during each block to build their own experience!

8-9:50 a.m.	Block One
10-11:50 a.m.	Block Two
12-12:50 p.m.	Lunch on your own
1-2:50 p.m.	Block Three
3-4:50 p.m.	Block Four
5-6 p.m.	Optional Happy Hour

Conference Room I

1. Dig Deep: Story as Our Greatest Tool with *Rachel Dempsey*
2. From Seed to Harvest: The Law of Causality in Fiction with *Rachel Dempsey*
3. Upmarket Fiction: Voice, Theme, and Market Identity with *Angie Hodapp*
4. Welcome to the Spec-Fic Multiverse: A Guided Tour of 100+ Subgenres with *Angie Hodapp*

Conference Room II

1. The First Chapter Fix: What Editors Look For on Page One with *Julie Cameron and Eva Fox Mate*
2. Know Your Ending: How a Killer Outline Elevates Story with *Rob Samborn*
3. The Author Marketing Blueprint with *Andre Gonzalez*
4. Utilizing Kickstarter in Your Publishing Cycle with *Z.S. Diamanti*

Friday Morning Masterclasses

8:00 - 11:50 a.m.

Conference Room I

Something to Talk About: Dialogue that Hits Different
Angie Hodapp

What shapes the way your characters speak—the words they choose, the truths they reveal, and the secrets they swallow? In this workshop, we'll dig into how context, subtext, and conflict work together to inform dialogue that lands with impact.

Conference Room II

Playing Chess with Money
Sara Megibow

Profit strategy for authors (traditional publishing, self-publishing, etc) is a bit like playing chess. In this masterclass, we'll look at distribution, formats, subsidiary rights, genre, platform, publicity and how each author can move the pieces around their own board effectively.

Conference Room III

Choose Your Own Adventure in Publishing: Different Paths to Success
Rob Samborn and Meghan Scott Molin

You just typed your last word of your first draft. Feelings of exuberance, pride, and accomplishment fill you, followed by overwhelming dread. Now what? This comprehensive masterclass will take you from manuscript to market.

Conference Room IV

Navigating the Short Speculative Fiction Field
Arley Sorg

Arley is bringing his decade of experience in the SFF short fiction field to you. Through lecture, conversation, and Q&A we'll cover topics including: utilizing short fiction to build a career; submissions and finding markets; sketchy contracts; and more.

Conference Room V

Taming the Scrivener Beast
Michelle Kellogg

Scrivener is one of the most powerful writing tools on the planet—but let's be honest, it can feel more like a wild animal than a trusty sidekick. In this four-hour master class, you'll learn to wrangle Scrivener's core features until they heel on command, no matter where you're starting from.

Conference Room VI

Turning Mistakes into Momentum: Harvesting Growth from Craft Missteps
V.L. Andromeda

Growth as a writer does not happen in isolation. It happens in revision and reflection. Drawing on principles from learning theory, this workshop explores how naming and sharing our missteps reduces shame, builds resilience, and accelerates skill development.

Friday Critique Roundtables

8:30 a.m. - noon

Boardroom A

Caitlin Blasdell

Boardroom B

Nadia Lynch

Boardroom C

Viengsamai Fetters

PRE-CONFERENCE

Newcomers' Orientation

12:15-12:45 p.m.
Conference Room VI
Bernadette Soehner

Welcome, conference newcomers! This orientation answers questions about what to expect from the conference, how to navigate the schedule, and other common questions held by folks new to our conference — or any writers conference. Also: door prizes!!

THE KICK-OFF!

Welcome Ceremony

1-1:20 p.m.
Aurora Ballroom
All encouraged to attend!

Join us in the main ballroom as we kick off the conference with door prizes, a short, inspirational speech by special guest L.S. Hawker, and lots of great information on how to navigate our weekend-long conference.

General Conference Events and Meals

Details about all events in following pages

FRIDAY:

- 1:00-1:20 p.m. — Welcome Ceremony, special guest **L.S. Hawker**, Ballroom
- 5:30-6:20 p.m. — Cash Bar, Ballroom Foyer
- 5:30-6:20 p.m. — Pre-Open Mic Coaching Session, Boardroom C
- 6:30-8:00 p.m. — Writer of the Year Banquet and PEN Awards with keynote Speaker, **Sarah MacLean**, Ballroom
- 8:00-10:00 p.m. — Open Mic, Conference Room VIII
- 8:00-10:00 p.m. — After Dark Pitches, Presidential Suite (add-on content)

SATURDAY:

- Breakfast on your own, coffee provided
- 12:00-1:15 p.m. — Publishing Panel Luncheon, Ballroom
- 5:30-6:20 p.m. — Cash Bar, Ballroom Foyer
- 6:30-8:00 p.m. — Gold Rush and Jasmine Awards Banquet with keynote speaker, **Stephen Graham Jones**, Ballroom
- 8:30-10:30 p.m. — PAA Signing and Book Sales, Aurora III

SUNDAY:

- Breakfast on your own, coffee provided
- 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. — Gold Rush Winners Brunch, Ballroom

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.

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

Twisting Tropes, Crossing Genres
Rebecca Fuentes, Rochelle Hampton
All levels – 1 Hour

Tropes are a shorthand between authors and readers. They tell the reader what to expect, but if nothing unexpected happens, the reader might lose interest. Keep genres and tropes fresh by lifting them from one genre, twisting them, and placing them in a different genre.

Conference Room II

How to Hook a Reader in Your First Ten Pages
Rachel Weaver
All levels – 2 Hours

It doesn't matter how good your book is overall if your first ten pages don't hook a reader effectively. Most agents request the first few pages to see if they want to read the rest of the book, most readers standing in a bookstore will give the opening pages a try to decide if they want to buy your book and Amazon has added that handy Look Inside button that shows the reader, you guessed it, your opening pages so that they can decide if they want to spend their hard-earned money on your book. In this class, we will discuss Jerome Stern's concept of position changes from Making Shapely Fiction, effective crumb dropping to create specific questions your reader will continue reading to find out the answer to, identifying your inciting incident for a powerful kick-start to your story, and what to do with that backstory.

Conference Room III

Turning Up the Heat: Mastering the Art of Spicy Romance
Jennifer Wilson
All levels – 1 Hour

Spicy romance is flying off the shelves, and knowing how to craft those scorching scenes is essential for capturing and holding your audience. This class delves into the art of crafting scenes that sizzle and how it's more than just physical. It's about connection, emotion, and the unspoken language of desire. We'll explore how to build tension, use unspoken communication, create believable characters with palpable chemistry, and write scenes that leave readers breathless and begging for more. By the end of class, you will be able to define the levels of spice, know how to write within your comfort zone, utilize the tropes that readers love, and understand what agents and publishers to query. Whether you're new to the genre or looking to refine your skills, this workshop will give you the tools you need to turn up the

heat in your writing and create romance that truly resonates.

Conference Room IV

Make the News, Don't Buy It: Publicity for Authors
*L*S Hawker
Advanced – 1 Hour

Fiction authors often assume that meaningful publicity requires expensive advertising or hiring a professional PR firm. This workshop challenges that belief by demonstrating how strategic, do-it-yourself publicity can generate significant sales, credibility, and visibility—at little to no cost. Drawing from real-world entrepreneurial experience, this session walks participants through proven, practical methods for attracting media attention, crafting compelling press releases, and leveraging both traditional media and digital platforms. Attendees will learn how a single well-placed media mention can outperform costly advertising, and how to build a sustainable publicity strategy that drives measurable results.

Conference Room V

Deviously Twisted Mystery Writing
Kim Olgren
All levels – 1 Hour

A good twist is not just unexpected. It must be satisfying, and leave the reader wondering how they didn't see it coming. Learn about a variety of twist options and how to use them effectively.

Conference Room VI

Pitch Your Way to a Better Book
Rachel Delaney Craft
Intermediate – 1 Hour

Pitching isn't just for the query process—in fact, writers should be doing it before they even start a new project. Crafting a pitch can help you identify your story's beating heart, shine a light on what's missing, and determine which direction you need to go. In this interactive workshop, we'll discuss key questions to ask and formulas to fill out as you write your pitch—and, more importantly, what you can take away from them to make your story stronger. Attendees will walk away with not only a working pitch, but also a better plan for drafting or revising their next novel.

Conference Room VII

In A Nutshell: Elevator Pitches, Comp Titles, Taglines, and Other Quick Positioning
Viengsamai Fetters
All levels – 1 Hour

Find yourself floundering when asked about your book? Learn about different ways to quickly describe your work, and what publishers use them for--then try your hand at crafting them.

Conference Room VIII

Cross Pollination: Mastering the Art of the Marketable Crossover Project
Meghan Molin
Intermediate – 2 Hours

So, you've unleashed your inner mad scientist and brewed up a genre-bending masterpiece? You're a cross-genre author! But how do you write and market a story that defies easy categorization? This class will equip you with strategies for identifying your unique target audience, crafting queries or back cover copy that highlight the best of both worlds, and the avenues for success and struggle selling cross-genre fiction both traditionally and indie.

Aurora IV

Chair Yoga for Writers
Kate Jonuska
All levels – 1 Hour

Let yoga relax your tissues and reset your busy mind. Bring only your body to this accessible yoga class, which takes place almost entirely in a chair and can be done in almost any attire. Session will end with a brief guided meditation.

Cafe Lounge

Meet and Greet with VIP Stephanie Stein for First Time Attendee Raffle Winner
Stephanie Stein

Boardroom A

Mentor Appointments

Boardroom B

Blue Pencil Appointments

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

Conference Room I

Metadata Is Marketing: How Readers Actually Find Your Book
Kiki Ringer
Advanced – 1 Hour

Metadata isn't just backend data. It's how readers find your book. Learn how keywords, BISAC/Thema codes, ISBN metadata, and categories drive discoverability across Amazon, Ingram, and retail platforms. This session shows how to position your book so the right readers can actually find it.

Conference Room II

How to Hook a Reader in Your First Ten Pages
Rachel Weaver
All levels – Second hour

Conference Room III

Strong Stories Start Small: Building a Foundation That Sustains Your Story Idea
Jennifer Wilson
All levels – 1 Hour

Most writing problems don't start in the middle of your book (even though that's where we often feel stuck)—they start at the very beginning! Weak character motivation, unclear goals, soggy middles, and even writer's block often trace back to foundational issues that weren't fully developed before drafting began. In this session, we'll focus on the "seeds" of a strong story: the core elements that determine whether your idea will grow into something compelling... or stall out halfway through. We'll break down how to identify your story's deeper "why," develop meaningful character goals and conflicts, and build both internal and external arcs that drive the narrative forward. This approach is also a powerful diagnostic for authors receiving rejections related to plot pacing or character stakes, helping you identify exactly where the "roots" of your story may have weakened. You'll also learn how to translate these ideas into a clear log line and synopsis, giving your story structure and direction. Plotters and pantsers welcome! This session doesn't tell you how to plot; it simply plants the story seeds for a successful harvest.

Reminder:
All conference registrants agree to abide by the Colorado Gold Writers Conference Code of Conduct, posted in full on page 33.

Conference Room IV

Audiobooks: What the Author Needs to Know
Tom Farrell
Intermediate – 1 Hour

We cover "why audiobooks." This workshop tackles why their sales grow year over year. Topics include best practices in narrating, reviews and awards, ACX and the audition process, distribution, marketing, contract review, and more.

Conference Room V

Pitch/Query Critique
Sara Megibow
Intermediate – 1 Hour

Literary agent Sara Megibow will listen to your brief pitch or query and provide feedback from an agent perspective and some helpful hints! This class is limited to 40 participants.

Conference Room VI

The State of Speculative Fiction
Stephanie Stein, Arley Sorg, Shelly Romero, Tasha Christensen (Moderator)
Advanced – 1 Hour

Get the lowdown on the latest happenings in sci-fi, fantasy, and horror publishing. We'll discuss the meaning of evolving terms like "speculative," "romantasy," and "cozy"; dive into what's selling and what's oversaturated; and provide tips on how to stand out as a spec fic author. From genre mashups to the all-powerful BookTok, it's an exciting time to be in speculative fiction!

Conference Room VII

Networking the Conference: Getting Out of Your Shell and Getting Known
Bowen Gillings
All levels – 1 Hour

A writers conference holds layers of value. Beneath the shiny, tempting surface of workshops and query sessions lies the deeper, richer motherlode of networking. Conference veteran Bowen Gillings will lead you through how to work it so that, by Sunday lunch, key people know you and want to know you better. This interactive workshop will provide valuable, practical lessons in goal setting, socializing, and self-promotion. We'll role play on how to push without being pushy, how to be focused while staying casual, and how to hold someone's attention without seeming to monopolize the conversation. Learn how to properly use business cards and promotional materials. The workshop addresses

maximizing planned and opportune free time, meal times, and Bar Con. Plus, how to stay connected post-conference with that agent, editor, or bestselling author you just became friends with.

Conference Room VIII

Cross Pollination: Mastering the Art of the Marketable Crossover Project
Meghan Molin
Intermediate – Second hour

Aurora IV

It Builds Character: 4 Steps to Creating Characters That Readers Will Root for and Remember
Chelsea Pennington
All levels – 1 Hour

You can have the coolest world or the most exciting plot, but if your characters fall flat, most readers won't bother finishing the book or remember it if they do. In this workshop, learn the 4 basic building blocks of creating a character who is flawed and relatable and will have readers rooting for them. Once you have a compelling character, we will then discuss how to use what you know about your character to create a plot that is tied directly to their growth.

Cafe Lounge

Meet and Greet with VIP Caitlin Blasdell for First Time Attendee Raffle Winner
Caitlin Blasdell

Boardroom A

Mentor Appointments

Boardroom B

Blue Pencil Appointments

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.

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

Conference Room I

Develop Your Characters' Voices: A Hands-On Workshop
Kelley Lindberg
All levels – 2 hours

This fun, hands-on workshop is full of painless exercises that will help you go beyond simple dialogue and observations to develop uniquely authentic character voices. Learn to identify the difference between a character's voice and your authorial voice, then dive into a variety of short, guided writing prompts to make those unique voices come to life. Bring your favorite writing implements and listen to your characters speak!

Conference Room II

Master Your Novel Pitch: How to Write, Refine, and Deliver a Pitch That Hooks Your Future Agent
Kevin Campbell
Intermediate – 2 Hours

In this interactive workshop, writers will learn how to craft a compelling log line and transform it into a clear, engaging one-minute novel pitch. Participants will explore what literary agents are really listening for, including concept clarity, conflict, and stakes. Through guided exercises, attendees will write their own pitches, practice delivering them in a supportive environment, and gain confidence overcoming stage fright. The session also prepares writers to answer common agent questions, helping them present their work professionally and increase their chances of receiving requests for pages.

Conference Room III

Diving into Diversity: Dodging the Dangerous
Rod Martinez
All levels – 2 Hours

Diversity in writing has become a hot topic. From whether a person of one race can factually portray a protagonist of another, to dialect, to "isms" to dealing with cultures and sexual orientation. Diving into Diversity: Dodging the Dangerous flows through these subjects and more in a smooth, fun entertaining way while still keeping us on task and more importantly, keeping our readers glued to the story and not the politics.

Conference Room IV

Literary Telephone: There Are No New Stories, Only New Storytellers

VL Andromeda, Oliver Blakemore

All levels – 1 Hour

As creators, there is immense pressure to invent something that has never been done before. In this collaborative workshop, we will examine the idea that originality does not come from inventing a brand-new plot, but from filtering timeless narrative structures through your unique perspective. Using foundational narrative frameworks—such as the 52 prompts, the quest, transformation arcs, revenge narratives, forbidden love, and classic setups—we will explore how multiple authors across decades have told similar stories in radically different ways.

Conference Room V

Plot(ting) Is Not a Four-Letter Word

Kim Lajevardi

All levels – 1 Hour

If you've ever settled down to the keyboard with a pocket full of vibes, you may be a pantser. Did you finish, or even more to the point, did it end up a rodent of unusual size? What feels good in the moment can cause you to curl into the fetal position with your favorite adult beverage when revisions come knocking. So, what can you do when vibes spit out a really good idea? Plot. No, seriously. Let me show you that plot is not the four-letter word you imagine it to be. If I can do it, anyone can.

Conference Room VI

A Decade in Traditional Publishing: Agent and Author Perspectives

Sara Megibow, Laura Gabriel, Michael Haspil

Advanced – 1 Hour

Michael F. Haspil is the author of GRAVEYARD SHIFT (TOR Books/ Macmillan) - he has written in and around traditional publishing for over a decade now. Laura Gabriel, conversely, is the debut author of EDEFNALL - a fantasy romance novel releasing in 2027. Sara Megibow is the literary agent who represents them both and who has worked in publishing since 2006. What's changed in traditional publishing? What can Laura expect that Michael could never have dreamed of? And what did Michael go through that Laura won't have to worry about? What worked a decade ago, what works now and how can you make traditional publishing work for you.

Conference Room VII

Spine-Tingling Stories: Writing Horror for MG and YA Readers

Shelly Romero

All levels – 1 Hour

Writer beware — you're in for a workshop of a scare! Join editor-turned-agent and certified Scream Queen Shelly Romero as she gives a crash-course on the children's horror genre and how you can use elements ranging from tone, illustrations and formatting to scare your youngest of readers

Conference Room VIII

From Manuscript to Market: Demystifying Traditional Publishing

Mira Landry

Intermediate – 2 Hours

Perhaps you've been around the writing world long enough to know the basics—if you plan to publish traditionally you need to write a manuscript, find an agent, sell it to a publishing house, and then people can buy your book, right? But perhaps all the in-betweens and maybe some before-and-after steps are still unclear? This workshop will breakdown a "typical" traditional publishing trajectory, from editing through selling, realistic expectations for timelines, advance amounts, and selling rights, and how to prep now to build your career later.

Aurora IV

Critique Partner Speed Dating

Kate Jonuska

All levels – 2 Hours

All writers benefit from peer critique! Find a critique group, beta reader, or other peer-feedback friend at this low-pressure, guided networking session.

Cafe Lounge

Meet and Greet with VIP Nadia Lynch for First Time Attendee Raffle Winner

Nadia Lynch

Boardroom A

Mentor Appointments

Boardroom B

Blue Pencil Appointments

COLORADO GOLD Writers Conference

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

Conference Room I

Develop Your Characters' Voices: A Hands-On Workshop
Kelley Lindberg
All levels – Second hour

Conference Room II

Master Your Novel Pitch: How to Write, Refine, and Deliver a Pitch That Hooks Your Future Agent
Kevin Campbell
Intermediate – Second hour

Conference Room III

Diving into Diversity: Dodging the Dangerous
Rod Martinez
All levels – Second hour

Conference Room IV

Let's Kill Some Characters — with Science
Ryanne Glenn
All levels – 1 Hour

From acid baths to chloroform, to extreme temperatures, there's a thousand ways to kill a character. But as wonderful as fiction can be, we do still live in a real world with real rules. This class will cover some basic science principles that most mainstream fiction and media get wrong. And if you want to kill (or maim) your characters accurately, this is the place for you!

Conference Room V

Build Your Practical, Productive, Profitable Platform
Jennifer S. Wilkov
Advanced – 1 Hour

Every writer writes a book with the intention of getting it to the readers they wrote it for, whatever genre it is in. However, understanding what it takes to actually get your book out into the marketplace and attract attention and/or grow your sales can seem like a mystery of its own. Break through the confusion, discover myriad ways to market your book, and start using it to attract more readers, agents, publishers, publicists, press and clients to your book and work.

Conference Room VI

Positioning, Pitching, and Platforms
Stephanie Stein, Nadia Lynch, Sarah MacLean, Tasha Christensen (Moderator)
Intermediate – 1 Hour

This panel will provide insight from publishing professionals on the nuanced art of positioning your book. From nailing down genre to creating a brand, we'll discuss how to condense your story into bite-size morsels that will grab the attention of agents, editors, and readers.

Conference Room VII

Take That AI! Tap Into Your Engaging Human Voice
Karen Lin
All levels – 1 Hour

Voice is who you are and how you deliver it. It's personal theme, cadence, details noticed and how you break rules. Find your honest, courageous, and evocative voice. Teachers drilled "rules" into us. But they are not the only things that make the book truly yours. That unique fingerprint sounds intangible, but it can be studied. We'll explore how to find your voice and capitalize on it through rhythm, tone, sentence length, language use, unexpected observations, distinctive viewpoint, details about your character, dialogue, action style, and your personal theme.

Conference Room VIII

From Manuscript to Market: Demystifying Traditional Publishing
Mira Landry
Intermediate – Second hour

Aurora IV

Critique Partner Speed Dating
Kate Jonuska
All levels – Second hour

Cafe Lounge

Meet and Greet with VIP Arley Sorg for First Time Attendee Raffle Winner
Arley Sorg

Boardroom A

Mentor Appointments

Boardroom B

Blue Pencil Appointments

Pre-Open Mic Night Coaching Session

5:30-6:20 p.m.

Boardroom C

Author and RMFW notable ZJ Czupor leads a practice and advise session open to any nervous readers who plan to participate in Open Mic Night at 8:30 p.m.

Writer Open Mic

8:30-10:30 p.m.

Conference Room VIII

Hosted by RMFW authors ZJ Czupor and Kevin Wolf, this open mic offers a chance to hear first pages from works-in-progress and published novels and potentially share your own. You'll never find a friendlier audience for a reading than at Colorado Gold! **Sign up to participate at the registration desk before 8 p.m. on Friday.**

Writer of the Year Banquet and Keynote Address by Sarah MacLean

6:30-8:00 p.m.

Aurora Ballroom

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

- Presentation of the PEN Awards by our PAA Liaison, **VL Andromeda**
- A speech by the 2026 RMFW Writer of the Year, **Andrea Catalano**
- A keynote address by New York Times, Washington Post and USA Today bestseller, **Sarah MacLean**

After Dark Pitches

These pitches require pre-registration and additional payment

Presidential Suite, 10th floor, see map

Agents Angie Hodapp, Arley Sorg, Bowen Gillings

Writers who signed up in advance will receive their pitch appointments with registration materials. Please arrive 15 minutes before your appointment time.

What is a PEN Award?

The PEN Award is given to new members of RMFW's Professional Authors Alliance. 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. For details or to join, email PAA Liaison, VL Andromeda, at paa@rmfw.org.

What is the RMFW Writer of the Year Award?

The Writer of the Year Award is open to all RMFW members who have published in the past calendar year, traditionally or independently. A committee reviews the entries to choose three finalists, and members vote to choose the Writer of the Year. This winner is announced every year at RMFW's Summer Member Party.

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

Conference Room I

The SuperPower of Writing Sprints: Smash Writer's Block
Johnny Worthen
Intermediate – 2 Hours

For those of us who overthink our writing process, writing sprints can help us break through our writer's block, self-doubt, and paralyzing perfectionism. In this improv-writing workshop, we'll use writing sprints (timed writing exercises) to glide right past writer's block, dive deeply into characters, and more. Bring pen & paper or your laptop, and be prepared to let your mind surprise you with fresh, uninhibited writing.

Conference Room II

Indie Publishing: Friend or Foe?
Laurie Marr Wasmund
Intermediate – 1 Hour

This course is designed as an introduction to the ever-evolving indie market. It focuses on defining and clarifying terms of the indie/self-publishing world and on answering questions of those who have one toe in the water but are reluctant to dive into the ocean. Ample time is given for questions and the sharing of experiences between participants.

Conference Room III

Sales Surge Strategy: How to Stack Promos That Convert
LS Hawker
Advanced – 1 Hour

Unlock the secrets of strategically coordinated book promotions in this informative workshop. You'll learn to leverage multiple marketing avenues, cultivate an engaged author platform, amplify your book's visibility, boost sales, and expand your readership. Join us and take your author game to new heights.

Conference Room IV

Help a Writer Pull the Weeds: Being a Good Critique Partner
David Rodeback
All levels – 1 Hour

How to give useful critique as an alpha reader, beta reader, or other critique partner or a member of a critique group. What to look for and report, critiquing in and outside your genre, the necessity of candor, managing the relationship, and critiquing the writing, not the writer. Examples of useful responses from real beta-reading, a useful tool or two, and some encouragement.

Conference Room V

Sowing the Seeds of Terror: A Class in Horror Short Stories
Amy Armstrong
All levels — 2 hours

Join me, if you dare, for a masterclass in writing spooky short stories. I will walk you through everything from structure to tips on how to craft the creepiest pages. Want to know how and where to sell your wares? Yes! I'll cover that too. Come to the dark side. I have what you need.

Conference Room VI

Mastering the Art of Great Conflict
Sarah MacLean
All levels – 2 Hours

Conflict is the gas in the engine of every aspect of the romance novel, from character to setting to theme. This workshop is an overview of how conflict works, how we build it, how we layer it, and why it's the key to the very best romance novels. This is Sarah MacLean's hallmark workshop.

Conference Room VII

POV, How to Properly Pick Your Poison
Elizabeth Devecchi
All levels – 1 Hour

You know the story you want to write, and the characters who will populate your work. But how do you decide which POV will best serve your story? How do you pick your poison between First, Second, or Third Person? Ultimately the choice is yours, but that choice will shape the experience of your readers, so it's important to choose with your personal goals in mind. In this program we will explore the pluses and minuses of each, with examples.

Conference Room VIII

Harvest Your Inspiration Through Short Stories
Lesley Smith
All levels – 1 Hour

Short stories are one of the most adaptable and fertile forms a writer can cultivate. They offer a compact, flexible space where ideas can take root quickly, grow with intention, and yield both creative and professional rewards. This workshop shows writers how to use short fiction to strengthen their craft, expand their skills, and build momentum in their writing lives. We'll explore how character, plot, setting, emotion, theme, and voice

flourish within the space of short form, and use short fiction as a rich field for experimentation and discovery. We'll also look at how short stories can help cultivate a thriving writing career, discover how short fiction can serve as newsletter content, reader-engagement tools, Patreon/Kickstarter rewards, lead magnets, and entry points into larger fictional worlds. Participants will leave with practical strategies for using short stories to sharpen their craft and harvest new opportunities at any stage of their writing journey.

Cafe Lounge

Birds of a Feather: Middle Grade and Young Adult
Rachel Delaney Craft & Kelley Lindberg

Boardroom A

Mentor Appointments

Boardroom B

Blue Pencil Appointments

COLORADO GOLD
Writers Conference

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, Ryanne Glenn, will will be at the pitch desk Saturday morning at 7:30 a.m. to cancel, reschedule, or potentially schedule additional pitches.

All Saturday pitches will take place in the Aurora IV Ballroom. Please offer grace to those who need to quietly enter or exit workshops for pitch appointments.

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

Conference Room I

The SuperPower of Writing Sprints: Smash Writer's Block
Johnny Worthen
Intermediate – Second hour

Conference Room II

Run Your Author Business Without Going Insane
Andre Gonzalez
Advanced – 1 Hour

Indie authors are business owners and entrepreneurs - whether you like it or not! Growing a business has plenty of challenges. To avoid the dreaded overwhelm that plagues many of us, you need the right tools, systems, and mindset to achieve success. Come learn how to strengthen these aspects of your business while maintaining a balance life.

Conference Room III

Who's Alpha Now? Why, When and How to Depict Character Status and Status Changes
Karen Lin
All levels – 1 Hour

Status changes, even within scenes. Learn why, how and when to use subtle and not-so-subtle shifts in power between heroes, antagonists and supporting characters. A compelling story includes status shifts in character. The hero and the antagonist need high status time, even when in the same room. The hero often inspires with his power. The antagonist often frightens. Through examples, learn key times for the antagonist's and protagonist's status to rise and how supporting characters bring out traits of both through their own status, a tool for creating gripping scenes.

Conference Room IV

Social Media For Authors Without Overwhelm
Mariah Ankenman
All levels – 1 Hour

Love it or hate it, social media is a necessary tool for today's author. For a lot of authors it can be overwhelming: what do I post? when do I post? where do I post? In this one hour workshop bestselling Author Mariah Ankenman will teach you how to make your social media work for you so you save your creative energy for your manuscript.

Conference Room V

Sowing the Seeds of Terror: A Class in Horror Short Stories
Amy Armstrong
All levels — Second hour

Conference Room VI

Mastering the Art of Great Conflict
Sarah MacLean
All levels – Second hour

Conference Room VII

Homegrown Heroes: The Real Meaning of Write What You Know
Rachel Dempsey, Alyssa Lance
Intermediate – 1 Hour

We've all heard it, but how does "write what you know" really apply to fiction, especially when writing about things as removed from one's lived experience as vampires, dragons or aliens? In this workshop, we will provide concrete tools from the theater world and beyond to help us build characters organically, from the inside out. Drawing from a wealth of both fiction and academic reading, we will explore methods for tapping into what we know emotionally, as artists, to infuse our characters with passion and authenticity.

Conference Room VIII

The Six-Step Revision Process: Revise Your Novel from First Draft to Final
Miranda Darrow
All levels – 2 Hours

Revise your manuscript from first draft to polished. Miranda Darrow's Six-Step Process helps break down your edits, from high-level developmental to copyedits while incorporating feedback from critique partners or beta readers plus reminders for steps to get ready for querying or indie publishing.

Boardroom A

Mentor Appointments

Boardroom B

Blue Pencil Appointments

Saturday Morning:

10-10:50 a.m.

Conference Room I

So You Want to Write Some Romance
Julie Cameron
All levels – 2 Hours

Romance is the bestselling genre in fiction, yet it's often misunderstood, underestimated, and under-taught. This fast-paced, interactive workshop pulls back the curtain on the romance genre for writers at every level: from those who want to write a standalone romance novel to literary, thriller, sci-fi, or fantasy writers who want to add a powerful romantic thread to their existing work. Participants will leave with a clear understanding of what romance really is, how the genre works, who reads it, and how to write romantic elements that feel authentic, compelling, and emotionally satisfying.

Conference Room II

Harvest Time: World-Building for Historical Fiction
Laurie Marr Wasmund
All levels – 2 Hours

Writers of historical fiction know that their readers look forward not only to reading about strong characters but also want a well-developed sense of the times in which the characters live. Unlike other genres, where a world may be created through imagination, historical world-building requires fine-tuned research. How do your characters live? Where do they find food? What type of transportation is available to them, and what is it called? In this workshop, we'll look at the details authors need to create a seamless, immersive world for their characters and readers.

Conference Room III

When Backstory IS the Story
Cynthia Swanson
All levels – 1 Hour

It's not unusual for novelists receive the feedback that their manuscript's pace feels slow. Often, this is the result of too much backstory, particularly toward the beginning. But how do you establish the world of your novel without setting the stage? How do you ensure readers have enough information to follow present-day action? In this session, we'll discuss techniques for seamlessly and compellingly weaving backstory into our work, minus the information overload.

Conference Room IV

Marketing as Mischief: Creative Ways to Get Noticed
LS Hawker
Advanced – 1 Hour

In today's publishing landscape, a strong author platform is essential—but many writers struggle to balance authentic connection with effective marketing. This practical, strategy-driven workshop breaks down the difference between social media sharing and selling, and shows authors how to build a platform that engages readers while driving book sales.

Conference Room V

Submissions 1, 2, 3
Bowen Gillings
Intermediate — 1 Hour

Submissions 1, 2, 3 is a look at the letter, synopsis, and the manuscript. Authors seeking traditional publishing must master the basics of the query triad: the query letter, the synopsis, and the manuscript. This workshop will address what authors must do to make it past the trash bin and atop the slush pile or better.

Conference Room VI

Worlds That Matter: Using Speculative Fiction to Explore Real Issues
Rachel Delaney Craft, Tasha Christensen, Farrah Frances, Paul Martz
All levels – 1 Hour

Once dismissed as pulpy and escapist, speculative fiction has become more crucial than ever in today's society. These stories may take place in magical realms or distant galaxies, but they're often used to explore present-day challenges like prejudice and inequality. Speculative fiction can help open readers' minds and show us the darkest places where current events like AI and climate change might lead—or give us hope for humankind. This panel will bring together a variety of authors with different genres and backgrounds to show attendees the many ways speculative fiction can make a difference. We'll demystify the subgenres that fall under this enchanting umbrella, from sci-fi, fantasy, and horror to grimdark, solarpunk, and slipstream. We'll also discuss ways to incorporate issues that matter to you into your writing, with examples from our own work and others we've read.

Conference Room VII

Save Yourself from Seductive Scammers — 10 Tips to Recognize and Defend Against AI Predators
Debbie Burke
Advanced – 1 Hour

Predators have long targeted authors, promising fame and fortune. In reality, they break hearts and bank accounts. Now scammers have a shiny new toy that's supercharged their ability to take advantage of unsuspecting writers. AI programs like Chat GPT, Claude, and Grok vacuum up every scrap of online data about books and authors. Then they send personalized emails full of flattery and crammed with specific details about plots and characters that convince us they actually read our work...and they LOVE it! This timely presentation shows how to recognize and keep ahead of this new breed of scammers. Learn about impersonators, miraculous marketers, and raving reviewers. Weed out phony proposals for media appearances, book clubs, and podcasts. Find reputable sources to vet who's legitimate and who isn't. Best of all, discover ways to turn their sneaky scams around to your benefit!

Conference Room VIII

The Six-Step Revision Process: Revise Your Novel from First Draft to Final
Miranda Darrow
All levels – Second hour

Cafe Lounge

Birds of a Feather - Horror
Andre Gonzalez

Boardroom A

Mentor Appointments

Boardroom B

Blue Pencil Appointments

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

Conference Room I

So You Want to Write Some Romance
Julie Cameron
All levels – Second hour

Conference Room II

Harvest Time: World-Building for Historical Fiction
Laurie Marr Wasmund
All levels – Second hour

Conference Room III

Short and Sweet: The Art and Business of Short Story Writing
Rachel Delaney Craft, Josh Clark
All levels – 2 Hours, continued after lunch

There are many reasons novel writers should add short fiction to their repertoire. Short stories can not only build your writing resume and make inroads in the publishing industry, but also help you grow your skills and explore new techniques. Join veteran short story writers Josh Clark and Rachel Delaney Craft to learn the basics of short story craft and how to get your work in front of readers. We'll spend the first hour learning the basics of short story craft, from plot and characters to hooky first pages and knockout endings, with a particular focus on how short stories are similar and different to novels. The second half will be all about the business side: finding markets, prepping submissions, navigating contracts, the editing process, and reprints.

Conference Room IV

AI and Authorship: Separating the Hype from the Reality
Matt Ginsberg
Advanced – 1 Hour

In this workshop, Matt Ginsberg, a senior scientist at Google's DeepMind, will discuss the likely impact of AI on the writing business. Can AI help us, or is it simply a threat? Do the big tech companies respect copyright? How can you use the technology *without* letting it do the writing for you? The workshop will be about half commentary, and then allow substantial time for audience questions.

Conference Room V

Stop Writing for Everyone
Kiki Ranger
All levels — 1 Hour

If your book is for everyone, it's reaching no one. Learn the difference between your ideal audience and your target reader, and how narrowing your focus actually expands your reach and drives sales.

Conference Room VI

Q&A with Stephen Graham Jones
Stephen Graham Jones
All levels — 1 Hour

Join our conference keynote speaker for an ask-me-anything session.

Conference Room VII

Frankengenre: The Unending World of Genre Fusion
Gabriella Batel
Intermediate – 2 Hours - continued after lunch

Prize-winning author Gabriella Batel gives single-genre veterans the tools they need to mix it up and reach their readers. In this workshop, we'll delve into what, exactly, genre fusion is, how to recognize it, and how to dissect it into its parent components, while simultaneously viewing such genres and stories as entities of their own. Establishing rules for yourself as the author and making those rules visible for your readers puts you on solid ground, and gives you the opportunity to worldbuild well, which is the pinion that hold genre fusion together.

Conference Room VIII

Filtering: Why, When, Where, and Why Not?
Kendra Griffin
All levels – 1 Hour

Want readers to feel closer to your protagonist, as well as your prose? Learn how to reduce filtering so that your narrative voice pops and your setting feels visceral and immersive. In this session, we'll discuss the concepts of filtering, narrative distance, and developing an engaging voice.

Boardroom A

Mentor Appointments

Boardroom B

Blue Pencil Appointments

COLORADO GOLD Writers Conference

Agent and Editor Panel Luncheon

12-1:20 p.m.
Aurora Ballroom

Saturday's buffet lunch will include a panel moderated by **Bernadette Soehner**.
Also, hear from our sister organizations, and more door prizes will be announced!

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

Conference Room I

Critiquing Opening Pages (Like an Agent)
Mira Landry, Chelsea Pennington
Intermediate – 2 Hours

Want to know how an agent sees your first pages? Do you also want to know how to improve it without feeling like a failure? Former Literary Agent Mira Landry and author Chelsea Pennington are combining an agent's first impression of opening pages alongside how to give critique in a teachable, helpful manner that encourages your peers to keep growing instead of wanting to give up. Send-in your first 1-2 pages of your manuscript without identifying details before August 20, and yours might be selected for a live critique.

Conference Room II

When Characters Drive the Plot: No GPS (or Outline) Required
Peggy Waide
All levels – 2 Hours

Whether you're a plotter or a pantser, every author wants to write a book that keeps fans turning pages. Character-driven plotting merges character needs and goals with action/events that hold the story together from beginning to end while fulfilling the promise made to the reader in the opening chapter. This method gives you a loose-fitting structure that gives you a launching point while allowing for detours along the way. Characters are the driving force. They start with a problem and must resolve that problem by the end of the book as they undergo new discoveries, choices and changes. We'll even take time to brainstorm ideas that link these plot elements to your current project, or a new idea.

Conference Room III

Short and Sweet: The Art and Business of Short Story Writing
Rachel Delaney Craft, Josh Clark
All levels – Second hour

Conference Room IV

The Bad Seed: How to Grow Deliciously Wicked Antagonists
Travis Tougaw
All levels – 1 Hour

Sherlock Holmes and Professor Moriarty. Harry Potter and Voldemort. James Bond and Goldfinger. Stories thrive on conflict between heroes and villains; the more memorable the bad guy, the more chances for the good guy to shine. In this workshop, we'll explore several archetypes of antagonists and how you can use them in your stories.

Conference Room V

Query Right
Bowen Gillings
Intermediate – 1 Hour

Your query is your only chance to make a first impression of you, your work ethic, and your writing. This workshop will give you the common sense tools you need to make that impression a great one. Want to get out of the slush pile and onto an agent's read list? Query Right.

Conference Room VI

Publishing Isn't a Straight Line: Creating Your Personal Definition of Success
Tasha Christensen, Rob Samborn, Jennifer Wilson, Meghan Scott Molin
Intermediate – 1 Hour

Publishing advice often promises a clear path, but real writing careers are anything but straightforward. In this honest, unfiltered Q&A, a panel of successful authors shares the many ways a writing life can unfold. From going hybrid to switching agents, from social media to novel alternatives, we'll explore the ups and downs that shape a career. We'll challenge the idea of a single definition of success and consider how yours might evolve during your wild and exciting publishing journey.

Conference Room VII

Frankengenre: The Unending World of Genre Fusion
Gabriella Batel
Intermediate – Second hour

Conference Room VIII

Harnessing the Power of BookFunnel to Find Your Audience
Christy Matheson
Advanced – 1 Hour

Are you trying to learn about your audience? Conduct market research at (almost) no cost? Get your writing in more readers' hands? BookFunnel is one of the most powerful tools out there, but many emerging authors find it overwhelming or miss key features. This presentation is for you if you are thinking of publishing within the next six months, have a BF account but don't use it often, have a couple books out but don't know what to do next, or have heard "you should start a newsletter" but have no idea how. BookFunnel is a key player in sharing and distributing your books, and this presentation will help you get the most value from the platform.

Cafe Lounge

Birds of a Feather - Science Fiction and Fantasy
Johnny Worthen

Boardroom A

Mentor Appointments

Boardroom B

Blue Pencil Appointments

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

Conference Room I

Critiquing Opening Pages (Like an Agent)
Mira Landry, Chelsea Pennington
Intermediate – Second hour

Conference Room II

When Characters Drive the Plot: No GPS (or Outline) Required
Peggy Waide
All levels – Second hour

Conference Room III

Fanfiction Is Practice, Not the Product: How to Train in Borrowed Worlds
VL Andromeda
All levels – 1 Hour

Fanfiction has long been a starting point for many writers—but in today's publishing landscape, it's also at the center of ongoing ethical and creative debate. This workshop reframes fanfiction into what it is best known for: a powerful training ground. Attendees will learn how to use inspiration from existing works to strengthen their skills without crossing into derivative storytelling.

Conference Room IV

Plot Twist: AI is Your New Marketing Assistant
Natasha Gonzalez
Intermediate – 1 Hour

Marketing your work doesn't have to be overwhelming, or expensive. In this session, we'll explore how AI-powered tools can help you create eye-catching graphics with ease, and how AI chatbots can take the guesswork out of writing compelling ad copy and building a strategic, consistent marketing schedule.

Conference Room V

The Publishing Timeline Nobody Warned You About
Kiki Ringer
Intermediate – 2 Hours

Most authors start marketing when the book is done. That's already too late. Learn the real publishing timeline and what needs to happen months before launch to build visibility, secure reviews, and give your book a real chance to succeed.

Conference Room VI

Q&A with Sarah MacLean
Sarah MacLean
All levels — 1 Hour

Join our conference keynote speaker for an ask-me-anything session.

Conference Room VII

Dissecting the Story: Critiquing Like a Surgeon
Kate Jonuska
All levels – 1 Hour

We all want our stories to live! This session teaches how critique (a.k.a. reading like a writer) can diagnose problems in your own work and that of your critique partners. With surgery as a metaphor, we'll dive into both structural and cosmetic feedback, and send you out with a firmer grasp of what makes a story successful.

Cafe Lounge

Birds of a Feather - Mainstream and Literary
Rachel Weaver

Boardroom A

Mentor Appointments

Boardroom B

Blue Pencil Appointments

ROCKY MOUNTAIN Fiction Writers
Youth Writers
ages 14-22

RMFW Silent Auction

The Silent Auction is a long-standing fundraiser for Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers' youth writer scholarships. Located near registration, the auction 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 8:30 p.m. on Saturday. Winners will be notified by text or email by 9 p.m., and payment is expected by 9 a.m. Sunday morning. QR codes to donate to our youth writer scholarships are also posted on auction tables!

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Visit me at my vendor table

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

Conference Room I

The Many Angles of Showing Vs. Telling
Mira Landry
All levels – 2 Hours

"Show don't tell" is a common writerly rule for an important reason: it's how you immerse readers in your story. But if we overly describe every element, setting detail, and emotion on the page, it can slow pacing, distract the reader, and occasionally feel as though it's trying too hard. This workshop is designed to modernize the approach, rephrasing it as "showing versus telling" by pulling away from the heavier sensory descriptions and analyzing the more subtle ways you can let your reader "see" the story on the page.

Conference Room II

The Authentic Book Launch
Cynthia Swanson
Intermediate – 1 Hour

When authors are preparing to launch a book, they often hear that they MUST do [insert non-negotiable task here] so readers know about their book. How do you sift through ideas and trends to determine what works for your audience -- and for you? In this session, we'll talk about what it takes to create authentic connections with readers, booksellers, librarians, and book clubs , and how to customize launch strategies to meet your specific goals.

Conference Room III

The Three Levels of Editing and How to Use Them to Elevate Your Writing
Ariane Peveto
All levels – 1 Hour

Whether you're revising on your own or working with an editor, it's important to understand the three main levels of editing: developmental, line editing, and copyediting. Knowing how they differ from and complement each other will not only save you time, but also give you the most effective and powerful approach to telling your best story. We will discuss these three types, the important questions to address at each level, and practical techniques you can apply to your writing.

Conference Room V

The Publishing Timeline Nobody Warned You About
Kiki Ringer
Intermediate – Second hour

Conference Room VI

From Picture Books to YA: Writing for the Next Generation of Readers
Natasha Gonzalez
Intermediate – 1 Hour

Bringing together children's and YA authors to explore how storytelling evolves across age groups—and what it takes to truly connect with younger audiences today.

Conference Room VII

The Ten-Page Test: How to Win Agents and Readers Before Chapter Two
ZJ Czupor

All levels – 2 Hours

The first ten pages of a novel are critical. Sometimes, even fewer pages, or short chapters in your opening are the key to success. These pages function as an "audition" for your manuscript. Agents, editors, publishers, and readers all invest precious time and money in your story. Even if you self-publish, readers will decide if they want to invest time and money in your novel. This workshop will introduce the key elements necessary to a sizzling opening, with real live examples from recent works, and tests you can use to self-check your success.

Conference Room VIII

How to Not Need Me (an Editor) — Self-Editing Techniques That Will Impress Your Own Editor (Who You Definitely Still Need)
Gabriella Batel
All levels – 2 Hours

Prize-winning author and editor Gabriella Batel lets you in on professional not-so-secrets that editors use to take manuscripts to the next level, so you can use those exact same techniques on your own story. While hiring a professional is still a necessary step on the road to publication, Gabriella's advice can, in some instances, reduce cost, and will make your experience with your editor smoother and leave you with a stronger result.

Cafe Lounge

Birds of a Feather - Romance
Bernadette Soehner

Boardroom A

Mentor Appointments

Boardroom B

Blue Pencil Appointments

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

Conference Room I

The Many Angles of Showing Vs. Telling
Mira Landry
All levels – Second hour

Conference Room II

The Multi-POV Novel
Cynthia Swanson
All levels – 1 Hour

For novelists, there is true challenge – and also great reward – in writing multiple points-of-view. Do you focus on a single main character, with all other POVs secondary? Do you alternate among several key POVs? How do you make your various characters' voices distinctive? In this hands-on workshop, we'll look at successful multi-POV novels and discuss how you can effectively incorporate multiple POVs into your work.

Conference Room III

Gamify Your Writing to Level Up Your Productivity and Reader Engagement
Miranda Darrow
All levels – 1 Hour

What do kanban boards, pomodoro timers, SMART goals, and fancy notebooks with gel pens all have in common? They're all tools we can use to increase our writing productivity by gamifying getting words on the page. Find out what motivates you with tips and tools to level up your writing productivity!

Conference Room IV

Kickstarter 201: Let's Do This
Caitee Cooper
Advanced – 1 Hour

So you want to run a Kickstarter campaign. Awesome! This workshop (which is built for first-timers, though all levels are welcome), will dive deeper into the mechanics, best practices, expectations, and resources you'll need to give your campaign the best chance for success. Participants will walk away knowing more about the Kickstarter platform and how to use it, what potential backers are looking for, how to structure pledge tiers for success, how to set up a compelling campaign page that will entice potential backers to pledge, how to analyze costs like a businessperson to maximize profit, and techniques for managing the stresses that arise before, during, and after a campaign.

Conference Room V

Scroll-Stopping BookBub Ads: Design, Copy, Convert
LS Hawker
Advanced – 1 Hour

BookBub Ads offer authors a powerful yet underutilized way to reach highly engaged readers and drive measurable book sales. This workshop provides a practical, data-driven approach to creating, testing, and scaling BookBub ad campaigns. Participants will learn how to leverage BookBub's unique audience—comprised largely of high-frequency readers with diverse genre interests—to increase visibility and maximize return on investment. Through real-world examples and case studies, attendees will gain the tools needed to craft compelling ad creatives, target the right readers, and interpret performance metrics to improve results.

Conference Room VI

Ask-A-Pro Panel — PAA Author Q&A
V.L. Andromeda
All levels - 1 Hour

Ask an author all your burning questions! The Professional Author Alliance is a group of authors who have reached certain sale goals with their books. If you're interested in how to become a member, or just hearing some general wisdom, come join us at the PAA panel!

Conference Room VII

The Ten-Page Test: How to Win Agents and Readers Before Chapter Two
ZJ Czupor
All levels – Second hour

Conference Room VIII

How to Not Need Me (an Editor)
Gabriella Batel
All levels – Second hour

Cafe Lounge

Birds of a Feather - Mystery and Thriller
Debbie Burke

Boardroom A

Mentor Appointments

Boardroom B

Blue Pencil Appointments

Gold Rush Awards Banquet and Keynote Address by Stephen Graham Jones

6:30-8:30 p.m.

Aurora Ballroom

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

- Announcement of the 2026 Colorado Gold Rush Literary Awards Contest winners, hosted by **Oliver Blakemore** and **Rachel Dempsey**
- Announcement of the Jasmine Award
- A keynote address by New York Times bestseller and author of nearly 30 novels and story collections, **Stephen Graham Jones.**

Author Signing Event and Book Sale

8:00-10:30 p.m.

Aurora III

Come join our authors and VIPs for a book sale and signing event! Wander around, purchase books from our featured presenters, attendees and VIPs, and even get your purchased books signed by the authors! Feel free to ask questions and discover some new authors and genres for yourself.

Admission is free. Bring your swag bag to load up!

What is the Colorado Gold Rush Literary Awards Contest?

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.

What is the Jasmine Award?

Named for RMFW founding member Jasmine Creswell, the Jasmine Award is given for exemplary long-term service to Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers. The winner is chosen by RMFW's Executive Committee to a volunteer who goes above and beyond for RMFW.

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

Conference Room I

Hooks vs. Tropes Which Is Which?
Mariah Ankenman
All levels – 1 Hour

Confused about what's a hook and what's a trope? Learn from author Mariah Ankenman what are they and how to include them in your book to grab agent/publisher/readers attention no matter what publishing path you take.

Conference Room II

Let's Start a Newsletter: How to Grow Your Audience
Chelsea Pennington
Intermediate – 2 Hours

Starting a newsletter to connect with readers is arguably the most important piece of your author platform, and certainly the most reliable, but so many people don't think they can start an email list before they're published, or are intimidated by all the steps to creating and using one. In this session, we will walk through, step-by-step, setting up an account in MailerLite, writing your introductory email, and creating a newsletter sign-up form so that by the end of class, attendees will be ready to start gaining subscribers. Please bring your laptop so you can follow along.

Conference Room III

DIY Critique Group
Miranda Darrow
All levels – 1 Hour

The who, what, why, when, where, and how of critique groups. Get the toolkit you need to start your own critique group or revitalize the one you're in. Tips on how to find your people, critique best practices and options, tech tips, and more so you can start polishing those manuscripts and make new writing friends!

Conference Room IV

Dialogue Diagnosis: Common Mistakes and How to Fix Them
Travis Tougaw
All levels – 1 Hour

Dialogue is one of the key ingredients for a tasty story; however, it's also one of the most difficult to get right. In this workshop, we'll cover some of the common dialogue mistakes writers make, and we'll look at how to fix them.

Conference Room V

The Long Game: Building a Sustainable Author Business
Natasha Gonzalez
Advanced – 1 Hour

Most authors focus on launches—few build careers. In this workshop, Natasha breaks down how to think beyond a single book and create a sustainable author business. Learn when to scale, where to focus your time and money, and how to turn your books into long-term assets that continue generating revenue well beyond release.

Conference Room VI

Why, Why, Why Delilah?
Peggy Waide
All levels – 1 Hour

In his song, the legendary Tom Jones asked the question that authors must ask of their characters then answer for their readers. A goal is what a character wants. Motivation is the 'why' they want it, the deep-seeded desires, fears and needs that compel them to act. This workshop will dive into examples of various motivations then discuss ways to develop the strongest ones for your plot which will set the stage for the bold, crazy, determined, desperate, vengeful choices your characters make and how to reveal those motivations to your reader over the course of your story.

Conference Room VII

What's the BFD?
Andre Gonzalez
Intermediate – 1 Hour

Want to land one of the most coveted promotional spots in indie publishing — and actually make money from it? This session demystifies the BookBub Featured Deal: what it is, how to apply, how to beat the odds, and how to stack promotions strategically so your book is already climbing the charts when your deal goes live. Whether you've been rejected, afraid of the price tag, or just not sure where to start, this talk will give you a concrete, tactical roadmap to maximize your visibility and ride the post-BookBub wave all the way up the rankings.

Conference Room VIII

My Pants Are Missing: The Pantsing and Plotting Continuum
Rochelle Hampton , Blythe Brandenburg
All levels – 1 Hour

As authors you've heard about pantsing and plotting, but what if you don't even know where your pants are? This session talks about pantsing, gardening, plotting, and Blythe Brandenburg's idea of Mountaineering. Get some resources to figure out what works for you, and get an idea of how to get past writer's block.

Aurora IV

Zen and the Way of the Writer
Johnny Worthen
All levels – 1 Hour

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

Cafe Lounge

Birds of a Feather - Historical Fiction
Laurie Marr Wasmund

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

Conference Room I

Lights! Camera! Novel! Movie and Screenplay Lessons for Writing Prose
Karen Lin
All levels – 2 Hours

Learn stunts used by screenwriters to power up prose. Learn how to study movies, download free screenplays, and use well-known examples to add snappy fun skills to your toolbox. Plot, casting, dialogue, subtext, metaphor, formatting (different but the same), endings (CUT!), beginnings, mood, on-the-nose and other warnings, conveying status, comparable elements between the two industries.

Conference Room II

Let's Start a Newsletter: How to Grow Your Audience
Chelsea Pennington
Intermediate – Second hour

Conference Room III

Just-In-Time Description and World Building (How to Avoid Those Info-Dumps)
Kelley Lindberg
All levels – 1 Hour

Whether you're writing modern murder mysteries, historical rom-coms, urban fantasies, or space operas, your characters exist in a world that includes features like geography, transportation, money, religion, politics, magic, bureaucracies, pandemics, or natural disasters. Learn how to avoid info-dumping while still creating a believable world that your characters inhabit and your readers will love.

Conference Room IV

So You Want to Make an Anthology?
Christy Matheson
Advanced – 1 Hour

Instead of writing as a solitary pursuit, has your author group decided to work together to create an anthology? It's a wonderful way to promote and support each other, but the logistics are more challenging than many authors realize when they begin. This interactive session will walk participants through the process of creating an anthology. We will cover logistics from designing your guiding philosophy, to figuring out how to distribute royalties. The session will provide opportunities for questions and answers and a sharing of experiences, and ensure participants will leave this session with a better understanding about how to kick-start a joint anthology project with fellow authors and to harness the power of author groups in promoting their writing together.

Conference Room V

Getting Your Writing Groove Back
Julie Cameron and Eva Fox Mate
All Levels — 1 Hour

Every writer knows the dreaded feeling of staring at a blinking cursor on a blank page. There's nothing worse than when a story that once felt alive goes quiet. In this hands-on workshop, we'll explore why writers lose momentum and, more importantly, how to get it back. Whether you're frozen by perfectionism, creatively depleted, or returning after a long absence from your work, you'll leave with practical tools, fresh perspective, and words already on the page. Come ready to write and to remember why you love it.

Conference Room VI

What's on My Mind? How Much Time Do You Have? — A Panel of Neurodivergent Writers
Oliver Blakemore, VL Andromeda, Mariah Ankenman
All levels – 1 Hour

A panel of neurodivergent writers with different backgrounds and varied stages in their careers sit at the front of the room, share stories, and answer questions. We talk about routine-building strategies—for recharging after busy, social weekends—for creating boundaries—oh, and how we tackle stories.

Conference Room VII

Geography? Geology? Geometry? Let's Talk Maps!
Ryanne Glenn
All levels – 1 Hour

What's the best part about world-building? Building the world! In this workshop, we'll go through different landforms, geological structures, and why people live where they do. By looking at those details, you'll be able to create a viable, livable world that feels real to every reader.

Conference Room VIII

Capturing Middle Grade Voice in an Adult World
Rod Martinez
All levels – 1 Hour

Capturing the voice of a young protagonist isn't as hard as we make it as adult writers, my choice to work in middle grade stemmed from being that parent who hung with kids a lot - naturally, grasping the middle grade voice was inevitable. In my presentation I will walk you back in time to your childhood and pull out the voice you need to write a convincing young hero, heroine or antagonist.

Aurora IV

How To Find an Agent: Best Practices
Rachel Weaver
Intermediate – 2 Hours

Are you feeling overwhelmed at how to narrow down which agents might be a good fit for you? Are you querying to no avail? Just wondering how it all works? In this class, we will discuss practices that can save you time, along with unnecessary rejections, as you navigate the path of finding a literary agent to represent your book.

Sunday Morning:

10-10:50 a.m.

Conference Room I

Lights! Camera! Novel! Movie and Screenplay Lessons for Writing Prose
Karen Lin
All levels – Second hour

Conference Room II

Querying Smarter: Using Data, Strategy, and QueryTracker to Find the Right Agent
Jennifer Wilson
Intermediate – 1 Hour

Querying often feels like tossing seeds into the wind and hoping something takes root. But a successful harvest isn't left to chance, and your query strategy shouldn't be either! It's the result of strategic cultivation. Most writers use QueryTracker as a simple spreadsheet tracker, missing the deep-soil data that can separate a "pass" from a "request." In this session, we'll move past the basic search bar to transform QueryTracker into your most powerful decision-making tool when querying. You'll learn to interpret response patterns, read between the lines of submission histories, and build a tiered "planting" strategy that maximizes your reach. Stop guessing and start strategizing. Whether you're just starting your outreach or are deep in the trenches with crickets, this class provides a repeatable, actionable system to help your manuscript find the right home.

Conference Room III

Riding Between the Brands — Understanding Subtext
Johnny Worthen
Advanced – 1 Hour

Join author and professor Johnny Worthen for a deep dive into the deep waters of subtext. Through examples, theory, and discussion we will explore the importance, uses and misuses of this often ignored narrative device. Beneath the surface-of narrative lies subtext. Like a ghost or a forgotten promise, it dwells in the spaces between, moving like weighty mist among the words, actions, dialogues, and plots of the tale. It is meaning made of pattern, inference, and false leads. It is the ultimate story-telling device since it relies on the attentive and receptive reader. It is not for the timid.

Conference Room IV

Protect Your Book and Your Characters
Karen Dropps, Bernadette Soehner
Intermediate – 1 Hour

Imagine your character is in an ally and a villain comes up behind them, does your character scream? or do they fight them off and get away safely? In this hands on course learn the basics of self defense. We will go over how to keep yourself safe and how to protect yourself in the event that you need to. We will look at spatial awareness and techniques to keep you and your characters safe in your environment.

Conference Room V

How to Make an Audiobook for Your Novel – and Harvest Millions of New Readers
Kevin Campbell
Advanced – 1 Hour

Audiobook sales are exploding. It's the fastest growing format in publishing, and millions of potential listeners prefer listening to books instead of reading them. Audiobooks are perfect for busy readers who want to "read" a book while traveling, exercising or multitasking. Audiobooks are also excellent for writers to expand their audience, create a new revenue stream, and hear their stories to help them make edits prior to submitting to agents and publishers. Self-publishing writers can reach many more readers as well. There are 3 major audiobook publishers (Audible, Spotify and Apple Books) who are always looking for new content. The old way of making audiobooks – hiring a voice-over talent, recording in a studio, and spending days editing – used to cost up to $15,000. Now you can easily produce one for $50 - $500.

Conference Room VI

From First Book to Full-Time Author: What It Really Takes
Natasha Gonzalez, Zac Diamanti, Andre Gonzalez, Bernadette Soehner, Nick Thacker
Intermediate – 1 Hour

This panel pulls back the curtain on the messy, unglamorous path from publishing a debut to building a sustainable full-time author career. This panel goes beyond craft and inspiration to tackle the business realities: pricing, ad spend, platform-building, and the operational systems that separate hobbyists from professionals. Panelists will share candid lessons from their own transitions, including the mistakes that cost them time and money, so attendees can skip some of the trial and error.

Conference Room VII

What If to Uh-Oh: Brainstorming The Art of Cause and Effect
Peggy Waide
All levels – 1 Hour

Call it a chain of events or the ripple effect, but nothing happens by chance because actions have consequences. Every cause has an effect, which leads to an interconnected link of events. Hmmm, that sounds like a story. As authors, we often live in our solitary "writing world' creating our novels from our own worldview. This interactive workshop will exploit the power of 'what if' and 'wouldn't it' to discover a fun way to brainstorm out of the box possibilities of cause and effect for character development, plot development, catastrophes, scene and story settings that will be unique and have you thinking outside of the box.

Conference Room VIII

Intertextuality: The Art of Grafting Classic and Contemporary Ideas
Rachel Dempsey
All levels – 1 Hour

All stories exist in relationship with one another, according to the theory of intertextuality. We will explore how to capitalize on this principle as fiction writers, tapping into shared knowledge as well as existing markets and readerships. Examining techniques from classic and contemporary literature, we will cover a range of approaches, including retellings and re-imaginings, satire and parody, and literary allusion and tropes.

Aurora IV

How To Find an Agent: Best Practices
Rachel Weaver
Intermediate – Second hour

Cafe Lounge
Professional Authors Alliance Meeting
PAA Only

Have feedback for us?

Attendees will receive an email to take a survey. PLEASE take a few minutes and fill it out. We strive to bring you the best writers conference each year, based on your thoughtful comments and feedback.

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 2027!***

- Gold Nugget Awards with **Sue Duff Loeffler** and **Bernadette Soehner**
- Silent auction results with **Sue Duff Loeffler**
- Colorado Gold Rush Winners' Readings with **Oliver Blakemore**
- Closing Statements and 2027 Conference Giveaway

Conference Presenters

Note: Visit rmfw.org/presenters for unabridged bios. VIP, agent, and editor bios are located on pgs. 3-4.

V.L. Andromeda brings academic rigor and creative insight to writing, editing, and teaching. With a background in the humanities and higher education, they specialize in translating complex storytelling and craft theory into practical, actionable tools writers can apply immediately. An author, poet, editor, and college educator, V.L. works with writers at every stage of their careers.

Mariah Ankenman lives in the beautiful Rocky Mountains with her two rambunctious children and loving spouse who is her own personal spell checker when her dyslexia gets the best of her. She loves to write about queer, disabled, neurodivergent characters falling in love (someone told her write what you know and she went with it). Visit her website http://mariahankenman.com/ follow her on social media, or sign up for her newsletter.

Amy Armstrong loves to dabble with ideas and occasionally gets a good story out of her dabbles. She has a monthly YouTube reading called Stories Live! featuring writers reading their own work aloud and participating in discussions. Some of the readers included Pam Houston, Stephen Graham Jones, and Carter Wilson. Her favorite stories involve dysfunctional families, complicated friendships, and lots of dark humor.

Gabriella Batel is a vibrant young Catholic woman with an adrenaline craving and a passion for God, family, acting, animation, fanart, and good food. She's the leechcraft-y author of the acclaimed Don't thriller series, the fantasy thriller Ending, and the prize-winning post-apocalyptic fantasy story "Antivenom."

Oliver Blakemore writes stories aimed to earn pumped fists and devil horns. Like so many punks and metalheads before him, he's a recovering intellectual and an undiagnosed neurodivergent. His idea of a true story is explaining the world by saying it must be witches and dragons (which need befriending) and systemic stereotypes (which need defeating).

Ryanne Buck (Ryanne Glenn) is the Volunteer Chair of Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers and has a degree in Chemical Engineering. She currently works as an Electrical Engineer in Grand Junction, CO. After struggling with depression in college, she turned to writing as a healthy outlet for her emotions. She wants to write strong female role models and is excited to share her stories with the world.

Debbie Burke looks like a cookie-baking grandma but behind that innocent smile lurks a devious criminal mind. Her award-winning Tawny Lindholm Thriller series (nine books) is set in her home state of Montana, the last best place to kill someone...fictionally, that is. The Villain's Journey - How to Create Villains Readers Love to Hate is her bestselling nonfiction book that earned accolades from Christopher Vogler (The Writer's Journey), Will Akers (Your Screenplay Sucks), and Midwest Book Review, as well as enthusiastic readers. For nearly four decades, she's been a novelist, journalist, and freelance editor.

Julie Cameron is an acclaimed author known for her award-winning contemporary romance novels and screenplays. With a unique blend of passion and creativity, she crafts stories that resonate with readers around the world. Through her company, Landon Literary and her partnership with Gemini Writer's Studio, she has established herself as a successful editor, mentor, and coach with over ten years of experience working with both published and non-published authors.

A 40-year television, film, and education veteran, K**evin Campbell** started his career as a TV news journalist; produced hundreds of news stories as well as TV commercials, marketing videos, and education/training content; and taught video production for high school and college students. He wrote and produced his first feature film, Cheerleader Ninjas, in 2001 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.

Tasha Christensen is a writer, teacher, and researcher based in Colorado. Her Itaska High series chronicles the romantic shenanigans of a high school marching band in Minnesota. The first book, As You Were, won the 2023 Indie Author Project contest, and she was honored as an RMFW Writer of the Year finalist in 2024. She co-edited the short story anthology Wild, and her fiction has been featured in award-winning collections and journals. She recently received her MS in Digital Anthropology from University College London.

Josh Clark is a writer, graphic designer, and bookseller. He is a writer of genre fiction for adults and young adults. His short fiction has been published by Amazing Stories, The Lunatics Project Podcast, Shacklebound Books, and many others. His life is filled with words professionally and recreationally, so if he's not writing or reading you're likely to find him at author events, science fiction conventions, writing conferences, or out in nature brainstorming his next novel.

Caitee Cooper is an entrepreneur, professional copywriter, and the author of multiple novels. She has ten years of writing and editing experience across a variety of industries and channels, and has helped launch three successful small businesses. After having her two sons, she pivoted to writing fiction (her first love). She knows from personal experience how to juggle the responsibilities of family and professional life in a way that (mostly) doesn't drive her insane, and loves sharing that knowledge.

Rachel Delaney Craft writes speculative fiction for children and teens. Her short stories have appeared in publications such as Cricket, Uncharted, and Cast of Wonders, and she edited the 2020 RMFW anthology, WILD. On the novel side, she is a two-time winner of the Colorado Gold Rush Literary Award and is represented by Alex Land at Mad Woman Literary Agency.

Z.J. Czupor's new murder mystery, DEAD MEN DON'T DRINK, is published at zoltanjames.substack.com. He's also the author of THE BIG WEIRD: Haikus in Times of Pandemic and Chaos. Z.J. is immediate past president of Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers and is an active member of Mystery Writers of America and International Thriller Writers. He is represented by Terrie Wolf, founder and owner of AKA Literary Management.

Miranda Darrow is an author, freelance fiction editor, and #RevPit online revision contest board member and contributing editor. Miranda's Concise Fiction Academy series of writing craft books and courses combines her experience as a freelance editor and a corporate attorney into an executive summary of complex writing topics with an overview, key recommendations, and sources for more information, all with a dash of humor. Miranda lives in Minnesota with her husband, teen boys, and two bossy little dogs.

Rachel Horak Dempsey is a writer of dark fiction living in Denver. Her debut novella, a retelling of Pinocchio with a terrifying techno twist, is forthcoming from M4L Publishing in summer of 2026. Her short fiction is available or forthcoming from Creepy Pod, Brigids Gate Press, Timber Ghost Press, Twenty Bellows (Pushcart nominated 2024), Stars and Sabers, and others. Rachel is also the editor of the anthology Horizons 2 from Twenty Bellows.

Elizabeth S. Devecchi writes in a variety of genres and styles, but horror holds a special place in her heart and has numerous short stories appearing in publications. Elizabeth's debut horror novel, A Whisper in the Dark, in October 2024 and followed with her first dark suspense novel, A Twist of the Lens, in October 2025. Now an imprint of Aethon Books, Wicked House Publishing plans to release The Shadow Beside Her, part of the Whisper in the Dark series, in early to mid 2026. Thus far, A Whisper in the Dark has received a Gold Award at BookFest and a Cippa Evvy Gold Medal and A Twist of the Lens was the recipient of a BookFest third place award.

Z.S. Diamanti is the award-winning author of the Stone & Sky trilogy, an epic fantasy adventure, and the Fables of Finlestia cozy fantasy series, which includes Guard in the Garden. In 2025, Zac received the honor of being named Rocky Mountain Fiction Writer of the Year. He went to college forever and has 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. He and his wife live in Colorado with their four children, where they enjoy hikes and tabletop games.

Karen Dropps, author of My Elbert and The Dorcha, holds a master's degree in Heritage Studies for a Global Society and a graduate certificate in Museum Studies from Regis College, Weston, Massachusetts. Karen followed adventurous careers in academia, museums, and cub scouts. She grew up in New England and now resides in the mountains of Colorado, where she enjoys Martial Arts hiking, and spending time with her family and cats.

Tom Farrell is a lawyer and the author of the Wager Series, an award winning mystery-thriller series set in the world of sports betting, horse racing and poker. He has produced the audiobook for all four of his books in the series. Tom was the RMFW 2024 Writer of the Year and a former RMFW VP.

Farrah Frances writes weird girl fiction and spec fic under the pen name A.Z. Sultana. Her prose can be found scribbled on the walls of many bathroom stalls across the nation. She holds a PMP certification, a Bachelor's in general studies with a focus on Marketing from Gonzaga, and a Master's in Library Science from North Carolina Central University. You can find her on Instagram or anywhere questionable behavior is encouraged.

Blythe Brandenburg (Rebecca Fuentes) is the author of fifteen published fantasy romance short stories and the fantasy romance novel Mistress & Mage. Her work combines her love of high fantasy, historical romance, and swashbuckling adventure. As such, she's a fan of Tolkien, Jane Austen, and Alexander Dumas, and enjoys the many books those have inspired. She's a former English teacher who's passionate about every child's right to a thorough education and the importance of the arts.

Matt Ginsberg. Author, AI scientist at Google DeepMind, trained by Nobel Laureates Kip Thorne and Roger Penrose. Also playwright, crossword constructor. I would be speaking as a member of DeepMind staff.

Andre Gonzalez is the international bestselling author of the Wealth of Time Series, and co-owner of M4L Publishing. He has written over twenty time-travel, thriller, and horror books after spending many years reading and studying the works of Stephen King and Dean Koontz. Keeping readers up late and their hearts pumping faster than normal is his ultimate goal. Andre was the recipient of the Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers 2021 Independent Writer of the Year award.

Natasha Gonzalez is a Colorado native, children's author, publisher, and marketing strategist dedicated to helping authors build and grow their careers. After 12 years in structural engineering, she transitioned into publishing, co-founding an indie press in 2019 and later helped launch a marketing agency specializing in Amazon advertising. She has worked on 50+ books and brings a data-driven, real-world approach to publishing and sales. Natasha is also a bilingual children's author, inspired by her Colombian and Venezuelan heritage.

Kendra Griffin is an indie author and developmental editor who has never met a good dog or a good underdog she didn't fall in love with. She is addicted to writing about quirky misfits, social inequality, diverse ensemble casts, and sibling dynamics. Kendra has an MA in Literature and has taught college-level creative writing for twelve years. She coaches authors of all levels through community programs, local libraries, and professional conferences. Kendra wishes she could jump between parallel universes and find time to write every novel that has ever occurred to her.

Rochelle Hampton is an author and playwright currently working in education. She has cast and directed her one-act play, "Closets Cleaned". Her flash fiction story, "Honest to the Last Drop", won an award at the Wyoming Writers Inc. conference. She also contributed to A Season for Romance: Summer Simmer anthology. Her work is an unflinching exploration of the darker side of human nature. Her career in education has given her experience working with adjudicated teens, emotionally disabled students of all ages, and preparing non-traditional students for college.

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, and she's sold 100,000+ books worldwide. Visit LSHawker.com to view book trailers and read about her adventures as a cocktail waitress, traveling Kmart portrait photographer, and witness to basement exorcisms.

Kate Jonuska is an author, freelance writer, and yoga teacher based in Boulder, CO. Her novel, Transference, was a Denver Post Staff Pick, and Kate's craft book, The Dictionary of Fiction Critique, is in its second edition.

Michelle Kellogg is a published author who moonlights as a corporate Instructional Designer by day and a jill-of-many-trades by night. As Co-founder and President of Denver Novel Writing Month (DenNoWriMo), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, she's deeply invested in supporting the writing community—which makes her a natural fit on the RMFW stage. Her eclectic background—a Bachelor's in Vocal Performance (with an emphasis in Opera) from UNC Greeley, a Master's in Religious Studies, and years of wrangling websites and graphics for charitable organizations—gives her a uniquely creative lens on both writing and 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, but what she truly prefers is to fly dragons and fight crime. Her books have won awards in several writing competitions, including Pike's Peak Zebulon, The Pacific Northwest Writer's Association, The Tucson Festival of Books, and Colorado Gold.

Alyssa Lea Lance earned her MFA in Creative Writing from Regis University in Denver, Colorado. She works at her local library, where she enjoys being surrounded by books and engaging with her community. Her short nonfiction has appeared in HerStry and Twenty Bellows, while her short fiction has been published in Helix Literary Magazine and The Sun. She was a finalist in the 2026 Women on Writing Flash Fiction contest.

Mira Landry studied Creative Writing at Simon Fraser University and spent three years working at a boutique literary agency. She presents workshops on publishing and craft across the continent and co-hosts a literary-forensics podcast called Writers Who Read. When not writing upmarket suspense novels, she can be found frolicking on the high peaks of the Rockies or knitting sweaters that likely won't fit anyone properly. Born and raised in British Columbia, she now resides in Colorado with her husband.

Karen Lin is a hopeless foodie, award-winning novelist, and produced screenwriter. She teaches for cruise lines and writers conferences in Colorado where she is part of a rich author community. Many of her stories are inspired by her experience marrying into a Taiwanese family. Food is a subplot in her novels: Mu Shu Mac & Cheese and American Moon: A Chinese Immigrant Story. She's a pitch and writing coach for award-winning and bestselling authors.

Kelley J. P. Lindberg writes YA and adult fiction. Her fiction and essays have appeared in literary magazines such as The Baltimore Review and Wilderness House Literary Review; in anthologies including This Isn't the Place, Bizarre Bazaar, Journeys into Possibility, and Chicken Soup for the Wine Lover's Soul; and in the Tellables app for Amazon Alexa.

Public speaker and author **Rod Martinez** writes middle grade & young adult. Growing up on Marvel Comics and Twilight Zone, the inspiration was inevitable. After a challenge by his son to write a story about him and his friends "like the Goonies' but based in Tampa", his first novel "The Juniors" was published "“ and the rest as they say "“ is history. A regular speaker at conferences and schools, Rod loves to share his writing experience with audiences.

#1 International Bestselling Author **Bernadette Marie** writes contemporary romances and believes in Happily Ever After. Bernadette is the 2020 Independent Writer of the Year, the 2022 Jasmine Award winner. Having published nearly 60 titles, she is often called upon to teach workshops for organizations such as RMFW, WHWA, RWA, Pikes Peak Writers, Wyoming Writers, Lighthouse Writers, and more. Bernadette is also the Founder and CEO of 5 Prince Publishing, a mid-sized, traditional publishing house in Arvada, Colorado.

Paul Martz is a fiction writer, technology blogger, and former punk rock drummer. At age six, he squandered his hoard of Bazooka bubble gum wrappers on x-ray specs, then wore them while watching _2001: A Space Odyssey_ on the big screen. Once seen, some things cannot be unseen. The booze, the sleeping pills—nothing erases those unnatural images that play like B-movie horror flicks on the inside of his clenched eyelids. Read his prophetic visions at Uncharted Magazine, Amazing Stories, and Creepy Podcast, among others.

Eva Fox Mate is a traditionally published romance author, literary consultant, and editor who delights in helping others with every step of their literary journeys. She has over ten years of coaching, content editing, and copy-editing experience with EFM Editing and Gemini Writer’s Studio. Throughout the course of her career, she has developed a unique skill set that benefits beginning authors, seasoned professionals, and everyone in between.

Christy Matheson has been a teacher almost as long as she has been a storyteller. Christy is an agented author with books both trad and indie published, so she is familiar with both major publishing paths. She understands the challenges that emerging authors are going through today. She is also an anthology editor, which gives her experience working with authors through all stages of publication. Besides her own publications, Christy is a regular speaker at writing events and is a columnist for Write On! magazine.

Meghan Scott Molin is an Amazon and Audible best-selling author who lives in Colorado with her husband, sons, a veritable zoo of animals. She’s a fervent corgi enthusiast, avid equestrian, and has permanent wanderlust. Her degrees in Opera and Architecture serve as excellent fodder for her books. Her series, The Golden Arrow Mysteries (SFF/ Mystery Crossover) have sold over 100,000 copies and have over 5,000 5* reviews on Amazon!

Kim Olgren is the Book Fest award-winning, internationally-selling author of the cozy mystery, Flipped: A Jillian McElroy Flipping Mystery, written as Kimberly Olgren. Flipping houses can be murder. When not writing Kim can be found in her local community renovating houses

with her husband, volunteering with her local writers' organization, or camping somewhere in the Rocky Mountains.

Chelsea Pennington is a romance author with three published books. She holds a degree in English/Creative Writing from Samford University and previously worked as a freelance editor. She shares the lessons she has learned from writing and editing in the hundreds of articles on her website and now on her Substack. When she's not writing, you can probably find her reading or being distracted by birds.

Ariane Peveto is a YA writer and editor who has called the US, England, and Japan home for a time. She earned a master's degree in creative writing and studied literary craft at the University of Oxford as a Visiting Scholar. Now she supports other writers through her small business, Ground Crew Editorial, while also serving as a volunteer and presenter with SCBWI.

Jackie Peveto is a passionate writer, artist, and enthusiast for anything involving imagination and paper. She has a master's degree in creative writing and a bachelor's in English literature. Her love of story is cultivated by this academic background as much as travel. She is an agented writer by night and a full-time editor by day, supporting independent authors and traditional publishers with her work at Ground Crew Editorial, which she co-founded with her twin sister.

Kirsten "Kiki" Ringer is a powerhouse in the publishing industry with more than 30 years of experience across editorial, marketing, contracts, and career strategy. She has worked with Nobel and Pulitzer Prize-winning authors at Russell & Volkening Literary Agency and held roles at The Walt Disney Studios and Penguin Putnam. For the past 18 years, she has led KLR Literary Management, working to produce books to traditional-industry standards while retaining full creative control.

A native of Boulder, Colorado, **David Rodeback** also lived in Idaho and New York. He taught writing and literature courses at Cornell University, Brigham Young University, and serves on the board of the League of Utah Writers. He is the League of Utah Writers 2025 Writer of the Year. His two self-published collections of short fiction won 2024 Silver and Bronze Quill Awards from the League of Utah Writers. He writes a monthly column for local newspapers, mostly about books, bookstores, and reading.

Rob Samborn is the multi-award-winning author of seven books, including The Prisoner of Paradise and The Swordsman of Venice. In addition to being a novelist, Rob is a screenwriter, entrepreneur, sales & marketing executive, and avid traveler. He's been to forty countries, lived in five of them, and studied nine languages. A native New Yorker who lived in Los Angeles for twenty years, he now makes his home in Denver with his family. Rob also serves as an ambassador for the Denver chapter of the Authors Guild. He's represented by Kimberly Brower of Park, Fine & Brower Literary.

Speculative fiction author **Lesley L. Smith**, M.F.A, has had short stories appear in various venues, including Fiction River and Analog Science Fiction and Fact. She has published twelve novels, including The Quantum Cop, Conservation of Luck, Temporal Dreams, and Kat Cubed. She's a founder and editor of the ezine Electric Spec (www.electricspec.com). Check her out online at www.lesleylsmith.com.

Named 2025 Indie Author of the Year by the Indie Author Project, **Cynthia Swanson** is the author of three novels and a short story collection. Cynthia's debut novel, The Bookseller, was a New York Times bestseller, an Indie Next selection, and the winner of the 2016 WILLA Literary Award for Historical Fiction. The Bookseller is to be a motion picture produced by Julia Roberts. Cynthia's second novel, The Glass Forest, was a CAL Award finalist, a USA Today bestseller, and was named 2024 Best Mystery/Thriller by the Indie Author Project.

Travis Tougaw is a writer, editor, and wannabe folk musician from Denver, Colorado. He is the author of the award-winning Marcotte/Collins Investigative Thriller series. The series has been featured as a recommended read by Best Thrillers, The Big Thrill, and The Writer's Dossier. Travis is active in the writing community as a member of International Thriller Writers and Mystery Writers of America and as a member, contest judge, and monthly blogger for Rocky Mountain Fiction Writing.

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

Laurie Marr Wasmund has worked as an editor, community college instructor, and local and national writing workshop presenter and her short stories have appeared in literary magazines. She is the author of My Heart Lies Here; 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 book award from the Colorado Authors League. It also received a 2020 EVVY award in Historical Fiction from the Colorado Independent Publishers Association.

Rachel Weaver's novel Point of Direction was named a Top Ten Book To Pick Up Now by Oprah Magazine and won the Willa Cather Award for Fiction. Rachel's newest book, Dizzy, an "arresting new memoir" according to Maureen Corrigan on NPR's Fresh Air, published in February of 2026. Her second novel The Last Run, is forthcoming in June 2026 with Lake Union Publishing. She teaches at Wilkes University and Lighthouse Writers Workshop.

Jennifer S. Wilkov is a multi #1 international best-selling award-winning author, an award-winning freelance writer, and a Hollywood consultant. She supports first-time writers and seasoned authors 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. She assists with the writing, editing, marketing, and publishing of their books as well as the building of their platforms to raise their visibility to readers, the media, Hollywood and beyond.

Bestselling YA Author & Romance Novelist **Jennifer Wilson** is the author of the acclaimed New World Series, comprising Rising, Ashes, and Inferno. Featured in OwlCrate and the BookWormBox, the New World trilogy has sold over 18,000 copies. Her YA short story, "The Vanished," was published in Colleen Hoover's "Two More Days Anthology", and she is the creator of "Write Your Novel: The Writer's Workbook." In addition, she writes Romance under the pen name Kay Rockland, where her writing is a fiery cocktail of witty banter and sizzling romance.

Johnny Worthen is a widely published, award-winning, best-selling author of books and stories. Trained in stand-up comedy, modern literary criticism and cultural studies, he writes excellent multi-genre fiction, symbolized by his love of tie-dye and good words. "I wear tie-dye for my friends, but I write what I like to read," he says. "This guarantees me at least one fan and easy dressing decisions in the morning." Johnny teaches writing at the University of Utah and lives in a house with his wife, assorted cats. There's also a lawn. Find him at: www.johnnyworthen.com.

COLORADO GOLD Writers Conference 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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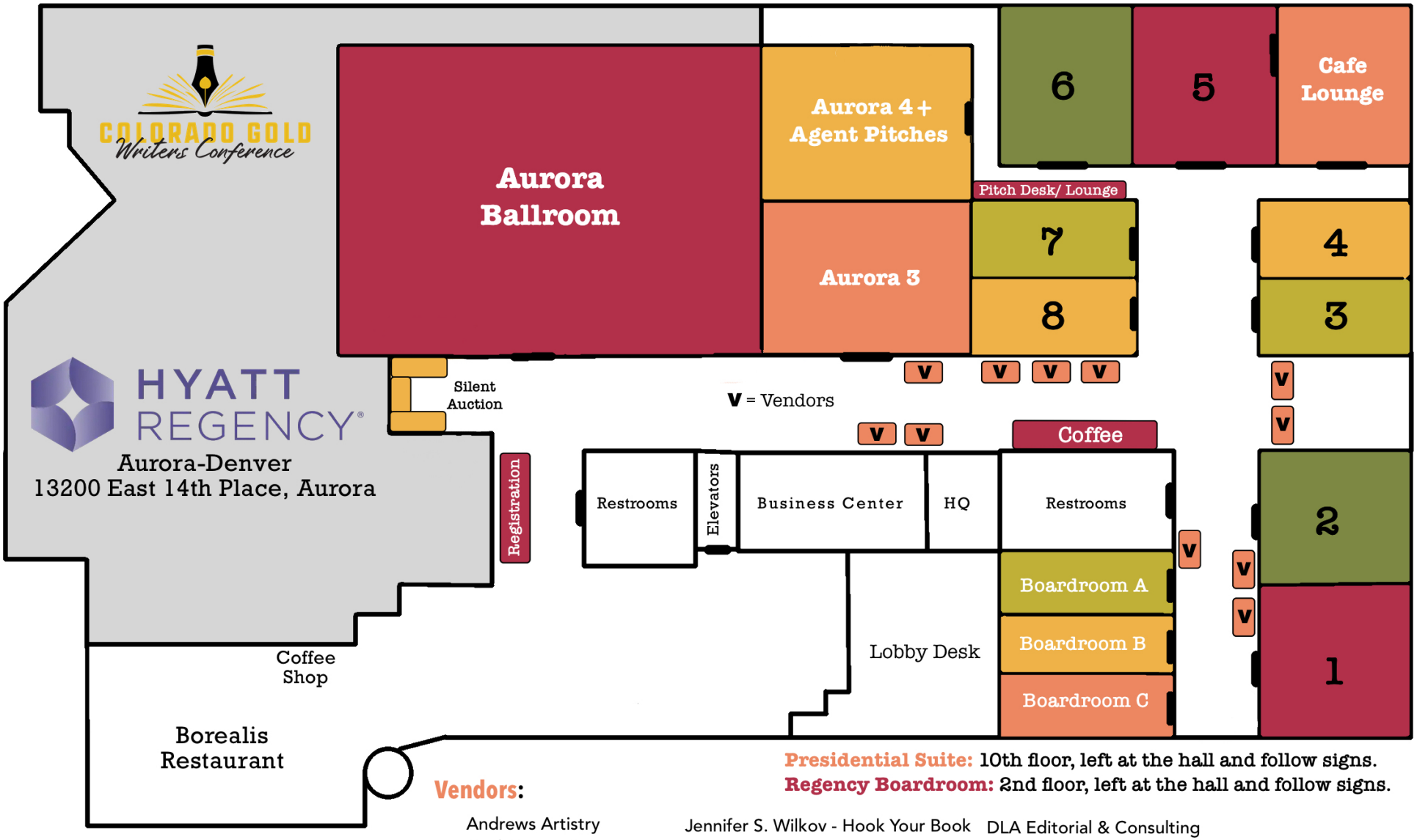

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