On behalf of everyone here at the Writers’ League of Texas, welcome to the 2024 Agents & Editors Conference.

I know that getting here today was no small feat. You crossed states, counties, or intersections. But before that, even, you sat down — maybe at your desk, or a coffee shop, or the library, or maybe you transformed your kitchen table into a workspace — and you wrote. You wrote and wrote and wrote until the words and sentences and pages grew in number and significance too great for only your eyes to behold. So, first of all, congratulations are in order. I hope you take a moment to appreciate the work you’ve done and the time and effort you’ve invested in order to arrive at this threshold. Like I said, no small feat.

On the other side of the threshold, you’ll find many paths and offshoots you can choose to take throughout the weekend. There’s sessions to help you hone your craft and polish your work, to build your community and network, to find support and readers and inspiration, and to better understand the myriad paths to publishing (and beyond).

Over the course of the next three days, you’ll have the opportunity to hear from nearly 100 authors and publishing professionals whose expertise and backgrounds and trajectories are as varied and unique as the books they author and edit and shepherd into the world. You’ll be assisted by close to 40 staff and volunteers, who’ve worked tirelessly to make this weekend a reality. And you’ll do so in the company of 300 other writers — current and future colleagues, collaborators, and friends. Which is all to say: You’re not in this alone.

Whichever paths you choose to explore, my hope is that you’ll leave on Sunday with the tools you need to write your next chapter, both literally and figuratively. And you’ll leave with new connections who will guide and support you along the way. Remember, the only requirement to being a writer is to write. Congratulations, my friend, you are a writer. Now, let us help you decide what happens next.

Sarah Renee Beach
Program Director
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The Writers’ League of Texas (WLT)
is the largest literary arts organization in Texas, a nonprofit with a forty-three-year history of supporting writers, both published and not yet published, across Texas and beyond. Our year-round programming includes online classes, both in-person and virtual free events, a summer writing retreat, Project WISE (author presentations in public schools), Texas Writes (writing workshops in rural libraries), and more. For more information, visit our website at writersleague.org.

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All programs and presenters are subject to change.
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ART WORKS. | National Endowment for the Arts | Texas Commission on the Arts

We’d also like to thank Inprint, Kirkus Reviews, and The Library Foundation for their generous support of this program.
Alicia Kroell
Catapult
Alicia Kroell is an Editor at Catapult, where they acquire literary fiction, narrative nonfiction, and hybrid memoir. Writers they work with include Jokha Alharthi, Chloe Aridjis, Manuel Betancourt, Marisa (Mac) Crane, Davey Davis, Marissa Higgins, Ruth Madievsky, Jennifer Neal, Amanda Peters, and Mina Seçkin. Originally from Oregon, Alicia got their start in publishing at Tin House, National Book Foundation, and Literary Hub.

Serena Jones
Holt

Meet the Editors

Thank You to Our Panelists, Moderators, and Other Special Guests:
Wendi Aarons, Aaron Aceves, Sam Babiak, Chris Barton, Robert Jackson Bennett, Christopher Brown, Bev Chukwu, Amanda Churchill, Samantha M Clark, Callie Collins, Kelsey Cox, Mac Crane, Elizabeth Crook, Nan Cuba, Lisa Doggett, Jennifer duBois, Kristin Dulaney, David Wright Faladé, Hannah Gabel, Dina Gachman, Meg Gardiner, Casey Gerald, Stephen Harrigan, Julia Heaberlin, SG Huerta, Hillary Hugg, Allison Hunter, Amanda Johnston, J. Kenner, Sara Kociek, Margaret Juhae Lee, Stephanie Macias, Alison Macor, Greg Marshall, Jennifer Mathieu, Jill Meyers, Ehigbor Okosun, Bianca Alyssa Pérez, Maya Perez, Ursula Pike, Julie Poole, Andrew Porter, Tonia Ransom, Gillian Redfearn, Kelis Rowe, Deanna Roy, Lori Ryan, Leila Sales, Richard Z. Santos, Patrice Sarath, Scott Semegran, Chaitali Sen, Rose Smith, Stacey Swann, Alex Temblador, Sherry Thomas, R.L. Toalson, Madeline Vosch, James Wade, Sasha West, Kirk Wilson, Jenny Tinghui Zhang, Jennifer Ziegler

Please join us
in congratulating the 2023 Writers’ League of Texas Manuscript Contest Winners & Finalists, many of whom are joining us here this weekend. You’ll be able to spot them by the blue ribbons they’re wearing.

See page 18 for the complete list.

Be sure to visit the BookPeople table where you will find books by many of our panelists, moderators, and other special guests. It’s a great way to say “thank you” to these amazing people for sharing their time and expertise with us!
Meet the Agents

Sarah Bowlin
Aevitas Creative Management
Sarah Bowlin is a senior agent at Aevitas Creative Management which she joined in 2017. Before becoming an agent, she was an editor of award-winning literary fiction and nonfiction at Riverhead Books and Henry Holt & Company. She represents both emerging and acclaimed writers and is particularly interested in bold voices and experiments in form—specifically stories of strong or difficult women and unexpected narratives of place, identity, and the shifting ways we see ourselves and each other. Originally from the South, she now lives in Los Angeles.

Hannah Brattesani
The Friedrich Agency
Hannah Brattesani is a literary agent and the Director of International Rights at The Friedrich Agency. She represents literary and upmarket fiction, and voice-driven nonfiction. Hannah emigrated from Scotland to New York after graduating from the University of St Andrews, where she was awarded the Douglas Dunn Award for Writing. She began her career at Emma Sweeney Agency and Blue Flower Arts, later joining Folio as interim Director of International Rights. Hannah has been with Friedrich since 2019 and is privileged to work with many bestselling and celebrated authors.

Jennifer Chen Tran
Glass Literary Management
Jennifer Chen Tran is a literary agent at Glass Literary Management. She is passionate about nurturing and championing authors and their creative lives. She represents a wide range of talent, including entrepreneurs, journalists, physicians, chefs, and graphic novelists. Jennifer is an editorial agent who believes in the art and magic of collaboration. Prior to joining Glass Literary, Jennifer was a literary agent at several top literary agencies and served as Of Counsel at The New Press. She is committed to amplifying voices from neurodiverse, BIPOC, LGBTQ, underrepresented, and marginalized communities, to create books that have a lasting positive social impact.

Lane Clarke
Ultra Literary
Lane Clarke believes in representing books that transport your mind, whether it be in a fantastical world, or the real one. She is always hoping to learn something new from books, and strives to represent a diverse list of creators. She represents all age groups and is fairly genre-agnostic—she simply looks for stories that have something to say in both the fiction and nonfiction space.

Amy Collins
Talcott Notch Literary Services
Amy Collins has over 30 years of experience matching books with readers. As a former book buyer, publisher, and sales director, Amy focuses on market and sales potential for authors. As an agent, she represents many authors who have signed deals with major publishers and is currently negotiating book to film as well. Amy is the author of several nonfiction books and is currently traveling the country with her two dogs meeting with editors and authors. She can be found on Twitter at @askamycollins and online at www.amysadvice.com.

David Doerrer
The Platform
David Doerrer founded The Platform in 2024 after 13 years at A3 Artists Agency, a full-service talent agency, where he worked his way up from Assistant to Agent to Director of the Book Division. His clients include pioneering academics, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalists, New York Times bestselling novelists, thought leaders in the world of business and medicine, and online influencers of all stripes. David is a true-blue native New Yorker: he grew up in Queens, graduated from NYU with a BA in English and Creative Writing, and lives in Brooklyn with his husband and tabby cat, Archie.

Scan this QR code for complete bios for our visiting agents
Meet the Agents

Natalie Edwards
Trellis Literary
Natalie Edwards joined Trellis at its founding, after starting her career at Curtis Brown, Ltd. and Janklow & Nesbit. She is actively seeking upmarket and literary fiction, as well as narrative nonfiction and memoir. She enjoys stories of queerness and diaspora, hidden histories, and explorations of subcultures, as well as speculative novels and workplace sendups. She loves hybrid memoirs that combine in-depth research and reportage with a personal throughline, and she can’t resist a good scam. Some of Natalie’s clients include Emma Specter, Jessie Ren Marshall, Adam Morgan, Mathew Rodriguez, Aram Mrjoian, and Alysia Li Ying Sawchyn.

Aurora Fernandez
Trident Media Group
Aurora Fernandez is an Associate Agent at Trident Media Group where she is growing her fiction and nonfiction list. She is looking for commercial and upmarket fiction. On the commercial end, she loves romance that features swoon worthy love stories, strong friendships, and witty dialogue, and thrillers with complicated female relationships, a good twist, and dark academia elements. For upmarket books, she is especially drawn to books with moral dilemmas with no clear cut answer, unexplored perspectives of historical moments, and a unique hook backed by great writing. And anything involving mythic retellings or witches will definitely catch her eye!

Emma Kapson
Verve Talent & Literary
Emma Kapson is a native Los Angeleno and Junior Agent and IP Coordinator at Verve Talent & Literary. She started her career in publishing at Regan Arts and has since transitioned to representation. She’s passionate about literature and bringing stories she believes in to life in various mediums like film, television, and audio. She’s a young agent looking to build her list and is open to queries of any kind. She has an eye for women’s voices, loves strong, female driven narratives, epic worlds, romance, horror, and works by foreign and diverse writers.

Sheyla Knigge
High Line Literary Collective
Sheyla Knigge is a budding publishing professional who comes to the industry with a lifelong love of reading under her belt. From middle grade to adult, Sheyla loves working on stories that immerse you in a different world.

Cherise Fisher
Wendy Sherman Associates Literary Management
Cherise Fisher represents novelists who have multiple, compulsively readable, impeccably crafted yarns in their head (both historical and contemporary), memoirists who showcase the diversity of human experience, and nonfiction writers who seek to provoke, inspire, and educate regarding multiple topics such as personal development, health and sexuality, racial identity, African American history, humor and pop culture. Her intention is that all the books she helps bring into the world are relevant, enduring, and help readers maximize their lives.

Stefanie Lieberman
Janklow & Nesbit Associates
Stefanie Lieberman joined Janklow & Nesbit Associates as Senior Counsel in 2005 after practicing law at New York’s Guggenheim Museum and boutique entertainment firm Frankfurt Kurnit. She has degrees from Yale and Northwestern University School of Law. As an agent, Stefanie focuses primarily on upmarket fiction with commercial appeal.

Jake Lovell
Sandra Dijkstra Literary Agency
Jake Lovell joined SDLA in 2023. He earned his MA in Literature and Writing Studies from CSU San Marcos in 2021. He is also a veteran, having joined the Army in 2008. Born and raised in Southern California, Jake proudly comes from a mixed cultural background and is second generation Chicano on his mother’s side. He is actively seeking adult fiction with an emphasis on: Gothic, horror, thrillers, westerns, military, and fiction with speculative elements. On the nonfiction front, Jake is especially interested in working with historians, up-and-coming scholars, journalists, scientists, veterans, and people with unique takes on important issues.
Meet the Agents

**Caitlin Mahony**
*WME*
Caitlin Mahony has been at WME since 2016. She represents bestselling authors across romance, genre, and commercial fiction. Caitlin is looking for books that offer a total escape and full immersion, in either this world or an imagined one. She loves a hard-won, epic love story (historical and contemporary), a transporting fantasy or sci-fi novel that helps parse earthly questions, a delightful beach read, or a pulse-pounding thriller; and is always looking to get swept up in something that you can’t put down.

**Duvall Osteen**
*United Talent Agency*
Duvall Osteen represents a diverse list of debut, award-winning, bestselling, and notable authors. Before joining UTA, she spent 11 years as an agent at Aragi Inc., focusing on literary fiction, narrative nonfiction, and graphic novels. Her literary interests include writing rooted in place, especially the global South, multigenerational storytelling, crime, and literary suspense. In both fiction and nonfiction, she gravitates towards books across genres with big, original, astute, immersive voices. She is a passionate advocate for her authors, and tailors her approach to representation based on their needs. Above all, she prioritizes close editorial relationships.

**Michaela Whatnall**
*Dystel, Goderich & Bourret*
Michaela Whatnall is an agent with Dystel, Goderich & Bourret, where they have worked out of the West Coast office since 2019. They have a degree in English and linguistics from Emory University, completed the Columbia Publishing Course, and in 2023 they were selected as a Publishers Weekly Star Watch Honoree. Michaela represents middle grade and young adult fiction across genres; upmarket adult fiction and grounded fantasy; and select picture books, graphic novels, and narrative nonfiction.

**Ayla Zuraw-Friedland**
*Frances Goldin Literary Agency*

Scan this QR code for complete bios for our visiting agents
Meet the Presenters

Jennifer Chen Tran
Jennifer Chen Tran is a literary agent with Glass Literary Management. You can read her full bio on page 3 of this program. Jennifer will be presenting on Sunday at 11:30 a.m. on “The Nonfiction Book Proposal.”

Amy Collins
Amy Collins is a literary agent with Talcott Notch Literary Services. You can read her full bio on page 3 of this program. Amy will be presenting on Saturday at 2:30 p.m. on “Writing a Plot Synopsis without Losing Your Mind.”

Natalie Edwards
Natalie Edwards is a literary agent with Trellis Literary. You can read her full bio on page 4 of this program. Natalie will be presenting on Saturday at 3:45 p.m. on “The Dos & Don’ts of Querying.”

Amy Gentry
Amy Gentry is the internationally bestselling author of the psychological thrillers Good as Gone, Last Woman Standing, and Bad Habits. Her work has been featured in the Chicago Tribune, Paris Review, Texas Monthly, Austin Chronicle, Los Angeles Review of Books, Salon, and other venues. She holds a PhD in English and teaches writing classes in Austin, Texas. Amy will be presenting on Saturday at 10:15 a.m. on “Plotting Your Novel in Three Acts.”

Chaitali Sen
Chaitali Sen is the author of the novel The Pathless Sky and the story collection A New Race of Men from Heaven, chosen by Danielle Evans as the winner of the 2021 Mary McCarthy Prize in Short Fiction. Her stories and essays have been published by American Short Fiction, Boulevard, Catapult, Colorado Review, Ecotone, Electric Literature, Los Angeles Review of Books, New England Review, and many other publications. She holds an MFA from Hunter College - City University of New York, and currently lives in Central Texas. Chaitali will be presenting on Saturday at 11:30 a.m. on “Layering: A Strategic Approach to Revision.”

Alex Temblador
Alex Temblador is the Mixed Latine award-winning author of Half Outlaw, Secrets of the Casa Rosada, and Writing an Identity Not Your Own: A Guide for Creative Writers, forthcoming from St. Martin’s Essentials on August 13. She received her MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Central Oklahoma and was a contributor to Living Beyond Borders: Growing Up Mexican in America and Speculative Fiction for Dreamers: A Latinx Anthology. Her creative work has appeared in Colorado Review, PALABRITAS, D Magazine, among others. Based in Dallas, Alex is the executive director of Write Here DFW and the moderator and founder of the LitTalk series. Alex will be presenting on Sunday at 10:15 a.m. on “Writing an Identity Not Your Own.”

Roanna Flowers, Britta Jensen, and E.A. Williams
Roanna Flowers, Britta Jensen, and E.A. Williams are authors based in Texas. They work in a cross-section of genres, from YA science fiction to dark urban fantasy and upmarket humor. Their presentation will touch on their collaborative work together running a writing group of over 20 authors who work in a variety of genres, including their recent project, Mixed Bag of Tricks, a short story anthology inspired by a series of writing prompts, published in late 2023. Roanna, Britta, and E.A. will be presenting on Sunday at 9:00 a.m. on “Collaboration & Craft: A Case Study.”

Natalie Edwards
Natalie Edwards is the author of the novel The Pathless Sky and the story collection A New Race of Men from Heaven, chosen by Danielle Evans as the winner of the 2021 Mary McCarthy Prize in Short Fiction. Her stories and essays have been published by American Short Fiction, Boulevard, Catapult, Colorado Review, Ecotone, Electric Literature, Los Angeles Review of Books, New England Review, and many other publications. She holds an MFA from Hunter College - City University of New York, and currently lives in Central Texas. Chaitali will be presenting on Saturday at 11:30 a.m. on “Layering: A Strategic Approach to Revision.”

Scan this QR code to learn more about our presenters and their presentations
Meet the Exhibitors
Visit our exhibitors throughout the weekend to learn about great opportunities and services.

Atmosphere Press
category: publisher
atmospherepress.com
Founded in Austin in 2015 by an author and PhD in Literature, Atmosphere Press is *the* selective hybrid book publisher that helps writers get taken seriously as authors. Benefiting from expert editors, award-winning design, global distribution, and dynamic promotion, Atmosphere Press authors have sold hundreds of thousands of copies and won dozens of awards. As the only press dedicated first and foremost to providing rewarding and meaningful publishing experiences to authors, you can trust that you’ll receive the best for your book.

Austin Community College Creative Writing Department
category: educational institution
austincc.edu/crw
A two-year degree program open to all writers in multiple genres, online and face-to-face. Writers do not have to be in the degree program to enroll in classes.

Austin’s Writer’s Workshop
category: workshop
workshopwriter.com
Editing and coaching authors to sparkling manuscripts. Developing for character or content, line-editing for powerful language, graceful and hawk-eyed copy edits — we do it all. Publishing strategies help every author, too. Give your book a personal edit with professional results. Conference writers get a free edit of their first 10 pages.

BookPeople
category: bookstore
bookpeople.com
The largest independent bookstore in Texas, offering books on writing and getting published as well as books by conference panelists, presenters, and keynotes.

Booktique Consulting
category: consulting
booktiqueconsulting.com
Booktique Consulting provides one-on-one concierge editorial and publishing services and consulting to new and established authors to help them build the literary career they’ve been dreaming of.

The First Line/Workers Write!
category: publisher
bluecubiclepress.com
Blue Cubicle Press publishes two literary journals: *The First Line* and *Workers Write!*, and chapbooks in the *Overtime* series.

Inkdrop Lit
category: literary consultancy
inkdroplit.com
Sarah Welch is a book editor and writing coach, and the founder of The Inkwell writing community. Build a fulfilling and sustainable writing practice in community with other authors, get your book ready for publication, and hone the tools and the confidence you need to achieve your writing goals.

The Mindset to Finish Your Book
category: life coaching
mindsettofinishyourbook.org
The Mindset to Finish Your Book is personalized, one-on-one life coaching for writers. You will learn how to use your novelist brain to imagine everything that is possible, write yourself a happy ending, and actually bring your creative vision to life.

The Writing Consultancy
category: editorial consultancy
thewritingconsultancy.com
Award-winning author and editor Britta Jensen and her team of editors offer collaborative, holistic editing and author services including: developmental editing, copy editing, manuscript critiques, literary agent submission edits, writing coaching, and publishing assistance.

Yellow Bird Editors
category: literary consultancy
yellowbirdeditors.com
Yellow Bird is a team of independent professional editors and writing coaches based in Austin and beyond. From memoirs to sci-fi novels to how-to-books, our experienced team can help you polish your manuscript and guide you on your path to publication. We offer critiques, developmental editing, content/line editing, copyediting/proofreading, monthly writing coaching, and publishing consultations. With more than 200 years of combined editing experience, all of our editors and coaches are vetted professionals who will treat you and your work with the respect you deserve.

Scan this QR code to learn more about our conference exhibitors, including some special discounts & offers.
Friday, June 21

12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
CHECK-IN
Pick up your badge and conference materials.
Big Bend Ballroom (first floor)

12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
EXHIBIT HALL
Big Bend & Hill Country Foyers (first floor)

5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
FRIDAY WELCOME RECEPTION
Join WLT staff, special guests, and fellow attendees to kick off the conference with light bites and refreshments (plus a cash bar) and socializing. Typewriter Rodeo will be on hand to turn your prompts into poetry.
Texas Ballroom (second floor)

Finding Your Way around the Hyatt Regency
All breakout rooms are on the first and second floors in the main part of the hotel. Agent and editor consultations are on the 17th floor. Friday’s check-in is in the Big Bend Ballroom on the first floor and the welcome reception will take place in the Texas Ballroom on the second floor. Our exhibitor area is located in the Big Bend and Hill Country Foyers on the first floor (Friday) and in the Texas Foyer on the second floor (Saturday & Sunday). All general sessions are in the Texas Ballroom on the second floor.

Genre Sessions
Enjoy moderated conversations with authors in various genres on the craft of writing and the journey to publication. Each of these sessions promises to be inspiring and illuminating, regardless of what you’re writing. Sit in on one or all of them!

1:00 p.m. to 1:50 p.m.
Mystery / Thriller / Suspense:
Featuring Kelsey Cox and Julia Heaberlin
Moderator: Tonia Ransom
(Hill Country A&B)

Memoir:
Featuring Margaret Juhae Lee and Greg Marshall
Moderator: Ursula Pike
(Hill Country C&D)

2:00 p.m. to 2:50 p.m.
Kid Lit:
Featuring Chris Barton and R.L. Toalson
Moderator: Leila Sales
(Hill Country A&B)

General Fiction:
Featuring Jennifer Mathieu and James Wade
Moderator: Becka Oliver
(Hill Country C&D)

3:00 p.m. to 3:50 p.m.
Historical Fiction:
Featuring Elizabeth Crook and David Wright Faladé
Moderator: James Wade
(Hill Country A&B)

Science Fiction & Fantasy:
Featuring Robert Jackson Bennett and Ehigbor Okosun
Moderator: Alex Temblador
(Hill Country C&D)

4:00 p.m. to 4:50 p.m.
Romance:
Featuring J. Kenner and Deanna Roy
Moderator: Lori Ryan
(Hill Country A&B)

Nonfiction:
Featuring Christopher Brown and Dina Gachman
Moderator: Alison Macor
(Hill Country C&D)
9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.
TEXAS BALLROOM (SECOND FLOOR)

Featuring Executive Director and Publisher of Graywolf Press Carmen Giménez

Carmen Giménez joined Graywolf as Publisher and Director in August 2022. She was previously the founder and publisher of Noemi Press and professor of English at Virginia Tech. A queer Latinx poet, she is the author of six collections of poetry, including *Be Recorder*, which was a finalist for the National Book Award in Poetry, and *Milk and Filth*, a finalist for the NBCC Book Award in Poetry. She has been awarded fellowships from the Academy of American Poets, Guggenheim Foundation, the Howard Foundation, and the Hermitage Foundation.

For this Opening Session, Carmen Giménez will be in conversation with WLT Executive Director Becka Oliver.

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
CHECK-IN
Pick up your badge and conference materials.
Texas Foyer (second floor)

8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.
BREAKFAST
Get your day started right with coffee, tea, and an assortment of breakfast treats.
Texas Ballroom (second floor)

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
EXHIBIT HALL
Texas Foyer (second floor)

10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
CONSULTATIONS
All agent and editor consultations will take place on the 17th Floor in Foothills I & II. Check in at the registration table in the Foothills Lobby. Arrive no more than 10 minutes before your scheduled appointment.

10:00 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.
BREAK

10:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.
BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Crafting Undeniable Opening Pages
Panelists: Aurora Fernandez, Meg Gardiner, Chaitali Sen
Moderator: Aaron Aceves
Texas 5 (second floor)

Writing Outside the Box: Publishing in Multiple Genres
Panelists: Wendi Aarons, Christopher Brown, Jennifer Mathieu
Moderator: SG Huerta
Texas 6 (second floor)

Writing & Publishing Short Fiction
Panelists: Callie Collins, Andrew Porter, Kirk Wilson
Moderator: Madeline Vosch
Texas 7 (second floor)

Plotting Your Novel in Three Acts
Presenter: Amy Gentry
Hill Country A&B (first floor)

Shelf-Talk: Finding Your Perfect Comps
Panelists: Sheyla Knigge, Jake Lovell, Ayla Zuraw-Friedland
Moderator: James Wade
Hill Country C&D (first floor)

11:15 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
BREAK
“How to Write a Book in One Year or Nine Years: On Inspiration, Setbacks, & Throwing Things Away”

Featuring author Ed Park


Advance registration required and includes lunch and a complimentary copy of Ed Park’s book *Same Bed Different Dreams*. The author will sign books after his keynote.

Saturday, June 22

**KEYNOTE LUNCHEON**

12:30 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.

TEXAS BALLROOM (SECOND FLOOR)

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

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Writing Character-Led Stories
Panelists: Jennifer duBois, Kelis Rowe, Sherry Thomas
Moderator: Richard Z. Santos
Texas 5 (second floor)

Beyond the Big 5: The Independent Press Experience
Panelists: Carmen Giménez, Alicia Kroell, Jill Meyers
Moderator: SG Huerta
Texas 6 (second floor)

Writing & Publishing Personal Essays
Panelists: Dina Gachman, Jenny Tinghui Zhang, Ayla Zuraw-Friedland
Moderator: Bianca Alyssa Pérez
Texas 7 (second floor)

Layering: A Strategic Approach to Revision
Presenter: Chaitali Sen
Hill Country A&B (first floor)

It’s a Partnership: Exploring the Agent/Author Relationship
Moderator: Stacey Swann
Hill Country C&D (first floor)

2:15 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

BREAK

2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Finding Your Audience: The Author’s Role
Panelists: Mac Crane, Casey Gerald, James Wade
Moderator: Amanda Johnston
Texas 5 (second floor)

Going Traditional: Signing after Self-Publishing
Panelists: Caitlin Mahony, Deanna Roy, Scott Semegran
Moderator: Sara Kocek
Texas 6 (second floor)

Writing Page-Turners: How to Build Tension & Suspense
Panelists: Julia Heaberlin, Jake Lovell, Tonia Ransom
Moderator: Richard Z. Santos
Texas 7 (second floor)

Writing a Plot Synopsis without Losing Your Mind
Presenter: Amy Collins
Hill Country A&B (first floor)

A Day in the Life of an Agent
Panelists: Lane Clarke, David Doerrer, Cherise Fisher
Moderator: Sam Babiak
Hill Country C&D (first floor)
Saturday, June 22

3:30 p.m. to 3:45 p.m.
BREAK

3:45 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.
BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Applying to Residencies, Fellowships, & Grants
Panelists: Nan Cuba, David Wright Faladé, Julie Poole
Moderator: Bianca Alyssa Pérez
Texas 5 (second floor)

Write, Submit, Repeat: Publishing in Literary Journals & Magazines
Panelists: Amanda Johnston, Stephanie Macias, Sasha West
Moderator: Madeline Vosch
Texas 6 (second floor)

Letting Go: When to Share, When to Submit
Panelists: Aaron Aceves, James Wade, Jenny Tinghui Zhang
Moderator: Tonia Ransom
Texas 7 (second floor)

The Dos & Don’ts of Querying
Presenter: Natalie Edwards
Hill Country A&B (first floor)

The Deal’s Done, What Now? What Happens after Acquisition and before Publication
Panelists: Serena Jones, Emma Kapson, Ayla Zuraw-Friedland
Moderator: Sam Babiak
Hill Country C&D (first floor)

4:45 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
BREAK

5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
SATURDAY EVENING RECEPTION
Join WLT staff, special guests, and fellow attendees to bring the big day to a close with light bites and refreshments (plus a cash bar) and socializing. Oh, and B-I-N-G-O!
Texas Ballroom (second floor)

Sunday, June 23

7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.
BREAKFAST
Get your day started right with coffee, tea, and an assortment of breakfast treats.
Texas Ballroom (second floor)

8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
EXHIBIT HALL
Texas Foyer (second floor)

9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
CONSULTATIONS
All in-person agent and editor consultations will take place on the 17th Floor in Foothills I & II. Check in at the registration table in the Foothills Lobby. Arrive no more than 10 minutes before your scheduled appointment.

9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.
BREAKOUT SESSIONS

The Writer as Architect: Structuring Your Story
Panelists: Samantha M Clark, Lisa Doggett, Stacey Swann
Moderator: Ursula Pike
Texas 5 (second floor)

A Look Inside: The Day to Day of a Publishing House
Panelists: Kristin Dulaney, Serena Jones, Gillian Redfearn
Moderator: Hannah Gabel
Texas 6 (second floor)

Letting Them Wanting More: Writing Genre Series
Panelists: Robert Jackson Bennett, Sheyla Knigge, Patrice Sarah
Moderator: Bev Chukwu
Texas 7 (second floor)

Collaboration & Craft: A Case Study
Presenters: Roanna Flowers, Britta Jensen, E.A. Williams
Hill Country A&B (first floor)

Plucked from Slush: Agents on the Compelling Query
Panelists: Cherise Fisher, Emma Kapson, Michaela Whatnall
Moderator: Jennifer Ziegler
Hill Country C&D (first floor)
Sunday, June 23

10:00 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.
BREAK

10:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.
BREAKOUT SESSIONS
A Look at Kid Lit Today
Panelists: Lane Clarke, Kristin Dulaney, Michaela Whatnall
Moderator: Samantha M Clark
Texas 5 (second floor)

Debut Authors Dish: Publishing Your First Book
Panelists: Amanda Churchill, Margaret Juhae Lee, Ehigbor Okosun
Moderator: Hillery Hugg
Texas 6 (second floor)

What Am I Writing? High Concept, Book Club, Upmarket, & Other Buzzwords
Panelists: Hannah Brattesani, Aurora Fernandez, Stefanie Lieberman
Moderator: Rose Smith
Texas 7 (second floor)

Writing an Identity Not Your Own
Presenter: Alex Temblador
Hill Country A&B (first floor)

Before You Sign: Questions to Ask an Agent
Panelists: Jennifer Chen Tran, David Doerrer, Duvall Osteen
Moderator: Maya Perez
Hill Country C&D (first floor)

11:15 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
BREAK

11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Beyond the Book Deal: Other Ways an Agent Supports Your Writing Career
Panelists: Sarah Bowlin, Allison Hunter, Duvall Osteen
Moderator: Maya Perez
Texas 5 (second floor)

It’s a Partnership: Exploring the Editor/Author Relationship
Panelists: Mac Crane and Alicia Kroell
Moderator: Rose Smith
Texas 6 (second floor)

Getting to Page One: Researching, Outlining, & Other Prewriting
Panelists: Alison Macor, Ursula Pike, Jennifer Ziegler
Moderator: Samantha M Clark
Texas 7 (second floor)

The Nonfiction Book Proposal
Presenter: Jennifer Chen Tran
Hill Country A&B (first floor)

Playing the Long Game: Building a Sustaining Writing Career
Panelists: Chris Barton, Elizabeth Crook, Stephen Harrigan
Moderator: Stacey Swann
Hill Country C&D (first floor)

12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.
CLOSING LUNCHEON
Join the WLT staff and fellow attendees for a closing meal, including a recap of the weekend’s highlights and thoughts about where you go from here. Advance registration required. Note: If you did not register for this luncheon in advance, tickets will be available for purchase ($25), subject to availability.
Texas Ballroom (second floor)
Consultation Fast Facts

Where
All consultations will be held in Foothills I & II on the 17th floor of the Hyatt. Only one elevator goes to the 17th floor. The others take you to the 16th floor. From there you can take the stairs up one flight to the Foothills lobby.

Scheduling
If you’re doing consultations with an agent or editor, in advance of the conference, you received an email notice with the date and time of your appointment(s) and the name(s) of the agent(s) or editor(s) you’re meeting with. If you did not receive this information, please come see a staff person at the WLT Information Desk.

Checking In
Please check in at the Consultations Desk in the Foothills lobby on the 17th floor no earlier than 10 minutes before your appointment is scheduled to start.
IMPORTANT: If you are late and miss your consultation, you will NOT be given another appointment.

Length of Appointments
All consultations will be 10 minutes long. A volunteer will be on hand to time your session and will cue you as your time nears its end. Once you receive that cue, please wrap up your meeting promptly. Because other attendees are scheduled after you, ending on time is EXTREMELY important. Occasionally consultations will get off schedule; please be patient if that is the case.

Agent and Editor Consultations
The agents and editors you’re meeting with are expecting a verbal pitch during your one-on-one meeting. Come prepared with your short and succinct pitch and be ready to elaborate, share additional details, and answer questions when prompted.
Take some time to think of a few questions you might ask so that, should an agent or editor tell you early in the session that your project doesn’t sound like a good fit for them, you’re able to take full advantage of your time in the most productive way possible.

Please, do not bring a manuscript or hand-outs with you to your appointment. It is highly unlikely that the agent or editor you’re meeting with will want to carry materials away with them (remember, most of our faculty are visiting from other cities and feel the same way you do about packing extras in their return luggage). Plus, handing something off at a conference means you’re not giving the submission its full due, the way you would with a well-written query letter sent (following specific submission guidelines) after the event. One exception: If your project is a picture book, feel free to bring a copy of the manuscript to your appointment in case the agent or editor asks to see it.
Keep in mind, tastes change and many factors can influence what genres or categories an agent or editor is currently looking for. The bios found in this program are a good starting point for gauging someone’s interests, but nothing is set in stone. If the person you meet with says he or she does not represent your type of book, use that time to gather information on what you might do to make your project more saleable. You can also talk about other ideas you have or ask for suggestions for other agents or publishers that it might be a fit for (especially if you’re talking to an agent who works in a large agency and might have colleagues who specialize in what you’re writing).
Finally, this is a great opportunity to ask about the state of publishing today, current market trends, and other general questions you might have. Come prepared and use your time well and wisely.

Networking
Agents, editors, and other special guests will attend the Welcome Reception on Friday evening and the Saturday Evening Reception. In addition, our faculty will lead presentations or sit on panels throughout the conference. Agents and editors welcome brief, informal pitches and will be glad to talk to you throughout the weekend. Remember that pitching in this format should be more casual and much quicker than in your one-on-one consultation.

Support our panelists, presenters, and speakers (and find your next favorite book) by visiting the BookPeople table in the exhibitor area.
Conference Tips & Tricks

Take copious notes! Panelists and presenters will share lots of information and advice that you can use – now or later in your career as a writer.

Leave the outside world behind. Between sessions, don’t check in with your business or personal email. Instead visit with fellow writers and other conference attendees.

If you accept a business card from someone, take a moment to jot down a note about your conversation so you’ll remember later.

Approach other attendees and ask them what they are writing. Make friends!

Take advantage of having a book signed by the keynote speakers and guest authors. It’s a great way to meet a fellow writer in person.

Be open-minded. You might arrive at the conference with certain assumptions or preconceived notions about the marketplace, the industry, and your own project. Leave that stuff at the door for a bit and be open to what comes.

Relax, have fun, and mingle. Get to know the moderators, panelists, and the other conference attendees. You never know who the person next to you might be.

Be “book sociable.” At the receptions, chat with agents, editors, and authors about the thing that brings us together: books. Take this opportunity to learn about a book you should check out or connect with someone about a book you both love.

Don’t forget to visit the exhibitor tables when programming is not in session. Interacting with exhibitors opens the door to additional networking opportunities.

Don’t expect agents or editors to ask for or agree to take your manuscript or book on the spot. The vast majority of submissions are done electronically.

VERY IMPORTANT: If an agent or editor asks you to submit pages, be sure to get their contact information and ask them how they’d like to receive materials.

And, when in doubt, find a WLT Staffer or Volunteer and let us know how we can improve your conference experience.

Tips for Chatting with Agents and Editors during the Weekend

Be respectful of their time and the time of your fellow conference attendees. Keep your pitches short (we recommend two minutes maximum). If someone says, “Yes, send it,” quit while you’re ahead! Say thank you, ask how they’d like it sent, and then excuse yourself.

Please remember that agents and editors have been listening to pitches all day (in a setting where they’re able to really listen and consider what you’re saying and give feedback). Do not go into the rest of the conference events expecting the same personal time and feedback. A great use of post-panel interludes and general sessions is to ask questions about the industry, what agents/editors like to see in queries and submissions, and recent books they have loved. Try to include multiple people in the conversation rather than talking with them one-on-one. After listening to someone for a few minutes, move on to another conversation. Keep a running list of who you’ve talked to and what they said; after the conference, follow up with a query (if they seem like a potentially good match) that references their remarks.

BE WILLING to talk to agents and editors who aren’t on your “must meet” list. Paths to publication are rarely neat and direct. Editors especially will be a great gauge of what ideas and stories the marketplace is looking for. You can also ask them how they acquire projects and what happens after a project is acquired.

DON’T FORGET that you will also be surrounded by more than 70 published authors who have won awards, sold thousands of books, and been in your shoes, trying to get published. There will also be freelance editors, industry experts, booksellers, and other publishing professionals. Say hello, ask questions, and pick their brains. Take every chance to make connections and build knowledge that can serve you throughout your career.
Conference Fast Facts

The following conference events require advance reservations: Keynote Luncheon (Saturday), Closing Luncheon (Sunday), and Consultations.

Any tickets to these events that remain will be available at the WLT Information Desk.

General Conference Badges

Badges Your name badge allows you entrance to all general conference events and panels. Please wear your badge at all times during conference hours. Door monitors will be checking badges at each session. Conference badges will also be checked at all consultations and general sessions. You cannot attend any conference-related event without it. If you lose your name badge, go to the Information Desk to request a replacement.

Guests Family or friends staying with you cannot attend conference sessions. All conference events require paid registration.

Parking Attendees staying overnight at the Hyatt receive discounted self-parking at $20 per day; check with the reception desk about using the card-access lot. Conference attendees who are not staying at the hotel will also receive discounted self-parking at $15 per day. Discount parking passes will be available daily. Valet parking is NOT discounted.

Note: Please allow extra time for parking if you’re staying off site.

Dining near the hotel:

Aussie’s Bar & Grill, 306 Barton Springs Rd. Burgers, beer, and beach volleyball.

Bennu Coffee, 515 S. Congress Ave. Fair-trade coffee house and a local hangout for writers.

El Alma, 1025 Barton Springs Rd. Inventive Mexican cuisine and cocktails in a chic setting.

Freebirds World Burrito, 515 S. Congress Ave. Made-to-order burritos, tacos, and salads.

Güeros Taco Bar, 1412 S. Congress Ave. Tacos, salsa, margaritas, hip celebrities.

Home Slice Pizza, 1415 S. Congress Ave. Authentic NY-style pizza by the slice or pie—an Austin staple with a great patio.

Hopdoddy Burger Bar, 1400 S. Congress Ave. Created to express the perfect union between burgers and beer—puts the WEIRD in Austin burgers!

Hotel San Jose, 1316 S Congress Ave. Popular bar/lounge with outdoor seating.

Lucy’s Fried Chicken, 2218 College Ave. Upscale versions of Southern staples, with a deck & patio.

Sandy’s Hamburgers, 603 Barton Springs Rd. Old-fashioned, locally owned burger and frozen custard stand.

Terry Black’s BBQ, 1003 Barton Springs Rd. Texas-style BBQ & housemade sides.

Thundercloud Subs, 201 E. Riverside Dr. Fast, fresh and healthy subs, soups, and salads.

About the Hyatt Regency Austin

ATM An automated teller is located on the first floor across from the guest elevators.

The Business Center (second floor) has computers, Internet access, and a printer available to guests 24 hours a day. High-speed wireless Internet is complimentary. Internet service in guest rooms is included.

Check-In time is 4 p.m.
Check-Out time is 11 a.m.

Parking Self-parking is available for hotel guests at a special rate of $20 per day. Self-parking is available for conference attendees not staying at the hotel for a special rate of $15 per day.

Restaurants and Bars

Starbucks (first floor)
6 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily

SWB/Southwest Bistro (second floor)
7 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Marker 10 Spirits & Cuisine Bar (first floor)
Lunch: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Dinner: 4 p.m. to 10 p.m.
Bar Service:
Friday & Saturday: 11 a.m. – 12 a.m.
Sunday: 11 a.m. – 11 p.m.

Culture and Nightlife

Bat Watching The Congress Avenue Bridge next to the Hyatt hosts the largest urban bat colony in North America. Each evening around sunset the Congress Avenue bats emerge from the crevices of the bridge. For up-to-date emergence times visit austinbatrefuge.org.

Hike and Bike Trail Enter from the back of the Hyatt Regency and stretch your legs on the 10-mile Roy and Ann Butler trail surrounding Lady Bird Lake. Make a splash with a choice of rentals including canoes and paddle boards.

Second Street and the Warehouse District Just across from Lady Bird Lake is one of Austin’s top entertainment districts with even more dining and music!

South Congress (SoCo) Walk a few blocks south on Congress Avenue and you’ll be in the heart of funky shopping, more great restaurants, and live music.

Looking for alternative transportation? Austin is chockfull of alternative transportation options. You can ride share with Lyft and Uber, or hop on one of the many scooters or bicycles found throughout the South Congress and downtown areas.
Anti-Harassment Policy

The Writers’ League of Texas is dedicated to providing a harassment-free conference experience for everyone, regardless of gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, race, age, or religion. We do not tolerate harassment in any form.

The WLT’s Anti-Harassment Policy in its entirety was shared with all conference registrants ahead of the event, and can be found on the conference pages of the website.

Conference participants violating the Anti-Harassment Policy may be sanctioned or expelled from the conference without a refund at the discretion of the conference organizers.

We’d Love to Hear Your Thoughts

We’ll be sending you a survey shortly after the conclusion of the conference. Please take a few minutes to send us your honest feedback. This information will help us as we turn our attention to the 2026 A&E Conference. And, of course, you can also send us a separate note to wlt@writersleague.org, or give us a call at 512-499-8914.

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2023 MANUSCRIPT CONTEST HONOREES

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2023 MANUSCRIPT CONTEST WINNERS & FINALISTS!

GENERAL FICTION

WINNER
Conversations in the Dark by Annette Pearson

FINALISTS
The Last Supper by Cristina Adams
Just a Run-of-the-Mill Wild Pitch by Robert Fernandes
MetaGames by Lisa Glasgow
A Binding of the Years by Rafael Roa
Small Dark Something by Scott Sparling

GENERAL NONFICTION

WINNER
Alcohol and Tears: The True Story of the Life and Death of Singer Jeanie O’Neal by Dr. Melissa J. O’Neal and Eileen Sisk

FINALISTS
Leaving Littleport by Ilene Devlin
Human Progress by Don Finley
Hair Down, Claws Out: George Cukor and the Making of The Women by Alison Macor
The Branches We Cherish: Twenty-Five Truths About Open Adoption by Linda Sexton

HISTORICAL FICTION

WINNER
Piano Girl by Claire Poole

FINALISTS
The Word of Luz Divina by Joseph Guyer
Valentine Tucker on the Barbary Coast by Andrew Hall
Harriet in Highgate by Kay Heath
City of Sorrow by Michelle Kraft

MEMOIR

WINNER
The Tiger’s Paw Print: A Memoir of Myth and Desire in the Himalayas by Calla Jacobson

FINALISTS
Waterways by Anna Adami
A Little Off The Charts: A Memoir by Ellen Green
The Bunker: A Road to Redemption by Rudy Landeros
How to Heal Your Cactus by Joy Victory

MIDDLE GRADE

WINNER
Of Moons and Monsters by Victoria Tatum

FINALISTS
Letters from the Fourth Dimension by Brenna Cuba
Accidental by Evelyn Hendrix
Searching for Extraterrestrials by Henjie Fierce
Curse of the Catfish by Victoria Tatum

MYSTERY

WINNER
Jacob’s Well by Lauren Jane Redmond

FINALISTS
Where There’s A Will by Ricks Frazier
Bent by Wendy Gee
518 Rosebrook by Deana Lisenby
The Rich Get Dead by Joy Zeigler

ROMANCE

WINNER
June Simple by Elizabeth McBride

FINALISTS
As Time Goes By by Rhonda Cloos
The Memoirs of a Guardian Angel by Liz Roberts
Don’t Give Me Grief by Kelly Hitchcock
Lights Out by Lexi Riemer

SCIENCE FICTION/FANTASY

WINNER
Traveler by Alyssa Cami

FINALISTS
Days Gone By by Abram Dress
Wielder of Words by Rachel Faulk
Thought Thief by K.E. Preston
The Trouble with Vintage Costume Shops by Claire Hider

THRILLER/ACTION ADVENTURE

WINNER
518 Rosebrook by Deana Lisenby

FINALISTS
Shadows Too Dark by Jess Hagemann
MetaGames by Lisa Glasgow
The Edge of Nowhere by Millie Hast
All the Right Lies by Stephanie Raffelock
Small Dark Something by Scott Sparling

YOUNG ADULT

WINNER
Betwixt by Susan Arscott

FINALISTS
Back Again by Hamilton Beazley
The Flare-Up by Marco Kaye
Thought Thief by K.E. Preston
Cold Dark Water by Lily Sayre
Swimmingly by Emily Winakur
We are pleased to sponsor the 2024 Agents & Editors Conference!

The Library Foundation

- atCentral  Free cultural events at the Austin Central Library
- Austin Youth Poet Laureate  Supporting young writers committed to civic engagement and poetry performance
- Badgerdog Creative Writing  Employing professional writers to lead workshops for people of all ages
- Mayor’s Book Club  Encouraging citywide community through reading

The Library Foundation supports the Austin Public Library by increasing awareness of its importance to the community, and by enhancing its collections, programs, and facilities.

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Lauren Groff
Kazu Ishiguro
Tayari Jones
Barbara Kingsolver
Jhumpa Laloi
Valeria Luiselli
James McBride
Viet Thanh Nguyen
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- Implementing successful marketing campaigns
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- Launching or taking your career to the next level

Hi! I’m Cyndi Hughes, the former director of the Writers’ League of Texas and the Texas Book Festival. I founded Booktique Consulting to work one-on-one with authors to build their careers and connect with their ideal readers.

www.booktiqueconsulting.com  cyndi@booktiqueconsulting.com

It's time to finish the exact book you've always wanted to write—on exactly your own terms.

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2024 Manuscript Contest

DEADLINE TO ENTER:
JULY 1, 2024

"I’d recommend [this contest] in a heartbeat. It was extraordinary. We've all put so much time and energy into our manuscripts and they are so personal to us. For me, sharing the work with anyone beyond my circle was a big step. The reviewers' comments were thoughtful and encouraging."

"Having my manuscript named a finalist gave me the encouragement to finish and publish my first novel. I credit this manuscript contest and the support of the Writers’ League of Texas with much of my success."

“This contest provides legitimate feedback for writers. It is a good litmus test for how ready one's work is for submission to agents and publishers."

"The Manuscript Contest was an absolute confidence booster for me."

TEN LUCKY WINNERS WILL MEET WITH A LITERARY AGENT AND BE FEATURED ON THE WLT’S INKLIST.
2024 Summer Writing Retreat

Starting July 8 | Live on Zoom

Fiction Class with Amy Gentry
Every Monday: 7/8, 7/15, 7/22, 7/29

Memoir Class with Elissa Altman
Every Tuesday: 7/9, 7/16, 7/23, 7/30

Revision Class with Chaitali Sen
Every Wednesday: 7/10, 7/17, 7/24, 7/31

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Every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday

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