



16th Annual Kentucky Writers Conference

Sponsored by:

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Theme: Processing Publication

Friday, April 26, 2019

9:00am-3:30 pm

WKU South Campus, 2355 Nashville Road

Kentucky Writers Conference

SESSION 1 - 9:00 – 10:15am

Room 110: [Deborah LeBlanc](#)—Hook ‘Em Danno

Description: A hands-on workshop that helps participants work on a first sentence “hook” for their work in progress. Deborah LeBlanc is an award-winning, best-selling author and business owner from Lafayette, Louisiana. She is also a licensed death scene investigator, a licensed private investigator and has been an active paranormal investigator for over twenty-five years.

Room 111: [Andy Plattner](#)—Exposition in Short Story

Description: Learn about the use of exposition in short story writing, looking at examples from some of the great short story writers: Chekhov (“Oysters”), Paley (“Wants”) & Hemingway (“Soldier’s Home”). Andrew Plattner teaches fiction and literature courses at Kennesaw State University and fiction courses at Emory University.

Room 225: [Blair Thomas Hess](#) & [Cameron M. Ludwick](#)—My Old Kentucky Road Trip: Exploring Your Own Backyard

Description: A drive straight across the Bluegrass State takes nearly eight hours. But that would bypass all the worthwhile distractions between Paw Paw in Pike County and the Kentucky Bend of the Mississippi River in Fulton County. Treasures like Abraham Lincoln’s boyhood home that rests inside a Greek-style temple. Or the Jefferson Davis monument rising from a field in Fairview. From rip-roaring barn dances in Rabbit Hash to the silent reverence of the monks at the Abbey of Gethsemani, the Commonwealth is chock-full of timeless landmarks. Join native Kentuckians Cameron M. Ludwick and Blair Thomas Hess as they explore all the amazing and irreplaceable things that make the state one of a kind

Room 226: [Jane Simon Ammeson](#)—Researching A Historic True Crime Book

Have an idea for a historic true crime book but not sure where to start? Jane Ammeson, author of thirteen books, can give you ideas on how to research your subject, what pitfalls to avoid, what resources to use and how to access them, and how to organize all the information you’ve gathered. Jane writes about travel, food, and history for newspapers, magazines and websites. She is the author of thirteen books.

Room 227: [Brad Aaron Modlin](#)—Land Acknowledgment: Writing a Place and Its History

Writers are ghost hunters. How can poets and (non)fiction writers describe the energy and character of a setting? What happened in this spot two weeks-or two centuries-ago? How does a particular house or state affect us? How can local history provide metaphors? We will explore examples and write our own. Be ready to remember and to be surprised. A Bowling Green native, he is a professor/the Reynolds Endowed Chair of Creative Writing at University of Nebraska Kearney.

Room 229: [Geoffrey Girard](#)—Wrinkles in Time

Description: Strategies and rewards of tense, pace, time, and memory in fiction. This writers' workshop includes specific discussion and hands-on exercises on tense (the many variations even of "present"), control of pace (including full-throttle tips), the various functions of fictional time, and the chance/means to mine our own memories for more honest stories. For writers of all genres and levels. Geoffrey Girard writes thrillers, historicals, and dark speculative fiction and also ghostwrites memoirs, and publishes fiction (from middle grade to westerns) under various pen names.

SESSION 2 – 10:30am – 11:45am

Room 110: [Dana Chamblee Carpenter](#)—Learning How to See and Play as a Writer

Description: A writer's craft begins long before the fingers start plunking away at the keyboard. Writers must cultivate a way of seeing the world that looks beyond what is in order to see what might be. We have to engage each day like we're explorers in a new land. But this kind of vision takes work and intention. We'll talk about the practices and techniques we can use to hone the skills of seeing the world as writers and how we can keep our creative "wells" full.

Room 111: [Brent "Eliot" Parker](#)—Create a Compelling Bad Guy that Readers Love to Hate

In mystery and thriller writing, the protagonist (a detective, private investigator, federal agent, average citizen, etc) is often pitted against an antagonist whose motives are heinous. The reader follows the narrative with great interest, waiting for the moment when the protagonist and the antagonist will have their final confrontation. Readers expect the protagonist to be an interesting, flawed character who experiences "raised stakes" on their way to solving the mystery. However, readers also expect the antagonist to be equally complex, with flaws and motivations in direct opposition to those of the protagonist. Writers often spend a great deal of time developing the protagonist, but how can that same attention be given to creating a complex villain that readers are going to "love to hate?" This workshop examines strategies and techniques that mystery/thriller writers can use to creating a complex, interesting, and passionate villain that will be worthy of challenging the protagonist physically and/or emotionally.

Room 225: [Abbie Roads](#)—Critique to Contract

Critiques are critical to writers because things get lost in the transition from living in our brain to typing it out on the keyboard. Critical things get lost. But we—the author—can't see those things. That's why critiques are so important. Through her own personal experiences with hundreds of critiques, Roads will share the real purpose of giving critiques and receiving critiques, the types of critiques (the good, the bad, the soul crushing), proper critique etiquette, and how to find good critique partners. This is a workshop that has been presented numerous times at Romance Writers of American chapter events and at the Romantic Times Book Lovers Conference. Abbie's first book *Race the Darkness* was a *Publishers Weekly* Top 10 Pick for Fall.

Room 226: [Kimmery Martin](#)—Build Your Platform: Social Media Strategies for Writers

How can you harness the power of social media to get the word out about your writing? Kimmery Martin will share tips, tricks, and best practices to build a viable online platform. Martin is an emergency medicine physician, book reviewer, and author interviewer originally from Berea, Kentucky. *The Queen of Hearts* is her debut novel.

Room 227: [Richard Taylor](#)—Poetry of Place: Getting the Lay of the Land: Writing Creative Nonfiction

Taylor will talk about his own experience in writing about place, Elkhorn Creek, describing the process of assembling a work of nonfiction about place, discussing the role of personal

experience in balance with writing about the historical past and place, what he calls topophilia in his own book. Richard Taylor is professor of English and Kenan Visiting Writer at Transylvania University and former Poet Laureate of Kentucky. Taylor has written numerous books, including *Sue Mundy: A Novel of the Civil War*; *Girty*; and *Earth Bones*.

SESSION 3 – 12:45pm – 2:00pm

Room 110: [Wendy Tyson](#)—Finding an Agent

How does a writer find an agent, and what do they need to know about the process? Join Tyson, mystery writer, lawyer, and former therapist, as she shares crucial knowledge about how to find an agent that's right for you—and your work.

Room 111: [Kayla Olson](#)—Writing YA Fiction (It's Not *Just* for Teens!)

Over the past decade, YA fiction has exploded well outside of its teen readership to capture the hearts of readers in their twenties and beyond. In this workshop, we'll look at the cornerstone features of YA that make it so compelling for such a broad audience, then discuss some practical ways to apply them when taking a YA project from first draft to finished book.

Room 225: [Alice Speilburg](#)—Mastering Your Query

In this workshop, literary agent Alice Speilburg will cover the basic structure of a query letter, tips and tricks for improving it, and tactics to avoid. Participants will then write (or revise) a query letter for their book, which they can then share for critiquing. The goal of this workshop is for participants to have a polished query letter in hand to send out to agents when they leave. Alice Speilburg is the founding literary agent at Speilburg Literary Agency and has worked in publishing since 2008. She is a member of Mystery Writers of America, Society of Children's Book Authors and Illustrators, and The Authors Guild, and she is the Vice President on the board of Louisville Literary Arts. She represents narrative nonfiction and commercial fiction for adult and YA readers. For more information, please visit the agency website: speilburgliterary.com or find Alice on Twitter [@alicespeilburg](https://twitter.com/alicespeilburg).

Room 226: [Andrew Shaffer](#)—Humor Writing: The Rules of Comedy

Description: “Explaining humor is a lot like dissecting a frog,” Mark Twain allegedly said. “You learn a lot in the process, but in the end you kill it.” Thankfully, we've learned a lot about humor since Twain's day. It's now possible to dissect what makes something funny—and have fun doing it. New York Times bestseller and author of over half a dozen humorous books Andrew Shaffer will explain the “rules of comedy,” and offer tips on incorporating humor into your writing toolkit. Students will learn about hyperbole, repetition, and other basic comedic techniques and experiment with each through in-class exercises. No frogs or comedians will be dissected.

Room 229: [Ayser Salman](#)—Make 'Em Laugh: Humor in Memoir

Ayser Salman was born in Iraq before it became a curiosity, and moved to America as a toddler. She is a writer and producer/editor for companies like Universal Pictures, Miramax Films, Disney, FX and Lantern Entertainment. Full workshop description forthcoming. Take a look at her [author profile](#) to learn more about her debut memoir, *The Wrong End of the Table*.

SESSION 4 – 2:15pm – 3:30pm

Room 110: [Heather L. Montgomery](#)—Breaking Boundaries with Today's Nonfiction for Kids

Description: From outrageous illustrations to irreverent voices, today's boundary-pushing books are chipping away at the confining walls of humdrum nonfiction. Come examine how innovative topics, distinct voices, and surprising structures carry today's children's books beyond the traditional approaches to conveying information. In this session we will look at different approaches to the same topic, practice retching our own voices, and explore books that play with the fiction/nonfiction line.

Room 111: [Jessica Young](#) & [Mary Reaves Uhles](#)— Writing & Illustrating for Kids

Description: Learn the ins and outs of writing and illustrating picture books and chapter books from two seasoned pros. Jessica and Mary will also cover some industry best practices helpful to those writing middle grade and young adult as well.

Room 225: [David Arnold](#) & [Courtney Stevens](#)—First Pages Critique

Description: The process of critiquing each other's work, including before and after examples. David Arnold is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Mosquitoland*, *Kids of Appetite*, and *The Strange Fascinations of Noah Hypnotik*. Courtney Stevens has several novels with her name on the spine: *Faking Normal*, *The Lies About Truth*, the e-novella *The Blue-Haired Boy*, *Dress Codes for Small Towns*, and *Four Three Two One*. As an educator and author, she visits schools, designs retreats, and teaches workshops on marketing, revision, character development, and Channeling Your Brave. These two authors have been critique partners through multiple novels.

Room 226: [Lauren MacLeod](#) & [Jodi Meadows](#)—Agent Author Relationship

Description: Join an actual author/agent team as they discuss how they work together through one publishing project after another! Jodi Meadows and her agent, Lauren MacLeod, will answer questions about how they work together, what they think works about their arrangement, and other general questions. They've been together since 2010 and sold twenty projects together, so they have a lot of time and experience to draw from. MacLeod has been a literary agent at the [Strothman Agency](#) (New York and Nashville) since 2007.

Room 227: [Elizabeth Weitzman](#)—Writing the Fun Stuff: TV and Film Criticism

Description: Most students with an interest in writing learn about fiction, memoir, nonfiction--but what about criticism? As a film critic, Weitzman gets paid to watch movies before anyone else sees them, interviews the stars who appear in them, and impact which art others choose to see. Weitzman, most recently a senior film critic at the *New York Daily News*, has taught many classes on film criticism. Her book, *Renegade Women in Film & TV*, incidentally, was written to appeal to all ages, beginning with teens.

Room 229: [Michael Croley](#)—From the Ground Up: Writing Short Stories with Deep Roots

Join Michael Croley to study the art of the short story using examples from Allegra Goodman's work along with John Cheever's short story, "Reunion." This workshop will cover all the bases, specifically, the movement necessary for a story to work. Michael Croley was born in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. The recipient of an NEA Fellowship in Literature in 2016, his work has appeared in *Narrative*, *Catapult*, *Blackbird*, *Kenyon Review Online*, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, the *Paris Review Daily*, and elsewhere. He teaches at Denison.