

AGENT DATING
GAME

AWARD-WINNING
SPEAKERS

SHOPTALK

ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS WITH
LITERARY AGENTS

FIRST PAGES
PANEL

James River

W R I T E R S

CONFERENCE 2019

WORKSHOPS
& INTENSIVES

AWARD
PRESENTATIONS

LUCY BOOTH

MASTER CLASSES

WAXING POETIC

PANELS ON THE
CRAFT AND BUSINESS OF
WRITING

OCTOBER 11-13, 2019

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ABOUT JRW

OUR MISSION

James River Writers builds community by connecting and inspiring writers and all those in central Virginia with a love for the written word.

OUR PAST

JRW was established in 2002 by a group of local writers who saw the need to support the growth of the region's literary community.

The James River Writers Conference began in 2003 as a two-day writing and publishing festival with seminars and lectures for aspiring and working writers. The program was a sell-out success, making clear what many already suspected: Richmond is a thriving city for writers. JRW strove to expand and now hosts a year-round calendar of literary programs plus a website and multiple newsletters about all things literary in central Virginia.

In January 2007, *Style Weekly* recognized the founding of JRW as one of the pivotal moments in the past quarter century of Richmond arts. JRW has been a recipient of a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and was awarded the Theresa Pollak Prize for excellence in the arts. James River Writers is honored to be recognized for all the ways the organization nurtures central Virginia's creative literary community.

ON SOCIAL MEDIA? If you're sharing your conference experience with the world, please use **#JRW19** so we can easily find and boost your posts. You can also tag us on Twitter and Instagram @jamesrvrwriters.

The 2019 JRW conference is presented with special thanks to these generous sponsors:



The 2019 JRW conference is a proud participant in #artoberVA, a month-long celebration of arts and culture in Richmond and the Tri-Cities area.



Greetings from Past Me in the middle of September!

Right now things are so chaotic that I'm having trouble believing we made it here this weekend. (We did make it, right? I'm not imagining this?) Every year at this time, I'm writing "to do" lists on any scrap of paper within reach and then spending way too much time deciphering my cryptic notes to myself. (Why are these three names and five random times written down?) The staff is consuming enormous quantities of chocolate and finishing each other's sentences, and our volunteers are sailing on a rising tide of last minute details.

This particular state of mind inspires panic and not much else. But I need to write my seventh annual welcome letter for the conference guide, so here I sit, butt in chair, because that's more than half of what inspiration is, right? Showing up. I can't tell you how thrilled I am that you decided to show up this weekend. Setting aside time to surround yourself with experts on your craft and people who understand your passion is one of the best things you can do for your writing self. And for us.

That's right, your belief in writing as an art form, a job, an invaluable way to connect, and/or the most amazing and frustrating craft ever makes you the perfect addition to our weekend. Your unique point of view and knowledge make our experiences richer. Just the fact that 350 or so of you came out this weekend to be here together is, in itself, inspirational—and that's before you hear the first wise word from our speakers!

As Pablo Picasso said, "Inspiration exists, but it has to find you working." May you work hard and play hard this weekend, and may you go home with that elusive inspiration clutched tight in both hands. And may all your notes to yourself be as clear as the Post It I just unearthed. "Get more chocolate," it says. Sometimes inspiration occurs in mysterious ways.

Katharine Herndon
Executive Director



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4 FROM THE CONFERENCE CHAIR

Greetings, Wordsmiths and Book Lovers!

Welcome to the seventeenth annual James River Writers Conference, a literary hot spot for sharing stellar expertise, developing next-level skills and perspectives, and forging new connections.

It is our goal to deliver a weekend of high-quality programming that inspires, educates, and empowers authors, emerging writers, literary agents, editors, poets, screenwriters, booksellers, and avid readers.

For the past three years, I helped to guide our signature event, which requires months of preparation and numerous dedicated volunteers. It's been a delight to watch our hard work result in record breaking attendance two years in a row.

Clearly, it's not just the acclaimed speakers, thought-provoking panels, and coveted agent meetings that distinguish this annual gathering. It's also the sense of community synonymous with James River Writers. As creative individuals, camaraderie energizes and supports us. I encourage you to meet as many attendees as possible this weekend and deepen your literary circles.

Speakers and others writers I befriended while attending JRW conferences helped to fuel my drive to complete *Angel Dressed in Black*, my debut YA novel, which will be published by SparksPress in 2021 as a result of winning a contest.

We never know what someone will say or do that will influence us as writers. That's the beauty of an inclusive conference known for its friendliness and accessibility. Whether it's memorable advice from accomplished speakers or insights gleaned from informal conversations between sessions, inspiration and guidance abounds. Embrace them. Hone your craft. Elevate your art. Dare yourself to set new deadlines to start or complete projects. Let this gathering of storytellers propel you to strive for whatever's next.



Most of all, keep writing!

Warmest regards,

Robin Farmer
2019 Conference Chair

WAXING POETIC Sponsored by Ron Smith

After spending the day attending inspirational panels and soaking in advice, join us Saturday night for a showcase featuring poets from this year's conference. Mary Bonina, Jon Pineda, Padma Venkatraman, and host Wendy DeGroat will be reading their work in The Edgar Allan Poe Museum's Enchanted Garden from 5:30PM to 7PM.

The poetry reading and exhibits at the museum are free and open to the public during the event. The Edgar Allan Poe Museum is located at 1914 E. Main St., Richmond, VA 23223.



NEW THIS YEAR

SHOPTALK With an add-on Shoptalk ticket, you can talk with writing and publishing consultants about topics of interest to you. In the Shoptalk room, you'll find writers, editors, independent publishing experts, and others who can help with your specific questions and challenges.

Be sure to check the roster outside room E10D because the participating consultants and topics change every hour. Access to Shoptalk can be purchased at the registration table. Tickets are limited.

JRW LUCY BOOTH The doctor is in! Do you have a unique narrator with a certain personality type or a specific mental illness? Do you have a character with addiction issues? Is your depiction true to reality? If you've ever wondered, come to the JRW LUCY BOOTH. Our "doctor" isn't actually Charlie Brown's friend, Lucy, but a team of professionals from the Richmond area. For just 5¢, Rashika Wallace, LCSW (Licensed Clinical Social Worker); Dr. Rashida Gray (Psychiatrist); or Helen Montague Foster, MD, DLFAPA (Psychiatrist) will analyze your character or situation and answer questions about personality, mental illnesses, etc. This is a one-of-a-kind conference opportunity to add depth to your character portrayals. No appointments necessary. Just drop by the booth when the doctor is in, and "Lucy" ...um...a member of the Lucy Team will offer ten-minute sessions.

FOLLOW A TRACK The James River Writers conference is designed to help you reach your writing goals, whatever they may be. To assist you in choosing from a variety of sessions, we've grouped them into tracks. You may want to follow a certain track throughout the conference to get an in-depth look at one aspect of writing. Or you might choose a few panels from each track to get a well-rounded experience. Then again, feel free to ignore the tracks altogether and follow your favorite speakers. As always, you select the sessions that are most relevant to your circumstances.

This year's tracks are **The Art of Craft**, **Sustaining A Writing Life**, **The Business Side of Writing**, and **Exploring Form**. Find each panel's track listed in its description.

ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS We are excited to, once again, offer one-on-one sessions during the conference. This year includes meetings with agents from a full spectrum of genres and feedback sessions with all three of JRW's co-founders: Phaedra Hise, Dean King, and David L. Robbins.

Please arrive fifteen minutes before your scheduled meeting time and check in at the desk outside room E11A.

8:00AM to 8:45AM
Registration & Breakfast

Maximizing Your Conference Experience

When: 8:15-8:45
Facilitator: Lana Krumwiede
Room: E10C

8:45AM to 9:15AM
Opening Ceremonies

Room: E10A-B
Announcement of Self-Published Novel Contest Winner

9:30AM to 10:30AM
Concurrent Sessions

Paths to Publishing

Speakers: Amina Gautier, Phaedra Hise, Beth Marshea, Ginger McKnight-Chavers

Moderator: Sadeqa Johnson
Room: E10A-B
Track: The Business Side of Writing

Explore different ways to get your work out into the world. By weighing the pros and cons and talking candidly about the financial realities, these experts can help you choose the best path or paths for you. Hear about hybrid publishing, content marketing, and more.

Shoptalk

Room: E10D

See the roster outside room E10D for the consultants and topics during this hour of Shoptalk.

9:30AM to 10:30AM
Concurrent Sessions

Compelling Characters

Sponsored by *Alien Hitman* by Jay Cannon

Speakers: Philippa Ballantine, Dolen Perkins-Valdez, Nafissa Thompson-Spires, Padma Venkatraman

Moderator: Kristin Swenson
Room: E10C
Track: The Art of Craft

Learn what characters need to become fully formed in the reader's mind. Discover strategies for deepening characterization, including ways to give your characters secrets, needs, goals, and fears.

Inspiration & Encouragement for Older Debut Authors

Speakers: Mary Bonina, Alma Katsu, Jenn Rossmann

Moderator: A. B. Westrick
Room: E11B
Track: Sustaining a Writing Life

The publishing world is rife with whiz kids making their mark before their thirties, but what about writers pursuing their passions later in life? This panel will share unique resources and advice for putting your best foot forward when you have a wealth of experience and wisdom to share.

Navigating Creative Nonfiction

Speakers: Roben Farzad, Dean King, Jon Pineda

Moderator: Ellen Brown
Room: E11C
Track: Exploring Form

This panel explores some of the inherent challenges in creative nonfiction. How creative can you be with your interpretations, and how close do you need to stick to the truth? How do you best speak the truth when the sources can't agree? Join our experts for their insights.

10:45AM to 11:45AM
Concurrent Sessions

Story Magic: Plot Tips & Tricks

Speakers: Bruce Holsinger, Alma Katsu, David L. Robbins, Padma Venkatraman

Moderator: Phillip Hilliker

Room: E10A-B

Track: The Art of Craft

A strong plot drives a story to the finish line. This session will rev up your writing engine with strategies to move the story forward.

Writing Across Class Lines

Speakers: Roben Farzad, Jenn Rossman, Chris L. Terry

Moderator: Michael Paul Williams

Room: E10C

Track: The Art of Craft

Literature enables readers to feel empathy for characters with different backgrounds, including socioeconomic class. This session will help you avoid tropes, clichés, and stereotypes while writing about socioeconomic class and multi-dimensional characters.

Shoptalk

Room: E10D

See the roster outside room E10D for the consultants and topics featured during this hour of Shoptalk.

Momentum & Mood in Poetry

Speakers: Mary Bonina, Michelle Dodd, Jon Pineda

Moderator: Wendy DeGroat

Room: E11B

Track: Exploring Form

How does a poet shape a poem's momentum? Do these answers vary for narrative and lyric work, poems of witness or memory, or from page to stage? A panel of accomplished poets will offer insights into these questions.

10:45AM to 11:45AM
Concurrent Sessions

Mastering the Short Story

Speakers: Amina Gautier, Melanie S. Hatter, Nathan Long, Nafissa Thompson-Spires

Moderator: Melissa Scott Sinclair

Room: E11C

Track: Exploring Form

Short stories help us learn about ourselves and the world around us with insight, power, and efficiency. This session explores what makes the form work and strategies to help get your stories published.

11:45AM to 12:45PM
Buffet Lunch

SATURDAY SCHEDULE CONTINUES



12:30PM to 1:45PM
Concurrent Sessions

Workshop—The Revisionist: Using your Inner Editor as a Writer with Jennifer Baker

Room: E11B

Limited to 40 participants. The biggest step to finishing is revising. But for many writers, this can be the hardest threshold to cross. When receiving feedback, processing feedback, and finding ways to fill plot holes or alter moments for greater impact, how do we as writers implement these updates on the page?

In this workshop, participants will compare early versions to final versions of fiction and nonfiction to see what's been added/removed, discuss different methods to tackle new drafts, and do on-site revisions of their own with time left over for feedback. The opening icebreaker will have the group write a short scene together and close with us revising it.

Intensive—Business Bootcamp for Writers: Legal and Business Basics of Making Your Art Your Career with Ginger McKnight-Chavers

Room: E11C

From the first idea you write down, to the release of your first book, law and business basics seep into your creative life. Whether you are writing a manuscript, pitching an article, or publishing and selling your work, you're not just a writer, but an entrepreneur. This bootcamp will provide you just enough basic legal and business information to help you navigate your writing life and career off the page.

12:45PM to 1:45PM
Concurrent Sessions

Bonus Panel: A Musical Conversation

Speakers: Jeff Jackson, Chris L. Terry

Moderator: Erica Orloff

Room: E10A-B

How do you capture the power and magic of live music on the page? Come listen to a conversation between music aficionados about how to get your words to sing.

Intensive—Editing to Empower Every Word with Kris Spisak

Room: E10C

Just like any other piece of the writing process, editing is a craft to be learned. So often the best of stories are held back not by the author's creativity but by common typos, weak verbs, cliché phrasings, and vague descriptions that don't hook the reader as much as they could. How can an opening go beyond what readers have seen before? How can a writer think past overused body language and movements? How can a simple interaction come alive?

Shoptalk

Room: E10D

See the roster outside room E10D for the consultants and topics during this hour of Shoptalk.



2PM to 3PM
Concurrent Sessions

Sustaining First Person in a Novel

Speakers: Maureen Moretti, Kat Spears,
Padma Venkatraman

Moderator: Robin Farmer

Room: E10A-B

Track: The Art of Craft

Using first person throughout an entire novel presents a particular set of challenges. We'll talk about the advantages of getting inside the narrator's head and discuss the pitfalls that may lead to disconnection.

Adapting Your Story for Small & Big Screens

Speakers: Eric Carlson, Caroline Hoover,
Ramona Taylor

Moderator: Kristin Swenson

Room: E10C

Track: The Business Side of Writing

Producers, as well as streaming giants such as Netflix, need original content, from pilots and limited series to movies. Interested in transferring your writing skills to different media? Come learn about resources to help you get started.

Picking & Working with Editors

Speakers: Jennifer Baker, Christina Morgan,
Jenn Rossman

Moderator: Erica Orloff

Room: E11B

Track: Sustaining a Writing Life

Finding an editor and using one is critical and advisable, whether you freelance, self-publish, or seek a traditional publishing deal. How do you vet a freelance editor, and how do you work together? This session will explore questions to ask and the types of editing services available so you can choose the best professional for your project.

2PM to 3PM
Concurrent Sessions

Shoptalk

Room: E10D

See the roster outside room E10D for the consultants and topics during this hour of Shoptalk.

Authenticity & Sensitivity in Historical Fiction

Sponsored by *The Guardian* by A.M. Mahler

Speakers: Bruce Holsinger, Dolen Perkins-Valdez, Paige Wheeler

Moderator: Sadeqa Johnson

Room: E11C

Track: Exploring Form

When writing historical fiction, do you need to get every detail right, or is it okay if you "don't sweat the small stuff"? How do you handle time periods where the norms were different than they are today? Our experts share their insights on getting it right.

3:15PM to 3:30PM
Plenary Session

Announcement & Presentation of the Emyl Jenkins Award

Room: E10A-B

3:30PM to 4:30PM
Plenary Session

How to Be a Great Writer: Thoughts on the Spirit, the Art, and Meaning of The Writer's Life

Sponsored by Visual Arts Center of Richmond

Keynote Address by Marita Golden

Room: E10A-B

8:00AM to 8:45AM
Registration & Breakfast

Find a Critique Group

When: 8:15-8:45
Room: E10C

If you're looking for a critique group or partner, this is an informal networking opportunity to connect with others.

8:45AM to 9AM
Opening Ceremonies

Room: E10A-B

9AM to 10AM
Plenary Session

First Pages

Speakers: Malaga Baldi, Anna Knutson Geller, Paige Wheeler

Moderator: Bill Blume
Room: E10A-B

A panel of agents read anonymously submitted first pages and share their initial reactions with the JRW crowd.

10:15AM to 11:15AM
Concurrent Sessions

What Comes First, Activism or Art?

Speakers: Michelle Dodd, Melanie S. Hatter, Nafissa Thompson-Spires

Moderator: Michael Paul Williams
Room: E10A-B
Track: The Art of Craft

What is the intersection of art and activism? Is the goal to incite, convert, inspire, or agitate? Our panel of experts share insights and strategies on how to explore issues of social justice with authenticity.

10:15AM to 11:15AM
Concurrent Sessions

Podcast Essentials

Speakers: Jennifer Baker, Philippa Ballantine, Tee Morris

Moderator: Sharvette Mitchell
Room: E10C
Track: The Business Side of Writing

Podcasting is everywhere, and everyone is listening. In this panel, we'll discuss tips to get started and best practices for keeping an established podcast going.

Building a Community to Sell Your Work

Speakers: Ginger McKnight-Chavers, Roben Farzad, Julie Valerie

Moderator: Kris Spisak
Room: E11B
Track: Sustaining the Writing Life

No matter what you write, readers are essential. From beta readers and independent bookstore relationships to social media and book club engagements, panelists will discuss how to cultivate and engage readers.

Vulnerability in Memoir

Sponsored by Constance Costas

Speakers: Mary Bonina, Marita Golden, Jon Pineda

Moderator: Patty Smith
Room: E11C
Track: Exploring Form

Readers forge connections to writing that is emotionally vulnerable and real. This panel will discuss how to be vulnerable on the page so you can write your own stories with heart and authenticity.

Shoptalk

Room: E10D

See the roster outside room E10D for the consultants and topics during this hour of Shoptalk.

11:30AM to 12:30PM
Concurrent Sessions

Building & Sustaining Your Brand

Speakers: Michelle Dodd, Maureen Moretti, Tee Morris

Moderator: Stacy Hawkins Adams

Room: E10A-B

Track: The Business Side of Writing

It's good to think about how you want to position yourself as a writer and how you can stand out from the crowd. Do you put your real self out there (including your political views and family photos)? Or do you create a persona? And what does brand have to do with selling your work?

Elements of Suspense & Horror

Speakers: Jeff Jackson, Alma Katsu

Moderator: Melissa Scott Sinclair

Room: E10C

Track: The Art of Craft

Mysteries, thrillers, and horror novels all rely on building suspense and making story decisions for surprise or shock value. But other genres can benefit from focusing on these important pieces of pacing and character development as well. Learn how you can use suspense and horror devices to keep your readers engaged.

Overcoming Writing Pitfalls

Speakers: Melanie S. Hatter, Nathan Long, Dolen Perkins-Valdez

Moderator: Rebekah Pierce

Room: E11B

Track: Sustaining the Writing Life

From professional jealousy and self-sabotage to writer's block and unprofessional behavior, writers experience emotions that are hard to talk about and sometimes harder to manage. Come hear about real strategies to sidestep negativity and get out of your own way.

11:30AM to 12:30PM
Concurrent Sessions

Shoptalk

Room: E10D

See the roster outside room E10D for the consultants and topics during this hour of Shoptalk.

Effective Essays

Speakers: Jennifer Baker, Jenn Rossman, Ginger McKnight-Chavers

Moderator: Kristen Green

Room: E11C

Track: Exploring Form

Do you pick your audience or your essay topic first? How do you find the best opening? Where do you end for the most impact? Essays are a great way to engage the world around you, and this panel can help you figure out what to emphasize and what to leave out.

12:30PM to 1:30PM
Buffet Lunch

SUNDAY SCHEDULE CONTINUES



1PM to 2:30PM

* the Agent Dating Game *

Speakers: Brenna English-Loeb, Marie Lamba, Christina Morgan, and Maureen Moretti

MC: Brian Rock
Room: E10A-B

Sometime between Saturday morning and Sunday at 10:00 AM, you can drop your name in a bowl, indicating your willingness to participate in The Agent Dating Game and selecting which category best describes your current work.

Our agent will ask each selected writer a question (for instance, "What would be your main character's idea of a perfect date?" or "What does your protagonist want most of all?"). After a few follow-up questions, our MC will encourage the agent to select a winner. Winners of each round will have their proposal and first chapter read (nonfiction), or their synopsis and three chapters read (fiction).

The audience will gain insights into the thinking of agents—and who knows? One of our own dates just might find the perfect relationship.

2:40PM to 3:40PM
Concurrent Sessions

Attention-Grabbing Queries & Synopses

Speakers: Malaga Baldi, Anna Knutson Geller, Jeff Jackson, Beth Marshea

Moderator: Patty Smith

Room: E10A-B

Track: The Business Side of Writing

Agents get hundreds of query letters and synopses a week. Come learn the essential components of each and how to distinguish your writing from the rest of the slush pile.

Authentic World Building

Speakers: Tee Morris, Philippa Ballentine, Brenna English-Loeb

Moderator: Bill Blume

Room: E10C

Track: The Art of Craft

Worldbuilding is the lifeblood of compelling storytelling, especially in science fiction and fantasy. Learn how to avoid the pitfalls and get guidelines to simplify your process.

Shoptalk

Room: E10D

See the roster outside room E10D for the consultants and topics during this hour of Shoptalk.

Revisions & Resubmissions

Speakers: Amina Gautier, Nathan Long, Chris L. Terry

Moderator: A.B. Westrick

Room: E11B

Track: Sustaining a Writing Life

Whether you're getting an agent or hiring a freelance editor, knowing how to approach revisions is an important part of the process. You may find yourself agonizing over suggested changes versus your vision. Learn how to accept constructive criticism and when to push back.



2:40PM to 3:40PM
Concurrent Sessions

Interiority & Pacing in MG/ YA

Speakers: Marie Lamba, Padma Venkatraman

Moderator: Erica Orloff
Room: E11C
Track: Exploring Form

What a character thinks may be far more interesting than what he or she says. While interiority can be the hallmark of great literature, it can also act as a momentum killer. Discover ways to balance interiority and pacing to keep middle grade and young adult audiences engaged.

3:50PM to 4:50PM
Concurrent Sessions

Genre Gatherings

Sponsored by Robert Sexton in loving memory of Emyle Jenkins

Room: E10A-B

Build community with others who write in your genre.

Intensive—Building a 21st Century Website with J.P. Cane

Room: E10C

A website is the perfect place for authors to showcase their work, connect with readers (perhaps even catch the attention of agents and publishers), build their brand, and grow their newsletter lists. But where do you start? Or, if you already have a website, how do you take it to the next level? Should you hire someone? This intensive provides practical advice and actionable takeaways.

3:50PM to 4:50PM
Concurrent Sessions

Intensive—Research like a Pro with Kristen Green

Room: E11B

If you have a book idea that requires research and you're not sure where to start, this session is for you. Author Kristen Green will share some of her best research tips, gleaned from 25 years working as a journalist and writing acclaimed nonfiction. Learn where to search for information, how to keep track of the details you find, and when to stop researching and start writing.

Intensive—Cutting Line: Rethinking Line Breaks in our Poems with Jon Pineda

Room: E11C

In this session, we will discuss ways to utilize enjambment and build momentum in our poems. We will also focus on a number of strategies for enhancing how lineation (end-stopped and/or enjambed lines) helps establish the speaker's voice and strengthens the poem's tonal resonance. In addition to leading these discussions, Jon will provide the group with an in-class writing exercise so that attendees will have the opportunity to practice the strategies discussed.

5:00PM to 5:15PM
Closing Ceremonies

Room: E10A-B

Join us for your chance to win a free ticket to the 2020 conference! You must be present to win.

14 SPEAKERS



Stacy Hawkins Adams is a longtime author, and journalist. Her books, essays and articles inspire readers to find confidence in their own stories. She has penned nine women's fiction novels and one nonfiction devotional book, including *Watercolored Pearls*, which has been featured in college coursework, and *Coming Home*, a Target stores "Recommended Read." Stacy also curates a blog called LifeUntapped.com and teaches at writing conferences nationwide. Beyond the literary world, she is a communications and marketing professional, based in Richmond, Virginia. @stacyinspires



Jennifer Baker is a publishing professional, creator/host of the Minorities in Publishing podcast, and contributing editor to *Electric Literature*. Her essay "What We Aren't" was listed as a Notable Essay in *The Best American*

Essays 2018. Jennifer is editor of the short story anthology *Everyday People: The Color of Life* (Atria Books). And her writing has appeared in various publications in print & online. Her website is jenniferbaker.com. @jbakernyc



Malaga Baldi has worked as an independent literary agent since 1986. The Baldi Agency is an eclectic agency specializing in literary fiction, memoir, and cultural history. She worked as a cashier at Gotham Book Mart, in the Ballantine Books

Publicity Department, as an associate at Candida Donadio & Associates and the Elaine Markson Agency before going out on her own. Baldi believes the strength of the author's voice and the heart of the story to be key when considering new work. Baldi graduated from Hampshire College and lives in NYC. Baldibooks.com @malagabaldi



Philippa (Pip) Ballantine is a New Zealand born fantasy writer, podcaster, and author of the *Books of the Order*, *The Chronicles of Art*, and *The Shifted World* series. She is also the co-author of the *Ministry of Peculiar Occurrences* series with

her husband, Tee Morris. In non-fiction, Pip has co-written with Tee *Social Media for Writers* from *Writer's Digest*. @philippajane



Bill Blume's love for the written word started in high school with an addiction to comic books that was later hijacked by novels such as *Frankenstein* and *Dragonflight*. His short stories have been published in many fantasy anthologies and ezines. He's the author of the *Gidion Keep*, *Vampire Hunter* series. Like the father figure in his novels, he's worked as a 911 dispatcher for more than 15 years. @BilltheWildcat



Mary Bonina is a Virginia Center for the Creative Arts Fellow, Warren Wilson MFA, and member of the Writers Room of Boston. Credits include poetry collections, *Clear Eye Tea* and *Living Proof*, *My Father's Eyes: A Memoir*, a completed novel

on submission, *Poets and Writers* and *Adelaide* essays, poetry anthologized and in *Hanging Loose*, *Salamander*, etc. A Boston Contemporary Authors winning poem is now permanent public art. Several poems were set to music by composers Paul Sayed and Christopher Montgomery. @reebonina



Ellen F. Brown is a lawyer, freelance writer, and co-author of the book *Margaret Mitchell's Gone With the Wind: A Bestseller's Odyssey from Atlanta to Hollywood*. She holds an MFA in nonfiction writing from Goucher College, where her

master's thesis on Tennessee Williams won the Chris White Award for best nonfiction thesis. @ellenfbrown



J. P. Cane's novel, *Shadows Within*, begins *The Shadowless* vampire series, set in his hometown of Philadelphia. He hosts a podcast on writing, interviewing authors and others about the craft. A member of James River Writers, he and his wife

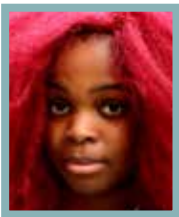
live in Virginia. @jpcane



Eric Carlson is a screenwriter from Williamsburg, VA. He currently has two scripts in development with L.A. based producers. His screenplays have won numerous awards, including the Virginia Screenplay Competition four times. His personal motto is “if you aren't writing, you aren't serious about the craft.” He joined the Virginia Screenwriters Forum in 2006, becoming its Director in 2014.



Wendy DeGroat is the author of *Beautiful Machinery* (Headmistress Press) and recently finished a documentary poetry manuscript about Grace Arents, a Progressive-era philanthropist and educator, and Grace's companion, Mary Garland Smith. Wendy's poems have appeared in *Streetlight*, *Rust + Moth*, *Common-place*, and elsewhere. She is a librarian in Richmond, where she also teaches writing, curates poetryriver.org, and facilitates workshops that help writers find creative inspiration in quirky historic artifacts.



Michelle Dodd is a spokenword artist based out of Richmond. She is a graduate fellow of The Watering Hole Writing Retreat and a fellow of Winter Tangerine. She has coached VCU's slam team in 2018 and has been published in numerous literary journals, along with two self-published chapbooks. Instagram: @delightfullydodd



Brenna English-Loeb came to Transatlantic Agency (TLA) after working for several years at Janklow & Nesbit Associates and Writers House, where she had the pleasure of working with New York Times bestselling and award-winning authors across multiple genres. At TLA she's excited to grow her list of speculative and suspenseful fiction in both YA and adult, as well as adult nonfiction, in collaboration with senior agents. @benglishhh



A national award-winning journalist, **Robin Farmer** specialized in narrative nonfiction projects for the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. Her freelance clients include corporations, universities, trade publications, and nonprofit organizations. Robin's fiction projects focus on girls discovering their voices to advocate for social justice. Robin is a recipient of residencies at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts and the Djerassi Resident Artists Program. Her debut novel, *Angel Dressed in Black*, will be published by SparkPress in 2021. @Sonewsy



Roben Farzad is the host of public radio's Full Disclosure and author of the book *Hotel Scarface: Where Cocaine Cowboys Partied and Plotted to Control Miami*. @RobenFarzad.

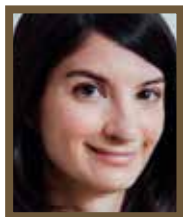


Helen Montague Foster, MD, DLFAPA, is a retired psychiatrist with over thirty years of experience in the psychotherapy of adults. Her poems have appeared in *JAMA*, *the Pharos*, *Rattle*, *Hektoen International*, and *Tuck Magazine*. A recent short story was a winner in the Owl Canyon Press Hackathon and appears in the 2018 anthology *No Bars and a Dead Battery*. Before her retirement, she was a Clinical Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at VCU School of Medicine.



Dr. Amina Gautier is the author of three award-winning short story collections: *At-Risk*, *Now We Will Be Happy*, and *The Loss of All Lost Things*. Her books have received the Chicago Public Library Foundation's 21st Century Award, the Eric Hoffer Legacy Award, the International Latino Book Award, a National Indie Excellence Award, and the Phillis Wheatley Award. More than one hundred of her stories have been published. For her body of work, she has received the PEN/MALAMUD award. @DrAminaGautier

16 SPEAKERS



Anna Knutson Geller has nearly twenty years of experience in the publishing industry, ranging from editor to literary scout to rights director to agent. She founded Write View, a literary agency with a focus on practical nonfiction, spirituality, and inspirational memoir in 2016. She previously worked at Maria B. Campbell Associates and at The Book Group, and she has been on the faculty of the Columbia Publishing Course since 2011.



Marita Golden is the award-winning author of seventeen works of fiction and nonfiction. Her most recent novel is *The Wide Circumference of Love*. As a cultural activist, she is the co-founder and President Emeritus of the Zora Neale Hurston/Richard Wright Foundation. She has been a member of the writing faculties at George Mason University, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Johns Hopkins University. @maritagolden



Dr. Rashida Gray is a practicing psychiatrist in Richmond, where she treats a range of mental health conditions affecting adults. She attended Xavier University of Louisiana for undergraduate studies, Drexel University College of Medicine, and she completed a psychiatry residency program at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. She is happily married to her best friend and the mother of a future film director and a future pediatric surgeon. She loves to be around creative people and she dreams of becoming a travel blogger, party planner extraordinaire, or restaurant owner one day.



Kristen Green is a longtime journalist and the author of *Something Must Be Done about Prince Edward County*, a *New York Times* bestseller. Kristen is a Virginia Humanities fellow and former Writer-in-Residence at the Library of Virginia, where her book won the Literary Award for Nonfiction and the People's Choice Award. @kgreen.



Melanie S. Hatter's most recent novel *Malawi's Sisters* (Four Way Books 2019) won the inaugural Kimbilio National Fiction Prize, selected by Edwidge Danticat. She is also the author of *The Color of My Soul*, and *Let No One Weep for Me, Stories of Love and Loss*. She is a participating author in the PEN/Faulkner Writers in Schools program in Washington, D.C., and serves on the board of the Zora Neale Hurston/Richard Wright Foundation. @mshatter1



Phillip Hilliker is a writer and illustrator working in picture books and middle grade novels. He is also the membership coordinator for James River Writers and teaches at both Visual Arts Center of Richmond and Richmond Young Writers. @philhilliker



Phaedra Hise is an award-winning writer, editor, and author, whose articles and cover stories have run in national publications including *Glamour, Inc, Fortune, Forbes, CNN Money, The Wall Street Journal, Popular Mechanics, and Salon*. In brand publishing, she has worked with brands including American Express, Pitney Bowes, Merrill Lynch, LoyaltyOne, and Walmart. She has authored or co-authored five books. She is married to a former chef and loves to write about food. @hiphaedra



Bruce Holsinger is a novelist and scholar based in Charlottesville. He is the author of two award-winning historical novels, *A Burnable Book* and *The Invention of Fire*, as well as a new contemporary novel, *The Gifted School* (Riverhead/Penguin Random House, 2019). His writing has appeared in *The New York Times, The New York Review of Books, The Washington Post, Slate*, and many other publications. @bruceholsinger



Caroline Hoover is a screenwriter who won the Virginia Screenwriting Competition two years in a row—in 2017 & 2018—and has twice been a quarterfinalist for the Nicholl Fellowship, the premiere screenwriting competition

administered by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. She has a master's in writing for film and television from the University of Southern California in Los Angeles and has worked for HBO Films in development, as well as for a variety of independent film producers. She lives in Richmond with her husband and two children. @thtptph



Jeff Jackson is a novelist, playwright, and songwriter. His second novel *Destroy All Monsters* was recently published by Farrar Straus & Giroux. It received advanced praise from Don DeLillo and Janet Fitch and rave reviews from *The New York Times*, NPR, and *The Washington Post*. His first novel *Mira Corpora* was a finalist for the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize. Six of his plays have been produced by the Obie Award-winning Collapsible Giraffe theater company in New York City. @DeathofLit



Sadeqa Johnson, a former public relations manager, spent several years working with well-known authors such as J. K. Rowling, Amy Tan, and Bishop T. D. Jakes before becoming an author herself. Her debut novel, *Love in a Carry-on Bag*, is the recipient of the 2013 Phillis Wheatley award for Best Fiction. She is also the author of *Second House From the Corner* and *And Then There Was Me*. She teaches a course in Richmond for writers called Pens Up, Fears Down! She is a motivational speaker, inspirational blogger, wife and mother of three. @Sadeqasays



Alma Katsu is author of *The Hunger*, a reimagining of the story of the Donner Party. *The Hunger* was on NPR's list of 100 favorite horror stories, and named one of the best books of 2018 by Barnes & Noble, *The Observer*, and others. Her debut novel, *The Taker*, was one of Booklist's Top Ten Debut Novels of 2011. She's a graduate of the Johns Hopkins writing program and an alumna of the Squaw Valley Writers Conference. @almakatsu



Dean King is the author of *The Feud*, which the *WSJ* called, "popular history as it ought to be written," and nine other books. His national bestseller *Skeletons on the Zahara* was translated into 10 languages and optioned by Steven Spielberg.

Dean is the chief storyteller of two History Channel documentaries and a producer of its unscripted series *Hatfields* and *McCoys*. His writing appears in *Esquire*, *Granta*, *Men's Journal*, and *The New York Times*.



Marie Lamba is author of the picture book *Green Green* (Farrar Straus Giroux), of the upcoming picture book *A Day So Gray* (Clarion), and of the YA novels *What I Meant...* (Random House), *Over My Head*, and *Drawn*. Marie is also a literary agent at the Jennifer De Chiara Literary Agency (jdlit.com), where she represents picture book writers and illustrators, middle grade, YA and adult fiction, plus memoir. @marielamba



Nathan Alling Long's work has won international competitions and appears on NPR and in over a hundred publications, including *Tin House*, *Story Quarterly*, and *The Sun*. Nathan's flash fiction collection, *The Origin of Doubt* (2018), was a finalist for a Lambda Literary Award; his second manuscript was a semi-finalist for the Iowa Fiction Award. He is the recipient of a Mellon Foundation Grant, a Truman Capote Literary Fellowship, two Bread Loaf scholarships, and three Pushcart nominations. He lives in Philadelphia and teaches at Stockton University.



Beth Marshea is the owner and Lead Agent at Ladderbird Literary Agency. She represents work from diverse authors with a special focus on underrepresented voices in both adult and YA. She represents literary fiction, speculative fiction, mystery, and thriller. as well as narrative nonfiction and memoir. @ladderbirdlit

18 SPEAKERS



Ginger McKnight-Chavers is an author and attorney whose novel, *In the Heart of Texas* (She Writes Press), won a 2016 USA Best Book Award. A native Texan, she is a graduate of Georgetown University and Harvard Law School and was a Kathryn Gurfein Writing Fellow at Sarah Lawrence College. McKnight-Chavers was a contributor to *Oil and Water: And Other Things That Don't Mix* and has written for *Essence*, *ShareBlue*, *The Huffington Post*, and other publications. She currently resides in New York. @gingermckchav



Sharvette Mitchell works with entrepreneurs to help them build their online platform so that they generate more revenue with an amazing online brand. She does this in a couple of ways with web design services, personal branding, social media coaching, and conferences. She is a graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University and for over twelve years she has hosted a weekly talk radio show every Tuesday at 6 pm EST – The Sharvette Mitchell Radio Show. Lastly, Sharvette is the visionary author of the new book collaboration, *PROPEL – The Essential Handbook for Emerging Women in Business & Leadership*. Find out more at www.SharvetteMitchell.com. @Sharvette



Maureen Moretti began her publishing career as an intern with several prestigious literary agencies before joining P.S. Literary Agency as an associate agent. She holds a B.A. from Saint Mary's College of California and attended the Columbia Publishing Course, where she fell in love with New York City. She loves narrative non-fiction, especially biography, culture, and history but reads widely in commercial fiction with a soft spot for upmarket women's fiction and romance. PSLiterary.com @maureen_moretti



Christina Morgan has worked in book publishing since 2005. She has worked for Curtis Brown LTD., HarperCollins, and Houghton Mifflin Harcourt prior to joining Serendipity.



Tee Morris first appeared on bookshelves with *Morevi: The Chronicles of Rafe & Askana* in 2002. With his wife, Pip Ballantine, Tee created the *Ministry of Peculiar Occurrences* series and its companion podcast, *Tales from the Archives*. Their series have won numerous awards, including RT Reviewers' Choice for Best Steampunk of 2014. They concluded the adventures of Books & Braun with *Operation: Endgame*. Tee kicked off 2019 with *Twitch for Dummies*, a how-to approach to streaming content.



After publishing over twenty novels for adults, **Erica Orloff** penned the award-winning middle-grade fantasy trilogy *The Magickeepers* as Erica Kirov. Her books have been praised in *Us Weekly* and *Cosmopolitan* and translated into thirteen languages. She writes regularly for publications on motherhood and complexities of family, and she was nominated for a Pushcart Prize for her essay "Choose Me," on motherhood after loss. She speaks and offers workshops, as well as school author visits. @ericaorloff



Dolen Perkins-Valdez is the author of *The New York Times* bestselling novel *Wench*. In 2017, HarperCollins released *Wench* as one of eight "Olive Titles," limited edition modern classics. Dolen received a DC Commission on the Arts Grant for her second novel *Balm* which was published by HarperCollins in 2015. In 2013, Dolen wrote the introduction to a special edition of Solomon Northup's *Twelve Years a Slave*, published by Simon & Schuster, which became a *New York Times* bestseller. Dolen is a 2019 nominee for a United States Artists Fellowship. @dolen



Rebekah Pierce, is an educator, veteran, and a member of several local writers' groups for both fiction and drama where her work has been widely received and supported. In February 2019, she released her newest book, *I Love Me More*; it's the story of how she came to understand that one cannot ask someone to love them if they don't love themselves first. @rebekahpierce



Jon Pineda is the author of the novel *Let's No One Get Hurt*, published by FSG and Picador. His poetry collection *Little Anodynes* received the 2016 Library of Virginia Literary Award. He teaches at the College of William and Mary.

@scrimshawcinema



David L. Robbins began writing fiction in 1997 and has published fourteen novels, with repeated visits to *The New York Times* bestsellers list. He is also an award-winning screenwriter, essayist, and playwright. David is the co-founder of James River Writers; co-founder of the Podium Foundation, which supports the practice of writing for Richmond area youth; and creator of The Mighty Pen Project, helping Richmond area veterans and first responders turn their service into written narratives. The Virginia Commission for the Arts named David one of the two Most Influential Literary Artists in the state for the last fifty years.



Brian Rock is a children's author of seven picture books and three chapter books. He lives in Richmond with his wife, daughter, and his many imaginary friends.

@brianrockwrites



Jenn Stroud Rossmann is the author of the novel *The Place You're Supposed to Laugh* (7.13 Books) and the essay series "An engineer reads a novel" at Public Books. Her stories have appeared in *Hobart*, *Cheap Pop*, *jmww journal*, *Literary Orphans*, and *Jellyfish Review*. She is also a professor of mechanical engineering at Lafayette College.

@jenn_rossmann



Jon Sealy is the author of *The Whiskey Baron* and *The Edge of America*, the latter of which he published as the first title with his new publishing house, Haywire Books. @jonsealy



Melissa Scott Sinclair is a fiction writer and an award-winning journalist. Her recent work has appeared in *Richmond* magazine and the anthology *Life In 10 Minutes*. She co-chaired The Writing Show in 2019.



Patricia Smith is the author of the novel *The Year of Needy Girls* (Kaylie Jones Books), a Lambda Literary Award finalist. Her short fiction has appeared most recently in the *Masters Review*, and her nonfiction has appeared in several anthologies and literary magazines. Twice nominated for a Pushcart, she has been awarded writing fellowships from the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts (VCCA) and the Rowland Writers Retreat. She teaches at the Appomattox Regional Governor's School in Petersburg, VA.

@pattysmith711



Kat Spears is the author of three novels for young adults, with a fourth title, *87 Days*, forthcoming. Her novels have been included on the recommended reading list for young adults by the American Library Association, as finalists for the Nutmeg and Virginia Reader's Choice Awards, and have received critical acclaim from *Booklist*, *Publishers Weekly*, and *Kirkus*. Kat lives in Richmond with her three children and serves as the volunteer bookseller at the annual JRW conference.

@katwritesbooks



Kris Spisak wrote her first traditionally published book, *Get a Grip on your Grammar: 250 Writing and Editing Reminders for the Curious or Confused* (Career Press, 2017), with a goal to help writers of all kinds sharpen their craft and empower their communications. A former college writing instructor, having taught at institutions including the University of Richmond and VCU, Kris now works as a ghostwriter and freelance editor, specializing in fiction. She is the board chair of James River Writers. @krisSpisak

20 SPEAKERS



Kristin Swenson, Ph.D., is the award-winning screenwriter of *Tell Mister Lincoln* and author of nonfiction, including the books *Bible Bable* (Bible 101, but fun), *God of Earth* (ecological Christianity), and the forthcoming *Horns of Moses* (oddities of and in the Bible). She co-hosts The Writer's Story podcast. Works in progress include historical fiction and nonfiction at the intersection of sustainability, spirituality, and food including her prettygoodkitchen.com blog. She writes for HuffPo and reviews for *Publishers Weekly*. @KristinSwenson



Ramona L. Taylor, Caring Field Films' founder, has been writing for decades. In 2008, *Camp DOA*, her first produced screenplay premiered. Since 2008, several of her projects have been recognized across the nation. Her screenplay *Blind Justice* was a winner in the 2018 Virginia Governor's Screenwriting Competition.



Chris L. Terry was born in 1979 to an African-American father and Irish-American mother. His satirical novel *Black Card* is set in Richmond and was published by Catapult in August 2019. Terry's debut novel *Zero Fade* was on Best of 2013 lists by Kirkus Reviews and Slate.com and shortlisted for the American Library Association's YALSA BFYA. He lived in Richmond during his high school and college years and now lives in Los Angeles. @christlerry



Nafissa Thompson-Spires earned a Ph.D. in English from Vanderbilt University and an MFA in creative writing at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *McSweeney's* "The Organist," *The Paris Review Daily*, *Dissent*, *Buzzfeed Books*, and other publications. Her first book, *Heads of the Colored People*, was longlisted for the 2018 National Book Award, the PEN/ Robert W. Bingham Award, and the Aspen Words Literary Prize; was a finalist for the Kirkus Prize and *The Los Angeles Times* Book Prize for first fiction; and has won the PEN Open Book Award and *The Los Angeles Times* First Fiction Award. She is also the recipient of a 2019 Whiting Award. @TisforThompson



Julie Valerie writes upmarket women's fiction and is developing a series set in the fictional Village of Primm. Her debut novel, *Holly Banks Full of Angst*, publishes December 2019. Julie founded the 85K Writing Challenge (85K90.com), providing writers with a supportive, enriching forum to pen 85,000 words in ninety days followed by twelve months of writing, editing, prepping to pub, and publishing support. Julie earned an editing certificate from the University of Chicago Graham School and enjoys testing her knowledge of the *Chicago Manual of Style*. @Julie_Valerie



American author **Padma Venkatraman** lived in five countries, explored rainforests, and was chief scientist on oceanographic vessels. Her novels, *A Time to Dance*, *Island's End*, and *Climbing the Stairs*, were released to multiple starred reviews and received several honors. Her latest novel, *The Bridge Home*, a contender for the Global Read Aloud initiative, has received starred reviews in *PW*, *Kirkus*, and *SLJ*. A former keynote speaker, she is delighted to return to JRW. @padmatv



Rashika Wallace is the owner and psychotherapist of Renewal Counseling and Consulting. She has been working in the therapy field for fifteen years. Her passions are working with young females with trauma & the schizophrenia population. She loves to listen to others and provide supportive feedback to aid in progression in lives.



A. B. Westrick is the author of *Brotherhood* (Penguin Random House). She lives near Richmond, teaches in Western Connecticut State University's low-residency MFA program in writing, and blogs monthly about writing. Her most recent essays appear in the series "Every Atom: Reflections on Walt Whitman at 200" (*North American Review* 2019) and in the anthology *Slavery's Descendants: Shared Legacies of Race & Reconciliation* (Rutgers University Press 2019). @ABWestrick



As the founder of Creative Media Agency, Inc., **Paige Wheeler** has merged her creativity and business savvy to create an agency that is dedicated to maximizing author potential. With over twenty years of experience in the publishing industry, Paige is propelled by an entrepreneurial spirit, ignited by the thrill of discovery. Through all of her professional endeavors, Paige has ventured to support her clients and their unique voices in an unprecedented way. In 2006, Paige also became a founding partner of Folio Literary Management, LLC. Through CMA, she is now able to manage the intellectual property rights of authors by selling both domestic and foreign rights, and co-agenting film and audio rights. @pwheeler_agent



Michael Paul Williams is a columnist for the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. A graduate of Virginia Union University and Northwestern University, he won Virginia Press Association awards for column writing in 1992, 1994, 2007, and 2014. During 1999-2000, he was one of a dozen U.S. journalists awarded a Nieman Fellowship at Harvard University. He was the 2010 recipient of the George Mason Award for outstanding contributions to Virginia journalism, given by the Virginia Pro Chapter of the Society for Professional Journalists. He has also received a 2012 Humanitarian Award from the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities and the 2014 Will Rogers Humanitarian Award from the National Society of Newspaper Columnists. @RTDMPW

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Be proud of what you write and easily share your interests with nametag flair. We invite you to stop by the sticker table near the registration desk, find the stickers that correspond to your genre or target audience, and apply as many as your literary output demands. It's a great way to spot other attendees with similar passions and provides an easy conversation starter. (Don't miss our Genre Gathering Sunday afternoon.)



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Did you miss out? Join us in 2020 when we happily return to Firehouse Theatre for more writing wit and wisdom.



Where: Firehouse Theatre
When: The last Wednesday of the month, January through September
Cost: \$12 for JRW members, \$15 for non-members, \$5 students
Time: 6PM to 8:30PM

Staff

James River Writers' three part-time staff members are dedicated to helping our members and JRW reach their greatest potential. They are grateful for the efforts of numerous volunteers who help run our programs and to our generous board and advisory board members for their community outreach and support. Thank you to everyone who is a part of the JRW family!



Katharine Herndon,
Executive Director



Annette Marquis,
Program Director



Phillip Hilliker,
Membership Coordinator

EVENTS AND WRITING CLASSES

Volunteer Janet Wooldridge maintains a complete Meetup calendar of upcoming JRW events. Thank you, Janet!

RESOURCES

At JamesRiverWriters.org, members can gain access to exclusive publishing insights and find information about all their membership benefits, including promo codes for online discounts.

You can also learn about and register for all of our upcoming programming, including Master Classes and Writing Shows.



Join James River Writers for our casual meet-and-greet for writers of every genre on the second Wednesday of each month, 5:30PM to 7:30PM. Spend time with live characters, make connections, and find inspiration.

Where: Ardent Craft Ales
When: Second Wednesday of each month
Time: 5:30PM to 7:30PM



In 2019, JRW hosted three single-session Master Classes and held six pre-conference Master Classes. In March, Eric Smith taught "Crafting and Workshopping the Synopsis;" in April, Katharine Herndon presented "Doing More with Dialogue;" and Elizabeth Ferris presented "Think Like an Editor" in June.



JRW is grateful to Visual Arts Center of Richmond for the use of their space.

Watch the JRW website for updates on 2020's Master Classes!



Looking for some motivation? A place with friendly faces who will encourage you in your craft? Come write with us!

Bring your laptop or other writing paraphernalia, hang out, get a cup of coffee, get some words written, set your writing goals for the week, find a sympathetic ear, or all of the above!

Where: Urban Farmhouse Midlothian
When: Every Thursday
Time: 6PM to 8PM



BEST SELF-PUBLISHED NOVEL CONTEST



James River Writers and *Richmond* magazine recognized the writing talents and entrepreneurial skills of indie authors by continuing the Best Self-Published Novel Contest, which we started in 2014.

Congratulations to the 2019 winner, Alexandra Christle for her novel, *Hitchin'*.

Final judge Katherine Lowry Logan said this about *Hitchin'* "I absolutely loved the characters, the suspense, the plot development. It was very well written and edited, kept me on the edge of my seat, and I loved the author's voice. I skipped forward to read the ending to find out which characters were still standing at the end, then I went back and read it. I will keep the author on my list and will read whatever they write."

The Best Self-Published Novel Contest will return in 2021.

EMYL JENKINS AWARD



Patty Parks
2019 winner

The Emyl Jenkins Award honors the memory of Emyl Jenkins by recognizing individuals who continue her legacy of inspiring a love of writing and writing education in Virginia. Jenkins, a JRW board member and former conference chair, was a mentor and champion of writers of all levels. She passed away in 2010 and continues to be missed.

The 2018 award goes to Patty Parks. One of Patty's nominators wrote, "In her role as librarian-at-large for the City of Richmond, she seeks to find ways to make books and information a part of the fabric of our city. Whether it's by supporting reading programs for children or programs collecting oral histories of our city residents, Patty is always thinking of a future where we are more compassionate, informed, and creative."



Emyl Jenkins

JRW will begin accepting nominations for the 2020 award on May 1, with the entry deadline of June 30.

POE INSPIRES FLASH FICTION AND POETRY CONTEST

Edgar Allan Poe has been influencing authors for generations with his use of the grotesque, his theory of the unified effect, or his pioneering work in science fiction and detective stories. To celebrate his enduring legacy, JRW and the Poe Museum partnered for three years on the Poe Inspires Contest.

2019 winners:



Jan Best
poetry winner



Matt Sandbank
fiction winner

For more information on these contests see www.jamesriverwriters.org

BEST UNPUBLISHED NOVEL CONTEST

will return in 2020.



K.T. Sparks
2017 winner

James River Writers and *Richmond* magazine partner on a three-year cycle to bring attention to the best unpublished works from throughout Virginia and the JRW community.

The next contest opens January 1, 2020, and closes February 28, 2020.

To submit an entry, the author must be a resident of Virginia, a student at a Virginia college or university, or a member of JRW.

Note that this contest is for fiction only. See the James River Writers website for full submission details and rules.

SHANN PALMER POETRY CONTEST

will return in 2021.

Updates will be posted on jamesriverwriters.org as the contest approaches.



Fred Everett Maus
2018 winner

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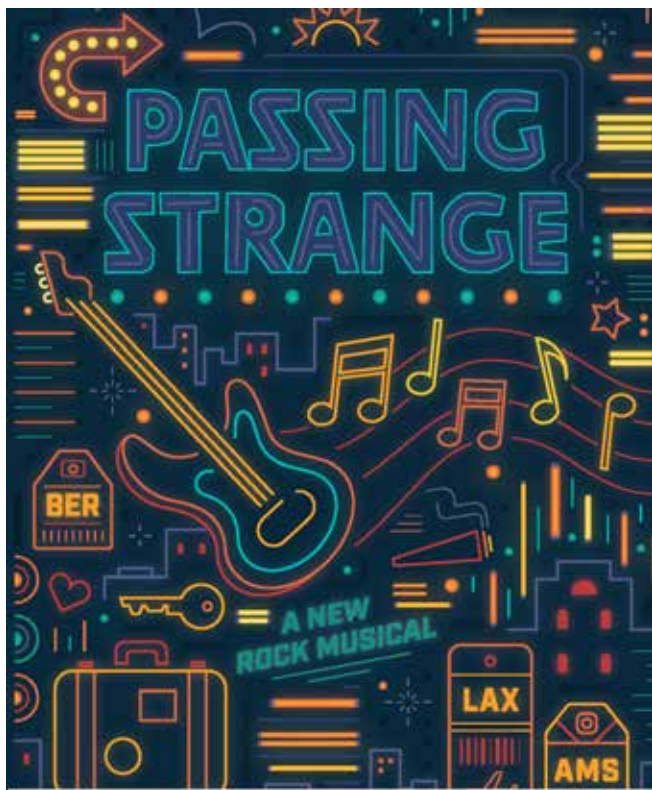
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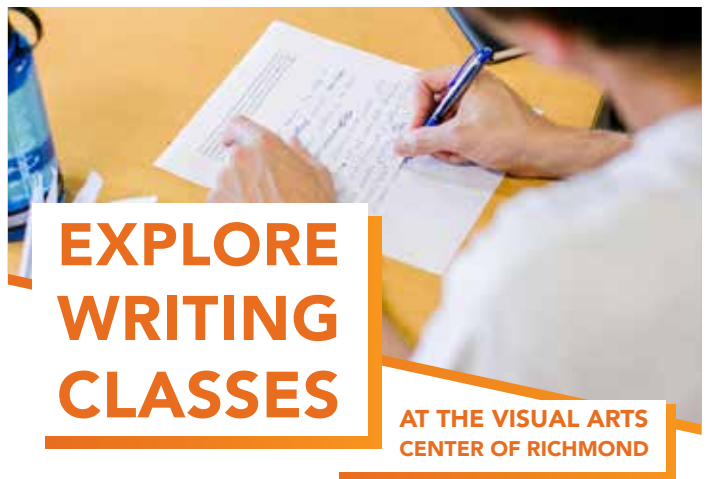
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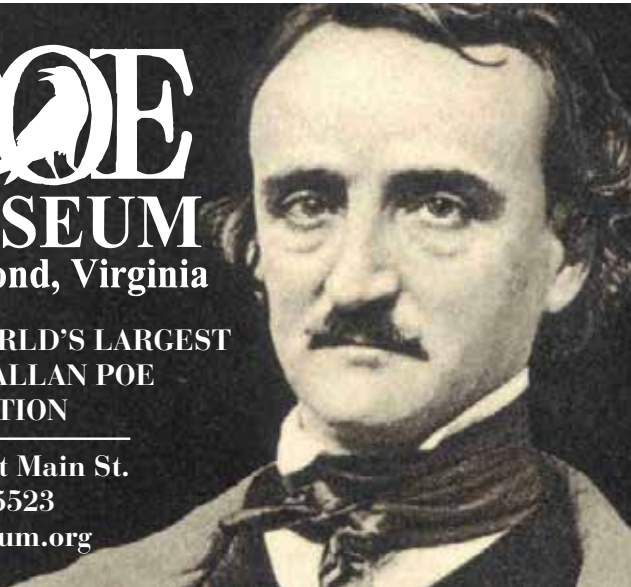
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**VIRGINIA
 COMMISSION**
 FOR THE
 Arts

James River Writers envisions a community enriched by the literary arts. This community aims to be welcoming, inclusive, respectful, and safe for all. To that end, James River Writers has adopted the following code of conduct and terms and conditions.

By attending any James River Writers ("JRW") events, the participant automatically agrees to the terms and conditions set forth below. Any person, guest, student, media representative, speaker, or exhibitor who is present is considered a participant. Thank you for making JRW a safe, enriching, inspiring community.

JRW is committed to providing an environment free from harassment, intimidation, and coercion based on race, gender, religion, national origin, immigrant status, veteran status, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, or any other classification protected by applicable law. No participant shall engage in any action that may constitute harassment. Examples of such behavior include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Offensive or abusive physical contact;
- Repeated or persistent unwanted physical contact;
- Use of slurs or offensive nicknames or terms of endearment;
- Unwelcome comments about a person's clothing, body, or personal life;
- Offensive jokes or unwelcome innuendo;
- Other conduct based on referring to a protected classification, even if not objectionable to some participants, which creates an environment that others may reasonably find hostile, offensive, or uncomfortable

Participants are expected to act in a civil and collegial manner at all times. While it shall not be cause for removal merely because a participant disagrees with the majority on one or more issues, both the "dissident" participant and the majority are expected to continue to treat each other in a civil and respectful manner so that all sides of any issue may be carefully considered. A persistent disregard of this principle may constitute cause for removal. Personal disagreements and differences of opinion are not harassment.

Reporting An Issue

Participants finding themselves in a situation where they feel their safety or comfort are at risk or who become aware of a participant not in compliance with this code of conduct should contact a JRW staff person or director so that the matter can be resolved. Staff and directors are identifiable by a name badge and ribbon or by a name tag. At the annual conference, they can often be found at the registration desk. Communications can be sent to Katharine Herndon, Executive Director, at execdirector@jamesriverwriters.org or (804) 433-3790 or to the Board Chair at chair@jamesriverwriters.org. Reports can be made at any time. JRW requests that a report be filed as soon as possible, especially if you believe the offending party might continue to harass you and/or other participants. Reports will be taken seriously and handled appropriately regardless of when they are made.

Retaliation in response to asking a question, raising a concern in good faith, or participating in an investigation will not be tolerated. Knowingly making a false report or reporting with malice or disregard for the truth is also prohibited.

Consequences of Harassing Behavior

Participants asked to stop harassment are expected to comply immediately. If a participant engages in harassing behavior, the JRW organizers may take any action they deem appropriate and necessary to safeguard participants, including warning the offender or expelling the offender from the event with no refund.

At the reporter's discretion, reports of harassment will be referred to JRW's board of directors, which will hear all sides and recommend whether to bar the offender from attending any additional events organized by JRW and/or to strip the offender's membership. In determining the appropriate response, the safety of all participants will be paramount.

JRW will handle all reports with equal consideration and will not be influenced by factors such as the social status or event role of anyone involved in the situation. JRW will provide procedures for addressing violations upon request and/or when a report arises.

Terms and Conditions

Participant in violation of rules and/or who behaves in an unsafe or careless manner may be asked to leave and will be held responsible for their actions. Participant acknowledges that such violations may result in being removed from the event or forum and barred from returning without refund of the participant's registration fee.

Participant likewise acknowledges and agrees that all participants have the right to enjoy JRW programs equally. Disruptive behavior that interferes with the conduct of reasonable business, or any other attendee's safety or comfort, may result in the participant being removed from the event/forum and barred from returning without refund of the participant's registration fee.

Indemnity. To the extent permitted by law, the participant agrees to protect, indemnify, defend, and hold harmless JRW, the event venue(s) and convention centers where the event is being held, and their respective employees, officers, directors, and agents against all claims, losses, or damages to persons or property, governmental charges or fines, and costs (including reasonable attorney's fees) arising out of or connected to the actions or failure to act in accordance with the Terms and Conditions by participant, its employees, officers, directors, or agents, except those claims arising out of the other party's gross negligence or willful misconduct.

Access Guidelines. JRW is committed to making all reasonable arrangements that will allow participants to participate in events. All rooms at the conference are wheelchair accessible. In order to help JRW better prepare, please submit requests for special services, equipment, or accommodations in advance of the event. Please submit your request to programdirector@jamesriverwriters.org. Participants who require special onsite assistance during events should request it from personnel at the registration desk or the event host.

Lost Registration Badge. Participant's registration badge must be worn at all times during the annual conference. Access to the conference facilities will not be granted to those without proper credentials. If a participant loses, misplaces, or forgets his or her name badge, a replacement badge can be obtained from the registration desk. A small fee may be required for the creation of a new registration badge. Once the new registration badge is released to the participant, the lost badge will become invalid.

Modification of the Event. Sometimes unforeseen circumstances arise. JRW reserves the right to modify the event, speakers, panels, etc, which are published online and in print as an indication only.

Salvatory Clause. If there is a determination that any part of the Terms and Conditions is ineffective or impracticable, then the validity of the Terms and Conditions remaining is not impaired.

Photography & Filming. Professional photographs, audio, and video will be captured during the events. Participants hereby grant JRW and its representatives permission to photograph and/or record them at the event, and distribute (both now and in the future) the participant's image and/or voice in photographs, videotapes, electronic reproductions, and sound recordings of such events and activities. Participants may not use professional recording, photography, or film equipment without authorization from JRW, whether digital or analog, and should refrain from interfering with the speakers, presenters, panelists, staff, and attendees and their enjoyment and participation in JRW events.

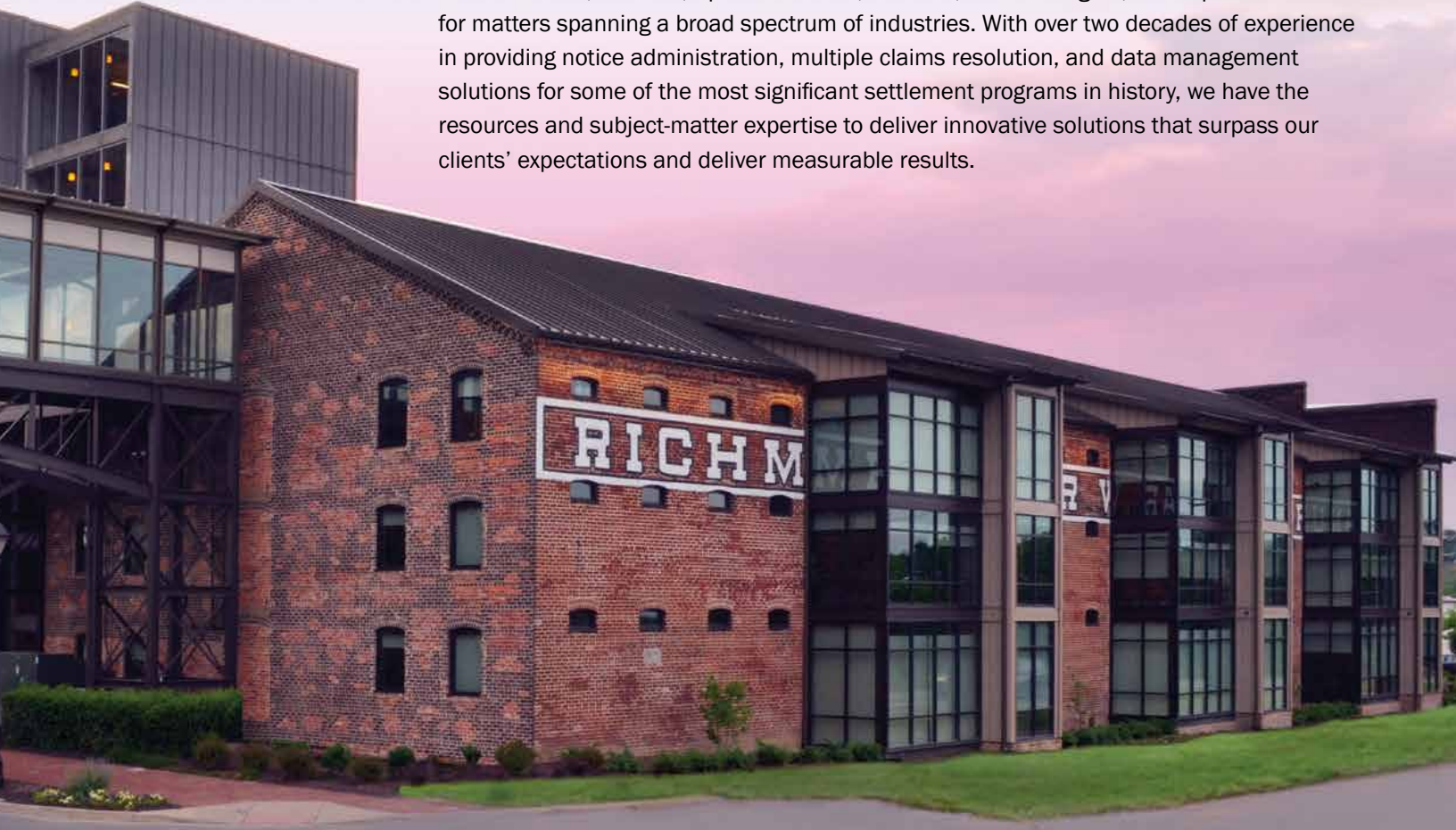
Force Majeure. Attendance at the event is subject to acts of God, government authority, disaster, or other emergencies, any of which make it illegal or impossible for JRW, the event venue(s), or convention centers to provide the facilities and/or services for the event, or make it illegal or impossible for the participant to utilize the hotels, convention centers, or venues for the event. A registration may be cancelled for any one or more of such reasons by written notice from JRW to the participant without liability on the part of JRW.

Cancellation. In the event the conference cannot be held or is postponed due to events beyond JRW's control, JRW shall not be liable to participant for any damages, costs, or losses incurred, such as transportation costs, accommodations costs, or financial losses. Under such circumstances, a participant may choose to have their registration fee refunded in full.

Do not use JRW's website or JRW's social media accounts for any unauthorized purpose.

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