On behalf of everyone here at the Writers’ League of Texas, welcome to the 25th annual Agents & Editors Conference.

We get excited about every year’s conference, but this one is special to us. For 25 years, we have been bringing together people from all aspects of the book-making process. This conference is and always has been designed as an opportunity to get inside the world of publishing and to connect with the terrific professionals and authors who are making American literature more exciting and vibrant than ever.

To that end, we want to highlight some of the roles these professionals play and what they’ll be talking about this weekend.

Agents and editors

Many of you will talk with an agent or editor one-on-one during a consultation, pitching your work and getting immediate feedback. But the conference also offers many opportunities to get an insider’s perspective on timeless questions about publishing: What do agents and editors look for in manuscripts? How do manuscripts get pitched, bought, sold, and become books? What do writers need to know about this process? You can learn answers by attending panels and presentations and by chatting with agents and editors informally during general sessions.

Authors

Austin has a rich and diverse literary scene, and it will be on display during the conference. During panels and presentations, learn from award-winning and bestselling authors working in a variety of genres. There will be authors with dozens of books to their name and debut authors who not so long ago were figuring out how to get their books read and published. Take this opportunity to pick their brains and walk away with a new favorite book (which will be for sale through our bookseller, BookPeople, the largest independent bookstore in Texas).

Other publishing professionals

It’s easy to focus on agents and editors, but the number of people involved in a book’s success stretches far beyond those two individuals. At the conference, you’ll meet publicists, freelance editors, event organizers, and literary journal editors (including from American Short Fiction, recently named the #8 best journal in the country, ahead of the famed Paris Review).

Your fellow attendees

As you write and publish, and continue to do so, your peers will come from the writers who are starting out, just as you are now. Begin building your literary community!

We hope you’ll join us for our Keynote Luncheon featuring Alexander Chee, and our Keynote Reception, featuring memoirist Melissa Radke. We also hope you’ll join us for a closing luncheon on Sunday. Three big days with more than 350 people in attendance. It’s time to start coloring in your writing future.

Michael Noll
Program Director
Meet the Editors

John Byrd
Cinco Puntos Press

John Byrd is the managing editor of Cinco Puntos Press, which publishes from its offices at the center of the universe (El Paso, Texas, in case your map is out of date.) He lives nearby with his wife and family. Cinco Puntos Press focuses on the U.S. / Mexico border region, the Southwest and Mexico but also ranges out, exploring different possibilities. Notable authors include fiction writers Dagoberto Gilb, Benjamin Alire Saenz, and Rene S. Perez II; nonfiction authors include Gary Cartwright and Beto O’Rourke; and picture book authors/illustrators include Xilena Gonzalez and Keith D. Shephard.

Vivian Lee
Little A, Amazon Publishing

Vivian Lee is an editor at Little A, Amazon Publishing’s literary fiction and narrative nonfiction imprint. Her list includes Matthew Salesses’ The Hundred-Year Flood, Viet Dinh’s After Disasters (PEN/Faulkner Finalist), Harold Schechter’s Hell’s Princess, Naima Coster’s Halsey Street and Natalia Sylvester’s Everyone Knows You Go Home. She is interested in language and character-driven literary fiction dealing with relationships and identity. For nonfiction, she is looking for personal memoirs, investigative journalism, and anything in popular science. In both genres, she is interested in the intersection of race/class/gender/ethnicity.

James Melia
Flatiron Books

James Melia previously worked at Doubleday before joining Flatiron Books, where he edits and acquires upmarket commercial fiction, narrative nonfiction, and pop culture. Notable books he has edited include The People We Hate at the Wedding by Grant Ginder (an Entertainment Weekly Summer Must-Read), James Rebanks’ The Shepherd’s Life (which was named one of the top ten books of the year by Michiko Kakutani), and Marc Maron’s Waiting for the Punch. James recently published Ron Stallworth’s memoir Black Klansman, the basis for the forthcoming film produced by Jordan Peele and directed by Spike Lee.

Meet the Agents

Tess Callero
Curtis Brown, Ltd.

Tess Callero represents young adult and adult fiction manuscripts, as well as select nonfiction projects. She welcomes all YA submissions but tends to gravitate towards stories involving friendship, romance, or suspense. On the adult side, Tess is interested in commercial and upmarket women’s fiction, mysteries/thrillers, and romance. She has a soft spot for anything involving food, sports, or Hollywood. Her nonfiction interests include pop culture, business, cookbooks, humor, biography, self-help, and food narrative projects. Tess is also the Social Media Director at Curtis Brown.

Terra Chalberg
Chalberg & Sussman

Terra Chalberg represents a range of fiction and nonfiction writers, including Victoria Fedden, author of This Is Not My Beautiful Life; Margaux Fragoso, author of The New York Times and international bestseller Tiger, Tiger; Elizabeth Isadora Gold, author of The Mommy Group; Lori Ostlund, author of James & Noble Discover selection After the Parade; Andrew Porter, Flannery O’Connor Award-winner and author of In Between Days; Melissa Radke, author of Eat Cake, Be Brave; Alex Taylor, author of The Marble Orchard; and Glenn Taylor, author of A Hanging at Cinder Bottom.

Jennifer Chen Tran
Bradford Literary Agency

Jennifer Chen Tran represents both fiction and nonfiction. She was previously an associate agent at Fuse Literary and served as counsel at The New Press. She counsels her clients on how to expand their platforms and improve on craft, and she works collaboratively with her clients throughout the editorial and publication process. Her ultimate goal is to work in concert with authors to shape books that will have a positive social impact on the world—books that also inform and entertain. She is looking to sign authors from diverse or marginalized backgrounds.

Arielle Datz
Dunow, Carlson, & Lerner

Arielle Datz started as an intern at Dunow, Carlson, & Lerner in 2011. She then worked in the foreign rights department at WME, followed by two years at the Elizabeth Kaplan Literary Agency. She returned to DCLA in 2015. She is looking for fiction (mostly adult, but is open to young adult and middle grade), both literary and commercial. In nonfiction, she is looking for essays, unconventional memoir, pop culture, and sociology.

Adriana Dominguez
Full Circle Literary

Adriana Dominguez has worked as Executive Editor at HarperCollins Children’s Books and Children’s Reviews Editor at Library Journal’s Critics magazine. She has performed editorial work for both children and adult publishers and is a professional translator. Adriana has a long trajectory of publishing underrepresented authors and illustrators and welcomes submissions that offer diverse points of view. On the children’s side, she represents fiction and narrative nonfiction as well as authors/illustrators. On the adult side, she seeks narrative nonfiction and pop culture titles written by authors with rock-solid platforms.

Connor Goldsmith
Fuse Literary

Before becoming an agent, Connor Goldsmith spent a year as a full-time intern and relief assistant in the commercial film and television department at Abrams Artists Agency. He is passionate about narrative fiction across all media as a vehicle for social progress.
Meet the Agents

Wendi Lulu Gu
Janklow & Nesbit Associates

Wendi Lulu Gu interned with children’s book agent Brenda Bowen at Sanford J. Greenburger Associates and continued working there as a literary assistant after graduation. She soon began representing her own picture books, middle grade, young adult, and adult fiction titles with a special interest in girl power, family relationships, and the immigrant experience, and has continued working on such books at Janklow & Nesbit. Most of all, she likes stories that root for the underdog.

Eric Myers
Myers Literary Management

Eric Myers authored three books with St. Martin’s Press and has been an agent since 2002. His clients include Chris Grabenstein (Escape from Mr. Lemoncello’s Library), Lydia Kang (Control, Quackery, and A Beautiful Poison), Seth Rudetsky (My Awesome/Awful Popularity Plan), Miriam Davis (The Axeman of New Orleans), and Patrice Banks (The Girls’ Auto Clinic Glove Box Guide). He specializes in YA, middle grade, historical fiction, thrillers, and most nonfiction, including memoir that comes with a strong platform.

Sarah Levitt
Aevitas Creative Management

Sarah Levitt represents critically-acclaimed fiction and nonfiction writers. Her list includes journalists, academics, historians, scientists, and musicians, among others. Sarah is most interested in narrative nonfiction in the areas of popular science, big ideas, history, humor, pop culture, memoir, and reportage, in addition to voice-driven literary fiction with a bold plot and fresh, imaginative characters. She’s excited by strong female and underrepresented voices, the strange and speculative, and projects that ignite cultural conversation.

Rachel Orr
Prospect Agency

Rachel Orr represents both authors and illustrators in projects ranging from picture books through YA. She previously worked for eight rewarding years at Harper-Collins Children’s Books and uses those editorial skills to help prepare her clients’ work for submission. Her clients include Kit Allowingway (the Dream Walker series), Samantha M. Clark (The Boy, the Boat and the Beast), Cori Doerrfeld (The Rabbit Listened), Emma Wunsch (The Movie Version), and Kim Zarins (Sometimes We Tell the Truth).

Sarah Phair
Trident Media Group

Sarah Phair spent two years learning from and assisting two domestic agents at Trident Media Group before being promoted to audio agent, and then to a sales agent in Trident’s foreign rights department. Now, Sarah is building her own client list. She is interested in all women’s fiction, literary fiction, and narrative nonfiction. She is most attracted to stories that are thoughtfully plotted and explore different aspects of lesser known experiences.

Meet the Presenters

Matthew J. Hefti is the author of A Hard and Heavy Thing. He was born in Canada and grew up in Wisconsin. After 9/11, he visited the Armed Forces Recruiter. He then spent 12 years as an explosive ordinance disposal technician. He deployed twice to Iraq and twice to Afghanistan, once to Iraq as an EOD team member and the remaining three tours as an EOD team leader. While enlisted, he earned a BA in English and an MFA in Creative Writing.

Isobella Jade is the author of Almost 5’4”, a modeling memoir first written on the display computers at the Apple Store in SoHo when she was without her own computer at the time. She followed Almost 5’4” with her ongoing graphic novel digital series Model Life, a lifestyle podcast and the YA novel Careful. Her story of striving to beat the odds has been featured in The New York Times, The New York Post, The New York Daily News, Publishers Weekly, The Los Angeles Times, Glamour, Seventeen, Sirius Radio, BBC and others globally.

Lindsey Lane earned her MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults from the Vermont College of Fine Arts. Her debut novel Evidence Of Things Not Seen is a “unique, powerful novel,” said Francisco Stork, author of Marcelo and the Real World. Publishers Weekly said that it “offers a gripping and genre-bending mosaic.” Lindsey is also the author of the award-winning picture book picture book and iTunes app Snuggle Mountain, illustrations by Melissa Iwai.

Meet the Agents

Sarah Phair
Trident Media Group

Sarah Phair is particularly interested in reportage, fiction and narrative nonfiction, and dynamic plots that bridge genres. In nonfiction, she is looking for socially and politically conscious narratives, especially those that engage with cultural conversations about gender, race, and class in an accessible way, but she’s also drawn to popular science, biography, cultural theory, and memoir.

Grace A. Ross
Regal Hoffman & Associates

Grace A. Ross is interested in literary fiction that experiments with form and speaks to the current cultural climate; historical fiction; international narratives; and dynamic plots that bridge genres. In nonfiction, she is experimenting with form and seeking stories that explore different aspects of lesser known experiences.

Jeff Silberman
Folio Literary Management

Jeff Silberman began his career as an entertainment attorney and navigates the film and television worlds as well as publishing. His interests are wide, his passions run deep, and the books he represents cut a wide swath: narrative nonfiction, memoir, science and technology, history, social issues, sports, the animal kingdom, literary fiction, upmarket fiction, and more. He seeks books that in some way leave us different than we were before, and he works closely with all of his authors.

Susan Velazquez
JABberwacky Literary Agency

Susan Velazquez is the assistant to Eddie Schneider and Joshua Bilmes and manages audio rights for JABberwacky Literary in addition to representing her own clients. Susan generally gravitates towards any story that details a complicated family dynamic, illustrates a transformative coming-of-age experience, or features multicultural characters or unique voices. In nonfiction, she is interested in memoirs, pop culture, and history. In science fiction and fantasy, she is looking for richly built worlds to become immersed in and stories that explore what humanity is like—or could be like.

Meet the Presenters

Matthew J. Hefti is the author of A Hard and Heavy Thing. He was born in Canada and grew up in Wisconsin. After 9/11, he visited the Armed Forces Recruiter. He then spent 12 years as an explosive ordnance disposal technician. He deployed twice to Iraq and twice to Afghanistan, once to Iraq as an EOD team member and the remaining three tours as an EOD team leader. While enlisted, he earned a BA in English and an MFA in Creative Writing.

Isobella Jade is the author of Almost 5’4”, a modeling memoir first written on the display computers at the Apple Store in SoHo when she was without her own computer at the time. She followed Almost 5’4” with her ongoing graphic novel digital series Model Life, a lifestyle podcast and the YA novel Careful. Her story of striving to beat the odds has been featured in The New York Times, The New York Post, The New York Daily News, Publishers Weekly, The Los Angeles Times, Glamour, Seventeen, Sirius Radio, BBC and others globally.

Lindsey Lane earned her MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults from the Vermont College of Fine Arts. Her debut novel Evidence Of Things Not Seen is a “unique, powerful novel,” said Francisco Stork, author of Marcelo and the Real World. Publishers Weekly said that it “offers a gripping and genre-bending mosaic.” Lindsey is also the author of the award-winning picture book picture book and iTunes app Snuggle Mountain, illustrations by Melissa Iwai.
Meet the Presenters

Melynda Nuss is a member of the State Bar of Texas, magna cum laude graduate from Princeton University, a graduate of the University of Chicago Law School, and has an M.A. and Ph.D. in English literature from the University of Texas at Austin. She is the author of Distance, Theatre and the Public Voice 1750-1850.

Kris Pauls leads Disruption Books, a hybrid publisher based in NY and Austin. She shepherds authors and their books through the evolving landscape of today’s publishing industry. She has worked on titles ranging from business and history to cookbooks, real estate, and children’s literature, including several New York Times and Wall Street Journal bestsellers. Before leading Disruption Books, Kris served as managing editor of Greenleaf Book Group, a publisher focused on independent authors; and as director of design and production for Dana Press, which is the books and journals division of the Dana Foundation, helmed by William Safire.

Tex Thompson is an instructor for the Writers Path at SMU and the author of the internationally-published Children of the Drought series. Tex is also the founder and “chief instigator” for WORD—Writers Organizations ‘Round Dallas. When she’s not leading the charge at home in Dallas, Tex brings her particular brand of “red-penthusiasm” to conferences, conventions, and workshops all over the country.

John Pipkin won the New York Center for Fiction First Novel Prize, the Massachusetts Center for the Book Novel Prize, and the Texas Institute of Letters Stephen Turner Prize for First Novel with his debut novel Woodsburner. His second novel The Blind Astronomer’s Daughter was published by Bloomsbury in 2016. John teaches at UT-Austin and in the low-residency MFA program at Spalding University in Louisville, KY.

David Eric Tomlinson was born and raised in Oklahoma, educated in California, and now lives in Texas. His first novel The Midnight Man was listed as a 2017 top crime debut by Austin’s independent bookstore BookPeople and was shortlisted for both the PEN Southwest Book Award and the Texas Institute of Letters Sergio Troncoso Award For Best Work Of First Fiction. David has contributed to the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference and teaches craft classes for Writing Workshops Dallas.

Meet the Exhibitors

VISIT OUR EXHIBITORS THROUGHOUT THE WEEKEND TO LEARN ABOUT GREAT OPPORTUNITIES AND SERVICES.

Austin Community College Creative Writing Department
A two-year degree program open to all writers in multiple genres; online and face-to-face.
austincc.edu/crw

The Authors’ Assistant
Established in 1996, The Authors’ Assistant has over two decades of expertise in guiding writers through the publishing process from idea to book launch, including manuscript editing and preparation, book design and production, and public relations.
authorsassistant.com

Ann Kellett Editing
I Polish. You Shine. I bring 30+ years of award-winning, full-time editing experience, with happy clients around the world.
annkelletteditings.com

Blue Cubicle Press
Blue Cubicle Press, home of the award-winning and internationally recognized literary journals Workers Write! and The First Line, is dedicated to giving voice to writers who realize their words may never pay the mortgage but who are too stubborn to stop trying. We’re here to support artists trapped in the daily grind.
bluecubicylepress.com

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

Mayborn Literary Nonfiction Conference
Organized by the Frank W. Mayborn Graduate Institute of Journalism, University of North Texas.
themayborn.com

Word Nerd Crafts
Hand-crafted, unique literary-themed crafts, such as Scrabble Tile earrings, upcycled journals, and tote bags.
wordnerdcrafts.com

Writers in the Field
A hands-on, gloves-off, first-of-its-kind research experience for writers.
writersinthefield.com

The Writer’s Workshop
Services in development and line editing, synopsis and query review, and manuscript evaluations propel independent authors from inspiration to publication.
workshopwriter.com

The Writing Barn
7.5 wooded acres devoted to writers: group and private retreats, weekend and week long intensives, book launches and other literary themed parties. Retreat. Create. Celebrate at The Writing Barn.
thewritingbarn.com

Yellow Bird Editors
Manuscript critiques, content editing, developmental editing, query letter critiques, and more.
yellowbirdbeditors.com

A Big Thank You to Ricki Ratliff and her outstanding group of timers for the one-on-one consultations:
Stephan Baley, Joan Barton, Jana’ Busby, Tiffo Carmichael, Tania DeGregorio, Candee Edwards, Rhonda Fuquay, Molly Guzzino, Tiffany Harelk, Stacee Harris, Caleb Heine, Linda Leal, Alexander Lewis, Anna Kosta-Rodriguez, Bernadette Nason, Martin Salinas, Tammi Schissler, Russell Staker, Anne Stoll, Jo Virgil

Complete bios for our visiting agents, editors and presenters are available at the 2018 A&E Conference page at the Writers’ League of Texas website.
Conference Sessions

Friday, June 29
11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
CHECK IN AND INFORMATION
Pick up your badge and conference materials when you arrive on Friday. Saturday Keynote Luncheon tickets can be purchased ($50 on-site), subject to availability.
Big Bend A-C (11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.)
Zilker Ballroom Foyer (4:00 to 5:00 p.m.)

11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
EXHIBIT HALL
Big Bend and Hill Country Foyers

1:00 to 3:15 p.m.
GENRE SESSIONS
See box below for details.

3:30 to 4:30 p.m.
PITCH LAB
Practice your pitch with other conference attendees. A great opportunity to build community and prepare for the conference’s many networking opportunities. Arrive at 3:30 for some quick guidelines and then spend the rest of the time practicing your pitch. Foothills II (17th floor)

4:30 to 6:30 p.m.
WELCOME RECEPTION
Join WLT staff and conference faculty for opening announcements and recognition of the 2018 Manuscript Contest Winners and Finalists, starting at 4:45 pm. Then, kick off the conference with snacks, socializing, and Typewriter Rodeo.
Zilker Ballroom

FRIDAY GENRE SESSIONS
Join fellow writers in your genre to learn tips from published authors and industry professionals for pitching projects successfully.

1:00 to 2:00 p.m.
GENERAL FICTION
Recommended for attendees writing novels that don’t fit in the other breakout categories. Hill Country A&B

SCIENCE FICTION / FANTASY
Recommended for attendees writing novels for the Sci-Fi or Fantasy markets. Hill Country C

PICTURE BOOK / MIDDLE GRADE / YOUNG ADULT
Recommended for attendees writing books for young readers. Hill Country D

NONFICTION
Recommended for attendees writing general nonfiction, narrative or practical, NOT memoir. Big Bend D

2:30 to 3:15 p.m.
MEMOIR
Recommended for attendees writing memoir or personal stories. Hill Country A&B

MYSTERY / THRILLER
Recommended for attendees writing novels that include mystery, thriller or suspense elements. Hill Country C

HISTORICAL FICTION
Recommended for attendees writing novels with historical settings. Hill Country D

ROMANCE
Recommended for attendees writing love stories, whether category romance or women’s fiction. Big Bend D

9:00 to 10:00 a.m.
BREAKFAST
Get your day started right with coffee, breakfast tacos, and other refreshments. Meet fellow writers in your genre at designated tables.
Zilker Ballroom

10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
EXHIBIT HALL
Big Bend and Hill Country Foyers

Saturday, June 30
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
CHECK IN AND INFORMATION
Pick up your badge and conference materials. Keynote Luncheon tickets can be purchased ($50 on-site), subject to availability.
Zilker Ballroom Foyer (8:00 to 10:00 a.m.)
Big Bend Foyer (10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.)

8:00 to 9:00 a.m.
BREAKFAST
Get your day started right with coffee, breakfast tacos, and other refreshments. Meet fellow writers in your genre at designated tables.
Zilker Ballroom

10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
EXHIBIT HALL
Big Bend and Hill Country Foyers

Saturday, June 30
Opening Session
Featuring Vice President, Grand Central Publishing Beth deGuzman

Beth deGuzman is VP, Digital and Paperback Publisher at Grand Central Publishing, where she oversees eBook publications and trade paperback and mass market programs, and acquires fiction and nonfiction. She works with James Patterson and Michael Connelly; sits in meetings with David Baldacci, Sandra Brown, Harlan Coben, and Nicholas Sparks; and is proud to be attending this conference with her author and fellow Texan Melissa Radke. Because she is a graduate of UT Austin, you should expect to hear her yell “Hook ‘em, Horns!” all weekend long. Also, her favorite things begin with the letters B and C: the Beatles and barbeque, Cheetos and crossword puzzles.
Zilker Ballroom

10:00 to 10:15 a.m.
BREAK
Enjoy refreshments while visiting the conference exhibitors.
Big Bend and Hill Country Foyers

10:15 to 11:00 a.m.
BREAKOUT SESSIONS

BUSINESS
Where Publishing Begins: Submitting to Journals and Magazines
Panelists: Levis Keltner, Adeena Reitberger, Grace A. Ross | Moderator: Sindya Bhanoo
Hill Country A

Writing a Great Synopsis
Panelists: Jennifer Chen Tran, Sarah Phair, Susan Velazquez | Moderator: Bradley P. Wilson
Hill Country B

Turning Your Worldbuilding Into Drama
Panelists: Connor Goldsmith, Patrice Sarath, José Skinner, Sherry Thomas | Moderator: Jason Neulander
Hill Country C

Making Characters Stick in a Reader’s Mind
Panelists: Arielle Datz, Sarah Levitt, Eric Myers | Moderator: Samantha M. Clark
Big Bend

BUSINESS
Real Talk: How Agents Spend Their Time
Panelists: Arielle Datz, Sarah Levitt, Eric Myers | Moderator: Samantha M. Clark
Big Bend

CONSULTATIONS
10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
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 15 minutes before your scheduled appointment. For details, see pages 16-17.
Foothills I & II (17th floor)
Conference Sessions

11:00 to 11:15 a.m.  BREAK
Enjoy refreshments while visiting the conference exhibitors.
Big Bend and Hill Country Foyers

11:15 a.m. to 12 noon  BREAKOUT SESSIONS

BUSINESS
Before Publication: Setting Yourself Up for Success
Panelists: John Byrd, Jess Hagemann, Bethany Hegedus, Nikki Loftin | Moderator: Levis Keltner
Hill Country A

CRAFT
What Makes a Memoir Stand Out? (Besides a Good Story)
Panelists: Juli Berwald, Donna M. Johnson, James Melia, Suzzy Spencer | Moderator: Charlotte Gullick
Hill Country B

BUSINESS
Working with Publicists, Marketers, and Booksellers
Panelists: Brian Contine, Colleen Devine Ellis, Abby Fennewald, Marika Flatt | Moderator: Maya Payne Smart
Hill Country C

CRAFT
Making Your Plot Twists Truly Thrilling
Panelists: Robert Ashcroft, May Cobb, Meg Gardiner, Jeff Silberman | Moderator: Mike Yang
Hill Country D

BUSINESS
Real Talk: When Is Your Book Ready to Query?
Panelists: Terra Chalberg, Wendi Lulu Gu, Sharon Pelletier | Moderator: Allison Grace Myers
Big Bend

2:00 to 3:00 p.m.  BREAKOUT SESSIONS

BUSINESS
The State of Kids’ Lit Today
Panelists: Donna Janell Bowman, Laura Creedle, Adriana Dominguez, Rachel Orr | Moderator: Vanessa Lee
Hill Country A

CRAFT
Keeping Your Novel’s Plot Moving
Panelists: Christopher Brown, Nicky Drayden, James Melia, Chaitali Sen | Moderator: Shannon Perri
Hill Country B

BUSINESS
Building Your Readership on the Web and IRL
Panelists: Tess Callero, Isobella Jade, Paige Schilt, Carlotta Eike Stankiewicz | Moderator: Nettie Reynolds
Hill Country C

BUSINESS
The Editor/Author Relationship
Panelists: John Byrd, Vivian Lee, Rene S. Perez II, Natalia Sylvester | Moderator: Stephanie Noll
Hill Country D

BUSINESS
Real Talk: Writing a Query that Stands Out from the Pack
Panelists: Connor Goldsmith, Sarah Levitt, Dana Murphy, Susan Velazquez | Moderator: Wendi Aarons
Big Bend

Saturday, June 30  Keynote Luncheon
“On Becoming an American Writer”
Featuring Award-Winning and Bestselling Author Alexander Chee

Alexander Chee is the author of the novels Edinburgh and the national bestseller The Queen of the Night and the essay collection How To Write An Autobiographical Novel. He is a contributing editor at The New Republic and an editor at large at VQR. His essays and stories have appeared in The New York Times Book Review, T Magazine, Tin House, Slate, Guernica, and Out, among others. He is winner of a 2003 Whiting Award, a 2004 NEA Fellowship in prose and a 2010 MCCA Fellowship, and residency fellowships from the MacDowell Colony, the VCCA, Civitella Ranieri and Amtrak. He is an associate professor of English and Creative Writing at Dartmouth College.

12:15 to 1:45 p.m.  Zilker Ballroom
Advance registration required and includes lunch and a complimentary copy of Alexander Chee’s book How to Write an Autobiographical Novel. Alexander will sign books after his keynote.

5:30 p.m.  Zilker Ballroom
Sponsored by Thompson & Knight Foundation
Admission included with conference registration.
Light refreshments provided. Cash bar. Attendees of the Keynote Reception will receive a complimentary advance copy of Melissa Radke’s memoir Eat Cake. Be Brave. Melissa will sign copies after her keynote.

Saturday, June 30  Keynote Reception
Featuring memoirist Melissa Radke

Melissa Radke is the author of the memoir Eat Cake. Be Brave. Her online videos have reached more than 57 million people on her Facebook page alone in a little over a year. Radke’s “Upside Down French Braid” video has close to 10 million views and her “Red Ribbon” video has been viewed over 100 million times across multiple websites and media outlets. A Texan born and bred, Radke spent 15 years of her life in Nashville, Tennessee, where she worked as a studio session singer for Recording Artists after graduating from Belmont University. Since becoming a parent, she moved her family back to her East Texas hometown because the barbecue is better and the babysitting is free.

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5:30 p.m.  Zilker Ballroom
Sponsored by Thompson & Knight Foundation
Admission included with conference registration.
Light refreshments provided. Cash bar. Attendees of the Keynote Reception will receive a complimentary advance copy of Melissa Radke’s memoir Eat Cake. Be Brave. Melissa will sign copies after her keynote.
**Conference Sessions**

3:00 to 3:15 p.m.  
**BREAK**  
Enjoy refreshments while visiting the conference exhibitors.  
Big Bend and Hill Country Foyers

3:15 to 4:15 p.m.  
**BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

**BUSINESS**  
**Which Shelf Will Your Book Sit On?**  
Finding Your Place in the Market  
Panelists: Tess Callero, Stina Leicht, Sarah Phair, Julie Wernersbach | Moderator: Robert Ashcroft  
Hill Country A

**BUSINESS**  
**Making a Nonfiction Proposal Stand Out**  
Panelists: Casey Kittrell, Kristina Moore, Dana Murphy | Moderator: Alison Macor  
Hill Country B

**BUSINESS**  
**Real Talk: Self-Publishing, Indie Publishing, and Big House Publishing**  
Panelists: Carolyn Cohagan, PJ Hoover, Jack Kaufus, Jedah Mayberry | Moderator: Sara Kocek  
Hill Country C

**BUSINESS**  
**Understanding a Book Contract**  
Panelists: Jennifer Chen Tran, Cherise Fisher, Eric Myers, Melynda Nuss | Moderator: Bethany Hegedus  
Hill Country D

**BUSINESS**  
**The Agent/Author Relationship**  
Panelists: Samantha M. Clark, Amy Gentry, Sharon Pelletier, Rachel Orr | Moderator: Richard Santos  
Big Bend

4:15 to 4:30 p.m.  
**BREAK**  
Enjoy refreshments while visiting the conference exhibitors.  
Big Bend and Hill Country Foyers

4:30 to 5:30 p.m.  
**BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

**CRAFT**  
**Turning Historical Details into Story**  
Panelists: Cherise Fisher, James L. Haley, Greg Leitch Smith, Tex Thompson | Moderator: Dalia Azim  
Hill Country A

**BUSINESS**  
**Real Talk: What to Expect from Your Debut Book**  
Panelists: Beth deGuzman, Jason Gallaher, Marshall Ryan Maresca, Natalia Sylvester | Moderator: Salima Alikhan  
Hill Country B

**CRAFT**  
**“I Was Hooked When…” The Craft of Catching a Reader’s Eye**  
Panelists: Adriana Dominguez, Adeena Reitberger, Tatiana Ryckman, Julie Wernersbach | Moderator: Ben Reed  
Hill Country C

**CRAFT**  
**Memoir or Fiction: Deciding How Best to Tell Your Story**  
Panelists: Terra Chalberg, Mary Helen Specht, Britanni Sonnenberg, Deb Olin Unferth | Moderator: Maya Perez  
Hill Country D

**BUSINESS**  
**You’ve Got an Agent. Now What?**  
Panelists: Arielle Datz, Wendi Lulu Gu, Grace A. Ross | Moderator: Olga Vilkostskaya  
Big Bend

7:30 to 9:00 a.m.  
**BREAKFAST**  
Get your day started right with coffee, baked treats, and other refreshments.  
Big Bend and Hill Country Foyers

9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.  
**EXHIBIT HALL**  
Big Bend and Hill Country Foyers

9:00 a.m. to 12 noon  
**AGENT & EDITOR CONSULTATIONS**

Please check in at the Consultations Registration Desk in the Foothills lobby no more than 15 minutes before your scheduled appointment.  
Foothills I & II (17th Floor)

12:15 to 1:45 p.m.  
**CLOSING LUNCHEON**  
Join the WLT staff for a closing meal, 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.  
Zilker Ballroom

10:30 to 10:45 a.m.  
**BREAK**  
Enjoy refreshments while visiting the conference exhibitors.  
Big Bend and Hill Country Foyers

10:45 a.m. to 12 noon  
**BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

**CRAFT**  
**Busting Stereotypes in Modern Crime Writing**  
with David Eric Tomlinson and Matthew J. Hefti | Emcee: Richard Cunningham  
Hill Country A&B

**BUSINESS**  
**Building Your Own Publishing Team**  
with Kris Pauls | Emcee: Rodney Sprott  
Hill Country C

**BUSINESS**  
**Developing an Author Brand and Image**  
with Isobella Jade | Emcee: Marc Hess  
Hill Country D

**CRAFT**  
**Establishing and Developing Convincing Characters**  
with John Pipkin | Emcee: Betty Lew Bewley  
Big Bend

12:15 to 1:45 p.m.  
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Zilker Ballroom
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 purchased 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 15 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 please wrap up your meeting promptly. Because other attendees are scheduled after you, ending on time is

Agent/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 extensive handouts 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.
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 Keynote Reception on Saturday evening. In addition, our faculty will lead presentations or sit on panels throughout the conference.

TIPS FOR CHATTING WITH AGENTS AND EDITORS: Be respectful of their time and the time of your fellow conference attendees. Keep your pitches short (we recommend one minute 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 receptions 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 onto 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 marketers, publicists, 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.

Support our panelists, presenters, and speakers (and find your next favorite book) by visiting the BookPeople table in the exhibitor area. You can also find an online bookstore with more titles at the link sent to you in pre-conference mailers.

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 writers and other guests.

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. 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 faculty, 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.
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 $10 per day; check in with the hotel about using the card-access lot. Attendees staying off site will also receive discounted self-parking at $10 per day. Valet parking is $18 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

Restaurants within walking distance of 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 & cocktails in a chic setting.
- **Freebirds World Burrito**, 515 S. Congress Ave. 
  Made-to-order burritos, tacos, and salads.
- **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.
- **Schlotzsky’s**, 218 S. Lamar Blvd. 
  Breakfast, deli, salads, pizza, bakery, ice cream.
- **Threadgill’s World Headquarters**, 301 W. Riverside Dr. 
  Home-style Southern cooking, enormous portions of vegetables, and live music on weekends.
- **Thundercloud Subs**, 201 E. Riverside Dr. 
  Fast, fresh and healthy subs, soups, and salads.
- **Whataburger**, 601 Barton Springs Rd. 
  A Texas staple. The name says it all: What. A. Burger.
- **Zax Pints & Plates**, 312 Barton Springs Rd. 
  Classic American Bistro fare with Mediterranean influences and local and seasonal beer selections.

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 call 512-327-9721 Ext 3.

**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?** 
Step outside the Hyatt for a ride in a pedicab! These fit Austinites work for tips and will take you to whatever destination you desire. Want to do the pedaling yourself? There are several places that will rent you a bicycle for the day. Ask the Hyatt concierge for more information.

About the Hyatt Regency Austin

**ATM** 
An automated teller machine is in the hotel lobby near Starbucks’s.

**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-Out** 
Check-out time is 11 a.m.

**Parking** 
Self-parking is available to Conference attendees for $10 per day. Valet parking is $18 per day or $31 overnight (discounts do not apply). For details, see “Parking.”

**Restaurants and Bars**

- **SWB/Southwest Bistro** 
  (first floor) 
  5 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily
- **Marker 10 Spirits & Cuisine Bar** 
  (first floor) 
  Monday–Friday 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
  Happy Hour: Sunday through Thursday from 4 to 7 p.m.
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 2019 A&E Conference. And, of course, you can also send us a separate note to conference@writersleague.org, or give us a call at 512-499-8914.

Follow us on Twitter @writersleague
Share your tweets as #WLTCon2018
Like us at facebook.com/WritersLeagueOfTexas.

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, can be found on the conference pages of the website, and copies are available at the WLT Information Desk on request.

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.
Notes

WRITERS’ LEAGUE OF TEXAS
2018 Manuscript Contest
Winners & Finalists

GENERAL FICTION
WINNER
The Devil’s Claw by Karen Stevenson

FINALISTS
Claire’s Burden by Irma Ned Bailey
Then I Became the Mean by Lauren Brazeal
After the Flood by Grace Elliott
The Summer of My Expectation by Dorothy Gospel
I Never Needed You Anyway by Tracey Palmer
DisgraceLand by Shannon Perri
Wishing Ground by Catherine Shattuck

NONFICTION
WINNER (MEMOIR)
Tough Girls by Gabrielle Montesant

WINNER (GENERAL NONFICTION)
Looking Beyond Limitations by Joan Kilbourne

FINALISTS
I’ve Seen You Naked Over 4,000 Times: Marriage and Other Risks of a One-Night Stand by Irene Habos
The Dragon in the Doorway by Kara Inle
The Best Years of Our Lives: The Forgotten Classic That United a Nation by Alison Mower
Stealing Baby Jesus: A Treasury of Ludicrous Attempts to Rescue Christmas by Bernadette Nason
Adoption Disorder by Mark Timm

HISTORICAL FICTION
WINNER
The Radúm by Larry Dowell

FINALISTS
On the Deck of the Onzaba by Deborah Lynn Blumberg
Three Good Leads by Richard Cunningham
The Stripper Beggar by Gerald Powell
Nobody’s Darling by Jazlyn Rogers
Secrets by Anna Sade

SCIENCE FICTION/FANTASY
WINNER
Izzy Crow by Rebecca Schwarz

FINALISTS
Surrenborn by Bill Adams
Demanese: Avana by Kimberly Jayne
Project Thirty-One by Christopher Lewis
Quidian’s Treasure by Henry McLaughlin

MYSTERY
WINNER
Keep Austin Weird by Erin Brown

FINALISTS
Search and Rescue by Jane Hammens
Dipping up the Dead: A Crispin Leahs Mystery by Meredith Lee
Hunter’s Way by J D Mastersan
A Work of... Art by Judith Persons
Nobody’s Darling by Jazlyn Rogers

ROMANCE
WINNER
Not for Profits by Susan Guthrie Dunn

FINALISTS
No Can Do by Danielle Filer
The Jet Set by Liz Loake
When Two Worlds Collide by Jan Sikes
Fearless Heart by Deborah Salice
Bloody Men by Josie Wilson

THRILLER/ACTION ADVENTURE
WINNER
The Last Road Trip by Linda Benjamin-Miles

FINALISTS
That Night by Marjorie Brody
Unravelling by Jen Glatz
The Orangemen by Gary Kidney
Terror Dressing by James Poyler
Mind Benders: Dead Air by Deborah Salice

MIDDLE GRADE
WINNER
The Unsettled Spirits of Willingkin Farm by Carla Jettner

FINALISTS
Under Ash by Carol Gouwens
The Book With No Story by Mary Osteen
The Stranger Companions by Chris Panafier
Looking for the Magic by Jane A. Shiffler

YOUNG ADULT
WINNER
Truth Of Consequences, NM by Lindsey Bello

FINALISTS
Enlivelore by Hamilton Beasley
The Sage Of Peace by Lou Britt
Alice by Ana Jean
Mind Benders: Dead Air by Deborah Salice
Not Dead Enough by Doree Walker
The Austin Public Library Friends Foundation is pleased to sponsor the 2018 Agents and Editors Conference. Join us for a variety of literary events and programs coming to your branch library at Central. Cultural series features author events, musical performances, film screenings, cooking demonstrations, and gallery exhibitions at the Austin Central Library.

New Fiction Confab brings America’s most prominent early and mid-career authors to Austin’s libraries for writing workshops, readings, and discussions.

The Mayor’s Book Club is a citywide reading campaign that fosters a shared community experience through reading and discussion of the year’s book selection.

Badgerdog Creative Writing Workshops bring professional writers into libraries, schools, and community spaces to lead workshops with people of all ages and skill levels and provides opportunities for publication. Workshops include spring break and summer camp programs for youth, school-based programs, and adult programs held in library branches.

www.austinlibrary.org

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

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Christopher Goffard
Lydia West

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PLUS: Evening events at venues around Nacogdoches, featuring special guests and delicious food and drink.

Tuition $329 WLT members / $389 nonmembers

Note: Tuition does not include room and board. Discounted rates available at the historic, boutique Fredonia Hotel, plus residential housing available on campus.

View complete class descriptions and register online at writersleague.org or call (512) 499-8914.