**WRITERCON 2022 SCHEDULE AND BIOS**

NOTE: This schedule is tentative and subject to change at any time. Though all speakers and topics have been confirmed, we know that sometimes last-minute changes become necessary.

**Friday**

8:00 Check-in Begins

8:30 Coffee Service

9:00

**Opening Orientation**

**William Bernhardt**

This is our chance to gather the entire WriterCon family in one room and tell you what you need to know to make this a successful conference and have some fun in the process. You’ll also learn about the new WriterCon Advisory Board. Would you like to be a member?

9:30

1. **Pssst! An Author Assistant Reveals Secrets of Bestselling Novelists**

**Maria Connor**

Discover strategies and tactics used by NYT and USA Today-bestselling authors from an experienced, full-time assistant for more than one hundred authors.

1. **Agent Panel: Do You Want an Agent? What Do You Need to Know About Publishing Contracts?**

**Katharine Sands, Elizabeth Kracht, Amy Brewer, Rita Rosenkranz**

Let these successful agents tell you what you need to know about agenting and publishing in the modern publishing world.

1. **Writing Nonfiction for the Inspirational Market**

**Gena Maselli**  
Do you want to write for the inspirational or Christian market but don’t know where to start? In this session, Gena Maselli shares what she has learned in two decades of working with ministries, nonprofits, and publishers. She’ll discuss genres that are ideal for new writers, the benefit of building relationships through contract work, and how to avoid pitfalls that will keep you from being taken seriously.

1. **The ABCs of Writing: I Want to Write, Where Do I Start?**

**Molly Jebbers**

New to writing? First time at a conference? This session will help you chart your course with a minimum of confusion and false starts. Get the knowledge you need to make this writing endeavor a success.

10:30

1. **Mysteries: Writing & Editing**

**Mary Coley**

Have you ever wondered how writers plant all those clues, develop red herrings, and build suspense? Learn about techniques used to draft and edit mysteries and suspense novels.

1. **Writing for Guideposts**

**Jim Hinch**

Many writers have found their first publication credit through Guideposts. Let editor Jim Hinch explain what they’re looking for—and how you can supply it.

1. **The Story Cube: Rethinking Story From the Ground Up**

**Steven James**

Ever since Aristotle, story theorists have been looking at story through a temporal lens—beginning, middle, and end, or first act, second act, and third act. But what if there was another way of conceptualizing story on a more elemental level? What if there was a way of understanding story that was easy to visualize and remember and that would apply to any genre you write? Well, there is, and in this seminar you’ll learn how it can transform your writing and storytelling forever.

1. **The ABCs of Nonfiction**

**Cheri Fuller**

Have you just finished your nonfiction book, or you have a great idea for one? What you need is a book proposal because many nonfiction books are sold to publishers on the basis of a proposal—a 20 to 30-page document that includes a pitch of your content, how marketable the book is, chapter-by-chapter outline, and more. Cheri Fuller has written many proposals that landed publishing contracts and can guide you in just what you need to do.

11:30

1. **All About the Agent/Publisher Relationship**

**Rita Rosenkranz**

Learn what you need to know about having an agent in the modern publishing world—then learn how to get one.

1. **7 Essential Elements for a Captivating Scene**

**Frank Ball**

Essential Content to Engage Readers: Follow a simple check list to be sure each scene has the seven essential components to make a message or scene captivating, holding attention and delivering an experience, not an observation, and teach a life-changing truth. Show how one thought, action, and reaction must lead to the next bigger issue, conflict, or dilemma in reaching the climax.

1. **Productivity Secrets to 10x Your Writing Momentum**

**Christopher Maselli**

What if you could increase your writing output by tenfold? It’s possible, and in this session, Chris shares 10 proven productivity tips that will turn you into a focused machine, writing like your fingers are on fire. See how you can set up each day for success, and get that book DONE!

**4) The ABCs of Publishing: From the Big Five to Do it Yourself, Be Informed**

**Sharon Kizziah-Holmes**

Find out what publishing avenue could be the best for you as you explore: Big Traditional Publishers, Small Traditional Publishers, Vanity Presses, Self-Publishing Service Providers, and Do it Yourself. Learn what to expect from each one. We’ll cover all the bases.

12:30

**Lunch with the Agents (reservation required)**

**Lunch with the Romance Authors (reservation required)**

**Box Lunches available (must be reserved in advance at the Registration Desk)**

**Practicing Pitchcraft:**

**Katharine Sands**

Here’s your chance to sharpen your pitch before you give it! As a writer you are always going to be asked to introduce your work, to share your enthusiasm for your writing, and to get others excited about what is exciting to you. Practicing Pitchcraft – writing about your writing and speaking about your writing. You will learn to put as much attention, as much passion and as much crafting into your pitch, including:

* How to identify the most exciting elements to compel your reader and propel your story.
* How to Make the Perfect Pitch
* Building in a cliffhanger, a question in the reader's mind to be answered by more reading.
* How to write the all-important first page, and ...
* query letters with a strong hook in the first two lines.
* Essential secrets to **PitchCraft**, including: ***what to do***--and what mistakes many writers make when querying agents, and seven surefire techniques that get you out of the slushpile, ***how to***: identify and develop your selling points and sales engines, whet an agent's appetite, get editors to say "yes." In this workshop, we look at hooks, selling points, and sales engines; and how to avoid **"Querial Killers":** the easy-to-fix mistakes writers make when querying agents and proposing book projects.
* Learn what to do--and what not to do--when setting out to woo and win a literary agent.

2:00

1. **Know the Reasons, Not Just the Rules**

**Frank Ball**

Explore some of the nuances of the writing and editing process that are largely subjective. Understanding the reasoning behind the publishing standards can reveal when a commandment should be followed and when it might, for good reason, be ignored.

1. **Pitching to Guideposts**

**Jim Hinch**

This morning you heard him explain what Guideposts wants. Now he’ll show you how to do it—and provide feedback on your pitches.

1. **Breaking into Science-Fiction and Fantasy**

**Timothy Cerepaka**

How to study the market, learn reader expectations, and more in this workshop taught by bestselling author Timothy Cerepaka (writing under his pen name, Lucas Flint).

**4) The ABCs of Fiction**

**Katharine Sands**

The workshop will provide perspectives on how the Internet is reinventing the writer in the rapidly changing media world. Sands will discuss how to effectively work with new tools and practices as well as the creative aspects, such as: treading the tightrope between art and commerce, trends in self-publishing, expanding digital markets, and the actual business of books—and its quirks and processes and challenges.

3:00

1. **More Than a Series Bible**

**Maria Connor**

How to create a series bible used for far more than managing your series, such as marketing, training and orienting assistants, and support staff, editing and plotting.

1. **Screenplays: That’s Not the Way It Works**

**Bob Saenz**

Listen to an expert in the field debunk some of the myths of screenwriting.

1. **Self-Editing for Authors**

**Elizabeth Kracht**

This renowned agent explains how you can edit yourself to avoid the most common—and most disastrous—problems which she all too often.

1. **The ABCs of Marketing**

**Shel Harrington**

The word *marketing* shouldn't make us cringe and conjure up images of paying for ads or chasing down reviews. This session is chock full of strategies and ideas which will inspire you to get creative with your marketing plan whether your book is out in the world or snugged up on your computer awaiting its debut. Who knew marketing could be so fun?

4:00

* 1. **Keynote Address: The Untouched Moment**

**Steven James**

In this thought-provoking and humorous talk, Steven James will share insights that relate to the writing life, lessons he’s learned, and mistakes he’s made. Learn to marvel, explore, and embrace each day and the stories it offers you to tell.

5:00

**Pitch Sessions**

**Manuscript Reviews by Appointment**

**Private Consultations by Appointment**

**Open Bar Reception, Perfect for Networking and Sharing Notes**

**Author Signing at Book Table: Come Chat with All the Authors You Heard Speak Today: Steven James, Molly Jebbers, Mary Coley, Cheri Fuller, Timothy Cerepaka, Bob Saenz, Maria Connor, and others**

**Visit the Exhibitor Tables!**

Dinner on Your Own

7:30

**Roundtable Sessions**

1) Thrillers: Steven James, Yasmin Angoe

2) Mysteries: Mary Coley, Callie Hutton

3) Romance: Maria Connor, Amy M. Le

4) Women’s Fiction: Lara Bernhardt, Linda Apple

5) SF and Fantasy: RJ Johnson, Timothy Cerepaka

6) Screenplays: Bob Saenz, Jon Meyers, Rene Gutteridge

7) Nonfiction: Cheri Fuller, Christopher Maselli

8) Poetry: Jerry and Estelle Cimino

9) Inspirational: Jim Hinch, Frank Ball

8:30

Open Mic

**Saturday**

9:30

1. **The Business Side of Writing: Did I Realize I Started a Business When I Became an Author?**

**April Ballestero**

There are three major milestones every author will want to master and measure in the business of their writing: Readers, Recommendations, and Registrations. These milestones create reliable results to build your platform and grow your community, and they apply to every stage of your journey— whether you're just starting or already building momentum. Join Author and Coach April Ballestero as she shares strategies and tools to master and measure the business of your book.

1. **Publishing Today Panel**

**Jeanne Devlin, Clarissa Willis, Callie Metler, Ally Robertson**

The publishing world has changed dramatically in recent years and continues to change. If you want to be a part of this world—you’d better know what’s going on! Ask the panel of experts what you need to know.

1. **Using Podcasts to Promote Your Books**

**J Hall**

How to get guest spots on podcasts (and other media) and how to be the perfect guest and sell a lot of books.

1. **Pro Tips: Tapping Universal Fantasies in Fiction**

**William Bernhardt**

Let the author of numerous bestselling novels—and five successful series characters—explain one of the most powerful—and rarely discussed—ways to broaden the appeal of your story. Bernhardt will explain how to tap into universal fantasies that readers find inherently attractive. Construct characters and plots that accomplish your goals but also find a large audience.

10:30

1. **What No One is Teaching You About Characterization**

**Steven James**

Multi-dimensionality for all characters (including antagonists and protagonists) depends on varying their status. Characterization is brought out by showing how a character acts in relationship to other characters. Learn how to understand the dance of submission/dominance that every relationship has and how situational and substantive status affect every character in your novel.

1. **Everything You Always Wanted to Know About International Rights**

**Clarissa Willis**

This interactive workshop discusses the international rights marketplace and how to generate an alternate revenue stream. Clarissa Willis has a long history of working in the international rights arena, having sold rights at significant book shows such as the Frankfurt Book Fair, Bologna Book Fair, and the London Book Fair.

1. **Imposter Syndrome: What It Is, How to Avoid It & How to Overcome It**

**Betsey Kulakowski**

Have you ever felt like a complete fraud? Like any minute you’ll be unmasked as a big fake? Like you’re writing sucks — you suck — and you’re not meant to achieve your full potential? You are not alone! Even high achievers like Maya Angelou and Neil Gaiman have expressed self-doubt. The key is to get out of your own way, overcome your fear and be the writer you were meant to be. In this session, I’ll give you some practical tips you can use to avoid and overcome the dreaded imposter syndrome.

1. **Pro Tips: Be a Marketing Movie Star**

**Sharon Jenkins**

In this workshop we will take a look at what your personal marketing style is and why it is important for you to know what it is. We will take a dive into examining the psychographics behind who you are as a marketer and what is the best marketing strategy for you as an author. From the shy introvert to the bodacious extrovert, there is an ideal marketing posture that can help you build your readership. Join us for this exploratory adventure and leave with the tools necessary to better position yourself in the book selling marketplace.

11:30

1. **Screenwriting: Juggling Your Ensemble**

**Jon Meyers**

How Robert Altman and Wes Anderson Can Inform Your Script So You Don't Drop The Ball

1. **Writing Romance**

**Callie Hutton**

Romance remains the most popular genre by a large margin. Come hear this experienced bestselling author explain how to do it—and do it well.

1. **Three, Two, One—Book Launch!**

**Desiree Duffy and AG Billig**

Book launches today need to be more strategic than ever. This presentation will cover strategizing a pre-launch calendar, coordinating a live, virtual, or hybrid book signing, and adapting the strategies that are right for you. Come with your questions and get ready to discuss: the importance of an author platform, book reviews, press releases and media interviews, online marketing, advertising, social media and more.

1. **Pro Tips: Audiobooks 101—Your Voice Must be Heard**

**Sierra Prasada and Serafim Smigelskiy**

Your voice can serve you at every stage of your project. Learn simple, powerful techniques to make your words flow as you read your writing aloud to yourself. Speak with confidence when pitching to readers (and agents!). Narrate your own audiobooks or collaborate more effectively with professionals. In this session, we connect you with your voice so you can connect with more readers.

12:30

**Lunch with the Agents (reservation required)**

**Box Lunches available (must be reserved in advance at the Registration Desk)**

**First-Page Panel—** Submit the first-page of your work-in-progress in advance at the Registration Desk, then come hear it critiqued by three experts who deal with unsolicited submissions regularly. Bulletproof your opening before you present it to an agent or editor!

Steven James, Jeanne Devlin, Elizabeth Kracht

2:00

1. **Book Marketing That Works**

**Molly Jebbers**

Tips on how to effectively market and tips for what works for free and what paid promotion sites are worth the money.

1. **Writing a Series**

**Callie Hutton**

Writing a series or series characters can be one of the best ways to break into the market, and one of the most satisfying ways to build a long-term writing career. Let this bestselling author explain how it’s done.

1. **How to Design Your Writing Schedule**

**Cameron Sutter**

Want a simple and effective framework for organizing all of the story ideas you have floating around in your head – and keeping them on track to be written and published? Learn three simple methods for creating a writing schedule using Plottr, the popular visual book planning software.

1. **Women of the Beat Generation**

**Estelle Cimino**

In the 1950s, the women of the Beat movement occupied traditional female roles of that era. They were the wives, girlfriends, lovers, and muses of the male Beat writers. Within the group, they were treated as intellectual equals to the men, but they didn't get published the way the men did. They also needed to focus on childrearing and home. There were a lot of reasons for this, but still, many of them were able to make their own path. In this presentation, Estelle Cimino will discuss the women Beats in general and, specifically, her friends Carolyn Cassady and the poet ruth weiss.

3:00

1. **Using the Elements, Earth, Air, Fire, & Water, to Develop Your Characters**

**Linda Apple**

Take your characterization to the next level!

1. **Writing Children's Books that Sell:**

**Clarissa Willis**

Author, editor, and publisher Clarissa Willis shares her tips with authors about writing a children's book that sells in an over-saturated crowded market. She shares insider tips and helps authors examine the various roads to publication. In addition, participants will have the opportunity to learn about her journey from the classroom to being a published children's author.

1. **Pro Tips: How to Get Readers**

**Katharine Sands**

The wonderful world of promotion and publicity, including how to: Get the word out about your fiction and non-fiction projects, propel your content into readers' hands, develop goals that will encourage fans to interact with you, build an author platform, become a Contentpreneur, and learn tips on how writers are leveraging social media, the twisty maze of tweets, news feeds, blogposts, hashtags, pins, click-throughs and tab views and what these mean for you to reach your targeted and unique audiences.

1. **Film Premiere and Presentation of the Ruth Weiss Foundation Poetry Awards**

**Elizabeth Montgomery**

Live/virtual grant awards ceremony for poets entered in the ruth weiss Foundation 2022 contest, plus screening of an award-winning film. Join the filmmaker and producer in a lively discussion on the life of ruth weiss, designated the “Beat Goddess" by iconic journalist, writer, critic Herb Caen. The film won ruth weiss the Maverick Spirit Award at Cinequest Film Festival in 2020.

4:00

1. **Keynote Address: The Role of Poetry**

**Billy Collins**

This one-of-a kind session with the most popular poet in America and former US Poet Laureate will include a brief poetry readings, and interviews, followed by questions taken from the audience.

1. **How to Craft Better Stories in Less Time with Plottr**

**Cameron Sutter**

Can software help you create better stories faster? In this session, you’ll discover how the program’s suite of highly visual book planning tools can accelerate your writing process. You’ll learn how the software can help you visualize your book and series arcs; identify and avoid plot holes; keep characters and settings consistent; outline with proven templates; and quickly transition to completing your manuscript.

1. **How to Finish Your Manuscript**

**Callie Metler**

You’ve started it. Isn’t it time to finish and get it published. This writer and publisher explains how to do it.

1. **7 Surefire Ways to Set Your Fiction on Fire**

**Rene Gutteridge**

Your manuscript is good...but is it *great?*In this workshop, best-selling author Rene Gutteridge shares 7 ways to raise the entertainment value of your fiction and increase interest on every page. Don’t settle for “good enough.” Make your story an unforgettable page-turner no reader can put down!

1. **Building Scenes: Piecing Together the Elements**

**Ally Robertson**

This author and editor of dozens of books provides the elements you need for making every scene you write dramatic and engaging.

5:00

**Pitch Sessions**

**Manuscript Reviews by Appointment**

**Private Consultations by Appointment**

**Open Bar Reception in Common Area, Perfect for Networking and Sharing Notes**

**Author Signing at Book Tables: Come Chat with All the Authors: Betsey Kulklaski, William Bernhardt, Callie Hutton, Molly Jebbers, Sierra Prasada, Sharon Jenkins, Steven James, and others!**

**Visit the Exhibitor Tables!**

7:30

**Roundtable Sessions**

1) Foreign Rights: Clarissa Willis

2) Self-Publishing: Kim McPherson

3) Author Websites: Caro Begin

4) Draft2Digital Distribution: Kevin Tumlinson

5) Book Marketing: Desiree Duffy

6) Social Media Marketing: Sharon Jenkins

7) Audiobooks: Sierra Prasada, Serafim Sigelskiy

8) Podcasts: J Hall, Jesse Ulrich

9) Paperback Publishing: Sharon Kizziah-Holmes

8:30

Karaoke! Warm up your vocal cords! This is going to be fun!

**Sunday**

8:30

**Advisory Council Meeting**

Have you attended WriterCon at least three times (counting this year)? If so, you’re invited to join the WriterCon Advisory Council. We’d like to meet with you! Given your experience, we would love to hear what you like, what you don’t, and how we can make the conference better. We would also like to make you part of an ongoing consultation group to bounce idea off and test new concepts. Join us!

9:30

1. **Plotting Beat by Beat**

**Robin Patchen**

Using Blake Snyder’s Save the Cat and other resources, learn to develop a plot that draws your readers in and keeps them on the edge of their seats until the last page.

1. **Rampant Reversals and Major Plot Points**

**Melanie Hemry**

“If you could write a reversal into every scene, we wouldn’t be able to put your manuscript down,” the speaker at the Santa Fe Screenwriter’s Conference said. In this fun class, Melanie teaches the power of writing reversals and the major plot points of a three-act structure using film clips from *The Proposal*. While these were designed for fiction, Melanie uses the same techniques when writing personal experience nonfiction.

1. **Overcome Your Fears and Write!**

**Suzie Newell**

How can you overcome fears and live your dream as a writer? The neuroscience behind fear explained along with actionable steps to boosting self-confidence and becoming the writer you yearn to be.

1. **Character Motivation**

**Lara Bernhardt**

The best characters are interesting and complex. How can writers avoid one-note protagonists and mustache-twirling antagonists? Identifying what motivates a character influences how the character acts, reacts, and interacts with others. In this session we will discuss types of motivation, analyze what drives behaviors, and explore tactics—from a unique perspective. Bring paper and pencil and come ready to play ball!

10:30

1. **Discovering Your Book’s Theme**

**Rick Ludwig**

Did you know everything you write has a theme? You may not even know what it is before your readers. Join me in an expedition to uncover the themes of some great works, including yours.

1. **Screenwriting Spoiler Alert**

**Jon Meyers**

Why Writers Should Declare “The End” To NOT Discussing The End

1. **Creating Captivating Copy for Your Welcome Email Series**

**Christy Johnson**

You’ve got new subscribers. Now what? Crafting a welcome series of emails can seem so salesy, but in this workshop you’ll learn copywriting secrets that will multiply your engagement and retain your readers. Plus you’ll learn how to make it all automated so you can get back to what you love...writing.

1. **Pulling the Rug Out: How to Create Twists Your Readers Will Never See Coming Panel**

**Robert Dugoni and Steven James**

A great twist will be unexpected, inevitable, an escalation of what preceded it, and a revelation that adds meaning to what has already occurred. Readers want to predict how a story will end, but they want to be wrong—yet still satisfied. In this seminar you’ll discover how to develop endings that leave your readers stunned, thrilled, and blown away.

11:30

1. **Breathing Life into Fantasy - Creating Relatable Characters in Fantastic Worlds**

**Laurel Thomas**

The secret to a successful fantasy novel is creating believable, relatable characters that sell your world.

1. **How Draft2Digital is Growing for You**

**Kevin Tumlinson**

Kevin Tumlinson gives you a deep dive into the merger between Draft2Digital and Smashwords, and outlines how this team up is changing the landscape of self-publishing. The new and improved D2D is ushering in the evolution of publishing, and they’re bringing you with them.

1. **Top 10 Secrets of GREAT Author Websites**

**Christopher Maselli**

Want an author website that gets noticed and works for you even when you’re away? In this session, Chris talks about the best website platforms for authors, the marketing elements EVERY author must include on their website for maximum impact, and proven steps on how you can use social media to expand your platform further than ever. If you have a website–or plan to create one–you don't want to miss this session!

1. **Suspense Essentials: Secrets to Tapping Into Tension Panel**

**Steven James and Robert Dugoni**

Every story can be improved by increasing the suspense, tightening the tension, and ratcheting up the action. This in-depth seminar will help you improve your story by pacing the promises that you make and connecting emotionally with your reader. We’ll explore the differences between suspense and conflict, how mystery, horror, and suspense differ, and how to use promises of peril to increase suspense throughout your story.

12:30

**Author Q&A: Ask Me Anything!**

**Box Lunches available (must be reserved in advance)**

**Lunch with the Thriller Writers (reservation required) Steven James, Robert Dugoni**

2:00

1. **Endings**

**William Bernhardt**

The ending is the most important part of your novel. Sure, a great beginning draws readers in, but a great ending makes readers want to tell their friends about it and anxious to read your next work. Bernhardt discusses different approaches to giving readers an ending that satisfies and delights.

1. **Selling Books in a Diverse World**

**Sharon Jenkins**

In this workshop we will examine methods that will assist you in expanding your readership to diverse cultures and multiple generations. We will look at the efforts of marketing experts who have done it and done it well. An increased readership often equates to increased exposure and more money in the bank. You may be surprised that you can find fans any and everywhere in this great big world simply by making a strategic effort.

1. **Hack Your Newsletter**

**Kat Lewis**

Tired of begging influencers for monthly appearances, or struggling for innovative and unique content ideas? This workshop will explore the *where, how, and why*of finding newsletter content that is unique, genre-focused, sustainable, and maximizes resources you already possess.

1. **Five Steps to Thriving as an Authorpreneur**

**AG Billig**

There may be differences between traditional publishing and self-publishing, but when it

comes to the current state of affairs, everybody agrees on one thing: it has never been a

better time to be a writer. US writers can leverage three major opportunities to reach

a global market, inspire and entertain millions of readers. But how? This interactive workshop will walk authors through the process of building a solid self-publishing

business.

3:00

1. **Screenplay and Adaptation**

**Bob Saenz and Molly Jebbers**

Bob (screenwriter) and Molly (novelist) are under contract to adapt Molly's book for PureFlix (Sony).  This class will examine their process, the challenges and even the contracts on a real book-to-movie project from the perspective of both the author and the screenwriter.

1. **Sun Tzu and the Art of Writing**

**Kenneth Andrus**

Applying the teachings of Sun Tzu’s epic “The Art of War” to the fundamentals of writing a novel in a profound and effective way that will keep your readers engaged from the opening hook to the closing sentence.

1. **The Art of Hustling**

**Amy Le**

If you want to be read, you have to promote. Learn how to hustle and sell!

1. **Jeopardy! at WriterCon**

**Hosted by William Bernhardt**

Now an annual tradition, Jeopardy at WriterCon uses the format of the familiar television show, but all the categories relate to books, publishing, and authors (including the ones attending this conference). The only rule change is that you don’t to race to ring in. Come join this low-key, no-pressure fun version of America’s favorite quiz show.

4:00

**Keynote by Robert Dugoni**

Come listen to one of the most successful, bestselling authors working today explain how he achieved his success, why he insists on diversifying, and what he sees as the future for writers.

**5:00 Closing Ceremonies**

**Contest winner announcements and Reception**

**Book Signings: Robert Dugoni, Steven James, William Bernhardt, Lara Bernhardt, Amy M. Le, Kenneth Andrus, Bob Saenz, Laurel Thomas, Christopher Maselli, Rick Ludiwg, and others!**

**Plus Some Special Offers!**

**Monday MasterClasses**

9:00

1. **Troubleshooting Your Novel: Essential Techniques for Identifying and Solving Manuscript Problems**

**Robert Dugoni and Steven James**

In this practical workshop packed full of specific, time-tested advice, you will explore how to pinpoint weak spots in your story—and solve them—examine how to adjust elements of story progression, develop riveting characters, master narrative techniques, and ensure reader engagement. You owe your book more than a polish and a proofread. This workshop will help take it to the next level.

1. **Boost Your Career from the Ground Up – Create Your Author Platform with Us**

**Desiree Duffy and AG Billig**

Every author needs, whether they are traditionally, self or hybrid published, a solid foundation. Often referred to as an author’s platform, building one can seem overwhelming. What should authors consider when building their platform? How does the work you put in now support your career as you grow?

From a sturdy infrastructure with a solid author brand and well-optimized website, to the outreach one achieves with social media and media relations, to the importance of online advertising, integrated strategies for email marketing and content marketing, and well-thought book launch campaigns, create your author platform foundation in this interactive workshop.

Join us and learn how to:

•           Construct the foundation for your Author Platform

•           Use email marketing to build and constantly grow a loyal fanbase

•           Create a power author brand

•           Use social media to forge authentic connections with your readers

•           Strategize and implement online advertising effectively

•           Leverage the power of media relations and public appearances to boost your visibility and sales

•           Launch your book as a hot new release with a well-planned book launch campaign

•           Stand out in the crowd with content marketing

**Bios**

**Stephanie Alton** is a literary agent and director of the agency’s blog network, BlogAbout. She specializes in creating custom launch teams, blog campaigns, and webinars with industry pros through the BlogAbout Blogger Network. Several of the books she has collaborated on have been in the top 10 on the New York Times Best Seller List and rated #1 on Amazon. She consistently engages with publishers, authors, podcasters, ministries, and creative businesses to be able to offer compelling and trendy material to the hundreds of bloggers whom she works with to review and give away new books, movies, and merchandise.

**Kenneth Andrus** While still on active duty, the idea for his first novel formed, resulting in *Flash Point*, the first in the five book The Defenders series. His second novel, *Amber Dawn* was published in March of 2021, and the third, *Arctic Menace* was published in August of 2021. While working his draft for “The Curartors,” the fourth in the series, he completed a novella “Twenty-one Day in December” to be included with several other Babylon Books authors in November of 2021.

**Linda Apple** is the author of nonfiction, women’s fiction, and children’s books. Her recent middle-grade early reader, *BOWWOW-Book of Winston’s Words of Wisdom,* is being used by school districts for their One-Book programs. Book three of her Moonlight Mississippi Series, *Lexi’s Choice,* is due to be released in 2022. She has served as president of the Oklahoma Writers Federation, Inc. and the Ozark Creative Writers Conference. She has taught writing workshops in the Midwest and southern portions of the United States, as well as Great Britain, which was on her bucket list.

**Frank Ball’s** first book, *Eyewitness: The Life of Christ Told in One Story*, is a compilation of biblical information on the life of Christ in a chronological story that reads like a novel. His most recent release on Kindle Vella is *Born Blind: Voice of a Visionary*, a novel about a first-century Jew born blind, a curse in his society. His current nonfiction project is *The Discussion Bible* with thousands of unanswered discussion questions to stir people’s thoughts, with the Bible’s first five books, Psalms and Proverbs, and the New Testament now available on Amazon. To help writers, he wrote *Storytelling at Its Best*, a practical guide for effective storytelling.

**April Ballestero** is a leadership expert and the founder of One Light Ahead, a coaching agency that helps business leaders shine at their brightest. With two decades of coaching experience, April knows exactly how to help business leaders achieve their full potential and become more effective, more energized, and more enthusiastic in their interactions with their teams, clients, families, and communities. Her book, *Slaying the Onion*, released in 2021, is still promoted in every show note of her growing Addressing the Elephant in the Room podcast, which reaches 19 countries and a multitude of diverse audiences and industries.

**Caro Begin** is an author and expert on author websites.

**Alice Bernhardt** is the Editor-in-Chief of Babylon Books. She is a librarian and OSU graduate and she is actively seeking fiction featuring series characters.

**Lara Bernhardt** is a Pushcart-nominated writer and editor. She is Editor-in-Chief of Balkan Press and also publishes a literary magazine, *Conclave*. Twice a finalist for the Oklahoma Book Award for Best Fiction, she writes supernatural suspense and women’s fiction. Her latest release, *Red Rain*, is available now. You can follow her on all the socials @larawells1 on Twitter and @larabern10 on Facebook, BookBub, and Instagram.

**William Bernhardt** is the bestselling author of over fifty books, including most recently, *Plot/Counterplot*, historical novels, YA, two books of poetry, and the ten books in the Red Sneaker Writers series. He offers writers a podcast, a free e-newsletter, small-group writing retreats, and WriterCon.

**AG Billig** is a published author, book coach, founder of Self-Publishing Marketing and member of the Black Château team

**Amy Brewer** wears many hats every day, from literary agent at Metamorphosis, to co-author of the Texting Prince Charming series, to social media manager, to yoga teacher. She graduated from Culver-Stockton College with a theater degree because drama, romance, and angst are lifelong passions. Her intuitive human understanding can help other writers bridge the communication gap and jump into the publishing world. For the last few years, she has been learning all she can about social media optimization and platform building in the publishing industry. Amy's experience in the mental health field and yoga training help her guide and assist clients with stress and anxiety in this highly competitive industry. She pulls all of this together with a multi-tasking, hyper-organized brain, so that at the end of every day, she feels accomplished and grateful.

**Timothy Cerepaka** is a professional fiction writer based in Oklahoma City. He's written in multiple genres but is best known for his Lucas Flint pen name, under which he writes young adult superhero and LitRPG fiction. He is also a part-time ghostwriter with experience in a variety of genres and subject matter. Find more at his website [www.timothylcerepaka.com](http://www.timothylcerepaka.com).

**Mary Coley** is the author of eight mysteries, a non-fiction children’s book and numerous short stories. She has been a member of Tulsa Nightwriters and the Oklahoma Writers Federation, Inc., since 2002, and is a member of Mystery Writers of America, Women Writing the West, and Sisters in Crime. She won the Oklahoma Book Award for Fiction in 2022 for *Blood on the Mother Road*. Coley received the Tony Hillerman Award from New Mexico/Arizona Book Awards in 2018 for her mystery, *Blood on the Cimarron*.

**Maria Connor** worked as a freelance writer, journalist and author in print and digital media for more than 10 years. Her publishing credits include daily and weekly newspapers, regional lifestyle magazines, national trade journals, academic texts, full- and novella-length fiction, e-zines, websites, marketing materials, brochures and newsletters. She also writes contemporary romantic fiction under the pen names EmKay Connor and Margo Diamond.

**Jeanne Devlin** is the founding editor of the award-winning publishing house The RoadRunner Press, established in 2011.  She has also handled marketing and publicity on behalf of a number of New York Times bestselling authors.

**Desiree Duffy** is an advocate for spreading stories, ideas, and making the future awesome. Her expansive marketing, event production, broadcast, and public relations background, mixed with her passion for storytelling, led her to found the multi-award-winning, full-service marketing and public relations firm, [Black Château](http://www.blackchateauenterprises.com), in 2016.

**Robert Dugoni** is the critically acclaimed *New York Times* bestselling author of the Tracy Crosswhite police series, which is set in Seattle and has sold more than 7 million books worldwide. He is also the author of the Charles Jenkins espionage series and the David Sloane series of legal thrillers, and several stand-alone novels, including *The 7th Canon*, *Damage Control*, *The Extraordinary Life of Sam Hell* (*Suspense Magazine*’s 2018 Book of the Year, for which Dugoni won an AudioFile Earphones Award for narration), and *The World Played Chess*, as well as the nonfiction exposé *The Cyanide Canary* (a *Washington Post* best book of the year).

Cheri Fuller is an internationally published, award-winning author of 49 books and hundreds of magazine articles. A gifted speaker, Cheri loves to inspire and equip writers. She speaks at writer’s conferences, equipping writers to not only write compelling nonfiction, but to create book proposals that sell and advance their careers.

**Rene Gutteridge** is a bestselling fiction and non-fiction author of twenty-six books, a multi-produced screenwriter and prolific comedy sketch writer who has been working professionally for over twenty years. She loves pouring into the next generation of writers with inspiration, instruction, coaching and encouragement.

**J Hall** is host of The Okie Bookcast - a podcast celebrating books and writing in and about Oklahoma. Each episode includes an interview with a contributor to the reading life of Oklahoma and a review from an Oklahoma author about a book they love. J is a life-long Oklahoman (even when he lived in Texas) and a life-long lover of books. He lives in Oklahoma City with his wife, Kenda, daughter, Rebekah, and a revolving cast of adult children who come through for holidays, meals, and occasional dog-sitting. His love of learning and education led him to earn a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Oklahoma where he currently works as an Assistant Dean in the College of Professional and Continuing Studies.

**Shel Harrington** is a humorist who writes for a (chronologically!) mature audience at *FatBottomFiftiesGetFierce.com* and has over 475,000 followers on her smile-inducing *Fat-Bottom-Fifties Get Fierce* Facebook page. In her alternative life, Shel is a seasoned Family Law attorney who writes and speaks about how to put her out of business by doing marriage better. (Check out her relationship blog at *ShelHarrington.com*). Shel’s new book***, Over 50, Yet Undefined – Words Just For Us That Aren’t in the Dictionary . . . Yet*** launched as an Amazon’s Hot New Release Bestseller.

**Melanie Hemry** has over 60 books and hundreds of articles to her credit. A popular ghostwriter, she has ghosted 55 books as well as written six under her own name. Melanie’s stories have warmed the hearts of readers around the world through *Guideposts*, *Reader’s Digest* and the *Believer’s* *Voice of Victory* magazines. She loves making stories come alive on the printed page and helping aspiring writers find their voice.

**Jim Hinch** is a senior editor at Guideposts magazine. He also writes about religion for *The American Scholar* and other publications. He lives in New York City with his wife, Kate, and their children, Frances and Benjamin.

**Callie Hutton** is the USA Today-bestselling author of more than fifty historical romance books and historical cozy mysteries. She writes humorous and spicy Regency and Victorian with “historic elements and sensory details” (*The Romance Reviews*). With close to a million novels sold and translated into several languages, she continues to entrance readers with her heartfelt stories.

**Steven James** is the critically-acclaimed author of seventeen novels. His books have been praised by *Library Journal, the Associated Press, the New York Journal of Books*, and *Booklist*, and garnered starred reviews from both *Publishers Weekly* and *Library Journal*. He has served as a contributing editor to Writer’s Digest Magazine and is the author of the groundbreaking book *Story Trumps Structure* as well as the guidebook used by thousands of novelists, *Troubleshooting Your Novel,*both from Writer’s Digest Books. *Publishers Weekly* calls him “[a] master storyteller at the peak of his game.” When he’s not working on his next novel, Steven teaches Novel Writing Intensive retreats with *New York Times*-bestselling author Robert Dugoni.

**Molly Jebbers** is a best-selling and award-winning author of Amish Historical Romance. Molly’s books have been featured in Publisher’s Weekly Best Ten lists, USA Today’s HEA, featured in live video on Naples News, many media outlets across the U.S. You’ll find her books on most stores the first three months of their release across the U.S, UK, Canada, and more. She’s been interviewed on television, and she’s a touring speaker for Women’s Christian Connection, other women’s professional organizations, and she offers presentations on writing, agent or no agent, publishing, and marketing. She also speaks about the Amish lifestyles and traditions.

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**Christy Johnson** is a soul-health coach, relationship expert and author. A domestic abuse survivor turned champion of forgiveness, Christy is passionate about helping women find emotional freedom and recovery from toxic relationships. She’s the author of *Love Junkies* and *Free Looks Good on You*. When she’s not coaching women, creating a workbook on Canva or reading the thesaurus, you can find Christy enjoying her other passions: shopping, decorating or rearranging her pillow collection. Look for her popular Bible plans on YouVersion or visit her at [www.christyjohnson.org](http://www.christyjohnson.org/).

**Sharon Kizziah-Holmes** has been an indie-author since 2002 and is well versed in the self-publishing industry. She is the co-founder and co-owner of Paperback Press LLC., with imprints Paperback Press, Kids Book Press and Audio Book Press.   She has served as publishing coordinator to over one hundred authors, assisted in publishing five hundred-plus books for writers in the US and abroad. Several have become bestselling, self-published authors.

**Elizabeth Kracht** is a literary agent with Kimberley Cameron & Associates and the author of *The Author’s Checklist: An Agent’s Guide to Developing and Editing Your Manuscript*. She also works as a freelance developmental editor coaching authors. Elizabeth represents both literary and commercial fiction as well as nonfiction, and brings to the agency experience as a former acquisitions editor, freelance publicist, and writer. In fiction, she represents thrillers, mysteries, literary, commercial, women’s, and historical. In nonfiction, she is interested in finding true crime, investigative journalism, narrative/creative nonfiction, prescriptive, voice- or adventure-driven memoir, high concept, science, spirituality, sexuality, self-help, and pet stories.

**Betsey Kulakowski** With over 30 years of experience as an occupational safety & health specialist and a degree in Emergency Management, Betsey Kulakowski uses her expertise to inform her writing. In September 2020, her first novel, *The Veritas Codex* was published but Betsey’s been writing since she was six-years-old. The Veritas Codex Series now includes *The Jaguar Queen*,  *The Alien Accord* and *The Monk’s Grimoire*.  *The Lost Templar*, book 5 in the series will be out later this year.

**Amy M Le** is a Vietnam War survivor and Congenital Heart Defect (CHD) warrior. She is the award-winning author of the Snow trilogy and is currently working on her phoenix series—three books showcasing the resilience of people who’ve survived deep trauma. Amy is the founder of Quill Hawk Publishing, a woman-owned, Asian American company that helps writers indie publish their books while amplifying diverse voices through storytelling. She co-founded The Heart Community Collection, a resource for the CHD community, and sits on the board of the Vietnamese Boat People Podcast. Amy also serves as an officer for two writing organizations in Oklahoma. When she is not writing or volunteering, Amy is experimenting in the kitchen or watching NFL games, Formula 1 races, or UFC bouts.

**Kat Lewis**

Kat Lewis is an up-and-coming thriller author and just launched the debut novel in her Lethal Nannies series. She believes that community is the best way to grow in one's craft and has served in volunteer positions for Oklahoma Christian Fiction Writers and WriterCon.

**Rick Ludwig** spent more than forty years in the academic, health care, biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries, authoring multiple scientific papers and book chapters, before turning to fiction. He self-published two mystery novels in 2014 and 2015, while living and working on the island of Maui. The first book in Rick's Maui Mysteries Series, *Eyes of the Beholder,* was published in July of this year by Babylon Books,the same independent publisher who published another Maui Mystery of his, *Pele’s Fire,* in 2019. Rick is currently working on the book which will bridge these two.

**Christopher Maselli** is a Certified Digital Marketing Professional, an award-winning children’s author of more than 50 books, a direct mail writer, and a ghostwriter for many prominent, international speakers. Chris regularly speaks at writer’s conferences nationwide and on WritingMomentum.com, he shares knowledge and tools that help independent authors build marketing and writing momentum. He holds a Masters of Fine Arts in Writing.

**Gena Maselli** is a professional writer who has written 15 books as well as magazine and Web articles for /Brio, HomeLife, Christian Single, Marriage Today/ and others. She has also edited and ghosted for several well-known ministers and written children’s church curriculum, direct mail, marketing materials and more. On WritingMomentum.com, she shares knowledge and tools that help independent authors build marketing and writing momentum.

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**Jon Meyers** is a screenwriter, blogger, webpreneur, and educator. He is the only US Moderator at Into The Script, the UK’s foremost online screenwriting advice/writing craft hub. He is a screenwriting panelist for LitCon in New York, where he also serves as Literary Fiction Genre Manager. He is also the founder of PennedToPinOnBowlingGreen.com, a not-for-profit website/mobile app, which publishes reader-submitted poems three times a year by pinning them to an online map of the location in Bowling Green, Kentucky in which they were inspired.

**Elizabeth Montgomery** promotes the ruth Weiss Poetry Foundation and annual awards.

**Suzie Newell** has her doctorate specializing in coping mechanisms. Her work as a nurse anesthesiologist on obstetric units in the epicenter of the opioid crisis exposed her to the day-to-day roadblocks people face not just within the world of substance use disorder, but in everyday life as well. Her own journey began with a degree in political science working in social justice. Suzie has always championed people’s journeys. While in Guatemala during the 500 Years of Resistance campaign, she met a woman who inspired her to return to school and ultimately work in anesthesia. This all sounds perfect on paper, but along the journey she lost half her family, lost a good portion of her mind, and fell down hard. She was lucky enough to get back up, and then get back up again. The work put into developing *The Path 365: Daily Direction for Ladies and Mothers, Witches and Others* is the culmination of a lifetime of work in healthcare, in peer support, and within her own personal journey.

**Robin Patchen** has been nominated for ACFW's 2018, 2019, and 2020 Editor of the Year Awards. She’s a *USA Today* bestselling and award-winning author and freelance editor specializing in Christian fiction. She’s also a speaker and writing coach who enjoys mentoring new authors and helping established authors polish their books. For more information about Robin Patchen, visit her website at <http://robinpatchen.com>.

**Sierra Prasada** is an author, voice actor, and audiobook producer. Trained as a journalist at Stanford and Northwestern universities, she reported for radio and print in Beirut, Lebanon, where she wrote her first book *Creative Lives: Portraits of Lebanese Artists*. Since returning to the U.S., she has co-authored (with Dan Millman) *The Creative Compass: Writing Your Way from Inspiration to Publication* and taught writing workshops and courses at the Gaithersburg Book Festival and the Writer’s Center in Maryland; and the Graduate School USA in Washington, DC; Omega in New York; Kripalu in Massachusetts; and Mount Madonna Center in California. With her husband, Serafim Smigelskiy, she founded HiSierrafim Audio to produce high-quality audiobooks that move and delight the 21st-century listener. They live in Brooklyn. Find Sierra on the web at <https://www.sierraprasada.com> and <https://www.hisierrafim.com>.

**Ally Robertson** has been an editor with The Wild Rose Press since it opened in 2006. As Alicia Dean, she is also a writing coach, freelance editor, and author, with more than twenty-five published titles. She’s partial to all things dark and creepy…the scarier the better. She loves meeting authors, discovering fabulous new stories and helping authors realize their dreams.

**Rita Rosenkranz** A well-established agent who began her career as an editor at major publishing houses, Rita Rosenkranz represents almost exclusively adult non-fiction titles. Her wide-ranging list includes health, history, parenting, music, how-to, popular science, business, biography, sports, popular reference, cooking, writing, humor, spirituality, illustrated books and general interest titles. She represents first-time as well as seasoned authors, and looks for projects that present familiar subjects freshly or lesser-known subjects presented commercially. She is a member of the Association of American Literary Agents (AALA), The Authors Guild, and Women's Media Group.

**Bob Saenz** is a screenwriter with 16 produced films. Works include the comedy *Church People, Extracurricular Activities, Help for the Holidays, Rescuing Madison, Christmas in Love, The Right Girl, Sound of Christmas, The Christmas Yule Blog* and *The Farmer and the Belle*. He regularly does rewrites and polishes on film and TV projects for Producers and Production Companies. He speaks and teaches at Film Festivals and Writer’s Conferences across the country and is the author of the book, *That’s Not the Way It Works*, a non-nonsense guide to the craft and business of screenwriting.

**Katharine Sands** is an agent with the Sarah Jane Freymann Agency who **likes books that have a clear benefit for readers’ lives in categories of food, travel, lifestyle, home arts, beauty, wisdom, relationships, parenting, and fresh looks, which might be at issues, life challenges or popular culture. When reading fiction she wants to be compelled and propelled by urgent storytelling, and hooked by characters. For memoir, femoir, and himoir, she likes to be transported to a world rarely or newly observed.**

**Serafim Smigelskiy** is an award-winning cellist, audio engineer, and composer. He trained at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory and the Juilliard School and has performed internationally as a soloist and with some of the world’s top ensembles. With his wife, Sierra Prasada, he founded HiSierrafim Audio to produce high-quality audiobooks that move and delight the 21st-century listener. Among other projects, he regularly composes for audiobooks and recently presented his video performance, *Land*, on Sarah Belle Reid’s *Sound and Synthesis* program. Find him on the web at <https://www.serafim-smigelskiy.com> and <https://www.hisierrafim.com>.

**Cameron Sutter** is a writer, software developer, family man, avid reader. He wrote several YA scifi/fantasy novels, including *Pizza Planet*. He invented Plottr—a visual planning software for stories and books of all kinds. His mission is to help writers write more powerful stories, and to help encourage everyone else to read the classics.

**Laurel Thomas**crafts stories of ordinary characters who achieve the extraordinary. *River's Call* is an award-winning historical novel based in the deep South. History and the fantastic mesh in her fantasy series, *When Stars Brush Earth* and *Stones of Promise*, published by Wild Rose Press. Through *Write Your Heart Out!* and WriterCon, she teaches and supports other multi-published industry professionals who equip writers for success through national conferences and weekend intensives.

**Kevin Tumlinson is the** Marketing Director for Draft2Digital and a multi-published author.

**Jesse Ulrich**, a man who was born to two Brooklyn Jews in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, has had the strange journey from trained historian to non-profit professional, to podcast producer. But through all of those careers, he has loved two things: people and technology. Making podcasts and audiobooks guarantees that Jesse is always meeting new people and learning new things.

**Chrissy Willis** has a PhD in Early Childhood Special Education and has written 19 teacher resource books and worked on major curriculum projects including Frog Street Press, Scholastic, and Kaplan Early Learning Company. She has worked in the publishing field for the last 20 years including seven years with Kaplan Early Learning Company as Senior Vice President of Publishing and International Rights. Currently, she is the publisher and executive editor for Young Dragons Press, a traditional publishing company that publishes picture books, middle grade readers and young adult books. Her book [Critter Invasion](https://youngdragonspress.com/book/critter-invasion/?grid_referrer=520)is scheduled was released in March 2021. Critter Invasion is book one of a five book series.