

2021 Kanab Writers Conference

Friday, November 5

Breakout 1 (1:00-1:50)

Boardroom A: Hook, Line, and Sinker by Holli Anderson

The Hook – How to get people immediately interested in your story. The Line – How not to be boring after the hook. The Sinker – Great endings, tying everything together, fulfilling promises.

Boardroom B: Elegant Solutions: Writing About Difficult Subject Matter by Shanan Ballam

In mathematics, “elegant solution” refers to a solution that solves the problem in the simplest and most effective manner. As artists, we are forced to confront problems ranging from minor to massive every time we face the page. One common problem is honestly facing difficult subject matter, such as the loss of a loved one. How do we write about things that hurt us? In this workshop I will share the problems I have encountered when writing about difficult subject matter and the elegant solutions I have found to solve those problems.

Pinyon Room: Do You Outline . . . or Do You Write by the Seat of Your Pants? by Lindsay Flanagan

To outline or not to outline...that is the (much-debated) question. As a writer you may feel like you're on team outliner or on team “pantser.” Maybe you haven't decided which side to join. Or maybe you've joined one or the other but haven't really had total success with either in your writing career. We're not going to make you pick a side. But we do have some thoughts on the pros and cons of each and when you may want to consider the other team's view to increase the chances of storytelling success.

Ponderosa Room: Giving Your Characters the Introduction They Deserve by Kathryn Cunningham

They say you never get a second chance to make a good first impression, and that's especially true for the characters in your stories. After all, you love your characters, and your readers deserve the chance to love them, too. Come join a discussion of some of the many methods you can use to make sure your characters shine from the moment they walk onto the page.

Sage Room: Swords and Spears and Axes, Oh My! (Medieval Weapons 101) (2-hour class) by C. David Belt

Why is the idea of a three-foot-long bronze sword wielded by an eleven-year-old laughable? Do you know the difference between a long sword and a great sword? A saber and a rapier? How about the difference between a thrusting spear, a throwing spear, and a hewing spear? How hard is it to swing a war hammer or a mace? This is a HANDS-ON presentation of various types of swords, axes, spears, and other weapons and armor, ranging from the Bronze Age to the early 20th Century, from copper to bronze to high-carbon steel. Participants will have the opportunity to handle and heft actual weapons, don armor, and learn how such items were employed.

Breakout 2 (2:00-2:50)

Boardroom A: How to Fix the Sagging Middle by Johan Twiss

If you want to learn how to fix your sagging middle, (and I'm not talking about those extra pounds you put on during the holidays), then this is the class for you. Discover proven tips and tricks to get your story back on track, excite you as a writer, and most importantly turn your readers into insomniacs who stay up way past their bedtime turning pages into the wee hours of the night. We'll discuss 14 different types of chapter-ending hooks, and other techniques, to help you keep your story churning forward through that saggy and soggy middle.

Boardroom B: Emotional Resonance: How to Torment Your Readers and Keep Them Coming Back for More by Rebecca Blevins

We love reading a book that leaves its imprint on our souls. We cry, we laugh, we fear, we fall in love. What causes a reader to bond with a story? Emotional resonance.

If you've ever wanted to make your readers either praise or curse your name—then immediately hop online to look for your next book—come to this class to discover how to craft emotional resonance that will capture your readers' hearts.

Pinyon Room: Self-Publishing - The Basics and Beyond by Cevin and Carol Ormond

It's never been easier to self-publish. But it's not a trivial undertaking, it's pretty easy to get lost in the weeds and overwhelmed, and it's never been more important to do it right. So let's start out on the right foot!

Learn the 3 ways to publish, the advantages and disadvantages of each, and which is the best fit for you.

Learn the 3 basic ways of self-publishing (plus a couple more) where you can get your content out there and how to determine which way(s) are best for you.

Finally, learn the 3 most important things you must determine before you even begin. (Everything else you do hinges on these)

We've been publishing (all 3 ways) for many years. Come and learn from our experience! See you there!

Ponderosa Room: Should You Join a Critique Group? (Hint: Yes, You Should) by Shanda Cottam

Critique groups are like a good pair of shoes: It can take a while to find the right fit. Before you start seeking out groups, consider your writing and critiquing priorities. What are your goals? Once you find the critique group you're comfortable with, how do you make the most of it? Learn proper critique etiquette, how to benefit from group feedback on your manuscript, and fun meeting activities.

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Breakout 3 (3:10-4:00)

Boardroom A: Save your Novel with Save the Cat by Ali Cross

Lots of people swear by it—some people swear against it. Why not find out for yourself what this “Save the Cat” business is all about?

Ali Cross is an Expert Cat with a nod from Blake Snyder’s team to teach you everything you need to know to get started outlining the best novel you’ve ever written—with the help of the Save the Cat Beat Sheet.

In this workshop, you’ll learn how to take a shiny new idea to ready-to-write novel outline. You’ll learn what each of the beats mean, how they impact your novel and your reader, and you’ll learn how to repeat the process over and over again.

Boardroom B: Giving Setting a Voice: When Nature Talks by JoLyn Brown

Ralph Waldo Emerson taught that the natural world around us is a language of its own. In his essay, "Nature," he explained “The use of the outer creation is to give us language for the beings and changes of the inward creation.” We don’t often think of the setting of our stories as speaking, but what if we treated it like a dialogue with the reader? In this class we will explore how we can use our setting to tell part of our story without overwhelming the reader with unimportant details. With a specific focus on the natural environment, this class will dive deep into the power of setting.

Pinyon Room: Perfecting Your Pitch by VJO Gardner

When selling your book to a potential reader, an agent or a publisher your pitch can make or break you. Learn the easiest way to do a synopsis and how it can help you create your pitch. Learn the secrets that help your pitch be more effective and how to be comfortable talking to the people you want to read your book.

Ponderosa Room: Earn That Kiss by Jo Noelle

Whether your novel is a romance or contains a love story as a subplot, the moment the couple kisses is a defining moment in their relationship. Learn the steps that lay the groundwork of a naturally building and compelling attachment. Already have a romance that's just missing that little something? Learn the mechanics that fix the flaws that can make the romance unbelievable or unsatisfying. It's all about how the characters earn that first kiss.

Sage Room: Tales from a Cult Insider Final Episode - Live Recording by Jared Garrett

Tales from a Cult Insider is the hit podcast by Jared Garrett, who grew up in a Scientology splinter cult and now tells true stories about that life. The cult evolved over thirty years and finally dropped all religion and became Best Friends Animal Society. This will be the final episode of this podcast series, so

join in and help it go out with a bang! A Q&A will follow, as well as a primer on doing your own podcast.

Breakout 4 (4:10-5:00)

Boardroom A: Killing Your Darlings by Janet Johnson

Writing is a work of love, and when it comes to revision, it can be hard to know what to cut and what to keep. Especially when we love, love, love what we've written. This presentation goes through four types of Darlings (words, phrases, characters, and scene), and how to look at them objectively to know better what to cut and what to keep.

Boardroom B: Can You Smell the Colors of the Wind? by Johan Twiss

Adding a dash of color and a pinch of smell can transform your story from a \$1 value meal burger into a filet mignon worthy of the Iron Chef. In this class, we discuss how to sprinkle your story with sensory seasoning, taking your writing to the next level. You are the master chef of your story and using sensory detail the right way will not only help satisfy your readers, but keep them coming back for more.

As with any seasoning, too much can ruin your meal instead of enhancing it. But adding just the right amount of color, smell, taste, sound, and touch, can make all the difference.

Pinyon Room: 30 Days to a Guilt-Free Writing Mindset by Rebecca Blevins

Do you ever feel guilt about not writing? Or maybe even when you've written, you feel guilty about not getting the number of words down you'd hoped to? Maybe you even feel disappointed with the quality of those words?

If you are one of the many writers whose creativity suffers due to the guilt monster tapping you on the shoulder, come to this class and learn how to change your writing mindset and kick that guilt monster in the face.

Rebecca stumbled across this technique when she was trying to figure out a way to write while coexisting with depression and anxiety. She shared her discovery with others who have found results by using the same technique, and she's excited to share it with you.

Ponderosa Room: The psychological side of writing: overcoming apprehension, procrastination, and blocks by Brock Dethier

We will examine some of the reasons people get hung up while writing and will suggest thought processes and writing activities to make writing easier and more productive. Be prepared to challenge some of your beliefs about writing.

Sage Room: How to Start a Cult by Jared Garrett

Have you ever thought, "You know, I think I need some loyal followers?" Have you tried Twitter? If Twitter wasn't enough for you, you might want to start a cult. In this class, former unwilling cultist Jared Garrett will briefly walk you through the story of the cult he grew up in, followed by a discussion about what a cult really is. This is a subject-matter heavy class for those interested in adding authentic doses of narcissism, cult-like groups, and fanaticism to your work.

Saturday, November 6

Breakout 5 (9:30-10:20)

Boardroom A: Noah's Story Arc: How to Use Conflict to Build a Watertight Plot by Liz Adair

Les Edgerton writes: "When the trouble is gone the story is over." In this class we will explore how to exploit, manage, manipulate, harness and milk conflict to craft a tight, well-plotted narrative, one that makes the reader stick with the story until the last page, one that will stick with the reader long after he's closed the book.

Boardroom B: How to Create Deep Conflict Between Characters, and How to Bridge It (If You Wish) by Angelica Hagman

Want to keep readers engaged? Then consider creating conflict between your characters that runs so deep, it seems impossible to resolve. The kind that starts out as a lovey-dovey conversation between newlyweds on which dishes to use at their housewarming party, and ends with porcelain shards and a shattered marriage. But how do we create that deep conflict? And how do we resolve it, if we wish? By playing around with judgment, values, and gremlins. I hope my experience as a life coach offers a fresh perspective on this topic—if you don't agree, let's duke it out in class.

Pinyon Room: Fifteen Minute Marketing by Julie Coulter Bellon

Have you ever said, "I don't have time to market my books?" As a busy mother of eight children, Julie Coulter Bellon was trying to balance family, writing, and getting her books in front of the right audience. Some days it seemed impossible until she developed a system of marketing that harnesses the power of just fifteen minutes. Through proven patterns that have increased her visibility and sales, Julie will teach you her system of fifteen minute marketing techniques and tools that any author---from beginner to advanced---can add to their marketing toolbox.

Ponderosa Room: Copyediting for Immersive Worldbuilding by Kristy Gilbert

You've built a world for your story, but have you thought about how to present that world's elements on the page? Not all dragons must be Dragons, and imaginary worlds feel more real with internal consistency. Learn how to use capitalization, italics, and linguistic consistency to help immerse readers in your world the way your characters experience it. Then learn how to communicate your choices to any editors you work with on your book, whether you're self-publishing or using a traditional publisher.

Sage Room: True Stories: Writing Biographical Fiction by Carol Bradley

In recent years, biographical novels have increased in popularity. This genre reaches beyond the dates, names, places, etc. found in nonfiction biographies, weaving story with imagination in order to more fully explore the life and times of individuals in history. This class will draw upon examples from various biographical novels to study how authors go about constructing a compelling story. We will also discuss the challenge of filling in the gaps in the history and the use and value of historical notes for the reader. We will also explore the value of this genre: that in writing or reading about real people, we can find meaning and perspective for our own present.

Breakout 6 (10:30-11:20)

Boardroom A: From Prolific to Pitiful and Back Again by Shirley Bahlmann

Once upon a time I wrote three books a year. Then life took an unexpected turn that sent me down a crude, uncut road that was rough enough to shake me senseless. When I finally started to heal, I realized that I wasn't writing anymore. That caused a different kind of pain, so I told myself, "I'll write tomorrow." The next day I said, "I'll write tomorrow." But guess what? TOMORROW NEVER CAME!

At least not until I was inspired at the 2019 Kanab Conference to get serious about writing again. One presenter even assured me that the experiences endured through my writing hiatus could actually serve to make me better at my craft, which helped me feel that I hadn't wasted time. So I set a goal to write for at least an hour a day, and this is what happened...

Boardroom B: V is for Villain: Creating Remarkable Villains from Playground Bullies to Galactic Archenemies by Cate Hart

Heroes and Villains are two different sides of the same coin. One can't operate without the other. This workshop discusses how to create a great villain using literary archetypes and shares examples from literature, film and TV.

Pinyon Room: 10 things to do to win writing contests by Jef Huntsman

We go over how most writing contests are set up and how the writer can increase their possibility of placing within the top three of most contests. It turns out the things you do for writing contests are some of the same things you would use to snag an agent or receive a publishing contract. The class will learn which contests to avoid and which types boost your career. Winning is motivational; this class will raise your percentages of achieving your goals.

Ponderosa Room: Essential Diversity: Writing with Intent and Care by Erin Olds

You care about writing diversely. You know how important it is to have accurate representation in your stories. You want to include characters whose experience is outside of yours. But can a white, cis, or able-bodied author write diverse characters? Salt & Sage Books gives a resounding yes! Not only can you write diverse characters, but you ought to! It's easy to find examples of writing gone wrong, but where do you start to get it right? Join us for a live discussion with several sensitivity readers discussing how to help authors succeed in the critical work of writing diversely.

Sage Room: Finding the Right Illustrator for Your Picture Book by Adrienne Quintana

You've always dreamed of captivating children and their parents during those precious bedtime moments, but your words are only one half of the equation. Picture books are only as good as...well, the pictures.

In this workshop, we'll discuss how to pinpoint the style of illustrations that will fit the mood of your book and where to go to find an illustrator who can create that mood. From contract negotiation to communicating expectations and creative relationship management, we've got you covered.

Breakout 7 (1:00-1:50)

Boardroom A: How To Build A Book Without a Blueprint by Rod Miller

Many writers create detailed outlines, character descriptions, and plot development for a novel before writing a word. Others prefer to start with a general idea and direction, and let all that stuff happen as the story unfolds and characters reveal themselves. While writing without a plan can result in a successful novel, there can be challenges in maintaining continuity and consistency in plot elements and details. This presentation shows methods for keeping track of those things—in effect, outlining in reverse, sort of. Writers will come away with helpful means of keeping the story on solid ground as they wing it.

Boardroom B: Everyday Folklore for Immersive Settings by Kristy Gilbert

Creating a setting that immerses your reader means more than just deciding where the mountains, rivers, and streets are. Culture and community make settings more than mere landscapes, and everyday, informal folklore is one of the best ways to let that culture invite your reader in and immerse them, whether your setting is in the real world or a faraway galaxy.

Pinyon Room: Author and Book Branding: What this REALLY means and how to do it well! A good brand = good sales! by Melissa Dalton Martinez

We hear about the importance of branding in any industry, but how do we define an author brand? What's the difference between branding yourself and branding your book? As writers, we make unspoken promises to our readers all of the time. What—intentional or unintentional—promises are we making with our brand? This seminar will help you define your brand elements, make the right promises, and find the tools you need for success—and more sales!

Ponderosa Room: Publishers Panel

Join our special guests, agents, editors, and others invited panel members as they answer your questions in a small classroom setting.

Sage Room: The Long and Short of It: How Writing Short Stories Can Help You Write Novels by C.H. Hung

Short stories often get overlooked by the aspiring writer, who may believe that novels are the only path to success. However, learning how to master short fiction can not only help you write better, more tightly plotted novels, but it can also help you find new readers -- especially in the thriving science fiction/fantasy/horror market. This session goes over the basics of why write short fiction, how to apply what you learn writing short to writing long, and where to sell your short story when you've finished it.

Breakout 8 (2:00-2:50)

Boardroom A: Getting It Right: Research for Fiction and Nonfiction by Rod Miller

You always hear, "Write what you know." But every writer, whether writing fiction or nonfiction, finds gaps in knowledge needed to tell a story. Understanding the times and places your story is set, the

people and events surrounding your characters, and the details and intricacies of how things get done add realism to a story. Get it wrong, and informed readers will notice and close the book. Get it right, and they will keep turning pages.

Boardroom B: Poetic principles in all writing by Jef Huntsman

Writing with the rhythm and balance of the poetic voice in all types of writing will give your readers the appropriate tempo to keep them reading. The reader needs a certain rhythm when reading a thriller vs a love story vs a humorous piece to bring their emotion into the beat of the circumstance or character. Working on readers feelings keeps them reading. These principles help with any genre or poetry.

Pinyon Room: Self-Publishing Vs Small Press Publishing by Adrienne Quintana

Do you have a manuscript that just doesn't fit into the traditional publishing mold? Don't worry. You have options.

This workshop will compare and contrast self-publishing against small press publishing. We'll begin by identifying individual publishing goals and how those goals can be best accomplished. Bring your questions. This class will be dynamic and interactive.

Ponderosa Room: World Building: The Power and Influence of Food by Mary Olsson

Have you ever thought about how food influences the world? Or the part it might play in your story?

Sink your teeth into a smorgasbord exploration of the power and influence food has on culture, trade, religion, politics, and even relationships (e.g. romance). We'll look at a few examples while discussing how a thoughtful inclusion of food can add a nuanced layer to delight both the senses and emotions of your readers.

Sage Room: Get That Murder Mystery Started by Michael Norman

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Breakout 9 (3:00-3:50)

Boardroom A: Q&A on Editing with Angela Eschler

Have you ever wanted to know more about the editing process? Whether you're an author or an aspiring editor, you won't want to miss this Ask-an-Editor-Anything (almost) panel with the founder and editor-in-chief of Eschler Editing, Angela Eschler, and senior editor Lindsay Flanagan. These editors are armed with answers to your many questions about what editing really is, how to become an editor, and what it's like to be an editor. Have questions about what type of editing your manuscript needs before you send it off to agents and publishers? They've got tips and advice for selecting the right type of editor and service. In this session, the editors are an open book!

Boardroom B: Copycat: I Think, Therefore Iamb: Meter in Children's Books by Merry Gordon

Pestered by anapests? Spondees got you stressed? Tripping over your own two feet when it comes to meter? Fear not—you don't have to be Shakespeare or Dr. Seuss to develop a sense of poetic rhythm! This fun and interactive class will help you turn the beat around as you craft a rollicking children's story with momentum and maximum readability.

Pinyon Room: Blueprint to Book Sales by Cindy R Williams

Learn how to: Create Your Platform, Market, Contact, Schedule, Create Your Presentation and Sell Your Books at Schools and Events.

Have you published a book, either traditionally or indie and asked yourself, "Now what? How do I promote and sell my book?" This class will show you a successful PR/Marketing plan and help get your creative juices flowing to map out your own journey to successful book sales.

Ponderosa Room: Science In Fiction by Elaine Vickers

Explosions! Time travel! Outer space! Using examples from books, TV, and movies, this class will cover some basic laws of science that can take your story to the next level, whether you're writing scifi, fantasy, or even contemporary/historical. Taught by a university science professor.

Sage Room: Raven's Circle by Tiffany Unsworth

In this session, we pay tribute to Raven Chiong, our beloved former resident of Kanab who was key in inspiring many to write (including the presenter).

We will look at a piece of contemporary poetry together, discussing interpretation and meaning, and then we will take some time to write during class and share.