

SOUTH CAROLINA The Storytelling State

2021 SCWA Writers' Conference Schedule OF Events

FRIDAY, April 16

Chapter Leaders Meet-Up 3-5pm

Tail Gate Workshop 3:45-5pm

***Yemassee* Editors Discuss Submission Strategies** Editors for the literary journal, *Yemassee* will discuss what they look for in submissions to the journal, what turns them off, and how to get your piece in shape to shine through the slush.

Arthur Turfa, “Sonnets Aren’t So Stuffey”

Susan Zurenda, “Family Stories: Evoking Emotion in Your Characters” Writing honestly about family can be more challenging than recalling events accurately or finding the arc of our own story. How fair is it to put people into our books—warts, and all? Only the writer can answer the question of how much to whitewash stories, but if you can’t write honestly, your story will be wrong and it will be thin. We are all human and flawed. This workshop will cover both the basics of story and the importance of genuine emotion in stories. It will also examine how writers achieve success in creating human emotion in contrast to why writers sometimes fail in this essential endeavor. Ample illustrations will be provided, some from Susan’s novel, *Bells for Eli*, and participants will be given writing prompts with feedback.

Opening Reception 6-8pm

Welcome Remarks with Special Guest, **Cassandra King Conroy**, Heavy Hors d'oeuvres

SATURDAY, APRIL 17TH

Breakfast **8-9am**

Remarks & Keynote: **9-9:40am** **Patti Callahan Henry**

WORKSHOP 1 **9:50-11:05am**

Jeffrey Blount, “The Shy Writer’s Guide to Presenting Yourself and Your Work”

Derek Berry, “Poetry as Play and Failure”

Cassie Premo Steele, “Memoir as a Way of Writing and Being Whole” This workshop will focus on writing memoir in ways that are healthy and balanced and contribute to our well-being. Participants will have the opportunity to deepen their writing with lessons taken from poetry and fiction, so the workshop will appeal to writers across genres. Writing will not be shared, nor will critique be given, as this will allow writers to dive deeply without fear. We will also explore stress reduction techniques that will show you how to write more quickly and with less self-doubt, and this will lead to the development of memoir writing that takes risks, opens the way to healing, and makes things whole.

WORKSHOP 2 **11:15-12:30pm**

Patti Callahan Henry, “The Soul of Story”

Cinelle Barnes, “What’s Mine and Yours: Writing Nonfiction Family Stories” In this generative seminar, writers will learn strategies for writing nonfiction stories on family: research, writing, scope setting, attribution and privacy matters, and literary tools and techniques that help depict family members with honesty, clarity, and nuance. The seminar will comprise of mini lectures, writing prompts, read alouds, and a Q&A.

Ray McManus & Len Lawson, Poetry Slushfest Read aloud one of your poems, get instant feedback and learn some tips and tricks from renowned South Carolina poets.

Lunch & Keynote **12:30-2pm** **Jeffrey Blount**

WORKSHOP 3 **2:10-3:25pm**

Belle Boggs, “You Do Look Funny In Your Bathing Suit: Humor in Life’s Dreadful Moments” Taking inspiration from stories and novels by Charles Dickens, Arnold Lobel, Joy Williams, Paul Beatty, and Julie Hecht, this workshop will examine the way these writers find absurdity and humor in life's dark moments. We will tap into our inner weirdness and explore strategies for putting it on the page. Please bring your insecurities, preoccupations, wild impulses, and secret meanness. Bathing suits optional.

Barbara Evers, “Short & Sweet & Oh So Hard: Creating Your Pitch” Ever tried to reduce your 70,000+ word manuscript to a 2-page synopsis or 1-page query? It’s tough, isn’t it? There’s something even shorter—the pitch—and it can open doors when you have mere seconds to grab an agent’s or publisher’s attention. In most cases, you have time for 140 words or less. That’s a pitch. A well-crafted pitch will invite the question: *Tell me more*. Taught by an author who used her pitch to get three requests for full manuscripts, this workshop will show you how to eliminate excess information and trim your story down to the bare essentials. Using tried and true formulas, writers will begin to craft their pitches. Also, the instructor will share insight on how you can use your pitch to reach out to agents during Twitter’s pitch wars. Added bonus? This process will help you focus your query letter, too.

Len Lawson, “Love Thyself: A Poetic Approach” The poet's life can be filled with thrilling highs and abysmal lows. It can be difficult to remain encouraged in the craft in addition to the hardships of life and the uncertainty of the world. Using a popular poetry trend in recent years, we will promote self-love through a transparent look into the self, using poetry by Ocean Vuong, Roger Reeves, and more. Through writing love for self, we can create poetry that matters beyond page and stage.

WORKSHOP 4 3:40-5pm

Patti Callahan, Marly Rusoff, Amanda Bostic, “From Manuscript to Publication: Answering Your Questions” An author, an agent and an editor discuss how a book comes into the world, from it’s early stages to its final display on a bookstore shelf and all the insider secrets in between. In this panel, you’ll learn about contracts, queries, the job of the author, agent, and editor, marketing and more. Come with your questions about the process!

Jonathan Haupt & Brooke McKinney, “Burning Man Vs. the Tortoises: Turning Memories into Stories” In his 2010 memoir *My Reading Life*, Pat Conroy shared two fascinating—and seemingly contradictory—metaphors for writerly inspiration: the burning man he encountered in Rome and the tortoises he encountered with writer (and *Our Prince of Scribes* contributing essayist) Jonathan Carroll in Vienna. We’ll discuss both of those metaphors as instructive examples of how we can turn our memories into our stories. This session will include discussion of the writer’s craft and sources of inspiration as well as interactive writing prompts.

BOOK SIGNINGS 5-6pm

Dinner on your own 6-7:30pm

OPEN MIC 7:30-9:30pm Vivian Bikulege & Yvette Murray, MCs

SUNDAY, APRIL 18TH

Breakfast

8-9am

WORKSHOP 5

9-10:15am

Pitchfest

Query letters are read aloud and agents respond to them in real time.

Cinelle Barnes, Jonathan Haupt, Ray McManus, “The Hustle: Building a Writing Career in S.C.”

Few writers in this country make a living off only their writing. What does a writer’s life look like in South Carolina and what steps can you take right now to start living and working as a writer in our state?

PANELS

10:25-11:40am

Prose Slushfest Your work is read aloud anonymously. Agents & editors respond to your work in real time.

Alexa Bigwarfe, “How to Get Started in Your Nonfiction Project” Self help, how-to, transformational, inspirational, and business authors welcome here! Learn from a publisher of non-fiction work, Alexa Bigwarfe, how to organize your thoughts, structure your book, and get ready to pitch. Step by step from brainstorming ideas and narrowing your topic to naming the project. When you leave this workshop, you’ll have an outline and be on your way.



See you in Columbia!