



HNSNA

Historical Novel Society North America

12.7.2020 | VIRTUAL CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

Hello, everyone, it's Jenny Q, your HNS 2021 North American Conference chair! I wanted to spend a few minutes speaking with you today about next June's conference.

I don't have to tell you that due to the pandemic, this year has been one of upheaval and uncertainty, and the conference board has faced unprecedented challenges. Planning for the conference was well underway before COVID-19 reached North America. We had already selected our host city and signed a contract with the venue, and we were in the process of choosing our special guests. With the conference still well over a year away, the board felt it best to proceed with planning as if we would be able to hold the conference in San Antonio. But we also began to consider the necessity of offering a hybrid conference to accommodate the needs and safety of all our members, and so for the first time in the conference's history, the board consulted with a production company and made plans to livestream the on-site conference to a virtual audience.

And things were looking up for a while there. With the welcome news that a vaccine would soon be ready for distribution, we decided to move forward with sharing our call for proposals information with the hope that we would still be able to livestream an on-site conference from San Antonio, thus accommodating both those who wanted to attend in person and those who preferred to attend virtually. We also hoped to be able to provide some prerecorded content to air outside normal conference hours in addition to our live, interactive sessions. With so much information already in the call, and not wanting to create confusion, we decided not to provide guidance on proposals for an all-virtual conference since we had not yet reached the point where we felt we absolutely had to make that decision. And while we were attempting to be flexible as long as possible to avoid making an early decision we might later regret, we understand that many of you would rather know sooner than later which form the 2021 conference will take.

And so that brings me to the reason I am speaking to you today. In just a few short weeks since we shared the call for proposals, the pandemic has flared alarmingly and many of us are experiencing renewed restrictions. It's hard to envision what the world is going to look like next summer. And so after much research and deliberation, and to be perfectly honest, a few tears, **the conference board is officially announcing that the Historical Novel Society 2021 North American Conference will be completely virtual.**

I know this is disappointing news to many of us, but this is also a chance for some exciting new opportunities. Rest assured that you can still look forward to the quality panels, presentations, cozy chats, and workshops you've come to expect from our conference. And yes, these will be live sessions with real-time interaction. Because networking and socializing with fellow historical fiction lovers is such a huge part of our conference, we hope to keep that spirit alive with conversation rooms, meet & greets, and other virtual social events. We will also feature virtual pitch sessions with our stellar lineup of agents and editors, and we are working to make the Blue Pencil Café virtual as well. We have partnered with EventMobi to provide a robust, all-inclusive platform for our virtual conference. Going virtual allows us to schedule content throughout the day and evening across multiple days to ensure that attendees from time zones all over the world will have the chance to participate. And a virtual conference paves the way for something so many of you have asked for in the past—sessions that are recorded so you can revisit at your leisure.

This change in format will necessitate that we delay the opening of the proposal submissions until January 2nd and the opening of registration until February 15th. We humbly ask for your patience as we strive to create the best virtual conference possible. Be on the lookout for a new call for proposals in December with all the information you'll need to put together your virtual presentation ideas. We will also hold a Zoom Q&A session to answer all of your questions on how to submit proposals and what to expect from our virtual conference.

So now you may be asking, what about San Antonio? Our announcement of the conference's location in San Antonio was met with resounding excitement, and indeed it is a vibrant city oozing with history, culture, and nightlife. The board is working on ideas to infuse the virtual conference with a taste of the city to give you a preview of what you can look forward to when we are able to meet in person again in San Antonio in June 2023.

I would like to close today by thanking you for your support and your understanding during this difficult time. Ours is a wonderful community, committed to advocating for each other and the historical fiction genre. We can't wait to see you in June!

Jenny Quinlan
Conference Board Chair
Historical Novel Society North America

See video announcement at: <https://youtu.be/7CSXlqPxq04>