

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM

MONDAY, JUNE 21

Monday, 7:00-9:00AM (CT) CONVERSATION ROOMS

One of the best things about a conference is meeting like-minded people who share your interests, and this year is no different! Check out the themed [Conversation Rooms](#) in our Histfic Hub.

Monday, 8:00-9:00AM (CT) TECH Q&A

Have questions about attending a virtual conference? Get comfortable with EventMobi and Zoom to get your conference week off to a great start!

Monday, 9:00-11:00AM (CT) MASTER CLASS: BEYOND THE GATE - Additional Fees Apply *Melissa Danaczko and Cate Hart*

Agents are often viewed as gatekeepers, and it's true that most major trade publishers only accept submissions via agents. But what else are literary agents responsible for—and do you even need one? In this two-hour master class, agents Melissa Danaczko and Cate Hart will walk you through the role of a literary agent, as well as provide tips for how to target your queries and evaluate which agent could be the right fit for you. They'll also discuss the marketplace for historical fiction, how to pitch your book so that it's in conversation with current trends, and answer your other pressing questions about the publishing industry.

Melissa Danaczko is an agent at the Stuart Krichevsky Literary Agency. Before becoming an agent, she was Senior Editor with the Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group. As an editor, Melissa developed books that became New York Times bestsellers and received or were nominated for honors including The National Book Critics Circle Award, the Man Booker Prize, and the PEN/Bingham Prize. Melissa gravitates towards plot-driven novels with a fresh perspective, energetic writing, bold characters, and deep sense of place. In terms of historical fiction, Melissa loves a strong emotional core, but also has a taste for the dark and strange. It's a big plus if the work taps into the cultural climate in some way, and she is particularly eager to represent more #ownvoices authors in this genre.

Cate Hart joined Harvey Klinger in 2019 after 5 years with another agency. Established in 1977 by its eponymous founder, Harvey Klinger, the agency has been among the leading literary agencies in adult and children's books. Its interests cross many fields in fiction, nonfiction, and middle grade and young adult fiction by new and established authors. Cate specializes in historical, whether middle grade or young adult, women's fiction and romance, and narrative nonfiction. She is particularly drawn to forgotten stories, especially from underrepresented voices. She is especially excited to see: fresh perspectives and voices in historical for MG and YA; women's historical fiction beyond WWI and WWII; dual timelines; everything gothic; family sagas and buried secrets; historical romance and romcom outside of Regency period; and nonfiction history and biography.

Monday, 10:00-11:00AM (CT)
FIRST TIME GUEST ORIENTATION

What can you expect at an HNS Conference? Let us provide some tips and pointers for making the most of your conference experience.

Monday, 12:00-2:00PM (CT)
CONVERSATION ROOMS

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Monday, 2:00-5:00PM (CT)
MASTER CLASS: TAKE OFF YOUR PANTS! (Section 1) – Additional Fees Apply
Libbie Hawker

In this three-hour outlining master class, Libbie Hawker guides you through the entire process of outlining a novel, from loose idea to fully structured story arc ready to be written. Come with a general concept for your own novel, such as an idea, a historical figure, or an event, but clearly defined characters and storylines aren't necessary. Libbie will show you how to construct a cohesive, compelling, tightly paced novel around a vague concept using the method set forth in her bestselling how-to book *Take Off Your Pants! Outline Your Books for Faster, Better Writing*. Have your laptop or notebook ready!

Libbie Hawker, who also writes under the pen names Olivia Hawker and Libbie Grant, is a bestselling author of historical and literary fiction. Her work has been translated into six languages; her most recent, *One for the Blackbird*, *One for the Crow*, was a finalist for the Washington State Book Award and the Willa Literary Award, and was among Amazon's top 100 bestselling titles of the year in 2020. She lives in the San Juan Islands with her husband Paul and several naughty cats.

Monday, 5:00-6:00PM (CT)
AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT: Sarah Woodbury

Sarah Woodbury received her Ph.D. in anthropology in 1995 and began writing fiction in 2006. With over a million novels sold to date, she is the author of five bestselling series, all set in medieval Wales.

Monday, 6:00-8:00PM (CT)
MASTER CLASS: ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE: CREATING DYNAMIC CHARACTERS – Additional Fees Apply
Gillian Bagwell

In this two-hour master class, author and actress Gillian Bagwell draws on her extensive theater experience to teach writers how to create fully developed characters. Attendees should come with an idea for a character, and, through discussion and exercises, you will learn how to: put yourself in your characters' skin, experiencing their sensory impressions and physical reactions; use point of view and narrative voice to deepen characterization and strengthen emotional connection with the reader; create a detailed imagining of the physical world of your story through your characters' eyes; examine how

motivations, circumstances, and inner and outer conflicts affect your characters; and write dialogue that illuminates character and relationships, puts readers in characters' heads and hearts, gives a flavor of the period, and is believable as speech.

Gillian Bagwell's historical novels feature vivid and lifelike characters and richly textured, compelling evocation of time and place. Before she turned to writing, she was an actress, director, and producer. She founded the Pasadena Shakespeare Company and produced thirty-seven shows over ten years. She's found her acting experience helpful to her writing, and she's presented classes and workshops at past HNS Conferences on writing effective historical dialogue, as well as on numerous other topics. Gillian is at work on her fourth novel, a Gothic thriller set in Scotland in 1845-1847 and 1901-1902. Please connect with her on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [BookBub](#), and her website, [GillianBagwell.com](#).

Monday, 6:00-7:00PM (CT) **FIRST TIME GUEST ORIENTATION**

What can you expect at an HNS Conference? Let us provide some tips and pointers for making the most of your conference experience.

Monday, 6:00-10:00PM (CT) **CONVERSATION ROOMS**

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Monday, 7:00-8:00PM (CT) **TECH Q&A**

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TUESDAY, JUNE 22

Tuesday, 7:00-9:00AM (CT) **CONVERSATION ROOMS**

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Tuesday, 9:00AM-12:00PM (CT) **MASTER CLASS: TAKE OFF YOUR PANTS! (Section 2) – Additional Fees Apply** ***Libbie Hawker***

In this three-hour outlining master class, Libbie Hawker guides you through the entire process of outlining a novel, from loose idea to fully structured story arc ready to be written. Come with a general concept for your own novel, such as an idea, a historical figure, or an event, but clearly defined characters and storylines aren't necessary. Libbie will show you how to construct a cohesive, compelling,

tightly paced novel around a vague concept using the method set forth in her bestselling how-to book *Take Off Your Pants! Outline Your Books for Faster, Better Writing*. Have your laptop or notebook ready!

Libbie Hawker, who also writes under the pen names Olivia Hawker and Libbie Grant, is a bestselling author of historical and literary fiction. Her work has been translated into six languages; her most recent, *One for the Blackbird*, *One for the Crow*, was a finalist for the Washington State Book Award and the Willa Literary Award, and was among Amazon's top 100 bestselling titles of the year in 2020. She lives in the San Juan Islands with her husband Paul and several naughty cats.

Tuesday, 12:00-2:00PM (CT)
CONVERSATION ROOMS

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Tuesday, 2:00-4:00PM (CT)
MASTER CLASS: UPPING THE ANTE: THE EXPANDED EDITION – Additional Fees Apply
Alma Katsu

Conflict is the heart of *every* story. Conflict keeps the reader asking, “What happens next?” and keeps the reader turning the pages. You don’t need to resort to melodramatic tricks and clichés to create and sustain tension in your novel or short story. This expanded two-hour master class of Alma’s highly rated presentation at HNS Maryland will: define what conflict is (and isn’t); describe different kinds of conflict and how to layer them to create depth in your novel; and teach attendees how to analyze their own writing and provide concrete ways to apply these techniques to all kinds of writing, not just mysteries and thrillers.

Alma Katsu is the award-winning author of six novels, including historical horror (*The Hunger* and *The Deep*) and, most recently, *Red Widow*, her first spy thriller, drawn from a long career in intelligence. She is a graduate of the master’s writing program at Johns Hopkins University and earned her undergraduate degree in literature and writing from Brandeis University. She lives in the Washington DC area with her husband, musician Bruce Katsu. For more information, please visit her website at www.almakatsubooks.com.

Tuesday, 2:00-3:00PM (CT)
TECH Q&A

Have questions about attending a virtual conference? Get comfortable with EventMobi and Zoom to get your conference week off to a great start!

Tuesday, 5:00-6:00PM (CT)
AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT: Sadeqa Johnson

Sadeqa Johnson is the award-winning author of four novels. Her accolades include the National Book Club Award, the Phillis Wheatley Book Award, and the USA Best Book Award for Best Fiction.

Tuesday, 6:00-9:00PM (CT)
MASTER CLASS: TAKE OFF YOUR PANTS! (Section 3) – Additional Fees Apply

Libbie Hawker

In this three-hour outlining master class, Libbie Hawker guides you through the entire process of outlining a novel, from loose idea to fully structured story arc ready to be written. Come with a general concept for your own novel, such as an idea, a historical figure, or an event, but clearly defined characters and storylines aren't necessary. Libbie will show you how to construct a cohesive, compelling, tightly paced novel around a vague concept using the method set forth in her bestselling how-to book *Take Off Your Pants! Outline Your Books for Faster, Better Writing*. Have your laptop or notebook ready!

Libbie Hawker, who also writes under the pen names Olivia Hawker and Libbie Grant, is a bestselling author of historical and literary fiction. Her work has been translated into six languages; her most recent, *One for the Blackbird*, *One for the Crow*, was a finalist for the Washington State Book Award and the Willa Literary Award, and was among Amazon's top 100 bestselling titles of the year in 2020. She lives in the San Juan Islands with her husband Paul and several naughty cats.

Tuesday, 6:00-10:00PM (CT)

CONVERSATION ROOMS

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23

Wednesday, 7:00-9:00AM (CT)

CONVERSATION ROOMS

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Wednesday, 9:00AM-12:00PM (CT)

MASTER CLASS: SELF-PUBLISHING 101 – Additional Fees Apply

Jane Friedman

Over the last decade, the publishing industry has undergone tremendous evolution due to the growth of online retail and digital book formats, as well as the power of any author to publish and distribute their work at the click of a button. In this three-hour master class, industry expert Jane Friedman discusses the most important service options available to independent authors, how to choose the best channels, formats, and distributors based on your target audience and genre, how to assess if you are well-suited to self-publishing, and what to expect when it comes to marketing your work. She'll also help you decipher "hybrid" publishing arrangements now available alongside the key forms of self-publishing and e-publishing practiced today.

You'll learn not just the foundational principles of self-publishing, but you'll also gain expert insight into the changing industry landscape and how you can navigate your own path toward success. By the end of

the session, you'll have a game plan for getting your book to market in the most efficient and effective way based on your skills and target readership.

Jane Friedman has 20 years of experience in the publishing industry, with expertise in business strategy for authors and publishers. She's the editor of The Hot Sheet, the essential industry newsletter for authors, and has previously worked for F+W Media and the Virginia Quarterly Review. In 2019, Jane was awarded Publishing Commentator of the Year by Digital Book World; her newsletter was awarded Media Outlet of the Year in 2020. Jane's newest book is *The Business of Being a Writer* (University of Chicago Press); Publishers Weekly said that it is "destined to become a staple reference book for writers and those interested in publishing careers." Also, in collaboration with The Authors Guild, she wrote *The Authors Guild Guide to Self-Publishing*.

Wednesday, 12:00-2:00PM (CT)

CONVERSATION ROOMS

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Wednesday, 2:00-5:00PM (CT)

MASTER CLASS: MAKING IT IN HISTORICAL FICTION

Libbie Hawker

Is it possible to establish a full-time career as a historical novelist? What pitfalls and advantages do writers face? How has the genre changed in recent years, and how might it change in the near future? What's the soundest strategy for ensuring one's career remains as stable as possible in an industry characterized by drastic change? It's time to slip off your writer hat and get used to wearing your business hat! Libbie Hawker has been a full-time historical novelist for the better part of a decade with bestselling self-published and traditionally published novels. In this three-hour master class, learn strategies for establishing and maintaining a historical fiction writing career, learn how to study the market and identify opportunities, and learn how to maximize your chances of success to take your career to the next level.

Libbie Hawker, who also writes under the pen names Olivia Hawker and Libbie Grant, is a bestselling author of historical and literary fiction. Her work has been translated into six languages; her most recent, *One for the Blackbird*, *One for the Crow*, was a finalist for the Washington State Book Award and the Willa Literary Award, and was among Amazon's top 100 bestselling titles of the year in 2020. She lives in the San Juan Islands with her husband Paul and several naughty cats.

Wednesday, 5:00-6:00PM (CT)

AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT: AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT: SHARON KAY PENMAN TRIBUTE

On January 22, 2021, the literary world, and historical fiction enthusiasts, in particular, lost one of our giants. Sharon Kay Penman, a longtime HNS supporter, was the author of nine acclaimed historical fiction novels about medieval England and Wales. Her meticulous research woven into such compelling epics drew readers from all over the world and won her many accolades, but it is her generosity of spirit that novice and skilled writers alike remember most.

Join us on Wednesday, June 23rd, 5 pm CDT for a special Author Spotlight as we celebrate the light and literature of Sharon Kay Penman. *Missed fondly and never forgotten.*

Wednesday, 6:15-7:15PM (CT)
Q&A WITH JANE FRIEDMAN

We're talking with Jane about how authors can shake up their careers! Get your publishing questions answered by one of the best in the biz!

Jane Friedman has 20 years of experience in the publishing industry, with expertise in business strategy for authors and publishers. She's the editor of *The Hot Sheet*, the essential industry newsletter for authors, and has previously worked for F+W Media and the Virginia Quarterly Review. In 2019, Jane was awarded Publishing Commentator of the Year by Digital Book World; her newsletter was awarded Media Outlet of the Year in 2020. Jane's newest book is *The Business of Being a Writer* (University of Chicago Press); Publishers Weekly said that it is "destined to become a staple reference book for writers and those interested in publishing careers." Also, in collaboration with The Authors Guild, she wrote *The Authors Guild Guide to Self-Publishing*.

Wednesday, 6:00-10:00PM (CT)
CONVERSATION ROOMS

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Wednesday, 7:30-8:30PM (CT)
WELCOME FROM THE HNSNA BOARD!

Let's kick off the conference officially as we join together to learn, share, connect, and inspire.

THURSDAY, JUNE 24**Thursday, 7:00-9:00AM (CT)**
CONVERSATION ROOMS

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Thursday, 9:00-10:00AM (CT)
GONE DIGITAL! TECH TOOLS FOR LANDING A LITERARY AGENT
Sarah Penner

Querying writers, listen up! This session is for you, or indie authors who want to pursue traditional publication. We'll be reviewing multiple tech tools for identifying, researching, and querying literary agents, including: Query Tracker, Publishers Marketplace, online pitch contests, Manuscript Wishlist (#MSWL) resources, and more! This isn't just an overview; instead, we'll navigate these tools *live* on-screen during the session. No longer will these digital tools intimidate you! We'll also be giving away one FREE annual subscription to Query Tracker (a \$25 value) during the session.

Sarah Penner is the debut author of *The Lost Apothecary* (March 2021, Park Row Books/HarperCollins), which has been translated into more than fifteen languages. She lives in St. Petersburg, Florida with her husband. When not

writing, Sarah enjoys running, cooking, and hot yoga. To learn more, find Sarah on social media or visit SarahPenner.com.

Thursday, 9:00-10:00AM (CT)

BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORICAL FICTION: BLACK AUTHORS WRITE ABOUT THE PAST WITH AN EYE TO THE FUTURE

Denny S. Bryce, Piper Huguley, Vanessa Riley

Untold, compelling stories starring Black historical figures and events are manifold, but only recently has this genre come to light since Black authors have just gained the opportunity to tell these stories. The authors on this panel will discuss the historical figures that inspired their novels and their contributions to the Black history canon. These rich stories cannot be researched using conventional methods, so they will discuss their approach to understanding a people with a largely oral culture and what to do when resource material is written by those who neglected to consider the humanity of their historical figures.

Denny S. Bryce, an award-winning recipient of the RWA Golden Heart®, was a three-time GH finalist, including twice for *Wild Women and the Blues*, her debut novel. She also writes book reviews for NPR Books and entertainment articles for *Frolic Media*. Additionally, the former professional dancer and public relations professional is a self-proclaimed history geek. She credits this obsession to her maternal grandmother, Ella Elizabeth Joseph, who immigrated from Montego Bay, Jamaica, to New York City in 1923. Recently, Denny relocated from Northern Virginia to Savannah, Georgia. She is represented by Nalini Akolekar, Spencerhill Associates.

Piper Huguley, two-time Golden Heart® finalist, inscribes and celebrates the ancestors to give voice to their stories. Her “Migrations of the Heart,” a historical romance series, spanning 1915-1935, is based on her family’s history of the Great Migration, the largest internal migration in US history. Huguley is also the author of the “Home to Milford College” series, which follows the building of a fictitious HBCU during Reconstruction. Her debut historical fiction novel about Ann Lowe, the Black designer of Jackie Kennedy’s wedding dress, will release in Winter 2022 (William Morrow). She lives in Atlanta, Georgia with her husband and son.

Vanessa Riley, Ph.D., Southern, Irish, Trinidadian author, writes Historical Fiction and Historical Romance (Georgian, Regency, & Victorian Eras) featuring hidden histories, dazzling multi-cultural communities, and strong sisterhoods. Her books have been reviewed by the AAMBC, *Washington Post*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *NPR*, *Publisher Weekly*, and the *New York Times*. Her debut Historical Fiction *Island Queen* (July 2021 William Morrow) recounts the remarkable life of successful entrepreneur Dorothy Kirwan Thomas, a formerly enslaved woman, who battles the unfair taxation of free colored women in British colonies. Riley is represented by Sarah Younger of the Nancy Yost Literary Agency.

Thursday, 9:00-10:00AM (CT)

SYMBOLISM SHAKE UP: STRATEGIES THAT AMPLIFY CONFLICT, CHARACTER, EMOTION, AND THEME

Autumn Bardot

Does the word *symbol* make you shudder? We all know that words are powerful magic, imbued with nuance, subtext, connotation, and emotions that reside deep within our collective consciousness. Words impart meanings the readers respond to on a visceral level, that extend beyond the literal meaning. Shake up what you know about symbols and discover all the ways they can provide thematic, foreshadowing, contextual, plot, and characterization beyond the superficial. We will look at four

elements; blood, topography, architecture, and fire & water, and ways to amplify conflict, theme, emotion, and character *your way*.

Autumn Bardot writes historical fiction and more about fearless women and dangerous passions. She has taught advanced literary analysis and writing for more than sixteen years. She has two traditionally published historical erotica and three indie historical novels. She is currently writing her next novel and making videos for new writers on her YouTube channel. Autumn has a passion for history and a special affinity for the unsung courageous females that history neglects or misunderstands. Autumn lives in Southern California with her husband and ever-growing family. She wishes she was one-tenth as brave as the women she writes about.

Thursday, 9:00-10:00AM (CT)

CHASING THE MARKET OR CHASING YOUR DREAM? HOW TO FIND YOUR NEXT NOVEL

Gill Paul, Weina Dai Randel, Heather Webb

Should you rush to write Regency romance since *Bridgerton* is such a huge hit? Do readers want 'up lit' in lockdown? Is finding a previously untold World War Two story the route to the bestseller list? Problem is, when choosing a novel's subject we need to predict what readers will want two years from now, so should we just choose the period, characters, and stories that speak to us and hope others will share our enthusiasm? Our panel will explain how they choose novel subjects with the market in mind – and there's not a crystal ball in sight.

Gill Paul is the bestselling author of ten historical novels, many of them describing real women she thinks have been marginalized or misjudged by historians. *Jackie and Maria* looks at the way Jackie Kennedy's and Maria Callas's lives began to overlap as they became rivals for Aristotle Onassis, and her forthcoming novel *The Collector's Daughter*, due out in September 2021, is about Lady Evelyn Herbert, a remarkable woman who was part of the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb. Gill lives in London with her partner, who is a light artist, and loves wild swimming year-round.

Weina Dai Randel is the award-winning author of *The Moon in the Palace* and *The Empress of Bright Moon*, a historical novel series of Empress Wu of China. *The Moon in the Palace* was the winner of the RWA RITA® Award, a Goodreads Choice Award nominee, and called one of the Biggest Historical Fiction books of 2016 by Bookbub. Her forthcoming novel, *The Last Rose of Shanghai*, a WWII novel of love and redemption, will be published in November, 2021. Weina lives in Texas.

Heather Webb is the *USA Today* bestselling and award-winning author of historical fiction. In 2018, *Last Christmas in Paris* won the Women's Fiction Writers Association STAR Award, and in 2019, *Meet Me in Monaco* was a finalist for the Goldsboro RNA award, as well as the Digital Book World's Fiction prize. Up and coming, *The Next Ship Home* is a novel of Ellis Island's dark secrets and the women who confronted a corrupt system to alter their fate as well as the immigrants who came after them. To date, Heather's works have been translated to over a dozen languages.

Thursday, 9:00-10:00AM (CT)

COLD READS

All attendees at HNS 2021 are welcome to participate in the Cold Reads sessions. Authors can attend either or both sessions. There is no advance signup. Literary agents and/or editors interested in historical fiction will give real-time critique sessions of authors' opening pages. A volunteer cold-reads the first page aloud for the audience and panel and then panelists provide feedback on what works and what doesn't work for them and why.

Thursday, 10:15-11:15AM (CT)**WRITING OUTSIDE YOUR EXPERIENCE, OR "WHO AM I TO TELL THIS STORY?!"*****Jeffrey Blount, Rebecca Bruff***

We've all heard that we should write "what we know", but historical fiction demands more. What are the challenges and opportunities of writing what we don't know from personal experience? Can a man write from a woman's point of view? Can an anglo write from a Black point of view? Can a privileged person write from an oppressed point of view? Authors Jeffrey Blount and Rebecca Bruff will discuss questions of representation and misrepresentation, appropriation, why they matter, and the possibilities and responsibilities of writing beyond conventional boundaries.

Jeffrey Blount is the author of three novels, the most recent being *The Emancipation of Evan Walls*, winner of the 2019 Readers Favorite Book Award, winner of the 2019 American Bookfest Best Book Award and a Shelf Unbound 2019 Notable Book. He is also an Emmy award-winning television director and a 2016 inductee to the Virginia Communications Hall of Fame. During a 34-year career at NBC News, Jeffrey directed a decade of *Meet The Press*, *The Today Show*, *NBC Nightly News*, and major special events. Born and raised in Smithfield, Virginia, he now lives in Washington, DC.

Rebecca Bruff heard the undertold story of Robert Smalls on her a trip to South Carolina. Enslaved, Smalls liberated himself and others in a life-or-death escape, was the first Black hero of the Civil War, and a 5 term US Congressman. Bruff was so intrigued that she moved across the country to research and write *Trouble the Water*. Originally from Texas, she now lives in Beaufort, South Carolina where she writes, volunteers at the Pat Conroy Literary Center, plays a little tennis, travels when she can, and loves life in the low-country with her husband and an exuberant golden retriever.

Thursday, 10:15-11:15AM (CT)**ART & SPIRIT SHESTORIES: REBEL MYSTICS*****Nancy Bilyeau, Stephanie Renee dos Santos, Laura Morelli, Kris Waldherr***

Women driven by spirit and the pulse to create have shaken up, challenged, and broken every social, economic, political barrier and taboo throughout history. SHEstories of the past inspire and inform the present. Join us in this panel-discussion exploring artist-rebel-mystics: how to uncover SHEstories, special considerations, the current marketplace and demand for these stories of female groundbreakers and luminaries of the past.

Nancy Bilyeau is a novelist and magazine editor. She has worked on the staffs of *Rolling Stone*, *Entertainment Weekly*, and *InStyle* magazine. Her Joanna Stafford trilogy is set in Henry VIII's England. She followed that with *The Blue*, set in the porcelain and art workshops of 18th century England and France, and *Dreamland*, a mystery set in 1911 Coney Island. Her next novel, *The Fugitive Colours*, a sequel to *The Blue*, will be published in 2022. She lives with her family in the Catskill Mountains of New York.

Stephanie Renee dos Santos is an artist and writer. She is author of art-inspired historical novel *Cut from the Earth* set in the 18th century Portuguese tile trade during the "Cycle of Masters", and forthcoming *Passion to Paint*, story of a South Asian rebel female painter from the 1930's. *Cut from the Earth* was short-listed for the 2019 Chanticleer International Book Reviews "Chaucer Book Awards". She has published in literary journals *American Athenaeum* and *Lalitamba*, and written features for the *Historical Novel Review* and the Historical Novel Society.

Laura Morelli holds a Ph.D. in art history from Yale University and has taught college students in the United States and in Italy. As a historical novelist, Laura's passion is bringing the stories of art history to life. Her award-winning books include *The Gondola Maker*, *The Painter's Apprentice*, and *The Giant: A Novel of Michelangelo's David*. Laura's latest historical novel, *The Night Portrait*, is based on the creation of one of Leonardo da Vinci's most famous portraits and its theft by the Nazis during World War II.

Kris Waldherr's many books include *Bad Princess*, *Doomed Queens*, and *The Book of Goddesses*. Her debut novel *The Lost History of Dreams* (Atria Books) received a starred *Kirkus* review and was named a CrimeReads Best Book of the Year. As a visual artist, Waldherr is the creator of the Goddess Tarot, which has over a quarter of a million copies in print. She is also a tarotist who teaches the tarot to writers and other creatives. Learn more at KrisWaldherrBooks.com.

Thursday, 10:15-11:15AM (CT)

TEN TIPS FOR RESEARCHING & WRITING HISTORICAL FICTION

Susan Meissner

The best historical novels are a transportive hybrid of fact and fiction that weave the hallmarks of a great story – plot, characters, and motivation – with the most compelling elements of the past – setting and tension. Here are 10 tried and true insights for crafting an unputdownable read that dovetails historical details with a compelling storyline.

Susan Meissner is a *USA Today* bestselling novelist with more than half a million books in print in fifteen languages. Her critically acclaimed works of historical fiction have been named to numerous lists including *Publishers Weekly's* annual roster of 100 best books, *Library Reads* Top Picks, *Real Simple* annual tally of best books, *Booklist's* Top Ten, and *Book of the Month*. She attended Point Loma Nazarene University and when she's not working on a book, she volunteers as a writing workshop facilitator for Words Alive, a non-profit dedicated to helping at-risk youth foster a love for reading and writing.

Thursday, 10:15-11:15AM (CT)

NO, REALLY, I DIDN'T MAKE THIS UP: USING THE HISTORICAL NOVELIST'S TOOLKIT TO WRITE COMPELLING NARRATIVE NONFICTION

Leslie Carroll, Nicole Evelina, Leanna Renee Hieber, Elizabeth Kerri Mahon

Whether your goal as an historical novelist is to "shake up" your writing career, expand your readership, or continue to stay "in contract" (or get one) during these uncertain economic times, one path to success is through the genre of narrative nonfiction. Think of it as historical fiction where you can't make ^&\$&^\$ up. Join a quartet of HNS authors who have successfully published historical nonfiction as they discuss the whys, hows, and how-tos of expanding your HF career into the world of nonfiction.

Leslie Carroll has authored 21 titles in three genres (including historical fiction, under the pseudonyms Amanda Elyot and Juliet Grey). Her novels have been optioned for film and TV and translated into 12 languages; and she's the author/narrator of two audio guides to the State Rooms of Versailles, soon to be released. She's a frequent commentator on royal relationships, appearing on Travel Channel and Canadian History Channel docuseries, the 2020 documentary "Grace of Monaco, Hollywood Princess" for Britain's Channel 5; and global media discussing the Windsors. Leslie's also a professional actress and award-winning audiobook narrator, specializing in historical fiction. www.lesliecarroll.com.

Nicole Evelina is a *USA Today* bestselling author of historical fiction, non-fiction, and women's fiction whose six books have won more than 40 awards, including four Book of the Year designations, the North Street Book Prize and the Sarton Women's Book Award. One of her books, *Madame Presidentess*, was previously optioned for film.

Her fiction tells the stories of strong women from history and today, with a focus on biographical historical fiction, while her non-fiction focuses on women's history. Both share the stories of unknown or little-known figures.

Leanna Renee Hieber is an actress, playwright, tour guide and award-winning, bestselling author of Gothic, Gaslamp Fantasy novels such as the *Strangely Beautiful*, *Magic Most Foul*, *Eterna Files*, *The Spectral City* series and forthcoming work with Serial Box. *A Haunted History of Invisible Women*, Leanna's first foray into non-fiction, focusing on women's narratives in haunted house and ghost stories, will release in 2022 from Kensington Books. She crafts Gothic and Neo-Victorian accessories <http://etsy.com/torchandarow>, works as a ghost tour guide for Boroughs of the Dead and has been featured in film and television on shows like *Mysteries at the Museum*. <http://leannareneehieber.com>.

Elizabeth Kerri Mahon is a native New Yorker, former actress, and history geek. Her first book, *Scandalous Women*, was released in March 2011 to enthusiastic reviews. Her second, *Pretty Evil New York*, will be released in September 2021. In 2011 she was also named RWA NYC's Author of the Year. She has been featured in the H2 show *How Sex Changed the World*, as well as The Travel Channel's *Monumental Mysteries* and the Investigation Discovery show *Tabloid*.

Thursday, 11:30AM-12:30PM (CT)

AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT: Margaret George

Margaret George is the award-winning author of eight epic biographical novels, focusing on the Tudor era (Henry VIII, Mary Queen of Scots, Elizabeth I), and the ancient world (Cleopatra, Helen of Troy, Mary Magdalene, and Nero), six of these New York Times bestsellers, with twenty-one foreign editions and over two million sold internationally since her debut in 1986. Her *The Memoirs of Cleopatra* was made into an Emmy-nominated ABC-TV miniseries in 1999. She has also written a children's book about tortoises. She has been a speaker at Hampton Court, the Tower of London, and the Folger Shakespeare Library, as well as being interviewed on A & E and the History Channel, and twice has been invited to the National Book Festival at the Library of Congress. See her website at margaretgeorge.com.

Thursday, 1:30-2:30PM (CT)

FACT IN FICTION: BRINGING LONG-LOST WORLDS TO LIFE

Thelma Adams, Jodi Daynard, Jane Healey, Joy Jordan-Lake

In this panel, we will discuss how as historical novelists we gather, choose, and incorporate the facts we include in our fictional worlds. How do we cull these facts? Which ones do we consider sacred, and which are we willing to bend a little (or a lot)? How does one include historical information without overwhelming the story? Four bestselling American historical novelists—Jane Healey, Joy Jordan Lake, Thelma Adams, and Jodi Daynard—weigh in on their personal practices and pet peeves, and offer practical tips on how to work with historical facts in every area of a narrative.

Thelma Adams is the author of the Amazon Bestseller, *The Last Woman Standing*, the #1 Amazon bestseller in Jewish Historical Fiction, *Bittersweet Brooklyn*, and the contemporary comedy of manners *Playdate*, an O: The Oprah Magazine pick. A career journalist, her essays and culture writing have appeared in The New York Times, Vanity Fair, The Hollywood Reporter, Variety, Marie Claire and *AARP.com*. She is a Top Critic on *Rotten Tomatoes* and former chair of the New York Film Critics Circle.

Jodi Daynard is the author of the bestselling trilogy that began with *The Midwife's Revolt*. Her fourth historical novel, *A Transcontinental Affair*, was published in 2019. She is also the author of many published essays and stories and book reviews, which have appeared in *The New York Times Book Review*, *The Paris Review*, *The Village*

Voice, The New England Review, and elsewhere. She has taught writing at Harvard University, at MIT, and in the MFA program at Emerson College. Ms. Daynard has just completed a new novel, details to be announced soon.

Jane Healey is the Amazon Charts and *Washington Post* bestselling author of *The Secret Stealers*, *The Beantown Girls* and *The Saturday Evening Girls Club*. When her daughters were young, Jane Healey left a career in high tech to fulfill her dream of writing historical fiction about little-known women in history. It was a passion that has turned into something much more. Jane shares a home north of Boston with her husband, two daughters, and two cats. When she's not writing, she enjoys spending time with her family, traveling, running, cooking, and going to the beach.

Joy Jordan-Lake, although born in Washington, D.C., spent her childhood reading and tromping through woods on the Tennessee mountain where she grew up. With a Ph.D. in English lit., she taught for years, which she loved, but now relishes writing full time. Her eight books include two historical novels, the #1 Amazon bestsellers *Under a Gilded Moon*, set at the Biltmore Estate in 1895, and *A Tangled Mercy*, a dual timeline set Charleston, and an Historical Novel Society Editors' Choice; as well as *Blue Hole Back Home*, winner of the 2009 Christy Award for Best First Novel.

Thursday, 1:30-2:30PM (CT)

FINDING WOMEN'S VOICES IN ANCESTOR STORIES

Lynn Downey, Kathryn Pritchett, Linda Ulleseit

Historical fiction writers often come to their genre through family stories. Intrigued by ancestors' trials and triumphs, they're inspired to turn a handful of anecdotes into a full-blown novel. But creating a compelling work of fiction out of a few facts can prove challenging—especially when writing about women and other marginalized groups whose stories were rarely recorded. Also, strict adherence to an ancestor's story can prove tedious to a larger (non-related) audience. This panel will focus on ways to fill in family history gaps through research and how to enliven stories of underrepresented female ancestors.

Lynn Downey spent her childhood in Marin County, California and now lives in the beautiful town of Sonoma, where her great-great-grandparents settled in 1913. She retired from Levi Strauss & Co. in 2014 and today works as a consulting archivist, historian, and lecturer for libraries, museums, and corporations. She is the author of *Dudes Rush In*, the first of a dude ranch series, as well as *Arequipa Sanatorium: Life in California's Lung Resort for Women*. Lynn is now writing a cultural history of dude ranching for the University of Oklahoma Press, which will be published in 2022.

Kathryn Pritchett grew up on a potato farm in Southeastern Idaho but has spent most of her adult life in the San Francisco Bay Area. After years writing and blogging about design for print and online publications, she's now writing historical fiction. Kathryn is currently seeking representation for her first novel, *The Casket Maker's Other Wife*, a fictionalized account of her Swiss ancestor's 19th century polygamous marriage and work as a frontier midwife in Utah and Idaho. She is working on her second novel, *Maude and Early*, which features actress Maude Adams, J.M. Barrie's muse and the original Peter Pan.

Linda Ulleseit is the author of three Young Adult historical fantasies that are about flying horses in medieval Wales as well as *Under the Almond Trees*, a historical novel set in pioneer California, and *The Aloha Spirit*, set in territorial Hawaii. Linda believes in the unspoken power of women living ordinary lives. Her books are the stories of women in her family who were extraordinary but unsung. Linda is a retired elementary school teacher Linda now writes full time in between traveling with her husband, walking her dogs, and visiting with her two adult sons. She lives in Northern California.

Thursday, 1:30-2:30PM (CT)**CAUSING A SCENE IN INTERWAR PARIS****Michaela Carter, Alex George, Kerri Maher, Whitney Scharer**

Modernism. Surrealism. Journalism. Paris was where every important writer, painter, and photographer went to develop their talents between the wars--and as a result, some of the most important artistic movements of the 20th century were born there, shaking the establishment to its core in ways that still impact us today. This panel brings together novels about the white-hot moments when these movements were developed in cafes, bedrooms, and salons: Whitney Scharer's *The Age of Light*; Kerri Maher's *The Paris Bookseller*; Michaela Carter's *Leonora In the Morning Light*; and Alex George's *The Paris Hours*.

Michaela Carter is a writer, painter, and award-winning poet. She is the author of the novels *Further Out Than You Thought* and *Leonora In the Morning Light*. Her poetry won the Poetry Society of America Los Angeles New Poets Contest, has been nominated for Pushcart Prizes, and has appeared in numerous anthologies and journals. She is the cofounder of the independent bookstore the Peregrine Book Company in Prescott, Arizona, where she lives with her husband and two dogs.

Alex George, a native of England, has published seven novels which have been translated into ten languages. His sixth, *Setting Free the Kites*, won the Missouri Award for Fiction in 2018. His most recent, *The Paris Hours*, was released in May 2020. It was a Book of the Month Club pick and a national bestseller. In addition to his novels, Alex's writing has appeared in *The Washington Post*, *Literary Hub*, and other publications. He's also an attorney.

Kerri Maher is the author of *The Kennedy Debutante*, which *People* called "a riveting reimagining of a true tale of forbidden love," and *The Girl in White Gloves*, which was an HNS Editors' Choice and *Library Reads* selection. Her forthcoming biographical novel, *The Paris Bookseller*, is about bookshop-and-library owner Sylvia Beach, who opened the original Shakespeare and Company in Paris in 1919. A professor of writing for many years, she loves to talk about the craft of writing. Learn more at www.kerrimaher.com.

Whitney Scharer is a writer, teacher, and graphic designer who lives just outside Boston. Her first novel, *The Age of Light*, was a national bestseller and named one of the best books of 2019 by *Parade*, *Glamour Magazine*, *Real Simple*, *Refinery 29*, *Booklist* and Yahoo. Internationally, *The Age of Light* won Le prix Rive Gauche à Paris, was a *coups de couer* selection from the *American Library in Paris*, and has been published in over a dozen other countries. Whitney is the recipient of a 2020 Massachusetts Cultural Council Fellowship, and a co-founder of the Arlington Author Salon reading series.

Thursday, 2:45-3:45PM (CT)**PICK A PLATFORM: BUILDING BRAND BEFORE YOU QUERY****Sara Wigal**

You're done with your draft and ready to send that query to agent. It's just a simple letter away, right? Not quite. Emerging authors are often kept busy with the most obvious task at hand— preparing their manuscript for submission to agents, or for the self-publishing path. But what many writers don't understand is that establishing brand and platform is an essential part of the publishing process that must begin prior to trying to snag that publishing deal. A good query and a complete MS are just part of getting that deal. This presentation will answer questions like: What is an author brand and how can a writer start to develop one? What do agents mean when they talk about "platform" and how can I make mine? What types of digital activities will help me with my brand and platform? How can I use my time

wisely to further my writing career? A nuts-and-bolts approach with tangible applications will be offered to help authors in the early stages of developing their careers start things off on the right foot.

Sara Wigal is an Assistant Professor of Cinema, Television and Media and Director of Publishing at Belmont University. Wigal trained under literary agents, magazine editors, and a major publishing house's marketing department, finally working in literary PR, beginning as an assistant and working her way up to a Senior Manager role. She has been published by *Library Journal*, *The Tennessean*, *Publishers Weekly*, and *Writer's Digest*, and was a featured interview in the *Writer's Digest* "Guide to Literary Agents" 2019 edition. Wigal is the Fundraising Chair for the Next Chapter Society which supports the programming made possible by the Nashville Public Library Foundation. She is the founder of the Nashville Publishing Meetup, which connects publishing professionals. When she doesn't have a book in hand, you can find Professor Wigal snuggling with her two dogs, dancing salsa, or doing DIY projects on her cottage home in Nashville, TN. She is an aspiring historical novelist.

Thursday, 2:45-3:45PM (CT)

THE FICTIONAL IS POLITICAL: HOW TO WRITE INTERESTING POLITICS IN ANY STORY

Carrie Callaghan, Samantha Rajaram

Every story is political. Whether we're writing about court intrigue or interpersonal romance, the power dynamics behind the characters and their world are political. But politics in the past can be devilishly difficult to write, particularly when the complex details are foreign to contemporary readers. This presentation will explore the role of politics in historical fiction and allow writers to understand how their own views of politics inform their writing. You'll deepen your understanding of the role politics plays in all types of historical fiction, and we'll discuss concrete tools for writing engaging politics in our own manuscripts.

Carrie Callaghan is the author of the novels *Salt the Snow* and *A Light of Her Own* (both from CRP/Amberjack). She lives in Maryland with her family and three ridiculous cats. She's something of a political junky, though she hates to admit it.

Samantha Rajaram is the author of *The Company Daughters* (Bookouture). Her essays and short fiction have been published in *Catamaran Literary Reader* and *India Currents*, and she was a contributor to *Our Feet Walk the Sky*, the first South Asian-American anthology published in the US. She lives in the Bay Area with her three children.

Thursday, 2:45-3:45PM (CT)

THE POWER OF VOICE IN HISTORICAL FICTION

Patricia MacEnulty

The single most important quality of a piece of fiction is the power of the narrative voice. It is the voice – a distinct, individual style of writing – which reveals the characters, drives the plot forward and, most importantly, entices the reader to keep reading. This presentation/workshop includes a discussion of the characteristics of narrative voice along with examples of unique and distinctive voices from current historical fiction, as well as exercises designed to let participants explore techniques for discovering their character's own unique voices.

Patricia MacEnulty holds a doctorate in English from the Florida State University. She has published four novels, a short story collection, and a memoir with Profile Books, Livingston Press, and the Feminist Press of City University of New York. She is currently working on a series of historical novels set in the early 20th century.

Thursday, 2:45-3:45PM (CT)

SHOOTING THE SH*T: THE CONNECTION BETWEEN GUNS AND DUNG

Patricia Finney

Fact: on average each human being produces about a quart of urine and a pound of feces (liter and half-kilo) *every single day*. From the first cities to the present, decisions have to be made about what to do with the smelly stuff. This is the story of what the Elizabethans did.

Patricia Finney has been a published writer since she was 18, a long time ago. Her first book was about an Irish harper who killed a king. Twenty-four books later, she has three grown up children and is thoroughly enjoying lockdown. She has had many day-jobs, including newspaper columnist, office cleaner, coffee shop entrepreneur, and stand-up historian. She has lived in Spain and Hungary. Her talk started from the fascinating research she unearthed for *Gloriana's Torch*, her novel of the Spanish Armada. She probably won't be able to resist writing a non-fiction book about it all.

Thursday, 4:00-5:00PM (CT)

THE MARKETING MAGIC OF GREAT COMP TITLES

Pamela Sheppard

Who knew that good COMP titles could help build your marketing plan, provide keywords, improve your SEO, and position your book against the competition? Pamela Sheppard outlines the process of finding great COMPS and mining them for the kind of information you need to market your book effectively.

Pam Sheppard has spent over 25 years in Sales and Marketing with Simon & Schuster, Random House, and Crown Publishers. Those years of experience and 17 years of editing and consulting equip her with a literary ear and street-smart instincts for her clients' projects. New applications of her COMP Analysis Reports have supported the marketing efforts of authors and independent publishers alike.

Thursday, 4:00-5:00PM (CT)

FOUR ON THE FLOOR: BACKGROUND AS FOREGROUND IN HISTORICAL MYSTERIES

Susanna Calkins, LA Chandlar, Colleen Gleason, Gabriel Valjan

Four writers of historical crime fiction share how they bring critical period details to the foreground to inform and shape their mysteries. Whether it's the United States' Capitol building in the Civil War, a 1920s Vanity Kodak camera, The Savoy in New York's Art Deco era, or stolen typewriter ribbons in Cold War Vienna, the familiar becomes significant. The panelists will share how they used specific objects and locations to anchor their plot points as well as explore larger cultural, social, and political issues in their respective historical eras.

Susanna Calkins is the author of the *Lucy Champion Mysteries*, set in 17th century London, and the *Speakeasy Murders*, in 1920s Chicago. Her books have been nominated for multiple awards, including the Anthony, Agatha, Mary Higgins Clark, the Lefty and the Macavity. Dr. Calkins holds a PhD in history. Born and raised in Philadelphia, she lives in the Chicago area with her husband and two sons. She is also the current president of the Sisters in Crime Chicagoland Chapter.

Laurie Chandlar writes and loves everything Art Deco. Like her heroine Lane Sanders, Laurie is fond of her red Mary Janes and a fan of a handcrafted cocktail and the inexhaustible Mayor "Fio" La Guardia. A finalist for the Agatha, the Anthony, a Lefty, Macavity, and the Silver Falchion, Laurie netted the Guides Association of New York Award in 2020. Laurie lives in New York City with her family and two cats named Monty and Maverick.

Colleen Gleason, a *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author, has dipped her pen in several genres, from paranormal romance, mystery and suspense, YA, and, of course, historical fiction. She has a book for every taste and reader. Colleen has written stories set in the Middle Ages, the Regency Period, Lincoln's nineteenth-century America, and even an alternate Victorian London. Colleen lives somewhere in the Midwest with her family and dogs, fingers furious on the keyboard on her next novel.

Gabriel Valjan is the author of the *Roma and the Company Files* series (Winter Goose Publishing) and the *Shane Cleary Mysteries* (Level Best Books). Whether it's contemporary Italy, a Cold War mystery, or Seventies Boston with Shane Cleary, he is known for a turn of phrase and crisp spare prose. His *Naming Game* was a finalist for the Agatha Award for Best Historical Mystery and the Anthony Award for Best Paperback Original in 2020. Gabriel is a member of the Historical Novel Society, ITW, MWA, and Sisters in Crime. Shane's cat is named Delilah, but Gabriel's feline is called Munchkin.

Thursday, 4:00-5:00PM (CT)

SHOWBIZ IN SHAKESPEARE'S TIME

Nicole Galland

Even if you don't know or care who said, "To be or not to be," knowing how Shakespeare's plays were originally performed throws vivid light on the material, economic, and social history of Tudor and Jacobean times. Details about costumes, accents, performance venues, admission prices, music, censorship, what audiences snacked on, how indoor shows were lit, the role of boy-players . . . In this presentation, Nicole Galland will discuss how these details highlight what we know—and what we don't—about daily life in early-modern London.

Nicole Galland is the author of the historical novels *I, Iago*; *Crossed: A Tale of the 4th Crusade*; *Revenge of the Rose*; *Godiva*; and *The Fool's Tale*. (She's also written two contemporary romantic comedies, *On the Same Page* and *Stepdog*.) Her most recent book, *Master of the Revels*, is a Shakespeare-themed time-traveling sequel to the New York Times bestseller, *The Rise and Fall of D.O.D.O.*, which she co-wrote with Neal Stephenson. She has been an invited speaker at events such as the Key West Literary Seminar and the Hay-on-Wye Book Festival. Mostly, she's a Shakespeare nerd.

Thursday, 4:00-5:00PM (CT)

HIDDEN HISTORIES: RECLAIMING OUR LOST HISTORIES THROUGH CULTURAL WRITING

Nancy Johnson, Leslye Penelope, Rita Woods

Three award winning novelists, Rita Woods, Nancy Johnson and Leslye Penelope, will discuss ways to weave history through story, while simultaneously honoring culture and entertaining. They will also address code-switching in literature and in life.

Nancy Johnson is a native of Chicago's South Side and a graduate of Northwestern University. Working for more than a decade as an Emmy nominated, award winning television journalist at CBS and ABC affiliates nationwide, Ms. Johnson writes at the intersection of race and class. Her much heralded debut novel, *The Kindest Lie*, is available now.

Leslye Penelope is an award-winning fantasy and paranormal romance writer. Equally left and right-brained, she studied filmmaking and computer science in college and sometimes dreams in HTML. She hosts the *My Imaginary Friends* podcast and lives in Maryland with her husband and furry dependents. Visit her at <http://www.lpenelope.com>.

Rita Woods is a writer, a Board-Certified Internal Medicine Physician actively practicing as the Medical Director of a large medical center in Suburban Chicago and a trustee on her local Library Board. Her award-winning debut novel, *Remembrance*, named one of NPR's Best Books of 2020, came out in January of 2020. Dr. Woods lives outside of Chicago with her family and house full of cats.

Thursday, 5:00-6:00PM (CT)

LISA SEE'S BOOK CLUB

Join Guest of Honor Lisa See for an hour-long discussion of her 2005 novel, *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*. Attendees may submit questions for Lisa in advance and during the discussion.

In Snow Flower and the Secret Fan, #1 New York Times bestselling author Lisa See takes us on a journey back to a captivating era of Chinese history and delves into one of the most mysterious of human relationships: female friendship.

In nineteenth-century China, in a remote Hunan county, a girl named Lily, at the tender age of seven, is paired with a laotong, an "old same," in an emotional match that will last a lifetime. The laotong, Snow Flower, introduces herself by sending Lily a silk fan on which she has written a poem in nu shu, a unique language that Chinese women created in order to communicate in secret, away from the influence of men. As the years pass, Lily and Snow Flower send messages on the fan and compose stories on handkerchiefs, reaching out of isolation to share their hopes, dreams, and accomplishments. Together they endure the agony of footbinding and reflect upon their arranged marriages, their loneliness, and the joys and tragedies of motherhood. The two find solace in their friendship, developing a bond that keeps their spirits alive. But when a misunderstanding arises, their relationship suddenly threatens to tear apart.

[Click here to buy the book.](#)

Thursday, 6:00-7:00PM (CT)

A VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COUNTER: WHAT INDEPENDENT BOOKSTORES ARE SEEING & DOING IN THE CHANGING WORLD OF BOOKS (COZY CHAT – Attendance limited to 50 people)

Erin Cox, Rae Anne Parker

Chat with a buyer and bookseller from Parnassus Books (Nashville, TN) to discover how independent bookstores are shaking things up. Hear what they're seeing from their unique vantage point as on-the-ground ambassadors for books in their communities. Find out what goes on behind the scenes at your local bookstore, as well as how they're adapting to everything from COVID protocols to changes in readers' buying habits. Learn some best practices for authors who want to build good relationships with their local bookstores.

Erin Cox is a bookseller at Parnassus Books in Nashville, Tennessee. Before moving to Nashville, she worked in marketing at Simon & Schuster and Macmillan in New York City. She also managed the development program for a national nonprofit literacy organization. Erin has an M.S. in Publishing from New York University and B.A. in History from the College of William & Mary in Virginia.

Rae Ann Parker is the Director of Books and Events for Young Readers at Parnassus Books, an independent bookstore in Nashville, Tennessee. She is the program director for the Nashville chapter of the Women's National Book Association.

Thursday, 6:00-7:00PM (CT)

SHAKE UP YOUR STORY WITH ART! (COZY CHAT – Attendance limited to 50 people)

Paula Butterfield, Amy Maroney

In this workshop-style chat, co-hosts Paula Butterfield and Amy Maroney, authors of historical fiction about women artists, will lead a discussion about how to use art to enhance your writing. No matter what genre your WIP falls into, art can be used as a tool for backstory, a memory-trigger, character development, and more. Art can reveal mood, build a setting, and expand a theme. The co-hosts will provide examples from their own novels and others, and we'll brainstorm possible solutions for your plot holes or sagging middles, one-dimensional characters, or generic settings.

Paula Butterfield lives with her husband and daughter in Portland, Oregon. She is a film fanatic, a dance devotee, and a pasta aficionado. Paula has been a travel enthusiast since her first plane flight on her own at age five, and she excels at creating an awesome itinerary. She writes historical fiction about women artists and is currently working on a novel about rival Abstract Expressionist artists in post-war Manhattan.

Amy Maroney lives in Oregon, U.S.A. with her family. When she's not diving down research rabbit holes, she enjoys hiking, drawing, dancing, traveling, and reading. Amy is the author of *The Miramonde Series*, an award-winning historical fiction trilogy about a Renaissance-era female artist and the modern-day scholar on her trail. Amy uses her author platform to raise awareness about the existence of female old masters. She is currently working on a new series set in medieval Rhodes and Cyprus.

Thursday, 6:00-7:00PM (CT)

PUTTING THE MAGIC BACK: WRITING HISTORICAL FANTASY (COZY CHAT – Attendance limited to 50 people)

Zenobia Neil

Witches, gods, magicians, and vengeful ghosts all have their place in historical fiction. Historical fantasy combines two difficult elements of writing: Creating realistic historical worlds as well as adding the worldbuilding of magic. We will discuss what incorporating supernatural elements adds to historical novels, pitfalls to avoid, and how to create a cohesive historical world where jinn lurk in the shadows of bathhouses or vengeful ghosts haunt warriors. Participants will have a chance to deep dive into the topic and discuss what makes historical fantasy special.

Zenobia Neil was born with a shock of red hair and named after an ancient warrior woman who fought against the Romans. In college, she studied Ancient Greece, Voodoo, and world mythology. She writes historical fantasy about the mythic past and Greek and Roman gods having too much fun.

Thursday, 6:00-7:00PM (CT)

GOOD SEX IN HISTORICAL FICTION: A COZY CHAT WITH A ROMANCE AUTHOR (COZY CHAT – Attendance limited to 50 people)

Jennifer Hallock

Romance novels sell billions of dollars of words each year by investing readers deeply in their characters. No matter whether sex is on or off the page, intimacy sells the story. If done right, these scenes advance

the plot and provide raw and honest characterization. If done wrong, a sex scene fail will jolt the reader right out of the story—or worse, garner you the Bad Sex in Fiction award by the *Literary Review*! Come join this cozy chat on the practical dos and don'ts of writing intimate scenes in historical fiction, no matter your level of sensuality.

Jennifer Hallock writes sex scenes that have been described as “a master class,” making readers “feel squiffy in the stomach,” and organically happening “without making sex the focus of the story.” She is the author of the *Sugar Sun* historical romance series set during the Philippine-American War. She spends her days teaching American, Asian, and military history, and her nights writing historical happily-ever-afters. She has lived and worked in the Philippines, but she currently writes at her little brick house on a New England homestead—kept company by her husband, a growing flock of chickens, and a mutt named Wile E.

Thursday, 6:00-10:00PM (CT) **CONVERSATION ROOMS**

One of the best things about a conference is meeting like-minded people who share your interests, and this year is no different! Check out the themed [Conversation Rooms](#) in our Histfic Hub.

Thursday, 7:00-8:00PM (CT) **ENTERTAINMENT: HISTORICAL TRIVIA**

Wind down at the end of the day with trivia time around your favorite subject! Have some laughs, dazzle friends and strangers alike, and best of all, win prizes!

FRIDAY, JUNE 25

Friday, 7:00-9:00AM (CT) **CONVERSATION ROOMS**

One of the best things about a conference is meeting like-minded people who share your interests, and this year is no different! Check out the themed [Conversation Rooms](#) in our Histfic Hub.

Friday, 9:00-10:00AM (CT) **CREATING CHARACTERS WHO BELONG WHERE YOU PUT THEM** ***Janet Benton, Nicole Galland, Aimee Liu, Jennifer Steil***

One of the hardest things about writing stories set in the past can be creating female characters with real agency, given how little agency women have historically been allowed. How do we balance creating a believable woman of the time with giving her the agency necessary to make her interesting and to achieve what a narrative requires of her? This is just one of the challenges we will discuss in this panel about how to create context-sensitive characters who are believable in a given fictional world, characters who don't feel anachronistic.

Janet Benton's novel *Lilli de Jong* was published by Nan A. Talese/Doubleday. Kirkus Reviews called it a “monumental accomplishment,” Library Journal and NPR named it a Best Book of 2017, and it remains an editors'

pick on Amazon. Benton has written for the *New York Times*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Writers' Digest*, and more. She edited and co-wrote award-winning TV documentaries for a series on Philadelphia history, *The Great Experiment*. She holds an M.F.A. from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and a B.A. from Oberlin College. She has taught writing at five universities. She mentors writers through The Word Studio.

Nicole Galland is the author of the historical novels *I, Iago*; *Crossed: A Tale of the 4th Crusade*; *Revenge of the Rose*; *Godiva*; and *The Fool's Tale*. (She's also written two contemporary romantic comedies, *On the Same Page* and *Stepdog*.) Her most recent book, *Master of the Revels*, is a Shakespeare-themed time-traveling sequel to the New York Times bestseller, *The Rise and Fall of D.O.D.O.*, which she co-wrote with Neal Stephenson. She has been an invited speaker at events such as the Key West Literary Seminar and the Hay-on-Wye Book Festival. Mostly, she's a Shakespeare nerd.

Aimee Liu is the bestselling author of the historical novels *Glorious Boy*; *Flash House*; *Cloud Mountain*; and *Face*, as well as the memoirs *Solitaire* and *Gaining*. Her books have been translated into more than a dozen languages. Honors include the Barnes & Noble Discover Award, Bosque Fiction Prize, and Literary Guild Super Release. Her essays have appeared in the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and elsewhere. She has also written or co-authored more than ten books of popular non-fiction. Aimee teaches in Goddard College's MFA in Creative Writing Program at Port Townsend, WA.

Jennifer Steil is an award-winning author of fiction and nonfiction. Her newest book, *Exile Music* (Viking, 2020), is the first novel in English to explore the lives of Austrian Jewish musicians who sought refuge from the Nazis in Bolivia in 1939. Her two previous books are *The Woman Who Fell from the Sky*, a memoir of her experience running a newspaper in Yemen, and *The Ambassador's Wife*, a novel about a hostage crisis inspired by Steil's experience. She currently lives in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. She is now writing a novel about an underground Bolivian community of LGBTQ artists.

Friday, 9:00-10:00AM (CT)

THE CLASSICS REVISITED: SHAKING UP THE BRONTES

Finola Austin, Bella Ellis (Rowan Coleman), Syrie James, Michael Stewart

In this session, the first of two sister panels on 21st-century responses to the *grandes dames* of historical fiction, four historical novelists will share how they found inspiration in the works and lives of the Bronte sisters.

Finola Austin, also known as the Secret Victorianist on her award-winning blog, is an England-born, Northern Ireland-raised, Brooklyn-based historical novelist and lover of the 19th century. Her first novel, *Bronte's Mistress*, about the "wretched woman" who "corrupted" Branwell Bronte, the Bronte sisters' brother, was published in 2020. By day, she works in digital advertising. Find her online at www.finolaaustin.com.

Bella Ellis is the Bronte-inspired pseudonym for *Sunday Times* and *New York Times* bestselling author Rowan Coleman. Rowan is the author of 15 novels including *The Accidental Mother*, *The Day We Met* and *We Are All Made Of Stars*. *The Bronte Mysteries* is a new series of novels that blends fact and fiction to imagine that before the Bronte sisters were world renowned authors they were amateur sleuths.

Syrie James is the bestselling author of 13 critically acclaimed novels published in 21 languages, including many award-winning works of historical fiction. Dubbed the Queen of Nineteenth Century Re-imaginings by *Los Angeles Magazine*, Syrie is a huge fan of Jane Austen, the Brontës, Dracula, and All Things English. A produced screenwriter and playwright, Syrie has given keynote and breakout addresses and served on author panels across North America and in England. Find Syrie on Facebook, Twitter, and at www.syriejames.com.

Michael Stewart's debut novel, *King Crow* was the winner of the *Guardian's* Not-the-Booker Award. Other books include *Couples*, *Cafe Assassin* and *Mr. Jolly*. His latest novel, *Ill Will: The Untold Story of Heathcliff* was inspired by Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*. His next book, *Walking the Invisible*, a hybrid memoir about the Brontes' lives and landscapes, will be published in July 2021. He is also the creator of the *Bronte Stones* project, four monumental stones situated in the landscape between the birthplace and the parsonage, inscribed with poems by Kate Bush, Carol Ann Duffy, Jeannette Winterson and Jackie Kay.

Friday, 9:00-10:00AM (CT)

HISTORY IN HISTORICAL FICTION: MAIN INGREDIENT OR ICING ON THE CAKE?

Margaret Skea

An illustrated exploration of the relevance of history to historical fiction, considering the role history plays as *Inspiration*, *Context*, providing *Plot*, infusing *Colour*, acting as a *Constraint* and as a *Prism* through which to view our 21st century world. This session will provide practical tips and techniques for researching and examining history to show how approaching it from differing angles will bring vitality and authenticity to the story; breathe life into the characters, both historic and fictional; and above all, provide a rooted, immersive, 'you are there' experience for the reader.

Margaret Skea is a multi-award-winning historical novelist and accomplished speaker, workshop presenter and creative writing tutor. Growing up in the violence of "*The Troubles*" in Northern Ireland, much of her writing is concerned with living within conflict, and the pressures that places on families, relationships, and on personal integrity. She is passionate about authenticity in historical fiction and her novels are all set in real history: A Scottish trilogy focusing on a notorious clan feud called the Ayrshire Vendetta and a two-book, fictionalized biography of Katharina von Bora, the escaped nun who married the reformer Martin Luther.

Friday, 9:00-10:00AM (CT)

NOT A DUKE AGAIN: CHANGING THE HERO IN REGENCY ROMANCE [MURDOCH]

Emily E K Murdoch

Dukes, dukes, everywhere! It's almost impossible to read any historical romance without stumbling across at least a dozen. They are literally everywhere! Why do we, as authors, do it? After all, there aren't that many dukes in real life—there never have been. Only 26 dukedoms were ever created in England, at least. Historical romance author Emily E K Murdoch investigates why dukes are so prolific, why readers are desperate for them, and how we can change the heroes in our books going forward without losing any of those readers.

Emily E K Murdoch is a historian and historical romance author. With a Masters in Medieval Studies, she has over 37 historical romance books published. Many of those have been heralded by academic journals for their detailed accuracy, and her genres span from medieval to Westerns to Regency, with different heat levels but—of course—happily ever afters.

Friday, 10:15-11:15AM (CT)

HOW TO NAVIGATE THE WILD WEST OF AUDIOBOOK PRODUCTION

Faith L. Justice

Audiobooks are the fastest growing segment of the publishing market. But how do you get your piece of the pie if your publisher doesn't want to exercise that option? Or you're a hybrid or indie author on a limited budget? It's your time or your money. Join Ms. Justice for an informative discussion on the paths

to market: from print publisher does everything to author-managed outsourced process to author “do-it-yourself.” With eight books out in audio, she’s done it each way and can talk about the pros and cons.

Faith L. Justice (www.faithjustice.com) writes award-winning fiction and articles in Brooklyn, New York. Her work appeared in such publications as *Salon.com*, *Writer’s Digest*, and *The Copperfield Review*. Her most recent book *Dawn Empress: A Novel of Imperial Rome* (from Raggedy Moon Books) is the second in *The Theodosian Woman* series and is available at all the usual places in all formats. Faith is the co-chair of the New York City chapter of the Historical Novel Society and Associate Editor for *Space and Time Magazine*. For fun, she likes to dig in the dirt—her garden and various archaeological sites.

Friday, 10:15-11:15AM (CT)

SHAKE IT UP: WHEN YOUR MAIN CHARACTER IS “UNLIKEABLE”!

Pamela Binnings Ewen

In the literary world, a constant meme is that readers prefer a female protagonist to be likeable—someone to cheer for in the story. But fascinating history is often created by difficult, often unlikeable, women. Many of these complicated women prepared the way for feminism today. In this discussion we will explore ways to create these difficult protagonists without compromising truth, and without prosecuting or defending. I will use characters from my novels and other literature as examples. Although the characters I will utilize in this discussion are female, to a great extent the information covers difficult male characters as well.

Pamela Binnings Ewen is the author one non-fiction book and six historical novels, her most recent being *The Queen of Paris*, a novel of Coco Chanel, which was ranked No. 1 in Hot New Spring Releases in 2020 historical fiction by Amazon Kindle. Before retiring, she practiced law with the international firm of BakerBotts, LLP.

Friday, 10:15-11:15AM (CT)

ART IN HISTORICAL FICTION

Carol Cram, Syrie James, Jeanne Mackin, Laura Morelli

Four authors of historical fiction inspired by the arts share how they draw upon real and imagined stories of artists, musicians, authors, and more. Join Syrie James, author of novels inspired by Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, and Bram Stoker; Jeanne Mackin, author of *The Last Collection* about the rivalry between Coco Chanel and Elsa Schiaparelli and *The Beautiful American* inspired by the photographer Lee Miller; Laura Morelli, author of five arts-inspired novels, including *The Giant* and *The Night Portrait*; and Carol M. Cram, author of three novels inspired by women in the arts: painting, theater, and music.

Carol M. Cram from Vancouver, Canada, is the author of four novels, including the *Women in Art Trilogy* (*The Towers of Tuscany*, *A Woman of Note*, and *The Muse of Fire*). Carol is also the author of over sixty bestselling college textbooks in computer applications and communications and was on faculty at Capilano University in North Vancouver for over two decades.

Syrie James is the bestselling author of 13 critically acclaimed novels published in 21 languages, including many award-winning works of historical fiction. Dubbed the Queen of Nineteenth Century Re-imaginings by *Los Angeles Magazine*, Syrie is a huge fan of Jane Austen, the Brontës, Dracula, and All Things English. A produced screenwriter and playwright, Syrie has given keynote and breakout addresses and served on author panels across North America and in England. Find Syrie on Facebook, Twitter, and at www.syriejames.com.

Jeanne Mackin from New York is the author of six novels; the most recent is *The Last Collection: A Novel of Elsa Schiaparelli and Coco Chanel*, which has been translated into five languages. An earlier novel, the award-winning *The Beautiful American*, is based on the life of photographer Lee Miller, and mysteries written under a nom de plume have been translated into Japanese. She lives in central New York in a two-hundred-year-old farmhouse complete with a few wandering spirits.

Laura Morelli from Georgia holds a Ph.D. in art history from Yale University and has taught college students in the United States and in Italy. She is a long-time trusted guide in the world of cultural travel and authentic shopping, known for her *Authentic Arts* guidebook series that includes *Made In Italy* and other guides. She has been a columnist for *National Geographic Traveler* and *Italy Magazine*, and has developed lessons for TED-Ed.

Friday, 10:15-11:15AM (CT)

SHATTERING THE MYTH OF WOMEN IN THE WEST

Wendy Voorsanger

You know the familiar myths of women in the old West: The helpless barmaid waiting around a dusty saloon for a brave cowboy or lawman to rescue her and make her an honest woman. Or the hysterical, violent vixen slinging a gun. Authentic historical novels of the Old West include female characters inspired by real women who enjoyed laws not granted to women in East. Those women owned property, made contracts, got divorced, kept custody of their children, and worked at a variety of jobs to build the fast-growing society of the West.

Wendy Voorsanger, born and raised on the American River in Sacramento, has long held an intense interest in the historical women of California, which she chronicles in the blog ShelsCalifornia.net. *Prospects of a Woman*, her debut historical novel, published in October 2020. She earned a BA in journalism from California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo and an MFA from the Vermont College of Fine Arts. She is a member of the Castro Writers' Cooperative, the Lit Camp Advisory Board, the San Mateo Public Library Literary Society, and Historical Novel Society. www.wendyvoorsanger.net.

Friday, 11:30AM-12:30PM (CT)

AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT: Elizabeth Chadwick

Elizabeth Chadwick is a multi-award winning top selling historical novelist with 27 novels in print translated into 18 languages. Her novel *The Greatest Knight* is a *New York Times* bestseller and has been optioned for film and TV, and her novel *The Scarlet Lion* was included in founder of the Historical Novel Society Richard Lee's top ten novels of the decade.

Friday, 1:30-2:30PM (CT)

RECENT DEBUTS TELL ALL: THE INSIDE SCOOP ON THE DEBUT EXPERIENCE

Denny S. Bryce, Elizabeth Everett, Sarah Penner

No secrets allowed: hear from this panel of 2021 historical fiction debut authors as they “tell all” about their debut experience! These authors are traditionally-published across three separate publishers, which makes for a great industry overview. Topics for discussion include what they wish they'd known before their book deals; the truth about interactions with editors and publicists; the financial realities of a book deal; and debuting in a pandemic. The session will end with plenty of time for FAQ; don't hold back on those burning questions you've been scared to ask!

Denny S. Bryce, an award-winning recipient of the RWA Golden Heart®, was a three-time GH finalist, including twice for *Wild Women and the Blues*, her debut novel. She also writes book reviews for NPR Books and entertainment articles for FROLIC Media. Additionally, the former professional dancer and public relations professional is a self-proclaimed history geek. She credits this obsession to her maternal grandmother, Ella Elizabeth Joseph, who immigrated from Montego Bay, Jamaica, to New York City in 1923. Recently, Denny relocated from Northern Virginia to Savannah, Georgia. She is represented by Nalini Akolekar, Spencerhill Associates.

Elizabeth Everett lives in Upstate New York with her family. She likes going for long walks or (very) short runs to nearby sites that figure prominently in the history of civil rights and women's suffrage. Everett is a passionate advocate for the romance genre and would like for anyone about to cast a stone to read a romance novel written in the past ten years. *A Lady's Formula for Love* is her first novel in *The Secret Scientists of London* series, inspired by her admiration for rule breakers and belief in the power of love to change the world.

Sarah Penner is the debut author of *The Lost Apothecary* (March 2021, Park Row Books/HarperCollins), which has been translated into more than fifteen languages. She lives in St. Petersburg, Florida with her husband. When not writing, Sarah enjoys running, cooking, and hot yoga. To learn more, find Sarah on social media or visit www.SarahPenner.com.

Friday, 1:30-2:30PM (CT)

CROSSING TIMELINES: WRITING THE DUAL-NARRATIVE NOVEL

Marty Ambrose, Jeannette de Beauvoir, D.M. Pulley, Susan Meissner

The dual narrative is a storytelling technique that has been used effectively throughout literature to deepen and expand plotlines, characters, and context. Multiple timelines or points of view create a more flexible story structure and opportunities to cross genres with heightened mystery, suspense, and intrigue. Join four authors who use the technique as they discuss examples of dual narratives and narrators, share tips and pitfalls, and help you determine if it's right for your project.

Marty Ambrose has been consumed with the world of literature, whether teaching in the MFA Program at Southern New Hampshire University or creating her own fiction. She completed her M.Phil. at the University of York (England), specializing in the British Romantics poets; and her fiction writing career has spanned almost fifteen years, with eight published novels. Marty's first book in a historical trilogy, *Claire's Last Secret*, (Severn House, 2018) combines memoir and mystery in a dual narrative of the Byron/Shelley "haunted summer." Her second novel, *A Shadowed Fate*, came out this past spring, earning a starred review by *Publishers Weekly*.

Jeannette de Beauvoir is an award-winning author of mystery and historical fiction—and of books that combine the two genres. She herself lives and writes in a cottage in Provincetown, Massachusetts, and loves the rich history of Land's End. She's a member of the Authors Guild, the Mystery Writers of America, Sisters in Crime, and the Historical Novel Society. She also teaches writing courses both online and onsite. Find out more—and read her blog—at her website, jeannettedebeauvoir.com. You can also find her on Facebook, Instagram, Patreon, Amazon, and Goodreads.

D.M. Pulley, before becoming a full-time writer, worked as a Professional Engineer rehabbing historic structures and investigating building failures. Pulley's survey of a vacant building in Cleveland inspired her debut novel, *THE DEAD KEY*, winner of the 2014 Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award. Since then, Pulley has sold over a half a million books worldwide, and her work has been translated into eight different languages. Pulley's historical thrillers shine a light into the darker side of life in the Midwest during the twentieth century. The abandoned buildings, haunted houses, and buried past of the Rust Belt continue to inspire her work.

Susan Meissner is a USA Today bestselling novelist with more than half a million books in print in fifteen languages. Her critically acclaimed works of historical fiction have been named to numerous lists including Publishers Weekly's annual roster of 100 best books, Library Reads Top Picks, Real Simple annual tally of best books, Booklist's Top Ten, and Book of the Month. She attended Point Loma Nazarene University and when she's not working on a book, she volunteers as a writing workshop facilitator for Words Alive, a non-profit dedicated to helping at-risk youth foster a love for reading and writing.

Friday, 1:30-2:30PM (CT)

ABA OR CBA: WHICH IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

Sarah Loudin Thomas

Christian fiction has often been labeled as boring, preachy, and tame. But as Christian publishers tackle more issues and edgier material, authors may wonder whether their writing is a better fit for the ABA (American Booksellers Association) or CBA (Christian Booksellers Association). This discussion will explore the differences between the two, will openly discuss what likely will (and won't) fly in Christian fiction, and will give authors some tools to help decide where their writing will be most at home. We'll chat about all the topics including cussing, sex, and violence!

Sarah Loudin Thomas is the seventh generation to grow up on her family's farm in West Virginia and her fiction celebrates that Appalachian heritage. A fund-raiser for a children's ministry, Sarah has time to write because she doesn't have children of her own. She is the author of the acclaimed novels *The Right Kind of Fool* and *Miracle in a Dry Season*—winner of the 2015 Inspy Award. Sarah has also been a finalist for the Christy Award, ACFW Carol Award and the Christian Book of the Year Award. She and her husband live near Asheville, NC.

Friday, 1:30-2:30PM (CT)

WHAT HAPPENED OR WHAT IF? CHOOSING BETWEEN BIOGRAPHICAL AND NON-BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORICAL FICTION

Marie Benedict, Jasmin Darznik, Greer Macallister, Heather Webb

We're all inspired by history, but when you're deciding to write a new novel, how closely do you stick to that initial inspiration? We'll talk about the choice between writing biographical historical fiction and the kind of historical fiction that's more loosely inspired by real-life events and/or figures. What are the benefits and drawbacks of each? Which do publishers want to see? What do readers prefer? Our panelists will each share their experience drawing inspiration from history to concoct original plots and characters as well as writing biographical novels about real-life women from history.

Marie Benedict is on a mission to excavate from the past the most important, complex and fascinating women of history and bring them and their contributions into the light of present-day. She is the *New York Times* and *USA Today* best-selling author of *The Mystery of Mrs. Christie*, *Lady Clementine*, *The Only Woman in the Room*, *Carnegie's Maid* and *The Other Einstein*. Her first co-written novel, *The Personal Librarian*, with the talented Victoria Christopher Murray, will be released on June 29, 2021. Her books have been Indie Next Picks, Library Reads Picks, a Target Book Club Pick, a Costco Book Club Pick, as well as a Barnes & Noble Book Club Pick—and have been translated into multiple languages.

Jasmin Darznik is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Bohemians* (April 2021), a novel that imagines the friendship between photographer Dorothea Lange and her Chinese American assistant in 1920s San Francisco. Her debut novel, *Song of a Captive Bird*, was a *New York Times Book Review* "Editors' Choice" book and a *Los Angeles Times* bestseller. Darznik is also the author of *The Good Daughter: A Memoir of My Mother's Hidden Life*. Her

books have been published in eighteen countries and her essays have appeared in the New York Times, Washington Post, and Los Angeles Times, among others.

Greer Macallister earned her MFA in creative writing from American University. Her new book, *The Arctic Fury*, was named an Indie Next and Library Reads pick and an Amazon Best Book of the Month. Her debut novel *The Magician's Lie* was a *USA Today* bestseller, an Indie Next pick, and a Target Book Club selection. She is also the author of *Girl in Disguise* and *Woman 99*, optioned for TV by Made Up Stories and Nina Dobrev. A regular contributor to *Writer Unboxed* and the *Chicago Review of Books*, she lives with her family in Washington, DC. www.greermacallister.com.

Heather Webb is a *USA Today* bestselling and award-winning author of historical fiction. In 2018, *Last Christmas in Paris* won the Women's Fiction Writers Association STAR Award, and in 2019, *Meet Me in Monaco* was a finalist for the Goldsboro RNA award, as well as the Digital Book World's Fiction prize. Up and coming, *The Next Ship Home* is a novel of Ellis Island's dark secrets and the women who confronted a corrupt system to alter their fate as well as the immigrants who came after them. To date, Heather's works have been translated to over a dozen languages.

Friday, 2:45-3:45PM (CT)

SETTING THE SCENE: EXPLORING HISTORICAL SETTINGS THROUGH GENRES

Ana Brazil, Edie Cay, Lynn Downey, C.V. Lee

Setting is so much more than just a time and a place. For historical fiction genres like romance, mystery, family sagas, and westerns, setting defines and sets expectations for both characters and plot. In this craft panel, four historical genre authors share why they love their chosen genres, how they build their specific worlds, and how the settings of their genre are both universal and unique within historical fiction. A fresh way to look at, enjoy, and possibly write historical genres.

Ana Brazil is the author of the historical mystery *Fanny Newcomb and the Irish Channel Ripper* (Sand Hill Review Press) and writes historical crime fiction that celebrates bodacious American heroines. Her short stories include "Kate Chopin Tussles with a Novel Ending" (Fault Lines anthology), "Miss Evelyn Nesbit Presents" (Me Too Short Stories: An Anthology), and "Mr. Borden does not quite remem--" (Kings River Life). Her work-in-progress features a bodacious vaudeville singer beset with murder, mistaken identity, and multiple romances in 1919 San Francisco. Ana lives in Northern California.

Edie Cay's debut novel *A Lady's Revenge* won the Golden Leaf Best First Book Award, hosted by the New Jersey chapter of the Romance Writers of America. The second in the series, *The Boxer and the Blacksmith*, won the 2019 Legends Award from Hearts Through History. Drawing on the history of women's boxing in nineteenth century London, Cay uses themes of found family and relatable misfits. She is currently at work on the third in the series, *A Lady's Finder*, as well as a literary novel titled *Square Grand*, set in North Dakota at the turn of the 20th century.

Lynn Downey spent her childhood in Marin County, California and now lives in the beautiful town of Sonoma, where her great-great-grandparents settled in 1913. She retired from Levi Strauss & Co. in 2014 and today works as a consulting archivist, historian, and lecturer for libraries, museums, and corporations. She is the author of *Dudes Rush In*, the first of a dude ranch series, as well as *Arequipa Sanatorium: Life in California's Lung Resort for Women*. Lynn is now writing a cultural history of dude ranching for the University of Oklahoma Press, which will be published in 2022.

C.V. Lee is new to the writing world although the seed for her work-in-progress, *Roses & Rebels*, set during the era of the Wars of the Roses, was planted 20 years ago. She writes historical family saga, featuring real people whose lives were shaped by the events of their day. Her next WIP, *Helier*, now in its infancy stage, will follow the same family through the years of the Renaissance and the Reformation.

Friday, 2:45-3:45PM (CT)

WRITING HISTORICAL FICTION ABOUT NATIVE AMERICANS

Danielle Apple, Elizabeth Bell, Michael Ross

This panel will describe the challenges in writing about Native Americans in the areas of research, language and culture, obtaining cross-cultural help and cooperation, effectively transmitting oral histories, and dealing with the publishing industry for Native American stories.

Danielle Apple is publishing her debut gothic saga this year. A “new” author and Cherokee language learner, she gives some insight as to how a person with limited funds can grow personally and professionally. While her own project includes 1800’s Cherokee characters, Danielle seeks to inspire people to learn more about our nation’s history from Indigenous authors. When she’s not pursuing research bunny trails, Danielle is reading. Her happy place is cozying up on the couch with her dog and a 19th-century gothic novel, but you’ll also find her hiking and exploring ghost towns and forgotten graveyards.

Elizabeth Bell has been writing stories since the second grade. Upon earning her MFA in Creative Writing, Elizabeth realized she would have to return her two hundred library books. Instead, she cleverly found a job in the university library. Her historical series the *Lazare Family Saga* follows a multiracial family struggling to understand where they belong in the young United States. The first book, *Necessary Sins*, was a Finalist in the Foreword Indies Book of the Year Awards. The second book, *Lost Saints*, was an Editors’ Choice in the *Historical Novels Review*. Visit Elizabeth online at <https://elizabethbellauthor.com>.

Michael Ross has released two novels in the *Across the Great Divide* series. *The Clouds of War* was a finalist for book of the year in the Coffee Pot Book Club and an Amazon bestseller and his latest novel focuses on Red Cloud's War and the Shoshone culture. He is a member of the HNS Board and blogs regularly on American history.

Friday, 2:45-3:45PM (CT)

SHAKING UP TIME'S FLOWING STREAMS: WRITING ANCIENT & MEDIEVAL HISTORICAL FICTION

Tinney S. Heath, James Conroyd Martin, Judith Starkston, Eileen Stephenson

Shaking up preconceived ideas about the lives of those who lived before 1500 reveals a colorful mosaic of intriguing characters. Ancient and medieval periods are rich sources for compelling stories that bring to life the people who lived long before us. Many imagine that ancient and medieval people lived in mud huts or marble cities, that they were all illiterate peasants, their lives nasty, brutish and short, or glittering royalty in fancy dress with easy lives. This panel will discuss how to ferret around in some of history’s dustier corners to discover unexpected and lively tales to enthrall modern readers.

Tinney Sue Heath’s background is in journalism, but now she writes fiction set in medieval Italy. When she is not writing, you will probably find her playing medieval and Renaissance music on a variety of peculiar early instruments. She lives in Madison, Wisconsin with her husband but travels to Italy as often as possible, for research and other pleasures. Her first novel, *A Thing Done*, won the Sharp Writ Book Award. Learn more about her work at www.tinneyheath.com.

James Conroyd Martin is the hybrid author of *Push Not the River*, a novel based on the diary of a countess in 1790s Poland; *Against a Crimson Sky*, which continues the family saga into the Napoleonic era; and *The Warsaw Conspiracy*, detailing the young Polish cadets' rising against the mighty Russia. His most recent novel is *Fortune's Child*, the first of a duology based on the life of Empress Theodora. The second one is due later this year. In the Chanticleer International Book Awards *Fortune's Child* won the 2019 Grand Prize, Book of the Year 2019.

Judith Starkston has spent too much time exploring the remains of the ancient worlds of the Greeks and Hittites. Early on she went so far as to get degrees in Classics from the University of California, Santa Cruz and Cornell. She loves myths and telling stories. This has gotten more and more out of hand. Her solution is her brand: Fantasy and Magic in a Bronze Age World. *Hand of Fire* was a semi-finalist for the M.M. Bennett's Award for Historical Fiction. *Priestess of Ishana* won the San Diego State University Conference Choice Award. Find out more at www.judithstarkston.com.

Eileen Stephenson, a lifelong ardent admirer of ancient and medieval history, is the author of three books about the Byzantine Empire. The first was the short story collection, *Tales of Byzantium*. The second was the novel, *Imperial Passions: The Porta Aurea*, the first of two books about the life of Anna Dalassena, the mother of the first Comnene Byzantine emperor, short-listed for the Chanticleer International Book Awards Chaucer Award in 2018. Her most recent book was a non-fiction history, *Byzantine History in the 11th Century: A Brief Introduction*, about the Byzantine Empire during this pivotal century.

Friday, 2:45-3:45PM (CT)

WHY READ (OR WRITE) HISTORICAL FICTION?

Larry Zuckerman

As readers or writers, we each come to historical fiction from differing perspectives and passions. That much seems too obvious to merit discussion. Yet this presentation proposes that despite varying tastes and sensibilities, we're all looking for the same thing: what makes us human. Comparing historical fiction to a house that feels lived in, reviewer, editor, and author Larry Zuckerman will suggest, with examples and artwork, what builds that house—empathy, contrast between past and present, recognition of who we are and how we got that way, respect for our forebears, and understanding what can change our world.

Larry Zuckerman, for the past six and a half years, has reviewed one historical novel a week on his blog, *Novelhistorian*. During much of that time, he has also reviewed for *Historical Novels Review*, of which he has served as an editor for the past year and a half. A published historian, he has turned to writing historical fiction, most often setting his novels during or around the First World War, on which he is an expert. He is also a former editor, having worked for book publishers, magazines, and a business newspaper. He lives in Seattle.

Friday, 4:00-5:00PM (CT)

SOCIAL MEDIA FROM SCRATCH: CRAFTING YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

Elizabeth Blackwell

Whether you're an indie author or traditionally published, all writers today are expected to have a social-media presence. But where should you start? This presentation covers the pros and cons of Facebook, Instagram and Twitter for promoting historical fiction and connecting with other writers online. Using real-life examples, we'll look at how authors are tailoring their messages to different platforms—and inspire you to do the same.

Elizabeth Blackwell writes about women who reinvent themselves after surviving dramatic historical events. She is the author of *Red Mistress*, *On a Cold Dark Sea*, *In the Shadow of Lakecrest* and *While Beauty Slept*. A former magazine editor, she lives in the Chicago suburbs with her family and an ever-growing stack of must-read books.

Friday, 4:00-5:00PM (CT)

CONNECTING MAINSTREAM AUDIENCES TO UNFAMILIAR HISTORICAL PERIODS

Janie Chang, Jeannie Lin, Weina Dai Randel, Lisa See

Historical novelists always grapple with the challenge of making our characters and time period come alive for readers. There's an extra challenge when it comes to engaging readers with what could be an unfamiliar culture and history. How do authors deal with issues such as names, cultural expectations, family dynamics, and use of language? Join four award-winning and bestselling authors of Asian-set historical novels as they share their experiences creating universal narratives with broad appeal that allow audiences to connect and immerse themselves into unfamiliar worlds and cultures.

Janie Chang writes historical fiction with a personal connection, drawing from a family history with 36 generations of recorded genealogy. Her first novel, *Three Souls*, was a finalist for the 2014 BC Book Prizes Fiction Prize and her second novel, *Dragon Springs Road*, was a *Globe and Mail* national bestseller. Both were nominated for the International Dublin Literary Award. Her third book, *The Library of Legends*, released in May 2020, is a *Globe and Mail* national bestseller.

Jeannie Lin, a *USA Today* bestselling author, started writing her first book while working as a high school science teacher in South Central Los Angeles. Her stories are inspired by a mix of historical research and wuxia adventure tales. Jeannie's groundbreaking historical romances set in Tang Dynasty China have received multiple awards, including the Golden Heart for her debut novel, *Butterfly Swords*. Jeannie also writes an Opium War steampunk series, the *Gunpowder Chronicles*. Her historical erotica series, *Princess Shanyin*, is written under the pen name Lilliana Lee.

Weina Dai Randel is the award-winning author of *The Moon in the Palace* and *The Empress of Bright Moon*, a historical novel series of Empress Wu of China. *The Moon in the Palace* was the winner of the RWA RITA® Award, a Goodreads Choice Award nominee, and called one of the Biggest Historical Fiction books of 2016 by Bookbub. Her forthcoming novel, *The Last Rose of Shanghai*, a WWII novel of love and redemption, will be published in November, 2021. Weina lives in Texas.

Lisa See is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane*, *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*, *Peony in Love*, *Shanghai Girls*, *China Dolls*, and *Dreams of Joy*, which debuted at #1. She is also the author of *On Gold Mountain*, which tells the story of her Chinese American family's settlement in Los Angeles. Ms. See has also written a mystery series that takes place in China. Her books have been published in 39 languages. See was the recipient of the Golden Spike Award from the Chinese Historical Association of Southern California and the History Maker's Award from the Chinese American Museum. She was also named National Woman of the Year by the Organization of Chinese American Women.

Friday, 4:00-5:00PM (CT)

SAINTS, SEERS, AND HERETICS: EVOKING THE SPIRITUAL WORLD IN HISTORICAL FICTION

Nancy Bilyeau, Glen Craney, Tinney S. Heath, Mitchell James Kaplan

Novels featuring religious figures risk veering between hagiography and fantasy. Yet the men and women of the past who laid siege to Heaven confronted enemies and perils no less dangerous than those met by statesmen and warriors. Our panelists will discuss the challenges in writing about the Ages of Faith, including: Building authentic interior worlds and describing mystical experiences; creating tension and drama in the monasteries and convents; romance story techniques for the divine relationship; using mysteries to convey theological disputes; mining literary criticism of sacred texts; and explaining ancient and medieval belief systems for modern readers.

Nancy Bilyeau is a magazine editor and author whose books include *The Crown*, *The Chalice*, and *The Tapestry*, a trilogy whose main character, Dominican novice Joanna Stafford, struggles to survive Henry VIII's Dissolution of the

Monasteries. She has also written *The Blue*, a thriller about a Huguenot woman painter in the 18th century, and is currently working on its sequel, *The Fugitive Colours*. She lives in Woodstock, New York, with her family.

Glen Craney is a novelist, screenwriter, and journalist. His fiction has taken readers to Occitania of the Albigensian Crusade, Scotland of Robert the Bruce, and Portugal during the Age of Discovery. *The Fire and the Light*, a Foreword Magazine BOTYA Finalist, tells the story of the Cathars, a 13th-century sect massacred by the Church. He has explored the religious lives of the 14th-century Culdees and Henry the Navigator's secretive Order of Christ. A Chaucer Award First-Place Winner and Nicholl Fellowship recipient from the Academy of Motion Pictures, Arts and Sciences, he has served as president of the HNS SoCal Chapter.

Tinney Sue Heath has a journalism background and writes about medieval Italy. Her book *Lady of the Seven Suns: A Novel of the Woman Saint Francis Called Brother* is based on the life of Lady Giacoma dei Settesoli, an early and devout follower of Francis of Assisi. Saints Francis and Clare figure prominently in Giacoma's story, as do popes, cardinals, early Franciscan brothers, and secular men and women from all walks of life. When she is not writing about medieval Italy, you will probably find her playing medieval and Renaissance Italian music on a variety of peculiar early instruments.

Mitchell James Kaplan graduated with Honors in English Literature from Yale University, where William Styron encouraged him to become a novelist, and where he won the prestigious Paine Memorial Prize. His novels include *By Fire, By Water*, set during the Spanish Inquisition, and *Into The Unbounded Night*, the story of first century Rome and the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem. He travels to industrial facilities around the world to help prevent and curtail environmental accidents. A licensed private pilot, he plays classical and jazz flute and lives with his family and their cats in Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains.

Friday, 4:00-5:00PM (CT)

USING ART TO INSPIRE STORY

Carol M. Cram, Elisabeth Storrs

In a lively, hands-on workshop, historical novelists Carol M. Cram (*Women in Art Trilogy*) and Elisabeth Storrs (*Tales of Ancient Rome Saga*) share techniques for using imagery found in paintings, ceramics, sculptures, cartoons, drawings, and *objets d'art* as inspiration for historical fiction. Topics include using art objects to determine the moral and social priorities of an historical era, identifying the significance of period clothing, using art for plot and characterization, and decoding period-specific symbolism. The workshop includes an interactive component in which participants apply the techniques discussed to "deconstruct" sample works of art.

Carol M. Cram from Vancouver, Canada, is the author of four novels, including the *Women in Art Trilogy* (*The Towers of Tuscany, A Woman of Note, and The Muse of Fire*) and *Love Among the Recipes*. Carol is the founder of Art In Fiction and the Art In Fiction Podcast, the author of over sixty bestselling college textbooks in computer applications and communications, and the founder and Artistic Director of the Bowen Island Writers' Festival. She was also on faculty at Capilano University in North Vancouver for over two decades and holds an MA in Drama and an MBA.

Elisabeth Storrs is an Australian author who graduated from the University of Sydney in Arts Law, having studied Classics. The three novels in *A Tale of Ancient Rome Saga* vividly describe the world of Etruria, a sophisticated society which heavily influenced Rome from republican to imperial times. She is the founder of the Historical Novel Society Australasia (HNSA) and the program director for the HNSA conferences. In 2020, she founded the \$60,000 ARA Historical Novel Prize. Her novels inspired an archaeologist to feature the books' characters in an audio-visual exhibition of Etruscan statuary at the Museo dell'Agro Veientano in Rome.

Friday, 4:00-5:00PM (CT)**COLD READS**

All attendees at HNS 2021 are welcome to participate in the Cold Reads sessions. Authors can attend either or both sessions. There is no advance signup. Literary agents and/or editors interested in historical fiction will give real-time critique sessions of authors' opening pages. A volunteer cold-reads the first page aloud for the audience and panel and then panelists provide feedback on what works and what doesn't work for them and why.

Friday, 5:00-6:00PM (CT)**LISA SEE'S BOOK CLUB**

Join Guest of Honor Lisa See for an hour-long discussion of her 2017 novel, *The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane*. Attendees may submit questions for Lisa in advance and during the discussion.

From #1 New York Times bestselling author Lisa See, "one of those special writers capable of delivering both poetry and plot" (The New York Times Book Review), a moving novel about tradition, tea farming, and the bonds between mothers and daughters.

In their remote mountain village, Li-yan and her family align their lives around the seasons and the farming of tea. For the Akha people, ensconced in ritual and routine, life goes on as it has for generations—until a stranger appears at the village gate in a jeep, the first automobile any of the villagers has ever seen.

The stranger's arrival marks the first entrance of the modern world in the lives of the Akha people. Slowly, Li-yan, one of the few educated girls on her mountain, begins to reject the customs that shaped her early life. When she has a baby out of wedlock—conceived with a man her parents consider a poor choice—she rejects the tradition that would compel her to give the child over to be killed, and instead leaves her, wrapped in a blanket with a tea cake tucked in its folds, near an orphanage in a nearby city.

As Li-yan comes into herself, leaving her insular village for an education, a business, and city life, her daughter, Haley, is raised in California by loving adoptive parents. Despite her privileged childhood, Haley wonders about her origins. Across the ocean Li-yan longs for her lost daughter. Over the course of years, each searches for meaning in the study of Pu'er, the tea that has shaped their family's destiny for centuries.

*A powerful story about circumstances, culture, and distance, *The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane* paints an unforgettable portrait of a little known region and its people and celebrates the bond of family.*

[Click here to buy the book.](#)

Friday, 6:00-7:00PM (CT)**CROSS-GENRE? YOU BET! A COZY CHAT WITH AWARD-WINNING, BESTSELLING AUTHORS ABOUT NAVIGATING MULTIPLE GENRES (COZY CHAT – Attendance limited to 50 people)**

Leanna Renee Hieber, Deanna Raybourn

Are you a mystery writer? A historical fiction writer? A fantasy writer? How about romance? If you answered yes to several of these questions in regard to the same book, you're in good company. That's what these authors have made a career of: not seeing a sole genre as a limitation. A lifetime of cross-genre books can, however, be tricky. Learn from two authors with a whole lot of books under their belts about the ways to navigate publishing when you're on more than one shelf, from dreaming to drafting to marketing, and how to embrace all of it!

Leanna Renee Hieber is an actress, playwright, tour guide and award-winning, bestselling author of Gothic, Gaslamp Fantasy novels for Tor and Kensington such as the *Strangely Beautiful* and *The Spectral City* series. *A Haunted History of Invisible Women*, Leanna's first foray into non-fiction, focusing on women's narratives in haunted house and ghost stories, will release in 2022 (Kensington). Her work has won 4 Prism awards and has been included in numerous notable anthologies and has been translated into many languages. A Manhattan ghost tour guide, Hieber has been featured in film and television on shows like *Mysteries at the Museum*.

Deanna Raybourn, the *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling novelist of the Julia Grey and Veronica Speedwell historical mystery series, is a 6th-generation native Texan. She graduated with a double major in English and history from the University of Texas at San Antonio. Married to her college sweetheart and the mother of one, Raybourn makes her home in Virginia. *Silent in the Grave* won the RT Reviewers' Choice Award for Best First Mystery. Her work has been nominated for an Agatha, a Last Laugh, and more. *A Treacherous Curse* was nominated for the 2019 Edgar Award for Best Novel.

Friday, 6:00-7:00PM (CT)

REPRESENTING INVISIBLE ILLNESSES IN HISTORICAL FICTION (COZY CHAT – Attendance limited to 50 people)

K. Orme

Illness is a tale as old as time. We tend to see these unfortunate characters throughout historical fiction. Poor Tiny Tim probably had rickets and tuberculosis, according to Russel Chesney. But there are thousands of people who live ill yet show nothing for it. However, underneath the fair façade, there is an ache. A barren woman with extra weight in the 1700s wouldn't know she most likely had polycystic ovary syndrome. This presentation will be about representing various "invisible illnesses" throughout historical fiction, focusing mainly on PCOS, POTS, and chronic pain, and all the accoutrements those maladies produce.

K. Orme, the owner of Tea Notes Press, has been writing for over 15 years and still continues to learn and grow in her craft, with a BA in History and Creative Writing. K. has multiple finished novel manuscripts, all ready for some revisions with each in a planned series. Her debut novel, *Pondered in Her Heart*, is set to be released in early 2021. She has received numerous awards for her writing and accolades from editors at conferences. But, most importantly, she is the proud mommy of Grantaire, her SDiT, and cares deeply about representing invisible illnesses in fiction.

Friday, 6:00-7:00PM (CT)

RIB REMOVAL AND PROPPED-UP CORPSES: MYTHS ABOUT THE VICTORIANS (COZY CHAT – Attendance limited to 50 people)

Susan Higginbotham

Prudes who could not even bear the sight of an uncovered furniture leg. Women so desperate to achieve perfect waists that they had their ribs removed. A culture obsessed with death, yet so fearful of it that when a person died, he or she was photographed as if still alive. Although the Victorian era is

extremely well documented, myths like these, some old and some new, abound, and have been given fresh life by the Internet. Led by your corseted hostess, we'll discuss the origins of these and other fallacies and look for the nuggets of truth buried within them.

Susan Higginbotham turned to nineteenth-century America after writing several novels set in medieval and Tudor England; her latest, *The First Lady and the Rebel*, tells the story of Mary Lincoln and Emily Todd Helm, half-sisters who find themselves on opposite sides of civil war. A diligent researcher who loves digging through archives, Susan is also the author of two biographies and a number of articles. Having developed a taste for American history, Susan is completing *John Brown's Women*, about the wife, daughter, and daughter-in-law who stood behind—and stood up for—the American abolitionist. Susan enjoys traveling and collecting photographs.

Friday, 6:00-7:00PM (CT)

FROM ACADEMIA TO KIDLIT (AND WHY MY PASSION FOR ANCIENT EGYPT MADE THE TRANSITION WORTHWHILE) (COZY CHAT – Attendance limited to 50 people)

Malayna Evans

After earning her Ph.D. in ancient Egyptian history, Dr. Malayna Evans wrote a middle grade adventure novel set in ancient Egypt. The unexpected path taught her how to incorporate historical details and when not to; how artifacts can move a story forward or bog it down; and when to cling to the history and when to let it go. And unlearning the pedantic habits of academia required a rethinking of the truth that animates great historical fiction. For Malayna, sharing her passion for ancient Egypt seemed particularly important in this fraught political climate: the effort was worthwhile.

Malayna Evans was raised in the mountains of Utah and spent her childhood climbing, reading, and finding trouble. Her early fascination with sci-fi—and worlds different than her own she found in books—led Malayna to a lifelong interest in the origins of culture and society. After earning an MA in Greek and Roman history, then Mesopotamian and Egyptian history, she received a Ph.D. in ancient Egyptian history from the University of Chicago. A single mom, Malayna now lives in Oak Park, IL, with her two kids and a rescue dog. Learn more about Malayna at <http://malaynaevans.com>.

Friday, 6:00-10:00PM (CT)

CONVERSATION ROOMS

One of the best things about a conference is meeting like-minded people who share your interests, and this year is no different! Check out the themed [Conversation Rooms](#) in our Histfic Hub.

Friday, 7:00-8:00PM (CT)

ENTERTAINMENT: MUSIC

What sounds better at the end of the week than decompressing to the sound of live tunes from Curt Locklear in the comfort of your own home? Join us for music straight from our own history books!

Friday, 8:00-9:00PM (CT)

ENTERTAINMENT: HISTORY AFTER DARK

We're bringing back an old favorite, but shaking it up this time—author readings! Bring us your murder, show us your spookiness, add a touch of mystery to our lives! History After Dark invites you to share your work out loud—published or in progress. Grab your stabbiest scenes!

SATURDAY, JUNE 26

Saturday, 7:00-9:00AM (CT)

CONVERSATION ROOMS

One of the best things about a conference is meeting like-minded people who share your interests, and this year is no different! Check out the themed [Conversation Rooms](#) in our Histfic Hub.

Saturday, 9:00-10:00AM (CT)

STATE OF THE STATE: TRADITIONAL

Amy Elizabeth Bishop, Cate Hart, Emily Sylvan Kim, Kevan Lyon, Tessa Woodward

Join our industry guests for a spirited conversation about what's passé, what's à la mode, and what's yet to uncover in the world of traditionally published HF.

Amy Elizabeth Bishop joined Dystel, Goderich & Bourret as a literary agent in 2015 after interning for them in 2014. DG&B was founded in 1994 by Jane Dystel, and is a dynamic, full-service literary agency boasting an impressive client list and a sterling reputation. Some of her recent and upcoming titles include *The Widow of Rose House* by Diana Biller, *A Dirty Year: Sex, Suffrage, and Scandal in Gilded Age New York*, by Bill Greer, *The Silence of Bones* by June Hur and *The Girl Explorers: How a Group of Adventurous Women Trekking, Flew, and Fought for Human Rights Around the World* by Jayne Zanglein. She represents a wide variety of adult upmarket and literary fiction, narrative and prescriptive nonfiction, as well as select YA. In historical fiction, she is looking for female-driven narratives, non-Western European settings, and untold perspectives. You can find her on Twitter at @amylibishop.

Cate Hart joined Harvey Klinger in 2019 after 5 years with another agency. Established in 1977 by its eponymous founder, Harvey Klinger, the agency has been among the leading literary agencies in adult and children's books. Its interests cross many fields in fiction, nonfiction, and middle grade and young adult fiction by new and established authors. Cate specializes in historical, whether middle grade or young adult, women's fiction and romance, and narrative nonfiction. She is particularly drawn to forgotten stories, especially from underrepresented voices. She is especially excited to see: fresh perspectives and voices in historical for MG and YA; women's historical fiction beyond WWI and WWII; dual timelines; everything gothic; family sagas and buried secrets; historical romance and romcom outside of Regency period; and nonfiction history and biography.

Emily Sylvan Kim is a literary agent and the president of Prospect Agency that she founded in 2005. Emily loves taking a holistic approach to agenting, working with her authors to build sustainable careers and partnering with every major publisher. She's committed to making sure her authors maximize all opportunities for each title, including foreign rights and audio rights. With a focus on romance, contemporary and historical women's fiction, young adult fiction and a select number of non-fiction, she gravitates towards titles by and for women and girls. Emily loves historical fiction because it can entertain and educate. She is looking for stories that illuminate little known aspects of the past and introduce inspiring historical figures and help readers understand the role women played in history. Some of her clients include Piper Huguely and Julia Kelly. Emily loves drinking tea, taking walks, and having long talks with her clients on the phone—and more recently on Zoom.

Kevan Lyon is a literary agent and partner with Marsal Lyon Literary Agency with more than 20 years in the publishing business, including 12+ years as a literary agent and many years in the wholesale, retail, and distribution business. She thus brings an informed and unique perspective to her work with clients. Her fiction list includes *NY Times* and *USA Today* Bestselling authors Kate Quinn, Natasha Lester, Stephanie Dray, Kerri Maher, Jennifer Probst, Jennifer Robson, Laura Griffin and many others. Kevan works with her clients to help them realize their dreams of being published and building a long-term career as a writer. Kevan handles women's fiction, with an

emphasis on commercial women's fiction and historical fiction. When not reading clients' work or obsessively monitoring email, Kevan loves to walk near the beach with her 4-legged office mates. For more information, visit the agency website at www.MarsallLyonLiteraryAgency.com or their Facebook page, or follow Kevan on Twitter.

Tessa Woodward is Executive Editor at Harper Collins. She edits a wide array of historical fiction, women's fiction, and romance. Her women's fiction titles range from historical fiction hits like *New York Times* bestselling author Kate Quinn's *The Huntress*, *Song of the Jade Lily* by Kirsty Manning, *Caroline* by Sarah Miller, and Jennifer Robson's *The Gown*, to contemporary favorites like *Pride, Prejudice, and Other Flavors* by Sonali Dev, as well as book club hits *If Only I Could Tell You* by Hannah Beckerman and *You and Me and Us* by debut author Alison Hammer. On the historical side, she recently acquired the forthcoming *The Night Portrait* by Laura Morelli and Kaia Alderson's *Soldier Girls*. On the romance side, she edits authors across all genres, including the *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestsellers Tessa Dare, Jennifer L. Armentrout, and Maya Rodale. She is looking for more women's historical fiction with strong characters, especially from diverse voices.

Saturday, 10:15-11:15AM (CT)

STATE OF THE STATE: INDEPENDENT PUBLISHING

Linda Cardillo, Anna Castle, M. Louisa Locke, Jane Steen, Sarah Woodbury

Historical fiction authors are increasingly interested in indie publishing—what it takes and what the benefits are. Join our panel of authors as they discuss the market as it pertains to indie histfic.

Linda Cardillo (<https://www.lindacardillo.com/>) is an award-winning author who writes about the old country and the new, the tangle and embrace of family, and finding courage in the midst of loss. Hailed by *Publishers Weekly* as a "Fresh Face," Linda has built a loyal following with her works of fiction—the novels *Dancing on Sunday Afternoons*, *Across the Table*, *The Boat House Café*, *The Uneven Road*, *Island Legacy* and *Love That Moves the Sun*, as well as novellas in the anthologies *The Valentine Gift* and *A Mother's Heart* and the illustrated children's book *The Smallest Christmas Tree*. She is also co-founder of Bellastoria Press, (<https://www.bellastoriapress.com/>) an independent hybrid publisher partnering with authors to produce, distribute and promote their books.

Anna Castle writes the *Francis Bacon Mystery* series and the *Professor and Mrs. Moriarty Mystery* series. She has earned a series of degrees—BA in the Classics, MS in Computer Science, and a PhD in Linguistics—and has had a corresponding series of careers—waitressing, software engineering, documentary linguist, assistant professor, and digital archivist. Writing fiction combines her lifelong love of stories and learning. She physically resides in Austin, Texas and mentally counts herself a queen of infinite space.

M. Louisa Locke, a retired professor of U.S. and Women's History, has a successful second career as the *USA Today* best-selling author of the *Victorian San Francisco Mystery* series. This cozy historical mystery series follows the investigations of Annie and Nate Dawson who own the O'Farrell Street boardinghouse. With the help of their servants, family, and friends, this couple investigates a series of crimes that are associated with various late nineteenth-century female occupations. Not just content with writing about the past, Dr. Locke also writes a science fiction series set in the open-source collaborative world of the *Paradisi Chronicles*.

Jane Steen has been writing and publishing indie historical fiction since 2012. Her books are a blend of mystery and family saga and consist of two series, both set in the late Victorian era. She has lived long-term in both Belgium and the US but is now living on the south coast of England, where she thinks she'll stay put. As well as being in the HNS, active as a reviewer and conference board member before she moved to England, Jane is a member of the Alliance of Independent Authors, Novelists, Inc., and the Society of Authors. You can find out more at www.janesteen.com.

Sarah Woodbury received her Ph.D. in anthropology in 1995 and began writing fiction in 2006. With over a million novels sold to date, she is the author of the bestselling *After Cilmeri* series, the *Gareth & Gwen Medieval Mysteries*,

The Welsh Guard Mysteries, the *Lion of Wales* series, and the *Last Pendragon Saga*, all set in medieval Wales. Sarah is a member of Novelists, Inc.; the Historical Fiction Society Cooperative; and the Historical Novel Society.

Saturday, 11:30AM-12:00PM (CT)

LUNCH WITH LISA SEE

Join us for a lunchtime discussion with our Guest of Honor, Lisa See.

Lisa See is the New York Times bestselling author of numerous books published in 39 languages. She received the Golden Spike Award from the Chinese Historical Association of Southern California, the History Maker's Award from the Chinese American Museum, and was named National Woman of the Year by the Organization of Chinese American Women.

Saturday, 1:30-2:30PM (CT)

THE A-Z OF YOUR INDIE AUTHOR BUSINESS

Anna Castle

You have a beautiful book, fully edited and ready to publish. You've decided to go indie. Well, now what? This talk will walk you through it from formatting to marketing. Should you go wide or sell exclusively through Amazon? Should you buy your own ISBNs? What about taxes? We'll learn the basics of marketing with plenty of references to learn more as you go along. We'll also talk about finding time for writing with all this business stuff to do. (Hint: writing always comes first.)

Anna Castle writes the *Francis Bacon Mystery* series and the *Professor and Mrs. Moriarty Mystery* series. She has earned a series of degrees—BA in the Classics, MS in Computer Science, and a PhD in Linguistics—and has had a corresponding series of careers—waitressing, software engineering, documentary linguist, assistant professor, and digital archivist. Writing fiction combines her lifelong love of stories and learning. She physically resides in Austin, Texas and mentally counts herself a queen of infinite space.

Saturday, 1:30-2:30PM (CT)

TURNING THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE: THE TAROT IN HISTORICAL FICTION

Glen Craney, Jean Huets, Susan Wands

The Tarot recurs in historical fiction, from Italo Calvino's *Castle of Crossed Destinies* to Margaret Atwood's *The Robber Bride*. The first cards appeared in 15th-century Italy, but the deck's origins may reach farther into the mists of time. Are these fascinating images—such as the Hanged Man, The Tower, and the Popess—more than just divination tools? Their allure and resonance with the past continue to provide rich source material. Our panelists will discuss derivation theories; esoteric influences; how Tarot readings build scenes and foreshadowing; the lives of famous Tarot artists; and insights into history's most enigmatic art collection.

Glen Craney is a novelist, screenwriter, and journalist. His fiction has taken readers to Occitania of the Albigensian Crusade, Scotland of Robert the Bruce, Portugal during the Age of Discovery, Civil War battlefields of Georgia, and WWI trenches of France. *The Fire and the Light*, a Foreword Magazine BOYTA Finalist, drew upon the Fez Moroccan Tarot deck to unveil the story of the Cathars, a 13th-century sect of pacifist Christians massacred by the Church. He is a Chaucer Award First-Place Winner and a Nicholl Fellowship Prize recipient from the Academy of Motion Pictures, Arts and Sciences for best new screenwriting.

Jean Huets co-authored, with Stuart R. Kaplan, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot*, and authored *The Cosmic Tarot* book, based on the visionary art of Norbert Loesche, and *The Bones You Have Cast Down*, a novel set in Renaissance Italy and inspired by the Popess card. Her *With Walt Whitman, Himself* is acclaimed as “a book of marvels” by poet Steve Scafidi and “a true Whitmanian feast” by scholar Ed Folsom. Her articles have appeared in *The New York Times*, *Ploughshares*, *Kenyon Review*, and *North American Review*. She co-founded *Circling Rivers*, which publishes literary nonfiction and poetry. Visit www.jeanhuets.com.

Susan Wands is a writer, Tarot reader, and actor. A co-chair with the HNS NYC Chapter, she produces book launches and author panels. Her writings have appeared in *Kindred Spirits* magazine and the Irving Society journal, *First Knight*. Podcast interviews include: 'Biddy Tarot', 'Imaginary Worlds', 'Bad Ass Bitches Tarot' and the 'Spirited Tarot.' Her first book in a series, *Magician and Fool: Book One, Arcana Oracle Series*, out in 2021, is based on Pamela Colman Smith, creator of the Waite Smith deck. Her next two books, *High Priestess and Empress* and *Emperor and Hierophant*, are in final edits.

Saturday, 1:30-2:30PM (CT)

PORTRAYAL OF LESBIAN AND GAY CHARACTERS BEFORE STONEWALL

John Musgrove

As we uncover more information about the lives of historical figures, we can begin to humanize the experiences of Gay and Lesbian characters. By examining the obstacles presented by society, our characters can become more lifelike, with richer, fuller worlds. The author can provide context for social mores of their chosen time period. By avoiding tropes and clichés, the author can present believable elements of life before Stonewall.

John Musgrove is a new author. His first novel, *Ginter's Pope*, which details the romance of the richest man in Reconstruction Era Virginia and his younger man, is being printed by Brandylane Publishers in 2021. He works as an information security analyst in banking, lives in Richmond, Virginia, with his husband, who is retired. John has five university diplomas, has had photographs published by the *Smithsonian Traveler* magazine, and is renowned for his baking skills. He has traveled extensively, covering six continents and nearly fifty countries.

Saturday, 1:30-2:30PM (CT)

SHARPENING THE BLADE: BORROWING ELEMENTS FROM MYSTERIES TO CRAFT COMPELLING HISTORICAL FICTION

Julianne Douglas, Mariah Fredericks, Karen Odden

With their life-and-death stakes, mysteries have had a profound narrative power since Wilkie Collins wrote *The Moonstone* in 1868. Mysteries generate profound sympathy for the protagonist; produce suspense, confusion and surprise through a plausible matrix of events and character motivations; and deliver a measure of justice. In this presentation, historical mystery novel writers Karen Odden (*A Trace of Deceit*) and Mariah Fredericks (*Death of A New American*) and agented mainstream author Julianne Douglas (writing on 16th-century France) explore ways to draw upon specific narrative elements fundamental to the mystery genre to write more powerful, compelling mainstream historical fiction.

Julianne Douglas holds a doctorate in French Literature from Princeton University. She has written two agented historical novels set in sixteenth-century France and is currently working on both a French Revolution novel and a dual-timeline historical mystery. She has twice attended the Squaw Valley Community of Writers Fiction Workshop. Long active in the historical fiction community, she posts book reviews, author interviews, and articles on French history and culture at her website, *Writing the Renaissance*.

Mariah Fredericks was born and raised in New York City. She graduated from Vassar College with a degree in history and studied Russian at the University of Exeter. She enjoys reading and writing about dead people and how they got that way. For many years, she was the head writer for Book-of-the-Month Club and worked as a freelance editor reviewing narrative history and historical fiction for inclusion in the catalog. She is the author of the Jane Prescott mystery series, set in 1910s New York.

Karen Odden earned her Ph.D. in English literature from NYU and subsequently taught literature and critical theory at UW-Milwaukee. She has contributed essays to numerous books, written introductions for novels by Dickens and Trollope for Barnes & Noble, and edited for *Victorian Literature and Culture*. Her published historical mysteries are all set in 1870s London. *A Lady in the Smoke* (2015, Random House/Alibi) was a *USA Today* bestseller; her second and third novels, *A Dangerous Duet* and *A Trace of Deceit* (2018 and 2019, William Morrow) have won awards for historical fiction and mystery. You can reach Karen at www.karenodden.com.

Saturday, 2:45-3:45PM (CT)

SOCIAL STRATEGY: PLATFORMS AND ONLINE PRESENCE FOR HISTORICAL FICTION WRITERS

Sarah Penner

The publishing industry talks endlessly about the importance of platforms and online presence, but what exactly does an effective platform look like for a historical fiction writer? Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, a personal website...the options are intimidating, to say the least. Yet whether you're soon-to-be-querying or an established author, a solid platform is paramount. In this session, we'll talk through strategies to develop and manage your platform given your writing career goals. We'll cover the pros and cons of each platform, plus we'll discuss engagement with followers, platform advertising, personal branding, effective social media visuals, and more.

Sarah Penner is the debut author of *The Lost Apothecary* (March 2021, Park Row Books/HarperCollins), which has been translated into more than fifteen languages. She lives in St. Petersburg, Florida with her husband. When not writing, Sarah enjoys running, cooking, and hot yoga. To learn more, find Sarah on social media or visit www.SarahPenner.com.

Saturday, 2:45-3:45PM (CT)

RESEARCHING HISTORY: DAUNTING, CHALLENGING AND FUN

Patricia Marcantonio

Conducting research for a book can be challenging, daunting and fun or all of the above. In this interactive presentation, writers will learn how to conduct effective and efficient research, consider out-of-the-box places to research, and when to stop researching and get to work writing.

Patricia Marcantonio is the author of the Victorian *Felicity Carrol Mystery* series (Crooked Lane Books); *Verdict in the Desert* (Arte Público Press, the largest US publisher of contemporary literature by US Hispanic authors); and *Red Ridin' in the Hood and Other Cuentos* (FSG), named an Americas Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature Commended Title. Her screenplays won the Willamette Writers Kay Snow competition and hit the top percentage in several other contests. She earned an Alexa Rose Foundation grant to direct her original play *Tears for Llorona* and is a Newspaper Association of America New Media Fellow.

Saturday, 2:45-3:45PM (CT)

BREAK IT DOWN: STAYING MOTIVATED FOR THE LONG HAUL

Erika Mailman

Writing a novel is such a daunting task, and while we begin a manuscript in a flurry of excitement, sometimes motivation dips when we hit the doldrums around 100 pages. In this workshop, Erika Mailman offers suggestions to keep focused on the goal and plunge forward through torpor to reach "the end." Her talk will address how to tie your motivation to the time period you are writing about and how to not get sucked into researching at the expense of writing. She will leave time for Q&A.

Erika Mailman's contemporary YA trilogy *The Arnaud Legacy* (Kensington)--*Haunted, Betrayed, and Avenged*—dips into history with shades of Elisabet Bathory, the French Revolution, and Arthurian legend. She writes YA under the name Lynn Carthage, and under her real name she's the author of three adult historical novels: *The Witch's Trinity*, *Woman of Ill Fame*, and *The Murderer's Maid: A Lizzie Borden Novel*. Her freelance work has appeared in *Smithsonian*, *Washington Post*, *Lit Hub*, *Rolling Stone* and more. She's a Yaddo fellow, co-director of Open Page Writers, and a novel-writing instructor through Mailstrom Writing Clinic. www.erikamailman.com & www.lynnarthage.com

Saturday, 2:45-3:45PM (CT)

FILLING IN THE BLANKS: WRITING ABOUT TIMES AND PLACES WHERE LITTLE IS KNOWN

David Blixt, Zenobia Neil, Lisa See

Ancient Rome, Victorian England, World War II— writers of these periods have a lot of access to research. However, there are places and times where very little has been recorded, oral history has no historical records to back up family lore, or the dominating narrative has been written by conquerors. Even for eras that are well documented, there are countless surprises. We as a society have many false memories and impressions of Tudor England, Renaissance Italy, or Victorian America. In this panel, three authors will discuss how they crafted the unknown into vibrant historical fiction.

David Blixt's work is consistently described as "intricate," "taut," and "breathtaking." His novels span the Roman Empire to early Renaissance Italy, through the Elizabethan era to the Victorian age with his series following daredevil journalist Nellie Bly. In 2021 he revealed that, while researching Bly, he had discovered eleven lost novels by Bly herself. David's novels combine a love of the theatre with a deep respect for the quirks and passions of history. As the Historical Novel Society says, "Be prepared to burn the midnight oil. It's well worth it."

Zenobia Neil was born with a shock of red hair and named after an ancient warrior woman who fought against the Romans. In college, she studied Ancient Greece, Voodoo, and world mythology. She writes historical fantasy about the mythic past and Greek and Roman gods having too much fun.

Lisa See is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane*, *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*, *Peony in Love*, *Shanghai Girls*, *China Dolls*, and *Dreams of Joy*, which debuted at #1. She is also the author of *On Gold Mountain*, which tells the story of her Chinese American family's settlement in Los Angeles. Ms. See has also written a mystery series that takes place in China. Her books have been published in 39 languages. See was the recipient of the Golden Spike Award from the Chinese Historical Association of Southern California and the History Maker's Award from the Chinese American Museum. She was also named National Woman of the Year by the Organization of Chinese American Women.

Saturday, 4:00-5:00PM (CT)

DEMYSTIFYING BOOKBUB

Stephanie Barko

When two of my historical novelist clients became bestsellers after being selected for a BookBub feature, I made it my mission to deconstruct how that happened. What was going on with these clients'

stories that made BookBub editors want to feature their books? Was it the number of Amazon reviews? Was it the book's price? Was it their subgenre? Was BookBub anticipating special demand from a date hook? Maybe it was their cover art or competition within their category at the time. Attracting a BookBub feature takes a quality product, insider knowledge and skill. Let me demystify it for you.

Stephanie Barko has specialized in preparing adult pre-pub historical novels and nonfiction for success in the marketplace for the past 15 years. She was voted 2020 Best Book Promotional Firm, Site, or Resource by 23rd Annual Critters™ Readers' Poll (formerly Preditors & Editors). Historical novelist clients include Pam Webber, Sandra Worth, Jane Kirkpatrick, Karen Kondazian, and Jack Woodville London. Stephanie has served as a Recommended Associate at Author U, an Industry Expert at Author Learning Center, and a Panel Moderator at Texas Book Festival for the past ten years. Based in Austin, Stephanie has degrees in Business & Sociology.

Saturday, 4:00-5:00PM (CT)

MORE THAN "JUST THE FACTS": THE JOYS AND CHALLENGES OF WRITING HISTORICAL MYSTERIES

Susanna Calkins, L.A. Chandler, John Copenhaver, Alma Katsu

What does an author do when historical evidence thwarts an elegant twist? Or a fact-rich account leaves no room for a riveting plot? Is adhering to historical accuracy always the righteous path to take? Is there a point where distorting history is problematic or even dangerous? In this panel, the four mystery authors will draw on their experiences wrestling with these issues and how often those challenges can create the opportunity to explore fresh perspectives, yield narrative innovations, and illuminate the past in new ways.

Susanna Calkins holds a doctorate in early modern British and women's history and occasionally teaches history at Northwestern University. She writes two award-nominated historical mystery series—the first set in early modern London and the other in a 1920s Chicago speakeasy. She has delivered several keynotes on writing and researching historical fiction at universities and libraries and has participated in many panels on the subject. She is the president of Sisters in Crime Chicagoland and lives in the Chicago area with her husband and two sons.

L.A. Chandler is the award-winning author of the *Art Deco Mystery Series* and has been nominated for the Agatha, Lefty, Macavity, and Anthony Awards. Laurie has been living and writing in New York City for 19 years and has been speaking for a wide variety of audiences for over 20 years and is on the Sisters in Crime National Speakers Bureau. Laurie has also worked in PR for General Motors, is the mother of two boys, and has toured the nation managing a rock band. She loves coffee and wine; and hates thwarted love and raisins.

John Copenhaver's historical crime novel, *Dodging and Burning*, won the 2019 Macavity Award for Best First Mystery Novel and garnered Anthony, Strand Critics, Barry, and Lambda Literary Award nominations. Copenhaver writes a crime fiction review column for *Lambda Literary* called "Blacklight," cohosts on the *House of Mystery Radio Show*, and is the six-time recipient of Artist Fellowships from the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities. He's a Larry Neal awardee, and his work has appeared in *CrimeReads*, *Electric Lit*, *Glitterwolf*, *PANK*, *New York Journal of Books*, *Washington Independent Review of Books*, and others. He lives in Richmond, VA. www.jcopenhaver.com.

Alma Katsu is the award-winning author of six novels, including historical horror (*The Hunger* and *The Deep*) and, most recently, *Red Widow*, her first spy thriller, drawn from a long career in intelligence. She is a graduate of the master's writing program at Johns Hopkins University and earned her undergraduate degree in literature and writing from Brandeis University. She lives in the Washington DC area with her husband, musician Bruce Katsu. For more information, please visit her website at www.almakatsubooks.com.

Saturday, 4:00-5:00PM (CT)**FASHION SHAKES UP SOCIETY: SCANDALOUS WOMEN AND WHAT THEY WORE, 1770-1960****Liza Nash Taylor**

From flaunted bare breasts in the French court of Marie Antoinette to Betty Paige in bondage in the 1950s, women's fashion statements since 1770 have both shaped and scandalized society. Through the centuries courtesans, socialites, performers, and feminists have used clothes to shock, to titillate, and to make political statements. This program features a sampling of two centuries of women whose clothing choices created scandal. From pinup nudity to androgyny, fashion has served as a conduit to and statement of power. A former fashion designer for Ralph Lauren, Liza Nash Taylor offers a brief visual history of scandal in fashion.

Liza Nash Taylor is a late-blooming writer and the author of two recent historical novels from Blackstone Publishing. *Etiquette for Runaways* (August 2020) is set in 1924. It was named one of *Parade's* 30 Best Beach Reads 2020 as well as *Frolic's* Best Book of Summer 2020. *In All Good Faith*, set in 1932, will be published in August 2021. Liza is the 2016 winner of the Fiction Prize of the San Miguel Writers' Conference and a 2018 Hawthornden International Fellow. She lives in rural Virginia, in an old farmhouse which is a setting in her novels.

Saturday, 4:00-5:00PM (CT)**VOICES THAT SHOOK UP THE PAST****Annamaria Alfieri, James R. Benn, Nancy Bilyeau, Michael Cooper**

What do historical novelists owe to the accurate portrayal of real historical characters in their stories? In their historical novels, members of our panel have featured the likes of Madame Pompadour, Ernest Hemmingway, Yitzhak Rabin, and Evita Peron. When we dramatize the lives of historical icons and weave them into the fabric of our historical fiction, how much artistic license do we have? Where does creative license end and misrepresentation begin? And if we stray from the historical facts about a real person's actions, should we include an addendum explaining where the story deviates from "true" history?

Annamaria Alfieri has written three historical novels set in South America at different times and places. Of her debut, *The Washington Post* said, "As both history and mystery, *City of Silver* glitters." *Library Journal* said, "History comes alive under Alfieri's sure hand. Alfieri's current series, set in British East Africa, begins in 1911. *The Richmond (Virginia) Times-Dispatch* described *Strange Gods* as having "the flair of Isak Dinesen and Beryl Markham, the cunning of Agatha Christie and Elspeth Huxley." *The Idol of Mombasa* and *The Blasphemers* have followed. Her work in progress, *La Magica*, is set in Sicily in 1692.

James R. Benn is the Dilys and Barry award nominated author of the popular Billy Boyle WWII mystery series—fifteen books to date—as well as two stand-alone books. His novel *The Blind Goddess* was long listed for the 2015 Dublin IMPAC Literary Award, and his works have garnered numerous starred reviews from major review publications. Benn is a graduate of the University of Connecticut and has a Master's in Library Science degree from Southern Connecticut State University. He worked in the library and information technology fields for over thirty-five years before leaving to write full-time.

Nancy Bilyeau is the author of five published historical novels: the Joanna Stafford series set in Tudor England titled *The Crown*, *The Chalice* and *The Tapestry*, published by Simon & Schuster; an 18th century thriller set in Europe's art and porcelain world titled *The Blue*, published in 2018; and an early 20th century mystery set in Coney Island titled *Dreamland*, published in 2020. *Publishers Weekly* gave *Dreamland* a starred review, saying, "This

fascinating portrait of the end of the Gilded Age deserves a wide audience.” She is now writing a sequel to *The Blue*, scheduled for publication in 2022.

Michael Cooper arrived in Jerusalem in 1966, lived in Israel for eleven years, studied at Hebrew University in Jerusalem and graduated from Tel Aviv University Medical School. Now a pediatric cardiologist in Northern California he volunteers for medical missions twice a year serving Palestinian children who lack access to care. *Foxes in the Vineyard*, set in 1948 Jerusalem, won the 2011 Indie Publishing Contest grand prize. *The Rabbi’s Knight*, finalist for the 2014 Chaucer Award for historical fiction, is set in the Holy Land in 1290. Soon to be published, *Sins of the Fathers*, is set in Jerusalem during WWI.

Saturday, 5:00-6:00PM (CT)

LISA SEE’S BOOK CLUB

Join Guest of Honor Lisa See for an hour-long discussion of her 2019 novel, *The Island of Sea Women*. Attendees may submit questions for Lisa in advance and during the discussion.

“A mesmerizing new historical novel” (O, The Oprah Magazine) from Lisa See, the bestselling author of The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane, about female friendship and devastating family secrets on a small Korean island.

Mi-ja and Young-sook, two girls living on the Korean island of Jeju, are best friends who come from very different backgrounds. When they are old enough, they begin working in the sea with their village’s all-female diving collective, led by Young-sook’s mother. As the girls take up their positions as baby divers, they know they are beginning a life of excitement and responsibility—but also danger.

Despite their love for each other, Mi-ja and Young-sook find it impossible to ignore their differences. The Island of Sea Women takes place over many decades, beginning during a period of Japanese colonialism in the 1930s and 1940s, followed by World War II, the Korean War, through the era of cell phones and wet suits for the women divers. Throughout this time, the residents of Jeju find themselves caught between warring empires. Mi-ja is the daughter of a Japanese collaborator. Young-sook was born into a long line of haenyeo and will inherit her mother’s position leading the divers in their village. Little do the two friends know that forces outside their control will push their friendship to the breaking point.

[Click here to buy the book.](#)

Saturday, 6:00-7:00PM (CT)

TAROT FOR FICTION WRITERS (COZY CHAT – Attendance limited to 50 people)

Kris Waldherr

The tarot may be hot these days for predicting the future. But did you know it can also be used as a tool for fiction writing? Join acclaimed tarotist and author Kris Waldherr for an hour-long craft workshop designed to introduce you to the mysteries of the tarot. Through lecture and writing exercises, you'll gain an overview of the seventy-eight cards that make up the tarot, along with tarot-based techniques to strengthen your fiction. No previous tarot experience necessary. Handouts included. Please bring a journal or laptop for writing. Tarot deck suggested but not necessary.

Kris Waldherr's many books include *Bad Princess*, *Doomed Queens*, and *The Book of Goddesses*. Her debut novel *The Lost History of Dreams* (Atria Books) received a starred *Kirkus* review and was named a CrimeReads Best

Book of the Year. As a visual artist, Waldherr is the creator of the Goddess Tarot, which has over a quarter of a million copies in print. She is also a tarotist who teaches the tarot to writers and other creatives. Learn more at KrisWaldherrBooks.com.

Saturday, 6:00-7:00PM (CT)

THE MYSTERY BEHIND THE HISTORY: CAN NOVELISTS BALANCE FACT, FICTION AND ETHICS? (COZY CHAT – Attendance limited to 50 people)

Indrani Ganguly

This session invites debate on how we balance fact, fiction and ethical issues in writing historical novels. How do historical novelists overcome barriers of time, space, gender and culture, decide how much of the fiction is actually true and whose truth they are to reveal? Is it possible for writers to recognise and overcome their own biases? Are current debates around cultural appropriation and the cancel culture relevant for writers of historical novels regardless of whether they belong to a dominant or marginalised group? Should we adopt some general principles to help historical novelists balance fact, fiction and ethical issues?

Indrani Ganguly was born of Bengali-speaking parents in Lucknow, India. Her parents imbued her with a strong sense of Indian and world history and culture. Indrani studied English Honours at the University of Delhi and sociology and history at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She did her Ph.D. on the impact of British occupation on revolution and reform in West Bengal from the Australian National University. Indrani's publications target a mix of academic, community sector and creative writing audiences, with particular focus on how different groups negotiate their diverse worlds as part of multicultural societies such as Australia and India.

Saturday, 6:00-7:00PM (CT)

CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION FOR HISTORICAL AUTHORS (COZY CHAT – Attendance limited to 50 people)

Jeannie Lin

How to authentically present crime scene investigation and police procedurals in a historical setting. Long before crime labs and DNA tests, magistrates in China were applying a methodical and forensic approach to crime-solving. From investigating a scene to interrogating witnesses, this talk features documented case records and forensics manuals to highlight techniques and approaches used in imperial China to catch wrongdoers. Join Jeannie Lin, bestselling author of the Lotus Palace mystery series, for a fascinating journey into historical Chinese investigation methods as well as insights on how to weave intricate research details together to create vivid settings, characters and plot.

Jeannie Lin, a *USA Today* bestselling author, started writing her first book while working as a high school science teacher in South Central Los Angeles. Her stories are inspired by a mix of historical research and wuxia adventure tales. Jeannie's groundbreaking historical romances set in Tang Dynasty China have received multiple awards, including the Golden Heart for her debut novel, *Butterfly Swords*. Jeannie also writes an Opium War steampunk series, the *Gunpowder Chronicles*. Her historical erotica series, *Princess Shanyin*, is written under the pen name Liliana Lee.

Saturday, 6:00-7:00PM (CT)

AUTHOR'S SCOOP ON HYBRID PUBLISHERS (COZY CHAT – Attendance limited to 50 people)

Lorelei Brush, Margaret Rodenberg

Can't break into traditional publishing? Leery of self-publishing? Determined to get your historical masterpiece into readers' hands? Here's a chance to learn about publishing's Third Way: hybrid publishing where the author shares in the cost and the hybrid publisher (according to Wikipedia) upholds "longstanding publishing industry standards and best practices." Two authors who took the hybrid route with different hybrid publishers share their experiences and answer questions in a frank, informal setting. We can't promise the hybrid path is right for you, but we'll shake up your idea of the publishing experience. Other hybrid authors are welcome too.

Lorelei Brush, after writing hundreds of government reports, stepped into the glorious freedom of fiction. Her second novel, *Chasing the American Dream*, rolled from her pen following a six-month stint in the National Archives researching her father's role in the Office of Strategic Services in World War II. He'd told his children exciting stories of his feats as a spy behind enemy lines, which turned out to be lies. She had to write about his quest to be a hero and how, when the war had not provided the opportunity, he might have used the 1950's to achieve his goal.

Margaret Rodenberg's debut novel *Finding Napoleon* was published in April 2021 by She Writes Press. She's a former businesswoman, an award-winning writer, and secretary of the Napoleonic Historical Society, a non-profit that promotes knowledge of the Napoleonic era. *Finding Napoleon*—based in part on a romantic novel Napoleon Bonaparte tried to write—will shake up your perception of the French emperor. A long-term, enthusiastic member of HNS, she's currently writing a French Revolution novel that speaks to today's social unrest.

Saturday, 6:00-10:00PM (CT) **CONVERSATION ROOMS**

One of the best things about a conference is meeting like-minded people who share your interests, and this year is no different! Check out the themed [Conversation Rooms](#) in our Histfic Hub.

Saturday, 7:00-8:00PM (CT) **HOOCH THROUGH HISTORY LIVE!**

It's time to dress up—costumes are welcome—and don't forget your dancing shoes! Take a sip of your favorite drink—whether one of the recipes from our lineup or a concoction of your own—and join us in an evening of camaraderie and music provided by our very own Curt Locklear. It'll be a night to remember!

We're thrilled to be able to incorporate the popular Hooch Through History into our programming this year, although things will necessarily be a little different. Since we can't actually provide you with drinks, instead we are providing you with recipes for a flight of cocktails, and then everyone is invited to bring their favorite to a casual virtual happy hour on Saturday. Each day, we will share a drink along with a bit of San Antonio history at local watering holes to whet your appetite. Be your own mixologist and join us on a tour of Hooch Through History, Meet San Antonio!

Saturday, 8:00-9:00PM (CT) **ENTERTAINMENT: HISTORY AFTER DARK**

Join us for a night of seduction and passion as History After Dark dials up the heat. Whether you're after lust, romance, or something more lurid, we want to hear your words! History After Dark invites you to share your work out loud—published or in progress. Give us your best shot!

SUNDAY, JUNE 27

Sunday, 7:00-9:00AM (CT) CONVERSATION ROOMS

One of the best things about a conference is meeting like-minded people who share your interests, and this year is no different! Check out the themed [Conversation Rooms](#) in our Histfic Hub.

Sunday, 9:00-10:00AM (CT) STATE OF THE STATE: INTERNATIONAL

Suneetha Balakrishnan, Ann Marti Friedman, Richard Lee, Elisabeth Storrs

With technology bringing us all together this week from around the world, the boundaries of publishing in markets beyond North America have become a real consideration to many. Join our panelists from around the world as they share the state of the state in their neck of the woods.

Suneetha Balakrishnan, a Creative Writing Trainer certified by the British Council, is a journalist, translator, editor, and writer; working in English and Malayalam, and across genres. She has two novellas, one poetry anthology, and five translations to her credit: including the Malayalam translation of Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies*. Suneetha won the 2010 Penguin-HT short fiction competition, the 2012 DWL Short Story Competition, is a Fellow of the Sangam House International Writer's Residency 2009, a Featured Poet at the Prakriti Poetry Festival 2010, and a 2019 awardee of the Book Completion Fellowship at The Manipal Centre for Humanities.

Richard Lee is founder and chairman of the Historical Novel Society. He's working (has been working for a while) on a novel set in eleventh century Syria at the time of the first crusade.

Ann Marti Friedman trained as an art historian and enjoys bringing the history of art into her novels. *An Artist in Her Own Right*, set in Paris in the early 19th century, tells the story of Augustine Dufresne, a little-known member of the circle of artists surrounding Napoleon Bonaparte. *A Fine Tapestry of Murder* takes place in Paris in 1676-1677 amidst the painters, sculptors, tapestry weavers, silversmiths and other craftsmen of the Royal Manufactory of the Gobelins. Ann is now working on its sequel, *Death in the Fountains of Versailles*. She was a member of the 2020 HNS Master Class on writing historical novels.

Elisabeth Storrs is an Australian author who graduated from the University of Sydney in Arts Law, having studied Classics. The three novels in *A Tale of Ancient Rome* Saga vividly describe the world of Etruria, a sophisticated society which heavily influenced Rome from republican to imperial times. She is the founder of the Historical Novel Society Australasia (HNSA) and the program director for the HNSA conferences. In 2020, she founded the \$60,000 ARA Historical Novel Prize. Her novels inspired an archaeologist to feature the books' characters in an audio-visual exhibition of Etruscan statuary at the Museo dell'Agro Veientano in Rome.

Sunday, 10:15-11:15AM (CT) ALL IS NOT LOST: MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR RESEARCH ***Claire Gebben***

Writers do a ton of research for our historical novels, but only a fraction of that work actually makes it into the book. But all is not lost. Thinking ahead to publication helps authors lay the groundwork for book promotion, raise visibility, and increase sales. In this presentation, historical novelist Claire

Gebben, author of *The Last of the Blacksmiths* (Coffeetown Press, 2014), shares tips and techniques for using your historical research to your advantage before, during and after book publication.

Claire Gebben is the author of *The Last of the Blacksmiths* (2014), based on a true story of a 19th century German immigrant blacksmith. Her memoir, *How We Survive Here* (2018), describes the discovery of ancestral letters in an attic in Germany, which propels her on a transatlantic quest to write about their lives. *The Last of the Blacksmiths* was named a Notable Book by Cleveland State University. The memoir was a finalist in the 2019 Next Generation Indie Book Awards. Claire loves research as much as writing and speaks at numerous venues on topics related to her books. <http://clairegebben.com>.

Sunday, 10:15-11:15AM (CT)

RESPECTING ROMANCE

Edie Cay, Syrie James, Jeannie Lin, Emily E K Murdoch

Romance is the most popular and bestselling book genre and the most profitable fiction book genre, bringing in more than a billion dollars in annual sales. Yet as a literary form, it doesn't always receive the credit it deserves. We will cover what romance is, the surprising people who write romance, its audience, the intense research required to write historical romance (just like other historical fiction categories), larger themes of the genre, writing challenges, its changing perception in the marketplace, and its financial impact in publishing. Interested in the power of Romancelandia? This presentation is for you!

Edie Cay (Katie Stine) writes Feminist Regency Romance. Her debut, *A LADY'S REVENGE* won the Golden Leaf Best First Book in 2020. The next in her series, *THE BOXER AND THE BLACKSMITH* will be out in February 2021, and won the Hearts Through History Legends Award as an unpublished manuscript in 2019. She obtained dual BAs in Creative Writing and in Music, and her MFA in Creative Writing from University of Alaska Anchorage. She is a member of RWA, The Beau Monde, the Historical Novel Society, and a founding member of Paper Lantern Writers. Follow her on social media @authorEdieCay.

Syrie James is the bestselling author of 13 critically acclaimed novels published in 21 languages, including many award-winning works of historical fiction. Dubbed the Queen of Nineteenth Century Re-imaginings by *Los Angeles Magazine*, Syrie is a huge fan of Jane Austen, the Brontës, Dracula, and All Things English. A produced screenwriter and playwright, Syrie has given keynote and breakout addresses and served on author panels across North America and in England. Find Syrie on Facebook, Twitter, and at www.syriejames.com.

Emily E K Murdoch is a historian and historical romance author. With a Masters in Medieval Studies, she has over 37 historical romance books published. Many of those have been heralded by academic journals for their detailed accuracy, and her genres span from medieval to Westerns to Regency, with different heat levels but—of course—happily ever afters.

Jeannie Lin, a *USA Today* bestselling author, started writing her first book while working as a high school science teacher in South Central Los Angeles. Her stories are inspired by a mix of historical research and wuxia adventure tales. Jeannie's groundbreaking historical romances set in Tang Dynasty China have received multiple awards, including the Golden Heart for her debut novel, *Butterfly Swords*. Jeannie also writes an Opium War steampunk series, the *Gunpowder Chronicles*. Her historical erotica series, *Princess Shanyin*, is written under the pen name Liliansa Lee.

Sunday, 10:15-11:15AM (CT)**THE CLASSICS REVISITED: SHAKING UP JANE AUSTEN****Katherine J. Chen, Molly Greeley, Gill Hornby, Natalie Jenner**

In this session, the second of two sister panels on 21st-century responses to the *grandes dames* of historical fiction, four historical novelists will share how they found inspiration in the work and life of Jane Austen.

Katherine J. Chen is the author of the novel, *Mary B*. Her work has been published in The New York Times, Los Angeles Review of Books, and Literary Hub, and most recently, in the bestselling historical fiction anthology, *Stories from Suffragette City*. She is a graduate of Princeton University and a candidate in the MFA Fiction program at Boston University, where she is also a Senior Teaching Fellow. Her second novel on the rise and fall of Joan of Arc will be published in 2022.

Molly Greeley was born in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where her addiction to books was spurred by her parents' floor-to-ceiling bookshelves. She is the author of two novels inspired by Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*—*The Clergyman's Wife* and *The Heiress*. Molly lives in northern Michigan with her husband and three children.

Gill Hornby is a writer and journalist. She read History at Oxford before working for the BBC, *The Times* and *The Telegraph*. She is the author of two non-fiction books for children—on Jane Austen and Mozart—and three novels. *Miss Austen*, published in 2020 by Century and Flatiron, is her first piece of historical fiction. She lives in Kintbury, West Berkshire, with her husband and four children.

Natalie Jenner is the internationally bestselling author of *The Jane Austen Society*, a fictional telling of the start of the society in the 1940s in the village of Chawton, where Austen lived. Born in England and raised in Canada, Natalie is a former lawyer who also once founded Archetype Books, an independent bookstore in Oakville, Ontario, where she lives with her family and two rescue dogs. A #1 National, *USA Today* and *LA Times* bestseller, *The Jane Austen Society* will be translated into eighteen different languages around the world.

Sunday, 10:15-11:15AM (CT)**A NOVEL WAY TO WRITE ABOUT THE KENNEDYS****Michelle Gable, Kerri Maher, Gill Paul, Steven Rowley**

John F. Kennedy and his wife Jacqueline are two of the most iconic figures of the 20th century, and the fascination with their family shows no signs of lessening. Their story is not just about politics, money, and ambition – it's also about living under media scrutiny and surviving unimaginable tragedy. Writing novels about the Kennedys is a way of uncovering deeper truths about them, and each member of this panel approached it by a different route. They will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of tackling recent history and look at ways to achieve a fresh perspective on well-known characters.

Michelle Gable is the *New York Times* bestselling author of five books, including *A Paris Apartment* and the upcoming *The Bookseller's Secret* (2021). A San Diego native and graduate of The College of William & Mary, Michelle spent twenty years in finance before retiring to write full-time. She lives in Cardiff-by-the-Sea, California, with her husband, two teenaged daughters, one geriatric cat, and a Thai street dog.

Kerri Maher is the author of *The Kennedy Debutante*, which *People* called “a riveting reimagining of a true tale of forbidden love,” and *The Girl in White Gloves*, which was an HNS Editors Pick and Library Reads selection. Her forthcoming biographical novel, *The Paris Bookseller*, is about bookshop-and-library owner Sylvia Beach, who opened the original Shakespeare and Company in Paris in 1919. A professor of writing for many years, she loves to talk about the craft of writing. Learn more at www.kerrimaher.com.

Gill Paul is the bestselling author of ten historical novels, many of them describing real women she thinks have been marginalised or misjudged by historians. *Jackie and Maria* looks at the way Jackie Kennedy's and Maria Callas's lives began to overlap as they became rivals for Aristotle Onassis, and her forthcoming novel *The Collector's Daughter*, due out in September 2021, is about Lady Evelyn Herbert, a remarkable woman who was part of the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb. Gill lives in London with her partner, who is a light artist, and loves wild swimming year-round.

Steven Rowley is the bestselling author of *Lily and the Octopus*, a *Washington Post* Notable Book of 2016 and *The Editor*, named by NPR and *Esquire Magazine* as one of the Best Books of 2019. Both are in development as feature films. His new novel, *The Guncler*, arrives May 25th, 2021. *O Magazine* hails it as one of the LGBT books changing the literary landscape. Rowley's fiction has been published in twenty languages. He lives in Palm Springs, California with his partner, the writer Byron Lane.

Sunday, 11:30AM-12:30PM (CT)

SHAKING UP TIME AND PLACE: HISTORICAL CHARACTERS IN UNFAMILIAR CULTURES

Janet Fitch, Aimee Liu, Jennifer Steil, Liza Nash Taylor

When writing about characters who migrate from one country to another, or characters native to a foreign land, historical novelists face a complicated cultural balancing act. We must fuse research on historical events with accurate, time-period correct portraits of foreign cultures. But how do we simultaneously convey both culture shock and rich and complex societies? How can writers employ the conflict and tension inherent in cultural transition? Perhaps most critical of all, how do we earn the right to tell these stories, when we ourselves are not native to the lands and the ethnicities we are fictionally inhabiting?

Janet Fitch is the bestselling author of *White Oleander*, *Paint it Black*, and now the epic historical novels *The Revolution of Marina M.* and *Chimes of a Lost Cathedral*, set during the Russian Revolution. She was awarded a Likhachev Fellowship to St. Petersburg, Russia in 2009, to further her research. While an undergraduate at Reed College, she majored in history with a specialty in Russian history and imagined she would become an historian before she turned her sights to fiction writing. Her short stories and essays have appeared in many venues.

Aimee Liu is the bestselling author of the historical novels *Glorious Boy*; *Flash House*; *Cloud Mountain*; and *Face*, as well as the memoirs *Solitaire* and *Gaining*. Her books have been translated into more than a dozen languages. Honors include the Barnes & Noble Discover Award, Bosque Fiction Prize, and Literary Guild Super Release. Her essays have appeared in the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and elsewhere. She has also written or co-authored more than ten books of popular non-fiction. Aimee teaches in Goddard College's MFA in Creative Writing Program at Port Townsend, WA.

Jennifer Steil is an award-winning author of fiction and nonfiction. Her newest book, *Exile Music* (Viking, 2020), is the first novel in English to explore the lives of Austrian Jewish musicians who sought refuge from the Nazis in Bolivia in 1939. Her two previous books are *The Woman Who Fell from the Sky*, a memoir of her experience running a newspaper in Yemen, and *The Ambassador's Wife*, a novel about a hostage crisis inspired by Steil's experience. She currently lives in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. She is now writing a novel about an underground Bolivian community of LGBTQ artists.

Liza Nash Taylor is a late-blooming writer and the author of two recent historical novels from Blackstone Publishing. *Etiquette for Runaways* (August 2020) is set in 1924. It was named one of *Parade's* 30 Best Beach Reads 2020 as well as *Frolic's* Best Book of Summer 2020. *In All Good Faith*, set in 1932, will be published in August 2021. Liza is the 2016 winner of the Fiction Prize of the San Miguel Writers' Conference and a 2018 Hawthornden International Fellow. She lives in rural Virginia, in an old farmhouse which is a setting in her novels.

Sunday, 11:30AM-12:30PM (CT)
MAKING THE FANTASTICAL REAL
Judith Starkston

The challenge for historical fiction writers who incorporate fantastical elements in their work is to sustain readers' believability and emotional engagement amidst the "unreal," magical, supernatural, mythical, or surreal. Embedding fantasy in richly historical world-building is the canonical solution within the fantasy genre whether the author pulls the historical details from one historical period/place or weaves from multiple traditions. Using passages from J.R.R. Tolkien, Ursula K. Le Guin, N.K. Jemisin, and George R.R. Martin, we'll explore what the fantasy genre offers to historical fiction and break down how to build convincing and immersive fantastical elements by using history.

Judith Starkston has spent too much time exploring the remains of the ancient worlds of the Greeks and Hittites. Early on she went so far as to get degrees in Classics from the University of California, Santa Cruz and Cornell. She loves myths and telling stories. This has gotten more and more out of hand. Her solution is her brand: Fantasy and Magic in a Bronze Age World. *Hand of Fire* was a semi-finalist for the M.M. Bennett's Award for Historical Fiction. *Priestess of Ishana* won the San Diego State University Conference Choice Award. Find out more at www.judithstarkston.com.

Sunday, 11:30AM-12:30PM (CT)
HYPING HISTORY: STRATEGIES FOR GETTING YOUNG READERS HOOKED ON THE GENRE
Susanne Dunlap, Malayna Evans, Colleen Gleason, Erika Mailman

It's the holy grail of building a brand: Appealing to young readers just starting to form their literary tastes so they'll follow you—or at least the genre—as they grow up. On this panel, four authors with different approaches to writing historical fiction for teens talk about their strategies for appealing to this important audience—from choice of protagonists to research tactics to adding paranormal or time-travel elements—and how much to meddle with history for the sake of a story young readers will devour. Author Q&A and fun to follow! Come prepared with a title and two sentences about a nonexistent YA historical.

Susanne Dunlap is the author of ten historical novels for adults and teens. Her PhD in music history has inspired her to bring to life the remarkable stories of women in music from the middle ages through the 19th century. A Junior Library Guild Selection and a Bank Street Children's Book of the Year, *The Musician's Daughter* (Bloomsbury Children's, 2008) kicked off a YA mystery series with a young Viennese violinist as sleuth, which she is continuing with a forthcoming fourth book.

Malayna Evans was raised in the mountains of Utah and spent her childhood climbing, reading, and finding trouble. Her early fascination with sci-fi—and worlds different than her own that she found in books—led Malayna to a lifelong interest in the origins of culture and society. After earning an MA in Greek and Roman history, then Mesopotamian and Egyptian history, she received a Ph.D. in ancient Egyptian history from the University of Chicago. A single mom, Malayna now lives in Oak Park, IL, with her two kids and a rescue dog. Learn more about Malayna at <http://malaynaevans.com>.

Colleen Gleason, a *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author, has dipped her pen in several genres, from paranormal romance, mystery and suspense, YA, and, of course, historical fiction. She has a book for every taste and reader. Colleen has written stories set in the Middle Ages, the Regency Period, Lincoln's nineteenth-century

America, and even an alternate Victorian London. Colleen lives somewhere in the Midwest with her family and dogs, fingers furious on the keyboard on her next novel.

Erika Mailman's contemporary YA trilogy *The Arnaud Legacy* (Kensington)—*Haunted, Betrayed, and Avenged*—dips into history with shades of Elisabet Bathory, the French Revolution, and Arthurian legend. She writes YA under the name Lynn Carthage, and under her real name she's the author of three adult historical novels: *The Witch's Trinity*, *Woman of Ill Fame*, and *The Murderer's Maid: A Lizzie Borden Novel*. Her freelance work has appeared in *Smithsonian*, *Washington Post*, *Lit Hub*, *Rolling Stone* and more. She's a Yaddo fellow, co-director of Open Page Writers, and a novel-writing instructor through Mailstrom Writing Clinic. www.erikamailman.com & www.lynnarthage.com

Sunday, 11:30AM-12:30PM (CT)

ONWARD THROUGH THE PAST: WRITING THE LONG HISTORICAL FICTION SERIES

Anna Castle, M. Louisa Locke, Sarah Woodbury

Wise heads these days are advising authors to write series, however they publish. It's the best way to build an audience. Readers love to come back to favorite characters in a familiar setting and see what they're up to now. Writers of historical fiction face the same problems as any other series author—keeping things fresh for themselves and their readers, book after book—but we face some unique problems as well. Come find out how four authors of long series manage to keep the story going through the years.

Anna Castle writes the *Francis Bacon Mystery* series and the *Professor and Mrs. Moriarty Mystery* series. She has earned a series of degrees—BA in the Classics, MS in Computer Science, and a PhD in Linguistics—and has had a corresponding series of careers—waitressing, software engineering, documentary linguist, assistant professor, and digital archivist. Writing fiction combines her lifelong love of stories and learning. She physically resides in Austin, Texas and mentally counts herself a queen of infinite space.

M. Louisa Locke, a retired professor of U.S. and Women's History, has a successful second career as the USA Today best-selling author of the *Victorian San Francisco Mystery* series. This cozy historical mystery series follows the investigations of Annie and Nate Dawson who own the O'Farrell Street boardinghouse. With the help of their servants, family, and friends, this couple investigates a series of crimes that are associated with various late nineteenth-century female occupations. Not just content with writing about the past, Dr. Locke also writes a science fiction series set in the open-source collaborative world of the *Paradisi Chronicles*.

Sarah Woodbury received her Ph.D. in anthropology in 1995 and began writing fiction in 2006. With over a million novels sold to date, she is the author of the bestselling *After Cilmeri* series, the *Gareth & Gwen Medieval Mysteries*, *The Welsh Guard Mysteries*, the *Lion of Wales* series, and the *Last Pendragon Saga*, all set in medieval Wales. Sarah is a member of Novelists, Inc.; the Historical Fiction Society Cooperative; and the Historical Novel Society.

Sunday, 1:30-2:30PM (CT)

YOUTUBE & ME: A STORY ABOUT RATTLING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

Autumn Bardot

Dive into a little-used author platform and bring your particular skill set or interest to readers. Having trouble getting 'out there' on the traditional social media platforms? Me too. I also wanted to brand and market my books in a more subtle way. A complete novice—and not especially techie—I waded through YouTube set up, vlog topics, videoing snafus, and editing snags. Was it worth it? My author reach expanded, and I get more views on a video than I ever did on a blog! Shake free from your author cage with a YouTube channel that is uniquely you!

Autumn Bardot writes historical fiction and more about fearless women and dangerous passions. She has taught advanced literary analysis and writing for more than sixteen years. She has two traditionally published historical erotica and three indie historical novels. She is currently writing her next novel and making videos for new writers on her YouTube channel. Autumn has a passion for history and a special affinity for the unsung courageous females that history neglects or misunderstands. Autumn lives in Southern California with her husband and ever-growing family. She wishes she was one-tenth as brave as the women she writes about.

Sunday, 1:30-2:30PM (CT)

BATTLE FLAGS, FALLING MONUMENTS, AND THE LOST CAUSE MYTH: THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF ANTEBELLUM AND CIVIL WAR FICTION

Elizabeth Bell, Glen Craney, Susan Higginbotham, Sadeqa Johnson

The past is never dead, wrote Faulkner: It's not even past. Perhaps more so than any era in American history, the Civil War is viewed through the prism of current social and political divisions. Our panelists will discuss new challenges and opportunities in writing and selling novels set during this period. Topics will include: Creating empathetic Confederate protagonists for a woke readership; ramifications for book covers; balancing authenticity and sensitivity using racially-charged language; navigating the minefield of cultural appropriation; interpretations of slavery and the Underground Railroad by emerging African-American voices; and public expectations and the persistence of the states-rights narrative.

Elizabeth Bell, at the age of fourteen, chose a pen name and vowed to become a published author. Upon earning her MFA in Creative Writing at George Mason University, and after nearly three decades of research and revision, she published her Lazare Family Saga about a multiracial Catholic family struggling to understand where they belong in the young United States. The first book in the series, *Necessary Sins*, was a Finalist in the Foreword Indies Book of the Year Awards. The second book, *Lost Saints*, was an Editors' Choice in the *Historical Novels Review*. Visit Elizabeth online at <https://elizabethbellauthor.com>.

Glen Craney is a novelist, screenwriter, journalist, and lawyer. His fiction has taken readers to Occitania of the Albigensian Crusade, Scotland of Robert the Bruce, Portugal during the Age of Discovery, and the WWI trenches of France. His recent novel, *The Cotillion Brigade*, is based on the Civil War's Nancy Hart Rifles of Georgia, the most famous female militia in American history. He is a Chaucer Award First-Place Winner and a Nicholl Fellowship prize recipient from the Academy of Motion Pictures, Arts and Sciences for best new screenwriting. He has also served as president of the HNS Southern California Chapter.

Susan Higginbotham turned to nineteenth-century America after writing several novels set in medieval and Tudor England; her latest, *The First Lady and the Rebel*, tells the story of Mary Lincoln and Emily Todd Helm, half-sisters who find themselves on opposite sides of civil war. A diligent researcher who loves digging through archives, Susan is also the author of two biographies and a number of articles. Having developed a taste for American history, Susan is completing *John Brown's Women*, about the wife, daughter, and daughter-in-law who stood behind—and stood up for—the American abolitionist. Susan enjoys traveling and collecting photographs, especially from the nineteenth century.

Sadeqa Johnson is the award-winning author of four novels. Her accolades include the National Book Club Award, the Phillis Wheatley Book Award, and the USA Best Book Award for Best Fiction. She is a Kimbilio Fellow, former board member of the James River Writers, and a Tall Poppy Writer. Originally from Philadelphia, she currently lives near Richmond, Virginia, with her husband and three children. Her most recent novel, *Yellow Wife*, tells the story of a sheltered house servant who is thrust into the bowels of the infamous Devil's Half Acre, a jail in Richmond, Virginia. To learn more, visit www.SadeqaJohnson.net.

Sunday, 1:30-2:30PM (CT)

REAL WOMEN, REAL HISTORY, AND WRESTLING WITH AGENCY AMIDST THE PATRIARCHY OF THE PAST *Libbie Hawker, Carrie Hayes, Pamela K. Johnson, Tonya Mitchell*

Historian Amanda Foreman has said, "Only fools and pedants have a problem with artistic license." Yet novels featuring historical female protagonists are confronted with countless obstacles. Not only do the characters go against the status quo, but they must also agitate the waters so they can step into their power. The writer then faces these age-old dilemmas: Is she (the character) a good mother/daughter/helpmeet OR is she something else? Can she be a good mother AND be something else? Or will she be obliged to SACRIFICE the opportunity to fulfill any domestic aspirations while pursuing her dream/destiny/life's work? These are time management issues women wrestle with even now, particularly in the pandemic. And to that end, is our narrative arc proactive or re-active? This panel aims to discuss the above challenges when writing about actual extraordinary women in historical fiction.

Libbie Hawker, who also writes under the pen names Olivia Hawker and Libbie Grant, is a bestselling author of historical and literary fiction. Her work has been translated into six languages; her most recent, *One for the Blackbird*, *One for the Crow*, was a finalist for the Washington State Book Award and the Willa Literary Award, and was among Amazon's top 100 bestselling titles of the year in 2020. She lives in the San Juan Islands with her husband Paul and several naughty cats.

Carrie Hayes was born in New York City and grew up around journalists, idealists and rule breaking women. Her debut novel, *Naked Truth or Equality*, *The Forbidden Fruit* was published last year. Reviewed as an Editors' Choice by HNS, *Naked Truth* "offers glimmers of fresh insights into these oft-discussed, oft-challenged women, providing an excellent, entertaining, and provocative read."

Pamela K. Johnson is the author of *Tenderhead* and co-author of *Santa and Pete*. She was an editor at *Essence* magazine and has written for the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*. <https://pamelakjohnson.com>.

Tonya Mitchell received her BA in journalism from Indiana University. Her fiction has appeared in, among other publications, *Glimmer and Other Stories and Poems*, for which she won the Cinnamon Press award in fiction. She is a self-professed Anglophile and is obsessed with all things relating to the Victorian period. She is a member of the Historical Novel Society and resides in Cincinnati, Ohio, with her husband and three wildly energetic sons. *Feigned Madness* is her first novel.

Sunday, 1:30-2:30PM (CT)

HISTORY IS CHARACTER: HOW HISTORICAL FICTION CAN ILLUMINATE EVENTS THROUGH CHARACTERS

Mary F. Burns, Colin W. Sargent

Great events of the past are inspiring and often inscrutable, and we writers love to linger on the details of the era as well as the real-life personages who were part of those events. But how much "history" do you include in an historical novel? How do we make history come alive without a long recitation of facts and events? The answer lies in the Characters and what makes them uniquely fitted to meet the challenges of their times. We'll explore how we create fictional characters from real people and produce a ripping good yarn that's engaging and memorable.

Mary F. Burns is the author of an historical mystery series featuring John Singer Sargent and Violet Paget (aka Vernon Lee) as Victorian Era amateur sleuths. Mary is a former book reviewer for HNS and a frequent presenter at HNS conferences. Her books include *Portraits of an Artist, Isaac and Ishmael, J-The Woman Who Wrote the Bible*, and *Ember Days*. Her latest mystery, *The Unicorn in the Mirror*, sets in 1881 Paris, involves a murder whose roots reach back to 1500, and which engages her characters' intelligence and intuition against a background of four centuries of French revolution and turmoil.

Colin W. Sargent is an acclaimed novelist and playwright from Maine. He has an MFA from Stonecoast; a PhD in Creative Writing from Lancaster University, UK; and is founding editor of *Portland Monthly*. His first novel was *Museum of Human Beings*, followed by *The Boston Castrato* (published by Barbican Press, and an HNS "Editors' Choice"). His latest novel, *Red Hands* (Barbican Press) is a fictional re-creation of more than 800 hours of one-on-one conversations with Iordana Ceausescu, daughter-in-law of the infamous Romanian dictator, during her five-year self-exile hiding in a small town along the Maine coast.

Sunday, 2:45-3:45PM (CT)

STARTING AN AUTHOR COLLECTIVE

Ana Brazil, Edie Cay, Kathryn Pritchett, Linda Ulleseit

Paper Lantern Writers consists of authors published in a variety of ways, including small/hybrid presses and self-publishing. Publishers may have a catalog, some salespeople, and an online presence, but the bulk of the marketing is up to the author. Marketing is the dirty word of book publishing; the part most authors dread. Authors typically write alone but search out writing and critique groups to hone their craft. Similarly, marketing collectives can help hone marketing skills. So, share the marketing effort by creating an Author Collective!

Ana Brazil is the author of the historical mystery *Fanny Newcomb* and the *Irish Channel Ripper* (Sand Hill Review Press) and writes historical crime fiction that celebrates bodacious American heroines. Her short stories include "Kate Chopin Tussles with a Novel Ending" (Fault Lines anthology), "Miss Evelyn Nesbit Presents" (Me Too Short Stories: An Anthology), and "Mr. Borden does not quite remem--" (Kings River Life). Her work-in-progress features a bodacious vaudeville singer beset with murder, mistaken identity, and multiple romances in 1919 San Francisco. Ana lives in Northern California.

Edie Cay's debut novel *A Lady's Revenge* won the Golden Leaf Best First Book Award, hosted by the New Jersey chapter of the Romance Writers of America. The second in the series, *The Boxer and the Blacksmith*, won the 2019 Legends Award from Hearts Through History. Drawing on the history of women's boxing in nineteenth century London, Cay uses themes of found family and relatable misfits. She is currently at work on the third in the series, *A Lady's Finder*, as well as a literary novel titled *Square Grand*, set in North Dakota at the turn of the 20th century.

Kathryn Pritchett grew up on a potato farm in Southeastern Idaho but has spent most of her adult life in the San Francisco Bay Area. After years writing and blogging about design for print and online publications, she's now writing historical fiction. Kathryn is currently seeking representation for her first novel, *The Casket Maker's Other Wife*, a fictionalized account of her Swiss ancestor's 19th century polygamous marriage and work as a frontier midwife in Utah and Idaho. She is working on her second novel, *Maude and Early*, which features actress Maude Adams, J.M. Barrie's muse and the original Peter Pan.

Linda Ulleseit is the author of three Young Adult historical fantasies that are about flying horses in medieval Wales as well as *Under the Almond Trees*, a historical novel set in pioneer California, and *The Aloha Spirit*, set in territorial Hawaii. Linda believes in the unspoken power of women living ordinary lives. Her books are the stories of women in her family who were extraordinary but unsung. Linda is a retired elementary school teacher Linda now writes full time in between traveling with her husband, walking her dogs, and visiting with her two adult sons. She lives in Northern California.

Sunday, 2:45-3:45PM (CT)

ART & HISTORY: SHAKEN, STIRRED, AND STORIFIED

Denny S. Bryce, Carrie Callaghan, Margaret Rodenberg

Artistic genius didn't just inspire these authors. It shook them to their cores, stirring them to craft fresh historical narratives that speak to our times. As inspiration, one chose painting, one music, one literature. But how does the music of the Jazz Age become a tale of found family and ambition? How can a writer convey a woman's heartfelt brushstrokes and 17th century Dutch prejudices? Or reveal a warrior's soul through a romance he wrote? These panelists share their artistic journeys with specific tips and short-cuts. Each also shares pitfalls to avoid. You'll leave eager to storify your own inspiration.

Denny S. Bryce, an award-winning recipient of the RWA Golden Heart®, was a three-time GH finalist, including twice for *Wild Women and the Blues*, her debut novel. She also writes book reviews for NPR Books and entertainment articles for *Frolic Media*. Additionally, the former professional dancer and public relations professional is a self-proclaimed history geek. She credits this obsession to her maternal grandmother, Ella Elizabeth Joseph, who immigrated from Montego Bay, Jamaica, to New York City in 1923. Recently, Denny relocated from Northern Virginia to Savannah, Georgia. She is represented by Nalini Akolekar, Spencerhill Associates.

Carrie Callaghan is the author of the novels *Salt the Snow* and *A Light of Her Own* (both from CRP/Amberjack). She lives in Maryland with her family and three ridiculous cats. She's something of a political junky, though she hates to admit it.

Margaret Rodenberg's debut novel *Finding Napoleon* was published in April 2021 by She Writes Press. She's a former businesswoman, an award-winning writer, and secretary of the Napoleonic Historical Society, a non-profit that promotes knowledge of the Napoleonic era. *Finding Napoleon*—based in part on a romantic novel Napoleon Bonaparte tried to write—will shake up your perception of the French emperor. A long-term, enthusiastic member of HNS, she's currently writing a French Revolution novel that speaks to today's social unrest.

Sunday, 2:45-3:45PM (CT)

LIBRARIES AND LIBRARIANS: SAVING CULTURE, SAVING LIVES

Janie Chang, Fiona Davis, Kristin Harmel, Kerri Maher

Libraries often call to mind moldy books, strict librarians, and fusty ideas, but the books by these four authors (Fiona Davis, *The Lions of Fifth Avenue*; Kristin Harmel, *The Book of Lost Names*; Janie Chang, *The Library of Legends*; Kerri Maher, *The Paris Bookseller*) show that libraries and their guardians often offer the opposite: controversial books, rebellious librarians, and trailblazing ideas. This panel will explore the ways in which libraries on three continents in the 20th century changed the lives of readers for generations to come.

Janie Chang writes historical fiction with a personal connection, drawing from a family history with 36 generations of recorded genealogy. Her first novel, *Three Souls*, was a finalist for the 2014 BC Book Prizes Fiction Prize and her second novel, *Dragon Springs Road*, was a *Globe and Mail* national bestseller. Both were nominated for the International Dublin Literary Award. Her third book, *The Library of Legends*, released in May 2020, is a *Globe and Mail* national bestseller.

Fiona Davis is the *New York Times* bestselling author of historical novels set in iconic New York City buildings, including *The Lions of Fifth Avenue*, which was a *Good Morning America* book club pick. She began her career in New York City as an actress, working on Broadway, off-Broadway, and in regional theater. After getting a master's

degree at Columbia Journalism School, she fell in love with writing, leapfrogging from editor to freelance journalist before finally settling down to write fiction. Her books have been translated into over a dozen languages, and she's based in New York City.

Kristin Harmel is the *New York Times* bestselling, *USA Today* bestselling, and #1 international bestselling author of *The Book of Lost Names*, the upcoming *The Forest of Vanishing Stars*, and a dozen other novels that have been translated into 29 languages. A former reporter for *People* magazine, Kristin was also a frequent contributor to the national television morning show *The Daily Buzz*. Kristin has spent time living in Paris and Los Angeles and now lives in Orlando with her husband and son. She is the co-founder and co-host of the popular web series and podcast *Friends & Fiction*.

Kerri Maher is the author of *The Kennedy Debutante*, which *People* called “a riveting reimagining of a true tale of forbidden love,” and *The Girl in White Gloves*, which was an HNS Editors’ Choice and *Library Reads* selection. Her forthcoming biographical novel, *The Paris Bookseller*, is about bookshop-and-library owner Sylvia Beach, who opened the original Shakespeare and Company in Paris in 1919. A professor of writing for many years, she loves to talk about the craft of writing. Learn more at www.kerrimaher.com.

Sunday, 2:45-3:45PM (CT)

THE PLAY'S THE THING

Wendy Swallow

When Hamlet says, “The play’s the thing,” he means that drama concentrates our attention on the dilemmas of the human soul. Wendy Swallow, author of *Searching for Nora: After the Doll’s House*, will talk about writing sequels or prequels to famous plays and operas rather than novels. Swallow argues that plays and operas can provide rich terrain for historical novelists. As intense, character-driven narratives bristling with conflict, problematic secondary characters and interesting historical settings, plays and operas easily feed a novelist’s imagination. Swallow will also discuss examples of dramatic heroines who deserve their own novels.

Wendy Swallow grew up with a dad who loved opera and a mom who taught her to sail. An English major with a Masters in journalism, she wrote for *The Washington Post*, then taught at American University. She saw Ibsen’s play *A Doll’s House* as her own marriage crumbled, growing fascinated with heroine Nora Helmer. As a divorced single mom, Swallow often thought about Nora. Swallow published *Breaking Apart: A Memoir of Divorce*, then remarried and published *The Triumph of Love over Experience: A Memoir of Remarriage*. In 2007, she left teaching to travel to Norway and write Nora’s story.

Sunday, 4:00-5:00PM (CT)

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN HISTORICAL FICTION: A CONVERSATION

Sadeqa Johnson, Vanessa Riley

It’s a truism that history is written by the victors, and sadly, that one-sided narrative based on dominance rather than accuracy persists today. Join two accomplished authors as we talk about the stories that need to be told and aren’t, and what we can do as individuals and as a society to broaden our perspectives and hear voices that were previously silenced.

Sadeqa Johnson is the award-winning author of four novels. Her accolades include the National Book Club Award, the Phillis Wheatley Book Award, and the USA Best Book Award for Best Fiction. She is a Kimbilio Fellow, former board member of the James River Writers, and a Tall Poppy Writer. Originally from Philadelphia, she currently lives near Richmond, Virginia, with her husband and three children. Her most recent novel, *Yellow Wife*, tells the story

of a sheltered house servant who is thrust into the bowels of the infamous Devil's Half Acre, a jail in Richmond, Virginia. To learn more, visit www.SadeqaJohnson.net.

Vanessa Riley, Ph.D., Southern, Irish, Trinidadian author, writes Historical Fiction and Historical Romance (Georgian, Regency, & Victorian Eras) featuring hidden histories, dazzling multi-cultural communities, and strong sisterhoods. Her books have been reviewed by the AAMBC, Washington Post, Entertainment Weekly, NPR, Publisher Weekly, and the New York Times. Her debut Historical Fiction *Island Queen* (July 2021 William Morrow) recounts the remarkable life of successful entrepreneur Dorothy Kirwan Thomas, a formerly enslaved woman, who battles the unfair taxation of free colored women in British colonies. Riley is represented by Sarah Younger of the Nancy Yost Literary Agency.

Sunday, 4:00-5:00PM (CT)

FICTION IN THE FAMILY TREE

Libbie Hawker, Cheyenne Richards

Genealogy can present fascinating inspiration for historical novels. But should authors use cherished family stories as a basis for fiction? What special challenges might we encounter when we combine family history with fiction? And just how should one go about utilizing genealogical resources to create compelling fiction anyway? Libbie and Cheyenne discuss the whys and hows of finding fiction in your family tree.

Libbie Hawker, who also writes under the pen names Olivia Hawker and Libbie Grant, is a bestselling author of historical and literary fiction. Her work has been translated into six languages; her most recent, *One for the Blackbird, One for the Crow*, was a finalist for the Washington State Book Award and the Willa Literary Award, and was among Amazon's top 100 bestselling titles of the year in 2020. She lives in the San Juan Islands with her husband Paul and several naughty cats.

Cheyenne Richards is a writer, sailor and wellness coach whose life has revolved around family history for decades: First as a marketing executive at Ancestry.com, then crafting her forthcoming novel *The Prisoner's Apprentice*—inspired by the 19th century serial killer she discovered in her family history closet. Whatever you do, don't look for consistency. A tomboy who adores polka dots, a Palo Alto native drawn to the past as much as the future, and for all her love of outdoor adventure, you'll usually find her under a cozy blanket with a good novel.

Sunday, 4:00-5:00PM (CT)

THEATRICAL TECHNIQUES TO A BLOCKBUSTER NOVEL: 3 PROFESSIONAL ACTORS SHARE TIPS FOR BRINGING YOUR BOOK TO LIFE

Leslie Carroll, Leanna Renee Hieber, Elizabeth Kerri Mahon

Shake up your writing process by viewing it through another artistic lens! In this lively session, three classically trained theatre professionals who have extensive experience in Shakespearean and classical theatre as well as multi-published fiction and non-fiction, guide fellow writers through the ways in which thinking like an actor, director, producer and more can invigorate and refresh your writing process. Learn the exciting tricks of the trade regarding character motivation, the realities of characters' physical existence, environment and more. More deeply invest in your characters with these tips from actors who have a lifetime of experience channeling vibrant personae.

Leslie Carroll has authored 21 titles in three genres (including historical fiction, under the pseudonyms Amanda Elyot and Juliet Grey). Her novels have been optioned for film and TV and translated into 12 languages; and she's the author/narrator of two audio guides to the State Rooms of Versailles, soon to be released. She's a frequent

commentator on royal relationships, appearing on Travel Channel and Canadian History Channel docuseries, the 2020 documentary "Grace of Monaco, Hollywood Princess" for Britain's Channel 5; and global media discussing the Windsors. Leslie's also a professional actress and award-winning audiobook narrator, specializing in historical fiction. www.lesliecarroll.com.

Leanna Renee Hieber is an actress, playwright, tour guide and the award-winning, bestselling author of Gothic, Gaslamp Fantasy novels for Tor and Kensington Books such as the *Strangely Beautiful* and *The Spectral City* series. *A Haunted History of Invisible Women*, Leanna's first foray into non-fiction, will release in 2021 from Kensington. Her work has won 4 Prism awards, has been included in numerous notable anthologies and has been translated into many languages. Hieber is a ghost tour guide and lecturer for Boroughs of the Dead and has been featured in film and television on shows like *Mysteries at the Museum*. <http://leannareneehieber.com>.

Elizabeth Kerri Mahon is a native New Yorker, former actress, and history geek. Her first book, *Scandalous Women*, was released in March 2011 to enthusiastic reviews. Her second, *Pretty Evil New York*, will be released in September 2021. In 2011 she was also named RWA NYC's Author of the Year. She has been featured in the H2 show *How Sex Changed the World*, as well as The Travel Channel's *Monumental Mysteries* and the Investigation Discovery show *Tabloid*.

Sunday, 5:00PM (CT)

CLOSING REMARKS

Join us as we gather at the end of a fantastic week to talk about where we've been and what's coming up in 2023!