

# CONFERENCE SCENE

Events to advance your craft, connections, and career.

BY KRISTY STEVENSON

## 1 Port Townsend Writers Conference

Sponsored by the Centrum Foundation, this event's focus is on rigorous attention to craft, workshops, guided free writes, and a vibrant reading and lecture series.

**WHEN:** July 12–19, 2020. **WHERE:** Fort Worden Historical State Park, Port Townsend, Wash. **PRICE:** Morning and afternoon workshops, \$760 (intensive sessions); afternoon only, \$460 (more time to write independently). Scholarships and fellowship awards are available. Evening readings are free and open to the public. Optional housing and meals available for an additional fee. See website for details.

**WHAT MAKES THIS CONFERENCE UNIQUE:** Participants range from established authors to students beginning to write. Acclaimed writers from across the nation engage with participants in intensives that focus on generating new material. “We write together, faculty and participants listen to each other, enjoy meals together, and learn from each other,” says George Marie, Program Manager for Writing. “When we allow our writing to be pushed further, when we’re encouraged to take risks and grow, it’s transformative for everyone involved.” They also offer a High School Writers Conference that runs concurrently with the main event and overlaps in programming for writers ages 16 and up. **HOW MANY ATTEND:** 200.

**FACULTY:** Featured authors include Kim Addonizio, Jenny Bouilly, Rebecca Brown, Claudia Castro Luna, Gary Copeland Lilley, CMarie Fuhrman, Mikhail Iossel, Jourdan Imani Keith, Melissa Kwasny, Samuel Ligon, Robert Lopez, Tiffany Midge, Lydia Millet, Kristen Millares Young, Bich Minh Nguyen, Jenny Ofill, Paisley Rekdal, Shawn Vestal, and Maya Jewell Zeller. Donna Miscolta is the High School Writers faculty. **HIGHLIGHTS:** Conference staff will put together a literary journal that will include writing from participants and faculty. Any participant registered for the conference is invited to submit. **IF YOU GO:** Visit Writers’ Workshope & Imprint Books, which hosts weekly writing workshops and readings; and William James Bookseller, which specializes in first editions, along with a range of new and used books. **FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Centrum.org/The-Port-Townsend-Writers-Conference.

## 2 Sun Valley Writers’ Conference

Now in the 26<sup>th</sup> year, the SVWC audience is made up of intellectually curious readers interested in a variety of genres and subjects.

**WHEN:** July 18–21, 2020. **WHERE:** Sun Valley Resort, Sun Valley, Idaho. **PRICE:** Full-access passes are sold out, but tickets to individual pavilion talks will go on sale in mid-June via the SVWC website for \$30–35 each. Four



of the afternoon/evening pavilion talks will be broadcast live to the lawn for free and open to the public. **WHAT MAKES THIS CONFERENCE UNIQUE:** “Our mission is to invite readers and writers into a realm of intellectual intimacy,” says Operations Manager Carrie Lightner. Some of the country’s—and the world’s—best writers and thinkers, including fiction and nonfiction writers, journalists, playwrights, poets, and filmmakers, talk about their work and the world. Past presenters have included Pulitzer Prize winners, National Book Award winners, and winners of The Booker Prize. With the ambition of inspiring as many young writers and readers in the area as possible, SVWC has created partnerships with the local libraries and school district, Boise State University, and also increased programming for the community to include free library talks, school speakers, lawn talks, and single-event tickets for local residents. This year, in a partnership with The Community Library, SVWC presenter Susan Orlean will give a talk and sign books after the conference on July 21. **HOW MANY ATTEND:** 1,500. **FACULTY:** Featured

## Using Social Media at Writing Conferences

Using social media during an event can help with personal branding, expanding your network, and getting more out of a conference. The people you meet can provide the real value of attending, so consider these dos and don'ts when you want to stand out.

- **DO** follow the event hashtag. Check the schedule for networking events that might facilitate more intimate and personal conversations.
- **DO** engage with presenters and attendees found online beforehand. Use the event hashtag to search for attendees on Twitter, or share content on LinkedIn. Prior engagement can make it easier to nail down a conversation at the event. Everyone is there to meet new people, so don't be shy.
- **DON'T** abuse hashtags. Added appropriately, they connect your posts to others on that topic, increasing your online visibility. In excess, they look spammy.
- **DO** follow the event's (or event sponsor's) social channels. You need to be active in these spaces in order to get noticed and make connections.
- **DO** follow Twitter lists of speakers. Smartly crafted feeds can be a great tool for social listening.
- **DON'T** be disappointed if you can't strike up an online friendship immediately after a session. Speakers get mobbed with feedback after presentations. A LinkedIn connection, with context, is an appropriate request.
- **DON'T** sell, self-promote, or overshare. Post only things that are share-worthy and add value.
- **DO** be socially active at the event. Engage with influencer content while they're speaking, mention them in your tweets, and ask them questions. Use the event hashtag, tag other attendees in your posts, retweet or reshare the content of others, and join conversations.
- **DON'T** get so caught up in social media that you forget to be present. The rule of thumb is: one Instagram image per session and two to five tweets. If you're in a small setting, put your phone away; you can post afterward.
- **DO** create visual content, such as photos and videos. Tag people you meet.
- **DON'T** broadcast presentations live unless you have prior permission.

authors include Elliot Ackerman, Isabel Allende, Sarah M. Broom, Lea Carpenter, William Dalrymple, Rita Dove, Geoff Dyer, James Geary, Andrew Sean Greer, Patrick Radden Keefe, Laila Lalami, Roger McNamee, Lynne Olson, Samantha Power, Heidi Shreck, Laura Secor, T. J. Stiles, Ocean Vuong, David Wallace-Wells, and Tobias Wolff. **HIGHLIGHTS:** The main talks are presented in the outdoor Sun Valley Pavilion, and smaller breakout sessions with speakers take place in other venues around the resort. Audio and video recordings of presentations are offered for free on the website after the conference, along with a "Beyond

the Page" podcast. **IF YOU GO:** The Ernest and Mary Hemingway House and Preserve is the site of a residency program for writers, scholars, and artists. Artifacts from the home are integrated into The Community Library's regional history collection. They also host a Hemingway exhibit; an extensive section of books, photos, and other materials; and an audio tour guiding visitors through Hemingway's footsteps. **FOR MORE**

**INFORMATION:** SVWC.com. **WD**

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## WRITE ON THE SOUND

WRITERS' CONFERENCE

FOCUSED ON THE CRAFT OF WRITING

EDMONDS WA

35<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
OCTOBER 2, 3 & 4  
2020



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