

A Rally of Writers

April 13, 2024

West Campus, LCC
5708 Cornerstone Dr
Lansing MI 48917

8:30 Registration and Coffee LCC Conference Center

9:00 Opening • Rob Edwards

9:30-10:30 Session 1 *Letters represent rooms*

- A. CRAFT • From Brainstorm to Outline • Jay Whistler
What you need to know about your story before you start writing.
- B. Getting Started with Audiobooks • Brandy Thomas
Want to make your book available in an audiobook format?
Come learn the process of audiobook creation.
- C. Tell Me A Story • Andrea King Collier
Ever heard or seen a TED Talk, a Snap Judgement, or a Moth Story Hour and thought you might want to try your hand at it?
- D. Self-Publishing: From Start to Finish • Amy Olle
Learn the details about self-publishing, from getting your book out to the world, to marketing it.
- E. Shoot, Write & Publish a Photo Book • Wayne Pope
How to capture, and edit your images, use templates to make page layouts, publish, promote and sell your photo book.

10:30-11:00 Authors Alley: Break and Books
(Tables by invitation only)

11:00-12:00 Session 2

- A. CRAFT • Character Desire • Jay Whistler
Learn the three prongs of desire and figure out what your protagonists want, need, and don't even know they're missing.
- B. How to Write a Great Sex Scene • Lev Raphael
Learn the dos and don'ts of a sex scene that you can be proud of, one that won't make readers laugh or say "What?!"
(Attendees must be over 18)
- C. The First Page • Erin Bartels
Improve your chances of getting an agent to read page two.
At least 10 people will be chosen to read their first pages.
- D. A Talk about Trees: Writing Poetry of Delight • Laura Apol
In this session, we'll focus on poetry of delight—writing poems of joy and pleasure as we live with integrity in challenging times.
- E. Your Path to Children's Book Success • Naomi V. Dunsen-White
Step out into the world of children's literature: write, publish, and thrive as a successful children's book author.

12:00-12:30 Keynote • Nandi Comer
"When Poets Respond: Poets, Resistance and Witness"

12:30-1:30 Feeding the Soul: Lunch & Networking
Authors Alley: Break and Books

1:30-2:30 Session 3

- A. CRAFT • Daring Dialogue • Steven Harper Pizaks
Dialogue can make a book—or break it. Dialogue should snap, sparkle, leap and bound. It should never fall flat or sound...real?
- B. Poetry as Resistance, Poetry as Witness • Nandi Comer
In this session, participants will learn strategies of contemporary writers who have uniquely engaged in writing for a more just world.
- C. Self-Publishing: From Start to Finish • Amy Olle
Learn the details about self-publishing, from getting your book out to the world, to marketing it. *(REPEAT SESSION)*
- D. Mirrors and Windows for the Mystery/Thriller Antagonist • Claudia Whitsitt
Learn to create a sympathetic antagonist—one who keeps your reader ravenously turning the pages.
- E. Short Stories • Let's Deconstruct a Story • Kelly Fordon
Kelly will share lessons on fiction writing gleaned from three years of podcast interviews with masters of the craft.

2:30-2:50 Authors Alley: Break and Books

2:50-3:50 Session 4

- A. CRAFT • Editing: An Interactive Workshop for New and Experienced Writers • Brandy Thomas
Participants will learn how to self-edit and gain hands-on experience.
- B. Memoir • Andrea King Collier
Everyone has a story that's uniquely theirs. But where will you start?
This class will help get your story out of your head and on the page.
- C. The First Page • Erin Bartels
Improve your chances of getting an agent to read page two.
At least 10 people will be chosen to read their first pages.
- D. Poetry Critique • Laura Apol & Masaki Takahashi
Bring a short poem to read for instant, honest feedback.
At least 10 people will be chosen to read their poetry.
- E. What's Up with Agents? • Steven Harper Pizaks
What does an agent do? How do you get one? Do you even need one? Come get the latest on agents in the modern market.

4:00 Closing: Last Words and Drawing

Bring this program to Rally

For more information, email us at: arallyofwriters@att.net

Richard Bradley Scholarship for Young Writers
Linda Peckham Scholarship for Older Learners
Winners receive Registration and Lunch for Rally
Submission guidelines for each are available online.
www.arallyofwriters.com Deadline: March 31, 2024

Or send registration panel below with check to:

A Rally of Writers 2024
P.O. Box 4253
East Lansing MI 48823

CLIP HERE AND MAIL IN

Name* _____

Add'l name(s) _____

Address _____

City/St/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Adult Registration \$112 Quantity
(At the door: \$127)

Student Registration \$77.00 Quantity
(At the door: \$97)

Students: bring student IDs, please

Total \$ _____

Make check payable to: A Rally of Writers 2024

Lunches: Boxed artisan sandwiches, pasta salad & cookie, included with conference registration.

Check this box for veggie lunch only

*Name tags will be provided at Rally.

Enter names as you want them to appear on your name tags.

Rally Speakers, April 13, 2024

arallyofwriters.com

Nandi Comer, Keynote • Nandi Comer is the current Poet Laureate of Michigan. Informed by her experiences growing up in Detroit, Comer writes and performs literary pieces that incorporate the history of the city, while also examining race, gender, sexuality, and class. She is the author of *American Family: A Syndrome* (Finishing Line Press) and *Tapping Out* (Northwestern University Press), which was awarded the 2020 Society of Midland Authors Award and the 2020 Julie Suk Award. She is a Cave Canem Fellow, a Callaloo Fellow, and a 2019 Kresge Arts in Detroit Fellow. Her poems and essays have appeared in *Callaloo*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, and others. Nandi has served as a writer-in-residence in Detroit Public Schools and has worked in collaboration with organizations, including YArts and InsideOut Literary Arts Projects. She serves as a poetry editor for *Obsidian: Literature & Arts in the African Diaspora* and is the co-director of Detroit Lit.

Laura Apol • Laura Apol served as the Lansing-area poet laureate from 2019-2021. She is an associate professor at Michigan State University and the author of several prize-winning collections of poetry, including *A Fine Yellow Dust* (winner of the 2022 Midwest Book Award for Poetry), and, most recently, *Cauterized*. laura-apol.com

Erin Bartels • The award-winning author of *We Hope for Better Things* (a 2020 Michigan Notable Book), *The Words Between Us*, *All That We Carried*, and *The Girl Who Could Breathe Under Water*, and *Everything is Just Beginning*. A part of the book publishing industry for 20 years, Erin is a professional copywriter and a freelance developmental editor. She also teaches writing workshops at retreats and conferences. erinbartels.com

Andrea King Collier • Andrea King Collier is a Lansing-based award-winning journalist, author and storyteller. Thanks to her TedX Lansing talk and becoming a member of the Moth family she has fallen in love with taking to the stage (big and small) to tell a great story in no more than 12 minutes.

Naomi V. Dunsen-White • Naomi V. Dunsen-White is an award-winning, independent children's book author who writes books that promote diversity, uplift self-esteem, and inspire discovery of one's purpose. Naomi is also a developmental editor, writing development coach, and author coach. She takes great pride in amplifying diverse voices and helping others fulfill their dreams of becoming published authors, leaving a legacy for the next generations. Naomi serves as Vice President of Literacy Nation, Inc., and Chairperson of the Equity and Inclusion Team, Michigan Chapter, Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators.

Kelly Fordon • Kelly Fordon's latest short story collection, *I Have the Answer* (Wayne State University Press, 2020), was chosen as a Midwest Book Award Finalist and an Eric Hoffer Finalist. Her 2016 Michigan Notable Book, *Garden for the Blind* (WSUP), was a Michigan Notable Book, an INDIEFAB Finalist, a Midwest Book Award Finalist, an Eric Hoffer Finalist, and an IPPY Awards Bronze Medalist. Her first full-length poetry collection, *Goodbye Toothless House* (Kattywompus Press, 2019), was an Eyelands International Prize Finalist and an Eric Hoffer Finalist. It was later adapted into a play by Robin Martin and published in The Kenyon Review Online. She has received a Best of the Net Award and Pushcart Prize nominations in three different genres. She teaches at Springfed Arts in Detroit and online, where she runs a fiction podcast called "Let's Deconstruct a Story." kellyfordon.com

Steven Harper Piziks • Piziks' science fiction novels include *In the Company of Mind* and *Corporate Mentality*. Writing as Steven Harper for Roc Books, he has produced *The Silent Empire* series (YA) and *The Clockwork Empire* steampunk series. He's also written movie novelizations and books based on *Star Trek* and *Battlestar Galactica*. *The Importance of Being Kevin* is his recent YA novel. He teaches English in southeast Michigan. theclockworkempire.com

Amy Olle • Amy Olle is a USA Today bestselling author of new adult and contemporary romance novels. She enjoys putting her psychology degrees to good use writing emotional, redemptive love stories. amyolle.com

Wayne Pope • Wayne Pope is an adjunct associate professor of photography at Lansing Community College and teaches classes in food styling, portrait, special effects, night sky, scenic and wildlife photography. He graduated from Michigan State University with a Biology degree and uses his science and photojournalism background to publish photo essays and articles for magazines, newspapers and books. Wayne published four books in 2023. They are *Birds of Michigan: Notable Species*, and *Michigan in Prose, Photos & Poems*. Wayne teaches a class entitled, "Basic Smartphone Photography" at Michigan libraries. It is popular with writers, educators and business professionals. waynerpope.com

Lev Raphael • The author of 27 books in genres from memoir to mystery, Lev Raphael escaped academia years ago to write and review full time in print and on-air. He's most recently the author of *Department of Death* and has won a Lambda Literary Award, a Reed Smith Fiction Award, the Harvey Swados Fiction Prize, and the Crossing Boundaries Award for Innovative Writing. MSU's Library collects his literary papers and he's done hundreds of workshops, talks, and readings in nine different countries. He coaches and edits writers at writewithoutborders.com and was recently chosen to be a Picador Professor at Leipzig University in Germany. levraphael.com

Masaki Takahashi • Masaki is the founder / host of The Poetry Room Open Mic. He has also recently started The Poetry Room Inc., a non-profit organization and is the current Lansing Poet Laureate. Masaki is a highly skilled and compelling performer and has appeared in numerous spoken word events in Michigan and nationally. He loves stories, hip-hop and being loud. the517poetryroom.com

Brandy Thomas • Brandy Thomas is a professional editor who lives and works in Marquette, Michigan. In addition to editing the written word, she is also an audiobook narrator and audio engineer. She is the voice of the U.P. Reader as well as several other series. Brandy currently serves on the Upper Peninsula Publisher and Author Association and Revolve CC (Creative Collaboration Conference) board of directors. When she is not refining other's words, she writes poetry and short fiction, quilts, and is a musician. ThomasEditing.com

Jay Whistler • Jay Whistler holds an MFA in Writing from the Vermont College of Fine Arts. She is an author, freelance editor, former acquisitions reader for three literary agencies, an editor for an online short story anthology and a print anthology and has been a judge for numerous writing contests. She regularly presents on the craft of writing at local, national, and international writing and publishing conferences. *The Ghostly Tales of San Antonio*, and *The Ghostly Tales of Put-In-Bay* are Jay's nonfiction historical middle-grade books, both using ghost stories to tell history. Her horror short story, *Seeking Bad Boys for Fun and Adventure* appeared in the December 2023 issue of The Quiet Ones anthology zine. jaywhistler.com

Claudia Whitsitt • Claudia Whitsitt is an award-winning Michigan author of both adult mysteries and historical fiction for children. Her mysteries include two series, the *Samantha Series*, based on an amateur sleuth, and the *Love and Loss Series*, novels with mystery and romance, as well as a stand-alone based on the Michigan Murders, entitled *The Wrong Guy*. As a former educator, Claudia was asked by her 5th grade students to write books for them. The result of that request is the *Kids Like You Series*, historical fiction based in Detroit. Aside from writing, Claudia spends time teaching workshops in schools and at conferences, always enthused to spend time encouraging writers of all ages. When Claudia isn't writing or teaching, she enjoys spending time with friends and family on Pleasant Lake where she finds peace, inspiration, and joy.

70% refund if requested by April 7, 2024; thereafter
50% for emergencies if requested by April 17, 2024.

The program is funded in part by
Lansing Community College.



A Rally of Writers 2024
P.O. Box 4253
East Lansing MI 48823
Bradley Scholarship - Age 22 and younger
Peckham Scholarship - Age 30 and older,
by March 31, 2024
arallyofwriters.com