

# 2015 AWP Conference Schedule

Thursday, April 9, 2015

**8:00 am to 5:30 pm**

**R100. [Conference Registration](#)**

Registration Area, Level 1

Attendees who have registered in advance may pick up their registration materials in AWP's preregistered check-in area, located in the registration area on level 1 of the Minneapolis Convention Center. If you have not yet registered for the conference, please visit the unpaid registration area, also in the registration area on level 1. Please consult the bookfair map in the conference planner for location details. Students must present a valid student ID to check-in or register at our student rate. Seniors must present a valid ID to register at our senior rate. A \$50 fee will be charged for all replacement badges.

**9:00 am to 10:15 am**

**R119. [Plot IS Character, Character IS Plot](#)**

Room M100 B&C, Mezzanine Level

(Jewell Parker Rhodes, William Konigsberg, Varian Johnson, [Nova Ren Suma](#))

Plot tests characters and forces them to make choices that define them. Plot provides characters with the things they are hard-wired to repeat and avoid, driven by physical, social, and emotional motivation. Successful authors of young adult and middle grade fiction explore how plot can deepen your characters as they tackle issues pertaining to social justice, diversity, environmental issues, cultural trends, and upheavals.

**1:30 pm to 2:45 pm**

**R216. [Young Adult and New Adult Content: Developing Themes of Substance for Readers](#)**

Room M100 J, Mezzanine Level

(Ann Angel, Ricki Thompson, Ann Matzke, Kekla Magoon)

Within children's writing, middle grade and young adult genres are well-defined. What about the new adult label? This genre was developed to delineate markets, but authors who write new adult and YA genres consciously work to develop themes that bring substantive and high quality experiences to readers. Writers on this panel will consider how NA and YA themes can move beyond expected issues of sexuality and independence to include family relationships, cultural, and world-issue perspectives.

**3:00 pm to 4:15 pm**

**R247. [Writing Biography for Young Readers: Creating the Gallery of the Good and Great](#)**

Room M100 H&I, Mezzanine Level

(Tracy Nelson Maurer, Phyllis Root, Jacqueline Briggs Martin, [Liza Ketchum](#))

Those who write nonfiction for children are often drawn to the stories of real people. We work to translate the facts of actual lives into works that will captivate our audience. This panel of award-winning writers considers the issues of writing biography: choosing the subject, knowing the audience, conducting research, framing and structuring the stories, and using appropriate fictional techniques.

**4:30 pm to 5:45 pm**

**R273. [How to Craft True-to-Life Queer YA Characters—Writing Beyond Stereotypes](#)**

Room 211 A&B, Level 2

(Kirstin Cronn-Mills, Molly Beth Griffin, Lauren Myracle, Judi Marcin)

Creating LGBTQ characters for a YA audience can be daunting. Many writers have limited experience with queer subject matter yet seek inclusivity. So where does one begin when crafting a young LGBTQ character? These YA authors will provide concrete methods for avoiding tropes, writing beyond stereotypes, and improving queer character veracity. This panel will give writers the tools needed to enhance the diversity within their work.

Friday, April 10, 2015

**9:00 am to 10:15 am**

**F115. [Representing Responsibly: We Need Diverse Books—Authors on the Challenges of Writing Diversity for Kids and Teens](#)**

Room 205 A&B, Level 2

(Sona Charaipotra, Sarah Benwell, Bryce Leung, Renee Ahdieh, Kristy Shen)

How do you change the (very white) face of children's literature? Through great storytelling. Because if there's one thing kids and teens hate, it's a lecture. The writers here are integrating issues of race, class, sexuality, gender, and/or ability, while still emphasizing the importance of narrative. This discussion, lead by #WeNeedDiverseBooks team members, will center on how to include diverse elements while putting the focus squarely on quality storytelling.

### 10:30 am to 11:45 am

#### **F151. [YA and Middle Grade Speculative Fiction: What's at Stake?](#)**

Room 211 A&B, Level 2

(Heather Bouwman, Pete Hautman, Laura Ruby, Justina Ireland, Anne Ursu)

The world of speculative fiction for kid and teen readers is diverse and deep. This moderated panel, composed of middle grade and young adult fantasy and science fiction authors, will discuss the special craft and genre concerns of MG and YA speculative fiction and the direction(s) in which they see the field headed.

### 12:00 pm to 1:15 pm

#### **F192. [YA Meets the Real: Young Adult Fiction and Nonfiction that Takes on the World](#)**

Room L100 D&E, Lower Level

([Marina Budhos](#), Kekla Magoon, [Marc Aronson](#), Elizabeth Partridge)

Most think the current boom in young adult is fantasy/dystopian series. Yet there's a flourishing world of YA fiction and nonfiction that grapples with the real—social issues, biography, history. Hear from YA authors about how they create compelling fiction and nonfiction on serious themes: How to invite the young reader into a subject they may not care about? What's the role of narrative literary techniques in nonfiction? How to illuminate issues in fiction without sounding didactic?

### 1:30 pm to 2:45 pm

#### **F221. [Tackling Tragedy in Young Adult with Different Mediums](#)**

Room M100 H&I, Mezzanine Level

([Lilliam Rivera](#), Cecil Castellucci, Meg Medina, Swati Avasthi, [Matt de la Pena](#))

How can children's writers approach tragedy in an original way without succumbing to cliché? Five young adult authors discuss structural choices in tackling traumatic events (bullying, death, natural disasters) while giving examples of ways these applications break boundaries and add perspective in articulating story. Through graphic novels to pulling story straight from the headlines to writing about disasters, participants will discuss one another's work and choices that have inspired theirs.

### 3:00 pm to 4:15 pm

#### **F254. [Young Adults, New Adults, & the Women Who Write Them: Navigating the Politics of Gender & Genre in Young Adult Literature](#)**

Room M100 F&G, Mezzanine Level

(Sheila O'Connor, Laurel Snyder, Lynn Melnick, Marian Crotty, [Stephanie Kuehn](#))

From S.E. Hinton to J.K. Rowling, YA literature is one of the few literary genres dominated by female writers. Success within this genre, however, has not always afforded its writers a place in literary conversations or academic institutions. This panel of authors and editors will discuss the gendered politics that inform the reception of YA literature, the importance of including YA writers in literary conversations, and the strategies by which these writers can advocate for their work.

### 4:30 pm to 5:45 pm

#### **F278. [Growing Up in a Magical Space: Magical Realism in Contemporary Young Adult/Children's Literature](#)**

Room 205 C&D, Level 2

(Laura Ruby, [Janet Fox](#), Nikki Loftin, [Nova Ren Suma](#), Samantha Mabry)

Magical realism is a genre in which magical elements occur naturally in a realistic environment—much as they do in childhood. As the popularity of dystopian fiction wanes in young adult/children's literature, other genres take its place, including a blend of the contemporary and the fantastic: magical realism. Five published authors will discuss the unique place of magical realism in young adult/children's literature and share their reasons and methods for working in this underrepresented genre.

**Saturday, April 11, 2015**

### 9:00 am to 10:15 am

#### **S121. [Geography of Nowhere: Suburban Landscape as Stage & Character in Young](#)**

## **Adult/Children's Literature**

Room 211 C&D, Level 2

(Geoff Herbach, [Janet Fox](#), Kari Anne Holt, Nikki Loftin, Kirstin Cronn-Mills)

Contemporary young adult/children's fiction is largely set in ordinary, often suburban landscapes. Characters experience love, loss, and growth amid the mundane world of sprawling shopping malls, high school football fields, and chain restaurants. Five published authors discuss the extraordinary nature of the everyday in crafting young adult/children's literature.

### **10:30 am to 11:45 am**

#### **S153. Navigating the Waters of Authentic Voice in YA Native Fiction**

Room M100 A, Mezzanine Level

([Debbie Reese](#), Eric Gansworth, Cynthia Leitich Smith, Tim Tingle, [Debby Dahl Edwardson](#))

Books by Native writers offer something unique that most non-Native writers don't have: access to a lived experience as a Native person. This identity shapes and informs the stories they choose to tell. Without deep connections, non-Native writers often recycle problems that characterize the body of literature about Native people. This dialog, with Nambe, Onondaga, Mvskoke, and Norsk panelists, will focus on choices writers make in telling stories that embody the depth and breadth of Native life.

### **12:00 pm to 1:15 pm**

#### **S182. Fascinated or Haunted: Why We Continue to Write & Rewrite Fairy Tales**

Room 208 C&D, Level 2

(Sherryl Clark, [Ron Koertge](#), Christine Heppermann, Phyllis Root)

Everyone from Einstein to Bettelheim says fairy tales are vital to children. Whether we believe their impact is deeply and psychologically empowering for the young, or just a good imaginative leaping off point for writers, we cannot deny their durability. This panel explores the reasons for writing a fairy-tale-based work, the transformations that happen, and delves into the writers' own childhood experiences of this realm. What endures in our deepest imagination, and why?

### **1:30 pm to 2:45 pm**

#### **S227. Coming of Age: Choosing to Write the Young Adult and Middle Grade Novel**

Room L100 J, Lower Level

(Sheila O'Connor, [M. Evelina Galang](#), Jewell Parker Rhodes, Nicole Helget, Mick Cochrane)

Novelists have long been interested in conflicts of the young, and many novelists are choosing to write for both adults and younger readers. What are the challenges of moving between two audiences? Does the age of the intended reader, middle grade or young adult, limit the novelist's ambition or craft? Are there craft demands unique to each audience? Five writers who have published novels for both adults and young people will share the lessons learned from writing for a second audience.

### **3:00 pm to 4:15 pm**

#### **S250. Race in YA Lit: Writing Ourselves, Writing the Other**

Room M100 D&E, Mezzanine Level

(Swati Avasthi, Justina Ireland, [Matt de la Pena](#), Varian Johnson)

We all know the importance of seeing yourself in a book. But in children's literature, where diversity is crucial, characters of color (CoCs) are few and far between. This panel will address common questions that arise when writing CoCs: Do I have the authority to tell this story? How do I avoid tokenism? Can I write outside my race authentically? Can I represent my own race? Four diverse authors will discuss the unique challenges and strategies for writing CoCs and navigating the market.

### **4:30 pm to 5:45 pm**

#### **S273. The Art of Fact: Writing Nonfiction for Children and Teens**

Room 205 A&B, Level 2

([Carrie Pomeroy](#), [Joyce Sidman](#), Tracy Nelson Maurer, [Mary Losure](#), Ann Matzke)

Juvenile nonfiction writers are increasingly breaking free from convention and exploring new ways to convey facts and true stories. They are experimenting with poetry and character-driven narrative. They are creating innovative back matter to enhance their books' educational value. So how does a writer craft a nonfiction book that's informative and a joy for kids to read? In this panel, five writers share their approaches to sparking young readers' curiosity and keeping readers engaged.