

2019 ANWA Writers Conference Faculty

Special Guests

Guest Agents

Quressa Robinson, Nelson Literary Agency

Quressa Robinson has been an avid reader as long as she can remember. She earned an MFA in Creative writing from Columbia and subsequently spent five years as an editor, mostly at a Big Five publisher. She joined the Nelson Literary Agency in September 2017 after close to a year at another agency.

Originally from San Francisco, Quressa has been living in New York City for over a decade. (She's a West Coast New Yorker!) As a New York based agent, she's eager to build her MG, YA, and Adult lists. She is most drawn to literary voices in commercial packages, wonderfully realized characters, untold stories from underrepresented communities, immersive world building, and complex narrative approaches/plots. Also, she is most drawn to character-driven stories and love strong voice as well.

<https://nelsonagency.com/quressa-robinson/> | [@qnrawesome](#)

Kari Sutherland, Bradford Literary Agency

Kari Sutherland joined the Bradford Literary Agency in 2017 after a decade of experience in publishing from the editorial side. Previously a Senior Editor at HarperCollins Children's Books, she has worked with bestselling and critically acclaimed authors on projects such as the #1 New York Times bestselling Red Queen by Victoria Aveyard and the #1 New York Times bestselling Pretty Little Liars series by Sara Shepard. She graduated from Williams College with a B.A. in English and Psychology, which she considers the perfect combination for working with authors on character and plot development. With her editorial insight and experience with the entire publishing process, Kari is passionate about helping to polish each manuscript and equip her clients for success.

Open to genres from picture books through adult, Kari is most interested in finding stories full of heart; ones that carry readers to faraway places or deep into a character's mind; action-packed page-turners that surprise her; dark dramas with touches of humor; and, above all, a voice that leaps off the page. She is actively seeking diverse voices across all genres.

<http://bradfordlit.com/about/kari-sutherland-agent/> | [@KariSutherland](#)

Guest Editors

Lisa Mangum, Shadow Mountain Publishing

Lisa Mangum has worked in the publishing department of Deseret Book since 1997. She has been the Managing Editor for the Shadow Mountain since 2014 and has worked with several New York Times best-selling authors, including Brandon Mull, Ally Condie, and Jason F. Wright. While fiction is her first love, she also has experience working with nonfiction projects (memoir, educational, cookbooks) and some children's picture books.

Lisa is also the author of four national best-selling YA novels (The Hourglass Door trilogy and *After Hello*), and several short stories and novellas. She has also edited four anthologies based on magical creatures. She graduated with honors from the University of Utah, and currently lives in Taylorsville, Utah, with her husband, Tracy.

[@LisaMangum](#)

Samantha Millburn, Covenant Communications

Samantha Millburn is the managing editor of Covenant Communications. In her nine-plus years at Covenant, she has collaborated with extremely talented writers to edit more than three hundred books. She graduated from BYU-Idaho with honors with a bachelor's degree in English and currently lives in Draper, Utah, with her husband, Matthew, and their four beautiful children.

Special Guests

Mary Weber

Keynote speaker

Mary Weber is the bestselling HarperCollins author of six books, including the Storm Siren Trilogy, The Evaporation of Sofi Snow series, and this year's highly-acclaimed *To Best the Boys*. When not writing, Mary sings '80s hairband songs to her three muggle children, and ogles her husband who looks strikingly like Wolverine. They live in California which is perfect for stalking aging superstars while wearing sweatpants and fannypacks.

Mary's written for the Huffington Post, Hypable, and Hallmark, and her books have been endorsed by Marissa Meyer, Jonathan Maberry, and Shannon Messenger. You can also find Mary's fun interview in the paperback of Marissa Meyer's NYT bestselling *Cress*.

[Maryweber.com](#) | [@mchristineweber](#)

Melanie Jacobson

Thursday speaker

Melanie Jacobson has published eight contemporary romances with Covenant, and contributed novellas to several other joint projects. Her YA work is represented by

Alyssa Henkin of Trident. Melanie holds an MFA in Writing from the Vermont College of Fine Arts and she is a multiple Whitney Award finalist. She could also probably hold a second masters in shoe collection.

melaniejacobson.net | [@writestuff_me!](https://www.instagram.com/writestuff_me/)

Adam Berg

Master of Ceremonies

Adam Berg is a six-foot-two, dog-obsessed, comedy writing nap expert. He wrote and performed sketch comedy at Studio C from 2012 to 2018. Now he and his Studio C co-conspirators are writing and producing their own content at JK! Studios. One day, his debut novel will actually debut and he can stop thinking about it during the wee hours of the night. Until then, he's gonna drink more Coke. The opening of his novel *Rainbringer* won the first place in the Storymakers Conference First Chapter Contest, Young Adult Historical & Epic Fantasy category.

Guest Speakers

Dr. Christy Alexon

Dr. Christy Alexon is a Clinical Associate Professor of Nutrition and coordinates the MS Medical Nutrition degree program at Arizona State University. She is also a Sport Nutrition Consultant for Renaissance Periodization.

Christy has been a Registered Dietitian since 2007. Professionally, Christy is past president of the Arizona Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and has worked as a clinical dietitian at Chandler Regional Medical Center. In 2012-2013, she was selected as "Recognized Young Dietitian of the Year" by the Arizona Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and was also nominated for the ASU Centennial Professor Award.

Prior to joining ASU, Professor Alexon was an adjunct faculty member at Mesa Community College and nutrition consultant for the Phoenix VA Health Care System.

Leslie Householder

Leslie Householder is a three-time best-selling, award-winning, internationally published author of *The Jackrabbit Factor*, *Portal to Genius*, and *Hidden Treasures: Heaven's Astonishing Help with Your Money Matters*. She's a contributing author to multiple Chicken Soup for the Soul publications, and she also created Genius Bootcamp, a 2-3 day workshop based on the book *Portal to Genius*, which gives you the training and environment to help you discover – absolutely genius (aka inspired) solutions to your toughest challenges.

Bookwritingretreat.com

Faculty

Ann Acton

Ann Acton was raised in Utah but was whisked away to Washington many years ago by her sweet husband. She and has learned to love the green, but not the rain. She is the mother of five children who speak sarcasm as their first language and don't believe she used to be normal before they were born. She is the author of *The Miracle Maker*, published by Covenant Book which was made into a feature film by Mainstay Productions. She is also the author of *The Vanishing* which she wrote with her 14-year-old son, and *The Return* which will be releasing in fall of 2019– if she can stop procrastinating. When she's not writing or staring at Facebook, pretending she's writing, she works as a daycare provider and homeschooling mom.

annacton.com

Torsha Baker

Torsha Shingler Baker is the author of *Tainted Lies* under her pen name, Leona Nation. She writes young adult and adult science fiction/fantasy, thriller, and romance. Torsha is a member of the Ready, Set, Write Podcast, and the So You Think You Can Write Youtube channel, offering serious writing advice without taking herself too seriously. Torsha lives in Chandler, Arizona, with her husband, four kids, cat, and dogs. Her imagination often got her into trouble in her school years, but she finally realized she could put it to good use by creating worlds of her own. When she's not writing, she's procrasti-baking French macarons with her business, Ooh La La Macaron.

torshashinglerbaker.wordpress.com | www.leonanation.com | [@torsha_s_baker](https://twitter.com/torsha_s_baker)

Soquel Baumgardner

Soquel Baumgardner pronounces her name SOH-kel BAHM-GARRD-ner but also answers to Your Majesty. Her first job was working the nightshift at a nuclear power plant. She has lived in 50 different homes, most notably next door to the famous Oak Alley Plantation and in a Victorian house in the middle of a California broccoli field which was said by locals to be haunted by a ghost in a space suit. Such were her formative years, in case anyone should wonder why she writes urban fantasy, alternative historical fiction, and fairy tales. Soquel loves research almost as much as she loves dark chocolate and writing. She likes going down rabbit holes and returning with new story ideas, quirky facts, and authentic details that bring realism and originality to her projects and instill a sense of her credibility in her readers. She teaches creative writing to students in grades 6-12 at a private school in Las Vegas, NV. Soquel's work is included in ANWA's 2018 book on the craft of writing, titled *Create, Craft, Critique, and More*.

www.facebook.com/S.G.Baumgardner/ | [@SG_Baumgardner](https://twitter.com/SG_Baumgardner)

Stephanie Black

Stephanie Black is the author of ten novels, most recently *Mind Games*. Her eleventh novel, *To Die, To Sleep*, will be released in November 2019, and her novella "Something Beautiful for Something Evil" will be released in September 2019 as part of the compilation *Entangled: Four Stories of Suspense*, alongside stories by Traci Hunter Abramson, Gregg Luke, and Clair Poulson. She is a four-time Whitney Award winner for Best Mystery/Suspense, and a Whitney finalist for Best Speculative Novel. She loves hanging out with other writers and discussing matters such as plot twists and semicolons. Stephanie is thrilled to be teaching at ANWA.

www.stephanieblack.net | [@StephanieMBlack](https://twitter.com/StephanieMBlack)

Paige Blaser

Paige holds an MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults from the Vermont College of Fine Arts. While she focuses on YA and MG writing, she recently wrote, and was the creative director on *Hear: A Study Guide on Personal Revelation* for the TOFW division of Deseret Book.

Shelly Brown

Shelly Brown is the author of *Ghostsitter*, *Squint*, and the award-winning *Mustaches For Maddie*. She tours the country talking to kids of all ages about literacy and being kind. And they're listening. They're good kids. She also has performed comedy for more years than she would ever admit to and has the pratfall bruises to prove it.

shellybrownwriter.com | [@sbrownwriter](https://twitter.com/sbrownwriter)

Donald Carey

Don Carey writes both Contemporary Realism and Science Fiction Adventure. He has long been fascinated by human nature, and loves trying to understand the thoughts and motivations of those around him. That interest has served him well as he writes stories about his "imaginary friends." Don currently lives in Kansas with his family. His day job involves writing computer programs, which is almost the same as writing fiction, but with a lot more semicolons.

thedelusiontree.blogspot.com | [@thedelusiontree](https://twitter.com/thedelusiontree)

Melinda Carroll

Melinda Carroll's first foray into writing was a speech for a US Senator during a committee hearing. Since then she's written for several newsletters, run a book review blog for a short time, and helped edit and review several manuscripts that went on to get published in the national market. In the last seven years she's worked behind the scenes in the writing world, serving once as the ANWA Conference Chair, in different

roles on the Conference Committee, and two years on the Board of Directors. Her debut domestic suspense novel, *Cold Confessions*, will be published in September.

Darci Cole

Darci Cole is an author and narrator, working mainly in the fantasy genre. She and her husband run Colevanders: a wand shop catering to lovers of magic and cosplay. Her YouTube series, The Darci Diaries, chronicles her personal writing journey. One of her favorite things is beta reading for friends and acclaimed authors. She currently lives in Arizona with her husband and four children.

darcicole.blogspot.com | [@darcicoleauthor](https://twitter.com/darcicoleauthor)

Lisa Crandall

Lisa is an Arizona native, Netflix addict, mac-n-cheese connoisseur, and is freakishly good at Name That Tune. She studied Technical Communication and Rhetoric at Utah State University, and after earning her bachelor's went on to take graduate courses in Visual Communication at Arizona State University. She currently works as a web developer for a digital marketing agency in Tempe, Arizona. When she's not building websites or writing, she can be found sitting in traffic, belting out songs from Broadway musicals.

lisaacrandall.com | [@misslcrandall](https://twitter.com/misslcrandall)

Gina Denny

Gina Denny is a former writer and contributor for Deseret Connect. She writes feminist-driven fantasy and science-fiction. She also teaches music to teenagers, which gives her a really bad headache most of the time.

ginadenny.blogspot.com | [@ginad129](https://twitter.com/ginad129)

Pam Eaton

Pam Eaton lives in the deserts of Arizona, but she'll always consider herself a New Englander at heart. She graduated from Arizona State University with degrees involving education and history. While she loves history, it'll always take a backseat to the fictional world she stumbled into as a young girl.

She lives with her husband, three kids, and two crazy, but lovable labs. It's a chaotic life, but she wouldn't have it any other way. Especially since they let her read an insane amount of books, and watch way too many Food Network shows.

www.pameaton.com

Jared Garrett

Jared Garrett is a family man, full-time dad and professional, and the author of the scifi thriller BEAT series and several other books. He grew up as an unwilling cultist and has

worked as a firefighter, BBQ chef, cowboy theater actor, and a bellman. After designing training solutions for Amazon and American Express, and other companies, he now works for BYU. He writes in the margins of the day and has published seven books since 2015.

www.jaredgarrett.com | [@jaredgarrett](https://twitter.com/jaredgarrett)

David Gill

David Macinnis Gill teaches in the Vermont College of Fine Arts MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults program and the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, specializing in young adult literature. He is a past president of ALAN, the Assembly on Literature for Adolescents of NCTE, and he has published five acclaimed novels with HarperCollins.

www.davidmacinnisgill.com | [@thunderchikin](https://twitter.com/thunderchikin)

Jennifer Griffith

Jennifer Griffith writes light, sweet romances she calls Cotton Candy for the Soul. Jennifer loves old cars, landscape paintings, fresh bread with raspberry jam, and reading. She served as a missionary in Japan, where she ate a cricket on a dare and once saw a sumo wrestler on a train. She also traveled through Europe, where she slept a night in a castle on the Rhine. Jennifer worked summers in a cookie factory, and she spent a few years working for the U.S. Congress before becoming a wife, a mom of five brilliant kids, and an author of over 20 books.

www.authorjennifergriffith.com | [@GriffithJen](https://twitter.com/GriffithJen)

Angelica Hagman

Angelica Hagman has published more than sixty short stories and non-fiction articles in print magazines. As a life coach and book consultant, Angelica helps her clients overcome internal and external obstacles, navigate the plot twists of life, rock their character growth arcs, and achieve their life and writing goals.

www.angelicahagman.com | [@angelicahagman](https://twitter.com/angelicahagman)

Whitney Hemsath

Whitney Hemsath has a B.A. in Screenwriting and is a Storymakers First Chapter Contest winner. She has sold and published multiple flash fiction and short story pieces and has both a YA sci-fi novel and religious nonfiction book in revisions. Her secret love is writing song parodies, and there is precious little she won't do in this world for a good back scratch or brownie a la mode.

whitneyhemsath.wordpress.com | [@WhitneyHemsath](https://twitter.com/WhitneyHemsath)

Christene Houston

Christene Houston has a dream. Part of it involves getting lost in a castle in Scotland. The other part involves inspiring others to think big and shine bright. She loves to travel, bake yummy things, and write sweet romances with her team at Gelato Publishing. This year Christene is determined to do big things, like graduate from college with a degree in English, write three clean romances, reach her goal weight, and teach at her first conference. If you want to know how to develop your passions or live a healthy writer life, come see her at ANWA Conference.

christenehouston.optavia.com/ChristeneHouston

Jen Geigle Johnson

Jen Geigle Johnson discovered her passion for England while kayaking on the Thames near London as a young teenager. She once greeted an ancient turtle under the water by grabbing her fin. During a study break date in college, she sat on top of a jeep's roll bars up in the mountains and fell in love. An award winning author, including the GOLD in Foreword INDIES Book of the Year Awards, now she loves to share bits of history that might otherwise be forgotten. Whether in Regency England, the French Revolution, or Colonial America, her romance novels are much like life is supposed to be: full of adventure. She is a member of the RWA, the SCBWI, and LDStorymakers. She is also the chair of the Lonestar.Ink writing conference.

www.jengeiglejohnson.com | [@authorjen](https://twitter.com/authorjen)

Gina Larsen

Growing up on dairy farm, Gina spent countless hours milking Holsteins and riding horses like a professional Midwest Wild Child. (Was that a good simile? Come to class and find out!) She lives in Idaho Falls, Idaho, with her funeral director husband, their four brilliant and independent children, and two high-energy border collies. With energy to spare and the heart of a teacher, Gina is currently the President of Snake River Writers, a writing group for those living in southeast Idaho. She writes fantasy romance and contemporary romance for both adults and teens, and occasionally journals about her writing experiences at www.seriouslygina.com, a blog that frequently includes kissing gifs. Because, kissing is life. (Was that a good metaphor? You tell me.)

www.seriouslygina.com | [@seriouslygina](https://twitter.com/seriouslygina)

Betsy Love

Betsy Love has been writing since she could hold a pen. She has a degree in English and secondary education. Betsy has nine published titles and plans for at least three more in the next few months. When not writing, she loves traveling to visit family or escaping the desert heat to go to her mountain property. She is an award-winning essayist and Whitney nominee.

www.betsylove.com | [@authorbetsylove](https://twitter.com/authorbetsylove)

Brad McBride

Brad has been blogging for almost a decade, first as Middleaged Mormon Man, and now as Brad. He specializes in walking the precarious tightrope between humor and spirituality in his writing. He loves to teach, to learn and to laugh. He calls Gilbert home. One wife, five kids, 3 grands, one dog, two books published, and one well-worn laptop. www.thusweseem.com | [@Brad_McB_TWS](https://twitter.com/Brad_McB_TWS)

Jordan McCollum

An award-winning author, Jordan McCollum can't resist a story where good defeats evil and true love. On the nonfiction side, she loves to teach about writing through her blog, online classes and Writing Craft nonfiction series. She's taught at conferences including LDStorymakers & UAACon and was the keynote speaker for the 2016 ANWA Northwest Writers Retreat. On the fiction side, Jordan specializes in stories about love, lies, secrets and spies. Her novels in the Spy Another Day series were all finalists for the Whitney Awards. In her day job, she coerces people to do things they don't want to, elicits information and generally manipulates the people she loves most—she's a mom. JordanMcCollum.com | [@JordanMcCollum](https://twitter.com/JordanMcCollum)

Melissa Meibos

Melissa Meibos is a creator of worlds, editor of books, and a walking Pinterest board who doesn't know how to sit still. She can accomplish more in one day than others can in a week or she can spend all day reading and eating cookies. Melissa does freelance editing as well as in-house editing for Immortal Works. www.thenovelthing.com

Chris Morris

Chris Morris is the founder and managing partner for Chris Morris CPA LLC, an accounting firm focused on meeting the needs of small business owners. He has worked in accounting and finance for nearly two decades, but over the past five years has been focused on building his firm and serving his clients. He has developed niche expertise for creative entrepreneurs and specifically authors, which now represent more than 65% of his clients. He has gladly served on the faculty of multiple writing conferences, sharing what he's learned with creative entrepreneurs. chrismorriscpa.com | [@cmorriswrites](https://twitter.com/cmorriswrites) | [@chrismorriscpa](https://twitter.com/chrismorriscpa)

Dyany Munson

Dyany Munson has 10+ years of experience working in IT, with her most recent role in user support and instruction as well as web site creation at Arachne Web Spinners as Top Tech Translator & Tweaker. She has built or helped with several WordPress sites, is a noted Scrivener expert and, with a degree in writing as well as contributions to the book

Rise Above Depression by Jodi Orgill Brown, she understands the needs of writers from a uniquely nerdy perspective. Her hobbies include random acts of tech support, telling her cats to get off the desk, and not writing.

writing.dyany.com | [@dyany70](https://twitter.com/dyany70)

Kimberly Vanderhorst

Kimberly Vanderhorst is a YA speculative fiction author who delights in bragging about how awesome she is (she's not wrong). She wrote her first book when she was seven, and her second when she was twenty-seven. When asked to account for the intervening decades, she likes to suggest the possibility of alien abduction with as straight a face as possible.

Represented by the incomparable Lorin Oberweger of Adams Literary, Kimberly fills her non-writing hours with four kids, four church callings, and four volunteer organizations (if there's a joke in all those fours, she's too tired to make it). Her life plan is to continually associate with people even awesomer than she is in hopes they'll rub off on her. This is likely why she decided to be born in Canada."

www.kimvanderhorst.com | [@Kymburleev](https://twitter.com/Kymburleev)

Jaclyn Weist

Jaclyn is an Idaho farm girl who grew up loving to read. She developed a love for writing at a young age and published her first book in 2013. She met her husband, Steve, at BYU, and they have six happy, crazy children who encourage her to keep writing. After owning a bookstore and running away to have adventures in Australia, they settled back down in their home in Utah.

When Jaclyn isn't herding her kids to various activities, she serves on the board for her local arts agency, runs a writing workshop, and stays up late writing books in various genres.

www.jaclynweist.com | www.jaclynhardy.com | [@jaclynweist](https://twitter.com/jaclynweist)