



# NMwriters

SUPPORTING *and* CONNECTING THE LITERARY COMMUNITY

7<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL DINNER

APRIL 17, 2025 | SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO



MAY 16-18, 2025  
SANTA FE COMMUNITY CONVENTION CENTER  
TICKETS: [SFINTERNATIONALLITFEST.ORG](https://sfinternationallitfest.org)

Stories set us free.



SANTA FE  
*international*  
LITERARY  
FESTIVAL

Photo © Jack Parsons

Be part of an unforgettable long weekend dedicated to the power of story. Join us at the Santa Fe Community Convention Center for more than thirty events with literary legends, book signings, and more.

*Authors and moderators include:*

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VIET THANH NGUYEN	HAMPTON SIDES	DEBORAH JACKSON TAFFA	CAITY WEAVER	JJ AMAWORO WILSON	

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COVER: Shiprock at sunrise.

TOP RIGHT: Ina Sizer Cassidy (left), director of the New Mexico Writers Projects, and Margaret Valdez, worked together on this vital program of the Works Progress Administration in 1936.



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APRIL 17, 2025 | SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO



About New Mexico Writers

New Mexico Writers is a not-for-profit organization founded in 2016 to support and connect New Mexico's literary community. Our mission is to provide grants, networking, and career development opportunities to aspiring and established writers from communities throughout New Mexico and the greater Navajo Nation. We believe that by addressing cultural, financial, and professional barriers facing writers, we will build a more vibrant and diverse literary community. Our annual dinner brings together writers and others to celebrate and inspire each other as well as to honor our annual grant recipients. In addition to our grantmaking program, our public outreach activities include Rising Writers, New Mexico Book Awards, and our award-winning monthly newsletter, *The New Mexico Writer*. To learn more, or become a member, visit [NMWriters.org](https://NMWriters.org).



CONGRATULATES

## New Mexico Writers

ON ITS OUTSTANDING  
SUCCESS SUPPORTING  
DOZENS OF WRITERS  
AND AWARDING NEARLY  
\$70,000 IN GRANTS  
DURING THE PAST SEVEN  
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### NMW ANNUAL DINNER TEAM

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BOOKSTORE  
& COFFEEHOUSE

LA FONDA ON THE PLAZA

SANTA FE INTERNATIONAL  
LITERARY FESTIVAL



## 7<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL DINNER

APRIL 17, 2025

*Lumpkins Ballroom, La Fonda on the Plaza*

### 5:30 P.M. RECEPTION

*Cash bar, time to mingle, browse, and buy*

- Curated selection of books
- Books by New Mexico Writers grantees
- Raffle tickets
- Display of books by the New Mexico Book Association

### 6:30 P.M. DINNER AND WELCOME

- James McGrath Morris, *NMW Executive Director*

### 6:50 P.M. PROGRAM

- Award for outstanding service to the writing community
- Celebration of NMW Grantees  
Carmella Padilla, *NMW Grants Committee Chair*
- Video of 2024 NMW Grantees
- NMW 2025 Grantee Awards

### RAFFLE DRAWINGS

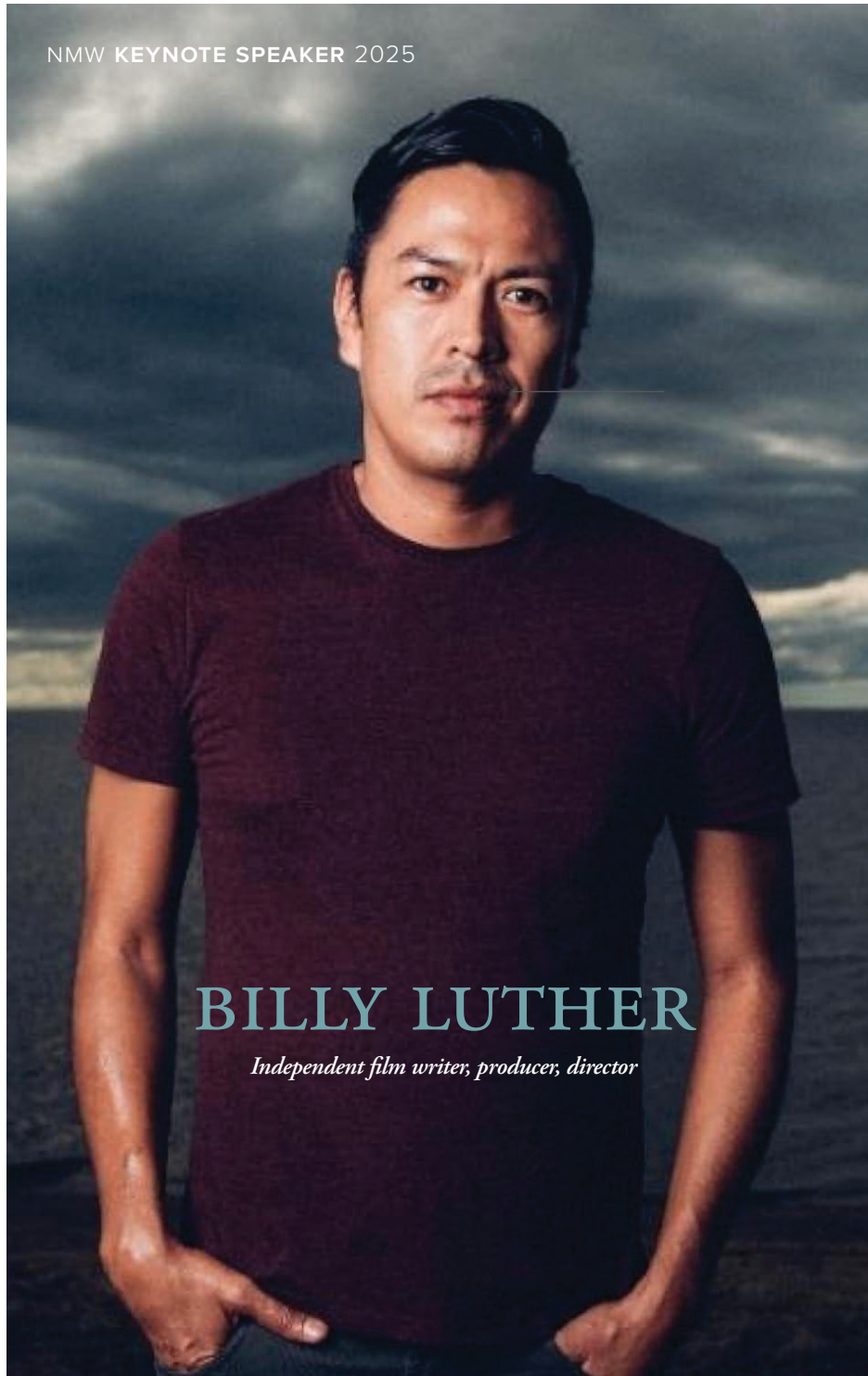
- Two Santa Fe International Literary Festival weekend passes
- New Mexico Book Sampler
- *Killers of the Flower Moon*, book signed by author David Grann and director Martin Scorsese
- Handmade, hand-painted ceramic platter by Allan Walter of Rainbow Gate, Santa Fe

### KEYNOTE SPEAKER BILLY LUTHER

*in conversation with Cynthia Sylvester*

### 9 P.M. CLOSING REMARKS





Billy Luther (Diné, Hopi, and Laguna Pueblo) is a film writer, producer, and director whose short films and documentaries turn an insider's lens on Indigenous life and culture. He is perhaps best known for his 2023 feature film, *Frybread Face and Me*, and as a writer and director for the award-winning AMC television series, *Dark Winds*. He is also the creator of alter-NATIVE, a short-film project launched in 2018 for the PBS web series Indie Lens Storycast.

The award-winning *Frybread Face and Me* is a coming-of-age story that *Variety* called “an amazing tale of exile and discovery.” The film draws upon Luther’s own story of living his formative years in San Diego until being uprooted to spend a summer with his grandmother on the Navajo reservation in Arizona. While there, he is introduced to Native traditions he has never known, forcing him to examine his contemporary urban experiences against a vast landscape of Indigenous history. The film was a 2023 “Official Selection” at the

SXSW Film & TV Festival, the Toronto International Film Festival, and the Mill Valley Film Festival.

Another celebrated documentary feature by Luther is the 2007 *Miss Navajo*, which follows a beauty pageant contestant on her quest to be crowned Miss Navajo Nation. The film premiered at the 2007 Sundance Film Festival before being aired nationally on PBS. Luther’s 2011 documentary feature, *Grab*, also premiered at Sundance and was screened at more than 80 film festivals around the world. In 2016, his documentary *Red Lake* premiered at the LA Film Festival and was nominated for Best Documentary Short at the International Documentary Association Awards.

A Los Angeles resident, Luther spends time in New Mexico as a writer and director for the *Dark Winds* television series, which is set in 1970s Navajo country and is based on the Leaphorn and Chee novels by the late, acclaimed New Mexico author Tony Hillerman. ■



## CONVERSATION STARTER: CYNTHIA SYLVESTER



Cynthia Sylvester (Diné) is born into the Kiyaa'ánii Clan for the Bilagáana Clan and is a native of Albuquerque. A graduate of the University of New Mexico, she received her MFA in creative writing from Warren Wilson College. She is a member of the New Mexico Writers board of directors and serves on the NMW Rising Writers committee.

Sylvester's debut book, *The Half-White Album*, published in 2023 by the University of New Mexico Press, won best LGBTQ+ book in the New Mexico-Arizona Book Awards. Her stories and poems have appeared in *Poetry Magazine*, *Leon Literary Review*, *Lunch Ticket*, *ABQ in Print*, *AsUs*, and *bosque (the magazine)*, among others.

She is a recipient of the Taos Writers

Conference Native Writer Award, and her flash fiction and nonfiction were nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

Sylvester is on the creative writing faculty of the Emerging Diné Writers Institute at Navajo Technical University. She also hosts the monthly ABQ DimeStories, an open mic event featuring three-minute stories written and read by an author.

Currently, Sylvester is working on a novel set in Albuquerque that follows the lives of four women who met when they played basketball in high school. The novel picks up their lives when the women are 49 years old, examining how what happened in high school continues to impact their lives. This time of year, Sylvester can also be found pulling weeds in her backyard. ■



— NMW Presents —

## FRYBREAD FACE AND ME

at Jean Cocteau Cinema

Join film writer, producer, and director Billy Luther and New Mexico Writers at Jean Cocteau Cinema on Friday, April 18, for a special screening of *Frybread Face and Me*, Luther's 2023 award-winning documentary. The screening begins at 6:30 p.m., followed by a Q&A with Luther. For tickets, visit [jeancocteaucinema.com](http://jeancocteaucinema.com).

## NEW MEXICO WRITERS TAKES OVER NEW MEXICO BOOK AWARDS

New Mexico Writers has a new project in 2025: the New Mexico Book Awards.

The nearly two-decades-old book competition has long been a bedrock of the New Mexico literary scene. When its Albuquerque-based founder, Paul Rhett, decided to call it quits, NMW embraced the opportunity to carry it forward.



Submissions for the 2025 New Mexico Book Awards are now being accepted for any book with a creative connection to the state. New Mexico authors, designers, publishers, publicists, and others are invited to apply.

All entries must be postmarked no later than Friday, April 25.

Finalists will be announced at the end of September. Winners will be announced before mid-November.

See [nmwriters.org/nm-book-awards](http://nmwriters.org/nm-book-awards) for entry eligibility, submission fee/instructions, judging, and category information.



# 2025 NMW GRANTEES

MEET OUR FIFTEEN OUTSTANDING GRANTEES



**CATALINA BARTLETT** is a writer and assistant professor who lives in Albuquerque and teaches remotely for Michigan State University. Her fiction has been nominated twice for a Pushcart Prize and appears in *Aster(ix) Journal*, *Boston Review*, *The Fiction Issue: An Aster(ix) Anthology*, and *riverSedge: A Journal of Art and Literature*. She also has been a recipient of a Ledig House Fellowship and a Prairie Center for the Arts residency. Bartlett is at work on *My Mother, the Plagiarist: Poems* and *Comadres: Stories*, the latter of which received an Honorable Mention for the 2022 Miami Book Fair's Emerging Writer Fellowship. The New Mexico Writers grant will help her complete this short story collection, which draws from her matrilineal family history and early life along the southern Colorado/northern New Mexico corridor.



**MARK BEAUREGARD** is the author of six novels, including *The Whale: A Love Story*, which was a finalist for a *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize. The book also won the M.M. Bennetts Award for Historical Fiction, and was named one of the best novels of 2016 by Powell's, Refinery 29, Bustle, and The Coil. He is also co-author of *The Open-Focus Life*, a guide to attention training based on research by Princeton University neuroscientist Les Fehmi. Beauregard lives in Santa Fe, and the grant from New Mexico Writers will support the publication of his novel, *Every Book & More*, a satire of corporate bookselling set in Albuquerque.

Photo: Bikaway Creative



**JOE CAJERO** was raised in a very traditional setting in the village of Jemez Pueblo, where he has participated in and experienced the pueblo's rich ceremonial life, ancient spiritual rituals, and teachings. In 1993, Cajero received his AFA degree from the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe. He comes from a long line of artists and storytellers, and for 30-plus years, he has led an active and very successful career as a visual artist. With support from the New Mexico Writers grant, Cajero is infusing tribal cultural stories and spiritual understanding into his first book, *Towa's Journey*, which will eventually be published as a trilogy.



**ANNE CHAMPION** is the author of *She Saints & Holy Profanities*, *The Good Girl is Always a Ghost*, *Book of Levitations*, *Reluctant Mistress*, *The Dark Length Home*, *Hunted Carrion*, and *This is a Story About Ghosts: A Memoir*. She was an Academy of American Poets Prize recipient, a Best of the Net winner, and a Barbara Deming Memorial Grant recipient. Her poetry project, *Love Letters to Hades*, explores the multifaceted feelings of assault survivors in persona poems in the voice of Persephone. The New Mexico Writers grant will allow her to travel to Greece and visit ancient sites where mythologies were birthed for inspiration. She lives in Albuquerque.



**JANIE CHODOSH** is an environmental educator and writer in Santa Fe, who writes largely about conservation and the natural world. Her book for middle-grade readers, *The Elephant Doctor of India*, was featured in the 2021 Earth Day edition of *Time Magazine for Kids*. Chodosh's New Mexico Writers grant will help fund research for her book *Travels with Rufous*, about the Rufous hummingbird. The three-inch bird makes a 4,000-mile, one-way migration, which Chodosh will follow in stages from Mexico to Alaska and back down the Rockies. *Travels with Rufous* will be published by Greystone Books.



**SHEBANA COELHO** writes, performs solo plays, and facilitates creativity workshops to engage with fear and empower stone and root strengths. Originally from India, she is currently based in Ramah, New Mexico, and facilitates workshops at A:shiwi Tribal College at Zuni Pueblo. Before that, she was in Spain and Santa Fe. Coelho has received a Fiction Fellowship from the New York Foundation for the Arts, a Fulbright grant to Mongolia, and a CEC ArtsLink award to Palestine. The New Mexico Writers grant will support her adaptation of her solo play, "The Good Manners of Colonized Subjects," into a memoir that she describes as "confronting all the systems, especially colonization, that had kept me silent."



**ASHTEN DUNCAN, MD, MPH, CPH**, is a Choctaw writer, board-certified family physician, and researcher originally from Oklahoma. Duncan completed and published his first novel, *Journey of the Broken Vessels*, in 2024. He has authored dozens of research articles, essays, op-eds, poems, short stories, monographs, and other pieces for *Scientific American* and other publications. He has also edited for medical humanities journals and online publications and has been a peer reviewer for many academic journals. Duncan resides with his wife and pets in Santa Fe. He plans to use his New Mexico Writers grant to complete and publish his second novel, *Waking the Lions*, in 2025.



**DANIELLE SHANDIIN EMERSON** is a Diné writer from Shiprock, on the Navajo Nation. Her clans are Tłaaash-chi'i (Red Cheek People Clan), born for Ta'neezaahníí (Tangled People Clan). Her maternal grandfather is Ashííhí (Salt People Clan), and her paternal grandfather is Táchii'nii (Red Running into the Water People Clan). She has a B.A. in Education Studies and Literary Arts from Brown University. She has received support from Lambda Literary, The Diné Artisan + Author Capacity Building Institute, Ucross Foundation, and Vermont Studio Center. The grant from New Mexico Writers will help fund her participation in a valuable Southwest writer's conference, supporting completion of her first poetry collection.



**TAMARA ENZ** writes to connect people to the wild world. She is the author of two bird guides, and shorter pieces have been published in *El Palacio*, *Polarlit*, and *Proteus*. Over the last 30 years, Enz held titles ranging from Science Steward to Wildlife Habitat Restoration Specialist. She has worked in every western state except Nevada, and spent three seasons in the Alaskan Arctic. The New Mexico Writers grant will help Enz complete her current project, a creative nonfiction book, *(un)frozen: THE THREE STATES THAT MATTER*, based on her work in the Alaskan Arctic. Although Lamy, New Mexico, is her home, Enz lives wherever she is.



**ASHLEY GALLEGOS** of Santa Fe is originally from Chicago and has been a poet since she was 12 years old. Her affinity for exploring social and cultural forces through writing has led to her current project, a biographical book of short stories and travel writing that retells her father's story of immigrating to the U.S. from Mexico when he was 14. The grant from New Mexico Writers will fund research and transportation for Gallegos to travel with her father back to his home village of San Luis Potosi. She will film and interview her father, as well as others they meet along the way.



**PATRICK MILLION** won his first writing contest at age 11. He has since been seeking the perfect turn of phrase. After publishing in a few small literary journals and winning fellowships to the Millay Colony for the Arts and Vermont Studio Center, he found success as a screenwriter. He made it to the finals of the Sundance Labs four times and penned the 2006 Audience Award Winner at the Toronto International Film Festival. In 2015, he left Hollywood and returned to his first and only true love of fiction. Million will use the New Mexico Writers grant to support travel and other expenses associated with research, editing, and development of a novel-in-progress. He also uses his talents as a nonprofit grant writer, bringing over \$2 million to northern New Mexico in the past three years.



**MARIE PARKS** is an award-winning, Albuquerque-based LGBTQIA+ fantasy author and founder of Sandia Starforgers writing retreats. Her debut novel, *Unrelenting*, won the 2022 New Mexico-Arizona Book Awards in the LGBTQ category. Parks was also a finalist for the 2020 Book Pipeline Unpublished Manuscript Competition and the 2021 Futurescapes Award for Most Promising New Author for her book *Flightless*, a fantasy heist to be published by Shadow Dragon Press in April 2026. She will use the New Mexico Writers grant to outline her next novel, a historical speculative fiction story set in a gold rush boomtown.





**STEVEN POTTER** is a Santa Fe-based writer and journalist. His fiction has appeared in *Conjunctions*, *The Drift*, and *Narrative magazine*, and his essays have appeared in *Adirondack Life*, *Climbing*, *Outside*, and elsewhere. He holds an MFA in Creative Writing (Fiction) from New York University, where he served as a two-year Starworks Fellow. Potter will use the New Mexico Writers grant to support his work on a multi-generational novel—a novella-length section of which previously appeared in *Conjunctions*—that explores the nuanced roles that gender, history, inherited expectations, and violence play in our sense of self.



**KAREN VARGAS** is a writer and weaver in the Rio Grande tradition from Taos. She is at work on a book of connected stories set in a fictional northern New Mexico with the overarching theme of the tensions between land/community-based culture and consumer-based culture. The New Mexico Writers grant will generously support her book project and educational pursuits in the MFA in Creative Writing Program at the Institute of American Indian Arts. Her work has been published in *Epoch*, *Terrain*, *Borderlore Journal*, *Pleiades Magazine* (forthcoming), and others. She lives six miles east of the Rio Grande with her husband and two dogs.



**ANTOINETTE VILLAMIL** was a shy, stuttering kid from a loud, multicultural family in Louisiana, who pursued an MFA in poetry from New Mexico State University to claim her voice. She has published a poetry chapbook through Grandma Moses Press and plans to use the New Mexico Writers grant to complete a full-length poetry manuscript. A former prenatal yoga instructor, fundraiser, and nonprofit leader, Villamil currently serves Northern New Mexico College in Española as the director of a college access program and an adjunct literature instructor. She lives in Nambé with her son, dog, and a flock of chickens.

## NMW GRANT PROGRAM

OVER \$70K  
AND COUNTING!

Every year, New Mexico Writers grants support writers in a variety of literary endeavors in fiction, nonfiction, poetry, journalism, playwrighting, and screenwriting. The competition highlights new works or works in progress by writers from all populations and geographic areas of New Mexico and the greater Navajo Nation. Grants are awarded at our annual dinner, where current grantees are honored as special guests.

Since the program's inception, NMW has awarded over \$70,000 in grants supporting a variety of writers' needs—including attendance at a writing-related workshop, conference, or mentorship program; research-related travel costs; time away from employment to work on a project; and more.

Major support for our grant making program is provided by bestselling author and Santa Fe resident Douglas Preston and his wife, Christine, and the Captain Bob Morris Fund. Thank you, Doug, Christine, and Captain Bob for your many gifts to New Mexico's writing community.

## RIISING WRITERS WRAPS THIRD SEASON

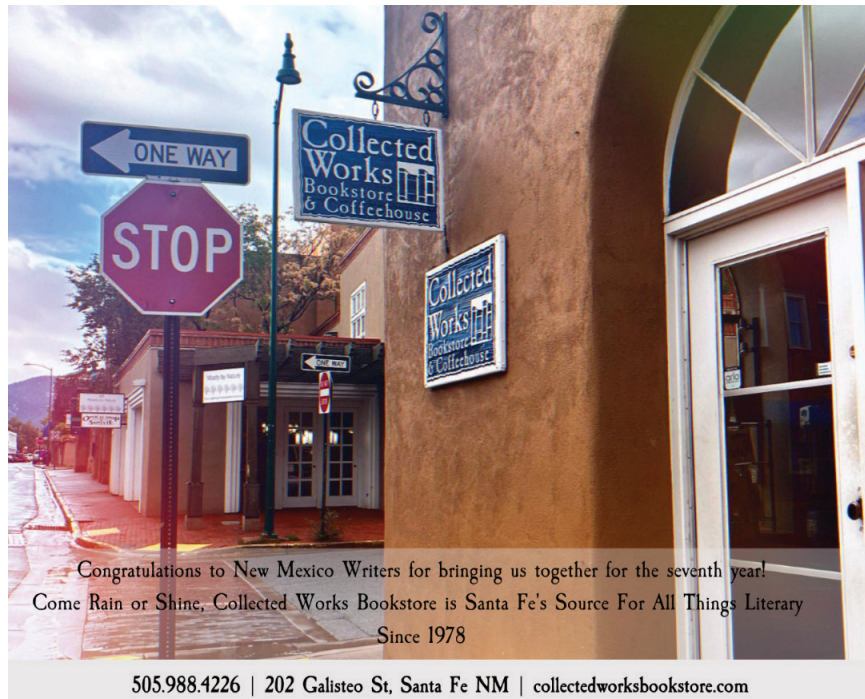
Rising Writers, a program of New Mexico Writers, expanded its reach to far corners of the state during its third season, hosting sessions in Las Cruces, Silver City, Gallup, Farmington, and Albuquerque. This program brings an established writer together with a few aspiring writers for informal mentorship and conversation about the joys and challenges of a writing career.

Many thanks to this season's host authors who traveled near and far to generously give their time and wisdom on the following topics:

- **Justin Golding**, screenwriting
- **Sue Boggio** and **Mare Pearle**, literary collaboration
- **John Fayhee**, outdoor writing and non-fiction
- **Zahra Marwan**, writing and illustrating children's books
- **Rus Bradburd**, fiction and satire
- **Byron Aspaas** (Diné), poetry and creative nonfiction

We are grateful to **Books on the Bosque**, **Gallup Public Library**, **San Juan Center for Independence**, **Vortex Theater** and **Western New Mexico University** for providing welcoming spaces for the sessions. And special thanks to **Ed** and **Maria Gale** and the **Gale Family Foundation** for their generous support of Rising Writers in 2024 and 2025.

For information on hosting or attending a Rising Writers session, contact Lucy Moore at [lucymoore@nets.com](mailto:lucymoore@nets.com)



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS


New Mexico Writers thanks the many partners, donors, and volunteers who have helped make this evening's dinner possible.

Special gratitude to **Allan Walter** of **Rainbow Gate Pottery** in **Santa Fe** and to the **Santa Fe International Literary Festival** for their generous raffle donations.

We are immensely grateful to **Dorothy Massey** and her team at **Collected Works Bookstore** for their longtime support.

A special shout out to **Lorie Woodmansee** of **La Fonda** for her kind assistance in organizing our annual dinner. Also, thank you to our fiscal sponsor, the **New Mexico Foundation**, and to the advertisers who support our dinner program.

Finally, *mil gracias* to all of our **annual dinner guests** for your support of **New Mexico Writers**. See you next year!



# THE 9<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL TAOS WRITERS CONFERENCE

Limited-seating live sessions  
as well as online via Zoom

A full weekend of workshops on fiction, creative  
nonfiction, memoir, poetry, essays, & more!

## Friday, July 25 - Sunday, July 27 2025

with Keynote Speaker  
**NICK FLYNN**

**Faculty Include:**

Jamie Figueroa  
Susan Mihalic  
Connie Josefs  
Veronica Golos  
Aaron Abeysa

Nick Flynn  
EJ Levy  
Helen Rynaski  
Johnny Boggs  
Sharon Oard Warner


Naomi Wax  
Jean-Marie Saporito  
Linda Michel- Cassidy  
Radha Marcum  
Holly Day

Allegra Huston  
David Pérez  
Sallie Bingham  
Chelsea Jackson

**Early Bird Registration by end of day 6/28/25:**  
**\$499** all three days, including faculty readings, keynote reading, receptions, and lunch roundtable discussions  
**\$335** for three weekend workshops (3 hours each) plus all of the above  
**\$175** Friday Intensive (6 hours) only plus all of the above

**Late registration beginning 6/29/25:**  
**\$569** for all three days  
**\$385** for all three weekend workshops  
**\$199** for Friday Intensive

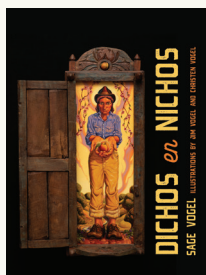
All events take place at SOMOS,  
108 Civic Plaza Dr, Taos, NM

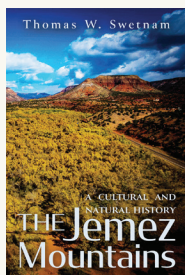

Sponsored by New Mexico Arts, New Mexico Humanities Council, the  
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**Go to [somostaos.org/taos-writers-conference/#about](https://somostaos.org/taos-writers-conference/#about)**  
for a full schedule of workshops, intensives, faculty bios and to register

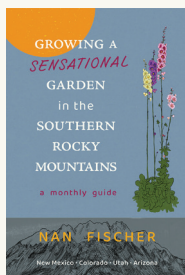
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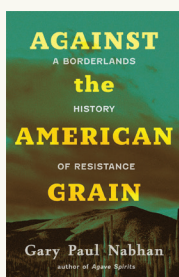
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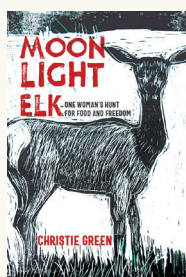
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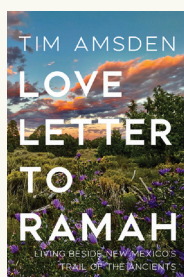
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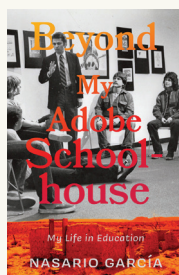
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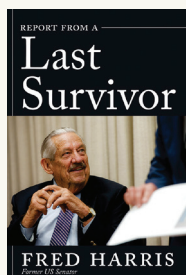
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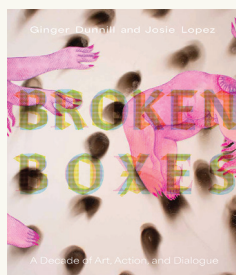
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