

# The New Mexico Writer

FEBRUARY 2026

*Supporting and connecting the literary community in New Mexico.*

A publication of **NMwriters**  
SUPPORTING and CONNECTING THE LITERARY COMMUNITY

## Lisa McCoy Steps Into Executive Director Role at New Mexico Writers

Lisa McCoy is the new executive director of New Mexico Writers (NMW), marking the organization's first leadership transition. McCoy's previous role as the NMW administrator involved her with the programs and the board. "My life-long passion is cheering on the creative arts, and I am thrilled to be part of NMW's inspirational group of writers supporting writers," McCoy said. "Stepping into the executive director role allows me to level up my support of the NMW board and our programs, which in turn allows me to be even more involved in the New Mexico literary community."



Former Executive Director James McGrath Morris has returned to the NMW board while also moving into the role of development director. NMW was founded in 2016 by Morris, who described its beginnings as unplanned. "New Mexico Writers was an accident," said Morris. "In the fall of 2016, I came back from the Camino de Santiago walk, and I met with Lucy Moore. I said, 'I've got time on my hands. We ought to do what we've talked about before, which is try to bring, at this point, just Santa Fe writers together.'"

What began as a dinner at La Fonda on the Plaza quickly grew into an organization focused on connecting writers and providing tangible support. Over time, NMW expanded its reach to serve writers across the entire state of New Mexico and greater Navajo Nation, developing programs that include writing grants, a monthly publication, the networking dinner event, and, as of 2025, the book awards program.

As Morris steps into the role of development director, his focus will shift toward long-term sustainability. McCoy says she plans to carry forward the values established under previous leadership while continuing to grow the organization's reach. "Jamie models generosity and enthusiasm for supporting the local literary community," she said. "I wish to reflect those same values in my role as executive director of NMW."

Looking ahead, McCoy identified "growing the awareness of NMW and our programs and continuing to expand our reach to all areas of this wonderfully creative state of New Mexico," as a key priority.

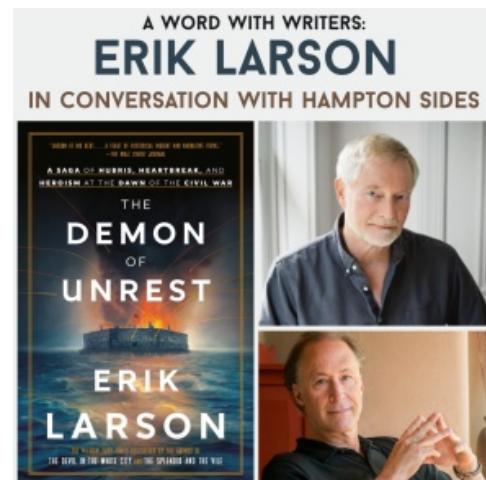
McCoy will continue as the director of the New Mexico Book Awards, a nearly two-decades-old book competition, now entering its second year under NMW management.

In December, Saleema Ishq was appointed editor of *The New Mexico Writer*. Ishq is an Albuquerque-based fiction author with a background in copywriting, editing, and social media marketing. She will oversee editorial content for *The New Mexico Writer* and NMW's social media accounts.



## NMW Sustaining Membership Perks Spotlight Exclusive Erik Larson Event

A Perk Alert landed in New Mexico Writers (NMW) Sustaining Members' e-mail inbox in January. The Perk Alert contained an invitation to enter a drawing for a complimentary ticket to the March 27 Erik Larson event at the historic KiMo Theatre in downtown Albuquerque. A Word with Writers, featuring Larson in conversation with Hampton Sides, is being presented by Bookworks and the Albuquerque Public Library Foundation, in partnership with the Santa Fe International Literary Festival (SFILF). Thanks to a generous donation by a NMW board member, fifteen Sustaining Members will receive a free ticket, a complimentary copy of Larson's *The Demon of Unrest*, and seating in a reserved section at the venue. Each ticket also includes a donation to the Albuquerque Public Library Foundation.



Congratulations to these fifteen Sustaining Members who entered the drawing and will receive the perk: Angela Wilson, Debra Pappler, Dita Dow, Efrem Razumny, Elizabeth Rose, Horacio Chávez, Kippur Flax, Liz Trupin-Pulli, Marcia Meier, Nina Amir, Pam Lewis, Paul Rhetts, Paula Lozar, Rebecca Reynolds, and Tamara Enz.

These Sustaining Membership perk recipients can expect to receive an email from NMW with ticket and event details.

“This is an exciting example of the perks NMW’s Sustaining Members periodically receive as a way to thank them for supporting the work we do in New Mexico’s literary community,” said Lisa McCoy, NMW executive director. “Our Sustaining Members fund *The New Mexico Writer* publication that you’re reading right now.”

Last year, Sustaining Members received Perk Alerts for an online workshop with a literary publicity expert, a speaking engagement opportunity in Bernalillo, and a discounted rate for a vendor table at the inaugural Southern New Mexico Book Festival in Las Cruces. In January, Sustaining Members received a 10% discount code for tickets to the NMW annual dinner to be held on April 30, and new Sustaining Members will receive that code through March 31. Books published by Sustaining Members are featured in a rotating gallery on the NMW website.

Sustaining Members should stay tuned for a Perk Alert about a members-only author event to occur during the 2026 SFILF in May.

**Are you enjoying this issue of *The New Mexico Writer*?**

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by becoming a Sustaining Member!

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## NMW Annual Dinner Returns to Historic La Fonda on the Plaza

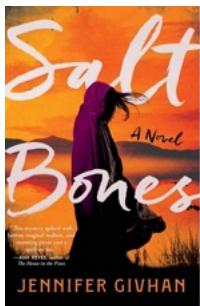
The New Mexico Writers (NMW) annual dinner will return to La Fonda on the Plaza on Thursday, April 30, continuing a tradition that dates back to the organization’s beginnings—the first annual dinner was held at La Fonda in 2017. The event brings together writers from across the state for an evening of networking and NMW grantee recognition.



Why La Fonda? “Literarily speaking, it’s a historic place,” said NMW founder James McGrath Morris. “Willa Cather and D.H. Lawrence stayed there. It has a lot of literary connections, so it’s a perfect venue for us.”

The dinner was conceived as a way to connect writers who might not otherwise meet and has since become one of NMW’s mainstay programs. “We ceased using the dinner as a fundraiser because we recognized it was a networking event,” Morris said. “It allowed an aspiring poet to walk up to a Pulitzer Prize winner or the Poet Laureate of the nation and say, ‘How did you handle such and such?’”

To preserve this spirit, Morris said that ticket prices are set to cover the cost of putting on the event. Attendees are invited to contribute to a program that helps subsidize tickets for writers who may need financial support to attend. In 2025, these donations subsidized dinner tickets for ten writers. Attendees may add a donation “So Others May Attend” when purchasing dinner tickets. Those wanting to be considered for reduced-price tickets should [email](#) NMW.



*Salt Bones* (Mulholland Books, 2025), written by this year’s dinner keynote speaker Jennifer Givhan, and *The Half-White Album* (UNM Press, 2023) by Cynthia Sylvester are now available as add-ons when purchasing dinner tickets, reports the NMW Dinner Committee. Pre-purchased copies will be available for pick up and author inscription at the conclusion of the dinner program on April 30. Those who have already purchased dinner tickets can expect an email from NMW about participating in this opportunity.

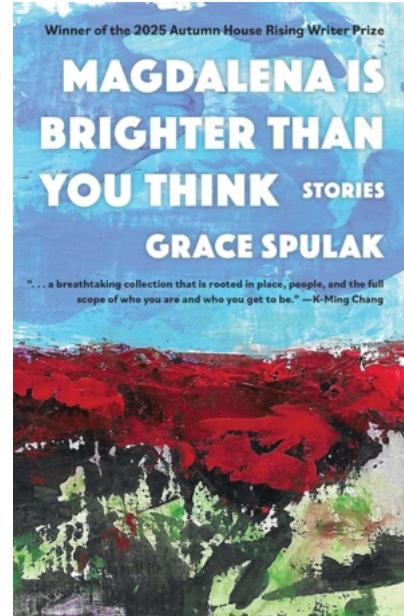
Attendance at the dinner will be capped at 200 again, so organizers urge writers to [buy your dinner tickets soon](#).

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## NMW Grant Supports Debut Story Collection Ahead of 2026 Release

A debut short story collection by 2024 New Mexico Writers (NMW) Grantee Grace Spulak is set for publication following the author’s receipt of grant support.

*Magdalena Is Brighter Than You Think* will be released on April 21, 2026, by Autumn House Press as the winner of their Rising Writer Prize. The stories draw from Spulak’s personal experiences. “This collection was inspired by my own experiences of violence and trauma, my work as an attorney representing children and young people in rural New Mexico, and my own experiences growing up poor and queer in semi-rural New Mexico,” she said.



New Mexico plays a central role in the collection’s exploration of resilience. “My starting place for these ideas was the New Mexico landscape that forms the backdrop of so many stories in this collection, harsh, yet full of possibility,” Spulak said. “I have always found hope in the landscape’s strange beauty: the way it looks dead on first glance, the way living things take on unexpected colors, the way life can survive for years with no rain. My connection to landscape helped me understand resilience and the way that survival often looks different than we expect.”

Spulak received an NMW grant in 2024, which supported essential research for this and future projects. “The New Mexico Writers grant allowed me to do some travel research that was related both to some of the stories in this collection and one of the novels that I’m working on,” she said. “For such a place-based collection, it was critical to be able to spend time in rural spaces and observe and document.”



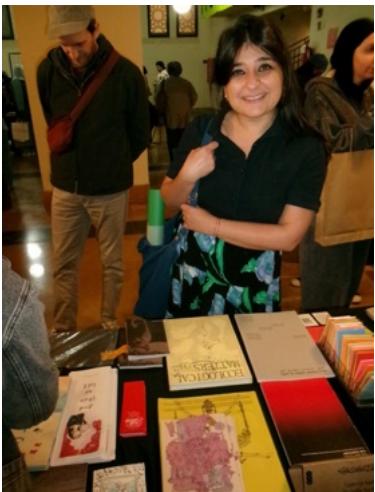
Beyond the financial support, Spulak emphasized the validation that came with the award. “Receiving the grant made me feel that this collection and my writing as a whole had value and importance to people beyond myself.”

Spulak encourages writers who are considering applying for an NMW grant to do so. “I always tell people who are on the fence about applying for anything they should apply,” she said. “I would also encourage people to think about the specific needs they have as a writer and how the grant might help with that.”

Grantees have used grant support for travel, equipment, software, workshops, and more. Applications for the 2026 New Mexico Writers grants will be accepted until Friday, March 6, 2026. Additional information is available on the NMW website [here](#).

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## Inside Cairo’s Literary Landscape



New Mexico Writers (NMW) Board Member and 2022 Grantee Zahra Marwan recently attended the Cairo Art Book Fair as part of Akkaz Collective, an artist-run publishing house.

“The number of educated people from various countries throughout the Middle East rendering their sentiments and academic research into such beautiful formats from table to table and the number of enthusiastic readers was thrilling,” Marwan said.

Marwan described conversations with artists who shared how stories emerge from lived experience. “They shared intricacies of village cultures, specificities from their neighborhoods, and how they built stories on that,” she said. “They showed illustrations from their books and the real-life inspiration behind their compositions and how remarkably subtle yet obvious it is when shared.”

NMW Board Chair, JJ Amaworo Wilson, called Cairo home for 18 months in the early 1990s at the beginning of his writing journey. Amaworo Wilson recalled spending time at the legendary El-Fishawi Coffee House, a gathering place for writers and intellectuals, including the Nobel Prize winning novelist Naguib Mahfouz.

“It was in El-Fishawi Coffee House that I took notes on the terrible Cairo earthquake of 1992. I would later turn those notes into a piece called ‘What I Found Amongst the Ruins’ that was published in a Penguin anthology in 2000,” Amaworo Wilson said.

“Living in Cairo opened my eyes to a whole, vibrant world full of history and beauty and struggle.”

Marwan noted that many artists she met at the book fair operate outside conventional institutions, using alternative publishing models to navigate censorship and limited access to funding. Amaworo Wilson and Marwan’s observations reflect a shared experience among creatives everywhere and align with NMW’s focus on building community and providing resources for writers.



## February Events Scheduled to Celebrate 2025 NM Book Awards Winners & Finalists

Two New Mexico Book Awards publicity events are scheduled in February for 2025 winners and finalists who live near Abiquiú and Taos.

Abiqui Inn is hosting the first event on February 7. Authors providing a reading and signing at this Abiquiú event are Karen Chrappa with *Beyond Fear: A Woman’s Path to Enlightenment*; Zach Hively with *Call Me Zach Hively Because That Is My Name*; Joan Logghe with *Jade Bird: Singing Grief*; and Renée Gregorio with *The Writer Who Inhabits Your Body*. These authors’ books will be available for purchase.

2025 New Mexico Book Awards  
• Winner and Finalist Event •

ABQUIU INN  
NEW MEXICO

KAREN CHRAPPA  
*Beyond Fear*

Zach Hively  
*Call Me Zach Hively Because That Is My Name*

JADE BIRD  
*Singing Grief*

Renée Gregorio  
*The Writer Who Inhabits Your Body*

Join NM Writers in celebrating the Abiquiú area Winners and Finalists of the 2025 New Mexico Book Awards. The authors will read from their winning or finalist book and answer questions from the audience. The winning and finalist books will be available for purchase and signing.

February 7, 2026 at 1:00 p.m.  
Abiqui Inn  
21120 Hwy 84  
Abiqui NM 87510  
505-685-4378

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This NM Book Awards event will be held in the Inn’s art gallery room. Refreshments will be served, compliments of Abiqui Inn.

2025 New Mexico Book Awards  
• Winner and Finalist Event •

Bree Rosenblum, PhD

J. Hoolihan Clayton

Lise Goett

Jeffrey M. Hills

This is a FREE event to attend.

February 8, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.  
SOMOS  
108 Civic Plaza Drive  
Taos, NM 87571  
call 575-758-0081 for further information

SOMOS  
A Place for Words  
in Taos, New Mexico

NMwriters  
SUPPORTING and CONNECTING THE LITERARY COMMUNITY

SOMOS is hosting the second event on February 8. Authors providing a reading and signing at this Taos event are Bree Rosenblum with *AND: The Tiny Word That Can Radically Transform Your Life*; J. Hoolihan Clayton with *Discretion is Valor*; Lise Goett with *The Radiant*; and Jeffrey M. Hills with *My Brooklyn Bridge*. Books will be available for purchase from the authors.

This NM Book Awards event will be held in the SOMOS Salon & Bookshop.

In addition to these two February events coordinated by New Mexico Writers, 2025 honorees are celebrating at their own events.

RJ Mirabal, winner for the third book in his Dragon Train Quest series, will be at Books on the Bosque on February 14 for a signing. Charmayne Samuelson will be at the Amerind Museum (Dragoon, AZ) on February 13 and 14 for a book signing of her winning book, *Mata Ortiz: Poetry of the Clay*.

Stay tuned for details of more NM Book Awards publicity events in future issues of *The New Mexico Writer*.



## New Mexico Writers Grantee News



2023 and 2020 NMW Grantee **Jason Asenap** was awarded a prestigious Ucross Foundation residency for Spring 2026. Learn more [here](#). **Asenap** also published an article in *New Mexico Magazine* about Analyss Benally, the professional Diné basketball player. Read it [here](#).



2023 and 2019 NMW Grantee **Sylvia Rains Dennis** was selected as Taos Poet Laureate for 2026 and 2027. Learn more [here](#).



2025 NMW Grantee **Marie Parks** announced the upcoming release of her solo debut novel, *Flightless*, which is scheduled for publication on April 7, 2026 by Artemesia Publishing (Tijeras).



2025 NMW Grantee **Shebana Coelho** was awarded an artist residency at Cill Rialaif Arts Centre in Ireland.

## Briefly Noted



**Ella Shaeffer** and **Rena Sapon-White** shared that Bookworks selected their sophomore novel, *Sweet Talk*, as their Queer Book Club pick for February.

**Joseph Badal** published *Soulless*, his 19th novel (and fourth in his Curtis Chronicles series).

**Nancy Schrock** celebrated the release of *Morning of a Crescent Moon*, published by Indigo River.

**Angela Wilson** performed at Thirsty Eye Brewing Company's Song Diva to introduce a character from her book who "fancies himself to be a songwriter."

**Debra Hughes'** debut novel, *The Geology of Secrets*, will be published in Fall 2026 by the collaborative team of Columbus State University Press and University of Georgia Press. The book was a finalist for the 2025 Donald L. Jordan Prize for Literary Excellence.

**Kit Rosewater** celebrated the release of *All's Fair in Love and Field Hockey*, published by Delacorte Romance, an imprint of Penguin Random House.

**Lauren Camp** announced that her ninth collection, *Is Is Enough*, will be published by Texas Review Press on February 18.



**Lauren C. Teffau** announced that *Accelerated Growth Environment*, a hopepunk eco-thriller, comes out from Shiraki Press on March 3.

**Emily Hyland** announced the upcoming release of *My Wise Little Ghost* in July 2026 by Trio House Press.

**William Green**'s new book, *This Is the Route of My Forefathers: The 1837 Ioway Map*, has just been published by the University of Iowa Press.

**Charmayne Samuelson** announced that *Mata Ortiz: Poetry of the Clay* was presented to the Consulate of Mexico in El Paso and the Ambassador to Italy. The book also won its 8th Award: a Southwest Book Award granted by the Border Regional Library Association.

**Steven McFadden** set the words of *Invocation for Odyssey of the 8th Fire*, a creative non-fiction book, to music.

**Casa Urraca Press** (Abiquiú) announced the February 24 release of **Margaret Randall**'s standalone essay chapbook, *Writing Under Fascism*.

**Artemesia Publishing** (Tijeras) announced two upcoming releases, including *Crime on the Coast (A Bea Rivers Mystery)* by Silver City author **Marty Eberhardt**.

## Send Us Your News!

Having a book or article published? Doing a reading? Offering a workshop? Let us know, so we can share your news with other writers. We're particularly interested to hear from New Mexico and greater Navajo Nation writers.

[Drop us a line.](#)

## Upcoming Events

### February 3 at 6 p.m. [Collected Works](#) (Santa Fe)

Join **Kirk Ellis** for the launch of *They Kill People: Bonnie and Clyde, a Hollywood Revolution, and America's Obsession with Guns and Outlaws* with a discussion and book signing.

### February 5 at 6 p.m. [Bookworks](#) (Albuquerque)

Join **Kirk Ellis** in conversation with **Gene Grant** to celebrate *They Kill People: Bonnie and Clyde, a Hollywood Revolution, and America's Obsession with Guns and Outlaws*.

### February 5 at 5:30 p.m. [Books on the Bosque](#) (Albuquerque)

Join **Barry Pearce** and **Dan Mueller** for a discussion and book signing of *The Plan of Chicago*.

### February 6 at 5:30 p.m. [Books on the Bosque](#) (Albuquerque)

Join **Dina Gilio-Whitaker** (Colville Confederated Tribes) for a book reading and signing of her latest release, *Who Gets to Be Indian? Ethnic Fraud and Other Difficult Conversations About Native American Identity*.

### February 7 at 1 p.m. [Abiquiu Inn](#) (Abiquiú)

Join 2025 New Mexico Book Award winners and finalists **Joan Logghe**, **Karen Chrappa**, **Renée Gregorio**, and **Zach Hively** for a reading and signing.

### February 7 at 3 p.m. [Barnes & Noble Santa Fe Place Mall](#) (Santa Fe)

Join **T. Kingfisher** for a book signing to celebrate the release of *Nine Goblins: A Tale of Low Fantasy & High Mischief*.

### February 7 at 5 p.m. [Books on the Bosque](#) (Albuquerque)

Join **Corina Deiters** for a poetry workshop and signing of *Marred Mask*.

### February 8 at 3 p.m. [Light Art Space Gallery](#) (Silver City)

Join **Ann Lane Hedlund** for an illustrated talk and book signing of *Mac Schweitzer: A Southwest Maverick and Her Art*.

### February 8 at 3 p.m. [Books on the Bosque](#) (Albuquerque)

Join **Scott Wiggerman** and **David Meischen**, editors of *Notes of Light and Dark: Southwestern Aubades and Nocturnes*, accompanied by 12 of the 107 authors represented in the collection, for an event to celebrate this Dos Gatos Press publication.

### February 8 at 4 p.m. [SOMOS](#) (Taos)

Join 2025 New Mexico Book Award winners and finalists **Bree Rosenblum, J. Hoolihan Clayton, Lise Goett**, and **Jeffrey M. Hills** for a reading and signing.

**February 13 and 14 at 10 a.m. Amerind Museum (Dragoon, AZ)**

Join NM author **Charmayne Samuelson** for a book signing of *Mata Ortiz: Poetry of the Clay*, winner and finalist in the 2025 New Mexico Book Awards.

**February 13 at 4 p.m. Jemez Springs Public Library (Jemez Springs)**

Join **Benjamin Green** for a discussion around his latest book, *His Only Merit*, along with readings from earlier works.

**February 14 at 2 p.m. Books on the Bosque (Albuquerque)**

Join **RJ Mirabal** for a book reading, signing, and Q&A for *Dragon Train War*, the third book in his Dragon Train Quest series and fantasy category winner in the 2025 New Mexico Book Awards.

**February 17 at 6 p.m. Bookworks (Albuquerque)**

Join **David King Dunaway** for a reading and signing to celebrate the release of *A Four-Eyed World: How Glasses Changed the Way We See*.

**February 18 at 1:30 p.m. Thomas Branigan Memorial Library (Las Cruces)**

Join NMW Board Member **Cassie McClure** for an author talk around *My So-Called Millennial Life*.

**February 19 at 10 a.m. Books on the Bosque (Albuquerque)**

Join **Jeffrey Candelaria** for a discussion titled *Tell Your Story – The Elements Required to Write a Book/Novel*.

**February 19 at 6 p.m. Collected Works (Santa Fe)**

Join **Carl Moore** for a book signing and discussion of *On the Road with On the Road*.

**February 21 at TBA op.cit. Books (Santa Fe)**

Join **Sasha Abramsky** for a signing to celebrate the release of *American Carnage*.

**February 21 at 10:30 a.m. Chatter North (Santa Fe)**

Join **Margaret Randall** for a reading from her forthcoming book of poems, *The Calendar's Whim*. Early-release copies of the book (from Casa Urraca Press) will be available for purchase.

**February 22 at 10:30 a.m. Chatter (Albuquerque)**

Join **Margaret Randall** for a reading from her forthcoming book of poems, *The Calendar's Whim*. Early-release copies of the book (from Casa Urraca Press) will be available for purchase.

**February 22 at 4 p.m. Garcia Street Books (Santa Fe)**

Join **Garrett Peck** for a reading and conversation about *The Bright Edges of the World*, which traces Willa Cather's life, adventures, and influences in the Southwest.

**February 26 at 6 p.m. Collected Works (Santa Fe)**

Join **Bruce Berlin** in conversation with **Victor La Cerva, MD**, co-founder of New Mexico Men's Wellness, to discuss *From Camden to Kathmandu: You Don't Have to Know Where You're Going to Get Where You Want to Be*.

**February 27 and 28 at 4 p.m. Santa Fe Public Library (Santa Fe)**

Join former Santa Fe Poet Laureate **Darryl Lorenzo Wellington** for a performance exploring the life and legacy of Black novelist Richard Wright.

### March 3 at 6 p.m. **Bookworks (Albuquerque)**

Join **Meg Mullins** for a reading and signing of her new short story collection, *We Are All Having Fun Here*.

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## More Opportunities for Writers

*Please note, there may be fees associated with these opportunities.*



### NMBA Winter Fiesta

The 2026 Winter Fiesta hosted by the New Mexico Book Association on **February 12, 2026** will feature Anne Hillerman as the speaker and a presentation of the Harris Book Awards. Learn more [here](#).

### Killer Nashville Call for Speakers

Killer Nashville is currently accepting panel and presentation requests for the 2026 Killer Nashville International Writers' Conference in August. Learn more [here](#) and apply [here](#).

### Workshop: Hope and Imagination in Environmental Writing

Dr. Wendy Johnson will lead a virtual workshop for The Loft Literary Center on **February 7, 2026**. Learn more [here](#).

### Los Alamos Writers Group

Local writers meet for a writers' group at the Los Alamos Public Library every second Wednesday. The next meeting is **February 11, 2026**. Learn more [here](#).

### Prompt Nights at SOMOS

Carrie Nassif and Christine Reed are hosting Prompt Nights every second Thursday at SOMOS Salon & Bookshop in Taos. Writers of any genre are welcome, and generative writing prompts will be provided. The next Prompt Night is **February 12, 2026**. Learn more [here](#).

### Aldo and Estella Leopold Residency

The Leopold Writing Program is accepting submissions for their 2026 Aldo and Estella Leopold Residency through **February 16, 2026**. Learn more [here](#).

### 2026 SouthWest Writers Contest

At the SouthWest Writers meeting via Zoom on **February 25, 2026**, Kimberly Rose will give interested writers a first look at the 2026 Writing Contest. Learn more [here](#).

### Songwriter's Showcase

Peter Dahl-Bredine is hosting Songwriter's Showcase at Whiskey Creek Zócalo every last Thursday of the month. The next opportunity to showcase your songwriting skills is **February 26, 2026**. Learn more [here](#).

### Atmosphere Press Writing Residency

Atmosphere Press is accepting applications for the Playa Flamingo Writing Residency in Costa Rica through **February 28, 2026**. Learn more [here](#).

### WOW! Flash Fiction Contest

Women On Writing is accepting submissions for its quarterly flash fiction contest through **February 28, 2026**. Learn more [here](#).

### Workshop: The Introvert's Guide to Publishing & Publicity

An online workshop hosted by New Mexico Book Association will take place

## **Presentation: To Free, or Not to Free (Verse)**

At the SouthWest Writers meeting in person and via Zoom on **February 14, 2026**, Dan Wetmore will offer a presentation on the pros and cons of formed and unformed poetry. Learn more [here](#).

## **Author Nation Call for Speakers**

Author Nation is seeking speakers for their 2026 conference in Las Vegas, NV. Submissions close **February 15, 2026**. Learn more [here](#).

## **Workshop: BARD-WIRED**

Mary Maurice will be hosting BARD-WIRED: An Unconventional Writer's Workshop at Santa Fe Bite on **February 15, 2026**. For more information, email Mary [here](#).

## **CLBS Indigenous Writer in Residence Program**

The Cranberry Lake Biological Station is accepting applications for their Indigenous Writer in Residence program through **February 15, 2026**. The residency aims to provide Indigenous writers with the space, time, and place to explore their creative endeavors. Learn more and apply [here](#).

## **NMPW New Mexico Professional Communication Contest**

The 2026 New Mexico Press Women Communication Contest is open for submissions through **February 18, 2026**. The state contest is the first tier in the National Federation of Press Women's contest. Entries are submitted through the National Federation of Press Women's Communications Contest portal. Learn more [here](#).

## **Writing Generation Series**

Santa Fe Community College's Library and Creative Writing program will offer a free Writing Generation (Wri-Gen) Series featuring Jamie Figueroa, Swati Avasthi, and Ramona Emerson and beginning **February 18, 2026**. Learn more and register [here](#).

## **Open Mic at SOMOS**

on **March 12, 2026**. Join author Haven Lindsay for a workshop on navigating author life as an introvert. Register [here](#).

## **Southwest Word Fiesta**

The 11th biennial Southwest Word Fiesta will be held in Silver City on **March 26–29, 2026**. Learn more [here](#).

## **Erik Larson in Conversation with Hampton Sides**

Bookworks and the Albuquerque Public Library Foundation, in partnership with the Santa Fe International Literary Festival, present A Word with Writers, featuring Erik Larson in conversation with Hampton Sides. The event will take place on **March 27, 2026** at the historic KiMo Theatre to celebrate Larson's paperback release of *The Demon of Unrest*. Learn more [here](#).

## **Trickster Literary Journal Submissions**

*Trickster*, a publication by Northern New Mexico College, is accepting submissions through **March 27, 2026**. Submitted poems, prose, and pieces of artwork should align with this year's theme: metamorphosis. Learn more [here](#).

## **Black Fox Literary Magazine**

*Black Fox* is accepting submissions for its Winter 2026 writing prize. Submissions must be received no later than **March 31, 2026** and should align with the theme of "Fairy Tale Remix." Learn more [here](#).

## **Tadpole Press Writing Contest**

*Tadpole Press* welcomes submissions for their 100-Word Writing Contest through **April 30, 2026**. Learn more [here](#).

## **NMPW Annual Conference**

The annual New Mexico Press Women's conference will be held Friday and Saturday, **May 1–2, 2026**, at Isleta Resort. The conference will include workshops and winner announcements of the Zia Book Award, Communications Contest, Communicator of Achievement, and scholarships. The conference theme is "Resilient Communicators – Thriving in Challenging Times." Learn more [here](#).

Carrie Nassif is hosting Spoken Word Open Mic every third Thursday at SOMOS Salon & Bookshop in Taos. Writers of any genre are welcome to share poetry, prose, storytelling, a capella. The next Open Mic is **February 19, 2026**. Learn more [here](#).

### **Workshop: Dirtying up Your Characters**

A workshop hosted by SouthWest Writers will take place in person and via Zoom on **February 21, 2026**. Marilyn Atlas will help writers recognize their protagonist's flaws to round out their motivation. Register [here](#).

### **Presentation: Developing Strong Relationships Between Characters**

At the next Write to Publish meeting on **February 21, 2026** hosted by Quill & Quest Bookstore, Bethany Turner will share how to craft meaningful, believable character relationships that bring your stories to life. Learn more [here](#).

### **Presentation: Inside a Writing Contest**

At the Croak & Dagger meeting on **February 24, 2026**, Lisa McCoy will share about the New Mexico Book Awards, giving authors an inside peek into a writing contest. Learn more [here](#).

### **Santa Fe International Literary Festival**

The 2026 Santa Fe International Literary Festival will be held **May 15–17, 2026** at the Santa Fe Community Convention Center. The star-studded author lineup includes Ada Limón, Jake Skeets, Kirk Ellis, Caroline Fraser, Craig Johnson, DezBaa', Priyanka Kumar, JJ Amaworo Wilson, among others. Learn more [here](#).

### **RWA Conference Call for Speakers**

The Romance Writers of America is open for workshop proposals for their 2026 conference, which will be held in Albuquerque **July 15–18, 2026**. Learn more [here](#).

### **Writing Excuses at Sea**

Sail with the hosts of the Hugo Award-winning Writing Excuses podcast from Seattle, WA to Alaska **September 3–11, 2026**. During this writing retreat, you'll hone your craft, connect with fellow writers, and make progress on your latest projects. This is the final annual cruise (for now). Learn more [here](#).

### **Green Fire Times Submissions**

*Green Fire Times*, a platform for regional, community-based voices, invites submissions of articles about New Mexico and the Southwest. Learn more and submit articles [here](#).

## 2026 Southwest Book Design & Production Awards

New Mexico Book Association is pleased to offer this award program for authors, book designers, publishers, authors, editors, printers, and more!

The New Mexico Book Association (NMBA) is now accepting submissions for the **2026 Southwest Book Design Awards**, which recognize excellence in book design and publishing across the Southwest.

The awards honor outstanding achievement in cover design, interior design, and overall book production. The submission deadline is **June 19, 2026**.

For eligibility details, categories, and submission guidelines, visit the NMBA [website](#).



The third annual **Sandia Starforgers Writers Retreat and Workshop** for science-fiction, fantasy, and horror writers is taking place **April 24 to 27, 2026**, in Albuquerque. Instructors at this event include:

- Charlie Jane Anders: Hugo, Nebula, and Locus Award-winning author
- Mary Robinette Kowal: Hugo, Nebula, and Locus Award-winning author and audiobook narrator
- Dave Ring: Ignyte and World Fantasy Award-nominated publisher of Neon Hemlock Press (joining virtually)
- Alexandria Valentine: Editor-in-Chief of *Harriet's House* (joining virtually)
- Darling Heart: writer, editor, creative, and communications professional (joining virtually)
- Geoff Habiger: founder of Artemesia Publishing and NM-AZ Book Awards-winning author
- Marie Parks: NM-AZ Book Awards-winning author and Futurescapes Most Promising New Author nominee

For more information and to register, click [here](#). Only a few tickets remain.

## In Others' Words

“You write in order to change the world ... and if you alter, even by a millimeter the way people look at reality, then you can change it.”

—James Baldwin

*Have a favorite quote about writing you'd like to share? [Send it to us!](#)*



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