

**Kansas Authors Club
Virtual Convention & Writers Conference**



2021

Writing through Difficulties

Convention Program



*Featuring Keynote Speaker
Tim Keane, Kansas Cowboy Poet*

Evolution of Another Virtual Convention

by Duane Johnson, KAC President

When Kansas Authors Club's 2020 virtual writers' convention ended last fall, the webinar tech team of Carol Yoho, Curtis Becker, Tracy Million Simmons, and I breathed a sigh of relief, thinking we had just completed something that would never again be necessary.

Almost immediately, I began sitting in on District 1's 2021 convention planning committee's meetings, believing the next step would be to consider whether a hybrid model—a live convention accompanied by live streaming—might be the next step in hosting our annual convention.

As 2021 progressed, I developed a relationship with Cytek Media Systems, a Topeka-based company that specializes in helping businesses resolve the audio-video challenges of large live and virtual meetings and conferences. My intent was to determine whether live-streaming KAC's 2021 convention at low cost might be viable. (I've recently discovered that a simpler, more cost effective alternative may be available by this time next year, but that's another story.)

Meanwhile, I watched, impressed, as District 1's 2021 planning committee busied itself with all the intricate details of planning this year's convention. The programs subcommittee assembled a lineup of workshops centered around the theme, "Writing Through Difficulty," then augmented it with presenters and other workshops designed to help you become better at the craft of writing.

The marketing subcommittee developed a strategy for raising the funds necessary to fund the convention while promoting Kansas Authors Club within the local community. They did so in a way designed to create a future strong relationship with schools and libraries within the district.

More than once, District president Anne Spry and others walked through Ramada Inn, projected site of the convention, to plan what events would happen where within the hotel. Through the website, Tracy Million Simmons provided you with frequent updates on the convention. And once again, Carol Yoho worked her magic by designing the convention logo and brochure.

When the Delta variant once again caused a surge in local Covid infections, the committee's year-long determination to host a live convention was set aside out of concern for your health. I could see the disappointment in their faces as they discussed, then unanimously voted to cancel the live convention.

Immediately, our Webinar support team went to work contacting presenters and workshop leaders and setting the wheels in motion for this year's virtual convention. Thea Rademacher, who also will lead a workshop on the legal ins and outs of writing, has replaced Curtis Becker, whose commitments as his school's debate coach made it impossible for him to participate.

The result of all this is that on **Oct. 8, 9 and 10**, you will be treated to an outstanding convention, within the comfort of your own home. *I will see you there!*



Kansas Authors Club appreciates financial support from Center for Kansas Studies for our 2021 Convention!



2021 Virtual Convention Schedule

Friday, October 8

6:30 p.m. If you are new to Zoom, join us at 6:30 for a quick introduction.

7:00 p.m. Opening presentation by **Thomas Fox Averill**: *Trouble—the Backbone of Literature*.

Saturday, Oct. 9—WEBINAR #1

Morning Webinars

8-8:45 am —KAC Gen. Membership meeting
(Zoom, not recorded)

9-10 am —**Thea Rademacher**: *Protecting Your Rights as a Writer*

10:15-11:15 am —**Marcia Cebulski**: *Writing Transformative Fiction*

11:30 am-12:30 pm —**Tony Silvestri**: *Creativity and Healing the Wounds of Deep Loss*

12:30 am-1:30 pm LUNCH BREAK

Afternoon Webinars

1:30-2:30 pm—**Children's Literature Panel**

3-5 pm—**Youth Writing Contest Awards**

Evening Webinar

5:30-6 pm— **Book Awards**

6-8 pm— **Keynote Speech** by **Tim Keane**,
Cowboy Poet and professor, Kansas State
University: *Pardon my Pentameter*

Sunday, Oct. 10—WEBINAR #1

Morning Webinars

9:15-10:15 am —**Small Kansas Press Publishers Panel**

10:30-11:30 am —**Future of the Book Panel**

11:30 am-Noon —REST BREAK

Afternoon Webinars

Noon-2:30 pm—**Writing Awards / Music / Closing**

Saturday, Oct. 9—WEBINAR #2

Morning Webinars

9-10 am —**Ronda Miller**: *The Importance of Voice in Trauma Transformation*

12:30 am-1:30 pm LUNCH BREAK

Afternoon Webinars

1:30-2:30 pm—**Stephen & Rosie Williams**: *Writing to Heal Veterans and Others with PTSD*

2:45-3:45 pm —**Duane Herrmann**: *Therapeutic Journal Writing*

4-5 pm —**Annette Billings**: *Writing with Wolves at the Door*

Evening Zoom Interaction

8:15-9 pm —**Read-around** via Zoom

Sunday, Oct. 10—WEBINAR #2

Morning Zoom Interaction

8-9 am —**Rosemary Time**: *In Memory of members lost since our 2020 convention*
(Zoom, not recorded)



Keynote Speaker, Saturday evening

Tim Keane

Pardon My Pentameter, A Descent Into Cowboy Poetry

Dr. Timothy Keane is a three-time champion in the Kansas Cowboy Poetry Contest. He also has won multiple events at the National Cowboy Poetry Rodeo, where he was overall reserve champion in 2016 and 2018. While this all sounds quite pretentious, he attempts to remain pragmatic, half-hand, and on occasion, entertaining. He describes himself as a “green broke”*

cowboy poet, although he has “slipped past various judges a few times.”

Dr. Keane is Professor of Landscape Architecture and Distinguished Graduate Faculty, in the College of Architecture, Planning, and Design at Kansas State University, where he has served since 1984. His research involves the study of rivers, creeks, gullies and erosional or depositional processes.

He lives with his wife, Sharon, and a couple of bird dogs in northwest Wabaunsee County.

*“Green broke”: has had a saddle on, been ridden a few times, has lots of vices, needs tons of work; is liable to spook, bolt, kick, rear, crow-hop, and refuse simple situations; basically unpredictable.



**Main Speaker,
Friday opening**

Thomas Fox Averill

***Trouble, the
Backbone of
Literature***

Tom Averill, retired WU English teacher, has published several books and is a radio commentator, using the name “William Jennings Bryan Oleander.” He donated a collection of books by Kansas authors to the Maybee Library at Washburn. <https://washburn.edu/cas/english/taverill/about.html>

He will open the convention on Friday night with a presentation that will focus on a quote from the Eudora Welty book, *Trouble, the Backbone of Literature*, and the way that trouble helps construct plot and character together as people move from difficulty to difficulty, and either overcome or come to live with “troubles.”



**Main Speaker,
Saturday morning**

Tony Silvestri

***Creativity and
Healing the
Wounds of Deep
Loss***

After suffering profound loss, we often find our lives out of balance, energies blocked, and futures uncertain. But, by channeling our creativity, we can affect a healing transformation and a renewed sense of control. Explore creative expression to tap into the deepest parts of grief and pain and work to heal from traumatic loss.

Tony is the author of three books and scores written for choral composers. He enjoys the creative challenges and rewards of the collaborative process and has had the privilege of working with many fine artists and composers. For inspiration he draws on his travels, his education, and his deep love of words and music. He also plays Irish traditional music and paints medieval-style illuminations or sacred icons. A veteran educator, he currently lectures in ancient and medieval history at Washburn University and lives in Lawrence, KS. Visit him at <https://www.charlesanthonyilvestri.com/>

Virtual Workshops



Annette Billings

Writing With Wolves at Your Door

Writing when all is bliss in the world is the content of a writer's dream. A waiting keyboard, a favorite beverage nearby and soft music precedes literary genius, does it not? But, wait, what happens when writing reverie is disrupted by a snarling wolf at the door? This workshop will explore whether creativity can continue when a writer feels at risk to lose it all? And, if it can, how?

Annette Billings is an award-winning poet known for both her written work and oral presentations. In 2015, after ending a decades-long career in nursing, she published her first collection of poetry, *A Net Full of Hope*. It received an ARTSConnect ARTY Award in Literature. Her second and third books, *Descants for a Daughter* and *Just Shy of Stars*, followed. Billings' work, including prose and short stories, can also be found in a variety of anthologies as well as in print and online journals.



Marcia Cebulski

A Jail & a Flood: Writing Transformative Fiction

Marcia Cebulski is a Topeka resident who writes plays, books & films. She recently published her first novel, *Watching Men Dance*. The novel includes some harrowing scenes based on real-life occurrences. For example, she writes about being harassed and jailed with a Native American dancer and trying to survive the worst flood in Crete's history.

Cebulski will discuss how she adapted the incidents to the necessities of her novel, its plot and characters; how the situations provided her lead character with opportunities for transformation, for personal change and decision-making. She will emphasize the possibilities of using life experience as a basis for fiction, but also, the need for employing literary craft in the process, transforming life into art. Q&A.

<http://www.marciacebulski.com//>



Duane L. Herrmann

Finding Healing & Transformation Through Therapeutic Journal Writing

Duane was born in 1951. He was only two years old, living at an Eastern Kansas farm when his mother's abuse caused him to consider killing himself. He was 2½ when he began running away from home. He finally managed to escape from traumatic childhood abuse when he finished high school at age 17. He then earned degrees in education and history, served as a teacher, raised four children, began work as an "office drone," then ended his professional career as a supervisor for the federal government.

All of his adult life Duane has written. He has filled 158 journals with therapeutic writing that makes sense of his past, peeling off layers of memory. "Essentially, writing about the past can change the past. It puts the writer (former victim) in control of the event (trauma). And when you are in control, you are empowered, and that power is significant."

Virtual Workshops, cont.



Ronda Miller

The Importance of Voice in Trauma Transformation

Ronda will ask attendees to share experiences that they have overcome through their writings. She will ask for the sharing of poetry or a short narrative paragraph that exemplifies healing through writing and offer suggestions as to how they can transform their attitude by changing their writing. Miller will utilize well-known authors' works as well as writings of her own.

Miller is a **Life Coach** who specializes in working with clients who have lost a loved one to homicide. Her personal experiences with trauma include the deaths of family, personal gun memories, a tough early life, adoption, drug abuse, mental illness, and a subsequent diagnosis of multiple sclerosis.

Gun Memories of a Stone-Eyed Cold Girl, MoonStain, WaterSigns, Winds of Time, and I Love the Child show her lifetime progression of healing through poetry, narrative, and children's stories.



Thea Rademacher

Protecting Your Rights as a Writer: Writing, Publishing, & the Law

What do writers need to know to steer clear of legal problems? You must understand you've created a business, and need to know about defamation and other tort law claims, tax issues, contract provisions.

Led by a former social justice lawyer turned publisher, authors are introduced to many relevant legal issues that avoid problems rather than having to fight to fix them. Recipients will receive an ebook and sample forms.

An honors graduate of the **University of Minnesota School of Law**, Thea Rademacher began her career as a social justice lawyer. After her life-changing experience co-authoring *A Drop in the Night, the Life & Secret Mission of a WWII Airman*, she founded **Flint Hills Publishing** in 2015, which now includes over 50 publications. It is her passion to help emerging authors protect their rights and avoid problems as they promote their work.

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Virtual Workshops, cont.



Steve & Rosie Williams

Writing to Heal Veterans and Others with PTSD

Steve Williams returned from Nam and got his undergraduate degree from Washburn University in 1982 in **Corrections and Criminal Justice**, graduating with honors. He went on to get a master's in management from Baker University in 1993 and spent 31 years at Shawnee County Court Services as a juvenile probation officer and supervisor.

Rosie Williams has a degree in **Family and Child Development** with an emphasis in community services. After years of working for the **State of Kansas** and in various community grant programs, she started and ran an eldercare case management business for nine years. Rosie was first published as a contributor to *Faith Deployed Again* (Jocelyn Green) in 2006 and went on to contribute to *Military Wives New Testament Psalms and Proverbs* (Devotional Bible) and the *Military Families Bible*. Her first solo book, *Repurposed Faith, Breathing New Life into Your Quiet Time* was published in 2016. She co-authored *Running Away and Finding Home* in 2019. She considers helping her husband, Steve, to co-author his memoir, her favorite writing project to date, *Nine Pairs of Boots in Vietnam*.



Explore



The NOTO Arts and Entertainment District is the vibrant heartbeat of North Topeka. Fine art, unique shops, activities, and all the mouth-watering food you could ever need! NOTO offers over 40 outdoor public art murals and sculptures, with performance art regularly featured at Redbud Park. NOTO – the community arts and entertainment district – is the eclectic place to be!

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Children's Bookwriting: 4 Panelists

Writing & Marketing Children's Books in Challenging Times



Kim Luke has published two continuing series of books: three fantasy books and three children's books. She is serious about the craft of writing and taught herself to record audio for her books. Kim and her husband operate a Christmas tree farm, which is the setting for the children's series she has published. She has some amazing methods for organizing and getting into the heads of the characters in her fantasy books by picturing them as celebrities or actors. And her imagination brings the fictional animal characters in her children's books alive with personality. Kim has other books to write but had to work around the pandemic, the family's tree and elderberry operation and a newly built event venue on the farm. It's not easy to balance all the work, but Kim does it somehow.



Kimberly Stringer is the owner and operator of a unique school in Wichita centered on an outdoor learning space. She is also a talented artist and early childhood curriculum developer. Her latest children's books, *Bully*, *Bully Blue Jay* and *I Swallowed a Bubble*, were published this year after she made some dramatic changes to her school in the wake of the pandemic. Her book *Leonard the Leprechaun* contains an appendix with daily curriculum ideas centered around a story she has used for years. She has much to tell us about how children react and interact with the contents of a book, as well as the challenges of keeping her school alive during a pandemic.



Dustin Wilgers is a native of Wichita. He received a B.S. in Biology from Southwestern College, a M.S. in Biology from Kansas State University, and a Ph.D. in Biology from the University of Nebraska. In Nebraska he fell in love with spiders. After surviving a mild case of arachnophobia, he has studied spider behaviors for more than a decade. He enjoys teaching students of all levels. Since 2011, he has been a faculty member in the Natural Sciences Department at McPherson College. During his spare time, Dustin holds outreach events across the state. He communicates science with a broader audience by writing books. His stories educate kids, entertain them so they come back for more but, most importantly, excite the next generation to change the world.



Lila Bartel, a local Topeka watercolor artist and author, is a retired teacher of gifted students at Topeka High School. She teamed up with author Kimberly Stringer to produce Kim's first book, *Loving Lauren*, about a physically challenged student who gets to go to a local fair in her wheelchair. The illustrations are beautiful. Lila also produced her own book, *What Was God Thinking*, that shows the depth of her lifetime work as a watercolor artist, as well as some of the questions all of us have about about how the universe operates. This year, Lila has teamed up with KAC President Duane Johnson to illustrate a book of poetry. She has much to tell us about collaborating with authors to bring their words to life.

Small Kansas Press Publishers: 3 Panelists

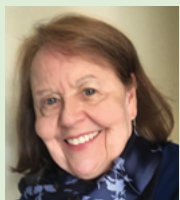
Kansas boasts an amazing array of talented and dedicated independent book publishers. Their owners are the folks who promote and publish the poetry and prose of talented wordsmiths who might never land or seek a contract with any of the big New York publishers. Meadowlark, Blue Cedar, One Voice and Spartan are all racking up some impressive title inventories and many of them are KAC members' books. How and why do these small publishers deal with the little fish? What is their vision for their companies and the talented authors they recruit? Do they accept submissions? What do they charge? The members of this panel will give us a brief history of their dedicated service to Kansas authors. They include:



Tracy Million Simmons of **Meadowlark** —Owner/Publisher of Meadowlark Press, enjoys reading and writing about the people and places of her home state of Kansas, both real and imagined. She started Meadowlark Books in 2014 with the publication of *Green Bike*, a group novel, with **Kevin Rabas** and **Michael D. Graves**. Since that time, Meadowlark has published books of poetry, fiction, and non-fiction, including the **2016 Kansas Notable Book**, *To Leave a Shadow* by Michael D. Graves and the **2020 Kansas Notable Book**, *Headwinds*, by Edna Bell-Pearson.



Gretchen Eick of **Blue Cedar** —After fourteen years as a foreign and military policy lobbyist in Washington, Gretchen Eick became a professor of history. Awarded two Fulbright Scholar awards (to Latvia and Bosnia and Herzegovina) and a Fulbright Hays travel grant to South Africa, she is the author of seven books, two scholarly histories, four novels, and a book of short stories. Her books include *Dissent in Wichita: The Civil Rights Movement in the Midwest, 1954-1972* (U of IL Press, 2001/2007) and *They Met at Wounded Knee: The Eastmans' Story* (University of Nevada Press). **Blue Cedar Press** published its first books in 2015. **Michael Poage**, the founder, wanted to start a press that would focus on poetry written by new voices that he believed should be published and heard. His wife, **Gretchen Eick**, a published writer of nonfiction, had begun writing novels and wanted the press to publish fiction and nonfiction from new voices also, particularly the voices of today's "other America"—people of color, immigrants, young people, people of nontraditional sexual orientation, as well as people from other countries.



Jan Gilbert Hurst of **Author's Voice** —In her business, **Author's Voice Publishing**, Jan's mission is to help aspiring writers become published authors. She provides all the services needed to shepherd manuscripts through editing, design, production, and print, to become polished books that authors are proud to present to the world. She appreciates **one** adoring husband, **two** grown sons, and **three** delightful grandchildren. Her spare time overflows with volunteering as a leader in Outdoor Ministry. She sporadically works on her own historical novel, regularly attends MacNovelists, a writers' group in McPherson, and enjoys meeting new people as a member of the Kansas Author's Club.

The Future of Books: 2 Panelists

New Business Models, Post-Pandemic

When the pandemic hit in March of 2020, many Kansas businesses were slammed with mandatory closures. Libraries and bookstores scrambled to find ways to continue to serve readers and stay afloat and Kansas authors have felt the effects. The panelists will let us in on their innovative business pivots and tell us how their new operating procedures will affect authors and how we can help them as they continue to help us.



RoundTable Bookstore — Andrew Howard

One of the busiest places in the North Topeka Arts District is Roundtable Bookstore. The family-owned and operated business opened just ahead of the pandemic and was the retirement dream for Dad **Scott Howard**. When lockdowns occurred, he decided to keep his day job driving a regional UPS truck. Son **Andrew** already had a demanding IT job with a local school district, while another

son, **Rain**, works another job when he's not serving as the store's coffee barista and salesclerk. Andrew will tell convention viewers how the family pivoted from their original expansion plans because of the pandemic and about other exciting plans for the store's future. Currently, the unique store has new and used books and an expanding local author section.



Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library — Thad Hartman

Topeka Shawnee County Public Library is more than books. It's a local cultural center with **Alice C. Sabatini Art Gallery**, **Millenium Café**, **Chandler Booktique** and numerous exhibits and special events. The beautiful facility has free meeting rooms and before the pandemic, District 1 members met upstairs in one of them.

In the pandemic the library has transitioned to patron book pickups and local deliveries. As **Interim Chief Executive Director Thad Hartman** will discuss how the library is being positioned for the future and about its relationship with local authors. He leads the library in sparking curiosity and connecting through literacy and learning. **Hartman** began his career as a shelving assistant at the library in 1993 and has worked in a variety of positions since then. He has led numerous projects throughout his career, including the implementation of the "Library @ Work" program, community center computer labs, and the facilities master plan.

NATIONAL LEAGUE OF AMERICAN PEN WOMEN



Visit: www.nlapw.org

Topeka Branch: Contact Barbara Waterman Peters @ barbara.peters@att.net

2021 Kansas Authors Club Youth Writing Contests Judges

Many thanks to those who volunteered their time and expertise to judge this contest!

Poetry Grades 3-4 and Grades 5-6

Kristine A. Polansky wrote puppet plays and some poetry as a child but her dream was to write and publish short stories. She took a fiction writing class from **James Gunn** at the **University of Kansas** and went on to teach middle school English and social studies ten years before returning to school and obtaining a law degree. Wanting a creative outlet but pressed for time while practicing law, she started writing poems. She experiments with different poetic forms and studies how content and form shape each other. Four of her poems were published in *Tallgrass Voices* edited by **Gary Lechliter**. Her poem, "Turning Points" won the 2016 Martin Luther King, Jr. Art and Writing Contest, adult division, Manhattan, Kansas. She has received numerous awards from KAC for her poetry and was named KAC Poet of the Year twice, most recently October 2020.

Poetry Grades 7-8 and 9-12

Roy Beckemeyer is a Past-President of the Kansas Authors Club and was KAC Poet of the Year for a number of years. He has four books of poetry published and his poems appear in poetry anthologies as well as in print and online poetry and literary publications. He is a retired engineer and scientific journal editor and has studied fossil insects for over 20 years.

Fiction Grades 3-4 and Grades 5-6

Krista Reed graduated from **Pittsburg State University** with a degree in Elementary Education, and went on to receive her Master's Degree in Education from **Baker University**. She has more than 25 years of experience teaching grades 2-8. Her passion is watching children develop to their fullest potential, both educationally and emotionally. In her free time, she enjoys camping, reading, and spending time with her family. Her newest title as "Gammy" is most rewarding and cherished.

Fiction Grades 7-8 and 9-12

Curtis Becker is a teacher, editor, and publisher living in Topeka, KS. His work has appeared in anthologies, literary journals, and magazines. He has presented on writing and teaching at academic conferences and to small groups. Becker's book, *He Watched and Took Note*, was released in 2018. An educator for over fifteen years, Becker currently teaches at **Holton Middle School** in Holton, KS. He sponsors the yearbook and coaches scholars bowl at HMS. Additionally, he coaches debate and forensics at **Holton High School**. Becker earned a Bachelors and Masters in English and Creative Writing and holds professional licensure in Kansas, highly qualified in English Language Arts and Speech Communications.

Non-Fiction Grades 3-4 and 5-6

Robin Clasen Wunderlich is the editor and publisher of the **Eureka Herald** and President of the **Kansas Press Association Board of Directors**. Robin is the daughter of the late Dick and Rachel Clasen. Dick Clasen was a KPA president and member of the **Kansas Newspaper Hall of Fame**, as was his father, **George H. Clasen II**. Robin and her husband, Wes, have two children and live south of Eureka, Kansas.

Non-Fiction Grades 7-8 and Grades 9-12

Anna Curry is a mother of four busy children on a ranch in east central Kansas. She enjoys sharing stories about her children and their rural life on her blog as a way to not only preserve cherished memories but also advocate for agriculture. Anna has always enjoyed writing as a creative outlet as well as woodworking. She obtained her bachelor's degree from **Oklahoma State University** and master's from **Texas A&M**.

Thank You to Our 2021 Book Award Judges

Many thanks to those who volunteered their time and expertise to judge this contest!

Nelson Poetry Book Award



Judge **Sandra Cox** is an Associate Professor at Southeast Missouri State University, where she teaches courses in contemporary American literature. She holds a **doctorate in English** from the University of Kansas (2011). Her first monograph, entitled *An Ethics of Reading*, was published in 2015. Her second book-length project, a collection of essays about gender as represented in visual narratives written by scholars from several academic disciplines, will be published under the title *Intersectional Feminist Readings of Comics* by Routledge this September. Her essays have also appeared in several collections edited by other scholars, including *Where is Adaptation* (2018), *Weaving the Legacy: Remembering Paula Gunn Allen* (2017), *Louise Erdrich: Critical Insights* (2012) and *Bodies and Culture: Discourses, Communities, Representations* (2012). In addition to her research on fiction and graphic novels in the US diaspora, Dr. Cox's work on cultural poetics has been published by the journals *Red Feather*, *Interdisciplinary Literary Research*, and *Studies in American Indian Literature*. She lives in southeast Missouri with her incredibly clever wife, two poorly trained Welsh corgis, and one very, very old Siamese cat.

J. Donald & Bertha Coffin Memorial Book Award



Judge **Robert Rebein** was born and raised in Dodge City, where his family has farmed and ranched since the late 1920s. Rebein received his BA in English from the University of Kansas. His subsequent degrees include an MA from Exeter University in England and an MFA from Washington University in St. Louis. He is the author of two award-winning memoirs about growing up in Kansas, *Dragging Wyatt Earp: A Personal History of Dodge City* (Swallow, 2013) and *Headlights on the Prairie: Essays on Home* (Kansas, 2017), as well as a work of literary criticism, *Hicks, Tribes, & Dirty Realists: American Fiction after Postmodernism* (Kentucky, 2001). His unpublished works include a novel-in-progress entitled *The Last Rancher*. Rebein teaches Creative Writing at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis in downtown Indianapolis.

Martin Kansas History Book Award

Judge **Ellen Hansen** is professor emerita in the Department of Social Sciences, Sociology, and Criminology at Emporia State University, where she taught Cultural Geography for 22 years. Her areas of teaching and research interest are gender and development, Geography and History of the U.S.-Mexico border, and Geography of Kansas and the Midwest. She is a fiber arts enthusiast, has taught knitting classes at **Flint Hills Technical College**, and is faculty advisor to the **Unwind Fiber Crafts Club** at Emporia State. She is rarely without a knitting or crochet project in her hands.



Kansas Authors Club Children's Book Award

Judge **Sue Lowell Gallion** is an award-winning children's author of picture books, nonfiction books, and early readers. Her newest picture book is *Pug & Pig and Friends*, illustrated by Joyce Wan, published by Beach Lane Books/Simon & Schuster, releasing August 17, 2021. Sue lives in Leawood, Kansas, and is a native of the Kansas City area.

Pug Meets Pig was published in 2016 and ...*Continued, next page* ➔

2021 Book Award Judges, cont.

received a starred review from *Publishers Weekly*. It won the Missouri Library Association Building Block Award in 2018. The second in the series, *Pug & Pig Trick-Or-Treat*, received starred reviews from both *Publishers Weekly* and *Kirkus*.

In 2020, Sue's first nonfiction title, *Our World, A First Book of Geography*, illustrated by **Lisk Feng**, was published by **Phaidon Press** as an international edition and a French edition. *Our World* is a large format globe-shaped novelty board book which opens up to form a 360-degree globe. The book was named one of *Parents* magazine's top books of 2020, was included in the *Washington Post*'s 2020 holiday gift guide. A second title in the "A First Book" series is in production now and will release in 2022.

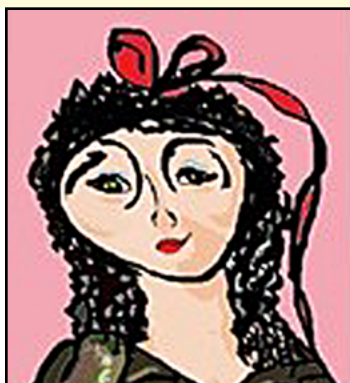
Sue is passionate about the importance of books for children. She is a long-time volunteer with **Lead to Read KC**, a program that matches adults with first or second graders for weekly reading sessions in urban schools. She also serves as a volunteer author for the **Church of the Resurrection's** education ministry and does author visits to partner schools throughout the city. She also enjoys doing author visits at libraries, schools, and bookstores around the country, in person or online. She is active in the **Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI)** and served as regional advisor for Kansas and Missouri.

Sue also loves sharing books with her three grandchildren, who live nearby. For more information on Sue and her books, check out Sue's website at <https://suegallion.com/>. Sue has lists of favorite books for kids on her Goodreads page. Follow her on Twitter @SueLGallion, on Instagram as @suelowellgallion, or on Facebook as Sue Lowell Gallion.



Kansas Authors Club "It Looks Like a Million" Book Design Award

Judge **Desiree Ultican** loves art, history, and mysterious circumstances. She is a graphic designer by trade, a collector of vintage paper ephemera by inclination and an author by desire and determination after publishing her first book in 2010—the steampunk novel *The Empress of the Clouds*. Over her 40+ years as a graphic designer (as **Desiree Mueller**), she designed the interior pages for several books for **Andrews McMeel Universal** and **The Vintage Workshop**, both based in the Kansas City area. While working for various advertising agencies and design firms in town, she designed books for corporate and municipal clients. She currently is **Art Director** for **Lamcraft Inc.**, a supplier of laminated bookmarks and products for the funeral home industry and for museums nationwide, including the U.S. Capitol and the **National World War I Museum** in Kansas City. Desiree keeps company with her husband, **Jim**, and their cats in **Independence, Missouri**.



Ruth Maus
Author of *Valentine*

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Thank You to Our 2021 Poetry Contest Judges

Contest Manager: Linze Garcia

Theme Contest



Judge **Amy Sage Webb-Baza** is Professor of English and Director of the Creative Writing Program at Emporia State University, where she was named Roe R. Cross Distinguished Professor and directs the Donald Reichardt Center for Publishing and Literary Arts. She is managing editor for Bluestem Press and *Flint Hills Review*. She publishes fiction, poetry, and nonfiction, and is author of *Your Own Life: Kansas Stories* (Woodley Press, 2012).

Classical Poetry



Judge **Kristin Van Tassel** teaches *Writing* and *American Literature* at Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kansas. She writes essays and poetry about place, teaching, motherhood, and travel. Her work has appeared in literary, academic, and travel publications, including *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *World Hum*, *ISLE*, *The Journal of Ecocriticism*, *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Wraparound South*, *Temenos*, *Burning-word*, *Capsule Stories*, and *About Place*.

Free Verse



Judge **Jason Ryberg** is the author of fourteen books of poetry, six screenplays, a few short stories, a box full of folders, notebooks and scraps of paper that could one day be (loosely) construed as a novel, and, a couple of angry letters to various magazine and newspaper editors. He is currently an Artist-in-Residence at both The Prospero Institute of Disquieted P/o/e/t/i/c/s and the Osage Arts Community, and is an editor and designer at Spartan Books. His latest collection of poems is *Are You Sure*

Kerouac Done It This Way!? (co-authored with John Dorsey and Victor Clevenger, OAC Books, 2021). He lives part-time in Kansas City, MO with a rooster named Little Red and a billygoat named Giuseppe and part-time somewhere in the Ozarks, near the Gasconade River, where there are also many strange and wonderful woodland critters..

Narrative Poetry



Judge **John E. Epic** is the author of the non-fiction memoir, *Ill Digestions*, the illustrated children's book, *Such a Little Apple: the anatomy of a bully*, and numerous poetry books that illuminate beauty within the mundane, meaning within the seemingly insignificant, and humor to all of life's absurdities. As an avid advocate of the arts John E. Epic co-created *Drone-BEE Gazette Publishing*, an agency dedicated to publishing previously unknown artists, poets, photographers and authors. Bio pic was created

by Rim Valiakmetov (Moscow, Russia)

Whimsy



Judge **Lori Brack** is the author of three books of poems: *A Case for the Dead Letter Detective* (Kelsay, 2021), *Museum Made of Breath* (Spartan, 2018), and *A Fine Place to See the Sky* (The Field School, 2010). She lives in Lucas, KS where she is a freelance writer for nonprofits, a writing coach and instructor.

Continued, next page →

2021 Poetry Contest Judges, cont.

Japanese Poetry



Judge **Dr. Cynthia Patton** has been a member of the English faculty at Emporia State University since 2000. For the past fifteen years, she has researched and taught Japanese Literature and Film in English translation, as well as her original fields (19th- and 20th-century British Literature, Literary Criticism and Theory). Her favorite haiku is by Yosa Buson: *harusame ya monogatari yuku mino to kasa*. Spring rain: / so the story goes-- / straw raincoat and umbrella

Performance Poetry



Judge **Matt Spezia** is the Kansas Program Director for Poetry for Personal Power. In art, Matt is a national powerhouse of lyrical ability, combining an eight-time national award-winning poetry style, Kansas City hip hop, and thespian teachings. He has three albums and a book published and has appeared in an anthologized CD and book. Matt uses his platform and his art to promote self-confidence and betterment, social awareness, and cultural change. Outside of art, Matt is a mentor and has worked to directly influence school children in 36 different districts. He has given numerous presentations on performing for the public forum at a number of state-wide venues and on the floor of the Kansas capitol building. Matt has experience with hosting radio shows and producing commercials, music videos, and films. Above all, Matt believes everything is a *#teameffort*.

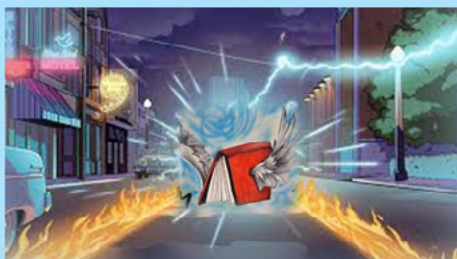
New Poets



Judge **Jason Baldinger** is from Pittsburgh and looks forward to roaming the country writing poems again. His newest books are *A Threadbare Universe* (Kung Fu Treachery Press) and *The Afterlife is a Hangover* (Stubborn Mule Press). *A History of Backroads Misplaced: Selected Poems 2010-2020* (Kung Fu Treachery Press) is forthcoming later this year. His work has been published widely across print journals and online. You can hear him read his work on Bandcamp and on LP's by The Gotobeds and Theremonster.

Starting at 10:30 a.m. Sunday

Workshop: Future of the Book Panel:
Andrew Howard, Will Leathem, Thad Hartman



Starting at 8 a.m. Sunday

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Thank You to Our 2021 Prose Contest Judges

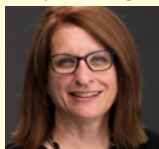
Contest Manager: Kerry Moyer

Writing for Youth

Judge **Sarah Moyer** is a career educator in Emporia, Kansas who has taught at the elementary school level since 2002. Sarah is an Emporia State University graduate and resides in Emporia with her husband, Kerry, and their boys, Edward and Miles.



Playwriting



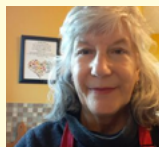
Judge **Cate Crosby Grundleger** received her Ph.D. from Ohio State University in Second and Foreign Language Education. She is currently teaching in the Intensive English Program at Emporia State and First Year Writing at Baruch College in NYC. She enjoys cycling, reading, and exploring with her husband, Adam.

Memoir & Short Story

Judge **Lindsey Bartlett** teaches Composition to first-year writing students at Emporia State University. Bartlett is an Emporian by choice and considers the Flint Hills region of Kansas her home. She grew up on a dilapidated farmstead in west-central Kansas, and her rural background informs much of her writing. Bartlett has published one poetry collection, *Vacant Childhood*. Her writing and photography have appeared in *Flint Hills Review*, *105 Meadowlark Reader*, and *MidAmerican Fiction and Photography*.



Humor



Judge **Marcia Lawrence** was born and raised in Barber County, Kansas. She has worked as a journalist, photo-finish photographer, stockbroker, editor, corn detasseler, musician, and mom. She is a lifelong scholar of regional history and a passionate researcher. Lawrence is the author of *Spirit of the Prairie: The History of the Making of the Medicine Lodge Indian Peace Treaty Pageant*. She's currently researching and writing the biography of Franklin L. Gilson, legendary founder of the Speech and Theatre Department at the Kansas State Normal (now ESU) and author of the play *John Barclay* based on William Allen White's best seller, *A Certain Rich Man*. If all goes according to plan, *Professor of Pageantry* will make its debut in 2022. She lives in Emporia, Kansas.

Flash Fiction

Judge **Michelle Zumbrum** is a self-describing bleeding-heart social worker, writers' groupie, and single mom of two semi-sweet/semi-surly teenagers. Hobbies include cat-calling cats, imbibing cheap wine, and watching "CinemaSins" on YouTube.

First Chapter of Book

Judge **Brian Dyer** is a social worker in Emporia, Kansas. He enjoys spending time with his kids, craft beer, music, Kansas, and nature.

Theme

Judge **Lydia Kautz** is the Editor of the *Junction City Union* in Junction City, KS. She is also a student with Emporia State University's SLIM Program and a hobby writer of fiction and other fun things.





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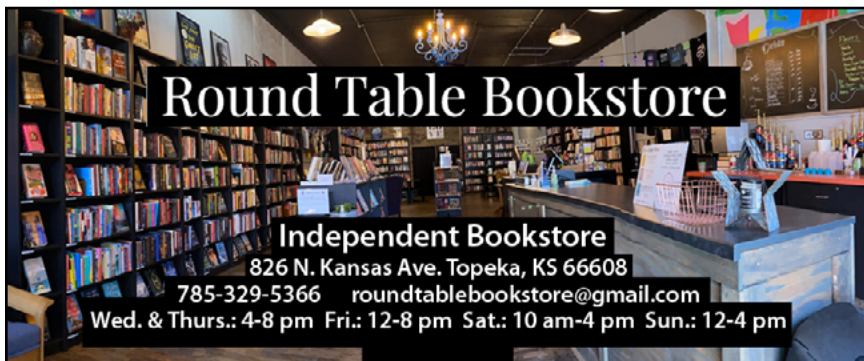


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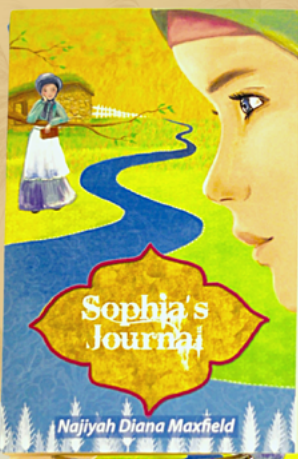
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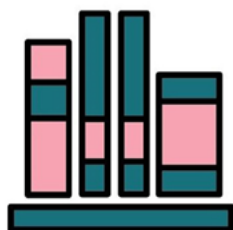
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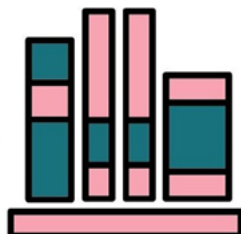
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