2020 ANWA Writers Conference Faculty

Special Guests

Guest Agents

Larissa Pienkowski

Larissa Melo Pienkowski grew up outside of Boston and attended Simmons University, where she earned her degree in Social Work and Sociology, performed poetry competitively and recreationally, and edited a number of literary magazines. Larissa later went on to receive her MA in Publishing and Writing from Emerson College, where she worked with the likes of Beacon Press and Barefoot Books, before becoming the assistant publisher of a small indie press. She joined Jill Grinberg Literary Management in 2020 and is now working to build her list. The daughter of Brazilian and Polish immigrants, Larissa speaks Portuguese and Spanish and travels to experience as much of the world as possible—always with a good book in hand.

Larissa is open to queries.

MSWL: manuscriptwishlist.com/mswl-post/larissa-melo-pienkowski

Twitter: @Impnk

What she's looking for:

- Middle-grade novels that intertwine adventure with diverse cultural elements
- YA coming-of-age stories about identity
- Literary fiction that centers underrepresented voices
- Funny yet steamy adult rom-coms
- Contemporary reimaginings of non-Western mythology and folklore
- Magical realism and feminist horror
- Narrative nonfiction
- Essay collections

Steven Salpeter

Steven Salpeter is a literary agent at Curtis Brown, Ltd. A graduate of the University of Florida, Steven edited Tea and founded the Palmetto Prize for Fiction. He began his publishing career at Writers House and Brandt & Hochman before moving to Curtis Brown to assist a senior literary agent and help Timothy Knowlton manage many of the agency's venerable estate clients, including W. H. Auden, Stanley Ellin, John Knowles, Alfred Lansing, and Ayn Rand, among other bestsellers and literary award winners. He is now actively building his list, seeking literary fiction, fantasy, graphic novels, historical fiction, mysteries, thrillers, young adult, and authors who can blend elements of these genres. Steven is also

interested in narrative nonfiction, gift books, history, humor, and popular science. He lives in New York City.

<u>curtisbrown.com/agents/literary-agent-steven-salpeter</u> | <u>mswishlist.com/agent/StiSal</u> @StiSal

What he's looking for:

- MG, YA, and Adult
- Fantasy, Contemporary Fantasy
- Myths and Retellings
- Magical Realism
- MG and YA Graphic Novels
- Contemporary Fiction
- Historical Fiction
- Mysteries and Thrillers
- Narrative Nonfiction
- Gift Books
- History
- Humor
- Popular Science

Guest Editors

Lisa Mangum, Shadow Mountain Publishing

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

Lisa is also the author of four national best-selling YA novels (The Hourglass Door trilogy and *After Hello*) as well as several short stories and novellas. She has edited multiple anthologies and has written a nonfiction book about the craft of writing using the TV show *Supernatural*. She graduated with honors from the University of Utah, and currently lives in Taylorsville, Utah, with her husband, Tracy.

What she's looking for . . .

- MG, YA, Adult
- YA Contemporary
- YA Fantasy
- MG Fantasy

- Women's Fiction
- General Fiction
- Romance
- Inspirational Nonfiction

shadowmountain.com/author-book/lisa-mangum | @LisaMangum

Kami Hancock, Covenant Communications

With fifteen years of editing experience, Kami Hancock has worked on everything from college dissertations to resumes to veterinary journals to books. Books are her favorite because they are the most challenging and the most rewarding. Kami is pleasantly surprised by how often she gets to draw upon her martial arts knowledge when she edits, even in unexpected places like Regency romances. She's been an editor with Covenant Communications for five years, doing what she loves, and is working toward her second-degree black belt in Shaolin kempo.Covenant Communications publishes many kinds of books (adult fiction and nonfiction, children's books, holiday booklets, gift books, and other products) both with and without a religious element, but all Covenant books reflect the values espoused by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. A book we are interested in will be of value to our readers and will be unique in its approach to its subject.

Samantha Millburn, Covenant Communications

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

What Covenant is looking for:

- Inspirational nonfiction from an LDS point of view
- Intriguing fiction, especially in the categories of historical romance, suspense, mystery, historical fiction, and romance

She is not interested at this time in memoirs, poetry, family histories, or personal journals, and we will not accept manuscripts that contain offensive material, including profanity, vulgarity, excessive violence, or sexually explicit or suggestive scenes.

covenant-lds.com/submissions

Special Guest Speakers

Tyler Whitesides Keynote

Tyler Whitesides decided he wanted to be an author by age seven. He spent his teenage years hunched over an old word processor, dreaming up stories. His first book, *Janitors*, was published in 2011, leading to a five part series. He went on to write *The Wishmakers*, and its sequel, *The Wishbreaker*. His latest endeavor is an adult epic fantasy trilogy, starting with *The Thousand Deaths of Ardor Benn*. Tyler has visited 26 states, presenting at over 700 schools to share his love of reading and creativity. He lives in northern Utah with his wife and two boys. In addition to writing, Tyler loves fly fishing and hiking in the mountains, playing games, and performing on stage in musical theatre.

Julie Wright Thursday Speaker

Julie Wright (1972-still breathing) was born in Salt Lake City, Utah. She's lived in LA, Boston, and the literal middle of nowhere (don't ask). She wrote her first book when she was fifteen and has since written twenty-three novels. She is a two-time Whitney-award winner and is a Crown Heart recipient. She is proud to be part of Shadow Mountain's Proper Romance line.

She has one husband, three kids, one grandbaby, one dog, and a varying amount of houseplants (depending on attrition).

She loves writing, reading, traveling, speaking at schools, hiking, playing with her kids, and watching her husband make dinner.

She used to speak fluent Swedish but now speaks only well enough to scold her children in public.

She hates mayonnaise and the fickle comma. bit.ly/scatteredjules | @scatteredjules

Faculty

Traci Hunter Abramson

Traci Hunter Abramson was born in Arizona, where she lived until moving to Venezuela for a study-abroad program. After graduating from Brigham Young University, she worked for the Central Intelligence Agency for several years, eventually resigning in order to raise her family. She credits the CIA with giving her a wealth of ideas as well as the skills needed to survive her children's teenage years. She loves to travel and enjoys coaching her local high school swim team. She has written more than twenty-five bestselling novels and is a five-time Whitney Award winner, including 2017 Best Novel of the Year. www.traciabramson.com [@traciabramson.

Torsha Baker

Torsha Shingler Baker is the author of Tainted Lies under her pen name, Leona Nation. She writes young adult and adult science fiction/fantasy, thriller, and romance. She has won several contests with her writing submissions. Most recently, she won first place in the Beginning of Book Contest at the 2019 ANWA Writers Conference. Torsha is a member of the Ready, Set, Write Podcast, and the So You Think You Can Write Youtube channel. Torsha lives in Chandler, Arizona, with her husband, four kids, cat and dog. When she's not writing, she's procrasti-baking French Macarons, with her business, Ooh La La Macaron, traveling to explore far off places, or spending time with family and friends. Above all else, she is a lifelong learner.

Torshashinglerbaker.wordpress.com | @Torsha s baker

Julie Coulter Bellon

After winning \$10 in a second grade writing contest, Julie Coulter Bellon knew she wanted to be a published author someday. That dream came true and she is now the author of nearly two dozen romantic suspense novels. Her book All Fall Down won the RONE award for Best Suspense, The Capture and Second Look were Whitney Award finalists for Best Suspense, and Julie has been a #1 bestseller on several Amazon category lists. Julie loves to travel and her favorite cities she's visited so far are probably Athens, Paris, Ottawa, and London. She loves to read, write, teach, watch Hawaii Five-O, and eat Canadian chocolate. Not necessarily in that order. Julie offers book deals, reviews, and writing tips on her blog ldswritermom.blogspot.com You can also find out about all her upcoming projects at her website juliebellon.com

www.juliebellon.com | @juliebellon

Adam Berg

Adam Berg is a six-foot-two, dog-obsessed, comedy writing nap expert. He wrote and performed sketch comedy at Studio C from 2012 to 2018. Now he and his Studio C coconspirators are writing and producing their own content at JK! Studios. One day, his debut

novel will actually debut and he can stop thinking about it during the wee hours of the night. Until then, he's gonna drink more Coke.

@theadamberg

Becca Birkin

Becca Birkin holds an MFA in Writing for Children from Vermont College of Fine Arts and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Utah. She has a story soon to be published in the Friend Magazine, and has also written for the New Era, Segullah, and Meridian Magazines. Her writing has won several statewide and regional contests, including Super Grand Prize Winner in the LDStorymakers Conference Contest. She loves travel, colorful clothes, and chocolate—not necessarily in that order. Becca is a wife and mother of four children, her sensitivity readers for the dos and don'ts of teen dialogue.

www.wifyr.com/blog/author/beccabirkin/ | Instagram: @beccabirkin

Stephanie Black

Stephanie Black is the author of eleven novels, most recently TO DIE, TO SLEEP. She is a four-time Whitney Award winner for Best Mystery/Suspense Novel and a Whitney finalist for Best Speculative Novel. She loves hanging out with other writers, chocolate chip cookies, and the ANWA Conference.

stephanieblack.net | @StephanieMBlack

Shelly Brown

Award-winning children's book author and indie romance writer, Shelly Brown feels a lot of feelings. She has feelings about her feelings and has studied how to make others feel feelings too. Shelly has been told countless times that her readers weren't expecting to laugh and cry on the same page. She wished they were talking about her books. (Just kidding, they were.)

She had no regrets, one husband, five children, six chickens, and ninety-eight Pez dispensers.*

*Pez dispenser number is an estimate. For the record, the other numbers are exact. http://www.shellybrownwriter.com/ | @sbrownwriter

Karlene Browning

Karlene has over 30 years experience in the publishing industry. She has owned a niche publishing company, acted as acquisitions editor for other publishers, worked for and with multiple printers and book presses, and even worked the sales side as assistant manager of a bookstore.

She currently specializes in freelance author services: helping authors and small publishers. Focusing on books and book-related marketing and promotional products, she has a long list of satisfied customers, whose projects include everything from books, magazines and websites, to business cards and complex order forms."

inksplasher.com | @ink splasher

Ali Cross

Ali Cross is a USA Today bestselling author of young adult fantasy and frequent speaker at industry events. An expert in story outlining, craft and industry, she's well-known for her upbeat and engaging presentation style. In addition to presenting at conferences, Ali's a writing coach with rave reviews and loves to help other writers maximize their potential in every way possible.

alicross.com | @ali_cross

Gina Denny

Gina Denny writes science fiction and fantasy that features young women who aren't sick of wearing skirts.

ginadenny129.wixsite.com/ginadenny | @ginad129

Deb Eaton

Deb Eaton lives with her husband, two cats and a dog, up on the mesa, in Arizona. Although she's been a technical writer for most of her life and was even crowned the Grammar Queen in Miss Spencer's 7th Grade English class, inside her lies a romance writer. She has a passion to help people be the best they can be and has done so through nearly 10 years of service on the ANWA Board and Executive Committee and through coaching students in public speaking. Surrounded by books, chocolate, and amazing children and grandchildren nearby, Deb is blessed beyond measure.

debeaton.com

Sara Ella

Once upon a time, Sara Ella dreamed she would marry a prince and live in a Disney castle. Today, she spends her days throwing living room dance parties for her two princesses, raising her little prince to be a king, and conquering realms of her own imaginings. Oh, and her husband is definitely more swoon-worthy than any Prince Charming. She is the author of four books including the award-winning Unblemished trilogy and *Coral*, a reimagining of "The Little Mermaid" that focuses on mental health. Sara may or may not be obsessed with #Bookstagram, which feeds her current addiction to bookish tea and candles. A lover of fairy tales, she believes "Happily Ever After is Never Far Away." https://saraella.com | @saraellawrites

Jessica Guernsey

Jessica Guernsey writes Urban and Contemporary Fantasy novels and short stories, her work is published in magazines and anthologies. By day, she crushes dreams as manuscript evaluator for two publishers. Frequently, she can be found at writing conferences. She isn't difficult to spot; just look for the extrovert with purple hair.

While she spent her teenage angst in Texas, she now lives on a mountain in Utah with her husband, three kids, and a codependent mini schnauzer.

jessicaquernsey.com | @JessGuernsey

Whitney Hemsath

Whitney Hemsath received her B.A. in Screenwriting and worked with multiple film production companies before pursuing novel-writing in earnest. Her animated feature-length screenplay was selected for the 2005 Chapman Killer Script list, and she has also placed in the Storymakers First Chapter and ANWA BOB contests. She has sold and published multiple flash fiction and short story pieces and has a novel in revisions. Her

secret love is writing song parodies, and her favorite stress reliever is pillow-fighting with her four sons.

www.whitneyhemsath.wordpress.com | @WhitneyHemsath

Steven Heumann

Steven spent his childhood recording stories into his sister's tape deck until she took it away in a huff. Even so, he wouldn't be stopped. After 15 years working as a writer, director, and voice over artist in the television industry, he left it all behind to become a full-time novelist...with a wife and six kids. Seriously. It may sound crazy, but that's who you're dealing with here. He's since written and published six full-length contemporary science fiction books and five novellas, including *Nightingale*, featured in Immortal Works' *Of Fae and Fate*.

https://www.stevenheumann.com/ | @SuperHeumann

Jen Geigle Johnson

An award winning author, including the Praiseworthy top award for romance and the GOLD in Foreword INDIES Book of the Year Awards, Jen Geigle Johnson discovered her passion for England while kayaking on the Thames near London as a young teenager.

Now, she loves to share bits of history that might otherwise be forgotten. Whether in Regency England, the French Revolution, or Colonial America, her romance novels are much like life is supposed to be: full of adventure. www.jengeiglejohnson.com | @authorlyjen

Brittany Larsen

Brittany Larsen has published three books with Covenant Communications: *Pride & Politics, Sense & Second Chances, The Matchmaker's Match*, and self-published eight books in collaboration with three other authors under the pen name Brenna Jacobs. She has presented for the past four years as an Instructor and the past two years as a Workshop Facilitator at Storymakers Conference. When not writing, she is a substitute high school English teacher. She lives in Orange County, California, with her husband and three teen-aged daughters. brittanylarsen.net | @WriteBritt

Gina Larsen

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

www.seriouslygina.com | @seriouslygina

Heather Moore

Heather B. Moore is a USA Today best-selling author of more than fifty publications. Her historical novels and thrillers are written under pen name H.B. Moore. She writes women's fiction, romance and inspirational non-fiction under Heather B. Moore. This can all be confusing, so her kids just call her Mom. Heather attended Cairo American College in Egypt, the Anglican School of Jerusalem in Israel, and earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Brigham Young University in Utah. Heather is represented by Dystel, Goderich, and Bourret. www.hbmoore.com

Stephanie Morris

Stephanie enjoys the Arizona heat by spending time fully submerged in the pages of a good book and combats the "cold" winters by wearing lots of jackets and fingerless gloves so she can still spend bliss-filled hours in front of a computer tapping away word by word at her obsession. She has served on the ANWA Board of Directors for the past three years, the last of which was spent as Conference Chair. Her short story "Pride, Prejudice & Demolition" appeared in the Wards & Rumors of Wards anthology, and she has a chapter on revising published in Create, Craft, Critique and More. She is currently working on her third romance novel and fine-tuning a non-fiction book for youth on relationships, connection, and the power of choice.

Erin Nuttall

Erin Nuttall holds an MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults from Vermont College of Fine Arts and is an active member of SCBWI and ALAN. She has taught children and adults extensively in volunteer organizations, as well as internationally for a billion-dollar corporation, and most enjoys teaching concrete tools that address specific ideas. She lives outside of Chicago with her family where she writes stories for middle grade and young adult readers that offer a humorous take on friendship, identity, feminism, and romance.

Martha Petersen

Martha Petersen writes short fiction and creative nonfiction essays. Her work has appeared in *Witness, Silk Road Review, Prime Number, Segullah Journal*, and others. She holds an MFA from Vermont College of Fine Arts, and she teaches composition and creative writing at Pima Community College. In addition, she presents regular writing workshops for Pima County Library patrons. She writes from the beautiful but prickly Sonoran desert in Tucson, Arizona, where she has raised four children. They bring her loads of joy and worry, and also writing material.

Janette Rallison

USA Today, bestselling author, Janette Rallison/CJ Hill writes books because writing is much more fun than cleaning bathrooms. Her avoidance of housework has led her to write 30 novels that have sold over 1,000,000 print copies and have been on many reading and state lists. Her books are fantasy, sci-fi, and romantic comedy because hey, there is enough angst

in real life, but there's a drastic shortage of humor, romance and hot guys who fight dragons. She lives in Chandler, Arizona, with her husband, kids, and enough cats to classify her as eccentric.

<u>JanetteRallison.com</u> | @JanetteRallison

Jill Richards

Jill Richards grew up in the Valley of the Sun, good ol' Arizona—surrounded by blazing heat, beautiful sunsets, and lots of brothers and sisters. She is the author of the Crown of Deception series and has more books in the works. Many authors claim to have known they wanted to become a writer since childhood . . . yeah, she isn't one of those authors. She didn't even know she liked to read until she was 24 years old, let alone knew she wanted to write. Life took her in a direction she never thought possible, filled with endless stories and characters. On the day to day, Jill enjoys her husband and their four kids; a good rib-eye steak, cooked medium rare; and a bowl of ripe watermelon.

J Scott Savage

J Scott Savage is the author of the eighteen published novels including: the Mysteries of Cove series, the Case File 13 series, the Farworld series, the Shandra Covington series, and others. His books have received starred reviews from Publishers Weekly and Kirkus, been named a Junior Library Guild selection, an Amazon book of the month, and a Barnes and Noble select book, and won several awards. He is represented by Michael Bourret of Dystel, Goderich, & Bourret and has presented at many schools and conferences.

www.jscottsavage.com | @jscottsavage

Cassie Shiels

Cassie M. Shiels is a multi-genre author. She was born in Idaho but moved around the Pacific Northwest while growing up. Currently, she lives in Utah. She has always enjoyed books and was one to be found, reading on the school bus, before she did her homework, and late into the night. (Wait, she still does that!) In middle school she determined that she liked creating her own stories as much as she liked reading them; so she decided she wanted to be an Author and keeps working on making that dream come true with every story idea that bounds into her head. She loves writing both clean contemporary romance and young adult speculative fiction.

www.cassiemshiels.com | @cassiemshiels

Carrie Snider

Carrie Snider always appreciated musical theatre, but it wasn't until she met her husband that her inner theatre nerd blossomed. Two days after their wedding, he auditioned for a local musical production, and he received a "you got the part!" call during their honeymoon. (Carrie did marketing for the production.) He appeared in other local productions over the years. They traveled to New York City and saw seven Broadway shows in seven days. The Sniders live in Phoenix, AZ, where they hold season tickets to the ASU Gammage Broadway series. Carrie is a newspaper reporter and writes middle grade fantasy.

Kate Stradling

Kate Stradling is a structure junkie who adores historical and descriptive linguistics. She graduated summa cum laude from Brigham Young University with her BA in English, and completed her MA in English at Arizona State. Her writing meanders through the fantasy spectrum, from dystopia lite to fairy tales to time-travel adventures. Devoted to token winters and scorching weather, Kate lives in sunny Mesa, Arizona. katestradling.com | @katestradling.

Anne-Marie Strohman

Anne-Marie Strohman writes stories for young readers of all ages. She has taught writing at the college level, as well as workshops in writing for children. She holds an MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults from Vermont College of Fine Arts and is an active member of SCBWI. She writes for and edits the blog *KidLit Craft* (www.kidlitcraft.com) and works as a freelance writer and editor. She lives in the San Francisco Bay Area with her family, where she enjoys swimming, hiking, and learning to play the banjo.

Wendy Swore

Wendy S. Swore farms full-time with her husband and 5 children. She writes part-time, particularly in winter when her farming chores give her time to plant seeds in her imagination. She is a member of SCBWI and is the author of *A Monster Like Me* & *The Wish And The Peacock*.

wendyswore.com | @wendyswore

Sammie Trinidad

Sammie Trinidad is a multi-award winning author. Having fallen in love with writing at the age of nine, she dabbles in many genres, but especially favors fantasy, magical realism, creative non-fiction, contemporary, and short fiction. The 3 T's are important to her: traveling, tacos, and time with family.

@Trinidadsammie

Ellie Whitney

Born and raised in the South, Ellie Whitney attended college in Utah, graduating with a degree in art history. She then traveled through Europe for six months before obtaining a

masters to teach English. She has moved a dozen times with her military husband, living nowhere exciting in the process. His job at the Pentagon brought them to Virginia where they've finally put down roots. Over the years, they dragged their four children on exciting vacations involving battlefields, historical sites, and art museums. In her spare time Ellie reads, attends chocaholics anonymous, or attempts to write while her cats walk back and forth across her laptop, chastising her for not making them her immediate priority.

Mercedes Yardley

Mercedes M. Yardley is a dark fantasist who wears poisonous flowers in her hair. She is the author of *Pretty Little Dead Girls, Nameless*, and the Bram Stoker Award-winning *Little Dead Red*.

mercedesmyardley.com | @mercedesmy