

FLORIDA



WRITERSCON 2025

OCTOBER 17-19, 2025

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FWA

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Donnie Chariot is the most gifted thoroughbred horse racing handicapper in the country.

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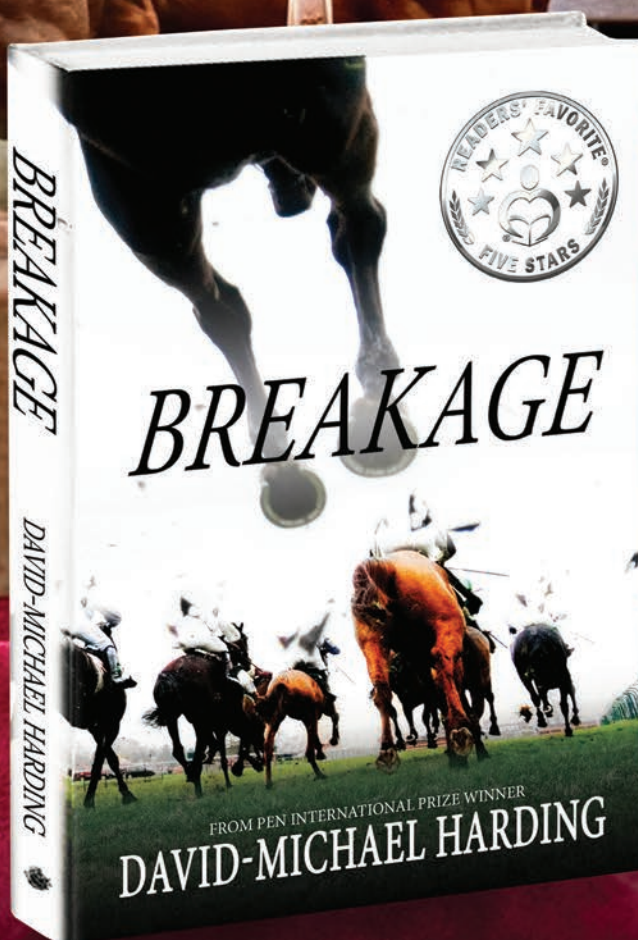


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Welcome to Florida WritersCon 2025



It's my pleasure to hold the title of conference chair for a third year in a row. But that exclusive title doesn't reflect the hard work of the WritersCon 2025 committee of Mary Ann de Stefano, Ginnye Cubel, and Michael Farrell. Each of them had a hand in planning the unique events you'll find at this year's conference—from Friday's Writers Connect to Sunday's AI Tutorial. Interspersed with three days of workshops are mixers and dinners designed to encourage networking among our members. This year I'm proud to have secured Kristen Arnett as our keynote speaker. When I heard her speak at this year's Key West Literary Seminar, I knew her message for writers to never give up would fit right in with our mantra of writers helping writers. When Kristen and I spoke, I hardly had to finish explaining what FWA does when she said "Where? When? And I'm in!" May that enthusiasm be infectious!

—Paul Iasevoli, Florida WritersCon 2025 Chair



If I had to pick one word to describe this year's conference, it would be *thoughtful*. So much care and dedication went into creating and curating an unforgettable experience. Everything from an introvert-friendly networking experience to a well-balanced lineup of workshops led by accomplished professionals to a hands-on AI workshop designed to spark curiosity in both beginners and seasoned prompters. There's a little something for everyone here and that is intentional. We're creating a space where writers can feel seen, celebrated, and empowered. So, whether you're here to meet new friends, sharpen your craft, or feel inspired, welcome. We're honored and excited to have you here as part of our story.

—Ginnye Cubel, Executive Director



Did you ever wonder how the conference, with its diverse program filled with opportunities to learn, connect and celebrate comes to be? Let me tell you what brings it to life—the heartbeat of the conference. Volunteers work tirelessly to make it all possible, and I'm in awe of their contributions. You've heard from Paul and Ginnye above—key players in creative planning and implementation—but dedicated Board Members Rick Bettencourt, Donna Brown, and Michael Farrell also play vital roles in guiding FWA and making this event a success. As we gather for the Royal Palm Literary Awards Banquet to celebrate members' accomplishments, take a moment to reflect on what leads up to the awards ceremony. Over 100 volunteer judges have contributed their time, supported by key staff Laurie Andrews, Alison Miller, and Bill Opperman under the savvy and kind leadership of Board Member Elaine Senecal. Volunteer spirit is the key ingredient, the heartbeat of Florida Writers Association and all that we offer.

—Mary Ann de Stefano, President

What are Workshop Tracks?

Think of them as guided pathways through the conference—each one spotlighting a key area of the writing life including craft, publishing, marketing, and legal.

While you're free to attend any session you choose at the conference, these tracks help you identify workshops that align with your current goals and creative interests. Learn more about the workshop tracks on our website: floridawriters.org/curated-tracks

Codes Used in Schedule to Indicate Tracks

AI: The Ethical Use of AI for Storytelling Track

CRFT: Craft and Creativity Track: From Idea to Page

LEGL: Legal Track: Rights, Rules & Industry Insight

MKTG: Author Marketing Track: Build Your Brand, Reach Your Readers

PUBL: Paths to Publishing Track: Navigating Your Options from Page to Platforms

The Craft and Creativity Track: From Idea to Page

- Moods, Motifs and MacGuffins – Victor DiGenti
- What Writers Can Learn from Pixar – Victor DiGenti
- Start Small and Save that Novel for Later – Thomas Smith
- 10 Steps to Save Your Editor's Sanity – JM Paquette
- Worldbuilding 101: An Organized Approach – JM Paquette
- Inhabiting Your Character through their Eyes – Jamie Poissant
- Flash Fiction: Writing Short! – Jamie Poissant
- Journaling to Heal, Grow, and Create – Sylvia Whitman

The Paths to Publishing Track: Navigating Your Options from Page to Platform

- Creating a Synopsis that Shines – C.I. Jerez
- The Power of the Premise: A Hook that Works – C.I. Jerez
- How NOT to be Published – Thomas Smith
- Behind the Editor's Desk at a Literary Magazine – Sylvia Whitman
- Which Publication Pathway is Right for You? – Olivia Zugay

The Author Marketing Track: Build Your Brand, Reach Your Readers

- How to Find and Hook Your Readers – Heidi McIntyre
- Crafting an Authentic Brand and Platform – Heidi McIntyre
- Mastering Book Marketing: Funnels & Promos – Olivia Zugay
- How Genre Impacts You and Your Plot – Valerie Willis
- Help! How Do I Land on the Bookshelf? – Valerie Willis
- Book Design: All the Front and Back Matters – Valerie Willis

The Legal Track: Rights, Rules & Industry Insight

- Stay Out of Legal Trouble – Ava Doppelt
- Protect Your Rights – Ava Doppelt

The Ethical Use of AI for Storytelling Track

- Pen, Paper, and Processor: A Hands-On Workshop for Ethical Use of AI for Storytelling – Noel Zamot

Keynote Address

Kristen Arnett



Photo credit: Maria Rada

Florida-based writer Kristen Arnett's work has appeared in *Guernica*, *The Guardian*, *McSweeney's*, and other publications. She was a finalist for the 2020 Lambda Literary award and won the Ninth Letter Literary and the Coil Book awards.

Kristen is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Mostly Dead Things*. Her new book, *Stop Me if You've Heard This One*, is a sparkling and funny new novel of entertainment, ambition, art, and love. Learn more about Kristen Arnett at kristenarnettwriter.com

Praise for *Stop Me If You've Heard this One*

"Sweet, sexy, sad, articulate, and funny." — *Vogue*

"As much heart, humor, and gritty realness as can fit between two covers." — *People*

"A funny and heartfelt tale of one woman grappling with grief, love and how to move forward." — *The New York Times*

Kristen will share about her writing journey at our Saturday luncheon. Signing will follow. Books will be available for purchase in the Crystal Foyer.

NEW! Writers Connect (Thoughtful Networking)

**Join us on Friday afternoon from 2:00 to 5:00 PM
for a networking experience that's actually fun!**

Instead of milling about a large room and handing out business cards, attendees will participate in guided activities designed to encourage authentic connection. The goal isn't to pitch yourself, sell a book, or hand out as many business cards as possible. It's to meet new friends and share a few laughs with other writers.

Activities include deep conversation tables, a pitch storm group activity, and matching games.

What are Connection Stickers?

Connection stickers will be placed on the tables at Writers Connect and will say one of four things: Conference Buddy, Critique Partner, Accountability Advocate, or Collaboration Seeker.

Participants will select one of these four stickers and wear it like a name tag to communicate what types of opportunities they're open to so that other participants may feel comfortable starting up a conversation.

Connection Stickers Descriptions



Conference Buddy
Looking to meet new people and share the conference experience together.



Critique Partner
Interested in exchanging feedback on each other's writing.



Accountability Advocate
Motivated to help and be helped in reaching writing goals.

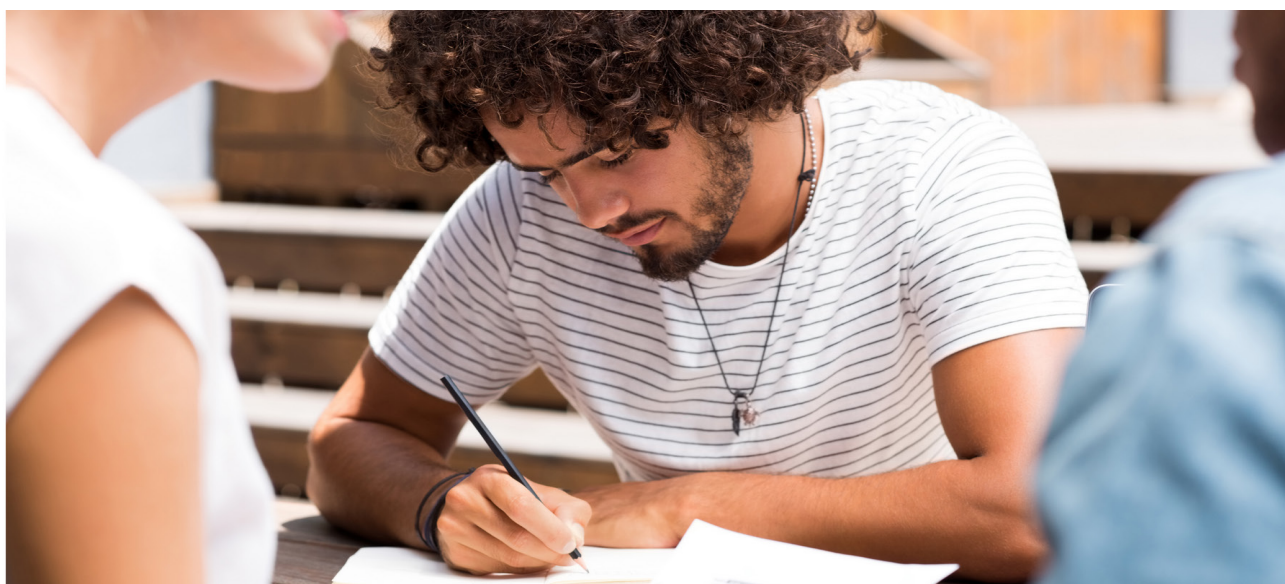


Collaboration Seeker
Excited to find others for creative projects or partnerships.

Schedule: **Friday** October 17

Time	Track	Event	Location
11:00 AM - 5:00 PM		Check-in: Pick Up Your Badge	Board Foyer
12:45 PM - 1:45 PM		Sessions	
	CRFT	Thomas Smith: Start Small and Save That Novel for Later	Dogwood
	PUBL	C.I. Jerez: Creating a Synopsis that Shines	Conrad
	MKTG	Valerie Willis: How Genre Impacts You and Your Plot	Waldorf
1:45 PM - 2:00 PM		Networking Break	
2:00 PM - 5:00 PM		Ginnye Cubel: Writers Connect (Thoughtful Networking) DON'T MISS THIS ONE-OF-A-KIND OPPORTUNITY!	Crystal C - E
5:00 PM - 5:30 PM		Networking Break	
5:30 PM - 7:30 PM		Mixer & Buffet Dinner	Royal Palm Ballroom

Your badge is required for admission to sessions, meals, mixers, and the banquet. Schedules and room assignments are subject to change without notice. For presenter bios and session descriptions go to floridawriters.org/faculty-workshops.



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Kenzie Allen	Lydi Conklin
Kristen Arnett	Samuel R. Delany
Samiya Bashir	Kate Folk
Amaranth Borsuk	Sarah Gerard
Edgar Heap of Birds	Yuri Herrera
Gabrielle Civil	Edwin Torres

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**Tag us on social media
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**Send your photos to
contactus@floridawriters.org**

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Schedule: **Saturday AM** October 18

Time	Track	Event	Location
7:30 AM - 11:30 PM		Check-in: Pick Up Your Badge	Board Foyer
7:30 AM - 9:00 AM		Breakfast	Crystal Ballroom
		Mary Ann de Stefano: Welcome Address Ginnye Cubel: Your FWA Member Benefits	
9:00 AM - 9:15 AM		Networking Break	
9:15 AM - 10:15 AM		Sessions	
	PUBL	C.I. Jerez: The Power of the Premise: A Hook that Works	Capital Ballroom
	CRFT	JM Paquette: 10 Steps to Save Your Editor's Sanity	Crystal A - B
	CRFT	Sylvia Whitman: Journaling to Heal, Grow, and Create	Crystal C
	CRFT	Jamie Poissant: Flash Fiction: Writing Short!	Crystal D
	MKTG	Olivia Zugay: Mastering Book Marketing: Funnels & Promo	Crystal E
10:15 AM - 10:30 AM		Networking Break	
10:30 AM - 11:30 AM		Sessions	
	LEGL	Ava Doppelt: Protect Your Rights	Capital Ballroom
	MKTG	Valerie Willis: Book Design: All the Front & Back Matters	Crystal A - B
	CRFT	Vic DiGenti: Moods, Motifs, and MacGuffins	Crystal C
	MKTG	Heidi McIntyre: Crafting an Authentic Brand and Platform	Crystal D
	PUBL	Thomas Smith: How NOT to be Published	Crystal E
11:30 AM - 12:00 PM		Networking Break	

Your badge is required for admission to sessions, meals, mixers, and the banquet. Schedules and room assignments are subject to change without notice. For presenter bios and session descriptions go to floridawriters.org/faculty-workshops.

“Collaborative workshops and writers’ peer groups hadn’t been invented when I was young. They’re a wonderful invention. They put the writer into a community of people all working at the same art, the kind of group musicians and painters and dancers have always had.”

URSULA K. LE GUIN
Steering the Craft: Exercises and Discussions on Story

Schedule: **Saturday PM** October 18

Time	Track	Event	Location
11:30 AM - 1:30 PM		Check-in Desk is Closed	
1:30 PM - 6:00 PM		Check-in: Pick Up Your Badge for RPLA Mixer & Banquet	Board Foyer
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM		Lunch & Kristen Arnett Keynote Address, Q&A	Crystal Ballroom
1:30 PM - 1:45 PM		Networking Break	
1:45 PM - 2:30 PM		Kristen Arnett Book Signing	Crystal Foyer
2:30 PM - 2:45 PM		Networking Break	
2:45 PM - 3:45 PM		Sessions	
	LEGL	Ava Doppelt: Stay Out of Legal Trouble	Capital Ballroom
	CRFT	Vic DiGenti: What Writers Can Learn from Pixar	Crystal C
	CRFT	Jamie Poissant: Inhabiting Your Character Through Their Eyes	Crystal D
	PUBL	Olivia Zugay: Which Publication Pathway is Right for You?	Crystal E
3:45 PM - 4:00 PM		Networking Break	
4:00 PM - 5:00 PM		Sessions	
	MKTG	Valerie Willis: How Do I Land on the Bookshelf?	Capital Ballroom
	CRFT	JM Paquette: Worldbuilding 101: An Organized Approach	Crystal A - B
	PUBL	Sylvia Whitman: Behind the Editor's Desk at a Literary Magazine.	Crystal C
	MKTG	Heidi McIntyre: How to Find and Hook Your Readers	Crystal D
5:00 PM - 5:30 PM		Networking Break	
5:30 PM - 6:45 PM		RPLA Mixer with Hors D'oeuvres & Champagne Pour	Royal Palm Ballroom
7:00 PM - 10:00 PM		Royal Palm Literary Awards Banquet & Awards Ceremony	Crystal Ballroom

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Don't Miss Our Hands-On AI Workshop

Sunday AM October 19

Curious about AI and writing? This is not a lecture—it's a hands-on, interactive workshop where you'll explore AI as a creative assistant, not a replacement for your voice.

Led by Noel Zamot, this session is designed for writers ready to experiment, learn, and discover practical ways to use AI in their process. Bring your laptop, your curiosity, and your creativity—then dive in!

What You'll Experience

- **Try AI yourself:** Interactive demonstrations show you how to work with AI in real time.
- **Boost your creativity:** Generate ideas, refine drafts, and brainstorm with a tech-savvy twist.
- **Ethical guidance:** Learn how to use AI responsibly while keeping your unique voice.
- **Expert tips & examples:** Noel Zamot shares real-world strategies tailored for writers.

Why This Workshop is Different

- **Hands-on, not slides-only:** Roll up your sleeves and explore AI tools directly.
- **Unique in the writing world:** Few conferences give writers this type of hands-on access to AI.
- **Practical and empowering:** Walk away with tools and confidence to use AI on your own projects.

Who Should Attend

- Writers curious about integrating AI into their workflow.
- Authors wanting **ethical, practical strategies** for collaboration with AI.
- Anyone ready for **experimentation and creativity in action**, not just a talk.

By the end of the morning, you'll have:

- A fresh perspective on how AI can support your writing.
- New techniques you can immediately apply to your projects.
- The confidence to use AI as a partner in your creative process.

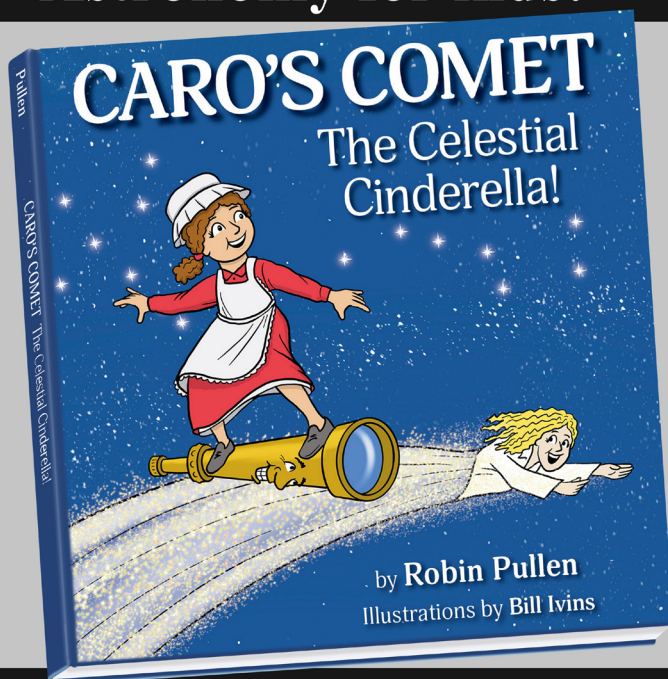
Don't just watch—do. Learn by experimenting. This is your chance to bring AI into your writing journey in a hands-on, fun, and practical way.

Schedule: **Sunday AM** October 19

Time	Track	Event	Location
7:30 AM - 9:00 AM		Breakfast	Crystal Ballroom
9:00 AM - 9:15 AM		Networking Break	
9:15 AM-11:30 AM	AI	DON'T MISS! Noel Zamot: Pen, Paper, and Processor: A Hands-On Workshop for Ethical Use of AI for Storytelling. Learn to use technology as a tool and assistant, not a replacement for writing. Bring your laptop!	Crystal Ballroom
11:30 AM - 12:00 PM		Paul Iasevoli, Collection 2026 Announcement; Farewell Address	Crystal Ballroom

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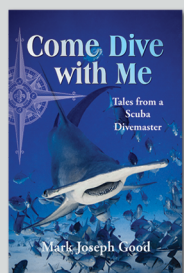
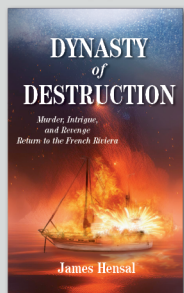
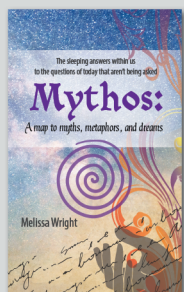


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