

2017 Royal Palm Literary Award Winners



PUBLISHED BOOK OF THE YEAR

Hard Core Love

Autobiography OR Memoir. Jim Pons

A story of spiritual evolution in the world of fame, Jim's book winds its way from the Sunset Strip to the NFL and finally a long-sought peace with God.

Jim Pons. Bass player for '60s rock groups The Leaves, The Turtles, Frank Zappa's Mothers of Invention. Film Director New York Jets Football Club. Seeker of God.

Runners-Up:

- 1st Runner-Up. **Baseball's Greatest.** General Catch-All. Jack L. Hayes
- 2nd Runner-Up. **Beach Kill.** Mystery OR Crime. Phyllis Smallman
- 3rd Runner-Up. **Trust My Heart.** Romance. Carol J. Post
- 4th Runner-Up. **Old Florida.** Travel. Doug Alderson

UNPUBLISHED BOOK OF THE YEAR

On a Winter Shore

Historical Fiction. Karen Dillon

When a samurai and his ninja partner set off to find a missing man, they discover a shocking murder, festering injustice, and the high price demanded by honor.

Karen Dillon is a lifelong cultivator of mystery plots, fine prose, and roses. She lives in the heart of Horse Country, Ocala, Florida.

Runners-Up:

- 1st Runner-Up. **Mischief Makers.** Women's Fiction. Kimberlee Esselstrom
- 2nd Runner-Up. **Stolen.** Autobiography OR Memoir. Caroline Tillotson
- 3rd Runner-Up. **On a Winter Shore.** Mystery OR Crime. Karen Dillon
- 4th Runner-Up. **Vivian Wexler, Galactic Detective.** Science Fiction. Patricia Crumpler

Best Children's Book

This is Not the Abby Show

Middle-Grade Fiction. Debbie Reed Fischer

Despite her many ADHD-fueled mistakes, irrepressible Abby uses comedy to navigate summer school, new friendships, her quirky family, and a derailed dream. Eventually, her weaknesses become her greatest assets.

Debbie Reed Fischer is the author of young adult and middle-grade novels, and has been praised by Kirkus Reviews for "balancing weighty issues with a sharp wit."

BOOK-LENGTH FICTION

Unpublished Blended Genre

- 1st Place. **A Promise to Lena**. J.J. White. In 1945, Sgt. Frank Daley promised a girl safe passage from the Soviet sector in Berlin. Three years later in Brooklyn, he'll risk everything to keep that promise.
J. J. White has written four novels and has had stories published in *The Sherlock Holmes Mystery Magazine* and the Saturday Evening Post 2016 anthology. He lives in Merritt Island.

Published Fantasy

- 1st Place. **Flight of the Golden Harpy, Waylaid**. Susan Klaus. The harpies, a humanoid, winged species, live in peace on their jungle planet, but evil forces conspire against them, and Shail, their golden ruler, again faces the challenge to save his flock.
Susan Klaus, an Amazon bestseller, is the author of award-winning thrillers and fantasy. She is founder and president of Sarasota Authors Connection (250 members) and lives in Myakka City, Florida, raising rodeo bulls.

Published Historical Fiction

- 1st Place. **Nicaea**. William Speir. A novel about the political intrigue surrounding the Council of Nicaea 325 AD, which created the blueprint for the Christian churches as a tool of statecraft for the Emperor.
Award-winning author **William Speir** was born in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1962, attended the University of Alabama, and graduated from the University of Alabama at Birmingham in 1984.

- 2nd Place. **Arthur, King.** William Speir. *Arthur, King* is about the man behind the legends who leads a kingdom besieged by enemies and filled with ambitious warlords plotting to become the next High King of Britain.
- 3rd Place. **Murder in Pharaoh's Palace.** William G. Collins. Following an emergency call to Pharaoh's palace, Shep, the physician, finds himself on a dangerous adventure. His cat accompanies him in this tale of the glorious days of Ancient Egypt.

Unpublished Historical Fiction

- 1st Place. **On a Winter Shore.** Karen Dillon. When a samurai and his ninja partner set off to find a missing man, they discover a shocking murder, festering injustice, and the high price demanded by honor.
Karen Dillon is a lifelong cultivator of mystery plots, fine prose, and roses. She lives in the heart of Horse Country, Ocala, Florida.
- 2nd Place. **Another Survivor in Algiers.** Yusuf DeLorenzo. When a successful young Italian tourist guide is swept to sea, he confronts his origins, beliefs, and character while struggling to ensure his own and his companions' survival.
- 3rd Place. **The Picolata Road.** James R. Glover. A former Texas Ranger hunts a ruthless killer in the chaos and treachery of Florida during the Civil War.

Unpublished Mainstream OR Literary

- 1st Place. **Parade of Horribles.** Rhett DeVane. Life can become a parade of horrors—the kind you imagine or the kind you never see coming.
Rhett DeVane is the published author of adult and middle-grade fiction. She lives in Tallahassee, Florida, where she splits her time between her dental hygiene practice and writing.
- 2nd Place. **Runaway in the Rearview Mirror.** Renée Anduze. A pregnant woman on the run from her husband or the law rebuilds her life while living with a stray dog in a rundown Chevy van.

Published Mystery

- 1st Place. **Beach Kill.** Phyllis Smallman. With a twisting plot and a touch of romantic sensuality, this story captures the essence of small town life where no sin can be hidden for long. The discovery of the ravished body of a teenage girl sets in motion a tragic series of events. Secrets and desires are revealed. The second book in the Singer Brown series, *Beach Kill* is set on a remote island in the Pacific Northwest.
Phyllis Smallman's first novel, *Margarita Nights*, won the inaugural Unchanged Arthur award from the Crime Writers of Canada. Her writing has appeared in both *Spinetingler Magazine* and *Omni Mystery Magazine*. Her Sherri Travis mystery series was chosen by *Good Morning*

America for a summer read in 2010. The Singer Brown series won the gold medal from Independent Publishers. Before turning to a life of crime, Smallman was a potter. Visit her at www.phyllissmallman.com.

- 2nd Place. **Shadow of Death.** Anne Nichols Reynolds. An identical twin is murdered. The surviving twin moves to North Carolina to check on the investigation and finds her own life is in peril.
- 3rd Place. **Further Investigation.** Marie Brack. A sheriff's deputy follows the trail of a murderer through small town gossip, secrets, and jealousy.

Unpublished Mystery

- 1st Place. **On a Winter Shore.** Karen Dillon. When a samurai detective and his ninja partner go searching for a missing man, they discover a shocking murder, festering injustice, and the high price demanded by honor.
Karen Dillon is a lifelong cultivator of mystery plots, fine prose, and roses. She lives in the heart of Horse Country, Ocala, Florida.

Published Novella

- 1st Place. **Colby in the Crosshairs.** John Hope. After Colby's estranged father returns home, the nine-year-old struggles to survive a promiscuous neighborhood mother, money sharks, and an uncontrollable brother while discovering the true cost of living and brotherhood.
John Hope is an award-winning short story, children's book, middle grade, young adult, and nonfiction writer. His work appears in paperback, hardback, audiobook, and multiple short story collections.
- 2nd Place. **Stalking Tennessee Williams.** Elizabeth Randall. A tropical hunt to solve a literary puzzle.
- 3rd Place. **A Country Heart.** Robin Thomas. A country girl and a city boy fight their natural attraction, nearly sabotaging their chance for happiness, hiding the secrets of their pasts while trying to avoid repeating their mistakes.

Unpublished Novella

- 1st Place. **The Relic: Jerusalem to St. Augustine.** Betsy S. Lee. *The Relic: Jerusalem to St. Augustine* is an inspirational historical fiction. Two modern-day Jewish unbelievers find God while searching for a famous relic and gold in the year 1702.
Betsy S. Lee received the Royal Palm Literary Award (First Place) for her children's book, *Off the Track*. She has participated in book festivals. Her other books can be found at betsyslee.com.

Published Romance

- 1st Place. **Trust My Heart.** Carol J. Post. A jaded big-city lawyer ... a quirky small-town reporter ... and a zany old matchmaker who won't give up.
Carol J. Post writes fast-paced romantic suspense and enjoys sailing, hiking, and camping. Since her kids flew the nest, she spends her spare time spoiling her fat black cat and long-haired dachshund.
- 2nd Place. **Healing a Hero.** Skye Taylor. New at Camp LeJeune, Elena Castillo's first patient is the man she loved and lost fourteen years ago. He's also the most challenging patient she's ever had.

Unpublished Romance

- 1st Place. **Strong Will.** Patricia Crumpler. When shy, unassuming Emma meets virile, confident Strong Manning, worlds collide and love blossoms, but misunderstandings and events tear them apart until Strong conquers Fate and reunites with his lover.
Patricia Crumpler is a retired high school librarian and art teacher. She enjoys travel, painting, drawing, and writing.

Published Science Fiction

- 1st Place. **The Olympium of Bacchus 12.** William Speir. Spread across 8 star systems, the 22 planets of the UEPC thrived and were at peace for more than 200 years ... until "they" came. Only Bacchus 12 survives the destruction.
Award-winning author **William Speir** was born in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1962, attended the University of Alabama, and graduated from the University of Alabama at Birmingham in 1984.

Unpublished Science Fiction

- 1st Place. **Vivian Wexler, Galactic Detective.** Patricia Crumpler. The Galaxy is on notice because Vivian Wexler has been promoted from Earth detective to Galactic Agent, and she's on the prowl for wrongdoers of any species.
Patricia Crumpler is a retired art teacher and high school librarian who likes to paint, draw, sew, and write stories.

Published Thriller OR Suspense

- 1st Place. **Echoes of Terror.** Maris Soule. A teenager is missing in Skagway, Alaska, and Officer Katherine Ward is assigned the case, never expecting it to parallel her own kidnapping experience seventeen years before.
Published in both romance and mystery, **Maris Soule** grew up in California, moved to

Michigan with her husband, and now spends the winters in Florida. Besides writing, she's taught art.

- 2nd Place. **Zero Day: China's Cyber Wars.** T.L. Williams. There is a Cyber War underway, every minute of every day. China is launching a Zero Day attack aimed at destroying the U.S. economy. Will we survive the day?

Unpublished Thriller OR Suspense

- 1st Place. **Silent Survivor.** Deborah Shlian. While investigating the cause of her mother's rare neurological disease, an Army nurse with her own secrets risks her life to uncover a covert government experiment aimed at developing a 21st century biologic weapon. **Deborah Shlian** is a physician and published author of medical mystery thrillers and nonfiction medically related articles and books.
- 2nd Place. **Nailing Coloradas.** Arthur Frederick. Biker Toenails Glidewell couldn't find his calling after the Gulf War, but that changed when members of the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee asked him to assassinate terrorists.
- 3rd Place. **Sacrifice of the Innocents.** Kenneth R. Overman. An American professor targeted by a Spanish human trafficking organization that uses victims for its Saharan phosphate mine becomes involved in overthrowing the organization.

Unpublished Women's Fiction

- 1st Place. **Mischief Makers.** Kimberlee Esselstrom. Tom and Ruth long for an empty nest but their chicks have flown back home. They enlist their friends, the Mischief Makers, to cook up a feather-brained scheme. **Kimberlee Esselstrom's** eclectic works have been published in the *Christian Science Monitor*, *Highlights*, *Knowonder! Mom Writers Literary Magazine*, KU Center for Testing & Evaluation, FWA Collection, and many others.
- 2nd Place. **New Moon Rising.** Patricia Averbach. No one knows that the conservative, middle-aged librarian grew up on a hippy commune outside of Santa Fe until a series of disasters sends her careening toward her past.
- 3rd Place. **Runaway in the Rearview Mirror.** Renée Anduze. A pregnant woman on the run from her husband or the law rebuilds her life while living with a stray dog in a rundown Chevy van.

BOOK-LENGTH NONFICTION

Published Autobiography OR Memoir

- 1st Place. **Hard Core Love.** Jim Pons. A story of spiritual evolution in the world of fame, Jim's book winds its way from the Sunset Strip to the NFL and finally a long-sought peace with God.
Jim Pons. Bass player for '60s rock groups The Leaves, The Turtles, Frank Zappa's Mothers of Invention. Film Director New York Jets Football Club and seeker of God.
- 2nd Place. **Possum Cops, Poachers and the Counterfeit Game Warden.** Susan Lindsley. Illegal hunters drove Susan to chase poachers while she pursued her goal of becoming an expert hunter and influencing the politics of wildlife management and hunting laws.
- 3rd Place. **Misadventures of a Happy Heart.** Amy F. Quincy. A memoir about life after a disabling stroke. Amy challenges how we see ourselves and others—disabled or not—to show us that we're not so different after all.

Unpublished Autobiography OR Memoir

- 1st Place. **Stolen.** Caroline Tillotson. The true story of a mother's struggle to save her daughter from an abusive family and corrupt police department.
Caroline Tillotson lives in Tallahassee, Florida, with her family and devoted canines. *Stolen* is her first manuscript.

Published Biography

- 1st Place. **Catharine's Horses.** Walter Joseph Schenck. This is a poignant tale about a former rodeo champion's memories of her childhood love for horses that she carried with her throughout her life.
Walter Joseph Schenck has received quite a few critical acclaims, achieving Recommended Read List twice in Kirkus Reviews. He also achieved Featured Writer in *Publisher's Weekly*, plus three awards from FAPA

Published Educational OR Informational

- 1st Place. **Unsafe on any Campus?** Samuel Staley. This unsparing look at the complex problem of campus sexual assault shows why our children are at risk, why conventional approaches won't work, and what parents and administrators can do about it.
Samuel R. Staley, Ph.D., is on the fulltime faculty of Florida State University and has a black belt in the self-defense martial art of To-Shin Do ninjutsu.

- 2nd Place. **Embezzlement: The Ultimate Betrayal.** Jack L. Hayes. Embezzlement can destroy entire organizations. Approximately ninety percent of embezzlement cases are avoidable or detectable when management follows the seven proactive steps defined within this book.
- 3rd Place. **Beauty for Ashes: Mourning to Morning.** Dr. Ruth L. Baskerville. Though devastated after losing my husband of 45 years, I moved past pain and discovered a joyous “new normal” four years later. My life is humorous and full again.

Published History

- 1st Place. **Murder in St. Augustine.** Elizabeth Randall. An interesting, fact-based historical perspective of a notorious unsolved murder mystery in Florida's oldest city: St. Augustine. **Elizabeth Randall** is a widely published freelance writer and the author of four books. She works as an English teacher in Seminole County, Florida.

Published Travel

- 1st Place. **A New Guide to Old Florida Attractions: From Mermaids to Singing Towers.** Doug Alderson. Many of Florida’s classic attractions still exist – and even thrive – in the shadow of mega-theme parks and interstate highways. *A New Guide to Old Florida Attractions* takes you to these places and more on an unforgettable journey across the Sunshine State. **Doug Alderson** is the author of thirteen published books. He has won three first place Royal Palm Literary awards for travel books and several other state and national writing and photography awards.

FICTION FOR YOUTH

Published Picture Book

- 1st Place. **Big-Hearted Charlie Runs The Mile.** Krista Keating-Joseph. Based on true story. A small boy joins a track team, overcomes his size by hard work, becomes a champion in running and, later in life, a Navy SEAL. **Krista Keating-Joseph** is a Gold Star Mom and track and field coach. The story is about her son, Charles Keating IV, who was a competitive runner in college, then a heroic Navy SEAL.
- 2nd Place. **Christmas in the Kingdom of Kool.** Joan J. Harris. Princess Betty Lou Sue helps the Royal Dragon, Billy Bob, learn about the true meaning of Christmas in his first holiday in the Kingdom of Kool.
- 3rd Place. **Too Many Things!** Tracy Bryan. Jamie's parents love to shop, but he thinks they have too many things. Can Jamie show his parents that they have more than they need?

Unpublished Picture Book

- 1st Place. **Old Frankenstein.** Patricia Crumpler. All children know that in their household there is a Frankenstein lurking, just waiting to do naughty things that the innocent kids get blamed for.
Patricia Crumpler is a happily retired school librarian. She likes to travel, paint, and write.
- 2nd Place. **If We Got to Choose.** Patricia Crumpler. Some kids think it would be great to choose what they eat but maybe it's not such a good idea after all.
- 3rd Place. **The Royal Dragon and the New Kid.** Joan J. Harris. Billy Bob, the royal dragon, tries to help a new student who speaks only a little English become a part of the class.

Published Middle-Grade Fiction

- 1st Place. **This is Not the Abby Show.** Debbie Reed Fischer. Despite her many ADHD-fueled mistakes, irrepressible Abby uses comedy to navigate summer school, new friendships, her quirky family, and a derailed dream. Eventually, her weaknesses become her greatest assets.
Debbie Reed Fischer is the author of young adult and middle-grade novels, and has been praised by Kirkus Reviews for “balancing weighty issues with a sharp wit.”
- 2nd Place. **The Case of the Disastrous Dragon.** Mark H. Newhouse. In this comical sequel to the award-winning mystery, *Welcome to Monstrovica*, Brodie and his lawyer uncle Jasper Doofinch must find a way to defend a fire-breathing dragon or face disaster.
- 3rd Place. **Pankyland 2: The Movie.** John Hope. Panky and younger brother Craig star in Pankyland the Movie. But fate turns sour when a jealous parent kidnaps the brothers after her kid doesn't get the envied role.

Unpublished Middle-Grade Fiction

- 1st Place. **Buddy and the Big Stinking Box of Revenge.** Ann Meier. A kid detective, hoping to gain early entry into the police teen academy, faces off with a rat-killing revenge-seeker in a theme park based on horror films and disasters.
Ann Meier writes adult and middle-grade mysteries set in fictional Orlando theme parks. She was a manager on Universal's opening team, and she's received five RPLA awards.
- 2nd Place. **The Lure of the Grove.** Sharon Keller Johnson. Three teens, drawn into an alternate dimension, battle a ruthless enemy and their own pasts. They must harness their strengths to save the Grove, each other ... and, maybe, return home.
- 3rd Place. **And Then There Were Three.** Annette Masters. After Dad's death, Maudie's young heart needs to heal, but her recovery is challenged by Mom's workaholic behavior, a crush on her bully's brother, and the stress of equestrian competitions.

Published Young Adult OR New Adult

- 1st Place. **This is Not the Abby Show**. Debbie Reed Fischer. Despite her many ADHD-fueled mistakes, irrepressible Abby uses comedy to navigate summer school, new friendships, her quirky family, and a derailed dream. Eventually, her weaknesses become her greatest assets.
Debbie Reed Fischer is the author of novels for teens and tweens. She has been praised by Kirkus Reviews for “balancing weighty issues with a sharp wit.”
- 2nd Place. **The Mendel Experiment**. Susan Kite. Corree and other created mutants fight against the human government that wants them to exploit Mendel's resources and also uncover a plot to destroy an alien race.

Unpublished Young Adult OR New Adult

- 1st Place. **The Reluctant Wiccan**. Pamela Wendell. Coming-of-age novel of a seventeen-year-old girl with phobias who, unknowingly, becomes involved with a wiccan coven in New Hampshire. Danger and love evolve. Book 1, Trilogy.
Pamela Wendell is an experienced businesswoman who craves and enjoys writing and art. Second book written along with a short story and magazine article. Currently living in Port St. Lucie, Florida.

GENERAL CATCH-ALL

Published General Catch-All

- 1st Place. **Baseball's Greatest**. Jack L. Hayes. This book contains many history-making nuggets about things that took place on and off Major League Baseball fields. They all have one thing in common—they're true!
Jack L. Hayes is a multiple award-winning author, producer of 180 minutes of award-winning training videos, columnist for two trade magazines, and publisher of a subscription newsletter for 22 years.
- 2nd Place. **The Wabele**. Christopher Malinger. Twin boys unknowingly unleash evil into a community while playing with a ritual mask of the Poro Society of West Africa. The spirit assumes the persona of a clown.

SHORT FICTION

Unpublished Flash Fiction OR Short Short Fiction

- 1st Place. **What's Wrong with Mike?** Joan North. Mike's young mind is easily confused and overwhelmed as his imagination runs wild.
Joan North lived on ashrams in California and Massachusetts and a Zen center in Hawaii for eighteen years. She currently lives in St. Augustine, Florida.
- 2nd Place. **The Leg.** John Hope. Newly crippled, I didn't want to scare my six-year-old. He hasn't seen me since I deployed to Afghanistan. But when we meet at the airport, he has a surprise for me.
- 3rd Place. **The Rafters.** Amarilys Ressler. They leave Cuba on a raft. Four adults and one child. Will they live to see freedom?

Published Short Story

- 1st Place. **The Bathroom Door.** Chris Hamilton. A woman and a man struggle with their doubts and demons as they wait for each other on opposite sides of a bathroom door.
Chris Hamilton has been a member of FWA for a long time. He lives in Tampa and doesn't write as much as he probably should.
- 2nd Place. **Return To Earth: Someday Loyal.** Elle Andrews Patt. When the military arrives during an alien invasion, unassuming Alice discovers her grandmama and neighbor Mrs. Suniol have a shared past she never could have imagined.
- 3rd Place. **Free the Elephant.** John Hope. Seven-year-old Abby pines for Daddy to tell her stories, which he keeps bottled while working a job he hates.

Unpublished Short Story

- 1st Place. **Without Witness.** Kim Hackett. A woman doubts her husband's loyalty when they have unexpected visitors in the middle of the night.
Kim Hackett's short stories have been published in *Chicken Soup for the Soul* and the Florida Writers Association anthologies. Her first novel won first place in the 2015 RPLA for suspense.
- 2nd Place. **Forced into Freedom.** Paul Iasevoli. In 1861 Florida, Seminoles kidnap a thirteen-year-old slave and lead him on a journey to freedom and manhood.
- 3rd Place. **Fly Away.** Kitty Lascurain. The pregnant and battered wife of a violent alcoholic must make a difficult choice to save herself and her child from the sick and damaged man she still loves.

Published Poetry

- 1st Place. **A Meno-Pause for Reflection.** Marie Brack. Once there was a Camelot.
Marie Brack enjoys creating short fiction. Although Ms. Brack lives primarily in cyberspace, she also has a physical home in Florida. She is a member of two writers groups.

Unpublished Poetry

- 1st Place. **I Remember.** Virginia Nygard. A reflection on the hidden lessons taught by an exceptional teacher.
Virginia Nygard is a member of NLAPW and Academy of American Poets, FWA Group Leader, Regional Director, and RPLA recipient. She has published novels, novellas, short stories, and poetry. Contact: nygardv@comcast.net.
- 2nd Place. **Interpreting the Sacred and the Profane.** Linda Kraus. An appreciation of a family member, a famous church scholar, who devoted his life to decoding secular carvings in cathedrals.
- 3rd Place. **Suburban Interlude.** Karen Dillon. Suburban isolation captured in a tragic event.

SHORT NONFICTION

Published Creative Nonfiction

- 1st Place. **Polepole.** Rachel Elizabeth Printy. A young girl takes on Mount Kilimanjaro and comes face to face with the most terrifying obstacle she's ever known: herself.
Rachel Printy lives in NYC where she spends her free time reading, writing, salsa dancing, and drinking entirely too much coffee.
- 2nd Place. **Learning to Kick.** Arielle Haughee. After sacrificing my beloved teaching career to stay at home, I struggle to find a new identity as a mother.