



Okanagan Valley *Writers'* Festival

CONFERENCE 2016

Connect *with* agents, publishers, writers & editors

Prepare to be *inspired!*

April 8, 9 & 10, 2016, in beautiful Penticton, BC

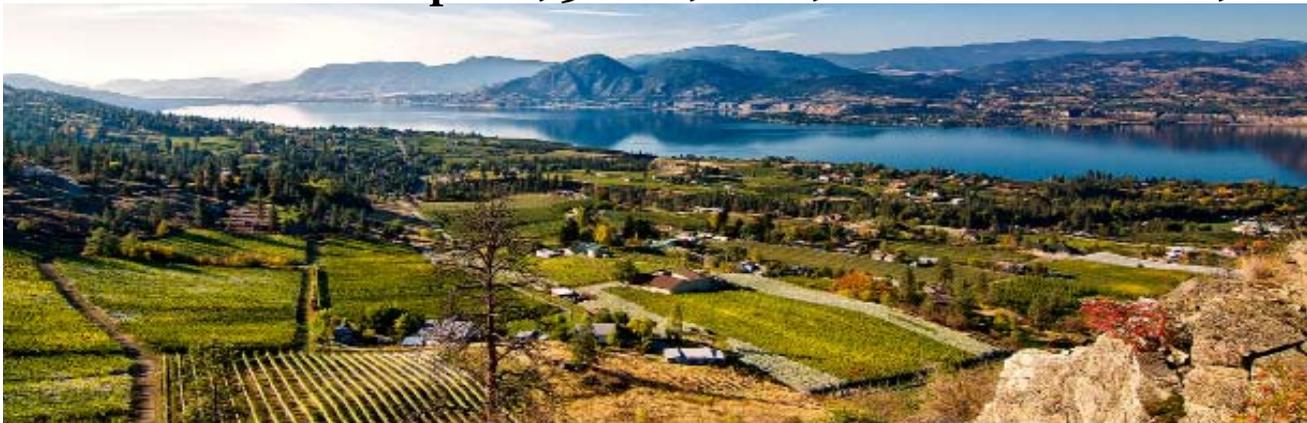


photo courtesy Doug McLaughlan

Friday

6:00 Registration opens; book sales; meet & greet with presenters

7:00 **Off the Page, On the Stage.** *Grant Lawrence*, CBC personality and author of two award-winning books, plays host to our Friday evening variety show. Special guests include *Adam Lewis Schroeder* (always highly entertaining); best-selling author *Jonas Saul*, whose latest action thriller is set in Kelowna; and *Gerry William* reading from his recently re-released sci-fi adventure.

Some of our conference presenters are joining us, too: poet *Daniela Elza* shares from her work, screenplay instructor *Kat Montagu* presents a short film from last year's Crazy8s, and musician/songwriter *Will Schlackl* performs a few songs from his repertoire. Full program at the door.

Bring your name badge—it's your ticket to get in!



Saturday

8:00 Registration continues; book sales open.

8:30 **Breakfast with speaker Grant Lawrence: REJECTION, REFLECTION, REWARD—A KEYNOTE ON WRITING SUCCESSFULLY** Grant Lawrence is an award-winning author and popular CBC personality, but was once the poster boy for rejection. His first book—eventually a national bestseller—was unceremoniously turned down flat by what could be a record number of publishers. In this inspiring keynote address, Grant tells the story of the type of perseverance, positivity, and ingenuity needed to become a successful writer in 2016 and beyond.



9:20 Break

9:30 **Concurrent Sessions A: ON WRITING.** Choose from:



A1 SCREENPLAYS with Kat Montagu

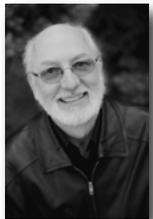
Kat gets to work on scripts at all stages from rough outlines to polished drafts to shooting scripts. In this seminar, we will talk about planning, structure, conflict, themes and character development, with reference to the typical script development process



A2 POETRY: WHAT'S IN AN IMAGE

with Daniela Elza In this workshop we will work with images and objects. We will explore their significance in our writing and how they could help us in addressing bigger questions.

Bring an object with a story, your curiosity, your questions and your passion.



A3 FANTASY with Brian Hades

What is fantasy? Chuck Wendig says it may involve dragons, magic and faux Medieval frippery, probably avoids science, may be scary. It's "a fuzzy, muzzy, gauzy, hazy fog-clogged hollow, this genre." Brian agrees; still, he's happy to share a publisher's perspective on writing fantasy.



A4 CHARACTERS with Denise Jaden

Why do some characters leap off the page and resonate with us, while others blend into character "types" we've read a million times before? Denise will discuss and share exercises to help you create fully-realized characters

you (and your readers) won't soon forget.

10:45 Break

11:00 Concurrent Sessions B: WRITING & RESEARCH. Choose from:



B1 SPARK UP YOUR STORY: ADDING TENSION, SUSPENSE & INTRIGUE with *Jodie Renner* Editor and award-winning writing craft author Jodie Renner presents a checklist of essential elements and effective techniques

for ratcheting up the “wow” factor of any novel or short story. Includes a two-page handout.



B3 HISTORICAL FICTION with *Roberta Rich* “This is how people ate, slept, made love, cooked their meals, heated their houses, sewed their clothes, worshiped their divinities...” The mission of the historical novelist is to recreate this world by creating vital characters who will make the past come alive.



B2 POETRY SALON with *Daniela Elza* Where do I begin? The first line of the poem is missing. In its wake—the sense of sudden water, the stillness of an egret... What is poetry? Where does it come from? What is poetic attention? How do we cultivate and sustain the poetic consciousness? Bring your questions to this celebration.



B4 OUTLINE IN A WEEK with *Denise Jaden* In this comprehensive workshop, Denise talks about the main elements of story—character, setting, motivation, and obstacles—and helps you organize your best ideas into a cohesive outline. Start with a little planning, and be ready to write your first draft quickly!

12:15 Lunch with speaker *Roberta Rich*: **UNLEASHING THE MUSE** Creativity is not a finite talent that one must be born with. It can be encouraged, developed and taught. Roberta shares how writers can take advantage of new discoveries in the field of neuroscience to increase our creativity, with practical ways to improve our brain’s ability to come up with new ideas, and to organize the information into a useful format.



1:15 Break

1:30 Concurrent Sessions C: MORE WRITING & RESEARCH. Choose from:



C1 25 TIPS FOR WRITING A WINNING SHORT STORY with *Jodie Renner* Jodie discusses 9 reasons to hone your skills at writing short stories, then offers 25 tips for writing a captivating short story worthy of anthologies and contests. Bring your story ideas or first pages for possible discussion.



C2 SONG LYRICS with *Will Schlackl* Using examples of contrasting styles from his own work and songs by other artists, Will discusses what makes a good song, shares a few strategies he uses, and leads the group in creating a song from scratch. Then, you’ll practice using those strategies to create your own.



C3 WRITING FOR YOUNG READERS with *Lorna Schultz Nicholson* How old should my characters be? Can I add colourful language? Can my characters kiss and tell? These are all questions that arise when writing for young readers. Join Lorna and learn where to the draw the line or jump.



C4 MAGAZINES & NEWSPAPERS with *Laurie Carter* With the print market more competitive than ever, freelancers have to stand out. Learn how to source likely magazines and newspapers, grab the attention of editors, and provide content that keeps those editors coming back for more.

2:45 Break

3:00 **Panel Discussion: SLUSHPILE CHALLENGE** with moderator *Kat Montagu* and panelists *Brian Hades, Cheryl Kaye Tardif and Robert Mackwood*. Imagine, if you will, the busy agents and acquisitions editors, tackling today's pile of unopened submissions.

What hooks them in? What turns them off? Find out in real time.

Our panelists, people in the business, listen as anonymous submissions from our slushpile are read aloud—but only until they've heard enough. Then they'll tell us where this writer grabbed their interest or lost it, and why. Learn what works and what to avoid.

Want to submit yours? Add your query letter or the first page of your ms, without your name, to the slushpile on the info-table, upstairs in the hall. Or, just come and absorb...



4:45 **Book Sales & Signing.** This is a great time to visit the bookstore and pick out a few new favourites for gifts, or for your own reading pleasure. Bring them to the Green Room (just down the hall) to have the author sign your copy. This event is open to the public, so if you have friends and family in town, feel free to invite them, too.

5:30 **SUPPER WITH SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER GERRY WILLIAM.**

Gerry is from Enderby's Splat'sin Reserve. His published work includes two novels—*The Black Ship*, incorporating First Nations storytelling with science fiction, and *The Woman in the Trees*, a historical novel depicting first contact between the syilx (Okanagan) and European settlers in the 19th century—plus poems, essays and fiction in a variety of anthologies and magazines. He's Director of Aboriginal Education for School District #22, with a PhD in First Nations Studies. Dr. William says in his spare time he is slowly losing his grip on the universe, and "it's a lot of fun squaring the circle with only a compass, two toothpicks and a hot cross bun."

Tonight, Gerry shares his perspectives on writing humour and sci-fi, with examples from his novels.

Evening entertainment: OPEN MIC 8X8. We'll draw 8 names for 8-minute readings. If you'd like to read, prepare an 8-minute (maximum!) reading and enter your name in the **8x8 Draw Box** on the Info-table, in the hall upstairs, before 5:00 on Saturday.



Sunday

8:00 **Breakfast** with speaker *Robert Mackwood: CURRENT TRENDS IN BOOK PUBLISHING*

Changes in this industry can have us scratching our heads. Just when it looked like the e-book was gaining considerable traction, it stalls and print seems revitalized. But what's selling these days? Colouring books! And where is the business heading next? Robert takes a look at the trends and developments that may affect what you do with your future writing work.



9:00 *Break*

9:15 **Concurrent Sessions D: SELLING YOUR WORK.** Choose from:



D1 SELLING SCREENPLAYS with *Kat Montagu* Writing screenplays is tough, optioning or selling them to producers is tougher. Can you sell your script without an agent? Can you make an agent want to represent you? Here we will discuss option agreements and the business of screenwriting.



D2 SELLING POETRY with *Daniela Elza* We will look at the business aspects of writing from the perspective of a publishing poet. Where do you submit? How often? How wide? How do you deal with rejections? What about contests? Do you have a manuscript and are you seeking a publisher? Bring your questions.



D3 SELLING YOUR FICTION with *Lorna Schulz Nicholson & Roberta Rich* What happens when the manuscript is done? How do you catch the interest of an agent or a publisher? With planning, perseverance and—of course—a great product, it can be done. Two published authors share their story-selling experiences.



D4 SELLING NON-FICTION with *Laurie Carter* Writing and publishing your non-fiction book was just the start. Learn how to reach readers and sell books in this session packed with tips from the trenches. Laurie shares her experience with speaking tours, social media, book fairs and much more.

10:30 *Break*

10:45 **Panel Discussion: MARKETING TO YOUR AUDIENCE** with moderator *Grant Lawrence* & panelists *Brian Hades, Cheryl Kaye Tardif, Denise Jaden, Lorna Schultz Nicholson* and *Robert Mackwood*.

How do you find your readers? How do your readers find you?

Whether we land a contract or publish alone, we must sell our work to the public. But what works, and what is a waste of time and money? Should you have a website, a Facebook presence? Should you tweet, blog, or both? Are launches and signing still important in the digital age?

And what about writing the next book? Isn't that part of marketing, too—and isn't that enough? This is your opportunity to grill our panelists on the fine art of author self-promotion.

Do you have a question for the panel? Drop it off in the **Marketing Panel Questions** box (great title, eh?) on the Info-table in the upstairs hall, by 9:15 on Sunday morning.

12:00 **Lunch and wrap-up.**



Our presenters:



Brian Hades

Brian owns EDGE Science Fiction and Fantasy Publishing, Canada's largest publisher of science fiction and fantasy books. Now celebrating 15 years, EDGE's books have been nominated for Canadian, Australian, and U.S. literary awards, and it's the first Canadian science fiction and fantasy genre publisher to have sold publishing rights to The Science Fiction Book Club of New York. Other co-publishing and licensing deals include the co-production of an animated short movie based on the poems in *i-ROBOT Poetry* by Jason Christie. More at www.edgewebsite.com.

Cheryl Kaye Tardif

An international bestselling Canadian author, Cheryl is best known for *Submerged*, a psychological suspense thriller, *Children of the Fog*, a supernatural suspense thriller, and *Whale Song*, a much-loved, inspiring family tale with a hint of mystery. Well-versed in book marketing, she has been involved with hundreds of book signings, held virtual book tours (and taught others how to do their own), and presented at conferences in the U.S. and Canada. Cheryl is also publisher at Imajin Books, which publishes quality international fiction with a focus on ebooks. More: www.cheryltkardif.com; www.imajinbooks.com.



Daniela Elza

Daniela has lived on three continents and crossed numerous geographic, cultural and semantic borders. Her work has appeared internationally in over 100 publications. Daniela's poetry collections are *the weight of dew*, *the book of It*, and *milk tooth bane bone*. She earned a doctorate in Philosophy of Education from Simon Fraser University in 2011 and was the 2014 Writer-In-Residence at the University of the Fraser Valley. She lives and writes in Vancouver. See strangeplaces.livingcode.org.

Denise Jaden

Denise's novels have been shortlisted or received awards through the Romance Writers of America, Inspy, and SCBWI. The first draft of her debut novel, *Losing Faith* (Simon & Schuster), was written in 21 days during NaNoWriMo 2007, and she loves talking with writers and students alike about her just-get-to-the-end fast-drafting process. Her non-fiction books for writers include *Writing with a Heavy Heart* and *Fast Fiction*. More about Denise at Denisejaden.com.



Grant Lawrence

Grant is a popular CBC personality and the author of two bestselling books, *Adventures In Solitude* and *The Lonely End of the Rink*, both of which won the Bill Duthie Booksellers' Choice Award—the first time in the history of the BC Book Prizes that the same author has won this prize twice. He's also a Canadian Screen Award winner, the former lead singer of the Smugglers, and the goalie for the Flying Vees beer league hockey team. Find out more at www.grantlawrence.ca.

Jodie Renner

Jodie is a sought-after fiction editor and the award-winning author of three craft-of-writing guides and two clickable time-saving e-resources. She recently organized and edited two anthologies, *Voices from the Valleys*, and *Childhood Regained – Stories of Hope for Asian Child Workers*. Jodie hosts writing workshops, judges for writers' contests (including Writer's Digest), and her posts appear on various blogs about writing and editing. More at www.JodieRenner.com and www.JodieRennerEditing.com.





Kat Montagu

Born in the UK, Kat has worked as a screenwriting instructor at Vancouver Film School and at UBC. What Kat loves most about teaching is helping students to find their own voices, make their screenplays work and create creative professional relationships with producers. She tends to focus on issues of structure, theme and characterization, but she'll also help to fix formatting issues because she just can't help it.

Laurie Carter

As both editor and freelancer, Laurie has acquired a uniquely balanced perspective on the business of writing for periodicals. Currently senior editor of *Okanagan Life* magazine, she has worked in editorial positions with the publication for well over a decade. Her byline has headed a travel column in Southern Alberta and BC community newspapers and her freelance contributions to magazines and newspapers in Canada and the United States number in the hundreds. Laurie's book *Emily Carr's BC: Vancouver Island* was a Finalist in the 2015 NATJA Awards. More at lauriecarter.com.



Lorna Schultz Nicholson

Lorna is full-time writer who has published over 30 books, including children's picture books, middle grade fiction, YA fiction, and non-fiction. Her books have been nominated for the Golden Eagle Award, Diamond Willow Award, and Red Cedar Award. Many have also been chosen as Best Books for Kids and Teens with the Canadian Children's Book Centre. Her non-fiction Olympic book, *Home Ice*, was on the Globe and Mail Bestselling list for many weeks during the 2010 Olympics, and her Puckster picture books are also Globe and Mail Bestsellers. See www.lornaschultznicholson.com.

Robert Mackwood

Robert is a publishing veteran with over 30 years in the industry. As owner and principal agent for Seventh Avenue Literary Agency, he represents over 50 authors. His agency has negotiated over 200 book contracts for clients, and their consulting service also works with authors to provide guidance and insight for their projects. Robert recently started his own imprint, Brilliant Idea Books. He is on the faculty of the UBC Creative Writing Department and appears on panels and at workshops throughout the year. More: www.mackwoodpublishingconsultants.com; www.seventhavenuelit.com.



Roberta Rich

For most of Roberta's professional life, she was a family lawyer in Vancouver. Several years ago she began writing full time. Her first novel, *The Midwife of Venice*, was published in 2011 by Random House Canada, and has been published in 15 countries and translated into 9 languages. The sequel, *The Harem Midwife*, appeared in Canada in October 2013. The third book of this trilogy, *The Trial of a Midwife*, will be published in October 2016. More about Roberta and her books at www.robertarich.com.

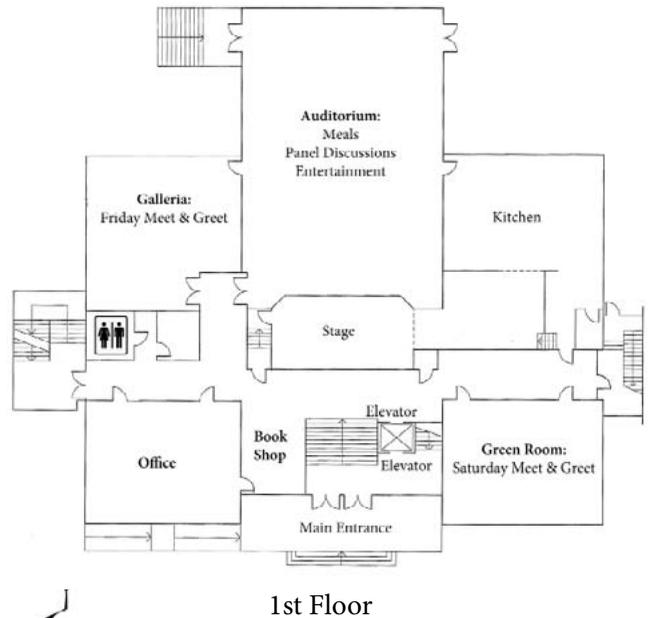
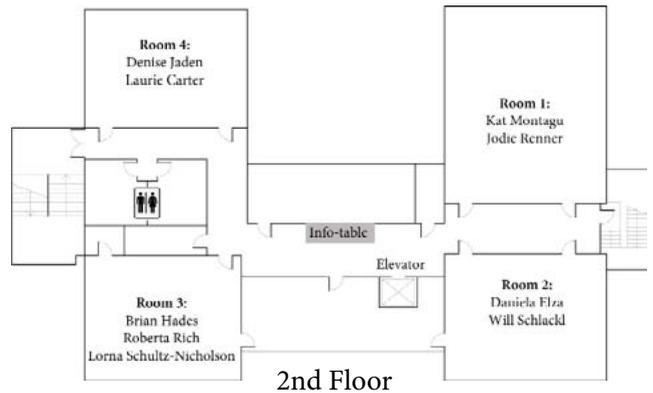
Will Schlackl

Will runs the Penticton Guitar Program, Rock Skool, and Jazzcool, and has taught poetry and song writing at the B.C. Youth Writers Camp. Along with music, he studied literature and theatre while in university, and earned a diploma in jazz studies and a degree in education. With more than 40 private students, Will also teaches middle-school band and concert programs and has presented for educators numerous times. A passionate artist, he practices and performs in numerous performing groups; his original music is based on lessons in life and has been primarily for his own growth.



Our schedule at a glance:

Friday		
	6:00	registration & book sales
	7:00	welcome & open mic
Saturday		
	8:00	registration
	8:30	breakfast (with speaker)
	9:20	break
	9:30	concurrent sessions A
	10:45	break
	11:00	concurrent sessions B
	12:15	lunch (with speaker)
	1:15	break
	1:30	concurrent sessions C
	2:45	break
	3:00	panel discussion #1
	4:45	book sales & signing
	5:30	supper (with speaker)
	7:00	entertainment
Sunday		
	8:00	breakfast (with speaker)
	9:00	break
	9:15	concurrent sessions D
	10:30	break
	10:45	panel discussion #2
	12:00	lunch, thanks & wrap-up



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