

SWWC Service Cooperative presents the 33rd Annual

# CONFERENCE FOR YOUNG WRITERS



January 7, 2025 (snow date Jan. 8) | For all students in grades 3-8  
Held at Southwest Minnesota State University, Marshall, MN

This conference brings authors and students together to learn different ways to create stories. They will help students figure out ways to create characters, find the location of the story, how to be descriptive to bring a story to life and so much more. Whether it is a song, a poem, fiction or nonfiction, everyone has a story to tell. Students will receive feedback from presenters and their peers and reflect on how to make their writings better.

## Registration

### Who can register:

- School teachers register groups of students and their chaperones.
- Parents register their students and themselves.

### Online Registration Deadline:

November 26, 2024, at midnight.



[www.swwc.org/yw](http://www.swwc.org/yw)



**SWWC**  
STUDENT ENRICHMENT

Contact: Andrea Anderson,  
Student Enrichment Coordinator

 507-537-2257

 [www.swwc.org/yw](http://www.swwc.org/yw)

 [andrea.anderson@swwc.org](mailto:andrea.anderson@swwc.org)

# CONFERENCE INFORMATION

## General Registration

- Available to students in grades 3-8
- Register Online: [www.swwc.org/yw](http://www.swwc.org/yw)
- All attending adults must be registered online.
- There is no student/adult ratio at this time.
- Not required but prefer contact person be an attending adult.

## School Participants

- Schools attending are responsible for collecting and entering registrations. Payments can be made online or see billing option below.
- If your school is unable to attend, direct parents to the website for access to conference information, giving them the chance to attend on their own.
- Please make sure parents sending students with the school are aware of the cancellation policy.
- School district funding may be available to support teacher and student participation in SWWC enrichment programs through MINNESOTA GIFTED AND TALENTED REVENUE MN Statute § 126C.10 2(b).

## Parent Participants

- Parents do not have to attend with their school. They may attend on their own as a family.
- An adult must be registered along with students.
- If a parent misses the school registration deadline, they can still register and attend on their own.
- Check with your school to see if they are participating as a school group.

## Registration Fees and Deadlines

Registration Deadline: **November 26, 2024, at midnight**

- \$40/per student
- \$10/per adult

## Payments

- Parent payments are made at the time of registration with Credit Card. Payments go through WePay.
- Schools can pay with Credit Card.
- A school can be billed after the event if they choose to. Contact us prior to registering for a billing code.

## Lunch

- Bring your own lunch – refrigeration not available.
- Campus cafeteria is closed for winter break.
- Check with your school about the sack lunch program.
- Place lunches in containers or coolers and label with school/parent name.

## Supplies

- Supplies are provided for students at the conference, unless otherwise mentioned in the session description.

## Sessions

- The conference features an opening keynote and three, one hr. hands-on learning sessions for students.
- Students choose six session options (**grade appropriate**) and are later scheduled into three sessions that fit their schedule.
- Select sessions in the order of preference.
- Choices selected by student **DOES NOT** represent their final schedule.
- The student's final schedule is based on session demand & session sizes; therefore, **we cannot guarantee students will be assigned all requested topics.** We do our best to give them as many of their choices as we can.
- We retain the right to limit the number of students per district in a specific session.
- A session may be canceled due to the number of students registered. Or a session may be added if needed.

## Conference Details

- Conference information is on [www.swwc.org/yw](http://www.swwc.org/yw)
- A few days before the event, or as soon as it is ready, the **final schedule** and other information will be emailed to the person's email on the registration.
- Please share information with chaperones/parents.
- Chaperones/parents are responsible for educating themselves on the Conference information and the cancellation policy.
- Contact person will need to check in and pick up group packet the morning of the conference.

## Book Fair - Commuter Lounge (BA Bldg.)

- Paper Pie will run a book fair all day.

## Students with Special Needs

- The SWWC Service Cooperative, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities ACT (ADA), is dedicated to making conference activities accessible to all students. Please contact Andrea for special accommodations by November 26, 2024.

## Cancellation and Refund Policy

- Cancellation requests must be received by the final registration deadline for a refund, less a \$10/student service charge.
- After the deadline, no refunds will be processed.
- If a student is unable to attend, try to send someone in their place and notify us of the change.



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# AGENDA AND KEYNOTE

## AGENDA

8:00 am - 9:00 am	Check-In, Refreshments
9:00 am - 9:15 am	Welcome
9:15 am - 9:45 am	Keynote
10:00 am - 11:00 am	Session I
11:00 am - 11:45 am	Lunch
11:45 am - 12:45 pm	Session II
1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Session III
9:00 am - 2:00 pm	Book Fair (in BA Lobby)

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER

**El Holly**

**"Magic of Imagination"**

El Holly loves to write, especially books full of adventure and whimsy. Finding Fae, the first book in the Finding Fae trilogy, was most recently a 2023 BookLife Prize Quarterfinalist. When she isn't writing, teaching, or "mom-ing," you can find her sipping on coffee or taking her dogs, Mack and Kevin, on walks in Minnesota. Her biggest passion is encouraging others to find their passion and joy, especially when it comes to unlocking the power of the imagination. She is a firm believer that with a little imagination, and a trusty pen and notebook, the sky's the limit! Or, as her characters in the Phantasmic Wars series say, "Imagination is key."



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# SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Select sessions appropriate for student's grade level 3-5 or 6-8

## A. Plotting with Post-its Gr. 3-5 & 6-8

We all love Post-it Notes! They mostly help us remember things, but they can also be used to create a new story plot. In this class, we'll discuss what every plot needs, how to carry action from scene to scene, and why it's important to increase the tension from beginning to end. Students will use this technique to generate a unique story outline.

**\*Jennifer Davidson**

## B. How to Write a Fantasy, Mystery or Anything Gr. 3-5 & 6-8

Students will choose what to write about. They will then work together on learning what makes a great story. These include WRITING THE FIRST SENTENCE: This is where you hook your reader, and STORY ELEMENTS: plot, suspense, characters, mood, villains, and heroes. Students may take notes, but this class is strong on sharing creative ideas. Even the most shy student has a story twist to share! **\*Maggie Fuller**

## C. Creating Your Own Tall Tales Gr. 3-5 & 6-8

Bob will share some Paul Bunyan tales. Students will then work on creating their own tall tales using ideas for amazing adventures, awesome characters and colorful details. The outline they create will allow them to write a finished story back at school. **\*Bob Gasch**

## D. Explore the Magic of Imagination Gr. 3-5 & 6-8

All it takes is a spark. Work with El Holly's guidance on techniques to spark ideas and get the creative juices flowing. You will leave the session with methods you can use on future stories, like the "what if" and "looking back" strategies. **\*El Holly**

## E. Character Sketch Gr. 3-5 & 6-8

The Key to Great Characters! Good stories depend on believable characters. Create compelling individuals through the use of character sketches. Develop individuals of depth, appeal, and interest to include in stories by writing character history, personality, and appearance. Include backstory, even if not all elements appear in a story, these aspects allow a writer to become better acquainted with individual characters and envision how they may realistically interact in a novel or short story.

**\*Elizabeth Rowan Keith**

## F. Writing TV News in an Hour Gr. 3-5 & 6-8

Television news, and now streaming news, is a fast-paced business. That's why we have to be able to collect information quickly and then write it even quicker. But that doesn't mean we can't be creative! We will gather news information and write a story together within 45 minutes. The type of story that could potentially find its way onto WCCO-TV!

**\*John Lauritsen**

## G. Retold Fairy Tales: Making Old Stories New Gr. 3-5 & 6-8

What is a retold fairy tale? If you've seen the Shrek movies, "Aladdin," "The Little Mermaid," or almost any other Disney movie, you already know the answer: it's an old story with a new spin. In this session, you'll learn how to put your own twist on stories you THOUGHT you knew.

**\*Lacey Louwagie**

## H. Midnight, The Darkest Part Of the Night to write a story! Gr. 3-5 & 6-8

Students will be writing a crime/mystery story. The Zoo Man will tell the start of the story under a low light to set the stage. Characters will be introduced to the students. The students will then start and finish the short story with The Zoo Man's guidance. The story starts in a cornfield. The year 1969. What stories will grow from the strange, dark cornfield known as.....

**\*The Zoo Man**

## I. The Art of Rap Gr. 3-5 & 6-8

How do you write to a beat? How do you put your ideas into rhyme? How do you make it sound so good?? Learn this and more from professional hip hop artist SEE MORE PERSPECTIVE in a crash course where you will write collaboratively to learn the basics of the worldwide phenomenon that is Hip Hop and the art of rap. **\*SEE MORE PERSPECTIVE**

## J. Escape the Cold; Let's Go to the Garden! Gr. 6-8

Students will plan their own garden or meal and draft a literary escape filled with sensory details. Participants will be guided by writing prompts after learning about the author's garden in Perennial Ceremony: Lessons and Gifts from a Dakota Garden. **\*Teresa Peterson**

## K. Sing a Story Gr. 3-5 & 6-8

As a group we will brainstorm to create a story and turn it into a song. Bring your ideas. We will walk through some steps on how to get started and line by line we will generate lyrics that rhyme or just tell a story. Students are welcome to create their own song story too. We will include guitar music to set the tone for the songs. The best thing is, with practice, when you start getting better at it, IT'S FUN!! **\*Charlie Roth**

## L. Deadline: Welcome to the News Desk! Gr. 3-5 & 6-8

You're a reporter on the first day of the job. Breaking news happens. Will you be able to gather the facts, put together a good news story, and get it ready by the deadline? Students will learn the basics of news judgment, how to gather information, how to structure a news story quickly and accurately, and edit down reporting and getting it ready for publishing. They'll also learn about good sources v. fake sources, media literacy and how to work together as a newsroom. Remember, keep your cool and work together!

**\*Hannah Yang**



### Photos, Videos, & Media

By participating in this event, you are giving SWWC permission to use any audio/video recordings and photographs that are taken during the event.



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# MEET YOUR PRESENTERS

## Jennifer L. Davidson

Jennifer L. Davidson is the author of three novels and works in communications at Mayo Clinic in Rochester. She enjoys writing, reading, and sharing all she's learned about being creative with students young and old.

## Maggie Fuller

Maggie Fuller is a rural writer and visual artist from Montevideo, MN. She enjoys gardening, painting, writing, and playing with her dog, Daisy. She has been a mentor in the 4-H Young Writers program which meets online during November for National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo). Young writers are challenged for the month of November to write the first draft of a novel! She has also served as a 4-H judge for the Creative Writing Project in various Minnesota counties. Maggie is an encouraging and enthusiastic mentor for both artists and writers. [www.mefuller.com](http://www.mefuller.com)

## Bob Gasch

For over 50 years Bob has been visiting schools, libraries, and organizations from Alaska to Texas and Colorado to Northern Ireland. His presentations have been helping people become more aware of and interested in history, reading, writing and storytelling. [www.gaschstories-puppets.com](http://www.gaschstories-puppets.com)

## El Holly

See keynote page. <https://elhollywriters.com>

## Elizabeth Rowan Keith

After a lifetime of collecting as many experiences as possible, I am an author. In childhood I made a plan to live as deeply, broadly, and vividly as possible so that I could develop the depth and skill to be a writer. I did. I am. I am also an artist, a scientist, a gardener, a professor, a traveler, and an explorer of whole life. [www.elizabethrowan.com](http://www.elizabethrowan.com)

## John Lauritsen

I'm a reporter with WCCO-TV in Minneapolis (CBS). I'm best known for the Finding Minnesota stories I do. This brings us across the state and features cool, visual and historic things in the Land of 10,000 Lakes. I grew up on a farm near Montevideo and graduated from Montevideo High School. Eventually, I got a master's degree at St. Cloud State. My wife Jessica and I have two kids Bo and Harlow. They are in 5th and 8th grade this year. In my free time, I like to watch my kids play sports, play sports myself, work out, read and I build furniture. [www.wcco.com](http://www.wcco.com)

## Lacey Louwagie

Lacey Louwagie is a freelance writer and editor living in Dell Rapids, South Dakota, with her husband, sons, and massive book collection. She is the author of "Rumpled," a retelling of the Rumpelstiltskin story. She loves reading, local wildlife sightings, Disney movies, tea, and cats. [www.laceylouwagie.com](http://www.laceylouwagie.com)

## The Zoo Man

I enjoy entertaining the young and the young at heart, with my Live Animal Friends. Performing Zoo Man programs is my favorite part of life. I'm also an author. I have published 2 books. My first book and manuscript were destroyed in a fire. My second published book, The Zoo Man Remembers is now for sale at all my LIVE EVENTS. The eBook can be purchased on Amazon Kindle. Currently, my book True Crimes and Bizarre Stories of Sleepy Eye Minnesota is at my editor's office and should be available in January 2025. My book, The Zoo Man Returns is almost complete. The Zoo Man keeps busy being a Personal trainer for Parkinson's Disease Clients. My job here is to keep them active and train them for balance, strength, and flexibility. See more on my Facebook: [Zoo Man's Attractions](#)

## SEE MORE PERSPECTIVE

SEE MORE PERSPECTIVE is an MC, Producer/Composer, Spoken Word Poet, Visual Artist, Filmmaker, and Social Justice Educator. Their work explores identity, culture, social justice, mythology, science fiction, spirituality, and the paranormal. Learn more at [www.seemoreperspective.com](http://www.seemoreperspective.com)

## Teresa Peterson

Teresa Peterson, Utuhu Cistinna Win, is Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota and citizen of the Upper Sioux Community. Teresa is the author of Perennial Ceremony: Lessons and Gifts from a Dakota Garden published by the University of Minnesota Press. She and her uncle, Walter LaBatte Jr authored, Voices from Pejuhutazizi: Dakota Stories and Storytellers, published by the Minnesota Historical Society Press. She is also the author of Grasshopper Girl, a children's book published by Black Bears and Blueberries Publishing, a contributor to Voices Rising: Native Women Writers, and has poetry in The Racism Issue of the Yellow Medicine Review. Teresa earned her doctorate in Education from the University of Minnesota Duluth. Her passion is digging in her garden that overlooks the Mni Sota River valley and feeding friends and family. [www.teresapetersonwords.com](http://www.teresapetersonwords.com)

## Charlie Roth

Hello, my name is Charlie. I was a creative kid and used to make up stories all the time. I always loved to sing too and sometimes I would make up songs too. I got a guitar when I was 12 for Christmas and I learned some chords. I found out that I could write stories and songs to music! Wow!! I used to run home after school to play my guitar and sing the songs I was learning and also writing. [charlierothmusic.com](http://charlierothmusic.com)

## Hannah Yang

Hannah is senior reporter for MPR News. She is a journalist and covers news stories from all over Southwest Minnesota for the radio and online. In her spare time Hannah likes to do photography, write stories, and spend time with her two corgis and her husband.



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# SWWC SERVICE COOPERATIVE



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For the full list of partners go to [www.swwc.org/foundation](http://www.swwc.org/foundation)



[www.swwc.org/jw](http://www.swwc.org/jw)



### Changes Needed?

Please notify us of any changes in your contact info or if you need to be removed from our contact list.



Contact: **Andrea Anderson,**  
Student Enrichment Coordinator

 507-537-2257

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