**Schedule for 2025 Book Fair
University of North Georgia Convocation Center
13 September 2025**

**9:30 – 10:30**

**Children's Reading Hour, hosted by Jessica Shannon (room 118)**

Bring your children (elementary school age or younger) to a children’s reading hour! A parent or guardian will be required to remain with their child or children during the session. There will be donuts, crayons, and coloring sheets!

**“Trad vs. Indie Publishing: The Highlights” with Stephanie Boné, Kelly Elizabeth Huston, and Meg M. Robinson (room 119)**​

Stephanie Boné, Kelly Elizabeth Huston, and Meg M. Robinson will share their thoughts and experiences for both traditional and indie publishing. They’ll go over pros and cons for each type of publishing, such as expenses, reach, and timelines for publishing, as well as what’s expected from the author in each case. They’ll also touch on publishing scams and what to look out for to avoid them. Last, they’ll offer helpful advice for those just starting out on their own publishing journey.

**“Techniques for Writing Historical Fiction and Nonfiction Novels” with Larry Freeland, James Wells, and Jason Wetzel (room 216)**

Larry Freeland, James Wells, and Jason Wetzel will share their approaches to conducting historical research in their published works. Are there elements within a story that must always be factual and precise? Where is the latitude for creative invention readers seek in compelling fiction and creative nonfiction? Join these authors as they discuss the sources that they rely on to ensure their fiction and creative nonfiction rests firmly on historical and factual footing.

**“Wait, you mean I have to promote my book?” Marketing with Bobby Nash, Sophie Leigh Fox, and J.R. Miller (rooms 218/219)**

You’ve published your book—congrats! But now what? This isn’t a field of dreams… readers and buyers won’t just magically appear. If you want your book to reach more than your mom and your college roommate, it’s time to think like a marketer. Here’s a grounded guide to help first-time authors market their books. Bobby, Sophie and J.R share their personal experiences and provide the Do’s and Don’ts of self-publishing marketing. Come join the discussion.

**11:00 – 12:00**

**“How to Co-Write Without Killing Each Other (So Far)” with Mary Becker and Diane Janelle (room 118)**

“How To Co-Write Without Killing Each Other (So Far)” is a crash course in creative collaboration... without the crime scene. Think of it as couples therapy for writers—minus the therapist. We’ll spill the tea on what actually happens when two brains try to write one thing, from clashes in storyline proposals to plot brawls to the sacred art of compromise. Enjoy a behind-the-scenes look at our journey and stay for the cautionary tales, as well as the hard-earned hacks for surviving a tag team partnership. Brace yourself! Collaboration is messy—but also hilarious, rewarding, and totally worth it!

**“Worlds and Relationships in Fantasy Fiction” with Lyndie Ferguson, S.J. Gragg, M.B. Mooney, and Anne Schlea (room 119)**

From sweeping realms of magic and myth to deep journeys of love, loyalty, and betrayal—fantasy thrives on the dance between world-building and character relationships. This panel explores how fantastical settings shape human (and non-human) connections, and how relationships, in turn, anchor readers in the most otherworldly of tales. Join our panel of fantasy authors as we discuss the interplay between epic landscapes and emotional depth, the power of romance and rivalry, and why relationships are just as vital to fantasy as dragons, destinies, and dark lords.

**“The Different Faces of Christian Fiction” with Sue Campbell, Emma Chester, Karen P. Gaines, and Heather Thompson (room 216)**

Are you ready to embark on an inspiring journey into the captivating realm of Christian fiction? Join us for a lively and thought-provoking panel discussion, where we’ll explore the incredible impact that Christian fiction has on readers and the world around us. Our talented panelists—Sue Campbell, Emma Chester, Karen P. Gaines, and Heather Thompson—are eager to share their unique writing strategies, personal stories, and the defining moments that sparked their extraordinary novels. Whether you’re drawn to supernatural tales, enchanting fantasy, romance or heartfelt contemporary stories, there’s a corner of this literary landscape for everyone to explore.

**“Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Writing a Children’s Book, But Were Afraid to Ask” with Jamika Banks, Carol Hathaway, David Lane, and Moniquea Willingham (room 218/219)**

Many people have the desire to write children’s books because they love children, are inspired by their children or grandchildren, or they just have a heart overflowing with the joy and wonder of childhood. But what happens? They never bear the fruit of that love out of fear or concern over “not doing it right”. This panel presentation, featuring four Georgia children’s book authors, will present the elements of children’s book writing from the idea/inspiration phase to targeting different ages to marketing the finished product. Fear is a liar! Come talk about the process and be fearless with us! Questions and answers will be encouraged.

​

**1:00 – 2:00**​

**"Top 10 Things to Do to Be a Successful Writer" with William Walsh (room 118)**

Some Rules for Being a Successful Writer: Having published eleven books and hundreds of pieces in magazines over the course of my career, this presentation will highlight ten things to help you toward a successful writing career. It’s not always as simple as being a talented writer. What do the following books have in common: *Moby Dick*, *Life of Pi*, *Twilight*, *A Wrinkle in Time*, *Harry Potter*, *Dune*, and *Haircuts for the Dead*? No one wanted to publish them. I’m here to help you become more successful.

**“Poetry: Rhythm, Resonance, Relevance” with Ezekiel Black, Catherine Hamrick, Elizabeth Michaud, and Barbara Serafino (room 119)**

One hour, four authors, plus a Q&A about why poetry matters today—more than ever. Whether you are a longtime poetry lover or a new fan, join poets Catherine Hamrick, Barbara Gomes Serafino, Elizabeth Michaud, and Ezekiel Black for reading, conversation, and connection. Themes: the healing power of nature, the counterculture of the 1960s, Black history, and despots.

**“Writing Techniques for Any Genre” with Toni Bellon, Rachael Mohr, and Douglas Young (room 216)**

Join us for an insightful conversation on writing techniques that are applicable across genres. Whether you write fiction, nonfiction, mystery, or memoir, you'll walk away with adaptable techniques to strengthen your storytelling.

* Rachael Mohr, author of the cozy mystery *Deadly Reflection*, shares how to weave suspense and build page-turning momentum.
* Toni Bellon, whose YA coming-of-age novel *L.E.A.P.* balances heartbreak with humor, discusses how to blend emotional depth with levity while moving the plot forward.
* Douglas Young, writer of four books in both fiction and nonfiction, reveals how he infuses humor into his novels, short stories, and essays for impact and resonance.

Writers at any stage or style will find practical tools and inspiration in this genre-spanning session.

**“Finding an Agent” with Dawn Cusick (rooms 218/219)**

Ready for an agent? Discover practical strategies for generating your query list, best practices for following submission guidelines, and resources to enrich your understanding of the querying process from the agent’s perspective. Join Dawn Cusick, who worked in trade publishing as an editor for more than 20 years, for this informative session!

**2:30 – 3:30**

**“Character not Caricature: Tips for Developing Authentic, Three-Dimensional Fictional Characters” with Brandi Bradley, Donna Lane, and Safari Spell (room 119)**

Do you struggle with building characters of depth, dimension, and resonance? Want some tips for avoiding flat, stagnant characters your readers don’t care about? Three authors of different genres describe their processes for developing authentic and relatable characters. The panel will examine the impact of genre and setting on character development and offer tips for maintaining your character’s emotional authenticity while revealing the character’s background to the reader without resorting to an “info dump.”

**“Race, Faith, and the South” with Barnard Sims, moderated by Micah Corum (room 216)**

*“One of the most shameful tragedies in our nation is that 11:AM on Sunday morning is one of the most segregated hours in Christian America.”1*

In this discussion, we will discuss how race and religion have shaped Southern identity. We will also examine how traditions of faith have been both a source of oppression and liberation in the South. Our collective task is to explore what it means to confront this legacy that lingers on upon us today. We ask that everyone join in on the conversation, as we unravel the intersectionality of "Race, Faith, and the South." In good faith, we believe together we can build a future rooted in truth, hope, and healing.

*1. MLK, Jr., Meet the Press (August 17, 1960).*

**Featured Speaker: Stacia Pelletier (rooms 218/219)**

**"In the Shadow of Gold: Fiction Rooted in North Georgia History"**

Join Stacia Pelletier for a discussion of her newly released novel, *The Deliverance of Barker McRae* (Mercer University Press), set in North Georgia during the 1833 land lottery and the Georgia gold rush. Stacia was a resident of Dahlonega from 2018 to 2025 and now makes her home in North Carolina. She holds an MDiv from Candler School of Theology and a PhD in the history of religion from Emory University, and she has been a Woodruff Fellow, a W.M. Keck Foundation Fellow, and a 2025 Heart Foundation Fellow at the American Antiquarian Society. She will discuss the process of researching and writing historical fiction in Dahlonega--and what the creative process is like, especially for writers who hold day jobs in fields unrelated to their writing habit! Q&A will follow. The author will sign books after the discussion.