

THES Young Writers' Workshop 2017

SAVE THE DATE! Coming soon ... Tuesday, February 7!

Teachers: Please share information about the workshop presenters and give students time to fill in their choice sheets. **Then please return the folders of choice sheets to the office by FRIDAY, JAN. 27.** Thank you!

FICTION & POETRY

KWAMENA ALHEEM has loved to both write and tell fictional stories since he was in elementary school. He recalls being one his family's storytellers when spending summer nights around the fire, as a child, on family vacations. Today, he is a performing artist, using his talents as singer and emcee to spread positive energy all over Austin. He is also an author and lecturer, who has penned three mythological stories, "The Bumbler Vs. The Chess Master," "Cheikh Kubwa," and forthcoming "Spirit Bond." He has also written a nonfiction book, *The Family Tree Grows Up*, about families building communities. **Workshop:** *Creating Mythology. The key to creating great mythology is presenting a concept or "moral of the story" in a fun way. Mr. Alheem will share some of his creative secrets—how he comes up with his characters (including how he chooses their names), the setting, and the moral of the story—while helping students realize their creative potential to do the same. Students will work in groups to create these elements of their own mythological stories.*

CAROLYN COHAGAN began her writing career on the stage. She has performed stand-up comedy and one-woman shows at festivals around the world from Adelaide to Edinburgh. Her first novel, *The Lost Children*, is part of the Scholastic Book Club and was nominated for a Massachusetts Children's Book Award. Her new dystopian YA book, *Time Zero*, was named a Summer Reading Pick by *Seventeen* magazine. **Workshop:** *The basis for most stories is a character with a problem. We will discuss your favorite heroes and their obstacles, and then you will come up with your own original characters and suspenseful dilemmas. *Twist alert. Prompt may not be what you expect.*

JENA KIRKPATRICK is editor of the poetry anthology *Writing for Positive Change* and poetry workshop instructor for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Texas. Jena tours nationally as a member of the Trio of Poets. As a Poet for Hire, she writes poems for clients worldwide and on her antique typewriters at events. **Workshop:** *Becoming Something Other Than Yourself. Using Jack Prelutsky's "Ballad of a Boneless Chicken" we will practice personification, rhyming and using sensory detail while writing hilarious poems. Get ready to become something you've always wanted to be, whether it be a chicken or a tennis shoe. These poems will surely entertain you!*

MAUREEN LOMO aka 'M.L. Wonder' is a former diplomat turned novelist who left

federal service to pursue a career of creative service, writing entertaining and engaging stories with impact. Maureen has written a short story, "The Ticket," and her first novel, *Tenth Year in the Sun*, debuts in June. **Workshop:** *Maureen will teach the students useful skills in the art of story crafting. She will first briefly explain why stories are important and discuss the most popular form of storytelling, the hero's journey. She will also discuss an important technique, "Show Don't Tell," and have students work in pairs for this lesson. The class will also divide them two teams and see which team can get the most creative with words.*

SUSAN MORRISON, mother of two Travis Heights graduates, is Professor of medieval literature at Texas State University in San Marcos and has written many books, including one on excrement (that's poop!) in the late Middle Ages. She has edited her mother's diaries written during World War II. This book, *Home Front Girl: A Diary of Love, Literature, and Growing Up in Wartime America*, was named by the Children's Book Committee of the Bank Street College of Education to the Best Children's Book of the Year 2013 list (Memoir: Ages 14 & up). Her most recent novel, *Grendel's Mother: The Saga of the Wyrd-Wife*, a feminist retelling of the Old English epic *Beowulf*, won the Words on Wings Book Award for young adult fiction, a Literary Classics Top Honors Award 2016. **Workshop:** *Take a step back in time. But beware! Ogres, dragons, and evil knights await! . . . Did you know Albus Dumbledore in the Harry Potter series is based on the magician Merlin from the tales of King Arthur and Queen Guinevere? Some of the greatest literature ever written takes place in the distant past. Participants in the workshop will write their own stories festooned with castle, armor, swords, towers, dragons, and magic. Make the Middle Ages come alive!*

SHELDON PACOTTI is a writer of fiction, nonfiction, and video games. His writing has appeared in magazines like *The Bridge*, *Bellowing Ark*, and *Salon.com*. Games he has worked on include *Wishbone* and the *Amazing Odyssey*, *Epic Mickey*, and *System Shock 3*. **Workshop:** *Are you brave enough to enter the Story Maze? We will start in a dark, dangerous place, and you will have to get us out. We will split into three groups, each deciding what to do, then we will split up and choose again. In the end, we will have nine endings -- nine stories -- the pathways of... the Story Maze.*

NEAL POLLACK is a very famous fiction writer and journalist who also tests race cars. Last year, he published his tenth book, a crazy sci-fi novel set on Mars and in the Austin of the future, called *Keep Mars Weird*. He's the cohost, with his 14-year-old son Elijah, of *Extra Credit*, a podcast on *Audible.com*. **Workshop:** *"Create your own detective." Everyone loves a mystery! In this workshop, you create your own detective and give them a crime to solve.*

RUPERT REYES is an Austin playwright and Artistic Director of *Teatro Vivo*, a bilingual theater company dedicated to reaching all audiences and creating bridges between cultures. He is a graduate of the University of Texas Department of Theater and Dance. The B. Iden Payne Theater Awards committee has nominated his plays for best new scripts and he has received several acting nominations as well. He recently published, at

the urging of his friends, the first of the Petra Trilogy, Petra's Pecado and Vecinos. His most recent collaboration with ZACH Theater and Glass Half Full, a children's play, *Cenicienta*, was awarded Best New Play in 2015 by the Critics Table Awards. **Workshop:** *Tutored by the Collective Creation style of one of best Chicano Theater companies in the US, students in Mr. Reyes workshop will create a scene as a group. This playwriting process uses each individual to contribute toward a finished product. Following prompts given at the start of the workshop, each student will have an opportunity to write a part to create the entire scene. Then groups of students will be given the opportunity to perform the scene for the entire class.*

NONFICTION

ANGEL ARREDONDO is the author of children's book, *I Love My Red Wagon*, which is now available, and a second book, *I Love Walking In Water*, currently in production. These books are 2 of 5 milestones reached and written in the Angel's Heart Series while living and coping with a disability. Angel was born with a rare condition called Arthrogyrosis Multiplex Congenita (AMC). Angel is a teacher, advocate, and speaker, founder of Project Hope Rolls, and an inclusion model for PhotoAbility.net. She was chosen First Runner-Up for 2015 Ms. Wheelchair Texas. She participates with the Advocacy Corps Group for the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities. **Workshop:** *How to Write Your Own Fun Autobiography: Our class will consist of writing and illustrating fun memorable moments of our lives. We will read I LOVE MY RED WAGON, discuss and write about our diversities through our own unique experiences that will inspire and/or entertain others by writing and telling our stories.*

SIMONE MONIQUE BARNES has been working with, for, in, and through the arts and honoring culture for more than 20 years. When she's not writing, teaching Laughter Yoga, or helping youth and adults to use the arts as a tool for social change, she's hanging out with her super cute little therapy dog, Razz. **Workshop:** *Students will become content editors and photojournalists for the day, helping Simone take and select photos of Razz, and write captions and content about his adventures at the Young Writers' Workshop for his microblog All That Razz (<https://www.facebook.com/allthatrazz/>).*

NAIJEAN BERNARD-ONWERE, PhD, emigrated to the United States with her family from Grenada in the mid 1970s. She grew up in a diverse, international community in the Washington DC area. For her PhD dissertation, she traveled to three Caribbean islands to investigate and compare the differences in racial identity development between college-age youth in the Caribbean and in the United States. Throughout her career as a mental health professional, Naijean has worked with children, youth and families in various capacities, from juvenile corrections, school systems, and child welfare. She is currently a Senior Foster Care Trainer for a Fortune 500 company. She enjoys presenting on the intersection of trauma, racial identity and how proper hair/skin care can help to provide cultural healing for Black children in the US foster care system.

Workshop: *"I'm weird and it's ok!" This workshop will explore what makes us all unique*

and maybe even a little weird. Workshop participants will explore their own passions, stories and unique hobbies. Feel free to draw, sing and of course, write out what makes you a unique person. We will use "emojis" as an ice-breaker to get our creative tools flowing!

AIMEE BORDERS is a copywriter. That means she is paid by companies to write words that persuade people to think, feel and do. And she's going to share the secrets she has learned working for companies like Coca Cola, Pizza Hut, Texas Children's Hospital and more with you. **Workshop:** *The Power to Persuade – Secrets from an Advertising Copywriter. Learn the six questions every good copywriter asks and how you can use copywriting to make your own writing more powerful. We'll look at good ads, talk about why they work and then use copywriting secrets to write an ad of our own.*

ASHELY "FLASHE" GORDON is a word nerd, so much so that a branch of her business, Fenomenal Flashe Empire, is entitled Word Nerds Writing Co. Flashe has been fascinated with all types of writing styles since her youth. Books were her best friends growing up so naturally she had an affinity for writing. Today, she does grant writing, curriculum writing, articles of incorporation for organizations, but she always finds time to write for fun. Her current projects include her blog, "The Young and the Breastless" (named for Flashe's triumph over breast cancer), and an autobiographical project she is overseeing. **Workshop:** *"Creative Nonfiction: Making the Facts Fun and Fascinating." In this workshop, students will learn what nonfiction is and how to write it in a new, groundbreaking method. More and more authors are turning to creative nonfiction to captivate audiences when presenting real life stories. Students will choose a topic and then be guided on how to present their truth accurately yet excitingly.*

MICHAEL HALL is a journalist and musician. In 1997 he joined Texas Monthly, and his stories have appeared in The Best American Magazine Writing, The Best American Sports Writing, The Best American Nonrequired Reading, and Da Capo Best Music Writing. As a musician, Mr. Hall has played in Austin bands Wild Seeds, the Setters, the Lollygaggers, and the Savage Trip. **Workshop:** *"How to Write a Story." We'll talk about how journalists pick stories and then how they write them. We'll all write a short piece ourselves; the topic will be "The Best Day of My Life."*

JESSICA LUTHER is a journalist and author who most often writes about sports and culture. Her work has appeared in ESPN Magazine, New York Times Magazine, and the Texas Observer, as well as at Sports Illustrated, BuzzFeed, and Texas Monthly. **Workshop:** *We will talk about how sports is more than wins and losses or what happens on the field/court/pitch. In this workshop, we'll use that to springboard away from the straight-forward sports story and find a deeper, richer story to tell. How do we identify characters and narratives worth exploring? What more can we learn about ourselves and our society through the lens of sports?*

NETTIE REYNOLDS is a nationally published essayist and speaker, and storyteller. She's a humorist and has spoken at *Erma Bombeck Conference, Texas Governor's Conference for*

*Women, BookExpoAmerica, Social Venture Network Conference, the Living Room Series, Frontera Fest and others. Nettie was most recently featured as a participant in the nationally lauded **Listen To Your Mother** show. She is a laughter yoga instructor, hula hooper and ukulele player. Ms. Reynolds believes in the power of humor in stories.*

Workshop: *Nettie will help you find the funny story inside of you that you're aching to share. She'll walk you through her five minute funny exercise which you can use anytime to help you find the humor in any story and write it so others laugh as well.*