

Guidelines for Mentoring

Main Objective of Mentoring at the Conference

Most of us have been to writing conferences in the past and seen a wide variety of methods used to get experienced authors and new writers together. One of our more experienced authors proposed a plan to have less experienced writers work with published authors on a one-on-one basis.

The mentoring program at the September 2019 joint SouthWest Writers (SWW) / Military Writers Society of America (MWSA) writing conference will build on the travel to Albuquerque of several award-winning authors who are willing to give their time to individual writers. This is easy for the MWSA authors who spend nearly the entire time in the conference hotel. Similar award-winning and successful SouthWest Writer presenters were asked if they would be willing to also spend time with up-and-coming writers. All presenters agreed to participate in the mentoring program.

The objective of the mentoring program is to pair writers in search of guidance with established authors who can share what has worked for them.

Secondary Objective

One of the challenges at any conference is how to deal with follow-on questions or in-depth issues that tend to disrupt the schedule of speakers and panelists. At this joint writing conference, when discussion or questions threaten to exceed the allotted time for an event, participants who wish to meet with speakers or panelists for additional interaction will be invited to do so in a separate mentoring session and not during time allocated for interaction in the main conference room.

Mechanics for Mentor

Each mentor will be asked in an email how many individual mentoring sessions they are prepared to support and to select their preferred mentoring topic. The number may vary because some presenters have multiple events, individuals may want to hear a presentation and not make themselves available, and some have administrative duties that will occupy time that might otherwise be spent mentoring.

Given the number of mentoring events each mentor is willing to provide, the program staff will prepare a poster board with event and other non-available times blocked out for each mentor. The remaining slots will be apportioned in approximately thirty minute segments. If a mentor replies to the program staff that they are willing to mentor, for example, two individuals, then once those two slots are assigned, this mentor will be marked as not available for any additional mentoring sessions.

When a mentor and a mentee have been scheduled, they will meet up at the registration desk. The mentor will select a meeting location. Available locations will include any public areas in the hotel that are not already being used. Another choice would be to sit together during meals or snacks. A third

26 June 2019

choice might include the program director's hotel suite. Joe Badal will manage the mentoring program and should be available in the main conference room most of the time he is not on a panel.

Mechanics for Mentee

Individuals who have registered for the conference and desire to meet with a mentor need to sign up on the scheduling board. Mentor short biographies were published online in the agenda and the program to be provided to each attendee at registration. Each mentor has listed the topics they are prepared to help mentees with. Attendees are invited to discuss what they would like assistance with during the Thursday evening reception and Friday morning registration.

When the time arrives for the mentoring session, meet with the mentor at the registration desk outside the main entrance to the main conference room.

For both the Mentors and Mentees

Please provide feedback and recommendations on this new program to the joint conference committee via provided conference evaluations before the end of the conference so we can continue to improve programs.