



FESTIVAL GUIDE

SEPT. 15-20

CEDAR CITY



**SOUTHERN
UTAH BOOK
FESTIVAL**

WHAT IS THE SOUTHERN UTAH BOOK FESTIVAL ?

Southern Utah Book Festival (501(c)3) is a community-wide celebration of literature that connects readers, writers, artists, and book enthusiasts. The festival exists to promote literacy among children and adults and is held in partnership with UT Humanities Statewide Book Festival.

More information about us can be found on our website. We're thrilled to be hosting this festival in Cedar City, Utah, which we acknowledge as the ancestral homeland of the Nung'wu, or Southern Paiute People.



GET IN CONTACT

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CONTENTS

Venues | pg. 4

Come visit us at five locations throughout the week.

Panelists | pg. 5

Discover new writers, illustrators, and filmmakers and engage with familiar ones.

Schedule & Descriptions | pg. 12

Explore everything we have to offer during the festival.

Sponsors | pg. 16

Support our generous festival sponsors that helped make these events happen.

WHERE WE'LL BE



Bookdom Apothecary

1579 N Main St STE 110



Cedar Fun Center

170 E Fiddlers Canyon Rd



Main Street Books

25 N Main St



Cedar City Library

303 N 100 E



Southern Utah Museum of Art

13 S 300 W

OUR PANELISTS

John Belk is an associate professor of English at Southern Utah University. His poetry collection, *The Gardens of Our Childhoods*, was featured in Poets & Writers Magazine and was selected as one of the best new poetry books of 2023 by the New York Public Library. His chapbook, *The Weathering of Igneous Rockforms in High-Altitude Riparian Environments*, is available from Cathexis Northwest.

Helen Boswell is a professor of biology at Southern Utah University, where she has enjoyed teaching since 1999. She has authored the YA *Mythology* fantasy trilogy, contemporary romance *Losing Enough*, nonfiction work *My Fish Ate Your Fish: Can Evolution and Religion Play Nicely?*, and several scientific journal articles. In addition to teaching and writing, Helen enjoys spending time with her two sons and also caring for her small zoo of dogs, reptiles, and tarantulas.

Chelsea Lane Campbell holds an MFA from Texas State University, where she was a W. Morgan & Lou Claire Rose Fellow as well as the recipient of the Judith Caldwell Miller Endowed Scholarship. Her essays appear in *The Rumpus*, *Southern Indiana Review*, and *Hunger Mountain*. Chelsea teaches creative nonfiction writing in southern Utah, where she lives with her husband and daughter. She is currently at work on a collection of essays about remaking her identity in her 30s.

Steve Capone, Jr., Whisper House Press founder, is an award-winning, Utah-based writer hailing from the Rust Belt. He is a recipient of the Denis Diderot grant in support of his summer 2025 residency at Chateau d'Orquevaux in rural France. He self-published his first YA historical fiction novel, *Max in the Capital of Spies*, in 2024. *Jimmy vs. Communism* is due out soon, and he has horror novels in the works. His "Cure for Creativity" won Best Short Screenplay at the Bloody Mirror Film Festival in 2024.

Judy Corry is a Amazon Top 12 and USA Today Bestselling Author of contemporary and YA romance. She writes romance because she can't get enough of the feeling of falling in love. She's known for writing heart-pounding kisses, endearing characters, and hard-won happily ever afters. She lives in southern Utah with the boy who took her to prom, their four awesome kids, and two dogs. She's addicted to love stories, dark chocolate, and chai lattes.

John DiAntonio is the artistic director of the Tony Award-winning Utah Shakespeare Festival. A highly experienced actor, director, and playwright, he was fundamental in the creation of the Headwaters New Play Festival and has had ten original plays produced, including five that have toured around the Southwest.

Danielle Beazer Dubrasky is a professor of English and creative writing at Southern Utah University and the author of *Drift Migration*, *Ruin and Light*, and *Invisible Shores*. Her poems have been published in *Terrain.org*, *Pilgrimage*, *Sugar House Review*, *Salt Front*, *Cave Wall*, *Contrary Magazine*, *South Dakota Review*, and elsewhere.

Scott R. Edgar is a father of five who finds peace in long desert hikes, wildflowers in mountain meadows, and the occasional perfectly shaped rock. He's a self-published poet with three books out and a fourth on the way, the host of *The Poet (delayed)* podcast, and the co-founder of "Torchlight," a monthly arts and open mic event in Bountiful, Utah. He also practices law in solo practice, balancing the legal world with a steady pull toward creative life.

Rosalyn Eves is a writer of award-winning young adult novels: a historical fantasy trilogy, *Blood Rose Rebellion*, a historical novel about the American West (*Beyond the Mapped Stars*), and two YA Regency romantic comedies. She's a three-time Whitney Award winner.



Autumn Gillard is the Paiute Indian Tribe's cultural resource manager. An expert in Southern Paiute astronomy, ethnobotany, and culture, she has a master's degree in cultural resource management and currently resides on the Kaibab Paiute Reservation.

Jonathan Steven Green is an award-winning filmmaker and executive producer with over 40 accolades for his work in documentary and scripted storytelling. His films often explore themes of resilience, justice, and belief, bringing cinematic depth to real-world narratives. Known for his immersive style and sharp narrative instincts, Jonathan is dedicated to telling stories that challenge perceptions and amplify underrepresented voices, creating impactful, emotionally resonant work across film and television.

Kevin Holdsworth is the author of three books of nonfiction: *Big Wonderful*, *Red Stone Heart*, and *Good Water*, a finalist for the 15 Bytes Book Award. He's currently working on a novel and collection of shorter fiction. He lives in Cedar City, Utah, with his wife, Jennifer Sorensen, and demented dog, Trudie.

Kase Johnston is the author of the novel *CAST AWAY* from Torrey House Press and *Let the Wild Grasses Grow*. His book *Beyond the Grip Craniosynostosis* was awarded the Gold Quill in Creative Nonfiction by the League of Utah Writers for 2015. His work has been published widely by literary journals and trade magazines.

Bonnie Kelso is a picture book author and illustrator from Las Vegas, Nevada. With a background as an exhibit designer for organizations such as Smithsonian Institution, National Geographic, and NASA, Bonnie enjoys taking complex information and distilling it into bite-sized pieces. Her passion for nature and environmental awareness shines through in her books, murals, and community art workshops. She is a graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design and winner of the 2021 SCBWI Karen Cushman Award.

Bill Kershnik is an associate professor of communication media studies at Southern Utah University and a successful screenwriter. He is known for *Shark*, *Things I Remember*, and *The Aquabats! RadVentures!* A recent project, *The Long Con*, won Best Comedy Teleplay at the Austin Comedy Film Festival and was a finalist for various awards, including one at the Nantucket Film Festival.

Cindy King is the author of a poetry collection, *Zoonotic*, and two chapbooks, *Easy Street* and *Lesser Birds of Paradise*. Her latest manuscript won the C&R Poetry Book Award. Her latest chapbook will be released by Galileo Press this year. Cindy's work appears in *Threepenny Review*, *The Sun*, *New England Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, and elsewhere. She is a professor of creative writing at Utah Tech University and an editorial associate at *Seneca Review* and *TriQuarterly*.

Ken Lamug is an author-illustrator who has created award-winning picture books and graphic novels. Ken has won various awards and is most proud of being selected as Nevada's 2020 National Book Festival Author and (LVCCLD) Library Card Design Winner. Ken's latest book is the *Mischief and Mayhem* graphic series.

Craig Lancaster is a novelist and playwright who lives in Billings, Montana. He's a two-time winner of the prestigious High Plains International Book Award. His most recent novel, *Jane, Divided*, came out in September 2025. Its immediate predecessor, *Northward Dreams* (2024), won a bronze medal in the 2025 Independent Publisher Book Awards. His plays *Straight On To Stardust* and *The Garish Sun* were the season-opening productions for Yellowstone Repertory Theatre in 2023 and 2024.

C.R. (Sylvia) Langille is a retired, disabled veteran with a deep love for weird and creepy tales. This prompted her to form Timber Ghost Press in 2021. She is an award-winning author, affiliate member of the Horror Writers Association, and DEI Chair for the League of Utah Writers. She earned her MFA from Seton Hill University in 2014 and was named Editor of the Year by the League of Utah Writers in 2024.

David McMullin is a picture book author, illustrator, and children's poet. His books include *Free to Be Fabulous* (HarperCollins), *Rock 'n' Roll Baby* (Penguin/Random House) and a soon-to-be-announced early reader series. Honors include an Ann Whitford Paul Award, an Astra International Picture Book Writing Contest award, and a Madness Poetry championship. David and his husband are currently full-time world travelers, bird nerds, and YouTubers. In past careers, he was a Broadway actor, an educator, and a children's librarian.

L. E. Modesitt, Jr., is the author of 85 science fiction and fantasy novels and nearly 50 short stories, as well as assorted nonfiction and political/economic commentary. His five fantasy series include the *Recluce Saga*, the *Imager Portfolio*, and the *Grand Illusion*.

Brittney Orton finds joy in helping and advocating for kids with disabilities in her community. This passion led her to a new love—writing—and the creation of *Through My Eyes*, her first children's book. Brittney grew up in Moab surrounded by family and later moved to southern Utah at eighteen. She has lived there ever since with her husband Kody and their four kids.

Todd Robert Petersen is a professor of English at Southern Utah University, where he teaches creative writing and film studies courses. In 2018, Counterpoint Press released a novel in stories called *It Needs to Look Like We Tried*, and *Picnic in the Ruins*, a dark comedy about antiquities theft set on the Utah/Arizona border, came out in 2021.

Zoë Petersen is an illustrator living in southern Utah. Her work has been awarded by the Utah Society of Professional Journalists and *3x3 Magazine*. Since 2021, she has been employed as an editorial illustrator. Her art has appeared in *Deseret News*, *Gumption*, and *Short Story, Long*.



Micah Player is the illustrator of *Paletero Man* with Lucky Diaz, a Bank Street Book and Junior Library Guild selection. *Itty Bitty Betty Blob* with Constance Lombardo was chosen for the Society of Illustrators Original Art 2024 show. He is the author and illustrator of *This is a Moment*, which came out in March 2025 from Rocky Pond. He lives in Cedar City with his family.

Lucy Tayco Price is the author of *Spinner*, the first book in *The Dova Chronicles*. She is a freelance writer of poetry, short fiction, and various forms of creative nonfiction. Her favorite topics are people, nature, and theology. Her work has appeared in several magazines and journals. Lucy graduated from Southern Utah University with a BA in creative writing and currently lives in Cedar City, Utah, with her husband and two sons.

Jonathan Reddoch is a co-owner of Collective Tales Publishing. He writes sci-fi, fantasy, romance, and horror. He's a prolific flash fiction author but also writes poetry and short stories. Notable works included in *Deluxe Darkness*, *Darkness 101: Lessons Were Learned* and *This Isn't the Place*.

Jahanara Saleh was born and raised in Tehran, Iran, and came to the United States to pursue a film career. She is an award-winning writer, director, and producer with a unique approach to narrative filmmaking. Her films have screened at festivals internationally, and she has contributed to major television networks. She is developing new film and television projects and serves as an assistant professor of filmmaking at Southern Utah University.

Peter Sham has written numerous plays and musicals, most notably *Lend Me A Tenor: The Musical*, and *To Catch A Thief: The Musical*, which will have West End and Broadway premieres in 2026-27. A professor of theatre at Southern Utah University, he is a two-time Thunderbird Award winner for Professor of the Year, an Outstanding Scholar of the Year Award winner, the recipient of SUU's Board of Trustees Award for Excellence, and the recipient of the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival's Excellence in Education Award.

Elizabeth Suggs is the co-owner of Collective Tales Publishing, president of the Utah Horror Writers Association, owner of Editing Mee, and the author of a growing number of award-winning published stories, one of which, titled "Into the Dark," was an Amazon Bestseller, and another won second place in the Quills Short Story Contest "Technicolor Tears." She is a book reviewer, popular bookstagrammer, and cosplayer.

Nano Taggart is a founding editor of *Sugar House Review* and serves as faculty advisor for SUU's literary magazine, *Kolob Canyon Review*. You can see some of his writing in places like the *Laurel Review*, *Verse Daily*, *Terrain.org*, *The Shore Poetry*, and elsewhere.

Jessica Tvordi's debut indie novel, *The Schoolmaster*, transports readers to the court of King James VI of Scotland. Jessica is an associate professor of English at Southern Utah University, where she co-organizes the Wooden O Symposium and has various academic publications.

Elaine/E.B. Vickers is an award-winning author of picture books, middle grade, and young adult novels that aim to help readers of all ages find connection and belonging. Several years and one PhD later, she found her way back to her hometown of southern Utah, where she now spends her time writing, teaching college chemistry, and exploring with her family.

Johnny Worthen is an award-winning, best-selling author. Trained in stand-up comedy, modern literary criticism and cultural studies, he writes excellent multi-genre fiction, symbolized by his love of tie-dye and good words. "I wear tie-dye for my friends, but I write what I like to read," he says. Johnny teaches writing at the University of Utah and lives in a house with his wife and assorted cats. There's also a lawn.

Lori Wrangle is a midwife, teacher, and author with her first book being published by the University of Utah Press this year. This is her first year at the Southern Utah Book Festival.

Natalie Padilla Young is a co-founder and editor-in-chief of the poetry magazine *Sugar House Review*. By day, she works as an art director for a Salt Lake City ad agency. Her first book *All of This Was Once Under Water* is out from Quarter Press (2023). Natalie's poetry has appeared in various magazines. She serves on the Lightscatter Press board and lives in southern Utah with the poet Nano Taggart and two dogs.



Shari Zollinger is the author of *Carrying Her Stone*, an ekphrastic poetry collection. She is the resident astrologer for Sugar House Review as well as a life coach, traveler, and book enthusiast. She abandoned social media moons ago.



Learn more about and connect with our authors on our website by visiting southernutahbookfestival.org or scanning the QR code.

WEEKDAY EVENTS



Monday, Sept. 15 | Main Street Books

Sales Launch | 9 a.m.-6 p.m.

Join the Southern Utah Book Festival all day for book and merchandise sales.

Tuesday, Sept. 16 | Cedar City Library

Respectful Methodology of Publication Related to the Southern Paiute | 2-3 p.m.

Listen to a presentation by Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah Cultural Resource Manager Autumn Gillard on the interior patio.

Wednesday, Sept. 17 | SUMA

Zine Workshop | 5-6:30 p.m.

Learn about zines with illustrator Zoë Petersen, then participate in a workshop to create your own!

Thursday, Sept. 18 | Two Locations

Sales and Signing Event | 12-2 p.m.

Meet David McMullin at Bookdom Apothecary and get your books signed.

***What She Carried* Film Screening | 5-7 p.m.**

Watch Utah Shakespeare Festival Artistic Director John DiAntonio's narrative feature about a woman's wilderness journey after a 1869 cholera outbreak. Screening at Cedar Fun Center.

Friday, Sept. 19 | Bookdom Apothecary

Sales and Signings | 2-4 p.m.

Meet Cindy King, Jonathan Reddoch, and Elizabeth Suggs at Bookdom Apothecary and get your books signed.

SATURDAY PANELS

Throughout the day, various vendors will be located outside in the Cedar City Main Street Park and presenting authors will be available inside the library for sales and signings.

10-10:45 a.m.

- **Indie Auteurs: The Power of Independent Cinema | East**
John DiAntonio, Jonathan Steven Green, and Jahanara Saleh discuss the art of storytelling through cinema. Moderated by Bill Kershishnik.
- **Enduring Horror: Creeps That Keep Creeping | West**
Horror captivates audiences by tapping into primal fears and emotions. Join Steve Capone, Jr., C.R. (Sylvia) Langille, Jonathan Reddoch, and Elizabeth Suggs as they discuss the unmatched visceral experiences the horror genre provides.
- **Real Life Artfully Crafted | Special Collections**
Chelsea Campbell and Kevin Holdsworth explore creative nonfiction, a genre where truth and Truth aren't the same and not every story has to be linear. Moderated by Jennifer Sorensen.

11-11:45 a.m.

- **Playwriting Passion: Adaptations that Enthrall | East**
Playwrights Peter Sham and Craig Lancaster discuss how to compellingly adapt stories for the stage. Moderated by Jessica Tvordi.
- **Where Words and Art Intertwine | West**
Join Bonnie Kelso, David McMullin, Brittney Orton, and Micah Player for a panel discussion about writing and illustrating picture books. Moderated by Elaine/E.B. Vickers.
- **In a World of... | Special Collections**
From initial spark to intricate details, explore how to make fictional universes feel real with Helen Boswell, L.E. Modesitt, Jr., and Lucy Tayco Price. Moderated by C.R. (Sylvia) Langille.



12-12:45 p.m.

- **2D Heroes in Graphic Novels | East**
Explore the worlds of *Mischief and Mayhem* and *Petra and the Flea King* with graphic novel author-illustrator Ken Lamug. Moderated by Bonnie Kelso.
- **Is Poetry the Fifth Element? Pt. 2 | West**
John Belk, Danielle Beazer Dubrasky, Cindy King, Natalie Padilla Young, and Shari Zollinger continue last year's discussion on poetry techniques through the four elements.
- **Truth in the Telling: Adapting Life to Story | Special Collections**
Kase Johnstun and debut author Lori Wrangle discuss the process of writing a memoir and what makes personal stories compelling. Moderated by Craig Lancaster.

1-1:45 p.m.

- **Writing for a Young Adult Audience | East**
Join Judy Corry, Rosalyn Eves, Elaine/E.B. Vickers, and Johnny Worthen for the intricacies of crafting stories that resonate with YA audiences. Moderated by Kase Johnstun.
- **Crafting a Compelling Screenplay | West**
Hear key insights into gripping, industry-level screenplay writing from Steve Capone, Jr., and Bill Kershnik. Moderated by Todd Robert Petersen.
- **Whimsical Worlds, Line by Line | Special Collections**
David McMullin shares his process for writing and publishing engaging, sensory-rich poetry for kids. Moderated by Scott Edgar.

2-2:45 p.m.

- **Clash of the Illustrators | East**
Watch Bonnie Kelso, Ken Lamug, Zoë Petersen, and Micah Player face off in an unforgettable illustration battle. Moderated by David McMullin.
- **Mystery: Solving the Puzzle | West**
Join Johnny Worthen for the history of mystery and a discussion of the genre's key elements.
- **Pushing the Boundaries of Literary Fiction | Special Collections**
Novelists Kase Johnstun, Craig Lancaster, and Todd Robert Petersen explore the literary devices that shape and push at conventional storytelling. Moderated by Kevin Holdsworth.



3-3:45 p.m.

- **Boundless Creativity and Timeless Storytelling | East**
Join Elaine/E.B. Vickers as she discusses her books and her writing process for picture, middle grade, and young adult books. Moderated by Lucy Tayco Price.
- **Slow Burns and Scorching Kisses | West**
Judy Corry, Rosalyn Eves, and Elizabeth Suggs zoom in on the romance novel and the impact of meaningful relationships. Moderated by Helen Boswell.
- **Off the Main(stream) Road**
Dive into the dynamic realms of podcasts, zines, literary magazines, and self-publishing with Scott Edgar, Zoë Petersen, Nano Taggart, and Jessica Tvordi. Moderated by Shauri Cherie.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

Special thanks go to the entities that have made this inaugural festival possible. Their aid has allowed us to provide compensation to our panelists, market the festival, create the festival guide you're holding, and more.

If you would like to donate to or sponsor us, visit our website for more information. Your support will help us with future programming and expanding the festival's reach.

Special Collections

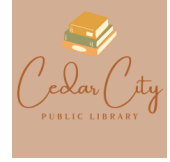


Cedar City's Recreation, Arts, and Parks Tax is a 0.1% local option sales tax that can be used to fund items defined by the state tax commission.



Cedar City & Brian Head celebrate a unique balance of outdoor adventure and the arts. We offer world-class cultural attractions alongside Utah's famous Mighty Five® National Parks.

First Edition



Hardback Book



UTAH**HUMANITIES**
Ideas in Action

Paperback Book



Chapbook



NOTE SPACE

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This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

MEET OUR TEAM

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Jennifer Sorensen, Advisor
Elizabeth Suggs, Advisor
Shauri Thacker, Media Coordinator
Diane Walsh, Advisor
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Special Thanks

Brandon Burk
Cedar City Senior Center
Derek Christensen
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Iron County School District
Donn Jersey
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*Festival guide by Shauri Thacker, logo by Micah Player,
and illustrations by Zoë Petersen*