




— SUN VALLEY —
WRITERS' CONFERENCE

"Words & Wonder"

PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

Saturday, July 19 – Monday, July 21, 2025

SATURDAY, JULY 19 OVERVIEW





TIME	EVENT	LOCATION	EXTRAS
9:00 AM	Registration Opens	Bookstore Tent	
9:00 AM – 12:30 PM	Typewriter Rodeo	Pavilion Lawn	
11:00 AM - 12:30 PM	Lunch	Lunch Village	
11:30 AM	New Attendee Orientation	Tent A	
11:45 AM – 12:15 PM	Art & Words Exhibition Tour	Pavilion West Terrace	
12:30 – 1:45 PM	Doris Kearns Goodwin	Pavilion	
2:15 – 3:15 PM 1 ST Breakout Sessions	Clara Bingham with Anne Taylor Fleming		
	Sloane Crosley, Andre Dubus III & Griffin Dunne with John Burnham Schwartz		
	Rachel Eliza Griffiths & Safiya Sinclair		
	Sonia Purnell		
	Dr. Theodore H. Schwartz with Willy Walker		
	Dr. Abraham Verghese with Alexandra Schwartz		
3:45 – 4:45 PM 2 ND Breakout Sessions	Meenakshi Ahamed, Dr. Vivek H. Murthy & Dr. Abraham Verghese with Evan Osnos		
	Jonathan Blitzer & Paola Ramos with Andrea Elliott		
	Dan Jones		
	Liz Moore with Jenny Emery Davidson		
	Todd S. Purdum		
	Admiral James Stavridis with Scott Moyers		
5:30 – 6:30 PM	2025 Writer in the World	Pavilion	

LIVESTREAMING

For livestream info please visit:
svwc.com/livestream

Livestream and Watch Party talks TBD.
Program schedule is subject to change.

EXTRA WAYS TO WATCH

-  Special Series Pavilion Passes
-  Free Lawn Seating
-  Free Livestreaming
-  Argyros Watch Party

Day One

Saturday, July 19

Conference Registration

9:00 AM | BOOKSTORE TENT

Typewriter Rodeo

9:00 AM – 12:30 PM | PAVILION LAWN

Lunch

See pocket schedule for time and location.

New Attendee Orientation

11:30 AM | TENT A

Art & Words Exhibition Tour

11:45 AM – 12:15 PM | PAVILION WEST TERRACE

Doris Kearns Goodwin

AN UNFINISHED LOVE STORY: A PERSONAL HISTORY OF THE 1960s

12:30 – 1:45 PM | PAVILION

There is no finer voice to launch our 2025 festival than that of **DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN**, the revered and respected Pulitzer Prize-winning historian and biographer. Now she has written something thrilling and different: a moving memoir of her long marriage to Richard “Dick” Goodwin, a presidential speechwriter and close adviser to John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, the latter of whom he worked with to develop the Great Society. She will talk about the passion she and Dick shared for each other and for the country, and about the pivotal moments and central figures of the 1960s—the Kennedys, Johnsons, and Martin Luther King Jr.—and tell us what still fills her with hope. Love stories don’t get richer or more meaningful than this.

Clara Bingham with Anne Taylor Fleming

THE MOVEMENT:

HOW WOMEN'S LIBERATION TRANSFORMED AMERICA 1963-1973

2:15 – 3:15 PM | 1ST BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

In her powerful and exhilarating oral history, *The Movement*, award-winning journalist **CLARA BINGHAM** brings to vivid life the years from 1963 to 1973 when a disparate group of amazing, visionary, frustrated, and feisty women helped knock down the barriers to equality that had existed throughout history. It is an extraordinary, sometimes overlooked story with deep resonance today. In conversation with **ANNE TAYLOR FLEMING**, Bingham will share the stories—and voices—of icons like Betty Friedan and Billie Jean King but also of the lesser-known heroes who were the heart and soul of the modern feminist movement that changed America forever.

Sloane Crosley, Andre Dubus III, and Griffin Dunne with John Burnham Schwartz

THE ART OF MEMOIR: AN ALL-STAR LINEUP

2:15 – 3:15 PM | 1ST BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

Writing one's own life story well and artfully is a hard business. You must navigate the uncertain shoals of memory and the scar tissue of the past, and in doing so you may well emerge with entirely new scars for your labor. You must consider deeply but not flinch in the face of discoveries, old and new. You must take the honest measure of yourself and others. **SLOANE CROSLY** (*Grief Is for People*), **ANDRE DUBUS III** (*Townie*), and **GRIFFIN DUNNE** (*The Friday Afternoon Club*) have all written brilliant memoirs and come out the other side. In conversation with SVWC Literary Director **JOHN BURNHAM SCHWARTZ**, they will unpack their respective literary journeys, mapping for us some of the greatest obstacles confronted and deepest joys experienced along the way.

Rachel Eliza Griffiths and Safiya Sinclair

A POETRY READING

2:15 – 3:15 PM | 1ST BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

Today, we are gifted with a reading by two luminous poets, **RACHEL ELIZA GRIFFITHS** and **SAFIYA SINCLAIR**, two women who happen to be great friends and are appearing together in what promises to be a memorable event. Griffiths is the author of five collections of poetry, including her most recent, *Seeing the Body*, poems both wrenching and beautiful, many about the life and death of her mother. The poems in Sinclair's *Cannibal* explore Jamaican childhood, race relations in America, history and exile in language that feels both utterly precise and wildly original. Think of this reading as a poetry concert performed by two exquisite lyricists.

Sonia Purnell

KINGMAKER: PAMELA HARRIMAN'S ASTONISHING LIFE OF POWER, SEDUCTION, AND INTRIGUE

2:15 – 3:15 PM | 1ST BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

When Pamela Churchill Harriman died in 1997, she was often written off as a courtesan and social climber known for her glamorous life and many erotic adventures. But in her delicious and comprehensive new biography, prize-winning author **SONIA PURNELL** helps set the record straight in the captivating story of a woman who was at the center of power over five decades and two continents. Purnell will share the details of Harriman's glittery and strategic life: how at age 20, as Churchill's beloved daughter-in-law, she became a "secret weapon" during World War II, and how, later in the United States, she hand-picked Bill Clinton and helped propel him to the presidency.

Dr. Theodore H. Schwartz with Willy Walker

GRAY MATTERS: A BIOGRAPHY OF BRAIN SURGERY

2:15 – 3:15 PM | 1ST BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

Neurosurgery as a profession is a hundred years old, but few know how it works or how far it has come in saving lives through dazzlingly intricate operations.

DR. THEODORE H. SCHWARTZ is a master brain surgeon whose new book, *Gray Matters*, shares the history of his profession and its pioneers, along with many of its most fascinating wonders. In conversation with **WILLY WALKER**, one of our favorite guest interviewers and host of the *Walker Webcast*, Dr. Schwartz will tell us exactly what it's like to apply the scalpel, wield the drill, or extract a tumor in the most delicate and precise surgeries known to man.

Dr. Abraham Verghese with Alexandra Schwartz

THE COVENANT OF WATER

2:15 – 3:15 PM | 1ST BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

Beloved author and physician **ABRAHAM VERGHESE**, whose novel *The Covenant of Water* Oprah Winfrey called “one of the best books I’ve ever read in my entire life,” will sit down with *The New Yorker* staff writer **ALEXANDRA SCHWARTZ** for a conversation that will touch on many fascinating and important topics, from medicine to writing to India to family, love, healing, and wonder. As Verghese himself has said, “Though I am fascinated by knowledge, I am even more fascinated by wisdom.” He will share his.

Cocktails

See pocket schedule for time and location.

Meenakshi Ahamed, Dr. Vivek H. Murthy, and Dr. Abraham Verghese with Evan Osnos

INDIAN GENIUS: THE METEORIC RISE OF INDIANS IN AMERICA

3:45 – 4:45 PM | 2ND BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

In her captivating new book, journalist and author **MEENAKSHI AHAMED** asks and answers a fascinating question: What accounts for the success of Indian Americans in American culture? Through portraits of some of the major Indian American success stories in tech, medicine, and public policy, she reveals the unique and shared strengths behind their achievements. Ahamed, along with two of her book's subjects—former Surgeon General of the United States **VIVEK H. MURTHY, MD**, and physician and author **ABRAHAM VERGHESE, MD**—will talk with *The New Yorker* staff writer and author **EVAN OSNOS** about what has moved and motivated them through their productive and meaningful lives.

Jonathan Blitzer and Paola Ramos with Andrea Elliott

A CONVERSATION ABOUT IMMIGRATION

3:45 – 4:45 PM | 2ND BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

No question, the topic of immigration has dominated many recent conversations in this country and generated a lot of heat. To discuss the topic, we have brought together two stellar reporters, **JONATHAN BLITZER**, author of the recent book *Everyone Who Is Gone Is Here*, and writer and Emmy Award-winning journalist **PAOLA RAMOS**. Both have covered the story in depth in recent years, putting in time at the southern border and traveling in and out of Mexico and South and Central America. In conversation with Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist **ANDREA ELLIOTT**, they will offer a firsthand look at our immigration crisis—how we got here and what might lie ahead.

Dan Jones

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF HENRY V

3:45 – 4:45 PM | 2ND BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

DAN JONES is not only an exceptional historian but also a riveting storyteller. In his new book, *Henry V*, he delivers a master class on the dramatic life and leadership of England's preeminent medieval monarch. Though Henry reigned over England for less than a decade and died at just 35, he looms over the landscape of the late Middle Ages and beyond. Shakespeare indelibly presented him as a study in youthful folly transformed into sober statesmanship. Jones considers Henry's reign "a case study in the art of leadership in a time of crisis." Join one of the most entertaining historians writing today for a deep—and deeply relevant—dive into the thrilling and unmissable life of England's greatest king.

Liz Moore with Jenny Emery Davidson

THE GOD OF THE WOODS

3:45 – 4:45 PM | 2ND BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

To read *The God of the Woods*, author **LIZ MOORE's** stunning literary thriller and *The New York Times* best crime novel of 2024, is to marvel at her ability to weave a complicated plot while also creating riveting characters—and suspects. From the minute a teenager vanishes from her Adirondack summer camp on an early August morning in 1975 until the final resolution, we are in a propulsive, multi-layered whodunit that touches on issues of class and loss and survival. Moore will talk with **JENNY EMERY DAVIDSON**, Executive Director of The Community Library in Ketchum, about how she manages such a complex storyline and whether she knew the end of the novel before she began. (All spoilers to be carefully avoided.)

Todd S. Purdum

DESI ARNAZ: THE MAN WHO INVENTED TELEVISION

3:45 – 4:45 PM | 2ND BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

Many generations have laughed at the classic episodes of *I Love Lucy* and the comedic genius of Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz, her husband on the show and in real life. There has been much focus on Lucy, but it turns out that Arnaz had a fascinating life of his own and made significant contributions to the entertainment industry, all of which we learn about in **TODD S. PURDUM**'s terrific new biography. Purdum, a veteran journalist and first-rate reporter, will talk about the book and trace Arnaz's journey from Cuban aristocracy to a world-class entertainer who helped spark the conga dance craze in America and revolutionized how sitcoms are filmed to this day.

Admiral James Stavridis with Scott Moyers

THE RESTLESS WAVE

3:45 – 4:45 PM | 2ND BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

A novel by **ADMIRAL JAMES STAVRIDIS** is both a nautical and psychological treat. In *The Restless Wave*, the former NATO Commander and four-star Admiral has given us a gripping and moving story of one young man's—and one great nation's—war at sea during the bloody first years of World War II. A great student of military history, Stavridis provides a deeply intimate look at wartime life in the Navy and how one young officer comes of age in the toughest of proving grounds. He will talk with his editor, **SCOTT MOYERS**, Vice President and Publisher of Penguin Press, about the pleasures and challenges of writing fiction and how he manages to write such intricate and pulse-raising battle scenes.

2025 Writer in the World

FILM AND PRESENTATION

5:30 – 6:30 PM | PAVILION







This year's recipient will be revealed from the stage during the presentation. The award recognizes a writer whose life's work embodies a rare combination of literary talent and moral imagination, helping us better understand the world and our place in it. Past recipients of the Writer in the World Prize include Barry Lopez in 2021, Abraham Verghese in 2023, and Margaret Atwood in 2024.

Save the Dates for SVWC 2026!

SATURDAY, JULY 18 - MONDAY, JULY 20

Please Note: The views, opinions, and positions expressed by SVWC speakers and attendees at the Conference are the speakers' and attendees' own and do not necessarily reflect those of SVWC, its founders, board members, staff, or volunteers.

SUNDAY, JULY 20 OVERVIEW





TIME	EVENT	LOCATION	EXTRAS
9:30 – 10:30 AM 1 ST Breakout Sessions	Jonathan Blitzer		
	Oren Cass with Liaquat Ahamed		
	Andre Dubus III		
	Ruth Reichl with Aleksandra Crapanzano		
	Nayantara Roy & Yael van der Wouden with Anne Taylor Fleming		
	Wright Thompson		
11:00 AM – 12:00 PM 2 ND Breakout Sessions	Carl Hiaasen with Dave Barry		
	Dan Jones		
	Erling Kagge with Willy Walker		
	Claire Keegan with Jenny Emery Davidson		
	Edward Luce & Admiral James Stavridis with Jonathan Blitzer		
	Safiya Sinclair with Alexandra Schwartz		
12:00 – 1:30 PM	Lunch	Lunch Village	
12:00 – 1:30 PM	Typewriter Rodeo	Pavilion Lawn	
12:15 – 12:45 PM	Art & Words Exhibition Tour	Pavilion West Terrace	
1:30 – 2:30 PM	Ocean Vuong with John Burnham Schwartz	Pavilion & Lawn	 
3:00 – 4:00 PM	The Improvised Shakespeare Company	Pavilion & Lawn	 
4:30 – 5:30 PM	Max Boot, Doris Kearns Goodwin & Evan Osnos	Pavilion & Lawn	 

LIVESTREAMING

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svwc.com/livestream

Livestream and Watch Party talks TBD.
Program schedule is subject to change.

EXTRA WAYS TO WATCH

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-  Free Livestreaming
-  Argyros Watch Party

Day Two

Sunday, July 20

Breakfast

See pocket schedule for time and location.

Jonathan Blitzer

IMMIGRATION AND THE SOUTHERN BORDER

9:30 – 10:30 AM | 1ST BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

What has often been missing in our national conversations about immigration is fair-minded and in-depth reporting from the front. Now we have that in **JONATHAN BLITZER**'s brilliant new book, *Everyone Who Is Gone Is Here: The United States, Central America, and The Making of a Crisis*, a moving and comprehensive look at the humanitarian crisis at the southern border told through portraits of some of the migrants who risk everything to come here and the policymakers who determine their fate. Blitzer, a staff writer at *The New Yorker*, will talk about our country's tragically convoluted immigration policy and about the deep reporting that informs his book.

Oren Cass with Liaquat Ahamed

WHAT HAPPENED TO AMERICA'S WORKING CLASS AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

9:30 – 10:30 AM | 1ST BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

OREN CASS is a conservative economist and one of the most prominent advocates for policies aimed at improving the lives of the working class, those who have been hit hard in the last 30 years by globalization and free trade agreements. He is the founder and chief economist of the Washington-based nonprofit organization American Compass and the author of *The Once and Future Worker*. In conversation with Pulitzer Prize-winning author **LIAQUAT AHAMED**, Cass will explore the ideas and economic policies—from the efficacy of tariffs and industrial policy to a revitalized labor movement—intended to support the flourishing of America's working families.

Andre Dubus III

GHOST DOGS: ON KILLERS AND KIN

9:30 – 10:30 AM | 1ST BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

During childhood summers in Louisiana, **ANDRE DUBUS III**'s grandfather taught him that men's work is hard. As an adult, whether tracking down a drug lord in Mexico as a bounty hunter or grappling with privilege while living with a rich girlfriend in New York City, Dubus worked at being a better human being. As he does in his brilliant collection of personal essays, Dubus will share moments of personal revelation with emotional generosity and stylistic grace, speaking from the heart about his successes, failures, triumphs, and pain. He'll reflect on the empowerment and shame he felt in keeping a gun and his decision, ultimately, to give it up—his violent youth and the challenges of fatherhood, the omnipresent expectations and contradictions of masculinity, the things writers remember and those they forget.

Ruth Reichl with Aleksandra Crapanzano

THE PARIS NOVEL

9:30 – 10:30 AM | 1ST BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

RUTH REICHL, one of our best-known and most well-loved food writers, is the author of five memoirs, including *Tender at the Bone* and *Save Me the Plums*. She is also a captivating novelist, and, as you might imagine, her fiction is full of many sensory pleasures. In her delightful new book, the protagonist Stella is left with an unusual inheritance: a one-way plane ticket and a note reading "Go to Paris." But Stella is hardly cut out for adventure; a traumatic childhood has confined her to the strict routines of her comfort zone. Reichl will talk to fellow food writer **ALEKSANDRA CRAPANZANO** about this novel that celebrates the city they both adore and the many reasons for living deliciously, taking chances, and finding your true home.

Nayantara Roy and Yael van der Wouden with Anne Taylor Fleming

NEW VOICES FELLOWS 2025

9:30 – 10:30 AM | 1ST BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

Both **NAYANTARA ROY**'s *The Magnificent Ruins* and **YAEL van der WOUDEN**'s *The Safekeep* are debut novels that were lauded around the globe last year, and both introduce us to complex, unforgettable young female protagonists who uncover dark secrets. In Roy's novel, an Indian American book editor in New York is summoned back to Kolkata to inherit her family's sprawling estate, leaving her to confront resentful family members who still live there, above all, her cold, mercurial mother. In *The Safekeep*, another house looms large, this one in the rural Dutch countryside in 1961, where Isabel is living in isolation, until her brother's girlfriend abruptly moves in, and the women tumble into a secret, obsessive affair, leading to a stunning plot twist that also manages to be a riveting exploration of the Holocaust. In conversation with **ANNE TAYLOR FLEMING**, Roy and van der Wouden will talk about the roads to their novels and about keeping faith with their literary ambitions.

Wright Thompson

THE BARN: THE SECRET HISTORY OF A MURDER IN MISSISSIPPI

9:30 – 10:30 AM | 1ST BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

WRIGHT THOMPSON's family farm in Mississippi is 23 miles from the site of one of the most notorious and consequential killings in American history—the murder of Emmett Till—yet he had to leave the state for college before he learned the first thing about it. Thompson's unforgettable new book, *The Barn*, is a shocking and revelatory account of that crime and how the truth was erased for so long. It is a story about property, and money, and power, and white supremacy. Thompson will bring to life the small group of dedicated people who have been engaged in the hard, fearful business of putting the killing floor of the barn on the map of the Delta and America and, in so doing, mapping the road this country must travel if we are to heal our oldest, deepest wound.

Carl Hiaasen with Dave Barry

FLORIDA ON OUR MINDS

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM | 2ND BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

No two authors have done more to raise the profile and skewer the image of their home state than **CARL HIAASEN** and **DAVE BARRY**, residents of the great state of Florida, which has so often been the target of their sharp eyes and comedic gifts. Both men were columnists for the *Miami Herald* before becoming authors with their tales about the oddballs, hustlers, and politicians (or, more likely, all-in-one) who make up the citizenry of a place they both call home. The two old friends will share some of their favorite stories from their homeland and talk about how they love to make each other laugh.

Dan Jones

WHAT THE MIDDLE AGES HAS DONE FOR THE MODERN WORLD

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM | 2ND BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

Did you know that Edward III's last parliament invented impeachment? That cancel culture in universities actually began at Oxford and Paris in the 14th century? That Edward II's bacchanalian revels would have made Johnny Depp's worst nights look like kindergarten parties by comparison? And then there's the Magna Carta, which supposedly limited the power of the monarchy and established the principle that everyone, including the king, is subject to the law. The great fun and scintillating interest of having in our midst British historian **DAN JONES**, host of the podcast *This Is History* and a riveting storyteller, will bring us intimately into the weirdly prescient past of the Middle Ages.

Erling Kagge with Willy Walker

AFTER THE NORTH POLE: THE HISTORY OF AN OBSESSION

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM | 2ND BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

ERLING KAGGE is a world-leading Norwegian explorer, philosopher, and author, the first in history to reach the North Pole, South Pole, and the summit of Mt. Everest on foot. His latest book, *After the North Pole*, is an epic adventure story of humanity's obsession with the North Pole. Blending memories from Kagge's expeditions, the book reckons with the pursuit of dreams and the challenging bonds between fathers and sons, while dramatically documenting the psychological toll of what it means to keep putting one foot in front of the other in the face of adversity. This is a story for anyone who's gazed out at the horizon and wondered what happens if you just keep walking. Kagge will talk with **WILLY WALKER**, All-American endurance athlete and host of the *Walker Webcast*, about his extraordinary journey across the North Pole and reflect on the beauty and fragility of our planet.

Claire Keegan with Jenny Emery Davidson

THE MAGIC AND THE MYSTERY OF THE SHORT STORY

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM | 2ND BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

"Elegance is saying just enough." Those are the words of the Irish writer **CLAIRE KEEGAN**, a master of the short story. Her debut collection, *Antarctica*, won the Rooney Prize for Irish Literature and introduced the world to her uncanny ability in every story to reveal the longings of the human heart. Her stories are translated into 35 languages and have won numerous awards, including the Edge Hill Prize, the William Trevor Prize, and are published in *The New Yorker* and *Best American Stories*. In conversation with **JENNY EMERY DAVIDSON**, Executive Director of The Community Library in Ketchum, Keegan will talk about short stories, hers and those of other writers she admires, and why she is drawn to the form and what makes the short story unique and magical.

Edward Luce and Admiral James Stavridis with Jonathan Blitzer

AMERICA AND THE WORLD

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM | 2ND BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

In tumultuous times like these, we need wise, deeply informed voices to help us understand the conflicts around the globe, and two of those voices belong to **ADMIRAL JAMES STAVRIDIS**, former NATO Supreme Allied Commander, and **EDWARD LUCE**, US National Editor and columnist at the *Financial Times*. In conversation with *The New Yorker* staff writer **JONATHAN BLITZER**, they will analyze current global hot spots, like Ukraine, the Middle East, and China, and reflect on the isolationist turn in American foreign policy. What does that mean for our long-honored alliances in Europe and elsewhere, and what would some of our formidable and formative strategists such as Henry Kissinger or Zbigniew Brzezinski have made of this shift?

Safiya Sinclair with Alexandra Schwartz

HOW TO SAY BABYLON

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM | 2ND BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

The best memoirs transport you fully into the head and heart of the writer and their experiences. So it is with *How to Say Babylon*, the lyrical and searing memoir by poet **SAFIYA SINCLAIR**. Winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award, the book recounts her Jamaican childhood and her efforts to escape the patriarchal control of her Rastafarian father who forbade make-up, jewelry, opinions, friends, and any sign of deemed immodesty. In conversation with *The New Yorker* staff writer **ALEXANDRA SCHWARTZ**, Sinclair will talk about the book and about how she found her power to resist and her own unique and beautiful voice.

Lunch

12:00 – 1:30 PM | LUNCH VILLAGE

Typewriter Rodeo

12:00 – 1:30 PM | PAVILION LAWN

Art & Words Exhibition Tour

12:15 – 12:45 PM | PAVILION WEST TERRACE

Ocean Vuong with John Burnham Schwartz

THE EMPEROR OF GLADNESS

1:30 – 2:30 PM | PAVILION & LAWN

In works of piercing beauty and heartrending grace, in poetry and prose, **OCEAN VUONG** has become one of his generation's most necessary and unforgettable literary voices. Now, with *The Emperor of Gladness*, he returns with a bighearted second novel. One summer evening in post-industrial Connecticut, 19-year-old Hai stands on the edge of a bridge in pelting rain, ready to jump, when he hears someone shout across the river. The voice belongs to Grazina, an elderly widow succumbing to dementia, who convinces him to take another path. Bereft and out of options, he quickly becomes her caretaker. Over the course of the year, the unlikely pair develops a life-altering bond. With his singular ability to twin grit with grace through tenderness, Vuong will discuss the novel and his writing with SVWC Literary Director **JOHN BURNHAM SCHWARTZ**.

The Improvised Shakespeare Company[®]

YOU HAVE TO SEE IT TO BELIEVE IT

3:00 – 4:00 PM | PAVILION & LAWN

Now for some wit and joy and literary-inspired belly laughs. They come courtesy of the one-and-only **IMPROVISED SHAKESPEARE COMPANY**, a performing troupe that will put on a never-before-seen and never-to-be-been-again fully improvised Shakespearean masterpiece. Based on an audience suggestion for a title of the show, founder **BLAINE SWEN** and his merry band, **ROSS BRYANT**, **BRENDAN DOWLING**, and **RANDALL HARR**, will create an actual play right before our eyes. Nothing has been planned, rehearsed, or written down. This is improvisational theater at its most dazzling and risky—something to make the Bard himself laugh out loud.

Cocktails

See pocket schedule for time and location.

Max Boot and Doris Kearns Goodwin with Evan Osnos

OUR TRANSFORMATIVE PRESIDENTS AND HOW THEY CHANGED THE
OFFICE AND THE COUNTRY

4:30 – 5:30 PM | PAVILION & LAWN

A few of the occupants of the highest office in the land have changed the nature and reach of the presidency and therefore the country itself. We have asked two preeminent presidential historians, **DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN** and **MAX BOOT**, to reflect upon the impact of transformative presidents and what combination of drive, vision, and charisma informed their White House tenures. Boot is the author of the much-lauded recent biography of President Ronald Reagan, and Goodwin is a Pulitzer Prize-winning author and has written books on Presidents Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt, and Lyndon Johnson. In conversation with award-winning journalist **EVAN OSNOS**, the author of a recent presidential biography on Joe Biden, they will offer wise, deeply-informed analyses of our transformative presidents and their lasting legacies.

MONDAY, JULY 21 OVERVIEW





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9:30 – 10:30 AM 1 ST Breakout Sessions	Oren Cass with Edward Luce		
	Sloane Crosley with Anne Taylor Fleming		
	Rachel Eliza Griffiths with Martha Williams		
	Claire Keegan with Andrea Elliott		
	Dr. Theodore H. Schwartz with Ayad Akhtar		
	Wright Thompson		
11:00 AM – 12:00 PM 2 ND Breakout Sessions	Griffin Dunne with Todd S. Purdum		
	Edward Luce		
	Liz Moore with Alexandra Schwartz		
	Evan Osnos		
	Paola Ramos		
	Ocean Vuong with Rachel Eliza Griffiths		
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1:30 – 2:30 PM	Colum McCann with Jeffrey Brown	Pavilion & Lawn	 
3:00 – 4:00 PM	Dr. Vivek H. Murthy with Andrea Elliott	Pavilion & Lawn	 
4:30 – 5:30 PM	Carl Hiaasen	Pavilion & Lawn	 
5:30 – 6:30 PM	Typewriter Rodeo	Pavilion Lawn	
5:30 – 6:30 PM	Closing Reception	Pavilion Lawn	

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-  Argyros Watch Party

Day Three

Monday, July 21

Breakfast

See pocket schedule for time and location.

Oren Cass with Edward Luce

THE REORIENTATION OF OUR POLITICAL PARTIES OR HOW THE
DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS SWITCHED PLACES

9:30 – 10:30 AM | 1ST BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

How did the Republicans become the party of the working class in this country, and how did the Democrats cede that role? That is the fascinating question now informing our politics and public policy. For answers, we turn to conservative economist **OREN CASS**, founder and chief economist of American Compass, a Washington-based nonprofit “with a focus on realigning the GOP as the party of the American worker,” and the author of the recently published book *The New Conservatives*. In conversation with author **EDWARD LUCE**, US National Editor and columnist at the *Financial Times*, Cass will shed light on economic and ideological changes behind this shift and the emerging shape of the new Republican party and its conservative coalition.

Sloane Crosley with Anne Taylor Fleming

GRIEF IS FOR PEOPLE

9:30 – 10:30 AM | 1ST BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

Here is your chance to listen to the captivating and witty **SLOANE CROSBLEY**, one of our most treasured observers of contemporary behavior. In her latest work, *Grief Is for People*—named “the #1 best reviewed nonfiction book of 2024”—she explores the pain and confusion of losing her closest friend to suicide. A month before his death, her New York apartment was burglarized, which preceded the shutdown and sadness that fell over her beloved Manhattan during COVID. In conversation with **ANNE TAYLOR FLEMING**, Crosley will talk about the book, an irresistible tale of loss on many overlapping fronts, but also a trove of gallows humor, and a love letter to a friend, a city, and, in a way, to grief itself.

Rachel Eliza Griffiths with Martha Williams

PROMISE

9:30 – 10:30 AM | 1ST BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

The artistic gifts of celebrated poet and visual artist **RACHEL ELIZA GRIFFITHS** are deeply apparent in her evocative and beautiful debut novel *Promise*. The book tells the story of two young Black sisters growing up loved and happy in 1950s Maine. But when the Civil Rights Movement sweeps the nation and their small town turns against them, they must fight for their homes, their bodies, and their dreams. In a conversation with **MARTHA WILLIAMS** of The Community Library in Ketchum, Griffiths will talk about her fears and excitement at moving into fiction and how she was able to blend big national themes with the tender details of intimate lives.

Claire Keegan with Andrea Elliott

SMALL THINGS LIKE THESE

9:30 – 10:30 AM | 1ST BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

Some works of literature seem to astonish and devastate at the same time. So it is with Irish writer **CLAIRE KEEGAN**'s most recent novel, *Small Things Like These*, a *New York Times* and Oprah Book Club Choice 2024, which was shortlisted for the Booker Prize and voted by readers of *The Irish Times* this year as the best book of the 21st century. In restrained and luminous prose, Keegan tells the story of a coal merchant in a small Irish town who makes a discovery that forces him to face his past and the complicit silences of a town controlled by the church. In conversation with Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author **ANDREA ELLIOTT**, Keegan will discuss the novel and her writing.

Dr. Theodore H. Schwartz with Ayad Akhtar

IDENTITY AND THE BRAIN: THE STORY WE TELL OURSELVES

9:30 – 10:30 AM | 1ST BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

One of America's preeminent neurosurgeons and the author of *Gray Matters: A Biography of Brain Surgery*, **DR. THEODORE H. SCHWARTZ** has spent his career investigating some of the most complex and perplexing questions about the three-and-a-half pounds of tissue that determines the very nature of ourselves and our lives. Perhaps no question in neuroscience—or, for that matter, in philosophy and psychology—is more mysterious than that of identity, how it is that we know and feel ourselves to be who we are. Perhaps the only thing that can be said for certain is that whatever identity is or isn't, it originates, somehow, in the brain. In conversation with Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright and novelist **AYAD AKHTAR**, Dr. Schwartz will shine a light for us into the darkness.

Wright Thompson

PAPPYLAND: A STORY OF FAMILY, FINE BOURBON, AND THE THINGS THAT LAST

9:30 – 10:30 AM | 1ST BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

This is the story of how Julian P. Van Winkle III, the caretaker of the most coveted cult Kentucky bourbon whiskey in the world, fought to protect his family's heritage and preserve the taste of his forebears. Following his father's death decades ago, Julian stepped in to try to save the bourbon business his grandfather had founded. Author **WRIGHT THOMPSON** was invited to ride along as Julian undertook the task. As he did in his book, Thompson will share what he learned from that journey, not only about great bourbon but about complicated legacies and the rewards of honoring your people and your craft—lessons that he couldn't help but apply to his own work and life.

Griffin Dunne with Todd S. Purdum

THE FRIDAY AFTERNOON CLUB

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM | 2ND BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

At eight, Sean Connery saved him from drowning. At thirteen, he attended his Aunt Joan Didion and Uncle John Gregory Dunne's legendary LA launch party for Tom Wolfe's *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*. In his early twenties, he shared a Manhattan apartment with his best friend and soulmate Carrie Fisher. A few years later, he produced and starred in Scorsese's *After Hours*. Amidst it all, Griffin's sister Dominique, just 22 and a rising star in Hollywood, was brutally murdered by her ex-boyfriend, leading to one of the most infamous public trials of the 1980s, which also marked the beginning of their father Dominick Dunne's celebrated writing career. And yet—as **GRIFFIN DUNNE** will tell journalist and author **TODD S. PURDUM**—for all its boldface characters and jaw-dropping scenes, his extraordinary life has always been a story about family.

Edward Luce

ZBIG: THE LIFE OF ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM | 2ND BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

In his riveting new biography of the late national security advisor and one of the most important strategists of the 20th century, **EDWARD LUCE** shows how this brilliant Polish-American saw the coming decline of the Soviet Union and used every tool of American policy to hasten that outcome. The author of three books and US National Editor at the *Financial Times*, Luce will talk about the crucial Cold War period and one of its major players and how he brought them to vivid life in a book that could not be more timely given the resurgent threat from Russia.

Liz Moore with Alexandra Schwartz

THE NOVELIST'S CRAFT

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM | 2ND BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

LIZ MOORE, one of the most admired and successful authors of crime novels like *The God of the Woods* and *Long Bright River*, will tell us how she is able to combine gripping suspense with psychological insight and literary flair. She actually wrote the majority of what would be her debut novel when she was still enrolled in college. Moore, who also teaches creative writing at Temple University in Philadelphia, will converse with *The New Yorker* staff writer **ALEXANDRA SCHWARTZ** about where her ideas come from, how much research is involved, and what she tells her students about how to find their voice and hold on to it.

Evan Osnos

THE HAVES AND THE HAVE-YACHTS

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM | 2ND BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

How much is too much—or rather, how much is never enough? Such is the question for the billionaires who now make up the country's ultrarich. Their giant yachts, luxury compounds—and, oh yes, tax schemes—are a source of endless, if alarming, fascination. It is the question tackled by *The New Yorker* staff writer **EVAN OSNOS** in his new, deliciously readable collection of essays. He will talk about the book and the acquisitive appetites and habits of our new "oligarchs" and how their outsized fortunes are allowing them to hold sway over the elections and the economy.

Paola Ramos

DEFECTORS: THE RISE OF THE LATINO FAR RIGHT AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR AMERICA

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM | 2ND BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

One of the more surprising turns in the electorate is the rise of far-right sentiments among Latinos, a story that author and Emmy Award-winning journalist **PAOLA RAMOS** tells in her fascinating and empathetic new book *Defectors*. The book takes us into the lives of a variety of Latinos across the country who support candidates with plans for mass deportation or efforts to stop diversity initiatives. Ramos will introduce us to many of these people and tell us what is motivating their rightward turn and how, like many of their white counterparts, they are fearful of losing their place in American society.

Ocean Vuong with Rachel Eliza Griffiths

POETRY

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM | 2ND BREAKOUT SESSION | VENUE TBD

The author of the poetry collections *Time Is a Mother* and *Night Sky with Exit Wounds*, **OCEAN VUONG** writes directly to our humanity without losing sight of the current moment, making poems that show how the themes we perennially live in and question are truly inexhaustible. Bold and prescient, and a testament to tenderness in the face of violence, his poetry is a return and a forging forth all at once. He will read and discuss his work with fellow poet **RACHEL ELIZA GRIFFITHS**.

Lunch

12:00 – 1:30 PM | LUNCH VILLAGE

Typewriter Rodeo

12:00 – 1:30 PM | PAVILION LAWN

Art & Words Exhibition Tour

12:45 – 1:15 PM | PAVILION WEST TERRACE

Colum McCann with Jeffrey Brown

TWIST

1:30 – 2:30 PM | PAVILION & LAWN

From 9/11 (*Let the Great World Spin*) to war and peace both in Ireland (*TransAtlantic*) and Israel/Palestine (*Apeirogon*), **COLUM McCANN** has sought ways to channel the biggest stories of our age into resonant, elliptical, poetic works of fiction. His latest novel tells the story of a journalist sent to report on the complex work of repairing underwater cables that carry the world's information. Dazzling on every level, human and technological, it is McCann at his best, finding beauty and mystery on the front lines of danger. Few novelists pay such close attention to the "stories of our times" as McCann, who will be in conversation with **JEFFREY BROWN** of the *PBS NewsHour*.

Dr. Vivek H. Murthy with Andrea Elliott

FROM THE HEART

3:00 – 4:00 PM | PAVILION & LAWN

During his tenure as the Surgeon General of the United States, **VIVEK H. MURTHY, MD** became, in effect, our national healer. In a soft but strong voice, he spoke about the country's maladies like addiction, depression, and violence, and he made the passionate case that loneliness was the contributor to many of those ills, including our over-dependence on social media. That message is at the heart of his book, *Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection*. In conversation with Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author **ANDREA ELLIOTT**, Murthy will talk about the book, about his own bouts of loneliness, and how we can each learn to be a healer in our own lives.

Cocktails

See pocket schedule for time and location.

Carl Hiaasen

FEVER BEACH

4:30 – 5:30 PM | PAVILION & LAWN

We close the 2025 Sun Valley Writers' Conference on a note of high hilarity with one of our favorite and funniest authors, **CARL HIAASEN**, talking about his brand-new novel *Fever Beach*, another classic based—where else—in his home state of Florida. He will have you from the opening sentence, when a man named Dale Figgo picks up a hitchhiker on Gus Grissom Boulevard in Tangelo Shores, Florida. Their escapades will take them deep into Florida at its most Floridian: a sun-soaked bastion of right-wing extremism, white power, greed, and corruption. Hiaasen is the author of seven novels for young readers and fifteen previous novels for adults, including *Bad Monkey*, recently adapted into a hit Apple series starring Vince Vaughn, and which, if you haven't already seen it, you will certainly want to after hearing this talk.

Typewriter Rodeo

5:30 – 6:30 PM | PAVILION LAWN

Closing Reception

5:30 – 6:30 PM | PAVILION LAWN

We invite all Conference guests and writers to join us for a complimentary glass of wine immediately following the last presentation.

SUN VALLEY WRITERS' CONFERENCE

580 Fourth Street East, Suite 240
Post Office Box 957
Ketchum, Idaho 83340
208.726.5454 | info@svwc.com | svwc.com

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