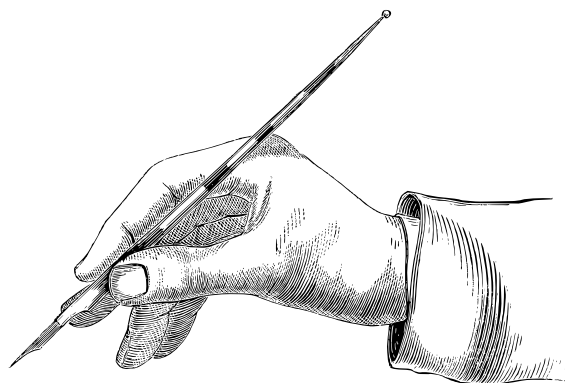


Northwest Service Cooperative

*Young Authors Conference*

**March 12th, 2025 | For students in grades 5-8**

Northland Community and Technical College  
1101 State Hwy 1, Thief River Falls, MN 56701



# 2025 Young Author's Conference

March 12th, 2025 | Northland Community & Technical College  
9:15 AM - 1:55 PM

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**AUDIENCE:** The YAC is targeted to students in grades 5-8. Each student will attend 3 breakout sessions.

**COST PER STUDENT:** \$35. Schools are billed after the conference for the number of students registered. School district is limited to 35 students. If there is room, more may be admitted.

**LUNCH:** Lunch is not provided. Participants bring their own lunch and beverage. No refrigeration is available.

**ADULT/STUDENT RATIO:** One chaperone is requested for every 10 students and each student must have a designated chaperone.

**SUPPLIES:** Students will be given a notebook & pencil. We ask that students DO NOT bring backpacks or other unnecessary things to the conference. Cell phones must be turned off during breakout sessions.

**ITEMS FOR SALE:** Presenters will have books for sale at the book fair. A list of books and other materials will be sent to the school contact prior to the conference.

**AUTOGRAPH SESSION:** Authors will be available to autograph purchased books after the last session. (Optional for school districts)

\*Each student will attend 3 breakout sessions. An overview of sessions is included in this brochure. Following registration, a mailing will be sent to school contacts to include more details for the day, breakout session assignments for their school, student tickets for each session, chaperone, lunch instructions, and site maps.

\*\*School contacts distribute breakout session tickets to their students prior to the festival, keeping in mind a student's specific interests with an effort for each student to attend a well-balanced variety of sessions.

## AGENDA

9:15 - 9:45 Registration & Check-in (Theater Entrance)

9:45 - 10:40 Breakout Session 1

10:50 - 11:45 Breakout Session 2

11:45 - 12:30 Lunch

12:30 - 1:25 Breakout Session 3

1:25 - 1:55 Autograph Session (Optional)

**Registration deadline: Friday, February 12th, 2025**

Scan here to sign up for  
this years conference!





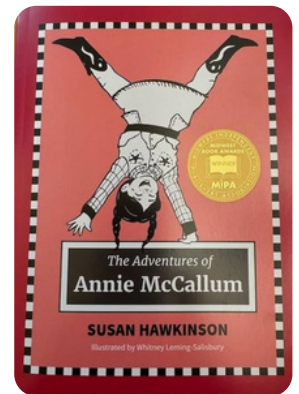
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# RIDDLES, CHANTS, TONGUE TWISTERS, INCANTATIONS

Enliven your writing with riddles, chants, tongue twisters, and incantations. Participants will look at examples from Susan Hawkinson's play, *Paddle Off the Map*, and then work separately or in pairs to write their own.

**Susan Hawkinson** taught mythology during her career at Itasca Community College in Grand Rapids. She is the author of *Tina Christina Sestina: A Northwoods Adventure*, *Paddle Off the Map*, and *The Adventures of Annie McCallum*; a 2024 Midwest Book Award winner for young adults.



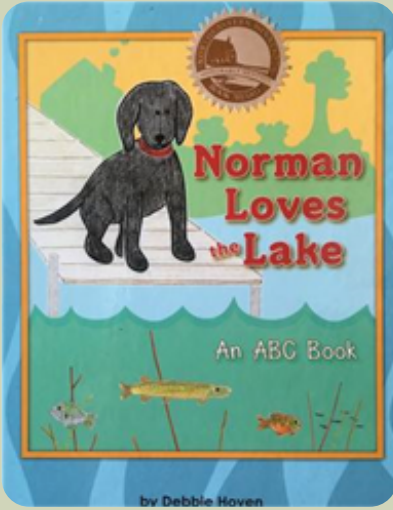
## WRITE IT, FEEL IT: THE POWER OF YOUR PEN

Unlock the power of words in this exciting gratitude journaling workshop! Through fun prompts, creative writing exercises, and journaling techniques, kids will learn how putting their thoughts into words can brighten their day and inspire positivity. This session is perfect for young writers who want to discover how journaling can boost happiness, develop creativity, and improve writing skills.

**Kari Sundberg** is the editor and writer for the Grygla Eagle Newspaper and also does freelance writing for various publications around the state of Minnesota. Kari graduated from the University of Minnesota Crookston with a Bachelor of Science degree in Communications and English. Her favorite type of writing includes lifestyle and creative writing pieces. She says, "My passion is writing. It's such a great outlet and allows for so much freedom. Whether it's journalism, fiction, nonfiction, poetry, I find it all very healing and a great way to connect."



## KEEP YOUR LIGHT ON AND WRITE



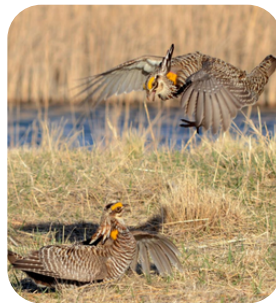
How do authors come up with their ideas? In this session, students will explore their imaginations as they come up with a character for their own children's book. Debbie will also share how a storyboard layout is important to how a book is put together, as well as the steps to self-publishing! Get ready to draw and create in this fun presentation!

**Debbie Hoven** After 40 years of encouraging her students to use their imaginations, retired preschool and kindergarten teacher, Debbie Hoven, followed her own advice. Her books "Light Up the Year", "Light up the States" and "Norman Loves the Lake", feature colorful pictures and whimsical prose. Debbie enjoys lake living in beautiful Alexandria, MN with her husband Brad.

## BLENDING WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY WITH NATURE WRITING

Have you ever seen something unusual in nature and caught yourself saying, "If I would have only had my camera" or have you ever had a great idea for a story about a special outdoor experience, but you just weren't sure how to put it down on paper?

We'll discuss these topics and how a camera can be a valuable researching tool for nature writing as we take a photographic journey through the planning stages, the opening sentences, the content, and the endings of articles for newspapers and magazines, and manuscripts for books.



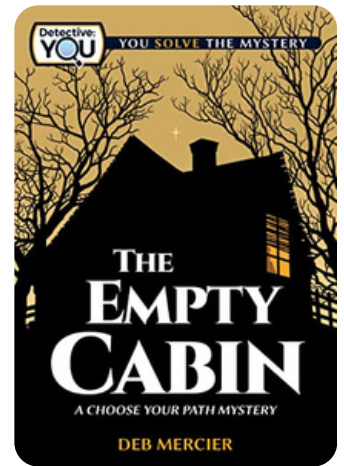
**Steve Maanum** is a retired Park Rapids educator who uses his backgrounds in science and language arts as a foundation for his nature writing and photography. His photographs have won national awards and they have appeared on television, in newspapers and magazines. He has been a columnist for three different newspapers and his nature stories have been published by a variety of outdoor magazines.

He strives to help others make nature connections through his family-style nature photography workshops in state parks and through his nature writing/photography sessions in schools and at Young Writers' and Artists' conferences.

## CHOOSE YOUR PATH

Have you ever wondered how to build a Choose Your Path book? These adventures put you in the driver's seat as the main character... but beware... not all choices are wise ones! Join Deb for a hands-on session of storytelling, adventure building, and quite possibly some serious silliness.

**Deb Mercier** lives in greater Minnesota with her husband, dogs, and outdoor critter friends. She is the author of multiple books for young readers, an award-winning journalist, and technical writer. When she's not working on a book project, you can find Deb wandering the trails, saving turtles from roadways, and playing flute with the Central Lakes Symphony Orchestra.



## VIEWPOINT: FINDING YOUR VOICE

How to choose a point of view that will allow you to tell your story most effectively. In this session we will review classic excerpts from authors who have used first person, third person, or omniscient voices with great success. Students will then practice their skill at choosing an appropriate viewpoint, and they will work on a story of their own.



**William Durbin** lives on Lake Vermilion at the edge of Minnesota's Boundary Waters Wilderness. A winner of the Great Lakes Book Award and a two-time winner of the Minnesota Book award, he has published fourteen novels for young readers, including, *The Broken Blade*, *Wintering*, *Blackwater Ben*, *Song of Sampo Lake*, *The Darkest Evening*, *Dead Man's Rapids*, *The Journal of Otto Peltonen*, and *The Hidden Room*. For more information visit his website at [williamdurbin.com](http://williamdurbin.com).

## HEROS AND VILLAINS

In this character creation drawing class, we'll talk about famous heroes and villains in art and pop culture. We'll learn techniques that visual artists use to make these characters who they are. And then the fun begins! You'll get a chance to invent you own hero and villain – and draw them!

**Rowan Pope** graduated from Stanford University and received an MFA from the University of Minnesota, where he teaches drawing. His art explores the human condition by telling stories, and his work has been acquired by the MIA and the Walker Art Center. He is also a professional screenwriter and has written one screenplay by himself and four screenplays with his twin brother Bly.



## THE ART OF SUPERHERO CREATION

Do you love writing, drawing, and exploring color? Have you ever dreamed of creating your own superhero? In this session, you'll discover how storytelling, color harmony, and the fundamentals of visual design come together to bring original superhero characters to life. Through hands-on activities, you'll explore the character design, color palette creation, and visual branding techniques. By the end of the session, you'll have the tools and inspiration to design a superhero that's uniquely yours!

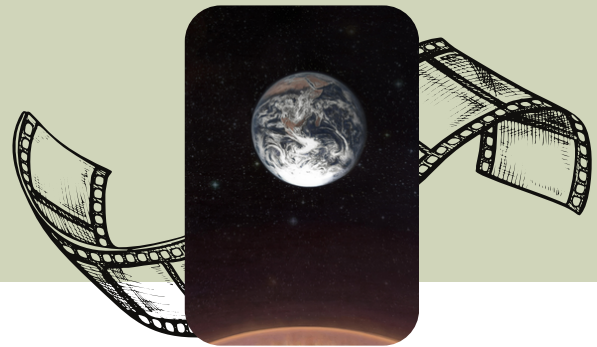
**Clare Odin** is a visual artist and UX/US designer with a passion for narrative exploration, storytelling, and visual communication. She holds an MFA in Drawing and Painting from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, where she has also served as a Adjunct Professor, teaching 2D design. Most recently, Clare collaborated with EarlyBird Education to design and optimize a gamified literacy assessment platform. This platform, used in 20 states, helps identify science based, actionable data for effective interventions.



## WRITING A MOVIE SCENE

Have you ever wanted to write and star in your own movie? Now's your chance! Before a blockbuster movie is shown in theaters, it starts out as a screenplay. In this session, we'll talk about what a screenplay looks like and what makes it such a unique, modern, and exciting form of writing. We'll watch a film clip and then the fun begins - we'll collaborate on writing a movie scene together and act it out!

**Bly Pope** earned his undergraduate degree in Studio Art from Stanford University and his Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Minnesota. He teaches drawing and design at the University of Minnesota and the Minneapolis College of Art and Design.



## THE WATCHFUL BIRD GETS THE WORM: HOW OBSERVING NATURE CAN FEED OUR STORIES



Growing up, Roxane always heard that “The Early Bird gets the worm.” Problem was, Roxane is a Night Owl, more interested in sunsets than sunrises. Thankfully, she eventually discovered a secret, and it’s one that has fueled her writing for over 30 years: observing nature and staying attuned to the conversations and events happening around her, no matter the time or season. In this session, we’ll learn together how it’s not the early bird who gets the best “grub,” after all, but the one who stays alert!

**Roxane B. Salonen** is an author, journalist, and podcast host for “Matters of Soul Importance.” In her regular work, she writes for The Forum newspaper and other publications. She and her husband, Troy, have five grown children, one shy cat and one boisterous dog. They live in Fargo, North Dakota, where her nature walks, in all seasons, provide inspiration for her work and life.



# THE ART OF SONG WRITING

In this session, students will get to know how to write a song by tapping into their own creative strengths and working together to create something special. Students will even get to listen to unreleased songs of Saphire's before the general public!

Nashville Recording Artist, **Saphire** has been in the music industry since she was young. She is passionate about the arts and loves helping others unlock their creativity. Writing with Grammy nominated songwriters has allowed Saphire to understand the ins and outs of how the songwriting process can look differently for each individual! She values the art of teamwork and knows that each person has something to bring to the table.



SAPHIRE



BACKSEAT

# ILLUSTRATION TECHNIQUES



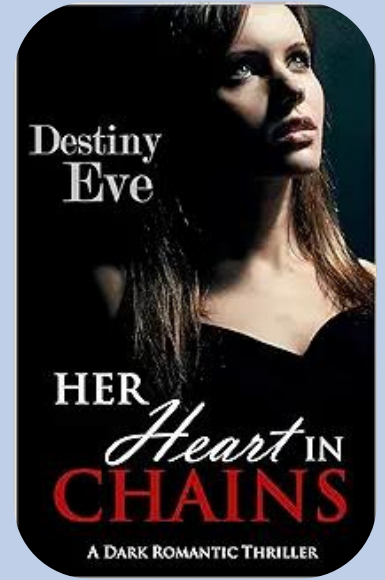
Come hang out with Illustrator Jessica Lundeen and learn how to illustrate kids books! We will be talking about digital illustration program techniques and practicing traditional illustration processes. Learn the stepping stones to illustrating a book of your own.

**Jessica Lundeen** has worked with two writers to illustrate 8 children's books. Her current work includes her illustrations in Dally the Distracted Cattle Dog series, written by Stephanie Jorgenson. Jessica is also a fulltime freelance artist specializing in acrylic painting, colored pencil pet portraits, wood working and digital design. [Jessielynnart.com](http://Jessielynnart.com)

## THE SELF-PUBLISHING JOURNEY

In this session we will explore the different types of publishing and how to get published, with the main focus on the self-publishing route. Topics we will go over include preparing your manuscript for publishing, formatting, book cover design, marketing, selling, and of course, how to publish your own book. Come prepared to learn and ask questions so that someday, you can become a self-published author too!

**Destiny Walker** is an author from Thief River Falls writing under the pseudonym **Destiny Eve**. She self-published her first novel, *Her Heart in Chains* in 2020, which later became an Amazon bestseller in 2024. She also self-published a poetry collection, *Evoke*, and has been included in a sci-fi fairytale retelling anthology, *Among Thorns and Stardust*. Her written works have also appeared in magazines.



## THERE'S A SKUNK IN MY TENT

Hear the story of how this really happened to Bob and learn how to create your own tale, tall or true. We will have fun using exciting details, unusual plot twists and funny characters.

**Bob Gasch** has been telling stories in schools, libraries and for special events for over thirty-four years. His presentations help people become more aware of and interested in history.



## 2025 Young Author's Conference

March 12th, 2025 | 9:15 AM - 1:55 PM

Northland Community and Technical College 1101 State Hwy 1  
Thief River Falls, MN 56701

\$35 / per person | cap at 35 students per district

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### Register by Friday, February 12th, 2025

\*\*Permission is granted to the NW Service Cooperative to photograph student(s) and to use the photograph in print, broadcast, video, Web, Public Service Announcement, media release or relating marketing and communications materials. The image will be used to communicate the programs of the NW Service Cooperative. (No individual names will be printed.) If there are students who can not be photographed, please let us know and we will make sure they are not in any pictures.

Schools will be billed after the Young Author's Conference for the number of students registered to attend.

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The Young Author's Conference is a program of the

### Northwest Service Cooperative

114 West 1st Street, Thief River Falls, MN 56701

[www.nwservice.org](http://www.nwservice.org)

Scan here to sign up for  
this years conference!

