

OASL/WLMA Fall Conference 2008

Featured Authors



John Green

John Green is the Michael L. Printz Award-winning author of Looking for Alaska and An Abundance of Katherines. When he was little, John wanted to be an earthworm scientist. (There is a word for such a person: oligochaetologist.) But he killed off his entire earthworm farm due to his general inability to care for pets. Later, he made a list of things he was good at. The list included “telling lies” and “sitting.” So he became a writer.

John has worked for Booklist writing reviews of hundreds of books of all varieties—from picture books about

Confucius to romance novels about Confucius! His reviewing specialties include literacy fiction, books about Islam, and books about conjoined twins.

Read more about John at www.sparksflyup.com

Join John for breakfast on Saturday at the conference.

Pete Hautman

Pete was born in 1952 in Berkeley, California. At the age of five, he moved to St. Louis Park, Minnesota, with his four brothers and two sisters. He attended Cedar Manor Elementary School (also the alma mater of Al Franken and the Coen brothers), and eventually graduated honor-free from St. Louis Park High School. For the next eight years he attended the Minneapolis College of Art and Design and the University of Minnesota.

Today, Pete lives with mystery writer and poet Mary Logue and their two small dogs Rene and Jacques. When he isn't writing, he reads, plays poker, hunts mushrooms, takes naps, talks with Mary, watches movies, inline skates, and bikes. John loves to cook!



Read more about Pete at www.petehautman.com



Kevin Hawkes

Kevin Hawkes is the illustrator of over thirty-five acclaimed picture books and chapter books including Library Lion, The Librarian who Measured the Earth, Weslandia and Sidewalk Circus. Authors whose books he has illustrated include Kathryn Lasky, Paul Fleischman and

Jack Prelutsky. His vibrant colors, unusual perspectives and dry sense of humor are hallmarks of his work.

He lives with his charming wife and children in southern Maine where he is often found wandering aimlessly in his garden. When forced indoors he works quite happily painting cobalt blue skies, imaginary landscapes and flying pianos.

Read more about Kevin Hawkes at www.kevinhawkes.com

Naomi Shihab Nye

Naomi Shihab Nye describes herself as a “wandering poet.” She has spent 33 years traveling the country and the world leading writing workshops and inspiring students of all ages. Nye was born to a Palestinian father and an American mother and grew up in St. Louis, Jerusalem, Ramallah and San Antonio. Drawing on her Palestinian-American heritage, the cultural diversity of her home in Texas, and her experiences traveling in Asia, Europe, Canada, Mexico, Central and South America and the Middle East, Nye uses her writing to attest to our shared humanity.



Nye’s work has been presented on National Public Radio on *A Prairie Home Companion* and *The Writer’s Almanac*. She has been featured on two PBS poetry specials: “The Language of Life with Bill Moyers” and “The United States of Poetry” and also appeared on *NOW with Bill Moyers*.

Nye gives voice to her experience as an Arab-American through poems about heritage and peace that overflow with a humanitarian spirit. About her work the poet William Stafford has said, “her poems combine transcendent liveliness and sparkle along with warmth and human insight. She is a champion of the literature of encouragement and heart. Reading her work enhances life.”

Read more about Naomi Shihab Nye at www.barclayagency.com/nye

Join Nye at Saturday’s luncheon that will close the conference.



Todd Strasser

Todd Strasser was born in New York City and grew up on Long Island. In school, his best subjects were math and science. He also liked to read but he had trouble with spelling and grammar and didn't do well in English.

Todd went to college at New York University for a few years, and then dropped out. He lived on a commune, and then lived in Europe where he was a street musician. Finally he decided to be a writer. He returned to the United States and went to Beloit College where he studied literature and writing.

In 1978 Todd sold his first novel, Angel Dust Blues. During the next few years, he wrote many movie novelizations, including Home Alone, Free Willy, Ferris Bueller's Day Off and Jumanji. In 1993 Todd wrote Help! I'm Trapped in My Teacher's Body. Since then he has written 16 more Help! I'm Trapped . . . books, as well as other series. All together he has published more than 100 books.

Todd now divides his time between writing books and speaking at schools and conferences. When he's at home, he likes to spend time with his children and dog, Mac. He likes to fish, play tennis and ski, but his favorite sport is surfing.

Have breakfast with Todd on Friday morning.

Read more about Todd at www.toddstrasser.com

Nina Laden

Nina Laden was born in New York City in 1962, the daughter of two artists. Nina started drawing as soon as she could hold a crayon, and soon after that she started making up stories. By age 9, when she wrote and illustrated "The Unbearable Bird," she decided that she wanted to be a children's book author and illustrator when she grew up.



She graduated from Syracuse University's College of Visual and Performing Arts in 1983. She was encouraged to keep writing by her English Lit professor, Tobias Wolff. In 1994, The Night I Followed the Dog was published to great critical acclaim and bestselling status. Many books, many awards and many adventures followed. Nina's books have been translated into many languages and she has spoken around the world. She loves to motivate children (and adults) to explore their imaginations through writing, drawing and creating books.

Nina and her husband Booth moved to Seattle in 1997 and found paradise on Lummi Island in 2002. They enjoy an abundance of outdoor activities: cycling, hiking, camping, kayaking, boating, rollerblading and other "ing" words. They both love to cook and grow organic veggies, fruits and herbs.

Read more about Nina at www.ninaladen.com



Justina Chen Headley

Justina Chen Headley always wanted to be a writer and wrote her first 50-page novella when she was eight. After graduating from Stanford, she took a minor detour to work at Microsoft, both in Seattle and Australia, before returning to her first love: writing young adult fiction.

Headley ties community service to every novel she publishes and encourages everyone to checkout the Go Overboard Challenge Grant she is co-sponsoring with Burton Snowboards and Youth Venture to fund the best youth-led ideas to change the world.

With her husband and children, the Headley family splits their time in the Pacific Northwest between their homes near Seattle and the Methow Valley. In between adventures with her family, writing and reading, she runs, walks and practices yoga. Headley is an ardent believer in giving back to the community, which is why part of the proceeds from her young adult novels benefit teens.

Read more about Justina at www.justinachenheadley.com.