**Timekeepers for Atlanta Writers Conference**

Friday, November 1

Tory Bunce - Olivia Turner and Christine Goss in Dogwood Room

Chuck Clark - Christopher Madden and Mara Hollander in Fayetteville Room

Jill Evans - Esty Loveing-Downes and Andie Smith in Riverdale Room

Becky Hodge - Jennica Dotson and Nicole Payne in Board Room 2

Olga Jackson - Sabrina Flemming and Carrie Howland in Board Room 4

Sharon Marchisello - Brittany Groves and Morgan Wilson in Board Room 5

Deborah Mitchell - Mike Hilbig and Kimberly Peticolas in Board Room 6

Brenda Sevcik - Claire Cheek and Ameerah Holliday in Board Room 1

Jerry Weiner - Sierra Fang-Horvath (virtual) and Isabelle Rader in Board Room 3

Saturday, November 2

Tory Bunce - Mara Hollander in Fayetteville Room

Chuck Clark - Mike Hilbig in Riverdale Room

Jill Cox-Cordova - Esty Loveing-Downes in Gardenia Room

Jill Evans - Andie Smith in Atlanta III Room

Becky Hodge - Nicole Payne in Magnolia Room

Olga Jackson - Sabrina Flemming in Board Room 4

Tiffany Jansen - Christine Goss in Board Room 5

Julie Johns - Claire Cheek in Board Room 1

Sharon Marchisello - Carrie Howland in Dogwood Room

Deborah Mitchell - Kimberly Peticolas in Cherokee Rose Room

Patrick Scullin - Mike Hilbig​​ in Riverdale Room

Brenda Sevcik - Ameerah Holliday in Peachtree City Room

Chuck Storla - Christopher Madden in Jasmine Room

Diva Thomas - Morgan Wilson in Atlanta I Room

Sunsheray Turner - Jennica Dotson in Board Room 2

Jerry Weiner - Sierra Fang-Horvath (virtual) in Board Room 3

Terra Weiss - Olivia Turner in Atlanta II Room

Jennifer Wiggins - Isabelle Rader in Atlanta IV Room

All meeting rooms are on the 2nd floor of the Westin Atlanta Airport Hotel.

Thank you again for volunteering to time the conference meeting activities. **Please reply to let me know you received this message** and send me your cell number if this is the first time you’ve done timekeeping. If you need to reach me at the last minute, **my cell # is 404-632-3525.**

WHAT TO BRING:

All you’ll need is a timekeeping device (watch, cell phone, PDA, etc.), some patience, and a sense of humor. **Unless I’ve asked you to bring a laptop already, the agent/editor assigned to you is supposed to bring their own laptop for use in the private meeting rooms to facilitate Zoom sessions (where some participants will/could be virtual. I’ve included the Zoom links in the details below so you can forward them to your guest agent/editor if needed.** Also, I'd love it if we all wore Atlanta Writers Club polo shirts—or any black shirt you prefer—so we’ll be easily identifiable. If this is your first time volunteering, I’ll bring an AWC polo shirt for you—please remind me what size you prefer.

LOCATION AND REPORT TIME:

Westin Atlanta Airport Hotel  
2nd floor: College Park Ballroom

4736 Best Road  
Atlanta, GA 30337  
404-762-7676  
[www.westin.com](http://www.westin.com)

Our registration table will be outside the College Park Ballroom, where I'll have a name tag waiting for you for the day(s) you’re volunteering. I’ll reimburse you for the $14 day/overnight parking fee (we’ll have a QR code at the registration table you’ll need to exit the self-park lot).

On both days, Board Room 2 will have refreshments (coffee, hot tea, water, and soft drinks) for you and the agents/editors. The Jasmine Room will also have refreshments on Saturday for that end of the 2nd floor. Please help the agents and editors with beverages if they need anything.

Most of you have done timekeeping—or experienced the conference from the participant perspective—before. What makes this conference different from others we’ve done previously is its hybrid nature. **About two dozen of our participants will be virtual. Because of this, we’ll need to keep to a tight schedule because we can’t communicate and adjust as readily with a virtual group as we could when everyone was present.**

I’ve indicated above whether the agent/editor assigned to you will be virtual. On the schedule I’ve attached for you, which also will be posted on the meeting room door and included inside the meeting room, I’ve indicated which participants will be virtual.

We’ll have four conditions:

1. Agent/editor is in-person, and participant is in-person
2. Agent/editor is in-person, and participant is virtual
3. Agent/editor is virtual, and participant is in-person
4. Agent/editor is virtual, and participant is virtual

If your assigned agent/editor is in-person, I’ve asked that guest to bring their laptop so they can hold Zoom meetings when the participant is virtual; they can use their phone for this, too, of course (the links are below in case they can’t find this information in my emails to them).

If your assigned guest is virtual, I’ve asked you to bring your own laptop to set up in the meeting room. Use these Zoom links to connect with the online room where the agents and editors will hold their virtual meetings:

**Friday, November 1 Query Letter Critique Meetings**

[**https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82858590906?pwd=VRlaTaIwA5buaoVMyy5pbPC1Wt88Cs.1**](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82858590906?pwd=VRlaTaIwA5buaoVMyy5pbPC1Wt88Cs.1)

**Saturday, November 2 Manuscript Critique & Pitch Meetings**

[**https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82559133731?pwd=PrQ3EpVoTzvl1xhZrSeqQcxgtqvVnM.1**](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82559133731?pwd=PrQ3EpVoTzvl1xhZrSeqQcxgtqvVnM.1)

In condition #1 (agent/editor is in-person, and participant is in-person), where both parties are in person, timekeeping will go on just like usual, with someone queued up to go into the room and then the next person in line waiting for their turn, etc.

In condition #3 (agent/editor is virtual, and participant is in-person), you’ll admit the participant into the room, where they’ll sit in front of the laptop; the agent/editor will be onscreen via Zoom. The participant won’t need to touch the computer to interact with the agent/editor. After their meeting time is up, they can exit, again without needing to touch the computer.

In conditions #2 and #4 (where the participant is virtual), volunteer Kim Conrey will be on a laptop at the registration desk and will virtually admit the participant into the breakout room assigned to the agent/editor. This will happen according to the schedule, so you can still indicate a two-minute warning and end-of-meeting notice to the in-person agent/editor (or participant) and on-screen (entering the room and moving into the view of the laptop camera) to the virtual individual(s).

Volunteers Janie Mills and Roger Johns and I will still make treks up and down the halls to check on things, so please don’t hesitate to let any of us know if you have any questions or if there have been any technical difficulties. Feel free to come to the check-in table if you’re missing the next person in the queue and ask a volunteer to text/call that person (and you can always flag me down, of course). At that table, you’ll see the badges that haven’t been picked—this is usually an indication that the individual has not arrived at the hotel yet, so we might need to consult the waitlist and have the first person in that queue standing by.

My primary job—with the help of Janie and Roger—is still to keep finding the next few people who are scheduled for your room if they haven’t queued up. I'll post a copy of the schedule to each door, and you can make notations on it to keep track of who's finished, who failed to show up, and any slip in the schedule, so you can manage your assigned room.

**If you’re doing critiques and/or pitches on Friday and/or Saturday, I’ve assigned a substitute timekeeper to manage your room while you’re in your meeting(s). The timekeeper will arrive ten minutes before your scheduled meeting to facilitate this handoff. The list of substitutes and which one(s) are assigned to your room if you have a meeting to attend is included in the same email as this file is.**

**PROCEDURES FOR FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1:** [Only for the 9 timekeepers working on Friday afternoon—see page 1 of this file]

I hope you can check in at the registration table outside the College Park Ballroom on the second floor of the Westin by 11:45 a.m. to get your name tag if you don’t have one and find the room you and your Query Letter Critique panel will use during the afternoon.

Before 12:30 p.m., for those bringing a laptop, please set it up in your designated meeting room and connect to Zoom using the link on the previous page. I’ll provide a copy of the WIFI code in the meeting room.

12:30-1:30 p.m. I invite you to attend the publishers’ panel (discussion and Q&A with all the publishers) in the College Park Ballroom unless it’s already standing-room only in there.

1:30-1:45 p.m. Set up for Query Letter Critique Sessions in Board Rooms 1-6, Riverdale Room, Fayetteville Room, and Dogwood Room; greet the agent/editor team you’ve been assigned to and see if they need a beverage—located in Board Room 2. Begin to queue up the first 1-2 critique participants (the check-in volunteers and I will be rounding them up for you as needed).

1:45-5:00 p.m. Query Letter Critique Panels in Board Rooms 1-6, Riverdale Room, Fayetteville Room, and Dogwood. Panels consisting of one agent and one editor (or two agents/editors) will critique individual participants’ query letters so they can hone them for their actual Saturday one-on-one pitch with the agent/editor of their choosing. Each participant has been assigned a panel composed of two guests they’re not meeting with on Saturday (and some of them aren’t doing any Saturday meetings). We try to queue up two participants at a time, but having one participant waiting at a time is fine.

The timing of the Query Letter Critique Panels had to be shortened to make sure all those who registered for one or two Query Letter Critiques as well as the Friday workshop can have their meetings before the Workshop starts at 4 pm. These Friday practice sessions are in 12-minute intervals. The first 2 minutes are to allow the guests to read and discuss the **printed query letters the in-person participants will bring with them**. **Virtual participants will submit their letter in advance—and I’ll have forwarded those letters to our guests via email.** You will take the hardcopy letters from the participant and give them to the guests (or remind the guests about opening the letter from the virtual participant who is next) and close the door so they can discuss the contents in private. For in-person participants, after the guests have used these 2 minutes to prepare, you will knock on the door, open it, bring in the participant, and close the door to give them privacy with the guests. For virtual participants, Kim will admit them to the Zoom meeting room at the appropriate time.

Ten (10) minutes are set aside for the query letter critiques once you admit the participant. Note the time. Eight (8) minutes into the session, knock on the door, open it, and announce that the participant has 2 minutes left. At the 10-minute mark, knock again, open the door, and either escort the first participant out and remind the guests who’s next on the schedule or tell the virtual participant that this meeting is over and remind the guests to prepare for the next one. When another 2 minutes of prep time elapses, continue the process again.

NOTES:

**If the guests don’t want all 2 minutes of prep time and prefer to start quicker with a participant, please still use the scheduled end time to calculate your 2-minute warning; extra time will mean a bonus for participants, not an acceleration of the schedule.**

In the past, it was okay if the schedule began to slip, but in a hybrid situation, that becomes problematic, so please try to keep everything on time. If an agent/editor requires an unscheduled break, their in-person teammate can carry on without them until they need to return. If both need an unscheduled break, please let me know so I can start doing damage control with those who are coming up in the schedule.

If the guests say they don’t have a virtual participant’s query letter to critique, please tell me so I can re-send the participant’s file. If an in-person participant forgets to bring their hardcopy query letter and there’s not enough time to print one, the participant can use the full 12 minutes to talk their way through whatever they’ve memorized from their query letter and take whatever feedback they can get.

If someone who registered doesn’t show up, Janie, Roger, or I will consult the waitlist and contact the first person there about an open spot. Hopefully we can fill it without impacting the schedule. See the bolded portion below regarding **Friday Standbys**.

4:30-6:00 p.m. **After the final query letter critique session, feel free to ask your assigned agent(s) and editor if you could pitch them or get a critique of your own query letter, if you want this. Please bring printed copies of your query letter with you if you do want this meeting.**

If you don’t want this meeting with the guests—or after your meeting is over—I invite you to go to the remainder of our Friday workshop in the College Park Ballroom. The agent/editor has free time until 6:00 p.m., when they need to go downstairs to the restaurant.

6:00-8:00 p.m. You are invited to dinner with other AWC officers and volunteers and our guest agents, editors, and speaker in the restaurant on the first floor of the hotel. The AWC is paying for your meal. Ordering has been done ahead of time for everything but beverages.

8:00-11:30 p.m. Social mixer in the Candler Room beside the restaurant for casual chats with our guests and conference attendees about books and the people who write them, sell them, publish them, and buy them. The Mike Shaw Trio will provide entertainment, and I’ll have a drink ticket for each of you.

**FRIDAY STANDBYS (if applicable):**

Here’s an explanation about how we'll work the waitlist (for people who tried to register for a query letter critique but all the spots were full): if a registered participant doesn't appear for their scheduled critique time, Janie, Roger, or I will check the waitlist. When we find the first person on standby, they will go in the missing person’s place—we’ll hand that person off to you. We’ll know at least a few minutes ahead of time whether we have a gap to fill from the standby list, so don’t worry about this. It’s our responsibility to keep your queue moving without delay.

If the one who missed their turn finally shows up, that person must wait until after the last critique is over. If the agent and editor are agreeable, the tardy individual can participate (use the regular timing procedure above).

If no one is on the query letter critique waitlist, this will be an extra break period for the guests—we’ll need to stick to the schedule rather than get ahead of it, due to the existence of virtual participants we won’t be able to communicate with as readily.

**PROCEDURES FOR SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2:** [for all 18 timekeepers]

By 9:30 a.m. Check in at the registration table outside the College Park Ballroom on the second floor of the Westin to get a name tag (if you didn’t volunteer on Friday) and also find the room you and your assigned agent/editor will use during the morning and afternoon. We have 18 total rooms: 6 individual Board Rooms, plus Riverdale and Fayetteville at the end of the same hall, Peachtree City Room outside that hallway and—on the other side of the College Park Ballroom—Dogwood, Gardenia, Jasmine, Magnolia, Cherokee Rose, and the Atlanta I-IV Rooms.

10:00-10:15 a.m. Set up for Critique Sessions in your assigned meeting room, greet the agent/editor you’ve been assigned to and see if they need a beverage—located in Board Room 2 at one end of the hall and Jasmine Room in the other wing. Please make sure the agent/editor logs into Zoom in case there are known virtual participants or in case in-person participants can’t make it and need to Zoom in for their meeting. Queue up the first critique participant (the volunteer runners and I will be rounding them up for you).

10:15 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Critique Sessions

Here's how these activities will work:

**The timing of this activity is a little different due to the hybrid nature of the conference and past agent/editor feedback that they would’ve liked a little prep time between manuscript critique sessions.** So, while these sessions are in 15-minute intervals, the first two minutes is reserved for (1) the agent/editor to read through their comments (which I will have shared with participants a day or two before the conference) and (2) for any virtual participants to log in and be assigned (by our Zoom volunteer Kim Conrey) to the proper Zoom breakout room. The remaining 13 minutes are for the agent/editor meeting with each participant.

At 10:15, for example, the agent/editor can begin their 2-minute prep (if they haven’t already started this). At 10:17, you will lead the first person on the schedule into the room. At 10:28, when the participant has been in the room for 11 minutes, knock on the door, open it, and announce they have 2 minutes left. At 10:30, knock again, escort the participant out and remind the agent/editor of who’s next on the schedule so they can prep for 2 minutes. Then close the door, note the time, and start the process again.

**If someone doesn't show up for their critique**, please let me know (we’ll have some warning, because their name tag will still be at the registration table). Because all participants will receive the guests’ MS critiques via email ahead of time, there will not be any paperwork to collect. To use this time most effectively, I’ll consult our pitch standby list so that someone can pitch the agent/editor during that 15-minute interval—in this way, they’ll actually get a little longer than the afternoon pitch participants. Here’s how this will work: If the waitlisted participant is virtual, I’ll email the guest with the individual’s query letter if they submitted one in advance. If they’re in-person and brought a printed copy, you’ll give the agent/editor the participant’s query letter, allow 2 minutes for their review, and then give the participant 11 minutes in the room before providing a 2-minute warning. If the participant is virtual, I’ll let you know so you can tell the guest, and our Zoom volunteer Kim Conrey will get the participant into the Zoom room. Please still keep timing as usual. At the 15-minute mark, knock again, remind the guest who’s next in the manuscript critique queue for prep and escort the pitching participant out (or this virtual person will depart the Zoom breakout room). This will avoid impacting the subsequent critique start times. *Additional standby guidance is below.*

**Please remind in-person participants as you’re escorting them out of the room to stay for the 5:45 Giveaway Drawings and Award Ceremony in the College Park Ballroom, where the “best manuscript sample submission” will be announced, with a certificate awarded and more than a dozen prizes will be given away in drawings. (Virtual participants will learn from me the next day whether they won an award.)**

After the final critique participant exits (either in-person or virtually), please ask the agent/editor to identify which 1-2 of the 10 participants should receive the “best manuscript sample submission” award—I’ll have a sheet in the room for the guest to indicate the name(s) to give to me. “Best” is totally subjective; I typically encourage them to pick the author of the manuscript they’re most excited to see in its entirety (this guidance is on a printed sheet I’ll put in all meeting rooms, along with the names of those they met with, so they can circle the award recipients). A tie between two participants is permissible if there is not an obvious best choice. **Please give their selection(s) to me during the lunchtime break so we can get a jump on making award certificates during the afternoon.**

LUNCH: 1:00 to 2:00 p.m.

In between the morning critiques and afternoon pitches is a buffet lunch, which you'll enjoy alongside the agents and editors and our guest speakers, courtesy of the AWC, in the Chandler Room on the ground floor next to the restaurant.

2:00-2:15 p.m. Set up for Pitch Sessions in your assigned room. Again, the volunteer runners and I will help queue up a few people at a time for you. The agent/editor needs to log back into Zoom if they disconnected for lunch.

2:15-4:54 p.m. Pitch Sessions:

**Our pitch sessions are in 15-minute intervals.** The first 5 minutes are to allow the agent/editor to read the query letter the participant is supposed to bring with them or submit in advance if they are virtual. The 5-minute period also gives us more time to secure a replacement participant if there’s a no-show. At 2:15, for example, you will remind the guest which participant is first on the schedule and either hand them the printed query letter from the first person in the queue—or they can open the virtual participant’s pitch letter file—and start reading. Close the door to offer privacy. After 5 minutes—or earlier if the agent/editor signals they are ready—you will knock on the door, open it, and bring in the participant (or Kim will admit the virtual participant into the Zoom breakout room). **If the guest starts early with a participant, please still use the scheduled end time to calculate your 2-minute warning; extra time will mean a bonus for participants, not an acceleration of the schedule.**

After leading the first participant on the list into the room at the scheduled start time, you will step back out, close the door, and note the time. Eight (8) minutes later, knock on the door, open it, and announce that the participant has 2 minutes left. At the 10-minute mark, knock again, open the door, escort the first participant out, and give them the next participant’s query letter or remind the guest who’s next virtually on the schedule so they can begin prepping for that meeting. When another 5 minutes elapse, escort the next person in, close the door, note the time, and continue the process again.

If someone forgets to bring a copy of their query letter, please direct that person to the check-in table outside the College Park Ballroom, where we’ll have a printer they can use. The business center adjacent to the boardrooms (which requires a guest room card to open) also has printers, as does the open terminals on the first floor near the escalator, where they can access the Internet and hopefully print that file. If they can’t do that in a timely manner, they can use the full 15-minute period for a verbal exchange with the guest. If a virtual participant didn’t send me their query letter in advance and can’t get it to me immediately, that too will be a strictly verbal exchange.

**Please remind in-person participants as you’re escorting them out of the room to stay for the 5:45 Giveaway Drawings and Award Ceremony in the College Park Ballroom, where the “best pitch” awards will be announced, with a certificate awarded and more than a dozen prizes will be given away in drawings. (Virtual participants will learn from me the next day whether they won an award.)**

After the final pitch participant exits, please ask the agent/editor to identify which 1-2 of the 12 participants should receive the “best pitch” award. “Best” is totally subjective; I typically encourage them to pick the author of the manuscript they’re most excited to see. A tie between two participants is permissible if there is not an obvious best choice. As with the manuscript critiques, I’ll have a page where they can indicate the name(s). **Please give their selection(s) to me at the registration table so Kim and I can prepare the award certificates.**

**It's my desire that you have a chance to pitch your work to the agent/editor, if you want to do this after you’ve given me the agent/editor’s choice(s) for Best Pitch. If interested, please bring your printed query letter. I'm sure they will be very accommodating given your assistance with keeping things flowing.**

Please ask your guest agent/editor to remain in the meeting room (a bathroom break is fine, of course) until they go to the College Park Ballroom at 5:50 p.m. If they need to run up to their room, they must return to the College Park Ballroom by 5:50.

5:30-5:50 p.m. Prep for Giveaway Drawings and Award Ceremony: We’ll create certificates for the best manuscript sample submitted for critique and the best pitch delivered.

5:45-6:30 p.m. We’ll do giveaways for free books, AWC memberships, critiques, and more. The Award Ceremony will begin around 5:50: I hope you can attend this closing ceremony, where each guest will present a certificate to participants for the best manuscript sample submitted for critique and the best pitch delivered, to celebrate your participants.

**SATURDAY STANDBYS:**

Here’s an explanation about how we'll work the pitch waitlists for people who tried to register to pitch an agent/editor but all the spots were full (there are no standby manuscript critiques, because that activity required submitting material a month in advance. As stated above, if someone fails to show for a manuscript critique, we’ll put in the first person on the pitch waitlist).

If a registered participant doesn't appear for their scheduled critique or pitch time, Janie, Roger, or I will check the pitch standby list. When we find the first person on the standby list for that agent/editor, they will go in the missing person’s place—we’ll hand that person off to you if they’re at the hotel, or we’ll get that virtual person into the Zoom breakout room. We’ll know a few minutes ahead of time whether we have a gap to fill from the standby list, so don’t worry about this. It’s our responsibility to keep your queue moving without delay. If there’s no one on the waitlist, this will be an extra break for the guest; please don’t accelerate the schedule, because we’ll have virtual people with whom it will be more difficult to communicate.

If the one who missed their turn finally shows up, that person must wait until after the last critique/pitch is over. If the agent/editor is agreeable, the tardy individual can participate (use same timing procedure as above).

NOTES:

In the past, it was okay if the schedule began to slip, but in a hybrid situation, that becomes problematic, so please try to keep everything on time. If an agent/editor requires an unscheduled break, please let me know so I can start doing damage control with those who are coming up in the schedule. We can plug the affected participant into the scheduled break time or, if this occurs after the scheduled break, we can add to the schedule after the last participant’s session is done.

**The attached file(s) show your schedule of participants for the manuscript critiques and the pitches on Saturday, and the query letter critique panel if you’re timekeeping on Friday as well. In addition, if you registered for a manuscript sample critique(s) and/or pitch(es), I’ve attached a substitute timekeeper file so you’ll know who will take your place a few minutes ahead of your meeting(s).**

When you reply to let me know you received this, please tell me if you have any questions. I know you'll do a great job—thanks again for your help!