



**IGW**  
**GENRECON**  
HUNTINGTON, WV  
July 25-26, 2026  
Welcome!

We are so excited to welcome you to the Jewel City. Huntington has long been home to a vibrant and varied writing and arts community. We hope this weekend fills you with inspiration and confidence to pursue your writing dreams. Make the most of the workshops and panels and don't forget to take advantage of the many one-on-one opportunities with our presenters.

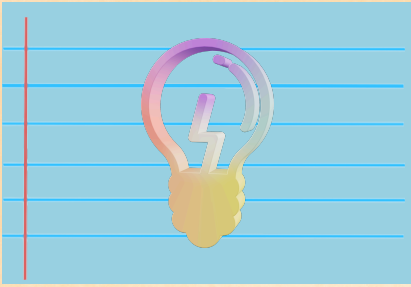
In your binder, you'll find a brochure of all the great restaurants and shops within easy walking distance of the hotel. Huntington is famous for its friendliness so don't hesitate to explore. But if you feel like sticking close to the hotel, we'll have a cocktail party Saturday night in the bar that is sure to be cozy, chatty, and lots of fun.

Our goal at IGW is to help you achieve your writing dreams, whatever they may be. Writing is lonely business and having a community of like-minded weirdos can make it feel less isolating. Whether you're just putting pen to paper for the very first time or you are pitching your opus to an agent or editor, we hope IGW and GenreCon help you along your journey.

If there is anything we can do to make you feel more at home, please don't hesitate to find us. We'll be the ones running up and down the hallway cheering you on.

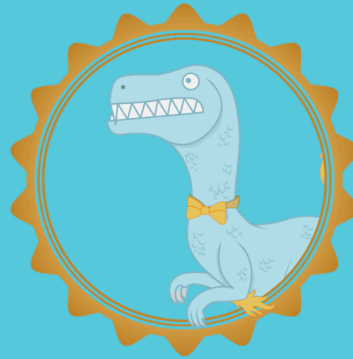
Cheers! Tobi and Sheila





We've placed index cards in your binder and rooms to encourage you to give us your comments or any ideas about what you'd like to see or have at future conferences. Please let us know! We're writers and know revisions are always needed. There are boxes in the rooms for you to leave the cards. We really appreciate your feedback.

Join us on Facebook



**The Henlo Press**  
Read indie. Stay awesome.  
[www.thehenlopress.com](http://www.thehenlopress.com)

## Check out the bookstore and raffles!

In the first room you'll find books available written by the presenters and local authors. There are also some fun crafts and gift ideas.

The two charities were supporting this year with the raffle tickets are the Cabell County Libraries and Central Ohio Fiction Writers.

Our library system is an integral part of our community. They support not only readers and authors, but members of our community needing everything from a snow shovel to tax help. Definitely help us support them.

Tobi has been a member of Central Ohio Fiction Writers for years. They offer a workshop each month on a variety of topics and it's always helpful. Sheila and Tobi have baskets with books and booze in their raffle.

Good luck and thanks for supporting these two worthy causes!





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## Our Presenters:



**Sheila Redling**, writing as SG Redling, is the author of nine novels of pure mayhem, including the bestselling thrillers FLOWERTOWN and the Dani Britton series. She is the co-director of Intensive Genre Workshops and was the recipient of the 2022 WVLA literary merit award and the WV Writers Just Uncommonly Good award. She has been a panelist and presenter at The WV Writers Summer Conference, Bouchercon, Left Coast Crime, and more. A graduate of Georgetown University, a former morning radio host, and a language geek, Sheila currently lives in Huntington, WV with a wide array of wildlife.



**Tobi Doyle**, co-director of Intensive Genre Workshops with Sheila Redling, is a hybrid romance and cozy mystery author. Tobi has published over a dozen romance books. She is the recipient of the 2022 Romance Writers of America PRO Mentor of the Year, and a Service Award for her work on RWA's Pen to Paper, a guide to romance writing. Basically, ask her about romance and she'll tell you EVERYTHING! Also, Tobi wants you to know that Tom Booker, from SG Redling's Dani Britton series, is the best villain she's ever read and she secretly fan-girls behind Sheila's back.



Author **A. B. Hooser** (Amanda) lives in Huntington, WV with her family and two dogs. Artist, gamer, writer: she lets the ADHD lead her into every new adventure. She tells people that she has mastered the art of procrastinating by creating an entire sticker business to avoid finishing the multiple books she has half-written.

Tobi and Sheila are awed at everything Amanda gets done and her different way of thinking about writing craft. She's an integral part of IGW!



**Jonathan Edward Durham** was born near Philadelphia where he read voraciously throughout his youth and beyond. After attending William and Mary, where he received a degree in neuroscience while also studying literature, Jonathan waded into the professional world before deciding he was better suited for more artistic pursuits.

He writes novels that bridge the wonder of his favorite childhood stories with the thrilling pop sensibilities of his early adult obsessions. He's also an avid humorist on social media where you can find him waxing quipsodic about cheese, and sometimes even the world beyond. The second edition of his debut novel, Winterset Hollow, is coming from Hachette/Union Square this October!





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## Our Presenters:



**Jen Graybeal** (she/her) is dedicated to empowering authors through encouraging feedback, collaborative problem solving and gently-applied tough love. In eleven years of coaching, workshops, and editing projects, she has helped over a thousand authors create stories they are proud of and businesses that align with their individual vision of success. Jen is an award-winning mindfulness-trained Creativity Coach, and international speaker with a degree in English, an ever-expanding TBR pile, and a furball assistant that is usually on her lap. Visit her website for client testimonials at [www.jentheeditor.com](http://www.jentheeditor.com) or follow her on social media: @JenTheEditor. Listen to the Books, Business & Mindset podcast, now available on all your favorite podcast apps.

*Tobi loves Jen's Work-It program. This conference would have never happened without Jen's coaching.*



**Amber (Decker) Koch** grew up in the mountains of West Virginia, where she still lives and writes. She has performed her work in theaters, coffee shops, laundromats, dive bars, and record stores across the country—from New York to New Orleans to Portland to Los Angeles and back again.

She is a recipient of the annual Jack Grapes Poetry Prize, presented by LA's Cultural Weekly, and has served multiple times as a judge for the annual Poetry Superhighway contest. In 2024, she was invited to open for Barbara Kingsolver during the Pulitzer Prize-winning author's only tour stop of the year in Barboursville, West Virginia.

Her latest collection, *Appalachian Gothic: Poems Inspired by the Life and Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, explores Appalachian landscape, grief, and folklore in conversation with the work of Edgar Allan Poe.



**Misty Simon** (also writing as Gabby Allen) always wanted to be a storyteller. She began writing stories to share her world with readers, one laugh at a time. She hopes everyone at least snickers in the right places when reading her books. She lives with her husband in Central Pennsylvania where she is hard at work on her next novel or three.



**Marsha Blevins** is an amazing author and even better author's best friend. Marsha has honed her technical skills to include website design and help, SEO optimization, marketing best practices, and many other things that make most authors want to cry.



## Our Presenters:



**Henlo Press - Chandler Haun and Courtney Pierce.** Breaking into publishing is tough—especially without connections or cash. At Henlo Press, we champion the talent of Appalachian writers and other underrepresented voices by offering full publishing support—editing, formatting, printing, and marketing—at no cost to the author. We don't offer advances, but we provide royalty contracts and real promotional support. Since starting with just two books, we've grown to publish multiple titles each year, including our first literary journal in 2023.



We're building a creative, welcoming community that flips the script on traditional, gatekept publishing. And yes, our mascot is Heckin' Hector—a big blue Troodon in a bowtie who dreams of writing his own romance novel. Because publishing should be for everyone—with talent, heart, and a little bit of whimsy.



**Timothy Goode** (any/all) was born in Charleston, WV and grew up in Hurricane, WV. He scoured the shelves of the Putnam County Public Library for all the fantasy and science fiction he could find as a kid. After attending Evangel University he went on to complete a Masters degree in counseling, and has run a small business as a licensed professional counselor since 2019. In the course of running that small business he realized that there is a unique opportunity to bring all the tools that authors need to manage their author business into one place, and with the help of a long-time friend IndieHold became a reality.

### BOOKS, BUSINESS & MINDSET

*a podcast for authors*



Available on your favorite podcast app.

Sign up for Jen's mailing list at

<https://www.jentheeditor.com/subscribe> to learn about her fabulous programs like...

#### Free Workshop - Planning and Goal Setting for Authors

Jen's hosting a free workshop on Tuesday, August 25 at 10 am Pacific/ 11 am Mountain/ Noon Central/ 1 pm Eastern. This 2-hour session will be held live over Zoom and there will be time to answer questions. You must be registered to receive links to the live session and the recording. Details will be sent in early August.

Use the QR code to register.





# SCHEDULE



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| Saturday    | Room One                                                                                                                                         | Room Two                                                                                            |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8:00-8:45   | Sheila Redling & Tobi Doyle: <b>Pitch, please!</b> Mandatory Pitch Workshop for everyone who wishes to pitch.                                    |                                                                                                     |
| 8:45-9:00   | Welcome!                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                     |
| 9:00-10:00  | Jen Graybeal<br>MasterClass<br><b>Truth, Lies, Emotional Arcs</b>                                                                                | Marsha Blevins: <b>Creating your author website. Finding your readers and connecting with them.</b> |
| 10:00-10:15 |                                                                                                                                                  | Break                                                                                               |
| 10:15-11:15 |                                                                                                                                                  | Misty Simon:<br><b>Character, take the wheel!</b>                                                   |
| 11:15-1:00  | Lunch                                                                                                                                            | Lunch                                                                                               |
| 1:00-2:00   | Amber Decker: <b>Write in the Gut: A Guide to Visceral Imagery in Poetry</b>                                                                     | Misty Simon: <b>Settings that breathe even more life into your story</b>                            |
| 2:00-2:15   | Break                                                                                                                                            | Break                                                                                               |
| 2:15-3:15   | Jonathan Edward Durham and Amber Decker: <b>A dialogue between a poet and comedian/author about the Power of Words: Get to the Fucking Point</b> | Tim Goode: <b>Beyond the Book Launch: Building an Author Business You Actually Own</b>              |
| 3:15-3:30   | Break                                                                                                                                            | Break                                                                                               |
| 3:30-4:30   | Marsha Blevins: <b>Creating your author substack. Finding your readers and connecting with them.</b>                                             | Sheila & Tobi - <b>Let's hear your practice pitches!</b>                                            |
| 4:30-5:00   | Silent Auction Closes                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                     |
| 5:00-7:00   | Cocktail Party                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                     |





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## Saturday Workshops

**1:00-2:00 - Room 1 - Write in the Gut: A Guide to Visceral Imagery in Poetry** with Amber Decker Koch. This workshop strips away all pretense and pretty, decorative language, and dives straight into the soft, squirming center where your rawest poems live.

- We'll break down what visceral imagery actually is, why it works, and how to use it without flinching. Expect a mix of craft, controlled chaos, and a few slightly unhinged exercises designed to make your work hit harder, linger longer, and maybe make someone a little uncomfortable (in a good way).
- Bring your nerve and leave your filter at home where it belongs.

**1:00-2:00 - Room 2 - Settings that breathe even more life into your story** with Misty Simon. You've heard that setting often shows up as a character all its own and in this class we'll explore ways to plumb the depths of the where and why this story is set and then how you make it breathe all on its own. From places to vibes, you can make the setting do a lot of the work for you once you look at it as its own being!

**2:15-3:15 - Room 1 - A dialogue between a poet and comedian/author about the Power of Words: Get to the Fucking Point** with Jonathan Edward Durham and Amber Decker. Probably an unhinged discussion about finding the words to connect to your reader, connect to the story, and lose the stuff nobody wants to read anyway.

**2:15-3:15 - Room 2 - Beyond the Book Launch: Building an Author Business You Actually Own** with Tim Goode. In this one-hour demonstration, Tim Goode will show how IndieHold helps authors bring the essential pieces of their author business into one place: websites, reader magnets, email automation, direct sales, funnels, social scheduling, reader communities, and performance tracking.

**3:30-4:30 - Room 1 - Creating Your Author Substack** with Marsha Blevins. Learn how to set up your author substack. With changing rules and owners of social media, it's increasingly important to have your own list of subscribers and not just followers who might see your content. You want to be able to deliver information directly into their inbox AND pop up while their scrolling. Join Marsha to learn how to get started!

**3:30-4:30 - Room 2 - More Pitch Practice** with Sheila & Tobi. You've had all day to noodle about your pitches. If you'd like, you can come by and practice them again.





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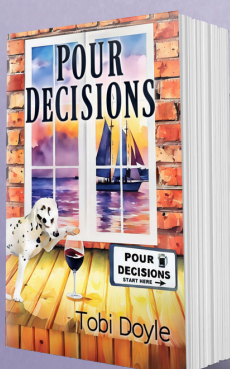
# Saturday Workshops

**8:00 - Room 1 - Pitch, Please!** with Tobi Doyle and Sheila Redling. If you are pitching at GenreCon, this workshop is mandatory. We'll walk you through exactly what to expect, help you polish your logline and elevator pitch, and demystify the whole process—so you can shake off the heebie-jeebies, calm those ants in your pants, and show up with only the usual amount of nerves. AND, we're having another pitch workshop for those of you who want to practice later in the day. You're welcome to attend if you're not pitching but practice will focus on those who have scheduled pitch sessions. This is a great stress reliever and past participants have been very happy (and received requests) after making minor tweaks.

**9:00-11:15 - Room 1 - 2-Hour Masterclass: Truth, Lies, and Emotional Arcs** with Jen Graybeal. Characters are the heartbeat of any story. In this two-hour masterclass, we'll explore how emotional arcs, inner conflict, and reader expectations work together to send readers on an emotional rollercoaster they won't forget. Through intentional choices, authors will learn to balance the lies characters believe with the truths they must face. We will dive into the secret ingredient for complex stories and the practical tools you can immediately implement.

**9:00-10:00 - Room 2 - Creating Your Author Website** with Marsha Blevins. You can be a beginner or intermediate for this workshop. Marsha will walk you through the steps to help you create a website so you can find your readers and connect with them.

**10:15-11:15 - Room 2 - Character, Take the Wheel!** with Misty Simon. Every story comes into being through our thoughts and experiences. We want to tell a specific story, and we want that story to be good, but how do you make it resonate with readers? Let the character take the wheel! We'll talk about concrete ways to bring your characters to life on the pages of your story and make the reader wish they could find you protagonist and have coffee with them, even if it's in some far off world or a small town like the one where you live.



Things are going great for Wanda Atkins. She's almost finished with her Master's degree, she's finally moved out on her own, and the cute deputy in their small coastal town wants to spend time with her. If only she wasn't a murder suspect.

Check out Tobi's new book. Available at the bookstore and most retailers.



# Are you interested in a critique weekend?

Follow the QR code below to the survey or just write your answers and info on a blue card and put it in one of the suggestions spots

It's three nights in the cozy and unfussy halls of Cedar Lakes Conference Center. Think summer camp meets writing retreat. We have small group critiques, workshops, craft time, and more snacks than you can possibly consume in a weekend, all on the quiet green grounds of Cedar Lakes. The cost is \$500 per person for a single room, \$400 to share. Each room has a private bathroom.

If you are interested, what is the best season for you? Rank these 1-4, 1 being best, 4 being least desired: Late spring (mid-May); Early fall (late August) ; Midwinter (January); Late winter (early March)

Please note: this all depends on availability from Cedar Lakes.

**Look for folks with an "Ask Me" button for personal recommendations.**

If you're writing this on a blue card, be sure to write your name and email CLEARLY, as well as your preferences for the season.

**Example:** Miss FancyPants [fancypants@me.com](mailto:fancypants@me.com)  
Definitely interested in critique weekend!

1. Early Fall
2. Late spring
3. Midwinter
4. Late winter



## What to expect:

What to expect:

Submit up to 5,000 words to be critiqued by the due date (which is a few weeks before we meet). These can be a chapter or a plot outline or story idea.

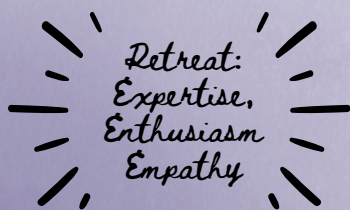
Attendees in your small group critique your work, including Sheila, Tobi, and other moderators.

Your critiques are sent to you after you've submitted your group's critiques. This happens about a week before we meet to give you time to feel all the feels and come up with some questions about your story.

Critique group is more like a workshop - you've already received your critique, now you can workshop where your story may need clarification or changes.

It's uplifting and encouraging. There is no "Milford Style" here. It's an active discussion of your work.

The rest of the weekend includes lots of snacks. Some workshops by Sheila and Tobi. Time to bond with other writers. Time to relax and focus on you!





# SCHEDULE



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| Sunday          | Room One<br>Panels                                                                                                                 | Room Two<br>Pitches!                                                                                                          |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9:00 -<br>10:30 | Jonathan Edward Durham,<br>Misty Simon, Amanda Hooser<br><b>First page to finished draft,<br/>let's talk writing styles.</b>       | <b>9:00-9:30</b> Open Pitch<br>Practice                                                                                       |
| 11:00-<br>12:00 | Ashley Skeen and Mande<br>Cunningham, Owners of Indie<br>bookstore Booktenders<br><b>Promoting your book launch.</b>               | <b>10:00-12:00</b> pitches<br>Danielle Marshall, Lydia<br>Caudill, Megan Frayser,<br>Dianna Vega, Kelly Moran,<br>Rachel Beck |
| 12:00-<br>1:00  | Lunch                                                                                                                              | Lunch                                                                                                                         |
| 1:30-3:00       | Amanda Hooser, Misty Simon,<br>Jen Graybeal, Jonathan<br>Edward Durham<br><b>Making your characters<br/>connect to the reader.</b> | <b>1:00-3:00</b> pitches<br>Alexandra Grana, Tamara<br>Kawar, Shelley Romero                                                  |
| 3:30-5:00       | Mande<br>Cunningham, Ashley<br>Skeen, Jonathan Edward<br>Durham, Misty Simon, Jen<br>Graybeal<br><b>Don't do this shit.</b>        | <b>3:00-5:00</b> pitches<br>Katie Reed, Gina Panettieri,<br>Elizabeth Kracht, Henlo<br>Press                                  |
| 5:00-5:30       | Goodbye!                                                                                                                           | Goodbye!                                                                                                                      |



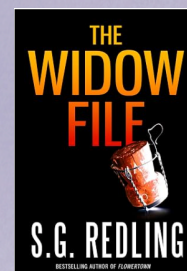


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# Sunday Panels in Room 1

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9:00 - 10:30 | Jonathan Edward Durham, Misty Simon, Amanda Hooser<br><b>First page to finished draft, let's talk writing styles.</b> From first page to finished draft, every writer has a process. Pantser, plotter, hybrid, outliner, note-taker, or index-card addict—there's no single "right" way to write. Join our experts as they share how they tackle each book, whether their process changes, and the tips, tricks, and breakthroughs that could transform the way you write.           |
| 11:00-12:00  | Ashley Skeen and Mande Cunningham, Owners of Indie bookstore Booktenders <b>Promoting your book launch.</b> Indie bookstores can be one of an author's greatest allies. Learn how to approach bookstores professionally, understand the business side of bookselling, what questions to ask, and how to ask them. Whether you're hoping to land a book signing, stock your book on local shelves, or build lasting relationships, this session will help you launch with confidence. |
| 1:30-3:00    | Amanda Hooser, Misty Simon, Jen Graybeal, Jonathan Edward Durham<br><b>Making your characters connect to the reader.</b> Connection is at the heart of every great story. Discover what makes readers care, laugh, cry, and keep turning pages. Our authors and editor will share the techniques they use to create compelling characters readers can't forget.                                                                                                                      |
| 3:30-5:00    | Mande Cunningham, Ashley Skeen, Jonathan Edward Durham, Misty Simon, Jen Graybeal <b>Don't do this shit.</b> The title says it all. You've heard the advice: post 47 times a day, be on every social platform, hand out bookmarks to strangers...but do you really need to? Join us as we expose the time-sucking, money-draining author tasks you can skip, so you can spend more time writing the next book.                                                                       |

*Did you know that Tom Booker, Sheila's villain in the Dani Britton Series (start with the Widow File) is Tobi's favorite villain ever? You should read it!!!*





# Work It

Work It is a six-week coaching program designed specifically for career-minded authors who need space to think clearly again.

**Fall session starts Sept 1!**

Visit [jentheeditor.com/workit](http://jentheeditor.com/workit) for details.

"I am so glad I took this course! It was the shot in the arm I needed. Jen [covers] a variety of crucial topics, she's very approachable and always accessible. Her experience in the industry really shines, and she is very generous with her knowledge. I highly, highly recommend this course."

Author G.K. Brady

*Jen Graybeal*

Creative Coaching



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