

Contact

Mary Hickey

mary@coloradohumanities.org

303.894.7951 x19

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Children's, Juvenile, and Young Adult Literature Finalist Reading in Colorado Springs

April 29 – 4 p.m. at Ruth Holley Library, 685 N Murray Blvd, Colorado Springs, CO 80915

The Colorado Book Awards annually celebrates Colorado's outstanding literary achievement by commending the accomplishments of its authors, editors, illustrators, and photographers. Volunteer judges from across the state review submissions to select finalists and winners through a rigorous selection process.

Prior to the June 10 awards celebration in Colorado Springs, finalists will present a series of free public readings through June 3. The readings will be held at different Pikes Peak Library District locations throughout the Colorado Springs area. Finalists will read from their work and attendees can pose questions. Select finalist books will be available for purchase at the readings and through Poor Richard's Books & Gifts at <https://poorrichardsdowntown.com/#books>. Registration for this free event is available at <https://coloradohumanities.org/programs/colorado-book-awards/>.

Children's Literature Finalists

If Tigers Disappeared

Lily Williams

What would happen if tigers disappeared? Find out in this fifth book in the award-winning *If Animals Disappeared* series that imagines the consequences of a world without tigers. There are nine subspecies of tigers, but three are now extinct. They play a very important role in keeping nature in balance, but due to expanding human populations, poaching, and more, they're in danger. Join Lily Williams as she tracks the devastating reality of what our world might look like without tigers. Lily Williams is the author and illustrator of *If Sharks Disappeared*, *If Polar Bears Disappeared*, *If Elephants Disappeared*, and *If Bees Disappeared*. She grew up in Northern California where she received her BFA from California College of the Arts. Lily seeks to inspire change, engage audiences, and educate people of all ages with her artwork. She lives in Idaho Springs.

Swim, Jim!

Kaz Windness

Jim the crocodile is scared of swimming—or rather, of sinking. His family’s swamp is just too deep, too dark, and too big. But maybe he could swim, if only there were a smaller swamp where he could try it on his own terms. Jim wiggle-waggles far and wide until he finds the perfect place. With the help of some floaties and his sisters, Jim just might find the courage to face his fear and show everyone—including himself—that Jim can swim! Kaz Windness is an author-illustrator who loves to make her readers laugh. When she’s not writing or illustrating books, Kaz teaches illustration at the Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design. She’s the author of 15 picture books, including *Bitsy Bat*, *School Star*, and *Worm and Caterpillar Are Friends*. Kaz lives in Thornton.

Sylvie

Jean Reidy and Lucy Ruth Cummins

One small spider takes a big risk to bring together the people she watches over in her apartment building in this charming picture book from the celebrated author and illustrator of *Truman*. Jean Reidy’s bestselling and award-winning picture books have earned their spots as favorites among readers and listeners of all ages and from all over the world. She is a three-time winner of the Colorado Book Award, a Parents’ Choice Gold Award winner, a Charlotte Zolotow Honor winner, and recognized on “Best of” lists by *School Library Journal*, *The New York Times*, NPR, and Amazon. Jean lives in Greenwood Village.

Juvenile Literature Finalists

Dad’s Girlfriend and Other Anxieties

Kellye Crocker

Dad hasn’t even been dating his new girlfriend that long, so Ava is sure that nothing has to change in her life. That is, until the day after sixth grade ends, when Dad whisks her away on vacation to meet The Girlfriend and her daughter in terrifying Colorado, where even the squirrels can kill you! Managing her anxiety, avoiding altitude sickness, and surviving the mountains might take all of Ava’s strength, but at least this trip will only last two weeks. Right? Kellye Crocker is a journalist who has written for *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Parents*, and *Glamour*. She holds an MFA in writing for children and young adults from Vermont College of Fine Arts and a BA in news-editorial from the Missouri School of Journalism. She lives in Denver.

Middle School: Safety Goggles Advised

Jessica Speer and Lesley Imgart

Yes, there are cool things about middle school, like more independence, new friends, and new activities. But there’s baffling stuff too, like harsh judgment, the whole “popularity” thing, and, of course, drama. Jessica Speer is the award-winning author of *BFF or NRF (Not Really Friends)? A Girls Guide to Happy Friendships*. Blending humor, a dash of science, stories, and insights, her writing unpacks the social stuff that peaks during adolescence. She has a master’s degree in social sciences and explores topics in ways that connect with kids. Jessica is regularly featured in and contributes to media outlets on topics related to kids, teens parenting, and friendship. Lesley Imgart is an illustrator/artist/writer based in

Edinburgh. In her autobiographical work, Lesley documents sincere observations, funny conversations, and anything else that feels important.

Sisterhood of Sleuths

Jennifer Chambliss Bertman

Maizy always assumed she knew everything about her grandmother, Jacuzzi. So, when a box full of vintage Nancy Drew books gets left at her mom’s thrift store, Maizy is surprised to find an old photo of her grandmother and two other women tucked beneath the collection. Determined to learn the truth — and inspired by the legacy of Nancy Drew — Maizy launches her own investigation with the help of new friends, Nell and Cam. This intergenerational mystery filled with literary history, friendship, and family secrets delivers a captivating tribute to the world’s most famous girl detective. Jennifer Chambliss Bertman is the *New York Times* bestselling author of the *Book Scavenger* series and the picture book *A Good Deed Can Grow*, illustrated by Holly Hatam. Jennifer holds an MFA in Creative Writing and lives in Erie.

Totality! An Eclipse Guide in Rhyme and Science

Jeffrey Bennett

This book features a unique combination of rhyme and science that makes it suitable for a wide range of ages. The book includes a glossary, suggested activities, and an eclipse science summary — features that will add particular value for parents and teachers learning along with their students or kids. Astrophysicist/educator Jeffrey Bennett is the author of numerous books, including college textbooks in astronomy, astrobiology, mathematics, and statistics, books for the general public, and six previous books for children. All six children’s books have won numerous awards, including the American Institute of Physics Science Communication award and have been read by astronauts aboard the International Space Station for the Story Time From Space program. Dr. Bennett lives in Boulder.

Young Adult Literature Finalists

Azar on Fire

Olivia Abtahi

Fourteen-year-old Azar Rossi’s first year of high school has mostly been silent, and intentionally so. After a bad case of colic as a baby, Azar’s vocal folds are shredded—full of nodules that give her a rasp the envy of a chain-smoking bullfrog. When she hears about a local Battle of the Bands contest, it’s something she can’t resist. Azar loves music and songwriting, but with her vocal folds the way they are, there’s no way she can sing her songs on stage. Growing up in the DC area, Olivia devoured books and hid in empty classrooms during school to finish them. Her debut novel, *Perfectly Parvin*, was published in 2021 by Penguin Random House Putnam Books for Young Readers, receiving the SCBWI Golden Kite Honor, and YALSA Odyssey Honor, and numerous starred reviews. She lives in Denver.

Bright Ruined Things

Samantha Cohoe

The only life Mae has ever known is on the island, living on the charity of the wealthy Prosper family who control the island's magic and its spirits. Mae longs for magic of her own and to have a place among the Prosper family, where her best friend, Coco, will see her as an equal, and her crush, Miles, will finally see her. As Mae and her friends unravel the mysteries of the island, and the Prosper's magic, Mae starts to question the truth of what her world was built on. Samantha Cohoe writes historically-inspired young adult fantasy. She was raised in San Luis Obispo, California and divides her time among teaching Latin, mothering, writing, reading, and deleting adverbs. *A Golden Fury* is her debut novel, and she lives in Denver.

Cold the Night, Fast the Wolves

Meg Long

A lone girl determined to survive. The feral wolf she must learn to trust. Only one chance to escape their icy planet: a race across the deadly tundra. As the girl and the wolf forge a tenuous bond and fight to escape ice goblins, giant bears, and the ruthless gang leader intent on trapping them both, one question drives them relentlessly forward: Where do you turn when there is nowhere to hide? Meg Long was born and raised in Louisiana and taught middle and high school for eight years before jumping to the tech industry as a content writer. *Cold the Night, Fast the Wolves* is her debut novel, and she lives in Lakewood.

Finalist Reading Schedule

May 13 – General Fiction, Mystery, and Romance at Sand Creek Library, 1821 S Academy Blvd, Colorado Springs, CO 80916

May 20 – Creative and General Nonfiction at East Library, 5550 N Union Blvd, Colorado Springs, CO 80918

May 27 – Anthology, Literary Fiction, and Poetry at Library 21c, 1175 Chapel Hills Dr, Colorado Springs, CO 80919

June 3 – Science Fiction/Fantasy and Thriller at Rockrimmon Library, 832 Village Center Dr, Colorado Springs, CO 80919

2023 Finalist Celebration and Winners Announcement

Saturday, June 10 at 4 p.m.

Penrose House Garden Pavilion

1661 Mesa Avenue, Colorado Springs, CO 80906

\$30 event tickets on sale at <https://coloradohumanities.org/product/2023-colorado-book-awards-celebration/>

About Colorado Humanities & Center for the Book

Colorado Humanities is the only Colorado organization exclusively dedicated to supporting humanities education for adults and children statewide. Celebrating its 49th year and its 19th year as host for the Colorado Center for the Book, Colorado Humanities, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, partners with hundreds of community partners across the state, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Library of Congress Center for the Book, the Smithsonian Institution, and the national award-winning educational nonprofit Helps Education Fund.

About Pikes Peak Library District

Pikes Peak Library District (PPLD) provides everyone with access to resources and opportunities so people can thrive and connect. The Library cultivates spaces for belonging, personal growth, and strong communities via 16 facilities, mobile library services, and a large online hub of resources. It is an internationally recognized system of public libraries serving a population of nearly 700,000 across 2,070 square miles in El Paso County, Colorado. Learn more at ppld.org.

About Poor Richard's Books and Gifts

Poor Richard's Books and Gifts is a full-service new and used bookstore that was founded in 1975 as Poor Richard's Used Paperbacks. It was the first in the Poor Richard's family of businesses and remains an anchor and draw for both our loyal regulars and new customers who are always delighted to make the discovery of our home-grown, Indie bookstore.

For more information, images, recording clips, and interviews, please contact Mary Hickey at mary@coloradohumanities.org or 303.894.7951 x19.

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