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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Science Fiction/Fantasy and Thriller Finalist Reading in Colorado Springs

June 3 – 4 p.m. at Rockrimmon Library, 832 Village Center Dr, Colorado Springs, CO 80919

Readers can delve into new and unfamiliar worlds, experience the thrill of uncovering murder mysteries, and explore the ins and outs of cartel operations in this free public reading. Finalists in these categories will read from their work and attendees can pose questions. Select finalist books will be available for purchase at the reading 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/>. This is the last finalist reading event of the Colorado Book Awards which will be concluded by the Finalist Celebration and Winners Announcement on June 10.

Science Fiction/Fantasy Finalists

Conscious Designs

Nathanial White

Eugene, a wealthy paraplegic, must decide whether to preserve his consciousness forever in a digital utopia or suffer the pain tormenting his existence. Yet the more he learns about digital replication, the more deeply he understands personhood, empathy, and the value of suffering. Nathanial White grew up in Maine and has lived in Mexico, Brazil, and Ecuador. His speculative fiction explores the human psyche, physical disability, culture, technology, and consumerism. He currently teaches high school English in the Rocky Mountains of Western Colorado.

Demon Riding Shotgun

L.R. Braden

Possessed by a demon since she was a child, Mira Fuentes maintains a fragile alliance with the snarky soul who shares her body. Together they hunt down unstable Rifters—demon-controlled humans sowing chaos in the mortal realm. But when a routine hunt leads to a powerful Rifter with plans for Baltimore, Mira finds herself in over her head and at the top of the city's Most Wanted. L.R. Braden is the bestselling author of the *Magicsmith* urban fantasy series and several works of short fiction. Her writing has won the Eric Hoffer Book Award for

Sci-fi/Fantasy, the First Horizon Award for debut authors, the Imadjinn Award for Best Urban Fantasy, and the Colorado Authors League Award in multiple categories. She lives in Broomfield.

Denver Moon: The Thirteen of Mars

Warren Hammond and Joshua Viola

It's been more than two years since Denver Moon discovered that alien shapeshifters infiltrated Mars Colony. Their attempts at human mind-control have failed, but when Denver opens a vault beneath a terraforming facility, she discovers what they really want: to exterminate all inhabitants of the Red Planet. **Warren Hammond** has authored several science fiction novels, quite a few short stories, and a graphic novel. His novel *Kop Killer* won the 2012 Colorado Book Award for best mystery. Joshua Viola is a *Denver Post* bestselling author, Colorado Book Award winner, and the owner of Hex Publishers.

Thriller Finalists

Dark of Night

Barbara Nickless

When esteemed historian Elizabeth Lawrence is found in her car, killed by a cobra's bite, only a brilliant professor of semiotics, Dr. Evan Wilding, can see the signs around her strange death. As he helps homicide detective Addie Bisset decipher the scene, the puzzles left behind offer Evan chilling passage into the mind of a killer. In a race where there can be only one winner, the final victim might be Evan. Barbara Nickless is the bestselling author of *At First Light* in the *Dr. Evan Wilding* series as well as the *Sydney Rose Parnell* series, a *Suspense Magazine* Best of 2016 selection, and winner of the Colorado Book Award and the Daphne du Maurier Award for Excellence. She lives in Colorado Springs.

Deep Waters of Destiny

Peter Carlson

It's the late nineties and rival drug cartels are looking to collaborate in the Caribbean. At the center of this dangerous chaos, Gunner, an experienced captain, agrees to pilot a mega-yacht from Palermo to the Caribbean so the Italian and Russian mafia bosses can oversee and celebrate the arrival of the coalition's first large shipment of drugs. Palmer, a DEA agent, is inserted as a crew member of the "Destiny" to stop the first shipment from Odessa, Ukraine, and arrest the leaders. Peter Carlson's debut novel *Ukrainian Nights* won the Finalist Award in the General Fiction of the Eric Hoffer Awards 2020 program. Carlson's second novel *Tearza* was selected as a finalist for the Colorado Authors League Book Award and the Annual Midwest Book Award. He lives in Denver.

The Wrong Woman

Leanne Kale Sparks

Sole survivor of Denver's notorious "Reaper" serial murders, FBI Special Agent Kendall Beck grapples with her past by seeking justice for victims of abuse. She's neck deep in a particularly ugly case involving the disappearance of five-year-old Emily Williams—but her

investigation is derailed when her best friend and roommate, Gwen, turns up dead floating in a nearby lake. With every new clue, Kendall questions how well she really knew her friend. Leanne Kale Sparks is returning to her first love—writing about murder and mayhem. She is currently working on a series featuring an FBI agent hunting down her best friend’s murderer. The backdrop is the Rocky Mountains of Colorado, the playground of her youth, and the place that will always be home. She now lives in Texas.

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.

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