

## **2007 Keynote Speakers: \***

**JOYCE CAROL OATES** is a literary legend, one of America's most prolific, versatile and distinguished writers of the last century. She has written novels, short story collections, several volumes of poetry, books of plays, five books of literary criticism, and some of the most savvy and penetrating nonfiction essays, articles and books published in the last 25 years. No wonder the renowned novelist John Gardner called her "one of the greatest writers of our time."

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[www.usfca.edu/~southerr](http://www.usfca.edu/~southerr)

**MARY ROACK** is an American original, an uproariously funny writer with a trenchant wit and an eye for the oddball. In her monthly column for *Readers Digest* and in her essays and feature articles for *Outside*, *Wired*, *GQ*, *Salon.com* and *The New York Times Magazine*, her writing gravitates toward the peculiar: flatulence, Eskimo food, vaginal weight-lifting, carrot addiction, amputee bowling leagues, and the question of how much food it takes to burst a human stomach.

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[www.booknoise.net/stiff](http://www.booknoise.net/stiff)

[www.spookthebook.com](http://www.spookthebook.com)

**ALLISON ADELLE HEDGE COKE**, of Cherokee, Creek and Huron lineage, learned at an early age to use words that "have movement and dance within them ... words to breathe." In *Rock, Ghost, Willow, Deer: A Story of Survival*, the award-winning author has written a powerful memoir that breathes and moves "fluidly across boundaries between prose and poetry, dream and reality, myth and history, animal and human, the personal and political," as one book reviewer put it. *Rock, Ghost, Willow, Deer* is a narrative of her life as a mixed-blood woman coming of age off reservation; her schizophrenic mother and the abuse that often overshadowed her childhood; the torments visited upon her; the rape and physical violence; and the violence she inflicted on herself.

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[www.iaia.edu/college/AllisonHedgeCoke.php](http://www.iaia.edu/college/AllisonHedgeCoke.php)

[www.hedgecoke.net](http://www.hedgecoke.net)

[www.hedgecoke.org](http://www.hedgecoke.org)

## **Speakers: \***

**BURKHARD BILGER** has been a staff writer at *The New Yorker* since 2000. His work has also appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*, *The New York Times*, *The New York Times Book Review*, and numerous other publications, and has been anthologized in *The Best American Science and Nature Writing*, *The Best American Food Writing* and *The Best American Sports Writing*. Bilger was a senior editor at *Discover* magazine from 1999 to 2005, and a writer and deputy editor for *The Sciences* from 1994 to 1999, where his work helped garner two National Magazine Awards and six nominations.

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**CARLTON STOWERS**, a narrative writer for the *Abilene Reporter-News*, is one of the nation's preeminent true-crime writers. He's written more than two dozen nonfiction books, and many have been selections of the Book-of-the-Month Club, Literary Guild, Doubleday Book Club, Mystery Book Club, True Crime Book Club, Preferred Choice Book Club, *Playboy* Book Club and *Guideposts* Book Club. Five have been optioned by motion picture and television production companies.

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**CECILIA BALLI** is a contributing writer for *Texas Monthly*. She is currently working on a nonfiction book about the murder of young women in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, for Metropolitan Books. A native of Brownsville, Texas, she has written many stories about the U.S.-Mexico border. Her personal essays have appeared in various anthologies, including *Puro Border* (Cinco Puntos Press), *Colonize This!* (Seal Press), *Border-line Personalities* (Rayo/Harpercollins), and *Rio Grande* (UT Press).

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**CHRISTINE WICKER**, former religion reporter for *The Dallas Morning News*, is the author of the highly acclaimed, national bestseller *Lily Dale: The Town That Talks to the Dead* and *Not In Kansas Anymore: Dark Arts, Sex Spells, Money Magic, and Other Things Your Neighbors Aren't Telling You*. *Publishers Weekly* says *Lily Dale* "is a portrait, not just of an upstate New York town built 122 years ago on old-fashioned spirituality, but also of the mediums who practice there, their clients, and Wicker herself, who lets details of her own spiritual beliefs lightly shade her travels to Lily Dale."

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[www.christinewicker.com](http://www.christinewicker.com)

**DENISE WATSON BATTS** is a member of a four-person team of writers that specializes in narrative writing. Batts wrote her first story on the underside of her parents' wooden coffee table when she was thigh-high. She likes to believe she's gotten better since then. She's been a staffer for the *The Virginian-Pilot* for 15 years and spent a year at *The St. Petersburg Times* in Florida.

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[www.pilotonline.com](http://www.pilotonline.com)

**DOUG SWANSON**, a reporter and editor for the projects department of *The Dallas Morning News*, is also the author of five novels. His first book, *Big Town*, won the John Creasey Memorial Award for Best First Novel given by the British Crime Writers Association. He is currently working on a novel about boxing. At *The Dallas Morning News*, Swanson has earned a reputation for his probing reporting of complex subjects: a foster care provider who made millions of dollars off troubled children, men on Death Row under questionable circumstances and the grim aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

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[www.dallasnews.com](http://www.dallasnews.com)

**ERIK CALONIUS** is a former reporter, editor and London-based foreign correspondent for *The Wall Street Journal*, a staff writer for *Fortune* magazine and Miami bureau chief for *Newsweek*. In 2006, Calonius completed his first narrative nonfiction book, *The Wanderer: The Last American Slave Ship and the Conspiracy That Set Its Sails*. Hampton Sides, a Mayborn Conference former speaker and author of *Ghost Soldiers* and *Blood and Thunder*, says "*The Wanderer* is my favorite kind of history: a voyage into the turbid waters of a past we thought we knew, a past we scarcely could have imagined."

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**GREGG JONES**, an author and projects writer at *The Dallas Morning News*, has been a Pulitzer Prize finalist and has won numerous awards in a newspaper career that began in 1981. At 25, Jones quit his reporting job at *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and set off for Asia with a manual typewriter and \$2,000. Based in the Philippines, he covered the “People Power Revolution,” traveled with guerrilla forces and documented seven coup attempts as a freelance correspondent for *The (London) Guardian*, *The Washington Post* and other publications.

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**JAMES HORNFISCHER** is the author of two military narratives, *The Last Stand of the Tin Can Sailors* and *Ship of Ghosts: The Story of the USS Houston, FDR’s Legendary Lost Cruiser, and the Epic Saga of Her Survivors*. *Last Stand*, winner of the 2004 Samuel Eliot Morison Award for Naval Literature, was a main selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club and was recently adopted into the U.S. Navy’s Professional Reading Program. *Ship of Ghosts*, published in 2006, was a Main Selection of the History Book Club and the Military Book Club. Hornfischer has appeared on C-SPAN’s “BookTV,” Fox’s “War Stories with Oliver North,” and The History Channel, which has aired two different documentaries based on *The Last Stand of the Tin Can Sailors*.

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[www.hornfischerlit.com](http://www.hornfischerlit.com)

**KEVIN FEDARKO**, one of *Outside* magazine’s “Literary All-Stars” and a senior editor of the magazine from 1998 to 2003, lives in northern New Mexico and works as a part-time river guide in Grand Canyon National Park. In addition to his travel narratives in *Outside*, Fedarko’s work has appeared in *Esquire*, *National Geographic Adventure*, and other publications, and has been anthologized in *The Best American Travel Writing* in 2004 and 2006.

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**MELISSA SHULTZ**, a native of Washington, D.C., has done freelance work for print, television and video. Her essays, highlighting humorous aspects of everyday life, appeared in a weekly column for *The Frederick News Post*. Since relocating to Dallas, Shultz’s essays have been published by *The Dallas Morning News* and its media properties across the country, as well as *The Washington Post*.

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**NAN TALESE** is publisher and editorial director of Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, a trade book publishing imprint known for its literary excellence and the quality of the production of its books. Established in 1990, Nan A. Talese/Doubleday is distinguished both by new authors of fiction and nonfiction, as well as by the authors Talese has published for many years, writers who have been staunchly supported by independent booksellers (and more recently Barnes & Noble and Borders) and reviewers.

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[www.randomhouse.com/nanatalese/about.html](http://www.randomhouse.com/nanatalese/about.html)

**ROB KAISER** is assistant managing editor for Sundays and projects, and the first writing coach at the *San Antonio Express-News*. Before joining the *Express-News*, Kaiser was an award-winning reporter for the *Chicago Tribune*. He wrote front-page takeouts, narrative series and covered several major national stories, including school shootings in Kentucky and Oregon, the homecoming of Jessica Lynch and the Confederate flag controversy in the South.

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**STEPHEN HARRIGAN**, a former senior editor at *Texas Monthly*, is the author of seven books of fiction and nonfiction, among them the bestselling novel *The Gates of the Alamo* and the recent *Challenger Park*, both published by Knopf. Whether he's writing fiction or nonfiction, Harrigan's prose is anchored in reality. In his bestselling novel, *The Gates of the Alamo*, Harrigan recreated the Texas of the early nineteenth century.

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**TONY FREEMANTLE**, writing coach and editor-at-large for the *Houston Chronicle*, was schooled in the world of journalism in Johannesburg, South Africa, where he was born. After immigrating to Houston in 1980, he worked briefly for the now-defunct *Houston Post* before joining the *Houston Chronicle*. During the past 25 years, Freemantle has been a police reporter, an assistant city editor, national correspondent, foreign correspondent and a special projects and environment reporter.

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[www.chron.com](http://www.chron.com)

**WILLIAM NACK** had been a senior writer at *Sports Illustrated* for nearly 23 years when he retired in 2001 to pursue a career as an author and freelance writer. His work has since appeared in *Sports Illustrated*, *Time*, *Gentleman's Quarterly* and *Golf Connoisseur*, among other publications. His work has also been anthologized in numerous books, including David Halberstam's *The Best American Sports Writing of the Century*, in seven editions of *The Best American Sports Writing*, and in *Sports Illustrated's Fifty years of Great Writing*.

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