

# 2026 WWA Spur Awards Contest Rules

## Entries are now being accepted for the 2026 Western Writers of America Spur Awards.

To be eligible, works submitted must be set in the American West, the early frontier, or relate to the Western or frontier experience. Nonmembers as well as members of WWA are encouraged to enter. Works submitted for this competition must have been first commercially published or aired during the 2025 calendar year (Commercial publication is defined as having value. The author must either be paid, or the publication must be purchased through a subscription or other sales venue, or earn revenue through advertising sales.) Authors may submit up to *five entries maximum per category*. Each submission must be entered as a separate entry. Individual works may be submitted in **ONLY ONE** category.

**Written copies of all books must be submitted** (this should be a published book or a copy of a manuscript in the event it is an audiobook or eBook). *NO revised editions, e-mailed copies, photocopies, advance readers copies or proofs will be accepted.*

Works published in *Roundup* magazine are not eligible for the Spur Award competition. At their discretion, judges may rule not to award a Spur or finalist honors in the category they are judging.

All material eligible for the Spur Awards **MUST** be submitted with an **ENTRY FORM** and **FIRST COPYRIGHTED in 2025**. *Only entries with proper paperwork will be judged.*

No entries arriving after the deadlines will be considered. Works submitted cannot be returned or their delivery acknowledged.

Winners and finalists are scheduled to be announced by WWA in March 2026. Awards are scheduled to be presented during the 2026 WWA convention in June in St. Louis, Missouri.

## Categories

### BEST WESTERN TRADITIONAL

**NOVEL.** For any book-length novel (print, eBook, original audiobook) set prior to 1940 that does not include actual historical persons and events in a principal role and is dependent in whole or in part on settings, characters, conditions or customs indigenous to the American West or early frontier.

### BEST WESTERN HISTORICAL NOVEL.

For any book-length novel (print, eBook, original audiobook) set prior to 1940 that is based on actual historical characters, settings and events in the American West or early frontier.

### BEST WESTERN CONTEMPORARY

**NOVEL.** For any book-length novel (print,

eBook, original audiobook) focusing on characters, events, places or developments in the American West from 1940 to present.

### BEST WESTERN ROMANCE

**NOVEL.** For any original book-length novel (audiobook, eBook, hardcover, trade paperback, mass-market paperback) set in any time period that has romance as a key plot/character point while focusing on characters, events, places or developments in the American West.

### BEST WESTERN NONFICTION -

**HISTORICAL (TO 1940).** For book-length works (print, eBook, original audiobook), including memoirs, focusing primarily on events, persons, places, or developments of the American West up to the year 1940.

### BEST WESTERN NONFICTION -

**CONTEMPORARY (1940 TO PRESENT).** For book-length works (print, eBook, original audiobook), including memoirs, focusing primarily on events, persons, places, or developments of the American West from 1940 to the present.

### BEST WESTERN NONFICTION - BIOGRAPHY.

For book-length works (print, eBook, original audiobook), excluding memoirs, about a person whose life has been associated with the American West or early frontier.

### BEST WESTERN SHORT FICTION

**STORY.** For works of fewer than 10,000 words published in magazines, periodicals and anthologies, their creation dependent in whole or in part on settings, characters, conditions, or customs indigenous to the American West or early frontier.

### BEST WESTERN SHORT NONFICTION.

For works of fewer than 10,000 words published in magazines, periodicals and anthologies about events, persons, places, or developments related to the American West or early frontier.

### BEST WESTERN JUVENILE FICTION.

For any book-length novel (print, eBook, original audiobook), the creation of which is dependent in whole or in part on settings, characters, conditions, or customs indigenous to the American West or early frontier and written especially for young and young adult readers.

### BEST WESTERN JUVENILE

**NONFICTION.** For book-length works (print, eBook, original audiobook) about events, persons, places, or developments related to the American West or early frontier and written especially for young and young adult readers.

### BEST WESTERN DRAMA SCRIPT

**(FICTION).** For a script for a radio, television or motion-picture production or a play that

was first released, aired or produced for the public in 2025 and contains plot, thrust, focus and voice depicting elements of the American West (past or present) or early frontier. A screenplay, shooting script or play **MUST** be submitted, along with an industry acceptable format DVD/Flash Drive/Vimeo/YouTube or viewable link of the motion picture or television program; an audio recording of the radio program; or a program for the play.

### BEST WESTERN DOCUMENTARY SCRIPT (NONFICTION).

For a documentary written for radio, television, motion picture, or as a film or play for a museum/library/etc., that was first released, aired or produced for the public in 2025 and contains plot, thrust, focus and voice depicting elements of the American West (past or present) or early frontier. A screenplay, shooting script or play **MUST** be submitted, along with an industry acceptable format DVD/Flash Drive/Vimeo/YouTube or viewable link of the documentary, television program or museum/ library/etc. film; an audio recording of the radio program; or a program for the play.

**CHILDREN'S PICTURE BOOK.** For best illustrated children's picture book (for pre-schoolers to 6 years old), the creation of which is dependent in whole or in part on settings, characters, conditions, or customs related to the American West or early frontier, but written and illustrated for young readers. Both author and artist will receive awards.

**BEST WESTERN POEM.** For an original published poem whose inspiration, image and literary excellence best represent the reality and spirit of the American West.

**BEST ORIGINAL WESTERN SONG.** For an original recorded song, released in 2025 for the *first time* and available to the public, with lyrics dependent in whole or in part on settings, characters, conditions or customs indigenous to the American West or early frontier. A copy of the LYRIC SHEET and CD/medium (with release date) **MUST** be submitted.

If this is your **FIRST NOVEL** or your **FIRST NONFICTION BOOK**, and you meet the requirements described below, your entry *may be recognized* as the "BEST FIRST NOVEL" or "BEST FIRST NONFICTION BOOK." Please check the BOX on the entry form and submit the required copies to the Spur Chair and judges in the appropriate category to be eligible. **THIS IS NOT A CATEGORY** (You **MUST** enter your work in a category from the list above to qualify).

**RULES** (continued on page 38)

**BEST FIRST NOVEL.** For the best first novel that otherwise meets the requirements of Best Western Traditional Novel, Best Western Historical Novel, Best Western Contemporary Novel, Best Western Romance Novel or Best Western Juvenile Fiction. This must be the first novel by author in any genre. Only one book will be recognized.

## 2026 Spur Award Judges Contact Info

Second addresses, when listed, are for FedEx, UPS, etc. USPS mail should be sent to the first address.

### Spur Awards Chair

R.G. Yoho  
1436 Hocking Road  
Little Hocking, OH 45742  
www.spurawards@gmail.com  
c: (740) 516-3373

### Contemporary Novel

Kaley Harrison  
1919 Maxwell Ave.  
Point Pleasant, WV 25550

W. Michael Farmer  
114 Commodore Lane  
Smithfield, VA 23430

Linda Jacobs  
2271 Silver Lake Road  
Dayton, VA 22821

### Historical Novel

Michael Knost  
P.O. Box 4112  
Chapmanville, WV 25508  
58 Elloise Ave.  
Chapmanville, WV 25508

Lowell F. Volk  
P.O. Box 264  
Pleasant View, CO 81331  
23137 County Road 12  
#264  
Pleasant View, CO 81331

Carol Crigger  
16924 E. Nora Ave.  
Spokane Valley, WA 99016

### Romance Novel

Ann McCord  
2012 Boyce St.  
Hastings NE 68901  
Jennifer Bohnhoff  
P.O. Box 2  
Sandia Park, NM 87047  
35 Madera Vista  
Sandia Park, NM 87047

JoAnn Conner  
628 N. Ferrocarril Road  
Atascadero, CA 93422

### Traditional Novel

Dedra Birzer  
6 W. Montgomery St.  
Hillsdale, MI 49242

James Wade  
2605 Rocky Ridge Loop  
Canyon Lake, TX 78133

Keith Davis  
170 Woodland Hills Drive  
Chapmanville, WV 25508

### Biography

Jane Little Botkin  
P.O. Box 40  
Nogal, NM 88341  
363 Nogal Canyon Road  
Nogal, NM 88341

Dennis McCown  
703 Wichita St. Lockhart,  
TX 78644

Thadd Turner  
118 Barkley Drive  
Pass Christian, MS 39571

### Contemporary Nonfiction

Ellen Bonnifield  
P.O. Box 243  
Yampa, CO 80483  
241 4th Street Court  
Yampa, CO 80483

Denise F. McAllister  
547 Wellford Ave.  
Jefferson, GA 30549

Jeff Sweeney  
3828 Mae Court  
Wellington, CO 80549

### Historical Nonfiction

Linda Wommack  
4284 W. Monmouth Ave.  
Littleton, CO 80123

Beth Wolfe  
149 Hidden Valley Estates  
Scott Depot, WV 25560

Don Reeves  
3620 South Square  
Williamsburg, VA 23188

### Juvenile Fiction

Jean Lukesh  
454 8th Ave.  
Palmer, NE 68864-1103

**BEST FIRST NONFICTION BOOK.** For the best first nonfiction book that otherwise meets the requirements of Best Western Nonfiction – Historical; Best Western Nonfiction – Contemporary; Best Western Biography or Best Western Juvenile Nonfiction. This must be the first nonfiction book by author in any genre. Only one book will be recognized.

Phil Mills Jr.  
1005 Newell Drive  
Hudson Oaks, TX 76087

Nancy Plain  
70 Minnisink Road  
Short Hills, NJ 07078

### Juvenile Nonfiction

Patrick Dearen  
5115-A West Illinois Ave.  
Midland, TX 79703

Monty Garner  
746 Choctaw Vista West  
Choctaw, OK 73020

Candace Simar  
31018 Rasmussen Road  
Apt 303  
Pequot Lakes, MN 56472

### Children's Picture Book

JoEllen Yoho  
1436 Hocking Road  
Little Hocking, OH 45742

Liz Markley  
803 Bridgeview Ave.  
Pierre, SD 57501

William Hill  
91 Wood Road  
Centereach, NY 11720-1619

### Short Fiction

Paul Schmelzer  
5652 Parliament Lane  
Delavan, WI 53115

E. Joe Brown  
4401 Desert Lily Court SE  
Rio Rancho, NM 87124

Laura Browarny  
1859 Cherry Blossom Drive  
Apt. 207  
Windsor, CO 80550

### Short Nonfiction

Vicky Rose  
379 Pleasant Grove Loop  
Elgin, TX 78621

Rod Timanus  
3663 W. Bluefield Ave.  
Glendale, AZ 85308

Rhonda Hammons  
420 Mt. View Drive  
Martinez, CA 94553

### Poem

Sherrell R. Wigal  
1420 23rd St.  
Parkersburg, WV 26101

Jim Jones  
2569 Littler Pl SE  
Rio Rancho, NM 87124

Deanna Dickinson McCall  
17164 CS 2530  
Lookeba, OK 73053

### Song

Danny Bonecutter  
2391 Horselick Road  
Gallipolis Ferry, WV 25515

Bobbi Jean Bell  
7819 Chaco Mesa Loop NW  
Albuquerque, NM 87114

Arlos Smith  
1109 27th St.  
Vienna, WV 26105

### Drama Script

Daniel Boyd  
803 Main St.  
Charleston, WV 25302

Andrew Patrick Nelson  
Western Spirit: Scottsdale's  
Museum of the West  
3830 N. Marshall Way  
Scottsdale, AZ 85251-5594

David S. Larson  
1315 E. Grand Ave.  
#52  
Escondido, CA 92027

### Documentary Script

Daniel Boyd  
803 Main St.  
Charleston, WV 25302

Andrew Patrick Nelson  
Western Spirit: Scottsdale's  
Museum of the West  
3830 N. Marshall Way  
Scottsdale, AZ 85251-5594

David S. Larson  
1315 E. Grand Ave.  
#52  
Escondido, CA 92027

Entries should be submitted at the earliest possible date, but **MUST** be received by no later than October 1, 2025 for materials first published/ released January 1-August 31, 2025, or no later than January 15, 2026, for materials first published/released September 1-December 31, 2025.

To ensure fairness, originality, and authenticity, WWA requires all writers and publishers submitting work to verify that the content of their submission is free of artificial intelligence AI-generated material. While AI-assistive tools may be used in supportive roles – such as for research, copy editing, grammar checking, or formatting improvements – core elements of the submission, including narrative, thematic development, and stylistic choices, should reflect the author’s unique voice and creative work.

By submitting and signing this entry form, you confirm that AI tools, if utilized, have only been used in a limited, assistive capacity and that the content is an original and authentic work of the author’s creative intent and voice.

Misrepresentation of the use of AI for work submitted will result in disqualification from eligibility for, or revocation of, a Spur winner/finalist award.

# 2026 WWA SPUR AWARDS ENTRY FORM

**Please complete this form!** One copy of the published work and the entry form **MUST** be mailed to the Spur Chair and to each of the three (3) Judges in the appropriate category. If applicable, check box for *First Novel* or *First Nonfiction Book*. *List of Spur Judges on previous page*

**1. Spur Awards chair**  
R. G. Yoho  
1436 Hocking Rd  
Little Hocking, OH 45742  
www.spurawards@gmail.com  
c: (740) 516-3373

**2. Three Judges whose category you are entering: please list names**  
1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Publish Date (month/year): \_\_\_\_\_

### Category Entered

Check ONE category. ALL Entries must be FIRST COPYRIGHTED in 2025

- ☐ Best Western Traditional Novel
- ☐ Best Western Documentary Script
- ☐ Best Western Historical Novel
- ☐ Best Western Drama Script
- ☐ Best Western Contemporary Novel
- ☐ Best Western Poem
- ☐ Best Western Romance Novel
- ☐ Best Western Song
- ☐ Best Western Juvenile Fiction
- ☐ Best Western Juvenile Nonfiction
- ☐ Children’s Picture Book  
*(please include both author and artist)*
- ☐ Best Western Nonfiction –Historical
- ☐ Best Western Short Fiction
- ☐ Best Western Short Nonfiction
- ☐ Best Western Nonfiction –Contemporary
- ☐ Best Western Nonfiction –Biography

☐ **Please Check Box** if above entry is your **FIRST NOVEL** or **FIRST NONFICTION BOOK**.

Author
PRINT NAME: Author (and pseudonym if used)
Address
City/State/Zip
Telephone Number
Print Email address

Publisher
Publisher
Address
City/State/Zip
Telephone Number
Print Email address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Person the Spur Chair should contact

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature / Title / Date

# FAQ

## Is there a fee to enter the Spur Awards?

No, it is free to enter, but all entries MUST meet all rule requirements and have the correct completed entry forms included when submitted.

## Do I have to be a *Western Writers of America* member to enter?

You do NOT have to be a WWA member to submit an entry, and membership has no bearing on the judging outcome. We do encourage everyone to join and enjoy the benefits of the WWA. All published authors are welcome to enter the Spur Awards.

## Where do I send my entry?

Send ONE copy of your entry, along with a completed entry form to the Spur Awards Chair and one copy to EACH of the three Spur Judges in the category you are entering.

TOTAL: 4 copies of your entry & 4 completed entry forms

(See *Spur Judges - Category list & addresses on Spur Rules page on website and in Roundup Magazine*)

## How do I choose a category to enter?

A list of requirements for each Spur Category is listed on the Rules Pages. The category that best describes and matches your entry is the one we recommend submitting it in.

Contemporary as well as Traditional Western works are encouraged to enter.

(Please NOTE that "memoirs" are NOT considered Biography, but should be entered in the nonfiction category which best fits the time period of the memoir.)

## Can I submit an entry in more than one category?

You can enter individual works in ONE category only.

## How many entries can I submit in each category?

You may enter up to five individual entries per category. Each submission MUST be entered as a separate entry. Revised editions may NOT be entered.

## Can I send an e-mail copy of my book to enter?

No e-mailed copies will be accepted. Written copies of all books/lyrics/screenplays, etc. MUST be submitted. (This should be a published book, in final produced version – NO ARCS or photocopies of published books, articles, poems, etc.) In the event it is an original audiobook or eBook, you will need to send a copy of the manuscript.

## Are eBooks and audiobooks eligible?

Yes, eBooks and original audiobooks can be entered but must be submitted with a copy of the manuscript, along with the completed entry forms.

## Can newly revised editions be entered?

NO revised editions are eligible.

## What "copyright date" is eligible to enter?

The "copyright date" used to judge the eligibility of each entry is the FIRST

COPYRIGHTED year of the entry, which matches the date printed in or on the submitted book/submission.

All eligible material for the Spur Awards MUST BE FIRST COPYRIGHTED (or aired for public viewing) for the year listed in the current Spur Rules. (Some categories may require an additional industry-acceptable format DVD/Flash Drive/YouTube or viewable link.)

## When can I enter the Spur Awards?

Entries will be accepted from August 1 through January 15, depending on the copyright/publishing date.

If published January 1 through August 31: must be entered and received NO later than October 1.

If published September 1 through December 31: must be entered and received NO later than January 15.

Entries should be submitted at the earliest possible date. Absolutely NO entries received after the deadline dates will be judged. Entry forms must accompany all entries.

## Will I receive an acknowledgment that my entry was received?

No works submitted will have their delivery acknowledged.

*(If you include a note to the Spur Chair when entering, requesting an e-mail acknowledgment, all efforts will be made to answer, but we cannot guarantee such acknowledgments. If you send an SASE to the judges, they may respond indicating that your entry has been received, but there is no guarantee of such acknowledgment.)*

## Should I enter myself or wait for my publisher?

All published authors are welcome to enter their own work, and we recommend you do it, rather than relying on the publisher. It is better to enter a submission yourself than not at all. If you expect your publisher to enter your work, make sure you contact the publisher in advance of the deadline to be certain that your work actually has been entered.

## Can I recommend an entry?

If you know of authors/songwriters, etc., please let them or their publisher/producer know about the Spur Awards and encourage them to enter.

## Can self-published books be entered?

Self-published books can be entered as long as they meet all the requirements listed on the Category and Rules pages.

## Are dramas or documentaries eligible for entry?

Yes, drama screenplays and documentaries can be entered in the Spur Awards.

Please refer to the category listings for complete entry rules.

## What if this is my FIRST Novel or FIRST Nonfiction book?

If this is your first Novel or Nonfiction book and you have entered it in one of the Spur categories, your entry may also be recognized as the Best First Novel or Best First Nonfiction Book. All you need to do is check

the BOX on the entry form, and submit the required copies to the Spur Chair and judges in the appropriate category. WWA awards one Spur each for the top chosen First Novel and First Nonfiction Book. (Please note that this is NOT a category on its own.)

## Will my entry be returned when the contest is over?

No works submitted will be returned.

## When will the Spur Award winners and finalists be announced?

The Spur Awards winners and finalists will be officially announced by WWA in March by posting on the WWA website and social media platforms.

Awards will be presented during the annual WWA Convention in June.

## How are Spur winners and finalists notified?

All winners and finalists will receive an e-mail notice before the official WWA announcement in March, followed by a written letter from the Spur Awards Chair. Only the persons and addresses listed on the entry form will be contacted.

## What does a Spur Award winner receive?

Winners will be invited to the Spur Awards banquet during the annual WWA Convention in June, where they will be presented their handcrafted Spur Award plaque during the ceremony. Winners will receive ONE complimentary ticket to the banquet for the author only (Children's Picture Book category: author & illustrator will each receive a banquet ticket).

## What is a Spur finalist?

Spur finalists are chosen in each category for being among the top entry choices of the Spur Judges but are NOT Spur Award winners. (Only ONE winner and usually two finalists are chosen in each category.)

## What does a Spur Award finalist receive?

Spur finalists will be invited to the WWA Convention Spur Finalist Luncheon, where they will receive their Finalist Certificate. Finalists will receive ONE complimentary ticket to the luncheon for the author only (Children's Picture Book category: author & illustrator will each receive a luncheon ticket).

## Can tickets be purchased for convention, events and Spur Award ceremonies?

Tickets for the convention and all events/tours/ceremonies can be purchased on the WWA webpage under Convention Information.

## Who do I contact if I have questions about the Spur Awards?

All rules, categories and the entry form can be found in *Western Writers of America's Roundup Magazine* (August Issue), as well as the WWA Webpage ([WesternWriters.org](http://WesternWriters.org)) beginning in August.

Direct inquiry can be sent to the Spur Awards Chair: [www.spurawards@gmail.com](mailto:www.spurawards@gmail.com).