

Western Writers of America, Inc.

2027 WWA Spur Awards Contest Rules

Entries are now being accepted for the 2027 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 2026 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 2026**. *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. See entry form for restrictions on the use of Artificial Intelligence.

Winners and finalists are scheduled to be announced by WWA in March 2027. Awards are scheduled to be presented during the 2027 WWA convention in June in Carson City, Nevada.

Categories

BEST WESTERN ALTERNATIVE NOVEL. For any book-length novel that pushes beyond the traditional Western genre, while remaining derivative in whole or in part on settings, characters and conditions or customs of the American West or early frontier. Revisionist, speculative, experimental or unconventional Western voices are welcome.

BEST WESTERN 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 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 CONTEMPORARY NOVEL. For any book-length novel (print, eBook, original audiobook) focusing on characters, events, places or developments in the American West from 1970 to present.

BEST WESTERN CONTEMPORARY NONFICTION BOOK. For book-length works (print, eBook, original audiobook), including memoirs, focusing primarily on events, persons, places, or developments of the American West from 1970 to the present.

BEST WESTERN DOCUMENTARY SCRIPT. 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 2026 and contains plot, thrust, focus and voice depicting elements of the American West (past or present) or early frontier. A screenplay or shooting script **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.

BEST WESTERN DRAMA SCRIPT. For a script for a radio, television or motion-picture production or a stage play that was first released, aired or produced for the public in 2026 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 script **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 GRAPHIC NOVEL. For first publication, long-form Western storytelling told primarily through sequential art. Eligible entries include original graphic novels or book-length comics that present a cohesive narrative rooted in the experience, history, culture or myths of the West. Both author and artist will receive awards.

BEST WESTERN HISTORICAL NOVEL. For any book-length novel (print, eBook, original audiobook) set prior to 1970 that is based on actual historical characters, settings and events in the American West or early frontier.

BEST WESTERN HISTORICAL NONFICTION BOOK. 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 1970.

BEST WESTERN JUVENILE NOVEL. 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, contemporary or early frontier (including alternative Westerns) 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, contemporary or early frontier and written especially for young and young adult readers.

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 WESTERN ROMANCE NOVEL. For any original book-length novel (audiobook, eBook, hardcover, trade paper-back, 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 SHORT FICTION STORY. For works of fewer than 10,000 words published in magazines, periodicals or 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 ARTICLE. For works of fewer than 10,000 words published in magazines, periodicals or anthologies about events, persons, places or developments related to the American West or early frontier.

RULES (continued on page 7)

BEST ORIGINAL WESTERN SONG. For an original recorded song, released in 2026 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.

BEST WESTERN TRADITIONAL NOVEL. For any book-length novel (print, eBook, original audiobook) set prior to 1970 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.

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).

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.

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.

2027 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

Rachelle Gibbons
226 N. Cedar Drive
Central, UT 84722

Marcia Gaye
289 Scenic Cove Lane
Saint Charles, MO 63303

J.R. Sanders
10945 Bryant St.
Yucaipa, CA 92399

Historical Novel

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

Kaley Harrison
1919 Maxwell Ave.
Point Pleasant, WV 25550

Mark Greathouse
70 Diane Trail
Fairfield, PA 17320

Romance Novel

Ann McCord
2012 Boyce St.
Hastings, NE 68901

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

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

Traditional Novel

Keith Davis
170 Woodland Hills
Chapmanville, WV 25508

Rachel Santino
2161 El Prado Avenue
Lemon Grove, CA 91945

Phil Mills Jr.
5612 Ashleigh Walk Drive
Suwanee, GA 30024

Alternative Novel

Jeff Mariotte
3562 E. Blue Ridge Way
Gilbert, AZ 85298

Bryan Thomas Schmidt
805 S. Sycamore Street
Ottawa, KS 66067

Tim Waggoner
225 Weller Avenue
Centerville, OH 45458

Graphic Novel

Ben Henry Bailey
1121 Birch Street
Broomfield, CO 80020

Ed Downes
724 Berwick Valley Lane
Cary, NC 27513

Stephen Zimmer
529 Fogo Court
Lexington, KY 40503

Biography

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

Mark Archuleta
39648 Calle El Baranco
Green Valley, CA 91390

Caleb Gayle
124 Marshall Street
Watertown, MA 02472

Contemporary Nonfiction

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

Lynn Downey
18739 Melvin Ave.
Sonoma, CA 95476

Charles Rankin
Mailed Before October 15
2068 Scott Drive
Helena, MT 59601
Mailed After October 15
905 N. Delacroix Drive
Green Valley, AZ 85614

Historical Nonfiction

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

Michael Knost
58 Elloise Avenue
Chapmanville, WV 25508

Dennis McCown
703 Wichita St.
Lockhart, TX 78644

Juvenile Fiction

Beth Wolfe
149 Hidden Valley Estates
Scott Depot, WV 25560

Don Reeves
3620 South Square
Williamsburg, VA 23188

JUDGES (continued on page 9)



Entries should be submitted at the earliest possible date, but **MUST** be received by no later than October 1, 2026, for materials first published/ released January 1-August 31, 2026. For materials first published/released September 1-December 31, 2026, entries must be received by January 15, 2027.

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-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.

2027 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 2026

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

☐ **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

JoAnn Conner
628 N. Ferrocarril Road
Atascadero, CA 93422

Juvenile Nonfiction

Monty Garner
746 Choctaw Vista West
Choctaw, OK 73020

Dallas Bell
400 15th Street
Canyon, TX 79015

Sherry Roberts
3315 Mershon Drive
Murfreesboro, TN 37128

Children's Picture Book

William Hill
91 Wood Road
Centereach, NY 11720-1619

JoEllen Yoho
1436 Hocking Road
Little Hocking, OH 45742

Karen Casey Fitzjerrell
4522 Fort Boggy
San Antonio, TX 78253

Short Fiction

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

B.L. McCarthy
P.O. Box 230
Buffalo, MO 65622
102 Quail Farm Road
Buffalo, MO 65622

Natalie Bright
1415 23rd Street
Canyon, TX 79015

Short Nonfiction

Nancy Plain
70 Minnisink Road
Short Hills, NJ 07078

Vicky Rose
379 Pleasant Grove Loop
Elgin, TX 78621

Bob Madison
18601 Newland Street
SPC 63
Huntington Beach, CA
92646

Poem

Jim Jones
2569 Littler Place SE
Rio Rancho, NM 87124

Deanna Dickinson McCall
17164 CS 2530
Lookeba, OK 73053

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

Song

Sharon Kizziah-Holmes
5511 S. Roanoke
Springfield, MO 65810

Billy Dean
C/O Red Light Mgmt.
1101 McGavock Street
#300
Nashville, TN 37203

Mike Blakely
523 Dinosaur Ranch Road
Harper, TX 78631

Documentary Script

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 Avenue
#52
Escondido, CA 92027

Joey Madia
441 S. Leavitt Road
Leavittsburg, OH 44430

Drama Script

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 Avenue
#52
Escondido, CA 92027

Joey Madia
441 S. Leavitt Road
Leavittsburg, OH 44430

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 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.

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 that 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. Include a hard copy or PDF of the manuscript for eBook and audiobook; a download link for eBook; and (audio) discs or downloadable link for audiobook..

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.

FAQ (continued on page 10)

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 may 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 may 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 and Graphic Novel categories: Author and 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 and Graphic Novel categories: 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 may 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 may be found in Western Writers of America's *Roundup Magazine* (August Issue), as well as the WWA Webpage (WesternWriters.org) beginning in August.

Direct inquiries may be sent to the Spur Awards Chair: www.spurawards@gmail.com.

Carol M. Highsmith's America Project/
Carol M. Highsmith Archive/Library of Congress

SAVE THE DATE



Western Writers of America
ANNUAL CONVENTION

June 17-19, 2027

**Gold Dust West
Carson City, Nevada**

For information, visit
westernwriters.org/convention

2027

Gold Dust West

Casino • Hotel
Carson City