



2025 California Coastal Cruise

November 1 – 8, 2025

Speaker Biographies

Katrina vanden Heuvel

Katrina vanden Heuvel is editorial director and publisher of *The Nation*. She served as editor of the magazine from 1995 to 2019.

She writes a weekly column for *The Washington Post*.

A frequent commentator on US and international politics for ABC, MSNBC, CNN, and PBS, her articles have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Boston Globe*. Vanden Heuvel is also the author of several books, including *The Change I Believe In: Fighting for Progress in The Age of Obama*, and co-author (with Stephen F. Cohen) of *Voices of Glasnost: Interviews with Gorbachev's Reformers*.



Vanden Heuvel has been recognized for her journalism and public service by organizations such as Planned Parenthood, the National Women's Political Caucus, the New York Civil Liberties Union, the Center for Community Change, the Norman Mailer Center, the Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill, American Rights at Work, Progressive Congress, and more. During her tenure, *The Nation's* journalism has been recognized for excellence by the National Magazine Awards, the Society of Professional Journalists, the Maggie Awards, GLAAD, and the National Association of Black Journalists, among others.

Vanden Heuvel serves on the boards of the Progressive Caucus Center, the Institute for Policy Studies, Type Media Center, the Sidney Hillman Media Foundation, the American Committee for US-Russian Accord, Inequality Media, Brave New Films, the Osborne Association, Research to Prevent Blindness, the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, and the Four Freedoms Park Conservancy. She is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Century Association.

Vanden Heuvel is a summa cum laude graduate of Princeton University, and she lives in New York City.

Sasha Abramsky

Sasha Abramsky is a widely published freelance journalist and book author. He writes regularly for *The Nation* magazine, and his work has also been published in the New Yorker online, the *American Prospect*, *Salon*, *Slate*, *Mother Jones*, *Rolling Stone*, *New York Magazine*, the *Village Voice*, the *LA Weekly*, *Sacramento Magazine*, *Sacramento News & Review*, London's *The Guardian*, the *Observer*, the *Sunday Telegraph*, and many other publications. He is the author of seven books, including three on the criminal justice system, one on hunger in America -- titled *Breadline USA* -- and a biography of President Obama, titled *Inside Obama's Brain*. Abramsky's 2013 book *The American Way of Poverty: How the Other Half Still Lives* was listed by the *New York Times* as amongst the 100 Notable Books of the Year. His 2015 book *The House of Twenty Thousand Books* was listed by Kirkus Reviews as amongst the year's best non-fiction books. Abramsky is a senior fellow at the Demos think tank, and a part-time lecture in the University Writing Program at UC Davis. He lectures widely at venues around the country. Abramsky currently lives in Sacramento with his wife and their two children.



Jamaal Bowman

Jamaal Bowman was born and raised in New York City, spending his early years in public housing and later in rent-controlled apartments. Jamaal now lives in Yonkers with his wife and three kids. Jamaal founded Cornerstone Academy for Social Action (CASA) in Baychester in the Bronx, which has become one of the best public middle schools in the city. In addition to his work as a teacher and a principal, Jamaal has always organized the grassroots to achieve real, tangible progress for working families.



Elected to Congress during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Jamaal got right to work on delivering real progress for all New Yorkers. As a direct result of his advocacy, FEMA opened a vaccination site in Yonkers and New York City opened a vaccination site in Co-op City, each site with the capacity to vaccinate 1,000 people a day.

Throughout his two terms in Congress (2020-2024), Jamaal secured over \$1 billion in federal funding for his district, with new investments in local gun violence prevention programs, affordable housing, health care, climate action, and more. In addition, he passed through the House investments in local community organizations including the NYC Health + Hospitals-Jacobi, Mount Vernon Neighborhood Health Center, Yonkers YMCA, New Rochelle YMCA, the Lake Isle Dam study, Mamaroneck Senior Center, and more. He was also a consistent voice for social justice and economic equality and was one of the first members of Congress to call for a cease-fire in Gaza.

Michael Klare

Michael T. Klare, The Nation's defense correspondent, is professor emeritus of peace and world-security studies at Hampshire College and senior visiting fellow at the Arms Control Association in Washington, D.C. His articles have appeared in many journals, including *Arms Control Today*, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, *Current History*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Harper's*, *The Nation*, *Scientific American*, and *Technology Review*. His most recent book is *All Hell Breaking Loose: The Pentagon's*

Perspective on Climate Change. Klare serves on the board of the Arms Control Association and advises other organizations in the field.



Anne Lamott

Anne Lamott writes and speaks about subjects that begin with capital letters: Alcoholism, Motherhood, Jesus. But armed with self-effacing humor – she is laugh-out-loud funny – and ruthless honesty, Lamott converts her subjects into enchantment. Actually, she writes about what most of us don't like to think about. She wrote her first novel for her father, the writer Kenneth Lamott, when he was diagnosed with brain cancer. She has said that the book was "a present to someone I loved who was going to die." In all her novels, she writes about loss – loss of loved ones and loss of personal



control. She doesn't try to sugar-coat the sadness, frustration and disappointment, but tells her stories with honesty, compassion and a pureness of voice. As she says, "I have a lot of hope and a lot of faith and I struggle to communicate that." Anne Lamott does communicate her faith; in her books and in person, she lifts, comforts, and inspires, all the while keeping us laughing.

Anne Lamott is the author of seven novels, *Hard Laughter*, *Rosie*, *Joe Jones*, *Blue Shoe*, *All New People*, *Crooked Little Heart*, and *Imperfect Birds*. She has also written several bestselling books of nonfiction, including, *Operating Instructions*, an account of life as a single mother during her son's first year; *Some Assembly Required: A Journal of My Son's First Son*; and the classic book on writing; *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*.

Her next book, a collaboration with her husband Neal Allen, will be *Good Writing* (Avery Penguin Random House, March 27, 2026). She also has a new podcast series with Allen titled *The Big Questions*, available exclusively on the Ritual app

Lamott has been honored with a Guggenheim Fellowship, and has taught at UC Davis, as well as at writing conferences across the country. Academy Award-winning film-maker Freida Mock has made a documentary on Lamott, entitled *Bird by Bird with Annie* (1999). Anne Lamott has also been inducted into the California Hall of Fame.

Lamott is a columnist for the *Washington Post*.

Elie Mystal

Elie Mystal is *The Nation's* Justice Correspondent—covering the courts, the criminal justice system, and politics—and the force behind the magazine's monthly column, "Objection!" He is also an Alfred Knobler Fellow at the Type Media Center.

Elie is a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School, a former associate at Debevoise & Plimpton, and a lifelong New York Mets fans. One of those things is not like the others. Prior to joining *The Nation*, Mystal was the executive editor of *Above the Law*. He's a frequent guest on MSNBC and Sirius XM. He will resist.

He can be followed @ElieNYC.



John Nichols

John Nichols, a pioneering political blogger, has written the Online Beat since 1999. His posts have been circulated internationally, quoted in numerous books and mentioned in debates on the floor of Congress.

Nichols writes about politics for *The Nation* magazine as its Washington correspondent. He is a contributing writer for *The Progressive* and *In These Times* and the associate editor of the *Capital Times*, the daily



newspaper in Madison, Wisconsin. His articles have appeared in the *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune* and dozens of other newspapers.

Nichols is a frequent guest on radio and television programs as a commentator on politics and media issues. He was featured in Robert Greenwald's documentary, "Outfoxed," and in the documentaries Joan Sekler's "Unprecedented," Matt Kohn's "Call It Democracy" and Robert Pappas's "Orwell Rolls in his Grave." The keynote speaker at the 2004 Congress of the International Federation of Journalists in Athens, Nichols has been a featured presenter at conventions, conferences and public forums on media issues sponsored by the Federal Communications Commission, the Congressional Progressive Caucus, Consumers International, the Future of Music Coalition, the AFL-CIO, the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, the Newspaper Guild [CWA] and dozens of other organizations.

Nichols is the author of *The Genius of Impeachment* (The New Press); a critically acclaimed analysis of the Florida recount fight of 2000, *Jews for Buchanan* (The New Press); and a best-selling biography of Vice President Dick Cheney, *Dick: The Man Who is President* (The New Press), which has recently been published in French and Arabic. He edited *Against the Beast: A Documentary History of American Opposition to Empire* (Nation Books), of which historian Howard Zinn said: "At exactly the time when we need it most, John Nichols gives us a special gift--a collection of writings, speeches, poems, and songs from throughout American history--that reminds us that our revulsion to war and empire has a long and noble tradition in this country."

With Robert W. McChesney, Nichols has co-authored the books *It's the Media, Stupid!* (Seven Stories), *Our Media, Not Theirs* (Seven Stories), *Tragedy and Farce: How the American Media Sell Wars, Spin Elections, and Destroy Democracy* (The New Press) and, most recently, *The Death and Life of American Journalism* (Nation Books). McChesney and Nichols are the co-founders of Free Press, the nation's media-reform network, which organized the 2003 and 2005 National Conferences on Media Reform.

Of Nichols, author Gore Vidal says: "Of all the giant slayers now afoot in the great American desert, John Nichols's sword is the sharpest."

Joan Walsh

Joan Walsh is a national affairs correspondent for *The Nation* and the author of *What's the Matter With White People? Finding Our Way in the Next America*. Salon's first news editor, Walsh served as editor in chief for six years. She is a frequent guest on MSNBC and CNN, and has contributed to publications ranging from *Vogue* to *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*.



Kai Wright

Kai Wright was formerly host and managing editor of the public radio show, *Notes From America with Kai Wright*. The Atlantic hailed the show as one of the “The Best Podcasts of 2018,” declaring that it “has always been able to swiftly explain current events through the lens of the past.” In addition, Wright has been the host of a number of WNYC Studios’ limited edition podcasts with social justice themes. Wright’s journalism has focused on social, racial, and economic justice throughout his career. Formerly, he was an editor at *The Nation*, the editorial director of Colorlines, and an investigative reporting fellow of Type Media Center. Wright is the author of *Drifting Toward Love: Black, Brown, Gay and Coming of Age on the Streets of New York*, as well as two surveys of Black American history, and a contributor to the best-selling collection *Four Hundred Souls: A Community History of African America*.

