

AUTHORCON VI – FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27

4:00pm to 5:00pm – Opening Ceremonies (First Floor, Auditorium): Brian Keene and Joe Ripple welcome all Guests of Honor, vendors, and attendees, give you important weekend information, and present the 4th annual Wilburn-Thomas Award and the 13th annual Crystal Award.

Attendance is strongly encouraged.

5:00pm to 9:00pm – Vendors (Ballroom and Promenade)

5:00pm to 9:00pm – Silent Auction (First Floor, Auditorium)

5:00pm to 9:00pm – Art Show (Second Floor, Room 11)

5:00pm to 9:00pm – Game Room (First Floor, Room A/B)

5:00pm to 9:00pm – A Quiet Place (Second Floor, Room 14): No, this is not a screening of the movie. This is a quiet room for those who need to get away. Please mute all phones, devices, and conversations. Be respectful of others in the room.

5:00pm to 10:00pm – International Film Festival (First Floor, Amphitheater)

6:30pm – 7:30pm – Pitch Sessions / French Press (Second Floor, Room E): Private, one-on-one pitch sessions with French Press. Proceeds benefit Scares That Care and do not guarantee any acceptance or deal. Please arrive promptly. French Press is interested in completed novel, novellas, and short story collections. French press loves horror, science-fiction, and the intersection of the two. **This is a ticketed session. Tickets are available for purchase at convention registration.**

7:00pm to 8:00pm – An Evening with Psychic and Medium Dakota Lawrence (Second Floor, Room 15): By popular demand, renowned psychic and medium Dakota Lawrence returns to AuthorCon VI! In this group setting, renowned psychic and medium Dakota Lawrence will conduct livereadings regarding loved ones, participants' lives and more. PLEASE NOTE that participants will be chosen at random from the gallery for a reading, and a ticket DOES NOT guarantee a reading. Due to the mature nature of this presentation, this is an ADULTS ONLY presentation. Limit of 40 participants. An AuthorCon Event ticket must be purchased in addition to the ticket for Dakota's gallery reading. **This is a ticketed session. Tickets are available for purchase at convention registration.**

10:00pm – Whose Line Is It Anyway? (First Floor, Auditorium): Joe Ripple hosts this horror writer version of the popular improvisational comedy contest as Clay McLeod Chapman, Nat Cassidy, CJ Leede, and Bitter Karella take on Shane McKenzie, Stephen Kozeniewski, Wile E. Young, and Mary SanGiovanni.

Readings:

Second Floor, Room 8

6:00pm – 6:45pm: AJ Humphreys and Edmund Stone
7:00pm – 7:45pm: Edward J. Flora and Craig Brownlie
8:00pm – 8:45pm: Nick Roberts and John Durgin

Second Floor, Rooms 9/10

6:15pm – 7:00pm: John Baltisberger and Jason Nickey
7:15pm – 8:00pm: R.J. Joseph and Candace Nola
8:15pm – 9:00pm: Lucas Milliron and Oscar Brady

Second Floor, Room 12

5:30pm – 6:15pm: M.J. Rowe and Jay Bower
6:30pm – 7:15pm: C.L. Merklinger and Brýn Grover
7:30pm – 8:15pm: Gemma Amor and V. Castro

Second Floor, Room I:

5:45pm – 6:30pm: Patrick Tumblety and Peter O’Keefe
6:45pm – 7:30pm: Shane McKenzie and Thomas R. Clark
7:45pm – 8:30pm: Chase Will and Tony Evans

Panels:

Second Floor, Room 16

5:45pm – 6:45pm: How To Research – Sooner or later, every fiction writer has to do it. Rebecca Cuthbert (Mod), Melanie R. Anderson, Valerie B. Williams, Terry Hooker, Stephen H. Provost, and Sidney Williams offer tips and tricks and dos and don’ts on research.

7:00pm – 8:00pm: Teaching Writing – Andrew Najberg (Mod), Cassandra O’Sullivan Sachar, Anthony J. Rapino, Paul Michael Anderson, Zach Lamb, Garrett Boatman, and Elizabeth Broadbent discuss the ins-and-outs of teaching writing, and how it may or may not apply to their own writing.

Second Floor, Room 17

6:00pm – 7:00pm: Cryptids – Bigfoot. Mothman. Nessie. Chupacabra. Why do these mythic creatures of folklore and legend still have such a hold on the horror genre? Richard Dansky (Mod), Tony Evans, Jeremy Megargee, Daniel Braum, David Simms, and Bitter Karella discuss.

7:15pm – 8:15pm: Writing Poetry – Nikolas P. Robinson (Mod), John Baltisberger, Anton Cancre, Royal Poff, and Phrique discuss their individual approach to writing poetry, and where to sell it in 2026.

Second Floor, Room 18

6:15pm – 7:15pm: Brought To You By Skynet – Oscar Brady (Mod), Lucas Milliron, Dacia Arnold, Nikolas P. Robinson, R.J. Roles, and B.C. Lienesch discuss the industry's fight against generative A.I., what else can be done, and whether or not it's too late.

7:30pm – 8:30pm: Cosmic Horror 2026 –As humankind's understanding of the cosmos expands, so do our questions and uncertainty about our very existence. Ben Farthing (Mod), Amanda Headlee, Thomas R Clark, Todd Keisling, Stephen Mark Rainey, Mary SanGiovanni, and Tommy B. Smith discuss the themes cosmic horror may tackle in the near future.

AUTHORCON VI – SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28

10:00am to 5:00pm – Silent Auction (First Floor, Auditorium): Winners will be announced at 5:00pm sharp.

10:00am to 6:00pm – Vendors (Ballroom and Promenade)

10:00am to 6:00pm – Art Show (Second Floor, Room 11)

10:00am to 6:00pm – Game Room (First Floor, Room A/B)

10:00am to 6:00pm – A Quiet Place (Second Floor, Room 14): No, this is not a screening of the movie. This is a quiet room for those who need to get away. Please mute all phones, devices, and conversations. Be respectful of others in the room.

11:30am – 12:30am – Pitch Sessions / French Press (Second Floor, Room E): Private, one-on-one pitch sessions with French Press. Proceeds benefit Scares That Care and do not guarantee any acceptance or deal. Please arrive promptly. French Press is interested in completed novel, novellas, and short story collections. French press loves horror, science-fiction, and the intersection of the two. **This is a ticketed session. Tickets are available for purchase at convention registration.**

Noon to 7:00pm – International Film Festival (First Floor, Amphitheater)

1:00pm to 2:00pm – How to Create an Amazing Author Website (First Floor, Center Lounge): In order for readers, agents, and publishers to find you online, you need a website. In this seminar, author and digital communications professional Sonora Taylor will share the unique advantages a website has over other online spaces like social media, then walk you through what makes a great author website. There will also be a Q&A session to answer any questions you may have. If you don't have a website or you have one that's in serious need of updating, then this seminar is for you. **This is a ticketed workshop. Tickets are available for purchase at convention registration.**

3:00pm to 5:00pm – Ask An Agent (First Floor, Center Lounge) – Literary agent Becky LeJeune (Confluence Literary Agency) hosts this workshop for writers of all levels. Learn how to pitch your manuscripts to an agent, how to write the perfect query letter, and much more. **This is a ticketed workshop. Tickets are available for purchase at convention registration.**

6:00pm to 8:00pm – Artist Reception (Second Floor, Room 11): Meet the artists who created the pieces in this year's art show, learn about their process, and purchase something to take home with you.

7:00pm to 8:00pm – An Evening with Psychic and Medium Dakota Lawrence (Second Floor, Room 15): By popular demand, renowned psychic

and medium Dakota Lawrence returns to AuthorCon VI! In this group setting, renowned psychic and medium Dakota Lawrence will conduct livereadings regarding loved ones, participants' lives and more. PLEASE NOTE that participants will be chosen at random from the gallery for a reading, and a ticket DOES NOT guarantee a reading. Due to the mature nature of this presentation, this is an ADULTS ONLY presentation. Limit of 40 participants. An AuthorCon Event ticket must be purchased in addition to the ticket for Dakota's gallery reading. **This is a ticketed session. Tickets are available for purchase at convention registration.**

8:00pm to 9:00pm –Sonora Taylor's Birthday Bash (Second Floor, Room I): Everyone is invited to come celebrate author and Scares That Care board member Sonora Taylor's 40th birthday! Join us for sheet cake and ghost stories. BYOB.

9:00pm-ish: Bra Walk (Bar and Promenade) – Joe Ripple, Brian Keene, and Grim. Make It Rain!

10:00pm – The Gross-Out Contest (First Floor, Auditorium): A 35+ year tradition continues! Your favorite horror authors square off once again in the literary world's most vile, hilarious, and incendiary showdown. Each contestant has five minutes to gross out the crowd and impress hosts Stephen Kozeniewski and Wile E. Young, and celebrity judges RJ Joseph, RJ Benetti, Eric Butler, Amanda Headlee, and Viggy Parr Hampton. Adults Only. No One Under 18 Permitted. No Phones or Recording Devices. Attendee Discretion Is Strongly, Strongly Advised.

Readings:

Second Floor, Room 8

10:15am – 11:00am: Dorian J. Sinnott and Royal Poff
11:15am – Noon: Matthew Lutton and Kalvin Ellis
12:15pm – 1:00pm: Lisa Kroger and RE Bunch
1:15pm – 2:00pm: Jennifer McMahon and Amanda Headlee
2:15pm – 3:00pm: Stephen Kozeniewski and Jonathan Gensler
3:15pm – 4:00pm: Bitter Karella and Anton Cancre
4:15pm – 5:00pm: Phrique and RJ Benetti
5:15pm – 6:00pm: Paul Michael Anderson and Garrett Boatman

Second Floor, Rooms 9/10

10:30am – 11:15am: Valerie B. Williams and Cassandra O'Sullivan Sachar
11:30am – 12:15pm: Andrew Najberg and Larry Hinkle
12:30pm – 1:15pm: Kathryn Tennison and T.L. Bodine
1:30pm – 2:15pm: Sam Rebelein and Chris Panatier
2:30pm – 3:15pm: C.J. Leede and Wrath James White
3:30pm – 4:15pm: Justin Holley and Zach Lamb
4:30pm – 5:15pm: Clay McLeod Chapman and Nat Cassidy

Second Floor, Room 12

10:45am – 11:30am: Gemma Amor and V. Castro
11:45am – 12:30pm: Shawn Winchell and Caleb Jones
12:45pm – 1:30pm: B.C. Lienesch and Stephen H. Provost

1:45pm – 2:30pm: Nikolas P. Robinson and D.S. Quinton
2:45pm – 3:30pm: L. Marie Wood and Cassandra Celia
3:45pm – 4:30pm: Mary SanGiovanni and Todd Keisling
4:45pm – 5:30pm: Tommy B. Smith and Anthony J. Rapino

Second Floor, Room I:

11:00am – 11:45am: Richard Dansky and Stephen Mark Rainey
Noon – 12:45pm: J.C. Moore and R.J. Roles
1:00pm – 1:45pm: Ronald Malfi and Rebecca Rowland
2:00pm – 2:45pm: Doug Goodman and Kyle Lybeck
3:00pm – 5:00pm: A Chronicle of Horrors anthology spotlight – Reading and discussion with the contributors

Panels:

Second Floor, Room 16

10:30am – 11:30am: Message Boards or Social Media: Are We Better or Worse Off Than We Were? – Veteran horror fans and writers who've been around since the internet's infancy discuss online fandom's evolution. Mark Seiber (Mod), Jason Cavallaro, David Simms, Craig Brownlie, and Norman Prentiss.

11:45am – 12:45pm: Navigating Self-Publishing – New to self-publishing or pondering dipping your toe into it? Chase Will (Mod), John Durgin, John Lynch, B.C. Lienesch, Cat Voleur, and Valerie B. Williams share their experience.

1:00pm – 2:00pm: Game Writing 2026 – Matthew Lutton (Mod), John Baltisberger, Richard Dansky, Andrew Najberg, and AJ Humphreys discuss the triumphs and challenges of writing for tabletop and videogames in 2026.

2:15pm – 3:15pm: Grief Horror 2026 – At a time when the world seems to be spinning out of control, and simply turning on the news can be traumatic, what might Grief Horror reflect back upon us in the near future? Katherine Silva (Mod), T.L. Bodine, Paul Michael Anderson, Amanda Headlee, Candace Nola, and Aaron Lebold discuss.

3:30pm – 4:30pm: Small Press Publishing 101 – Interested in starting your own small press publishing business? Mitch Hull of Rapture Publishing (Mod), Katherine Silva, Aron Beauregard, and John Baltisberger offer advice.

4:45pm – 5:45pm: Writing Craft – T.L. Bodine (Mod), Sherrilyn Kenyon, L. Marie Wood, John Durgin, Stephen H. Provost, and Brent Winzek of Space Cadet Studios discuss the commonalities and differences in their individual approaches to the craft.

Second Floor, Room 17

10:45am – 11:45am: Organizing A Convention / Online Community – Want to start a convention, festival, or online community? With over 40 years' experience between them, Brian Keene (Mod), Joe Ripple, Wrath James White, T.L. Bodine, Rebecca Rowland, and John Baltisberger details the headaches and heartaches that go into such a feat.

Noon – 1:00pm: Folk Horror – What is behind the resurge in the popularity of Folk Horror, and will it last in a future dominated by big-tech and A.I.? Jonathan Gensler (Mod), Jennifer McMahon, Thomas R. Clark, Tony Evans, Bitter Karella, and Stephen Mark Rainey discuss.

1:15pm – 2:15pm: Historical Horror, Folklore, and Mythology – One current trend in the present is horror fiction focused on the past. Patrick Tumblety (Mod), Lisa Kroger, Terry Hooker, Pamela K. Kinney, and Brandon Perras-Sanchez discuss mining history, folklore, and mythology for fiction.

2:30pm – 3:30pm: Writing Media Tie-Ins, IP, and Adapting Screenplays to Novels – Richard Dansky (Mod), Cat Voleur, Chase Will, and Peter O'Keefe discuss adapting other people's works and playing with another company's toys.

3:45pm – 4:45pm: Character Development – Lucas Milliron (Mod), CJ Leede, Caleb Jones, Martin Shannon, J Denison Reed, Stephen H. Provost, and Kalvin Ellis details their tips, tricks, and process for developing fully-fleshed characters – and for developing Place as a character.

5:00pm – 6:00pm: Slashers Slashing Tropes – Oscar Brady (mod), Nick Roberts, Nikolas P. Robinson, Kristopher Triana, Patrick Tumblety, and Daniel Shrader discuss works that are bending and breaking the tropes of the Slasher subgenre, and tropes (if any) that have yet to be broken.

Second Floor, Room 18

11:00am – Noon: Splatterpunk and Extreme Horror: There Is A Difference – John Baltisberger (Mod), RJ Joseph, John Lynch, Phrique, Oscar Brady, Eric Butler, and Jason Nickey discuss the sometimes subtle and sometimes blatant differences between these two oft-entwined subgenres.

12:15pm – 1:15pm: The Halloween Librarians and You: A Not So Scary Author-Library Partnership – Konrad Stump (Mod), Clay McLeod Chapman, Laura Schuler, and Matt McCleland discuss ways libraries and horror authors and publishers can work together to grow the genre and increase awareness and community outreach.

1:30pm – 2:30pm: The Obligatory Horror and Music Panel – Always an AuthorCon favorite, Thomas R Clark (Mod), Brandon Perras-Sanchez, David Simms, Tommy B. Smith, Dorian J. Sinnott, Justin Holley, and Jay Bower discuss the links between music and horror fiction.

2:45pm – 3:45pm: Why I Love Horror – Konrad Stump (Mod), Clay McLeod Chapman, Jennifer McMahon, Brian Keene, and Mary SanGiovanni discuss their introductions into the horror genre, as detailed in the new anthology from Saga Press.

4:00pm – 5:00pm: Future Feminism In Horror – Amanda Headlee (Mod), Sherrilyn Kenyon, RE Bunch, Rebecca Cuthbert, Gemma Amor, V Castro, Rebecca Rowland, and Candace Nola discuss the work ahead, and what the next wave of feminism in horror needs to accomplish – both in fandom and professionally.

AUTHORCON VI – SUNDAY, MARCH 1

10:00am to 3:00pm – Vendors (Ballroom and Promenade)

10:00am to 2:00pm – A Quiet Place (Second Floor, Room 14): No, this is not a screening of the movie. This is a quiet room for those who need to get away. Please mute all phones, devices, and conversations. Be respectful of others in the room.

11:00am – 11:30am – Pitch Sessions / French Press (Second Floor, Room E): Private, one-on-one pitch sessions with French Press. Proceeds benefit Scares That Care and do not guarantee any acceptance or deal. Please arrive promptly. French Press is interested in completed novel, novellas, and short story collections. French press loves horror, science-fiction, and the intersection of the two. **This is a ticketed session. Tickets are available for purchase at convention registration.**

Readings:

Second Floor, Room 8

10:30am – 11:15am: Elizabeth Broadbent and Norman Prentiss

Second Floor, Rooms 9/10

11:00am – 11:45am: Dacia Arnold and Sonora Taylor

Noon – 12:45pm: Brian Keene and Laurel Hightower

Panels:

Second Floor, Room 16

10:15am – 11:15am: Analog / Internet Horror Story Culture – Ben Farthing (Mod), and Todd Keisling discuss their favorite Analog Horror and Internet spawned horror stories.

11:30am – 12:30pm: Writing Short Stories – Jeremy Megargee (Mod), Cassandra Celia, J Denison Reed, Larry Hinkle, Martin Shannon, Mitch Hull of Rapture Publishing, and Bryan “B.D.” Prince discuss the specific craft of writing an effective short story.

Second Floor, Room 17

10:30am – 11:30am: Communicating with Bookstores – Cassandra Celia (Mod) and Liz Aspbury offer best practices for befriending booksellers, promoting to stores, setting up signings, and more.

11:45am – 12:45pm: Weird Westerns, Grimdark, and Military Horror – Robert Whitmore (Mod), Daniel J. Volpe, Jonathan Gensler, Andrew Najberg, Seth Tucker, and Stephen Kozeniewski discuss writing cross-genre works and some of their favorite mash-ups.

Second Floor, Room 18

10:45am – 11:45am: Streaming and Screaming: 2025 Horror Movies Revisited – Sidney Williams (Mod), Caleb Jones, Brandon Perras-Sanchez, and Eric Butler discuss the state of horror films in 2025. What worked. What didn't. And what trends may indicate for the year ahead.

Noon – 1:00pm: Vintage Paperbacks – Sidney Williams (Mod), Mark Seiber, Phrique, Jason Cavallaro, Craig Brownlie, Bitter Karella, and Stephen Mark Rainey discuss their favorite Paperbacks from Hell.

1:15pm – 2:15pm: The 500th Annual Yell At Brian Keene Panel – Brian Keene, Joe Ripple, Sonora Taylor, Angel Hollman-Gaston, and the rest of the Scares That Care staff welcome your feedback in this open forum, so that we can implement it next year. Please don't really yell at Brian, though...