UPPAA

The Written Word

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"It is spring again. The earth is like a child that knows poems by heart."

–Rainer Maria Rilke

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Spring Conference: May 15–16, 2026

Join us for the 2026 UPPAA Annual Conference at
Peter White Public Library,
117 N. Front Street, Marquette, MI

Please register online at
www.uppaa.org/meeting-registration/

Friday, May 15, 2026

New Pre-Conference Workshop Opportunities for Writers and Poets

It has been several years since UPPAA offered a Pre-Conference Workshop on Friday, the day before our Spring Conference in Marquette. For Spring Conference 2026, UPPAA is pleased to announce three Pre-Conference workshops on Friday, May 15. The workshops will be presented by Julie Covert and Kathleen Carlton Johnson in the Peter White Public Library meeting rooms on the 2nd floor.

Seats will be limited to 25 participants and offered on a first-come, first-serve basis. Each workshop will be an optional "add-on" item to your registration process as you complete registration in the TicketTailor app. This is the same app that confirms your Saturday attendance and the optional Friday Night Live segment of our weekend programming.

2:00pm–5:00pm in the Heritage room:

Developing Your Poetic Voice,
with Kathleen Carlton Johnson (cost: $45)

Robert Lowell says of poetry, "Poetry is a profession of private truth." Regardless of whether we live in a rural area or a city, poems are all around us. An effective poet must be skilled in: image, language (concise meaning), sound, insight, and structure.

In this workshop, you'll also learn how to turn off the "automatic editing" that can stifle our creative output on the page, so as to access the subconscious poet within. Other topics will include: the importance of reading a broad scope of literature beyond poetry to grow our literary boundaries, how to create a safe space of solitude for composition, being ready to strike whenever the creative impulse hits, finding a poet's circle to read with, and resources to help you get your work published.



About Kathleen Carlton Johnson

Kathleen Carlton Johnson been published in several small press publications: *Diner*, *Rattle*, *William and Mary Review*, *The Third Wednesday*, *U.P. Reader*, and *MacGuffin*, to mention a few. She has just published her 17th chapbook, *Roots in Water*. Kathleen is well aware of the joys and pitfalls of self-publishing. We are pleased to have her join us once again as a presenter.

1:00pm-4:00pm in the Shiras room:

Create Your Writing Mini-Trail Guide, with Julie Covert (cost: $45)

A 3-hour workshop to help you map a trail plan for your book journey.

- Would you climb a mountain without camping gear? Without food and water? Without a map?
- Would you consider starting a business and applying for a business loan without creating a business plan?
- No? I don't blame you; it's scary, silly, dangerous, or a financial mess.
- So, give your book the trail plan it deserves.

Your book will be more successful if you create a trail plan for your writing journey.

In this workshop, we'll help you hone your message so you write exactly to where you want to go without getting lost in the forest of words.

- This workshop is excellent for those considering writing a memoir, and can be applied to fiction and non-fiction. You'll walk away with actionable steps to help you make sure your pen is going to lead you in the write direction (pun intended) on your writing journey. So, let's help you create a mini-trail guide for your book.
- This is a "worksheet workshop"; no PowerPoints will be used! Each participant will receive a printed blank mini-planner, and it can be emailed to those who have pre-registered, so they can bring their laptop and work on it during the workshop (recommended.)
- I'll begin with a brief overview of the objectives of the planner, then discuss each aspect of the planner with time for folks to work on each step as we go through the planner.
- Throughout, I'll take Q&A as we go to give participants one-on-one guidance and feedback.
- Discussion through Q&A will be the emphasis, rather than lecture, so participants can understand how to create a great plan for their book.
- At the end of the workshop, participants will have honed their ideas for their books and have actionable steps of what to do next, including how to finish their mini-planner if they didn't during the workshop.
- Each participant will work on their planner in solo, rather than in a small group.

4:15pm-5:15pm in the Shiras room:

Know Your Writing-Style Color and Make It Help You Write Better, with Julie Covert (cost: $10)

A 1-hour interactive presentation about identifying your writing and communication style so you can make your time at the keyboard more productive.

- Do you get frustrated when can't write as easily as you'd like?
- Does something hold you back, that you can't put your finger on?
- Come learn what your Writing-Style Color is.
- When you can identify your style then you can learn how to make it work to your advantage, rather than hold you back.

About Julie Covert



Julie Covert is a book coach and editor with over 10 years experience working with writers of all levels. She helps writers who feel overwhelmed and unsure find a sure footing in the writing world. Some have called her a book midwife, mentor, task-master, and cheerleader; others have called her fun to work with. She enjoys helping writers with book coaching, editing, and indexing.

6:00pm–9:00pm at The Crib: Pre-Conference Networking & Social Mixer

We will gather from 6:00–9:00pm at The Crib, a cozy and comfortable coffeehouse with lots of seating. Light appetizers will be served, and a cash bar will be available. There will be a $15 cover charge when you purchase the Friday Night Event when you register for Spring Conference, or $20 at the door.

An Open Mic night will be on the 2nd floor from 6:30pm to 8:30pm. Open mics allow poets and storytellers—both seasoned and emerging—to share their work in a safe and welcoming space. Writers may bring something they've already published or something they are still working on.

Saturday, May 16, 2026

Keynote Speaker – Sara Maurer



Sara Maurer's debut novel, *A Good Animal*, was published by St. Martin's Press in February 2026. Place deeply informs Sara's writing, particularly how it influences identity and choice. She attended Albion College and Eastern Michigan University and completed the Stanford Continuing Studies certificate in novel writing in 2022. In 2023, she was selected as a Suzanne M. Wilson Artist-in-Residence at the Glen Arbor Arts Center.

She lives in Michigan's Upper Peninsula with her husband, two kids, and mini Dachshund.

Spring Conference Sessions

This year, we're providing both a Marketing track and a Writing track for attendees. You can choose sessions from either track when you register to attend the conference. Even though attendance is free for UPPAA members in good standing, we need to know your session choices in advance to right-size the rooms for each presenter.

9:00–9:40 – Registration: complimentary coffee, baked goods, fruit

9:40–9:45 – Opening remarks, **Victor R. Volkman**, UPPAA President

9:45–10:45 – Keynote, **Sara Maurer**, author of *The Good Animal* (St. Martin's Press)

10:45–11:00 – Morning Break

11:00–12:00 – **Morning Session**

Nikki Mitchell:
"Authentic Voices: Crafting Neurodivergent Heroes for Middle Grade Readers"

Deborah K. Frontiera:
"Self-Publishing 101: Why You Should Self-Publish and How to Do It"

12:00–1:15 – Lunch/Networking Hour

1:15–1:45 – UPPAA Town Hall moderated by Victor

1:45–2:45 – **Afternoon Session #1**

Dianna Stampfler:
"Research & Records for Historical Writing"

Michael Dwyer:
"Building a Creative In-Person Author Platform with Real World Connections"

2:45–3:00 – Afternoon Break

3:00–4:00 – **Afternoon Session #2**

Sue Harrison:
"Orchestrating Your Novel's Plot"

Brandy Thomas, Marty Achatz, & Nikki Mitchell:
"Creating and Marketing Audiobooks Panel Discussion"

4:00–4:15 – Door Prize Giveaways/Concluding Remarks by the president

5:00 – Afterglow at the Crow's Nest an informal gathering to take place (top floor of the Landmark Inn, directly across the street)

With Thanks

Conference lanyards were made possible through the in-kind contribution of Lake Superior Press.

Phone: 906-228-7450

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www.lakesuperiorpress.net

Announcing the Young Writers Storytelling Workshop in Marquette

When: May 16, 2026, from 9:30am to 4:00pm
Where: Peter White Public Library, 217 N. Front St, Marquette, MI
How to Register: storytellingworkshop.org

The Upper Peninsula Publishers and Authors Association (UPPAA) is excited to announce that the Young Writers Storytelling Workshop will be back for a third year and has grown in scope and mission since its debut in 2024.

This year, the workshop will have additional breakout sessions for the students to choose from. It will be adjacent to and share amenities with the conference for adult writers on Saturday, May 16, from 9:30am to 4:00pm at the Peter White Public Library.

"The workshop will run in parallel to UPPAA's main conference, but the sessions will be aimed at a youthful audience, in grades 6 to 12, who are beginning their writing journeys," said Rehema Clarken (Hancock, MI), who is the workshop chair.

In previous years, our award-winning author instructors taught the basics of storytelling, but this year, participants will have more to choose from with breakout sessions in the afternoon.

The additional sessions are designed especially for returning participants to help them further develop their writing skills.

These sessions, led by published authors and industry professionals, will cover topics such as creating vivid characters, compelling use of point-of-view, and dynamic plots that both captivate and engage readers' imaginations. Specialized breakouts offer opportunities to explore the fun of poetry and demystify the publishing experience.

Like UPPAA's Spring Conference, participants in the Young Writers Storytelling Workshop will sign up for the tracks they wish to participate in, have additional writing time in each breakout, and a Q&A session with a panel of authors during the lunch break.

Enrollment for the workshop for children in grades 6 to 12 is now open at www.storytellingworkshop.org! The workshop fee is $30 per student for the general public. Children of UPPAA members with family membership packages can attend for free. A limited number of need-based scholarships are available. Please contact storytelling@uppaa.org for details.



Young Writers Storytelling Workshop Schedule

Morning Session #1

Cyndi Perkins

"Getting to know you—why do you write?"

Drawing on her experience as a novelist and award-winning journalist, editor, and higher education communications director, Cyndi—who is based on the Keweenaw Peninsula—will lead relaxed warm-up activities to help participants ease into writing and feel excited about sharing their ideas.

Morning Session #2

John Hagen

"Crafting Captivating Characters"

An award-winning author of short fiction from St. Ignace, John will reveal why compelling characters are essential to successful storytelling—and how to build them. Participants will use key tools and techniques to craft their own characters.

Marty Achatz

"Poetry Possibilities Workshop"

Marty lives in Ishpeming with his family and in his spare time chases comets and Bigfoot. This workshop will play in poetry. Participants will enjoy the experience of writing poetry with the guidance of a UP Poet Laureate.

From 12:15-1:15 p.m., a complimentary pizza lunch is provided and Q&A with Authors with special guest **Sue Harrison** (Pickford, MI), author of the Alaska Trilogy

Afternoon Session #1

Michael Peach

"Identifying the Main Problem:
Conflict Builds Your Story"

An author from Escanaba, Michael will guide participants through an investigation of conflict—the essential element of story—to encourage them to create a compelling plot that makes a page-turner.

Marian Volkman

"Point of View:
A Writer's Not-so-Hidden Power!"

Marian will share how point-of-view moves the reader through the story. It determines how the story is told based on what details are shared by the narrator or through the experiences of the main characters.

Afternoon Session #2

Rehema Clarken

"Publishing 101"

Rehema is a young adult fantasy novelist and a nonfiction essayist who grew up in Marquette and now lives in the Keweenaw. Her session will explore how young adults can publish short pieces like stories and articles, as well as longer works such as novels.

Registration is open! Please visit www.storytellingworkshop.org

Writing Events

Not sponsored by UPPAA

Two Free Public Events Planned During 5th Annual Walloon Lake Writer's Retreat

A screening of the 2023 movie *The Marsh King's Daughter* by Karen Dionne will be held on Friday, April 17. Doors to The Talcott Events Center in Walloon Lake will open at 6:45pm and the evening will begin at 7pm with a author-led discussion about the book-to-film process.

On Saturday, April 18, a Walloon Lake Author's Fair will be held at The Talcott Event Center. Featured authors include past and current participants of the Walloon Lake Writer's Retreat. These writers will be selling and signing copies of their various titles and are happy to talk with the public about the writing process.

Cost: FREE
Date: April 17, doors open 6:45pm | April 18, 1:00pm–3:00pm
Location: Talcott Event Center in Walloon Lake





The Bards of Northern Michigan

The third annual event celebrating the spoken word will be held at the Charlevoix Public Library. The emcee and keynote, author John Mauk, will be speaking on "The Poetry of Fiction, Memoir, Essay, and Everything Else." There will be light refreshments to enjoy, and poets and John will be available to chat, sell, and sign books.

Cost: FREE
Date: April 21, 2:00pm | 6:00pm
Location: Community Room, Charlevoix Public Library
220 Clinton St, Charlevoix, MI 49720
To Register: Call 231-237-7340 or email reference@charlevoixlibrary.org

UPPAA Board Proposes Updated Membership Categories

By Jodi Perras, UPPAA Treasurer

To meet IRS guidelines, the UPPAA Board has voted to revise our membership categories to add a discounted associate category for students and family members, and a category for publishers and partners seeking additional member benefits. UPPAA members will be asked to vote this fall to add the member categories to our bylaws, as required under Michigan law.

We want UPPAA to be a welcoming community for all writers, whether published or unpublished, along with others who have a business interest in creating and promoting U.P. literature. You can join at whatever membership level fits your needs and budget. So, for example, a writer who also does editing does not have to join at the "Publishers and Partners" level if they don't want the additional benefits.

If you have any questions, contact me at treasurer@uppaa.org.

Member Category	**Regular Membership**	**Publishers and Partners Membership**	**Associate Membership**
Annual Dues	$50	$75	$15
Definition *Note:* All UPPAA members should have a common business interest in publishing or promoting written words with a U.P. connection. U.P. residency is not required.	Writers and poets who are published or aspire to be published, as well as librarians, educators, bookstore owners and others who have a business interest in promoting U.P. literature.	Persons or organizations involved in publishing other people's work or supplying services to writers and publishers, including editors, printers, illustrators, photographers, designers, audiobook editors, and other industry suppliers.	Discounted membership for full-time students (high school, college) and for UPPAA family members living in the same household.

Member Benefits			
Member Category	**Regular**	**Publishers & Partners**	**Associate**
Network with other authors and publishing industry experts	✓	✓	✓
Obtain early and free registration access to the annual UPPAA Spring Conference	✓	✓	✓
Obtain free or discounted access to online workshops and other UPPAA events	✓	✓	✓
Submit short works to the annual *U.P. Reader* with no entry fee	✓	✓	✓
Connect with and learn from peers and industry experts in online members-only discussion groups	✓	✓	✓

Receive notices of upcoming book contests, book fairs, and awards	✓	✓	✓
Receive and submit news and articles to *The Written Word*, UPPAA's quarterly newsletter	✓	✓	✓
Receive discount membership to Independent Book Publishers of America (IBPA), which offers its own industry discounts and additional benefits	✓	✓	✓
Serve as a volunteer on UPPAA committees and work groups	✓	✓	✓
Obtain voting rights regarding UPPAA's Board leadership, by-laws, and annual budget and the ability to serve on UPPAA's board	✓	✓	✓
Obtain early and free registration access for up to three seats at the annual UPPAA Spring Conference		✓	
List your business on UPPAA's online Writing Resources directory		✓	
List your business in a directory in UPPAA's annual printed newsletter		✓	
Submit an industry-related article to be distributed via UPPAA's listserve, blog, and social media channels		✓	
Opportunity to host an industry-related workshop or discussion in person or via Zoom		✓	

Have You Ever Wanted a UPPAA-Sponsored Event in Your Area?

By Jodi Perras, UPPAA Treasurer

Thanks to UPPAA's financial success, the UPPAA Board has voted to create a grants program to expand our activities and reach. The UPPAA Regional Grants Program will offer grants up to $300 to UPPAA members who volunteer to organize programs consistent with UPPAA's mission. The application deadline is June 30, 2026.

Examples of eligible programs might include:

- Open mic night for local writers and authors, partnering with a local bookstore, coffee shop or other business
- Panel discussion at a local library with a group of authors talking on a theme, such as the writing process
- Events that focus on young writer development
- Storytelling contest at a local venue, with prizes
- Writing workshop or panel discussion on how to get published
- Launching a regional writers' circle that will meet regularly to provide support for each other

This is not an all-inclusive list. We encourage you to think creatively about how to support writers in your area. To view the grant guidelines and apply, go to www.uppaa.org/grants.

Questions? Contact Jodi Perras at treasurer@uppaa.org or Terri Martin at Terri4045@gmail.com.

U.P. Publishers & Authors Association Announces 9th Annual Dandelion Cottage Award Winners

The Upper Peninsula Publishers & Authors Association (UPPAA) is extremely pleased to announce the 9th annual Dandelion Cottage Award winners. The award recognizes U.P. student short story writers for excellence in grades 5 – 12. The Dandelion Cottage Award is funded entirely by charitable donations, and no fees have ever been charged to entrants or winners. Students submit stories in consultation with their teachers. The contest includes honors for first-, second-, and third-place winners in both the senior and junior divisions. The contest is chaired by Larry Buege (Marquette, MI), a UPPAA Board member and author of the popular Chogan series for middle-grade readers.

The Copper Country dominates this year's winners. In the senior division (grades 9 - 12), first place will be awarded to Leah Johnson, a junior at Houghton HS, for her story "The Girl Who Fell From the Sky" (sponsor Jessica Klein). The award includes a medallion, the winner's name on a traveling school trophy, and a $250 cash prize. Second place will be awarded to Analise VerBerkmoes, a sophomore at Copper Country Christian School in Chassel, for her story "Pepper" (sponsor Judie Chizek), accompanied by a medallion and a $100 prize. A medallion and prize money of $50 will go to third-place winner Colin Spencer, a freshman at Houghton HS, for his story "Revenge on the Reich" (sponsor Jessica Klein).

The junior division features U.P. writers in grades 5 - 8. Genevieve Baker (grade 6) at Washington Middle School (Calumet, MI) won first place for her story "Tulipsville Terror" (sponsor Amy Machiela), earning a $150 prize. Adele O'Neill (grade 8) at Houghton Middle School won second place for her story "Eggscape" (sponsor Jennifer Saaranen), which includes a $75 prize. Natalie Verbrigghe (grade 6) at a home school took third place for her story "The Diary of Penelope: A Passenger aboard the L.C. Waldo" (sponsor Maria Verbrigghe) with a $25 prize.



Three of the Dandelion Cottage Award Winners: Genevieve Baker, Colin Spencer, Natalie Verbrigghe

This year, more than 50 participants came from 11 different U.P. schools, including De-Tour, Marquette, and the greater Escanaba area, to name a few. This year's 12 judges would like to thank every student who submitted their work. For more information about the annual Dandelion Cottage short story contest, visit www.DandelionCottage.org, which features the full text of stories from the previous eight years of contests.



Victor R. Volkman, UPPAA's President, highly recommends the Young Writers Storytelling Workshop for students wishing to improve their writing craft. See page 6 for details about this May 16, 2026, event held at the Peter White Public Library in Marquette, or visit www.storytellingworkshop.org.

Each of the honored stories will appear in the upcoming 10th volume of U.P. Reader, UPPAA's own annual literary anthology featuring short stories, poetry, and essays by its members. This successful publication helps spread the word about the organization, raise money for educational programming, and encourages people in the Upper Peninsula and beyond to read U.P. writers. Complimentary copies of the U.P. Reader are available to all U.P. educators and media at no cost. The on-sale date is scheduled for May 1, 2026. Consult your local bookseller for availability or purchase at Amazon. For more information, visit www.UP-Reader.org.

Tom Pelissero's Unique Author Events & Donations

"The best promotion is word of mouth, and sometimes you need to create those moments to get folks talking about your book," Tom says. Here are some ways he's done exactly that:

- The 9th grade English and Social Studies classes at Bessemer high school started their lesson using his book, *Bring One Home*.
- He was honored before his high school's basketball game, where he spoke and donated $500 each to literacy in the Bessemer schools and the athletic booster club.
- He paid for 120 meals for seniors citizens at the G-O Community Action Association Senior Center in Bessemer.
- He donated $600 for a children's summer reading program.
- He held a local book signing and donated $540 to the Ironwood Michigan Carnegie Library.

"I have been blessed to donate over $8,600 [from sales of my book] to local libraries and schools in just 5 months."

See page 12 for more images of Tom Pelissero's events.



Member News

UPPAA congratulates the following members for their New Releases since the last installment of *The Written Word*. If you'd like to see your newly released book (within the last 12 months and hasn't been featured in a previous newsletter) added to Member News, please send a Sell Sheet or Press Release to editor@uppaa.org

This Fell Sergeant by **Adam Dompierre**

Amasa Speaker Factory by **Chad Faries**

Living on Sisu by **Deborah K. Frontiera**

She's been doing author visits in schools, spoke at the Calumet Library and in April will be traveling to Fredonia, New York, where Houghton was raised, to speak at the museum there. She's also had three poems accepted into the upcoming volume of *Lake Superior Poems*.

Edd Tury:

The Boy Who Growled at Thunder
and
The Fall and Rise of Sierra Quinn

The Feather Wars and the Great Crusade to Save America's Birds by **James MCommons**

Kathleen Carlton Johnson's poems have been accepted in:

- *Michigan Bard Anthology*
- *Micro Lit*
- *North Dakota Quarterly*
- *Otherwise Engaged and Arts Journal*
- *U.P Reader*

She will present a Pre-Conference Workshop: Developing Your Poetic Voice (see page 2).

Solomon Northup: Hope Out of Darkness by **Larry Jorgensen**

Michigan Revealed: Exploring the Wilds of the Upper Peninsula by **Leslie Cieplechowicz**

The New King by **Nathan Shore**



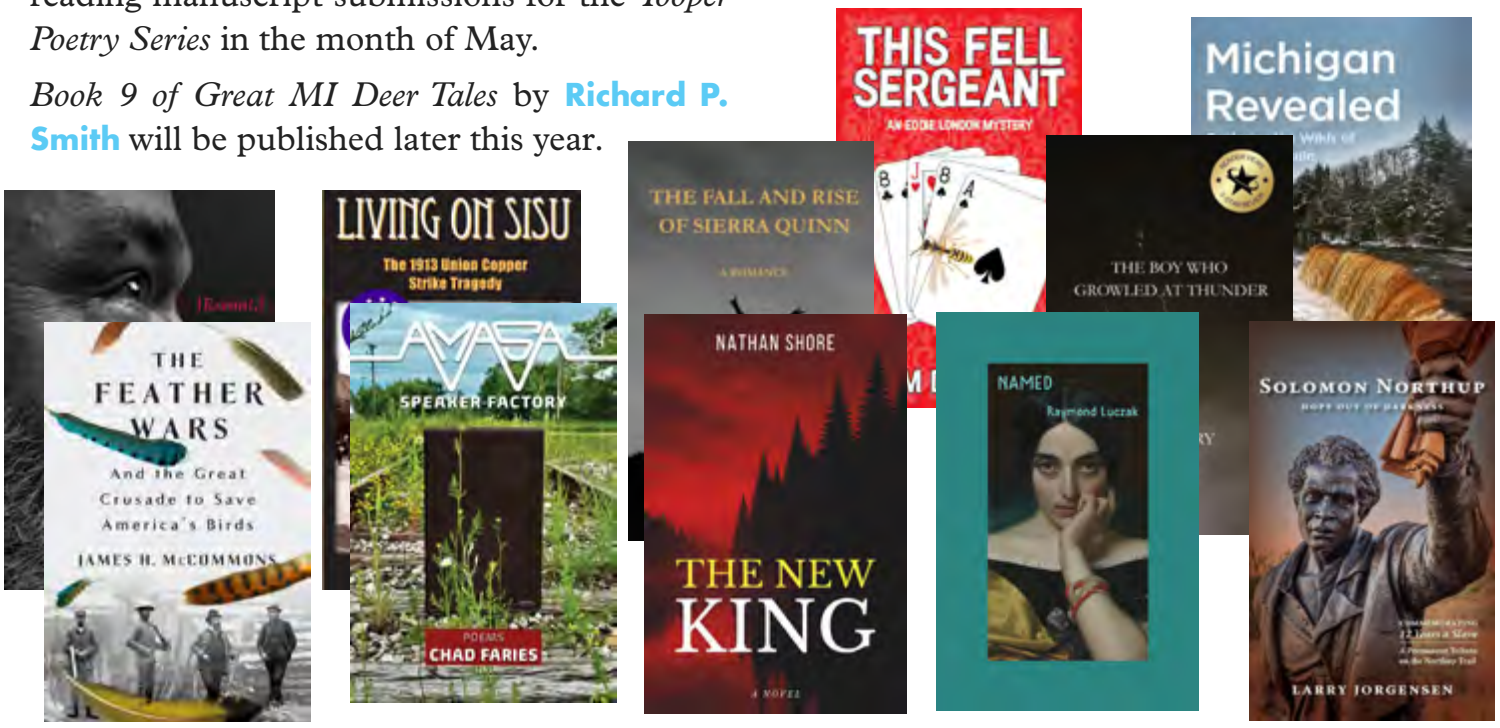
Raymond Luczak:

Named
and
[Exeunt.]: Poems

Luczak is still considering submissions for his Lake Superior poetry anthology, and will be reading manuscript submissions for the *Yooper Poetry Series* in the month of May.

Book 9 of Great MI Deer Tales by **Richard P. Smith** will be published later this year.

Tim Mulherin will be giving his *This Magnetic North: Candid Conversations on a Changing Northern Michigan* author talk at the St. Ignace Public Library on Wednesday, July 22, and at the Bayliss Public Library in Sault Ste. Marie on Thursday, July 23. His talk in St. Ignace is part of the 2026 Michigan Notables book tour.



U.P. Reader 2027 Submission Guidelines

About the U.P. Reader

The *U.P. Reader* is an annual publication that represents the cross-section of writers who are members of UPPAA. Each issue is released in paperback, hardcover, and ebook editions at the spring membership meeting. Copies of the *U.P. Reader* will be made available to booksellers, UPPAA members, libraries, and news services. We hope the *U.P. Reader* will be a great place for you to showcase original short works too!

After reading ALL the instructions that follow, you may submit your work through our submissions gateway:

https://www.uppaa.org/submit/

If you email your submission, you may be asked to re-send it through the gateway.

Submission Guidelines

- **Don't wait until the last minute!** It's best to submit at least 5 days before the deadline.
- **Email submissions are no longer allowed.**
- **Please read and follow** our *U.P. Reader Style Sheet*. In cases of disagreements with the author, the Style Sheet will prevail.
- If a receipt is not received within three business days of submission, either resubmit or contact editor@UPReader.org
- Must be a **current member of UPPAA** to submit. All are welcome to join!
- Submissions **must be original** with no prior appearance on the web or print.
- Submissions will be accepted for **up to 5,000 words**.

- Submissions **can be any genre**: fiction, nonfiction (memoirs, history, essays, feature articles, interviews, opinions), and poetry.
- All submissions will be **reviewed by a jury** and the submissions will be chosen through this process. Writers will be notified as to acceptance or rejection, but reasons for rejection will not be discussed.
- **Judging will be blind**. A number will be assigned to each submission. Jurors will only see the number and title.
- We prefer **Microsoft Word Documents** (.DOC, .DOCX) but will accept .TXT files. PDF files will automatically be rejected.
- **Additional photos** can be attached (up to 3 in .JPG format).
- **Please include a 50–75-word bio** at the end of your document. Bios longer than 75 words will be trimmed by the editor. Any web address or email address in bios must be the most simplified form possible (do not include the http://).
- Authors may only submit photos with the understanding that they will be converted to black-and-white. We reserve the right to limit the number of photos per story. Photos should be at least 300 DPI and no smaller than 2 inches on a side (i.e. 600px minimum). If the author is not the photographer, we may ask for a simple one-page "Photo Release" form to be sent in. Contact us in advance if you think you need more than 3 photos for your story. Author headshots are neither required nor used.
- **No more than 3 submissions will be accepted from one person**. If more than 3 are received, the jury may choose to disregard all of them. We are looking for quality, not quantity.
- **Poetry submissions count as one submission per poem.**
  - » If a poem cycle is submitted it needs to be formatted either as one poem with multiple sections or as separate poems not numbering more than three.
  - » Exception: a set of 5 Haiku can be sent as a SINGLE submission. If you have more than 5, each must be broken into a separate submission file.

The U.P. Reader will require FIRST-time rights in all formats, including but not limited to print, ebook, and audiobook for 12 months after publication. After 12 months, the author may use the work in any form they desire, including on the internet, print, and digital media. UPPAA retains the right to use it in perpetuity.

You will see a tab like the one below to submit your work online:



Publication Schedule for *U.P. Reader* Volume #11

» **June 1, 2026:** submission window opens
Submissions sent before June 1 will not be recognized.
» **November 10, 2026:** submission deadline
jury / peer-review process begins
» **January 15, 2027:** media announcement of selected works
» **April 15, 2027:** official on-sale date

U.P. Reader Scoring Rubric

Since more than one member asked about how submissions to the *U.P. Reader* are juried, the *U.P. Reader* Committee decided to share.

Scoring for each item:

5-excellent, 4-very good, 3-good,
2-acceptable, 1-unacceptable

Fiction:

1 Hook, language, style, and point of view: How well are you drawn into the story? Does the author progress from scene to scene smoothly? Does the author use colorful descriptions and language in narration?

2 Characters, dialogue, and plot: How well do you identify with the characters? Does the dialogue match the characters and style? Is there a good plot curve and satisfying ending?

3 Mechanics: Level of spelling, punctuation, grammar, typos, etc. (Consider exceptions for intentional dialogue or narration.)

4 Overall Impression: Upon finishing, what do you think?

Nonfiction:

1 Hook, language, and style: How well does the introductory paragraph introduce the subject? How interesting are the facts and material as presented?

2 Organization and development: How well does the author progress through the material in an organized way? Is the ending clear?

3 Mechanics: Level of spelling, punctuation, grammar, typos, etc.

4 Overall impression: How do you feel after reading the piece?

Poetry:

1 Form: If the poet used a specific form, how well did they use that form? If the poem is free verse, how well does it read out loud? If the piece is prose poetry, does it have depth of language, dominance of metaphor, simile, and other poetic techniques?

2 Mechanics: While poetry can leave out punctuation entirely, how well is punctuation used, or not used?

3 Clarity of theme and language: How well does the theme and meaning of the poem come across?

4 Overall impression: After reading the poem, how do you feel?

U.P. Reader Photo Showcase Guidelines

The *U.P. Reader* is now searching for photographers for our U.P. Photo Showcase. This is a family friendly publication and content should reflect those values. The section is intended to showcase the beauty and wonders of the Upper Peninsula.

- All pictures must be taken in Michigan's Upper Peninsula and must include the location.
- Photos from all parts of the Upper Peninsula are welcome and preferred. Membership in UPPAA is not required to submit.
- No AI or digitally altered images.
- All pictures must be taken by the submitting photographer.
- Three picture submissions per year, per photographer.
- No portraits or recognizable faces.
- When you send a submission, you are agreeing to let the *U.P. Reader* use it for one-time use only in paperback, hardcover, and ebook editions. All rights remain with the photographer.
- We will accept .jpg, .heic, or .tiff files only.

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