



WORKSHOP REPORT:

New Six-Week Students, Solid Workshop Foundations

Jae Steinbacher (CW '14)
Workshop Manager

Clarion West's summer workshop returned to the University District this summer after four years of lockdown, virtual workshops, and testing out other locations. Students and instructors lived and wrote at the University of Washington dorms, jogged the Burke-Gilman Trail, paddled on Lake Union, and visited other parts of the city with ease via public transit. It was a great return to our old stomping grounds, with quite a few new elements as well.

A series of first-time instructors taught this summer: Usman T. Malik (CW '13), Brenda Peynado, Cadwell Turnbull (CW '16), Sarah Pinsker, Ruoxi Chen, and Carmen Maria Machado all debuted as six-week teachers, although half of them had previously attended a Clarion workshop. And Stephanie Malia Morris (CW '17) joined the staff for the first time this summer as a workshop assistant, helping out in the classroom and with all the minutiae of making the workshop run smoothly.



Isaiah Hunt does the "scootz" upon receiving his diploma, a celebratory dance from one of his stories. [Kris Millering CW '09]

All of this newness was balanced out by returning staff Amy Hirayama and Jae Steinbacher (CW '14) stepping up to facilitate workshops under the solid foundations laid by the workshop

culture project. We welcomed students into a classroom space designed to excite them to share their ideas and empower them to get support for their visions. We've settled comfortably into a new cycle of workshop review, testing, and training in conjunction with our Workshop Core Values for the staff, students, and instructors, where the workshop is a collaborative space in which the class and instructors build amazing and wondrous stories together.

We also want to tip our hats to those of our alumni and other community members who came to parties to celebrate the class, including our rotating cast of writing "celebs" who visited and shared advice. New and long-time community partners like the Seattle Public Library, Third Place Books, Hugo House, Town Hall Seattle, and Elliott Bay Books

"I've heard that Clarion West is transformative, but I didn't know what that meant until having gone through it. The workshop has awakened within me such an appetite for stories... For six weeks, we were submerged in the world of writing. Now that I'm back to my ordinary life, working a busy full-time job, I realize how much of a privilege it was to have that bubble of undivided attention where you could discover your potential in a tailored environment of support and encouragement. Whenever I need a reminder of the joy of creation, I will think back on the workshop for many years to come."

—Chanon Wongsatayanont (CW '24)

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above: The Clarion West Class of 2024 with Week 5 instructor Ruoxi Chen: (L to R, back row) Somto Ihezue, Sydney Rossman-Reich, Chris Campbell, Laurie Sample, C.Z. Tacks, Conrad Loyer; (L to R, middle row) D.A. Vorobyov, Isaiah Hunt, ashi krishnan, Charles Velasquez-Witosky, Tanisha Tekriwal, Chris Yin, Andrés González Galante; (L to R, front row) M.T. Khan, Rutendo Chidzodzo, Chanon Wong-satayanont, editor Ruoxi Chen, Hazel Milla, and Max Franciscovich. [Elly Bangs CW '17]



left: Max Franciscovich (left) and Tanisha Tekriwal (right) interviewed Sarah Pinsker (center) after her reading at the Seattle Public Library Central Branch. [Elly Bangs CW '17]

► WORKSHOP, continued from page 1

supported the summer reading series this year. We changed up the readings and brought an interview format to most, with students taking the lead in interviewing two of their instructors. Since 2022, we've also begun a new (and pandemic-friendly) tradition of hosting at least two community parties in Seattle parks, including Ravenna Park and Gas Works Park. And finally, we started a new tradition of hosting the graduation during the last party!

Even with the last-minute adjustments that made our final week a hybrid experience with Carmen teaching from the East Coast, 2024 was aspirational in many ways, and we've heard many good things from our students and community. We're excited to take this energy forward into the 2025 workshop (read more about it on page 4) and future summer workshops! ♦

Learn more about the cost of housing and why the virtual workshop is helping to recover costs [on our website](#).

"Thanks to the advice and encouragement from my classmates and instructors, I now have a much clearer picture of how I want to develop as an author, and what steps I need to take to do so. Most importantly, I'm now part of a vibrant community of writers.... I can't wait for the world to see more of their stories, and to be as inspired by them as I continue to be!"

—Laurie Sample (CW '24)

IN SESSION!

Fall Classes, Spring Classes & More

Rashida Smith (CW '05)

Program Director

Our fall class session is in full swing, and we've been thrilled to welcome first-time instructors this season, including STEM educator Ashley Christine ("It's Farther Than You Think! Avoiding Common Pitfalls in Writing Science Fiction"), agent Amy Bishop Wycyisk ("Anatomy of a Query Letter"), and horror author Cynthia Pelayo ("Writing the Horror Novella"). Due to high demand, we'll be offering a second session of Cynthia's novella workshop in the spring — date TBD.

Also coming this spring are exciting new classes with bestselling author Melissa Marr, disability educator Dr. Lara Ameen, and game writer James L. Sutter. Be sure to subscribe to our newsletter for the full list of spring classes, with registration opening December 1. Classes begin February 1.

Additionally, we've continued to expand our library of on-demand classes, featuring recordings of previous live sessions and **exclusive content** designed for the online format by our partner, Writing the Other. ♦

So Be It! See To It! A Generative Intensive Convening for Intermediate Speculative Fiction Writers

When: Nov 22 – Nov 25, 2024

Where: Online

Register: www.hedgebrook.org/retreats-convenings
There are only a few spaces left!

Clarion West is excited to partner with the Hedgebrook Writing Residency for a Speculative Fiction Convening November 22–25. During this four-day online retreat, participants will engage in lectures and writing workshops led by two instructors who are alumni of both Clarion West and Hedgebrook, Nisi Shawl and Minal Hajratwala, and by Clarion West instructors Fonda Lee and Tara Campbell. In addition to the direct instruction, Hedgebrook and Clarion West staff will guide participants through speculative fiction writing workshops, explorations of their practice, and community connection.

Our two organizations have been operating in the Pacific Northwest for decades, and we're thrilled to finally have the chance to collaborate and celebrate our shared values and belief in the transformative power of writing. In our conversations and preparations for the program, we have been so inspired by Hedgebrook's commitment to radical hospitality, which our staff experienced firsthand last winter during a site visit to the Hedgebrook land on Whidbey Island.

The Convening is so much more than a weekend workshop. It's the opportunity to connect with the broader writing community, and to use the lens of speculative fiction to imagine what we might nurture and grow after an apocalypse. ♦

Steamy in Seattle 2024



L. Penelope, Melissa Marr, and Rashida J. Smith discuss paranormal romance at Wisteria Hall on May 10. [Kris Millering CW '09]

Marnee Chua

Executive Director

We held the second annual Steamy in Seattle on May 10 with Melissa Marr and L. Penelope, moderated by Rashida J. Smith. Attendees enjoyed a traditional afternoon tea under blooming Wisteria on a beautiful spring day at the Seattle Arboretum. As our guests emphasized throughout the panel, the intersection of fantasy and romance genres bring us hope, empathy, and the thought that in relating to each other, we can figure some things out.

With the help of our donors and attendees, we raised \$19,550.84 to support the 2024 Six-Week Workshop! Event sponsors included the Breneman Jaech Foundation, Hagen Insurance Partners, Paper Boat Booksellers, STG, the Elliott Bay Book Company, Friday Afternoon Tea, and Owl Crate! Event partners included Hedgebrook, Writing the Other, and Emerald City Romance Writers. ♦

Clarion West Turns 40+!

Jae Steinbacher (CW '14)

Workshop Manager

In 1984, J.T. Stewart and Marilyn J. Holt began running the Clarion West summer workshop as we know it with the guidance of Vonda N. McIntyre, who attended the 1970 Clarion workshop in Clarion, Pennsylvania. With the exception of 2020, we've held the Six-Week Workshop every year since!

This summer marked our 40th workshop, and we'll be celebrating four decades of Clarion West next summer at and alongside Seattle WorldCon 2025! We are planning panels, parties, and potentially a reading at WorldCon, and will also look into some virtual and off-site events in the Greater

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SUMMER 2025:

Virtual Six-Week Workshop Format & Instructors

Jae Steinbacher (CW '14)
Workshop Manager

After two successful years of running a virtual Six-Week Workshop, we've taken the time to revamp the most exhausting aspects of the format. We're prioritizing more time for class socializing and r&r. Weeks 1 and 4 will be lighter weeks, although still packed with lessons and lectures! Weeks 2, 3, 5, and 6 will all follow the typical workshop format. We're excited to present this more sustainable format for virtual workshoping!

Week 1: Workshop Staff Prepare the Class

In the first week, students will get to know each other and build a set of community agreements for how they'd like to approach each other's work and address conflict during the workshop. Staff will familiarize the class with Clarion West's workshop values and models, as well as offer prompts and short writing exercises to get ideas flowing for the following week's critiques.

Week 2: Workshop with Maurice Broaddus

Reading Date: July 1, 2025

Maurice Broaddus is a fiction and game writer, an editor, a community organizer, and a teacher. His books include the Astra Black series, *Black Panther: T'Challa Declassified*, the steampunk works *Buffalo Soldier* and *Pimp My Airship*, and the middle grade detective novels *The Usual Suspects* and *Unfadeable*. He's done game writing for Marvel Super-Heroes, *Leverage*, and *Firefly* as well as consulting on *Watch Dogs 2*. As an editor, he's worked on *Dark Faith*, *Fireside Magazine*, and *Apex Magazine*.



left to right: Maurice Broaddus [Chandra Lynch of Ankh Productions], Malka Older [Allana Taranto Ars Magna], Diana Pho & Martha Wells [Lisa Blaschke].

Week 3: Workshop with Malka Older

Reading Date: July 8, 2025

Malka Older is a writer, aid worker, and sociologist. *Infomocracy*, the first book in her science-fiction political thriller series *The Centenal Cycle*, a finalist for the Hugo Award for Best Series, was named among the best books of 2016 by Kirkus, the Washington Post, and Book Riot. *The Mimicking of Known Successes*, a murder mystery set on Jupiter, was on four best of 2023 lists and is a finalist for the Nebula, Hugo, and Locus Award for Best Novella. She is a Faculty Associate at Arizona State University, where she teaches on predictive fictions.

Week 4: Lectures & Recharge

The four summer instructors will offer lectures with the class this week. Students will be encouraged to spend some time resting and recharging, and will also have additional time to prepare stories for the final two weeks of the workshop.

Week 5: Workshop with Diana Pho

Reading Date: July 22, 2025

Diana M. Pho is a queer Vietnamese-American independent scholar, playwright, and Hugo Award-winning fiction editor. Presently, she is Editorial Director at Erewhon Books. Books she has edited have won the Thriller

Award, the Ditmar Award, the American Library Association's Alex Award, the Nebula Award, and a Kirkus Best Book of the Year Selection. Several of her books earned Junior Library Guild Selections, multiple starred reviews from Publishers Weekly, Booklist, School Library Journal, Shelf Awareness, and Kirkus, and are finalists for the Nebula Award, Lambda Literary Award, Shirley Jackson Award, and Andre Norton Award for Young Adult Fiction. Diana herself is a two-time finalist for the Ignite Award, a finalist for the Locus Award, and a Hugo Award recipient for Best Editor, Long-Form, one of the most prestigious honors in the field of speculative fiction.

Week 6: Workshop with Martha Wells

Reading Date: July 29, 2025

Martha Wells' work includes *The Books of the Raksura* series, the *Ile-Rien* series, *The Murderbot Diaries* series, and other fantasy novels, most recently *Witch King* (Tordotcom, 2023). She has also written media tie-in fiction for *Star Wars*, *Stargate: Atlantis*, and *Magic: The Gathering*, as well as short fiction, YA novels, and nonfiction. She has won Nebula Awards, Hugo Awards, Locus Awards, and a Dragon Award, and her work has appeared on the Philip K. Dick Award ballot, the BSFA Award ballot, the USA Today Bestseller List, the Sunday Times Bestseller List, and the New York Times Bestseller List. ♦

Donor Spotlight: Linda Breneman

Marnee Chua

Executive Director

Linda is a Clarion West development volunteer, donor, and former board treasurer. In 1996, she co-founded Seattle's literary center, Hugo House, and served as the first board president. Her poetry, essays, and stories have appeared in various literary magazines. She also publishes a website for video gaming families, Pixelkin.org.

MARNEE CHUA: Your foundation, the Breneman Jaech Foundation, supports literary and youth arts programs in the Seattle area. What inspires you most about working with local arts nonprofits?

LINDA BRENEMAN: Over the years, our family foundation has supported arts, education, medical research, and basic needs organizations in Washington State. For me, the art projects, in philanthropy as in life, are usually the most fun. Working with creative people sparks my curiosity and my own creativity. Plus, the amount of work arts organizations are able to do with our grants is truly impressive. I guess what inspires me the most is how dedicated arts organizations are to their missions, and the sense of community many of them are able to build.

MC: Arts organizations have been having a hard time finding a new normal since the pandemic; what is your advice for surviving the next few years?

LB: The pandemic posed challenges that nobody was prepared for. It's been harder than I expected to go back to normal. People just haven't felt as comfortable meeting in person, and of course that's the lifeblood of many arts organizations. What seems to be helping right now is closer partnerships between organizations doing similar work. The other thing I'd recommend is that staffs and boards double down on talking to the people we serve, as well as donors, to build a culture of reciprocity and philanthropy, and a sense of joy in the work. Art is a thing we all need right now to help keep us healthier and saner and to



Linda Breneman.

bring us together in a time of division. The only other thing I'd say is, as someone turning 70 this year: I've seen a few hard times for organizations — none quite this hard or sustained, maybe, but I have faith that things will get better. It may take a while, but we've got to hang in there and help one another, and we'll learn new things and thrive.

MC: You're back on the board at Hugo House! Can you talk a little about your history with Hugo House and why it's important to have a place for writers to connect?

LB: Sure. When we started Hugo House in 1996, none of us envisioned what this community could eventually mean to all of us. I went off the board in the early 2000s and stayed involved as a student and a donor until recently. I've got to say, I'm excited for the future. Listening more, being more open, concentrating on partnerships, and figuring out ways to keep the space open and welcoming has been really fun and interesting. A lot of work, too, for our now small but mighty board and staff. Pepe Montero, the Acting Executive Director, inspires me every day with how hard he works, along with a much slimmed-down staff, "making certain it goes on," as Richard Hugo said. We're finding more and more that gathering in person is crucial to humans and to writers, and we're determined to preserve our physical space. We really do need it.

MC: What do you find most rewarding and most challenging about being on boards?

LB: Sometimes boards can be challenging because people care so much about the work but might disagree about how to get it done. Sometimes it's challenging because boards are made up of volunteers who don't have unlimited time and resources to spend. (Sometimes I think people forget that board members are volunteers who are mostly doing the best they can!) The most rewarding thing is hearing stories from people we serve about how our organizations have helped them — and there are so many stories like that.

MC: As a significant donor for CW, what would you like to see the organization accomplish in the next few years?

LB: Oh, so many things! The CW community is so special. So interesting! Amazing writers, great thinkers, futurists (of course), and so much of the community is international. It would be great if CW could have a permanent affordable space to hold the Six-Week Workshop. I'd love to see more donors step up and help the organization build a bigger cash reserve. And I'd just like to see more great classes and events. I learn so much whenever I take a class or go to a CW event. It's a fantastic group.

MC: You're a writer yourself, what are you working on these days?

LB: Thanks for asking that! I'm working on a novel about a woman who gets transported to a universe that's based on the VR game world her late father created. It has aliens, spaceships, portals, and action, and I'm happy as hell when I get to sit down and immerse myself in that world. I also write flash fiction — some literary, some speculative, and some in-between. ♦

Community Book Swap

When: December 15, 2 – 4 PM

Where: Third Place Commons in Mountlake Terrace

Join us for our first Community Book Swap! A free event open to everyone that would like to bring their speculative fiction (science fiction, fantasy, horror, and everything in-between) books and swap them for others. For more information, visit our [events page](#).

NEW Virtual Novel Writing Workshop

When: March 2025 – November 2025

Where: Online

Applications open Nov 11, 2024

We are thrilled to announce the launch of our first-ever Clarion West Online Novel Writing Workshop, taught by the acclaimed author Samit Basu. The workshop will run from March to November 2025 and offers weekly classes, instructor check-ins, staff support, and guest lectures. It is designed to help writers with busy lives create the process and structure that will help them finish their novels, and comes after popular demand from our writing community, who have long expressed the need for a space dedicated to novel writing.

By offering this workshop, we are honoring our roots in short story craft while embracing the broader needs of our community. It reflects our ongoing commitment to evolve alongside our writers and provide the same level of support, creativity, and excellence that has long been the hallmark of Clarion West programs. Applications will open November 11, 2024.



Samit Basu. [Sanghamitra Chakraborty]

For more information about this exciting opportunity, please visit [Clarion West Novel Writing Workshop](https://clarionwest.org/novel-writing-workshop).

We are also seeking donors for full and partial scholarships to help make this class accessible to a wider range of writers — your support can make a big difference. Please email director@clarionwest.org for more information. ♦

2024 Fall Fundraiser

November 11 – December 3, 2024

A purple and teal graphic for the Clarion West Fall Fundraising Campaign. It features the Clarion West logo, the text 'FALL FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN', a progress bar, and the goal amount '\$40,000'. At the bottom, it says 'Together, we're empowering new voices — and helping emerging writers connect to an ever-expanding community!'.

Would you like to join an RPG session with Annalee Newitz? Experience a Seattle escape room with Evan J. Peterson? Learn from an editorial assessment with Neon Hemlock Press's dave ring?

Keep an eye out for these and other packages from our upcoming crowdfunding campaign: www.indiegogo.com/projects/clarion-west-fall-fundraiser/coming_soon!

Help us reach our 2024 goal, and support the acclaimed Six-Week Workshop, online classes and workshops year-round, one-day and weekend workshops, a reading series every summer, and other events throughout the year. You'll find consultation and meet & greet opportunities, signed books, and other experiences you'll love — all in support of speculative fiction workshops for emerging and underrepresented writers!

The campaign begins November 11. Sign up to get updates and discounts for early supporters!

Together, we're empowering new voices — and helping emerging writers connect to an ever-expanding community! ♦

Clarion West

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Our Mission

We support emerging and underrepresented voices by providing writers with world-class instruction to empower their creation of wild and amazing worlds. Through conversation and public engagement, we bring those voices to an ever-expanding community.

Our Vision

We aim to set emerging and underrepresented writers on the path to success by fostering greater equity and inclusion in the speculative fiction world, bringing quality speculative fiction to light, and bringing writers and readers together.

In Memoriam

Georgina Morales
Volunteer Editor

The Clarion West community remembers the lives and stories of the alumni, instructors, and mentors we've lost in the last two years:

Vernor Vinge

Vernor Vinge, who taught for Clarion West in 2006, passed away on March 20, 2024. A mathematician and computer science teacher for San Diego State University, he won the Hugo Award in 1992 and 1999 for his novels *A Fire Upon the Deep* and *A Deepness in the Sky*, and in 2001, 2004, and 2006 for his novellas *Fast Times at Fairmont High*, *The Cookie Monster*, and *Rainbows End* respectively. He was among the first proponents of a point at which artificial intelligence surpasses human intelligence, known as the technological singularity. His almost prophetic worlds will continue to inspire future writers of the genre.



Steven Miller (cw '73)

Steve Miller passed away on February 20, 2024. Steve was a prolific science fiction writer who co-wrote the Liaden Universe books with his wife, Sharon Lee Miller, with whom he won multiple awards. He participated in Clarion West's 1997 workshop, where he studied with genre greats Peter Beagle, James Sallis, Harlan Ellison, Terry Carr, Vonda McIntyre, Ursula K. Le Guin, and Joanna Russ, shortly after which he joined the University of Maryland Baltimore County's Albin O. Kuhn Library staff as the founding Curator of Science Fiction. Steve was always willing to answer questions and interact with fans online.



Howard Waldrop

Howard Waldrop died on January 14, 2024. He was a stalwart of instruction at Clarion West, so much so that the workshop instructor selection process included a "Waldrop Advisory": he shouldn't be scheduled to teach for the beginning weeks of the workshop because he dazzled the participants too much. He taught for Clarion West in 1992, 1995, and 1999.

Howard died at the age of 77 with the print run of *H'ard Starts* (Subterranean Press 2023) — a new collection of essays, interviews, and early stories — sold out, and a cluster of short films based on his stories ready to release. He was in the midst of a renaissance of interest in his work.

An [excerpt from our blog](#), posted by Eileen Gunn on January 29, 2024.



Terry Bisson

Terry Bisson died on January 10, 2024, at the age of 81. A political activist and editor, Terry was best known for his award-winning science fiction and fantasy short stories, and his "This Month in History" series for Locus, which ran for two decades. He taught at Clarion West in 1996.

Read more about Terry Bisson [on our blog](#), posted by Nisi Shawl on January 26, 2024.



Michael Bishop

Michael Bishop passed away on November 13, 2023, at the age of 78. He was a Clarion West Workshop instructor in 1997 and 2010 and the author of fifteen novels, three collaborative novels, and more than 150 short stories. He was best known for his gender-bending science fiction, which received multiple honors such as the Shirley Jackson Award,



two Nebula Awards, four Locus Awards, and multiple Hugo Award nominations, among others. He fought passionately to usher a new wave of science fiction into mainstream literature.

Greg Bear

Greg Bear, who passed away on November 19, 2022, at the age of 71, taught for Clarion West Workshop three times, in 1988, 1993, and 1999. As an instructor, he was considered funny, smart, and warm; as a human being, gracious and supportive. Greg wrote science fiction, fantasy, and near-future thrillers. He served on the Advisory Council on National Space Policy, was a founding member of the Association of Science Fiction and Fantasy Artists and the San Diego Comic-Con, and was a member of the original advisory board for Seattle's Experience Music Project's Science Fiction Museum, among many other accomplishments.

An [excerpt from our blog](#), posted by Executive Director Marnee Chua on December 28, 2022. "Few instructors at Clarion West embody the impact of generations of writers learning, teaching, and supporting each other more than Greg." The ripple effect of his generosity will echo through the halls of the science fiction community at large.

* Did we miss someone? Please send us information at communications@clarionwest.org.



► **FORTY**, continued from page 3

Seattle area. There will be opportunities to learn more about updated workshop methods, meet with alums at all stages of their careers, and help shape the future of Clarion West.

The Alumni Engagement Committee has helped develop these plans through monthly Zoom meetings. If you'd like to get involved, please reach out to Workshop Manager Jae Steinbacher at workshop@clarionwest.org. We held two excellent flash writing sessions for alumni with John Kessel and Eileen Gunn. Andy Duncan will be the host for our next writing session in November! ♦

Seattle Reads 2024: Parable wrap-up

Marnee Chua

Executive Director

Octavia Butler was an intrinsic part of Clarion West's history; she taught the summer workshop five times and was heavily involved in building the close-knit speculative fiction community in Seattle. We were thrilled to partner with the Seattle Public Library (SPL) this summer for their 2024 City Reads book selection, *Parable of the Sower*, the first of Butler's prescient and inspirational Earthseed duology.

Published in 1993, this classic science fiction novel opens in 2024, a time when global climate change and economic crises lead to widespread social breakdown. This year's selection of *Parable* has given many readers an opportunity to consider Butler's 2024 and compare it to our current-day reality, while also discussing opportunities for re-envisioning our future.

Clarion West partnered with SPL and several other local organizations on six events this year, including "Queering the Future: LGBTQ+ Authors on Octavia Butler's Impact" with Elliott Bay Book Company; Sistah SciFi's Wine Down Wednesdays; Two Hour Transport's July 20 open mic; Bushwick Book Club's Banned Book series; and the upcoming "So Be It! See To It!", Hedgebrook's speculative fiction convening. Each event featured local authors, musicians, and artists who have been inspired by Octavia Butler's work. ♦



Amber Flame, Amy Hirayama, Anastacia-Reneé, and Nisi Shawl spoke at the Queering the Future panel at Elliott Bay Book Company on June 5th. [Marnee Chua]

**"All that you touch
You Change.
All that you Change
Changes you."**

— Octavia Butler, *Parable of the Sower*

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