

# CONFERENCE SCENE

BY LINDA FORMICHELLI

## Face to Face

Up your odds of finding an agent at one of these opportunity-filled events.

**W**hen you're looking for an agent to represent you, what better way to get your work noticed than to make a connection in person? Many writing events give you a chance to pitch your book, but these four stand out as extraordinary. Read on to learn more about their offerings, including pitch sessions, agent-led workshops and social events designed to facilitate networking around the clock.

### James River Writers Conference October 8–9, 2010

**WHERE:** Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va.

**PRICE:** \$195

**FOR MORE INFO:** jamesriverwriters.org



While the James River Writers Conference faculty boasts some veterans in the agenting biz, the organizers also go out of their way to include reps who are young, hungry and looking to build their client lists. The attending agents have a wide mix of interests, from young adult to nonfiction.

If you're ready to get unvarnished feedback on your story's start, don't miss the "First Pages Critique" session. Conference Chair Kris Spisak explains how it works: "Attendees have the option to submit the first page of their book—not their favorite page, not the first page of their favorite chapter, but the very first—and we have a panel of three or four agents who listen [and give] their reaction."

In addition, attendees can vie for free five-minute one-on-one pitch sessions with agents on a first-come, first-served basis. There's also the optional "Query Workshop" (for an additional \$40) the day before the conference begins, where registrants learn strategies for standing out in the slush pile.

Networking is emphasized at all times. "We make a great point of telling our guests they're expected to mix and mingle and be available—not just show up, speak at a lectern and leave," says Lee Gimpel, vice chair of James River Writers. "So in addition to the five-minute sessions, there are many, many more opportunities for attendees to meet and talk with an agent."

### Writers' League of Texas Agents Conference

June 10–12, 2011

**WHERE:** The Hyatt Regency Austin, Texas

**PRICE:** \$379 for members; \$439 for nonmembers

**FOR MORE INFO:** writersleague.org

W R I T E R S ' L E A G U E O F T E X A S  
www.WritersLeague.org



Don't let the name fool you: The Writers' League of Texas Agents Conference is not for agents, but for writers who want to meet them. Conference registration includes a 10-minute consultation with a literary rep, and you can purchase additional meetings on-site for \$50 apiece.

Writers and faculty at the conference skew toward those who write and represent fiction; the split is about 70 percent fiction to 30 percent nonfiction. Conference organizers are also working to add more YA and middle-grade faculty because of the increased demand for agents in those genres.

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