'Refining Our Writing Voice Through Poetry'

Online workshop starts Sept. 8

By Lisa Britton
Go! Magazine

ENTERPRISE — Oregon Book Award finalist Nick Jaina will lead a four-session workshop on "Refining Our Writing Voice Through Poetry" beginning Wednesday, Sept. 8.

The workshop is organized by Fishtrap, the Wallowa County organization that "promotes clear thinking and good writing in and about the West."

Jaina's workshop launches Fishtrap's 2021-2022 season. The course will be online and meet from 6-7:30 p.m. Sept. 8, 15, 22 and 29.

Registration is $180, or $162 for Fishtrappers (membership starts at $5 per month, and includes a 10% discount on workshop and program registrations). Space is limited to 13. Register online at www.fishtrap.org/poetry-workshop-with-nick-jaina/.

In this workshop, participants will "work on developing a poetic heart to improve our writing, no matter what genre it might be."

Here is the course description: "One of the core components of writing is developing a distinctive voice. We can look at poetry not just as a genre of writing, but as a way of viewing the world, and we can learn to use our heart to find connections between disparate things. Some of the best writers are ones who have this fundamental poetic voice and weave it into a narrative, such as Margaret Atwood and James Baldwin."

Jaina is an author, musician, writing teacher and editor. His 2015 memoir "Get It While You Can" was a finalist for the Oregon Book Award. He lives in Oakland, California, with his wife and stepson. Learn more about him at www.NickJaina.com.

FUTURE PROGRAMS

Although Fishtrap held several in-person events this summer, the organization decided to move fall events entirely online, said Executive Director Shannon McNerney. Winter Fishtrap in January and The Big Read will likely be virtual, as well.

"We already decided to do big chunks of that virtually," she said.

Depending on circumstances, some in-person events could be added.

Fishtrap Fireside, a monthly event where Wallowa County writers have a chance to share their work, will also be virtual. The monthly sessions are held the first Friday of each month from October through April.

Decisions about summer 2022 events will be made at a later date.

"Our goal is Summer Fishtrap is not virtual," McNerney said.

Find updates online at www.fishtrap.org or on Facebook.

A HISTORY OF FISHTRAP

According to a history described on the Fishtrap website, the organization's roots date to the mid-1980s when Wallowa

www.fishtrap.org
Nick Jaina will lead a virtual poetry workshop in September through Fishtrap.

County bookstore owner Rich Wandschneider attended a Western writers conference in Portland. During that gathering, Wandschneider told conference organizer Kim Stafford that it seemed the event wasn't really a gathering of writers of the West, but of Willamette Valley "I-5 writers." Stafford agreed, then issued a challenge: "Why don't you host the next one in Wallowa County?" In 1988, Wandschneider, Stafford, and the award-winning journalist

and historian Alvin Josephy organized a gathering at Wallowa Lake with the theme "West Coast Writers and East Coast Publishers."

Summer Fishtrap was born. Every July since has brought readers, writers, journalists, historians, publishers, and lovers of the arts from all over the world to Wallowa Lake.

Over the years Fishtrap grew to add new programs, including Winter Fishtrap, The Big Read, and the Outpost wilderness writing program. More recently, Fishtrap has expanded to include youth programming, the Fishtrap Fireside reading series, and several in-person and online workshops throughout the year. To learn more, visit www.fishtrap.org.