



2018 Montana Playwrights Network (MPN) Writer's Challenge

The 2018 MPN Writer's Challenge is an **opportunity for writers to become MPN members and showcase their work in public performances and possible publication.** This unique occasion challenges participants to **create original works in poetry, short stories, essays, memoirs, short plays, stage monologues, cowboy poetry, music and storytelling.** All participating entries will be adjudicated by a panel of experts who will also choose a variety of these works to be presented in a public performance on **September 15** in Helena, Montana.

In addition to the performance, a collection of selected works will be published within three years, depending upon the amount and overall quality of submissions gathered during this period. Creative works previously submitted by members, but not performed on September 15 or previously performed at the 2017 Montana Playwrights Conference, will also be considered for this publication.

Members retain ownership rights to their creative works, but featured writers are required to submit written permission for their works to be included in any MPN sponsored publication or anthology of members' works. All proceeds from any such publications are used to support the Network, and the organization's ongoing activities.

MPN Writer's Challenge General Guidelines: All Categories

1. All members of the Montana Playwrights Network (MPN) may **submit one entry per category** for consideration in the 2018 Writer's Challenge. **You must be a current member** to participate. **Send us your best!**

DEADLINE FOR ALL SUBMISSIONS: July 13, 2018.

2. Your entry must be original, in English, unpublished, unproduced and not accepted by any other publisher or producer at the time of submission. **Entries in short stories, plays, stage monologues and music are based on participation in the Challenge Inspiration Pool**, which includes a random selection of location, characters, and situation to inspire the work. (For access to the Inspiration Pool after May 5, contact Pamela Mencher at Montanaplaywrights@gmail.com.)
3. Writers' works that feature an element of the 'Montana Experience' receive priority in selection. However, all submissions that conform to guidelines will be considered for performance or publication.
4. Submissions for all categories **should NOT** include the writer's name, address, etc., or any identifying marks on the manuscript indicating authorship. Copyrights are protected

- and retained solely by the author. Judges will read only 'blind' submissions with no identifying marks and will not retain copies once evaluations are completed. Selected works require permission in writing from the author prior to any presentation in any form by MPN.
4. Each submission must be accompanied by a completed Challenge entry form. (Submission form may be hand written and must be legible.) Manuscripts must conform to guidelines for each Challenge category. The Challenge category and word count/line count must appear in the upper left-hand corner of the first page; otherwise your entry is disqualified. The first page should also include the entry's title.
 5. Manuscripts must be typed and submitted electronically as either Word documents or pdf. Select a font that is easy to read, such as Times New Roman; 12-point type size is mandatory. There are no requirements as to the number of words per page.
 6. Submit to: montanaplaywrights@gmail.com, and label your email subject line as "MPN Challenge Submission." **DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS: July 13, 2018.**
 7. A hard copy entry must be printed on 8.5 x 11 white paper single sided, with 1 inch margins. Follow specific guidelines for stage plays below. All documents must be double spaced, except for poetry which may be single spaced.
 8. No handwritten entries, please. **Hard copies may be mailed with a completed submission form for each entry to: Montana Playwrights Network; PMB 2052; 1 Jackson Creek Road; Clancy, MT 59634.** Mailed entries that are more than one page in length must be stapled and **postmarked by July 13, 2018.**
 9. The Montana Playwrights Network is not liable for any copyright infringement on the part of the entrant and will not become involved in copyright disputes.
 10. The Montana Playwrights Network reserves the right to reject work deemed unsuitable for performance or publication or that does not meet all named criteria.
 11. Please submit text only; illustrations are not accepted.

MPN Writer's Challenge Categories

(In addition to conforming to the general guidelines above, additional requirements are listed in the following categories.)

Poetry & Cowboy Poetry Guidelines:

- Only unpublished works are eligible for consideration.
- Poems should not exceed 300 lines. Can be single or double spaced.
- Poems can be free, blank, or lyrical verse. Sonnets, limericks, narrative, couplets, etc.

Essays & Memoirs Guidelines:

- Only unpublished works are eligible for consideration.
- Manuscripts should be double spaced.
- Manuscript length should **NOT exceed 1500 words**. Be certain of your word count!
- Topics are not restricted; however, special consideration is given to those works that express an aspect of the 'Montana Experience'.

Short Story Guidelines:

- You must base your entry in this category upon the **Challenge Inspiration Pool**, which may include a random selection of location, characters, and situation. (For access to the Inspiration Pool after May 5, send inquiry to: montanaplaywrights@gmail.com.)
- All manuscripts in this category should **NOT exceed 1500 words**. Be certain of your word count! Any works exceeding 1500 words will not be considered.
- Manuscripts should be double spaced, with pages numbered sequentially. Place title on the first page in the upper left corner. More than a one page entry should be stapled for hard copy, mailed entries.

Storytelling Guidelines:

- Only unpublished works are eligible for consideration.
- Manuscripts should be double spaced.
- All manuscripts in this category should **NOT exceed 2000 words**. Be certain of your word count! Any works exceeding 2000 words will not be considered.
- Winning authors in this category may be invited to perform the work on September 15.

Stage Monologues Guidelines:

- You must base your entry in this category upon the **Challenge Inspiration Pool**, which may include a random selection of location, characters, and situation. (For access to the Inspiration Pool after May 5, send inquiry to: montanaplaywrights@gmail.com.)
- Monologues must be clearly intended for live theatrical performance or auditions, and exhibit standard theatrical playwriting techniques. Avoid writing a static "memory piece" or disguising an essay or memoir as a theatrical monologue. Create monologues that offer present, in-the-moment performance by an actor.
- Be certain the monologue contains a dramatic arc that creates dramatic action and sense of progression in performance. Your monologue should be consistent with material often used by successful actors in auditions.
- Stage monologues submitted must not require the use of multiple props or costumes, although one prop or costume piece may be specified.
- Manuscript may single or double spaced.

Short Play Guidelines:

- You must base your entry in this category upon the **Challenge Inspiration Pool**, which may include a random selection of location, characters, and situation. (For access to the Inspiration Pool after May 5, send inquiry to: montanaplaywrights@gmail.com.)
- Short plays may **NOT exceed 10 pages of dialogue** in standard manuscript format for plays. Published format is **NOT accepted**. Type size is 12 point, and use Times New Roman as the font. (For guidelines for standard manuscript format, email inquiry to montanaplaywrights@gmail.com.)
- Character limit: Up to four characters.
- Include a title page and a second page for list of characters, and time and place description. These pages are not included in total page count.
- Include a page count in the upper right corner.
- The work submitted may be comedy or drama. It should be “stand-alone”, and must not depend upon a larger body of work in order to be enjoyed, understood or performed; however, excerpted work may be submitted if it meets the “stand-alone” requirement.
- Submit your script in Word or PDF format only. Play script software templates must be translated to Word or PDF format; otherwise the entry will be disqualified.

Music Guidelines:

- You must base your entry in this category upon the **Challenge Inspiration Pool**, which may include a random selection of location, characters, and situation. (For access to the Inspiration Pool after May 5, send inquiry to: montanaplaywrights@gmail.com.)
- Length of song should **NOT exceed 5 minutes**.
- A song with lyrics is required.
- Type of song is not restricted. It may be lyrical, rock, rap, musical theatre, country western, etc.
- If the entry is a musical theatre piece, it may be written for up to three voices in performance.
- Song may be written for any instrument, or may be intended to perform acapella.
- Submit a recording with sung vocals and accompanying music for standard digital playback.
- Submit sheet music with lyrics as a Word doc or PDF.
- Mail entry recorded on a data stick or DVD with a hard copy of the sheet music and lyrics along with a completed Challenge submission form to: **Montana Playwrights Network; PMB 2052; 1 Jackson Creek Road; Clancy, MT 59634**. Mailed entries should be **postmarked by July 13, 2018**.
- Winning authors in this category may be invited to perform the work on September 15. Or, if the author prefers that someone else performs the piece, the sheet music should be suitable for guitar or piano. Or, the author may provide a digital recording of the music without lyrics to be used to support a singer in performance.