

Writers & Readers Gather on Nantucket Island for 2025 Book Festival

Annual Nantucket Book Festival this June 12 to 15, 2025

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This week, from Thursday, June 12 through Sunday, June 15, more than 20 distinguished writers will be on [Nantucket](#) Island to talk about their craft in on-stage conversations, readings, and panel discussions, and they will interact with readers in several informal social gatherings. Tim Ehrenberg, creator of Tim Talks Books and President of the Nantucket Book Foundation, says the four-day Nantucket [Book Festival](#) as a favorite among “year-rounders, summer residents, weekenders...the commonality is a love for books. There is such a genuine feeling of connection all weekend long...this connection has been at the root of the Book Festival since the very beginning.”

According to Mary Haft, co-founder of the Nantucket Book Festival, this beloved event began in 2012, after Haft attended The Nantucket Project with independent book store owner Wendy Hudson in the autumn of 2011: “Wendy had been suggesting a book festival on Nantucket for a number of years...the galvanizing impetus was



Tim Ehrenberg



Nantucket Book Festival co-chairs Mary Haft & Sara DiVello

sitting side by side at TNP and understanding the power of community.”

Haft (with Wendy Hudson) is also the co-founder of The Nantucket Book Foundation, which she describes as the “overarching framework under which all our work happens.” The Foundation operates “a consortium of programming for island students, to enlarge their world through the power of words...You reach a young person and you can change a world.”

Having worked for years in key roles and on the board of The PEN/Faulkner Foundation, Haft had experience bringing writers into schools to speak to and interact with youth: “I saw how transformative an experience that could be...I wanted to have that outreach to our island children.” The Foundation’s Visiting Authors in Schools is key to its mission of unleashing “the power of words to change and enlarge our students' worlds. Through reading, they discover that although they live on an island, there is no boundary to imagination,” Haft explained.

In addition to Visiting Authors in Schools, the Nantucket Book Foundation has grown to include the annual Young Writer Award, the Tharon Dunn Scholarship, Nantucket Book Foundation Presents, and Children’s Book Day. As part of their community outreach, they also help support Gillean Myers and her Nantucket Book Mobile.

All this is accomplished by the efforts of one full-time staffer, a devoted board, and dedicated volunteers in collaboration with Nantucket teachers and librarians. “It is us and we,” Haft emphasized, “a group united around a mission we all passionately believe in.”

Kaley Kokomoor, Executive Director of the Nantucket Book Foundation (that “one full-time staffer”), said she is “always inspired by our work with island students...I am particularly passionate about our programs for young readers and am eternally grateful for the work of ...Mary Haft, creator of the Visiting Author Program, and to NBF board members, and Nantucket's middle and high school librarians Becky Hickman and Jill Surprenant for all they do to bring authors to Nantucket students.”

The Foundation’s first visiting author was Jack Gantos in 2012: “it was a powerful experience for all of us,” Haft added. “I want to give a shout-out to the teams of teachers: they prepare our children so well for the visits. When our authors come into [island] schools, the kids have read the books, talked about the books, done art projects around the books...it’s a total partnership with our schools, our librarians.”

It is the Nantucket Book Foundation’s annual Nantucket Book Festival that shares their mission beyond our island community to reach readers and writers everywhere. Now in its second decade, the festival has evolved from a modest local gathering into a well-known celebration of the literary arts. “Authors often tell us that our festival provides a unique opportunity for them to engage with their peers because we curate time and comfortable spaces for them to be together without over-prescribing the weekend,” said Kokomoor. “As one author noted last year, we trust the authors to show up and speak about their work, their area of expertise, then we give them space to engage with other guests and take inspiration from the island. According to

many, this is a rare experience in the book festival circuit.”

This organizational model means participating writers enjoy the Nantucket Book Festival as much as the readers who attend: “Every year we pinch ourselves with the writers who show up for us,” Haft added. “They’re happy to have a ‘moment of communion’...there is an alchemy that happens here with our writers, with us, with our audiences.”

True crime writer Sara DiVello, co-chair of the 2025 Nantucket Book Festival, agrees: “This festival is pure magic—from in-depth author sessions, the chance to meet and mingle with fellow book lovers and writers, and the opportunity to meet your favorite authors or discover new books, all on the magic of this island—there is nothing else like it.

“I’ve been so lucky to have the opportunity to speak at book festivals around the country, and what makes the Nantucket Book Festival so special to me,” DiVello explained, “is the thought and intention that goes into every aspect. Unlike many festivals, we intentionally offer single-stream events (one event at a time with no competing programming) because in an overstimulating world with multiple demands on our attention at all times, we want to provide a unified and focused experience for our attendees. From that shared experience, we know connections and conversations will arise.”

Nearly all Nantucket Book Festival events are free to attend: plan to arrive early, as every session is well-attended and seats fill quickly. At press time, there were a few tickets still available for the Nantucket Book Festival Author Dinner on Friday evening. This is the only event designed to raise funds for the Book Festival and offers a rare opportunity to share a meal and intimate conversation with the acclaimed writers attending. Tickets to the Author Dinner and the full festival schedule is at NantucketBookFestival.org.

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Insider's Guide to Nantucket

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