



LEAGUE OF VERMONT WRITERS, INC.

League Lines

The League of Vermont Writers Newsletter

Join us!

April 29,
2017

Best Western
Waterbury, VT

SPRING 2017 PROGRAM — Springtime is the Write Time: Inspirational Words to Open Your Mind, Create & Live By

JONI COLE

PRESENTING:

Good Naked: Wit, Wisdom, and Happy Endings

Continued on page 6

The time has come to expose the creative process in all its glory, celebrate the value of our stories, and debunk the myth of the suffering artist. To that end, join acclaimed author and writing instructor Joni B. Cole as she shares the insights and humor of her new book, *Good Naked: Reflections on How to Write More, Write Better and Be Happier* ("joyful, tough-minded, and heartening," Cynthia Huntington, National Book Award finalist). The presentation will be



JULIE MCGRATH

PRESENTING:

The Right Time is Right Now: 6 Questions to Help You Let Go of the Excuses and Change Your Life Today

Continued on page 6

Julie will take you through six KEY questions to help you let go of all those excuses that get in your way and prevent you from changing your life. With her joy-filled attitude and high energy, she will inspire you to tackle the obstacles and put those dreams and goals into action immediately!

Julie McGrath, LICSW, is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker who has worked in the mental health field for the past 17 years. She is currently the director of a crisis team in a hospital emergency department north of Boston, connected to the world-renowned Massachusetts General Hospital and Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts. She manages a busy department of crisis clinicians, arranges for the care and placement of the mental health and/or substance-abusing



JOE CITRO

PRESENTING:

Vermont— Writing from the Dark Side

Continued on page 6

Joe Citro's work has focused on dark and occasionally disturbing Vermont landscapes more traditionally portrayed with sunny skies above quaint pristine villages. His presentations will reflect on his adventures writing about "The Dark Side," including his research, his publishers, and his readers. And hope "Better Late than Never" still applies...

Joseph A. Citro, award-winning author, public radio commentator, and expert on New England peculiarities, has been part of the Vermont writing scene since his first novel, *Shadow Child*, came out in 1987. Today, some fifteen books later, he is still chronicling local weirdness, waiting for film adaptations of his books, preparing his next manuscript, and studying for finals.



Letter from the President

Dear Fellow Members,

I am honored, and still in awe, to be representing such an amazing group of writers. As I begin my role as President, I have come to find out that heart really is the most important part of this journey. Heart has been the driving force when my brain cast doubts as to whether I am getting everything done, and in the right way.

Heart has been there when I started to question my ability to maintain a high quality of work for the LVW. It has been there when I questioned if I was the right individual for this position.

The more questions that arose, the more my heart beat. This, my Fellow Members, is when I realized I sounded like a writer. This is when I realized my heart was beating for the big picture.

Sitting down to write you, our membership, what is it that I see for the LVW? It certainly isn't me pondering a way to muster up a profound message for the membership. Or in a simplistic way, is it? I just need to start writing.

Just start writing.

This is my message to all of you. Let go of the doubts, the worry, the fear of rejection, and listen for the heartbeat that projects you into your passion for writing. Writing is what brings all of us together in this League. It is what has sustained this organization since 1929. If writing wasn't important, we wouldn't be here.

The LVW is important to me. I have gained knowledge and insight from speakers through the years. I have learned to incorporate what I learned into my own writing. Now, I am starting a new chapter as President.

I realize I am in the first draft phase of this personal endeavor! It will only get better from here. How do I know this? I am surrounded by amazing people who are there to lend support and work together, striving to make every member feel connected to our great organization.

I am honored to have Alyssa Berthiaume as my Immediate Past President. During the last three years, she put a tremendous effort into learning the "behind the scenes" workings of being President of the LVW. She has a wealth of knowledge. I think the greatest thing she said to me is, "You are going to make mistakes."

It is amazing how much stress that takes off a person, knowing it is all right to be human. We all make mistakes. It is how we recover from our mistakes that shows our true character.

Personally, I admit when I am wrong, find ways to remedy the situation, and keep moving forward. I promise you all this: I will always give my best for our great organization.

As I reflect back through my life, I see many skills I have learned. One of which is knowing when to ask for

help. This is not a skill that came easily. In my youth I tried to do everything myself. I never wanted to burden others. I wanted to prove I could do it.

Well folks, I learned doing it all myself just depleted me. Asking for help didn't make my accomplishments any less beautiful. In fact, they were just as wonderful because they were accomplished.

I have seen this time-and-again in the different committees and local groups I have been a part of as a volunteer. I see it in our organization, as well. Good things happen when people work together.

As I step further into my first year as President, I look forward to continuing to volunteer my time and energy toward making the LVW flourish and grow, surrounded by other amazing volunteers within our organization.

Please consider how the LVW makes your heart beat, then consider if you can find even an hour of your time to help volunteer, as well.

Let's all start writing our new chapter together in whatever capacity we can.

Just start writing...

-Bobbi Jo Davis



WINTER 2017 PROGRAM RECAPS

Sweet Pea & Friends

by Margery Sharp

“Self-publishing is a journey,” said Jennifer Churchman.

She and her photographer husband, John, spoke at the January 2017 League meeting and generously shared their experiences in producing their first children’s book, *Sweet Pea and Friends, the Sheep Over*.

Jennifer and John live with their children on a farm in Essex, Vermont, where they raise sheep.

The idea for a book, she said, began when they started having fun with their friends and neighbors by holding “sheepovers” and birthday parties with their sheep and some of the other farm animals. John would take photographs of the “events,” but at first they were just Saturday night fun among neighbors.

Jennifer said she and John kind of backed into publishing when someone said, “Why don’t you make a book of these events?”

Prior to moving to Vermont, both had extensive business experience in marketing, photography and copy writing. These skills helped them while they gathered ideas for their foray into the publishing world following this innocent suggestion.

Amid lots of comment, advice and opinion from friends, the project became a kind of mass collaboration.

“We worked out a budget and started soliciting financial help,” Jennifer said. “John’s mother was our first investor!” Group funding ensued!

When enough funds were raised, they were able to self-publish their first book, full of John’s photographs artfully combined with graphic imagery they

created themselves on the computer.

“That was just the beginning of our journey,” Jennifer said. They started out, book in hand, to visit as many bookstores as possible. They also sent the book out to libraries, schools, and even orphanages. In the publishing world, bookstores are impressed if an author can show sales of at least 2,000 books, the Churchmans explained. They also learned that the typical split in cost when selling wholesale to a bookstore is 60/40, with the author receiving 40% of the cover price. After deducting production costs, there’s not that much left.

“Then we met our fairy godmother,” Jennifer explained, naming the booksellers at the Flying Pig Bookstore in Shelburne, Vermont.

Bookstore co-owner Elizabeth Bluemle wrote about the book in the store’s newsletter and in her *Publisher’s Weekly* blog on children’s books, and suddenly, agents came calling. The Churchmans made the jump from self publishing to being agented with Brenda Bowen, a rock-star among children’s book agents.

Bowen generated so much interest that the book went on auction among several publishing houses. Little, Brown and Company was the publisher they finally signed with.

Soon after, CBS Evening News correspondent Jim Axelrod came to the farm and interviewed the Churchmans about the book while sitting on hay bales in the barn, with the sheep near at hand. Sales increased. Their fame spread and more national news interviews followed. *Sweet Pea and Friends, The Sheep Over* made the New York Times Best Selling Children’s Picture Book List in

January of 2016.

Having been brought up on a sheep farm in southern Vermont, Jennifer said her father recently commented, “You’ve finally figured out how to make a living farming!”

That first book was just the beginning of the journey. The contract with Little, Brown was a multi-book deal.

As of January when they were talking to League members, the Churchmans had produced three books about their farm animals.

“And we plan more,” Jennifer said. So much is changing in the publishing industry, but she added, “Despite the demise of many print media, the children’s book market will continue!”

**TELL YOUR FRIENDS
ABOUT
THE LEAGUE!
HAVE THEM VISIT OUR
WEBSITE AT:
www.leagueofvermontwriters.org**

LVW ONGOING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- Pat Goudey O’Brien is looking for someone with **editing and graphics skills** to help out with (and eventually take over) the workings of *League Lines*.
- The **marketing committee and programming committee** are also actively taking new volunteers

If you’d like to put your skills to use for the League in one of the above ways please drop us a line at lvw@leagueofvermontwriters.org.

WINTER 2017 PROGRAM RECAPS

Buddy Edgerton and Norman Rockwell

By Megan Price

Putting pen to paper and self-publishing a book is always a risky venture. But in the case of author James A. “Buddy” Edgerton, it may pay off soon – a movie adaptation is in the works.

Edgerton’s book, *The Unknown Rockwell, A Portrait of Two American Families*, was published in 2009. Printed in hardcover with a book jacket and featuring both black-and-white and color photos inside, the book took a dozen years to ready for the press, Edgerton told LVW members. He finally produced the book only with the assistance of co-author and media professional Nan O’Brien, to whom he gave much credit.

Buddy was just a boy in 1943 when the beloved portrait artist Norman Rockwell purchased the house next door to the Edgerton family in West Arlington, Vermont. He played with Rockwell’s children, helped build the artist’s studio and became one of his many models.

Rockwell’s *Saturday Evening Post* covers inspired America and reminded people to be grateful for small favors during a very difficult period in our nation’s history. His many paintings helped buoy the spirits of a generation during World War II.

Buddy remembers stacks of painted canvases tucked up a corner of the artist’s studio like yesterday’s news. Today, Rockwell’s paintings fetch millions of dollars at auction.

Buddy’s son, Jimmy Edgerton, Jr., told LVW members the sale of 9,000 copies of his father’s book were enough just to recoup their initial costs, in part due to printing issues. Only very recently, as they approach 10,000 copies sold, are they seeing any profit.

But perseverance – and a good story told well – may yet win the day. The father and son team announced a movie producer has optioned the book. A script is being written and nationally recognized actors have expressed interest in being a part of the project.

At 84, Buddy is going strong and looks forward to seeing his personal story of the iconic American shared with all Americans.

Young Writers Project, Geoffrey Gevalt

By Bobbi Jo Davis [with PG O’Brien]

Founder and executive director Geoffrey Gevalt provided a fascinating look at the work being done in Vermont, across the country, and beyond by the Young Writers Project [www.youngwritersproject.org]. The organization encourages and develops new talent among eager young people who are just beginning to appreciate the power of their own literary voice.

Gevalt spoke with passion about his work with kids from all over the world, providing samples of the work coming out of the organization’s efforts. And that work was inspiring. The intensity, insight, and sophistication kids can achieve when they’re encouraged to be themselves and express themselves

without fear of rejection – it was amazing! [log onto the organization’s web site for a sample.]

Gevalt talked about how this generation is starting their journey differently from those who came before. They’re the tech generation—growing up in a digital world they use in their artistic expression, revealing their emotional truth in sound, visual representation, or written or spoken words.

During the course of the afternoon, Gevalt showcased these talents in ways that captivated the audience. Not a sound was heard as a video played...and even for moments after. Then awe from the audience.

My personal experience was one of holding back tears. The beauty these young people captured in their work

was what most adults grasp at, hope to catch.

The organization mentors kids, provides a safe place to express themselves, offers publication and an audience, creates weekly challenges to keep kids engaged and motivated, and encourages the participation of entire communities to nurture the next creative generation.

Hmm...yup. Loved it.

I thought, “I need to step up my game! These kids are truly talented.” The more people who know that, the better. Visit their site and check them out.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

You and Your Credits

Justine O'Keefe: *Animal Wellness*, Dec/Jan edition, "Of Dinks and Droods"

Deb Fennell: *Explore Smuggs*, Winter 2016/17, article on ski teaching.

Marge Sharp: fall, 2016, reading of two plays

Kathleen McKinley Harris has signed a contract with Finishing Line Press of Georgetown, Kentucky. FLP will publish her chap-book of poems, *Earth Striders*. All of the poems in the collection center on horses. Publishing date to be announced.

Paula Diaco and **Pat Goudey O'Brien:** [writestoriesnow.com and thetamaracpress.com] launched a coaching and editorial service to business owners writing entrepreneurial books.

The Marketing Committee needs you!

Volunteer with a supportive, rewarding subset of the League membership. Gain essential skills you will need to market yourself and your writing while helping the organization succeed.

Please contact Shawn Anderson at shawntwrites@gmail.com for more information, and to join our team.

Directory of Vermont Writing Resources coming soon from our intern, Cynthia Anderson.

Thank you to everyone who filled out the survey for the Directory of Vermont Writing Resources. Cynthia is currently in the process of putting together the website and making it easy to browse and search and is hoping to have it up and running by the end of April. If anyone missed the deadline, they will have another chance to get in the directory after it goes live. Stay tuned for further updates!

League Lines Live!

We're looking for writers for our blog.

Share your tips, insights, and writing expertise with our community. We have a need for people to write blog posts for *League Lines Live*, our new blog.

Please contact Shawn Anderson at shawntwrites@gmail.com for more info.

Find us! Follow us! Friend us!

Our writing community is growing.

We have three great ways for you to keep up with the League:

1. Like us on our Facebook at www.facebook.com/VermontWriters/
2. Follow us on Twitter at [@vtwriters](https://twitter.com/vtwriters)
3. Explore the new website at www.leagueofvermontwriters.org

2017 Spring Program, continued

JONI COLE, CONT.

followed by a quickie workshop that invites participants to uncover their own creative potential. Come. Have fun. Write on!

Joni B. Cole is the author of the new release, *Good Naked: Reflections on How to Write More, Write Better, and Be Happier* (“...Cole...disabuses common misconceptions of how one should think, act, and be as a writer, exchanging those myths for ideas that feed creativity and productivity. Essentially, one doesn’t have to suffer to be a genuine artist.”—*Library Journal*.) Joni is also the author of the acclaimed book on writing *Toxic Feedback: Helping Writers Survive and Thrive* (“I can’t imagine a better guide to [writing’s] rewards and perils than this fine book— *American Book Review*), and *Another Bad-Dog Book: Essays on Life, Love, and Neurotic Human Behavior* (“Funny, smart, original, and, just to keep us on our toes, occasionally heartbreaking”—Gina Barreca, syndicated columnist). Joni teaches in the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program at Dartmouth College, serves on the creative writing faculty of the New Hampshire Institute of Art, and is founder of the Writer’s Center of White River Junction, Vermont. She is also a contributor to *The Writer* magazine. Joni has been nominated for both a Pushcart Prize and USA Fellowship Award. For more information: www.jonibcole.com

JULIE MCGRATH, CONT.

patient, and advocates for patients’ needs within the larger systems throughout the state.

Through her activities as a social worker, she has created Julie McGrath Seminars, a public speaking business that serves human services professionals, nurses, physicians, social workers, and counselors. She speaks regularly to groups of up to 300 people on such topics such as job stress, burnout, self-care, working with difficult people, time management, and setting boundaries. In these workshops, Julie brilliantly combines work and home life to inspire her participants to seek the good life professionally and personally. That “good life” involves setting and achieving goals, and practicing effective time management so life includes work and play time, as well as appropriate amounts of rest and relaxation.

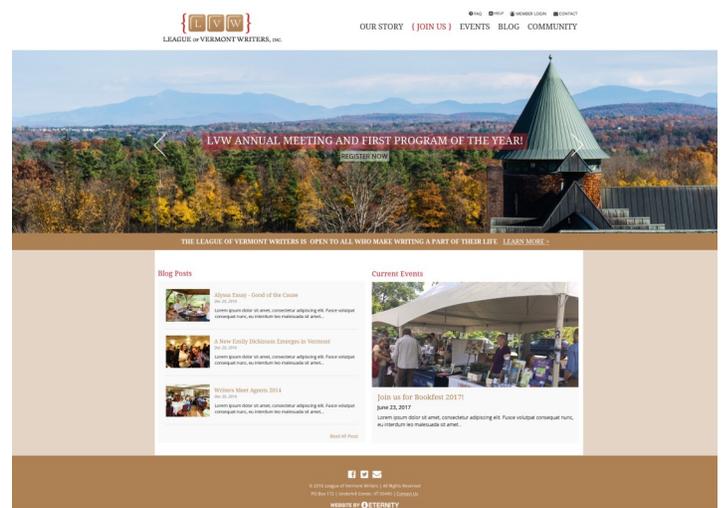
HAVE YOU CHECKED OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE YET? WE WENT LIVE IN JANUARY

The new LVW website provides the following (which is not an exclusive list):

- Clean, modern look and feel that will make it easier to find what you need and provide greater visibility to the organization for purposes both of membership recruitment and retention
- One place for all member information, which means reduced risk that members aren’t included in League mailings, and reduced risk of this information being on someone’s private computer and therefore lost due to any number of circumstances
- The ability for you as a member to modify your profile online, including email, address, phone number, and genres, and to manage your own dues
- A community tab where we will be adding information about other writing groups and showcasing our own writers’ publications and services

- An upgraded and flexible website architecture that will provide more control to LVW for making enhancements to the website as needed

Visit at www.leagueofvermontwriters.org



Registration Form

LVW 2017 Spring Program & Annual Business Meeting

Register online at www.leagueofvermontwriters.org or fill out the form below and mail with a check to: **PO Box 5046, Burlington, VT 05402.**

Make check payable to: *LVW Spring 2017 Program*

Registrar: lvw@leagueofvermontwriters.org

DATE: April 29, 2017

TIME: 9:00-9:30 arrival and registration
9:30-3:00 program

LOCATION: Best Western, Waterbury
45 Blush Hill Rd, Waterbury, VT 05676

Schedule at a glance:

9:00-9:30 check-in/registration

9:45-10:45 Joni Cole

10:45-11:00 Break

11:00-12:00 Julie McGrath

12:00-1:00 Lunch

1:00-1:30 *LVW Panel

1:45-2:45 Joe Citro

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Members: _____ @ \$55ea. registration = \$ _____

Nonmembers: _____ @ \$60ea. registration = \$ _____

[Students, ask about our student discount]

Tax deductible donation: \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Check # _____

Do you have special dietary needs? _____

*LVW Panel

There will be a board-member panel where attendees can engage with LVW and brainstorm for future programming, membership benefits, and other offerings.

LVW Board: Bobbi Jo Davis, president; Shawn Anderson, vice-president; Julia Hoover, secretary, Alyssa Berthiaume, past president; Elizia Meskill, treasurer; Wendy Heilig, Annalisa Parent, Tammy Hetrick, Charlene McManis and Lisa Halvorsen at large.

Membership: Tommy Walz; Critique service: Sharon Putnam.

League Lines is published four times per year, in January, April, July, and September. Questions or information can be emailed to us at lvw@leagueofvermontwriters.org

Tommy Walz
157 Camp St.
Barre, VT 05641