

2024-01-27 League of Vermont Writers - Annual Meeting Minutes

The League of Vermont Writers held its Annual general membership meeting via Zoom on January 27, 2024. There was a time of social sharing and general announcements from 9:15 am until 10:00.

At 10:00, LVW guest speaker Christopher Citro presented “Voices of the Poet.”

The agenda for the business meeting was:

1. Call to order
2. Previous year’s minutes
3. Treasurer’s report - Mel
4. President’s remarks
5. Committee reports
 - a. Book Club - Shawn
 - b. Book Festivals – Celia
 - c. PR team – (Newsletter -Gail; Linked In, Discord – Shawn)
 - d. Nominating Committee – Celia
6. New Business
7. Website – Gail
8. Adjournment

1. Call to Order

Amy Braun called the League of Vermont Writers’ annual business meeting to order at 12:11 p.m. Six board members in attendance were: Amy Braun, Jon Meyer, Melinda Meyer, Joan Grant, Jeniah Johnson, and Gail Wind. Absent was Cindy Hill.

Additionally, the fourteen LVW members in attendance were Betty Warner, Celia Ryker, Ellie Bryant, Henry Parker, Jerry Johnson, Katherine Quimby Johnson, Laura Power, Liz Gauffreau, Lisa Halvorson, Louella Bryant, Melody Beth Brown, Pat Goudey O’Brien, Shawn Anderson, and Thomas Carroll.

2. Previous Year’s Minutes

Shawn Anderson shared the minutes of the last annual meeting on the Zoom screen.

Corrections were mentioned as follows:

- Joan Grant: Ron Jensen’s name was incorrect. It was spelled Johnson.
- From Katherine Quimby Johnson: amend the spelling of my name: Katherine with two e's, not Katharine. Also, there's one place it's Cathy. – [change to Katherine]
- From Lisa Halvorsen-my name is misspelled; it should be Halvorsen.
- From Shawn Anderson: Shawn versus Sean

Gail said that all corrections will be done and the new minutes posted on the website.

Jon Meyer moved and Katherine Quimby Johnson seconded to accept the 2023 minutes with these corrections. Motion carried.

3. Treasurer’s Report

Melinda Meyer was engaged as the LVW treasurer late in 2023 and bravely took on the responsibility of untangling the financials of the league. She presented an excel summation of the League’s income and expenses. She mentioned that \$12,000 had been transferred from the PayPal account to the bank. Other than that, LVW had a final net gain. Mel will be working on

the books more in the beginning of the year to offer the board a more complete picture of our finances.

4. President's Report

Amy Braun gave her president's report.

There was a moment of silence for all who have suffered loss or setbacks in 2023. Amy said that she wanted members to know they are not alone.

She acknowledged the work of the League and all of its volunteers for the 2023 year.

She said that there are 127 members currently. The League, partly due to Covid of course, has been losing up to ten members per year, but in 2023, we gained two. So, obviously recruiting new members and retaining old ones will be a 2024 priority. There are 117 single members, five lifetime members and five family memberships.

LVW has managed to hold strong this past year. She encouraged members to share our free events with friends. We hold open mic and book club alternately every month and our writer friends can attend and hopefully some will join the League.

Our January meeting in 2023 featured Joni B. Cole with "Five Tips for Productive Revision." In April we had an in person gathering featuring Cindy Hill, Esq. Her talk was "Staying on the Right Side of the Law." In August we held "Into the Words" at Jerry Johnson's house. In October we had a virtual event, "Using Both Sides of Our Brain When Writing" with Alexander Wolff and Char Gardner. Ultimately we had an event every single month of the year except July, and that was because of the storms.

This year the board decided to create a code of ethics for our members and our presenters. The gist of this document honors all creators and their right to copyright. Gail will post a link to this in our library on the website. Jon mentioned that each speaker should get a copy, perhaps to sign and Amy said that it is being done.

We have also done some exploring into the possibility of a new website. Gail was kind of spearheading this effort and we have discovered that it would be much less expensive and also more within our control. There was more discussion on this later

In 2024 we have event in the planning stages. Our spring event will be April 20th. Our summer event will be "Writers meet Agents." Our fall event will be September 21 at Celia Ryker's house in Bridgewater.

We are five years away from being 100 years old and this is a rather incredible achievement.

Jon said he wanted to thank the board for all of their work. He mentioned that he has attended many of Shawn's events. He thanked Jerry Johnson for his generosity for opening his home to us again for the summer event.

5. Committee Reports

a. Book Group Report

Shawn Anderson reported that the book club was very active in 2023. The group reviewed the following books:

- *Catching the Big Fish: Meditation, Consciousness, and Creativity* by David Lynch
- *On Writing* by Stephen King
- *The Heroine's Journey* by Gail Carriger
- *WONDERBOOK: The Illustrated Guide to Creating Imaginative Fiction* by Jeff Vandermeer
- *The Emotional Craft of Fiction* by Donald Maass
- *Negotiating with the Dead: A Writer on Writing* by Margaret Atwood

The group meets every other month on a Thursday at 7 PM. It is usually a group of 6 to 12 people.

The 2024 first Book Group meet is set for February 22, at 7:00 pm. The book that the group will be reviewing is *Bird by Bird Some Instructions on Writing* by Ann Lamott. Sign up with Shawn – or email the League at lvw@leagueofvermontwriters.com Put ‘book group’ in the subject line. Shawn keeps the list and sends out a reminder to everyone. Future titles are chosen at that meeting.

b. Book Festival Committee Report

Celia said that she spoke to one of the managers of Bookstock – they are not taking reservations yet

Celia also went to the Boston Book Festival and it was huge and the weather was perfect. Jon responded that we should definitely go to Bookstock again and he thought that Boston Book Festival was also a great idea. Gail asked what the price was. Shawn said that he thought it was 175.00 per table with two chairs. But he thought LVW got a deal of 2 tables with a few chairs for 200.00. Gail asked if this was the three day festival in Woodstock, VT. Shawn said yes.

The tables are on the green. A big tent has a book sale, several speakers, a couple of food vendors. They provide cover, tables and chairs. People provide their own table covers. There were lots of publishers and authors. In 2022 the LVW table was right next to the book sales tent.

At this place, members of the League can promote their own books and collectively promote the League. Pat mentioned that our participation in Bookstock could help strengthen the southern Vermont membership of the League. Louella Bryant asked if Celia would need payment for tables at registration. Jon suggested that authors share the cost of the tables. Gail asked Shawn if the League had promotional materials printed for Bookstock. He said they did and that he still had a box of things he wanted to give to someone else. Amy said that he could be brought to her as she has a big cabinet for LVW equipment. Sean said that there are brochures and postcards.

Louella said that the website says there is limited space. Gail asked if we should authorize Celia to register for two tables. Celia said that she felt we should find out the costs, and also what costs there would be at other Book Fairs. Celia said that if anyone has thoughts, comments or suggestions, they can contact her at her email celia@celiaryker.com.

c. PR Committee Report

Shawn has been working with Fallon Clark with the platform Discord. It is an instant messaging media platform – it is an online community. It can be private or in a group. You need to be invited to join. Fallon has been having online writing time on Monday mornings. It was originally a gamer platform. It is now the 35th most popular platform. It will help us as writers and hopefully will attract more, and some younger members. He suggests that we send out a message and an invite to all members. It is not difficult to use. LVW will be sending out an email with the invite link. Discord does not cost anything.

Fallon will be developing a professional link for LVW, but first they are focusing on Discord.

Gail said that due to her stroke in 2022, and the work on the new website, she did not get the fourth quarter of League Lines published. The first quarter of 2024 League Lines has been published and is in the Library tab of the League website. Gail encouraged contributions to League Lines.

Shawn said that he wanted to caution that there was a large exploratory search when the committee chose our current web provider. Shawn was on the committee. Alyssa, a past president and Ron Jensen were on the committee. He suggested that we explore what our current site provider was chosen for specifically and make sure we don’t lose any of those characteristics. Also, think about the long term – we need something that is ‘turnkey’ – who would do all of this work if the current board was gone?

There was a bit more discussion. Betty Warner said that there are two pieces – the technical pieces. The second piece is content.

Kathy Quimby Johnson moved to table the discussion. Amy asked Shawn to make a list of people that created the first site. Cynthia seconded the motion. Amy called for a vote; the motion carried.

On a separate issue, Gail shared that via the board authorization, she had purchased a 2TB external hard drive to back up all the League's important documents and paperwork, logins and passwords and that it should be passed from secretary to secretary. Pat Goudey O'Brien said we used to have a file box, now we have a hard drive. Gail asked where the file box went. Shawn said it was not at his house. Pat said some of it went to special collections at UVM.

d. Nominating Committee Report

There was a brief discussion as to whether or not there was a voting quorum. Lisa Halvorsen said that ten percent of membership made a quorum. We filled that requirement.

Celia Ryker shared that she is on the nominating committee with Luella Bryant and Sharon Darrow. The following people were nominated for Board Members at Large for three years:

- ♦ Cindy Hill – two years left
- ♦ Pat Goudy O'Brien- three years
- ♦ Jeniah Johnson- two years left
- ♦ Caryn Connolly

There were no nominations from the floor. All were voted in unanimously.

Celia said that the following were nominated for officers.

- ♦ Caryn Connolly for president for one year
- ♦ Melinda Meyer for treasurer
- ♦ Jon Meyer for Vice President
- ♦ Gail Wind for Secretary

Celia Ryker asked for a vote on the newly proposed slate of officers as listed above. Again, everyone turned off the mute buttons and the vote was taken. They ayes had it and the new officers are as proposed. Amy is now Immediate Past President.

6. New Business to address in the future

- a. Website – will be discussed at future board meetings
- b. Outreach – we need to reach out and get more members and hopefully encourage some younger people to join.

7. Adjournment

Celia Ryker moved to adjourn the meeting

Kathy Quimby seconded the motion.

Amy called for a vote. The Ayes had it.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:35 in the afternoon.

Submitted by

Gail E. Wind, Secretary

*Note – the group took a short break after the business meeting and re-grouped for open-mic.