



LEAGUE OF VERMONT WRITERS, INC.

League Lines

The Newsletter of the League of Vermont Writers

2023-03 Spring Issue

LVW Spring Event
Mark your calendar!
April 22, 2023
Ilsley Public
Library, Middlebury, VT
10:00 to 3:00

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“Stay on the Write Side of the Law: Legal Issues Every Writer Should Know”

Location: Ilsley Public Library Community Meeting Room, 75 Main Street, Middlebury VT 05753. Free parking is located behind the library. The Community Meeting Room may be accessed through the library (which will be open) or via the accessible entrance from the parking lot.

Date and Time: April 22, 2023 Sign in and coffee at 9 a.m., program 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Presenter: Cindy Ellen Hill, Esq.

Cost: \$35.00 for members, \$55.00 for non-members.

About Cindy Ellen Hill: She is a writer, musician and attorney. Her legal practice is steeped in the issues related to creative works for writers, musicians, artists and artisans, including: review of manuscripts for copyright, defamation and invasion of privacy issues; publishing contracts; gallery and museum contracts; copyright registration and licensing of writing, music, photographs and art. She also practices public-interest land use and environmental law, representing nonprofit organizations and small towns throughout Vermont

A 1987 graduate of Vermont Law School with a JD and an MSL in Environmental Law, Cindy Ellen Hill has been writing poetry, fiction, and journalism since the 1970s. She edits technical and legal papers for global NGOs including UNFPA and PAHO. She has won NENPA awards for news and feature articles, has twice won Vermont's Ralph Nading





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Hill award for fiction representing the voice of Vermont, and her poems have been published in Measure, The Lyric, and other journals. She is the author of two books of sonnets, Wild Earth (Antrim House Books 2021) and Elegy for the Trees, (Kelsay Books 2022). She lives and gardens in Middlebury, Vermont.

About the Program:

9:00 – Sign in and chat

9:30 – Announcements

10:00-12:00 Morning Session - Copyright

Copyright law is what makes it possible for writers to reap the fruits of our labor, by preventing others from profiting from our work without our permission.

In the morning session, we'll explore what copyright is -- how and when does copyright protection attach to your writing, what rights does it give you, and how long does it last? We'll look at how you can find information about copyright laws, how to determine if material you want to use is protected by copyright or in the public domain, and ways to protect your own work and respect the copyrighted works of others. In this session you'll learn to:

- Understand the principles behind copyright protection
- Identify potential copyright issues in your writing
- Develop self-editing strategies to avoid copyrights infringement
- Obtain permission from copyright holders

12:00-1:00 Lunch Break

1:00-3:00 AFTERNOON SESSION: DEFAMATION AND INVASION OF PRIVACY

In social media posts, memoir, fiction, and journalism, we writers can't help but write about other people. But words, like sticks and stones, actually can do harm. When our writing presents others in an unflattering light, we run the risk of being sued for defamation or invasion of privacy.

In the afternoon session, we'll explore the legal realm of defamation and privacy as it relates to our writing -- who can bring a defamation or invasion of privacy lawsuit, what they'll have to prove, whether or not it makes a difference if the person you wrote about is a public figure, when telling the truth will protect you--and when it won't.

In this session you'll learn to:

- Understand the principles of defamation and invasion of privacy
- Identify potential defamation and privacy issues in your writing
- Develop self-editing strategies to avoid defamation and privacy law problems
- Consider economic and business strategies to insulate you from liability

Recapping the January 28, 2023 Business Meeting

by Gail Wind

On January 28, 2023 the league of Vermont writers gathered via Zoom at 915. General chitchat gave way to some basic announcements. Amy Braun generously shared with us a dream induced by parliamentary worries that included her town librarian rescuing her with a truffles shake and retractable digital spoons! She got us off to a great start. She also heaped praises on Shawn, the past president for his guidance.

Many of the two dozen or so attendees shared their writing and membership experiences.

Lisa Halvorson, author of eight travel-geography books and two biographies for children, shared the sad news that Sharry Marie Traver Underwood, a past president of the League in 1985, had passed away in September of 2022 at 100 years old. Sharry was active in the League for three decades. She was also a dancer and mother of five children.



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Jon said that perhaps the League is helpful for growing old gracefully. Celia said that we can keep writing as long as we can type or hold a pen.

Margery Sharp said she'd been a member since 1969! The president then was Harriet Riggs. She had moved from Connecticut to Vermont. She talked of the many amazing people she met, and that she felt it was pretty amazing that League of Vermont Writers had survived so long, starting in 1929 during the depression and stock market crash.

Lisa Halvorsen was also introduced to the League by Harriet Riggs in 1977. During her time as a member she has served on the board a couple of time, as secretary, and as newsletter editor. There is lots of room for volunteers, she said.

Margery added that there were many more members from Southern Vermont and the League met in many places. Marina in Panton, Lake Champlain and other places were meeting points of the League.

Jerry Johnson shared that he has been a member for about seventeen years. He had been shopping for antiques in the Buggy Man Antiques in Johnson, Vermont and he met Marie Tedford, who told him of Pat Goudey O'Brien. He hosted his first event, a poetry event about fifteen years ago. Pat could not attend, but sent salutations to Hank Parker, "Say hello to Hank, he's the king!"

Celia Riker admitted to being one of the new kids on the block. Her first book, *Walking Home* was about hiking the long trail was published in 2021. She credits the league with giving her the confidence to get published. Her second book is coming out early this year, about her grandmother's life. The title is *Augusta*. She mentioned that promoting her book is almost as complicated as writing it in the first place.

Kathleen McKinley Harris mentioned that this is one of the hallmarks of the League Vermont writers; that all the members help one another. Her first meeting was in Ferrisburgh, Vermont. She also said that the league has been very supportive of her as a writer. Goat Hill was an overnight stop where the league had had overnight events. She mentions that this was when people started using computers and the raining thought was that computers were a passing whim.

Louella Bryant has been an "intermittent" member for many years. She mentioned how much she liked the Writers Meet Agents events. She has had nine books published without an agent! But some are out of print because Jason and Nordic Press and New England Press have closed down. She expressed the delight in being with senior writers who are not "too tired" to keep writing.

Jon Meyer has been a member about ten years. Moved from Norwich to Putney, VT and has mentioned he has a very nice large building that might be a nice spot for an in-person meeting. Jerry Johnson said that holding a meeting in Southern Vermont might encourage Chard deNiord, a poet laureate of Vermont to make an appearance! Jon said Chard lives in a town by his. He said he was glad that Joni Cole was at the meeting.

Hank Parker expressed his joy at knowing the people in the League. He spoke a bit about the High School Writing Contest, co-sponsored by the League and Northern Vermont University. The six winners and up were given membership in the League. Hank said that plans are afoot to do the contest again this year.

Margery talked about writer coming from Family Circle Magazine who came to a League event in Shelburne. The turnout was quite large and some people had to be turned away.

Gail mentioned that Family Circle was the magazine in which she sold her first story. She made a whopping twenty-five dollars! She has a book by Catherine Sands, *Perfect Pitch*, interviews from well-known agents about what they expect from a query. She offered to share the book with anyone who wanted to read it. She said that the level of creativity of the high school writers in the contest was exemplary. She mentioned that in another website she works for is an entry at the top of the pages for people to enter just their email to sign up for the newsletter of the organization.

At ten o'clock, Amy Braun introduced Joni Cole who spoke on "Five Tips for Productive Revision."



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After Joni's presentation, the League of Vermont Writers' annual meeting took place. Following that several of the attendees shared a bit of their work in open mic time.

Submission Guidelines

LVW encourages its friends and members to submit articles for the League Lines.

- ♦ Less than 1000 words please. Well edited! The League Lines staff will not edit.
- ♦ Pertinent to the craft of writing, i.e., book reviews, writing event reviews, recaps of LVW events, publication credits☺, speaking engagements – past or upcoming.
- ♦ Send them to Gail Wind at gailinvermont@outlook.com. Subject: League Lines
- ♦ Word documents please. (This helps in formatting for the newsletter)
- ♦ LVW particularly invites its members to reviews books published by other members. Check out our announcements for publications by League writers and let Gail know if you've selected one for review (so we avoid duplication) Reviewing one another's books is one of the best ways to support each other!

New SERIES: What Every Vermont Writer Needs to Know About the Law

by Cindy Ellen Hill, Esq.

"Copyright helps protect the economic value of creative works by ensuring that only the 'author' of that work has the right to duplicate and distribute it, perform it, create variations of it - and license other people to do the same."

What is a copyright and how do I know if I have one?

Copyright is the intangible, intellectual property right that you have in your original creative works, provided those works have been fixed in a tangible medium. In the United States, copyright is a constitutionally protected right, but its exact parameters are set by statute and case law, as well as by international copyright treaties and agreements.

That's a lot of big lawyer words. Let's parse them out.

Copyright is an intangible right. You can see or feel a painting, sculpture, novel, play script and song lead sheet or thumb drive holding a recording. These things are tangible objects that you can own as personal property. Copyright is the package of intellectual legal rights attached to property that you can't touch: the words of a novel rather than the physical book; the lyrics and notes of a song rather than the printed score or disc containing a recording; the image contained in a painting, rather than the physical canvas and paint. I can sell a used book from my bookshelf or a painting from my wall, or CD from the pile stashed in my car -- but I do not have the right to reproduce and distribute that book, painting, or CD, because I only own the physical object. The person who created the work still owns the *copyright*.

Copyright protects original, creative intellectual property. Copyright laws are intended to protect the economic value of *original creative ideas*, so creative people can make a living and generate more creative ideas to better all of society. To secure copyright protection, your intellectual property must be *original* and it must be *creative*. You can't copyright the word "the," the alphabet or a C major scale, because it is not original. You can't copyright a list of names and addresses, because it is not creative.



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Copyright protections attach to an idea when it is "fixed in a tangible medium," which means written down or recorded somewhere. The story in your head is not yet protected by copyright law. It may well be original and creative, but you don't hold copyrights in that idea yet, until you fix it in a tangible medium. Speak it aloud into your hand-held digital recorder, and copyright protections attach. The danger is, if you walk around telling everyone about it before recording it or writing it down, and someone else writes it down, you will not hold the copyright.

Copyright gives an author (creator) of a creative, original work certain exclusive rights to use and sell that work. Copyright law calls everyone who creates an original, creative work an 'author' regardless of whether that person is a composer, painter, sculptor, or book writer. The original drafters of the copyright laws probably were wary of the religious implications of referring to people as 'the Creator'.

Copyright helps protect the economic value of creative works by ensuring that only the 'author' of that work has the right to duplicate and distribute it, perform it, create variations of it – and license other people to do the same. If you wrote a poem, only you have the right to turn it into a song, record a reading of it, perform it live at a slam, or create a video from it. You also have the right to license (allow temporary use) or transfer (convey permanent rights to) other people to use your poem or make "derivative works" (coffee mugs, greeting cards) of it.

Copyright belongs to the 'author' of a work – unless it was created under a 'work for hire' agreement. If you are a script writer hired as an employee by a television network to write their shows, or a content writer working for an advertising firm, your employment contract likely specifies that copyright to anything you create on the job belongs to the employer as a 'work for hire'. If you are commissioned to write a document (a poem for a wedding, a corporate history) your commission contract should state who is going to own the copyright to that work.

Copyright of a product can be shared on collaborative projects. It's common for two or more writers to share copyright ownership of a document just like songwriters often collaborate on a song. Multi-media projects often involve even more joint copyright holders.

For example, in the animated music video of my band O'hAnleigh song The Mermaid's Tale, my band partner Tom Hanley and I share the copyright on the music and lyrics of the song about the mermaid who lures sailors to their doom, but the extremely talented Emilie Rodgers, www.emilierodgers.com, created the animated interpretation of the song and owns the copyright in the animation. In this case, Emilie and I exchanged a license--permission to use each other's copyrighted works--so that we can both show her animation video with our song playing in it.

Copyright attaches to a creative work as soon as you fix it in a tangible medium--but you cannot bring a legal action to enforce your copyrights if you have not registered your work with the U.S. Copyright Office. Registration is easy and inexpensive--and is even easier and less expensive if you register a batch of items like stories or poems together as a collection. More on registration in a future article, but in the meantime, bookmark the U.S. Copyright Office webpage, <http://www.copyright.gov/>, and make it your friend. It's surprisingly user-friendly, with plain English FAQs and simple online forms.



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Recap of Joni B. Cole “Five Tips for Productive Revision.”

by Gail Wind

Joni B. Cole is the author of two books for writers: *Good Naked: How to Write More, Write Better, and Be Happier* and *Toxic Feedback, Helping Writers Survive and Thrive*. She is also the author of *Another Bad-Dog Book: Essays on Life, Love, and Neurotic Human Behavior*.

In work and life, Joni looks for the extraordinary in the ordinary, the wonder, humor, and mystery in everyday moments. This focus inspired her to create the three-volume “This Day” series that shares a day in the life of hundreds of women across America and from all walks of life (“fascinating and eye-opening” — Publishers Weekly).

As freelance writer and literary consultant, Joni is a contributor to *The Writer* magazine, the Jane Friedman blog, and other publications.



She served as program director for Bookstock Literary Festival 2022, creating and overseeing 36 author events for this 3-day festival! In addition, she works as a creative consultant for a variety of individual clients, as well as academic and nonprofit organizations. <https://www.jonibcole.com>

The league was delighted that she took the time to lead the group in an interactive presentation called “Five Tips for Productive Revision.” Several members of the group read excerpts from their own writing for Joni to comment on regarding revision.

One of the first things she shared was that writers need to understand that revision can be daunting. The route to good revision is threefold.

- One, acquire a knowledge of narrative craft.
- Two, get timely feedback – from reader, other authors, editors.
- And three, have confidence. Writers gain this by understanding that there is no bad writing when you are doing a first draft. Even though you may cut a lot of it later, it’s ‘all good!’
- She advised writers that while they were reviewing what they wrote, they should look for the things that make them feel good, and this would help them know they are indeed a good writer.

Joni shared extensive suggestions on how to acquire the knowledge of narrative craft. She suggested we learn to amplify scenic moments with some of the four narrative techniques; action, detail, dialogue, and internal monologue. Writers need to know how to create a scene and understand the difference between showing and telling. Joni suggested we *show* emotions and *tell* information.

Writers don’t need to spend a lot of time creating transitions. Often times the description of a transition can be eliminated and substituted with a simple statement of fact such as ‘three days later,’ or ‘when they got back to the school.’

Joni cautioned; when revising, writers should examine their work to see if they have told emotions rather than showing them. They should examine their work to decide if they have describe the transition rather than simply stating it. Everything you put in a book has to add to the value of the book. If it does not, consider cutting it.

Finally they need to know that their main character has undergone some sort of change in the story. If there is no change, there is no story!

Joni was a delight to listen to and everyone in attendance appreciated her concise and entertaining presentation.



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Kudos Korner – Publishing Credits

Cindy Ellen Hill of Middlebury had two sonnet chapbooks published in 2022, *Wild Earth* from Antrim House Books, (978-1943826964) and *Elegy for the Trees* from Kelsay Books (978-1639801565a0). [Both available at Amazon] A review of *Wild Earth* can be found in Buffy Aakash's marvelous poetry blog at: <https://www.buffyaakaashpoetry.com/post/exploring-little-songs> [editor's selection from that review follows]

Hill works the sonnet to the bone in this collection, and she really extracts the elements of the structure that punch their strengths, taking obvious delight in the Italian form, for which she shows a particular fondness. I especially like the structural variation she uses in "In Praise of Weeds" and "My Neighbor is a Property Rights Man," in which she employs two quatrains followed by two tercets. The break in between each of the four stanzas gives the reader a moment to breathe and savor the depth of them. "In Praise of Weeds" concludes:

So let us, rather, sing in praise of weeds
and everything that grows along the edge

...

In *Wild Earth*, Cindy Hill takes the reader on an exciting voyage of the sonnet, exploring its many mires and crevices, and she does so with such enthusiasm and gusto for formal poetry, which has been much maligned of late by advocates of free-verse only approaches. For those not aware of the almost endless multitude of sonnet variations in existence, the book includes a "List of Sonnets with Sonnet Type" on page 30. A welcome instruction to conclude a rare collection of solely formal poetry.

Jon Meyer's most recent book *Clouds: love poems from above the fray* won two awards from Feathered Quill book awards. Also, it won an Independent Publisher Book Awards for Poetry. Joshua Tree Press (2022) (9781733232845)

This review is by Susan Violante Managing Editor/CEO/Partner of I Have Something to Say Press (01/2023). [editor's selection from that review follows]

Susan says, "Clouds takes readers through a sensory journey that touches their mind and soul. I am a fan of Jon Meyer's work, so when I saw his latest book "Clouds: love poems from above the fray" I jumped on it! In this new collection, Jon Meyer presents his poetry alongside pictures of the place that inspired it, complemented with fun facts about the place, picture, or the inspiration for the poem.

What is new in this new collection is that Meyer went international and black and white! The book is structured by country and region, featuring 10 countries, the US being the last one and including features from 9 states. Once again, I was captivated by the overall experience of the photography, poems and inside scoop pages. Except this time, the black and white pictures added a mystifying effect to the journey.

My favorite places visited were Chile, Nepal, Norway, Israel, California, and Maine. What do all these places have in common? Clouds! Meyer's overall art is unique as his poems are elevated by the beautiful scenic pictures, taking readers through a sensory journey that touches their mind and soul. At the same time, Meyer gives us a backstage peek, which I found unique from other similar books, creating an enjoyable reading experience.



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How the Year is Shaping Up

We'll update this in each newsletter.

Jan 28, 2023	Annual Business Meeting	Joni Cole "Five Tips for Productive Revision."
Feb. 24, 2023	Book Club –	<i>Wonderbook</i> by Jeff Vandermeer
March 23, 2023	Open Mic	
April 13, 2023	Book Club	<i>The Heroine's Journey: For Writers, Readers, and Fans of Pop Culture</i> by Gail Carriger
April 22, 2023	Spring Event – Middlebury VT Library	"Stay on the Write Side of the Law: Legal Issues Every Writer Should Know" – by Cindy Hill, Esq.
May, 2023	Open Mic (tba)	
June 8, 2023	Book Club	<i>The Emotional Craft of Fiction</i> by Donald Maass
July 2023	Summer Event (tba)	
July 2023	Open Mic (tba)	
August 10, 2023	Book Club	Attendees will choose a book beforehand
September	Fall Event (tba)	
Sept. 2023	Open Mic (tba)	
October 12, 2023	Book Club	Attendees will choose a book beforehand
November tba	Winter Event(tba)	
Nov. 2023	Open Mic (tba)	
December 14	Book Club	Attendees will choose a book beforehand



Mini Editor's note: Covid Recovery is not completely complete, but the League of Vermont Writers weathered the worst of it by going digital as many groups were forced to do. HOWEVER, the League is nothing if not a social creature, and so we will begin 'sneaking out of the cave' with more in-person events. Last year we managed to pull off a great Writer's meet Agents event. We are working on the Spring event

mentioned on page 1- "Stay on the Write Side of the Law: Legal Issues Every Writer Should Know." Also, once again, the League will be collaborating with Northern Vermont University to sponsor the High School Writing Contest. **THE LEAGUE WILL NEED A LOT OF HELP FROM ALL OF YOU TO BRING US BACK INTO THE SUNLIGHT.**

- ♦ Read the League emails and League lines.
- ♦ Attend the events.
- ♦ Join the book club.
- ♦ Submit articles to the Newsletter.
- ♦ Volunteer when you can.
- ♦ Communicate with fellow members.
- ♦ Present at open mic.
- ♦ Read books published by members and do a review. This helps authors get "noticed."





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LVW Board: President, Amy Braun; Vice President, Jon Meyer; Secretary, Gail E. Wind, immediate Past President, Shawn Anderson, Board Members at Large are Cindy Hill, Jeniah Johnson, Gail Wind and Jon Meyer

DO YOU HAVE A PERSONAL WEBSITE OR FACEBOOK PAGE?

TELL YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT THE LEAGUE! IT'S EASY. JUST COPY AND PASTE THIS:

Check out the League of Vermont Writers at <https://leagueofvermontwriters.org/>

Here's the link to the latest Newsletter [LINK](#)

Contact the League at lvw@leagueofvermontwriters.org