



LEAGUE OF VERMONT WRITERS, INC.

League Lines

The League of Vermont Writers Newsletter

Join us!

January 23, 2016:
Annual Meeting &

Winter Program

DoubleTree Hotel

1117 Williston Rd

So. Burlington, VT

WINTER 2016 PROGRAM

Theme: Writing to Heal; Finding Your Authentic Voice
Program followed by a Social Session with Cash Bar

SARAH BARTLETT

PRESENTING:

**Writing to Heal(th):
Creating Safe Circles**

A safe place to tell the truth is a healing place ... Experience the power of Women Writing VT practices, inside and out.

About Sarah: Experienced writing coach and facilitator, Sarah W. Bartlett directs *writing inside VT*, a weekly writing opportunity since 2010 for Vermont's incarcerated women. This program arises from *Women Writing VT, LLC*, her program for women writing for self-



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GARY LEE MILLER

PRESENTING:

**Writers for Recovery:
A New Approach to
Treating Addiction**

For the past two years, in sites across Vermont, Writers for Recovery has offered free writing workshops for people in recovery or affected by substance abuse. The workshops employ a prompt-based/short write approach that ensures success for all writers. Work produced by Writers for Recovery participants has been featured in public readings and the Writers for Recovery blog, and is forthcoming in the first Writers for Recovery print anthology.

While the work created in Writers for Recovery is compelling, the real value of the program is its impact on participants' lives. In as little as ten weeks, the program



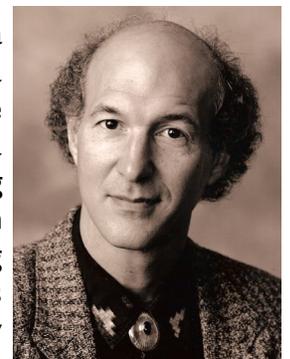
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DR. PAUL FOXMAN

PRESENTING:

**Dancing with Fear: How
a Psychologist Writing to
Heal from Anxiety Be-
came a Best-Selling
Author and International
Speaker**

In this presentation Dr. Foxman shares the true story about how his first book, *Dancing with Fear*, conceived as a personal healing project with no book contract, became a publisher's best-seller. The book spawned a profitable international speaking business and contributed to a thriving psychology practice and therapist training program, known as the Center for Anxiety Disorders, in Burlington, Vermont. Having found his authentic writing voice, Dr. Foxman has continued to write and has published two additional books with another currently under contract.



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Letter from the President

Dear members,

Happy Holidays! I hope this letter finds you well and cheery, peacefully reflecting on the wonders of the year almost-passed and hopeful for the new one that is upon us. And if you are neither cheery nor peaceful, I hope you are at least warm and well-fed, preferably on your favorite holiday treats.

In my April letter I wrote, "I am confident that this year, though it be a year of growth and development, will be a great year nonetheless, and we will come out at the other end of 2015 stronger and better than when we began." I am happy to report that I do believe this proved true; we had an incredible year.

Going against my nature to write a long-winded, prosey letter, I present you with this list to recap much (as no doubt, I've forgotten something) of what was accomplished in 2015. It's an impressive list and I can think of no better way to present it. (And I'll imagine each of you, after reading this list, applauding this organization that you continue to be a part of... yes I can hear you all now. That applause sounds so good...)

I hope to see many of you at the January program and annual business meeting on the 23rd. Let us ring in the New Year and start our year off with valuable time spent sitting together and learning more about our craft and about each other.

For the good of the cause,
Alyssa Berthiaume



LVW's 2015 Highlights:

- Began an Internship Program with Champlain College's Professional Writing Program and worked with two fabulous interns: Kara Joyce and Amanda Wedegis
- Implemented monthly e-newsletters using Mail Chimp
- Recreated our Twitter page
- Put new energy into our Facebook page
- Hosted a workshop on Author Platform with Barnes/MacQueen Publishing Resources
- Also hosted a workshop on self-publishing with Pat Goudey O'Brien and Paula Diaco
- Held the first 'Into the Words' Summer Retreat and Member Showcase (which was a raving success!)
- Had increased program attendance at both the summer and fall programs
- Redeveloped our programming committee
- Established a new marketing committee
- Circulated the July and September issues of *League Lines* in a more timely fashion.
- Attended Bookstock with a table and plenty of member-authors present
- Supported Burlington Book Festival through writing and providing author introductions and exhibiting
- Finished our Fiscal Sponsoring relationship with Burlington Writers Workshop (who now have their own 501©3 status!)
- Began preparations for Writers Meet Agents 2016
- Reviewed committee work and structure and began making improvements to our systems and operations
- Began working on an organizational budget
- Reviewed the LVW mission statement, statement of purpose, and the bylaws – all to be presented to membership at this the 2016 annual business meeting on January 23rd

Annalisa Parent will conduct an Inspiration Session, following the Winter Program

Annalisa is a *magna cum laude* graduate of Middlebury College's English Dept. and Creative Writing Program, where she studied under Julia Alvarez and Jay Parini. She writes for local, national, and international publications and for television. She's the author of *Chair & Pen: Musings on Writing and the Writing Life*, and co-wrote a novel, *No. 2 Inc*, released in 2014. Among many other accomplishments, she is a Gateless and a Vermont-State Certified Writing teacher, and a 2015 Vermont Teacher of the Year nominee. An Inspiration Session with Annalisa will be truly inspiring for those not taking part in the Annual Business Meeting.

FALL 2015 PROGRAM RECAPS

Creating Strong Openings

Sara J. Henry

by Amanda Wedegis



You have to revise your work. You have to fix your work.

But also, you have to believe in your work.
Sara J. Henry read the first

pages of her novel *Learning to Swim* for us. In the middle of her reading, she revised. She said this shows that a work can always be revised. Despite that, you must accept that there's a time to let your work go and send it to publication.

To be ready to submit work, you have to revise ...especially that first chapter or those first fifty pages.

As writers, we struggle not to put EVERYTHING on those pages. We want readers to know the context, characters, the nagging bits swarming in the back of our heads.

In reality, we don't need all that exposition. And our readers (and our potential agents), don't want to read it, either. That detail is not what draws the reader in.

Which isn't to say that we should dump all the character and setting for good. Sara doesn't want us to condemn our backstories. Just save it for later in the novel, when a little context might be necessary to understand a character's actions.

So put a halt on the backstory to start. Instead, lay out the problem in your first 5,000 words.

In *Learning to Swim*, the main character sees a little French boy thrown from a ferry into Lake Champlain. Right there in the first

fifty pages, the reader comes face to face with the conflict that sparks her novel.

Once the first chapter is out of the way, she says, the rest of the novel is allowed to flourish, and Sara had important rules for that, as well. Keep moving and don't lose your flow. Use dialogue to give personality to characters.

Over-do it. Yes. Don't underwrite crucial scenes.

Be honest. Imagine yourself as your character and evaluate how you would react to an emotionally-driven moment.

Last lines are as important as first ones. And Sara ended the presentation with one last line of advice:

Don't frustrate your reader. Don't kill dogs. Don't kill children. Email and pitch and market your work.

Vermont Poet Laureate

Sydney Lea at the Fall Program

by Kara Joyce



Vermont Poet Laureate Sydney Lea began his presentation by posing a question to the group: "What's the point of poetry without feeling?"

Lea stated that every narrative poem should have a distinct character, setting, and plot. The speaker can be anywhere, anyone, anything, but a speaker must be present, and the speaker should be an established character within the poem.

Lea read different poems displaying how the use of character and setting can be used well and the differences you can feel in the poem

when there is no distinct speaker, setting, and plot. He reminded us that our writing should continue to be accessible to everyone. Note that accessible does not mean you need to dumb down your work. It means the language should inspire anyone who picks up the work to read more. The language of pervasion, Lea called this. He drew attention to the classic phrase we've all heard a million times, "show don't tell."

"Sometimes telling works," Lea said. "But not too much telling."

He then moved on to the bane of my existence when writing poetry: line breaks.

"It begins as translation of a failed poem," Lea explained. Line breaks are what create the detail of a poem. They're part of that language of pervasion. They make the poem mean something, and give it that feeling Lea said poems are worthless without. His saying that it

was a translation of failed poetry, personally helped me to understand line breaks better than any teacher has been able to explain. Think of it as looking at a well written poem that doesn't express what the words mean. Put it all in a paragraph, and try again.

Finally, Lea closed with talking about metaphor in poetry. He said the one thing every English teacher I've ever had needs to listen to: not everything in a poem is a metaphor. He stated that many people believe there must be a different meaning to everything, but that's not necessarily so. Sometimes a river is just a river.

Overall, Vermont Poet Laureate Sydney Lea's presentation wonderfully explained the tricks to writing the most evocative narrative poetry you can write.

Just remember to make it have feeling.

FALL 2015 PROGRAM RECAPS

Katherine Quimby Johnson “Finding Your Place in the Great Conversation”

by Julia C. Hoover



After a wonderful lunch, conference goers were treated to a discussion by long-time League member and former Board Member Kathrine

Quimby Johnson, who spoke about *Finding Your Place in the Great Conversation*.

Johnson discussed writing as communication, and characterized the ‘Conversation’ as the Reader / Writer interface. At one end of the Conversation is the reader; Johnson reminded the audience that before we wrote, we were readers, and this is a habit we must maintain. As authors, we bear a responsibility not only to write, but to read, so that

we may become more creative, but also so that we may be aware of what is currently being written.

The bridge between the author and the reader is the one who critiques – the beta reader, the critique circle, etc. – and authors can learn enormously by participating in this process, too. The first professional critique for the writer is his / her editor.

Johnson then delved into the current online ‘Conversation,’ what she dubbed the ‘Conversation Part II.’ Social media has become increasingly important to today’s author. It can be used in a variety of ways: as a social gathering place; as an advertising tool; as a means to hone works; or as a hybrid of the three. Authors are increasingly mixing and matching the multitude of social media sites to meet their needs. The number one rule for any author is to find the tool that best meets his or her own needs. Although there is no single media site that is critical, online

presence somewhere is generally accepted. Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr are currently the top sites for authors. Once published, authors ought also to have their own web-sites, and there are various sites available at no cost for this purpose (e.g., WordPress).

Online presence today is not only recognized by who is online, but also by what they say. It is important, therefore, as in any professional environment, for authors to recognize that the internet is now akin to their office space – and to treat it accordingly. Authors should watch what they post on social media sites, treat posts as professional communications, and invite escalating conversations into less public forums, such as email. And as in everything else, not saying anything at all may be the best option.

Johnson’s session completed a wonderful afternoon and was well-received by all members.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

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* and the League’s web site.
- The marketing committee, programming committee, and membership committee are also actively taking new volunteers
- Please see separate announcements for volunteering for Burlington Book Festival and Bookstock
- We are developing a subcommittee for planning next summer’s Writers Meet Agents! You can be a part of planning one awesome event!

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.

INTERESTED IN HELPING TO MAKE **BOOKSTOCK** AN ANNUAL EVENT THAT LVW ATTENDS? PLEASE EMAIL LVW@LEAGUEOFVERMONTWRITERS.ORG WITH INTEREST IN SERVING AS AN ORGANIZER.



The LVW table at this summer’s Bookstock Festival!

LVW PO Box Address Has Changed
Effective immediately, LVW’s new address is:
P.O. Box 5046, Burlington, VT 05402

ANNOUNCEMENTS & OTHER OPPORTUNITIES CONT.

Do You Write Plays?

Are you Looking for a Group of Playwrights?

Please send LVW member Marge Sharp an email stating your interest. Marge is looking to start a playwriting group.

She can be reached at: margesharp@gmail.com

As a member of the League of Vermont Writers you have access to a *free manuscript critique service!*

Visit the website for more details.

Please note that the address for sending your manuscripts has changed.

Please send to:

LVW Manuscript Critique Service
Director c/o Sharon Putnam
108 Waterford Lane
North Springfield, VT 05150

Slate For Board of Directors

The Winter Program will feature our annual business meeting and vote on the slate for Board of Directors. As such, we would like to share with you the individuals who are nominated to join the Board-of-Directors. Bios for nominees for new At-Large Board Members will be provided at the annual meeting.

The candidates to fill At-Large positions are:

Shawn Anderson
Wendy Heilig
Annalisa Parent
Sharon Putnam

Candidates (and current board members) nominated to hold officer positions include:

Alyssa Berthiaume President
Bobbi Jo Davis Vice President
Elizia Meskill Treasurer
Julia Hoover Secretary

LVW AND HOW YOU CAN MAKE IT BETTER:

Reflections from the Outgoing VP, Mary Muncil

Several years ago, as I was leaving one of our quarterly programs, I complained to the organizer of the event that I didn't think a speaker was very good. As I told her this, her face dropped. She looked tired and discouraged, and I felt bad but thought, "What's the big deal?" Before becoming a member of the LVW board, I had no idea how much time and energy our 100% volunteer board put in.

I think that it is fairly safe to say that we all want to attend wonderful programs, held in very nice locations, with great speakers/presenters, and excellent food, and we want all of this delivered for under \$50 per person, but sometimes we forget that putting these programs together, in addition to writing, editing, and collecting information for our quarterly newsletter, keeping our non-profit status active, banking, collecting membership dues, and responding to community requests for our support/sponsorship, is basically done by a handful (and I mean a handful) of members.

Often times the board, and several non-board members, are trying to keep LVW moving along with as few as five to ten active people; most of whom have full time jobs in addition to their work for the League.

If you are interested in helping the League to become a better and stronger organization, I've listed a few ideas that I hope will be helpful.

1. **DON'T WAIT TO BE ASKED.** If you have ideas, contacts, or suggestions that you feel would benefit the League, please tell someone. It does involve some risk, I know. Thoughts like, "If I suggest an author for a program, and then they don't turn out to be very good, I'll be responsible," or, "If I make a suggestion, then I'll be asked to do more and I don't have the time," are thoughts we've all had but I encourage you to take the leap anyway.
2. **SPEAKERS:** Make suggestions from your own experience. If you're not happy with the programs speakers, make it a point to do some investigating on your own. The programming committee doesn't have greater access to high quality speakers than you do. We rack our brains for suggestions and would love yours!
3. **TALENTS OF YOUR OWN.** Could you help out in any way with the programs or *League Lines* (our newsletter)? Even a few hours a month would be a tremendous help.

My final thought is simply that we really are all in this together (both LVW and LIFE) and the more that I give to any endeavor, the more I receive.

In love and appreciation,
Mary Muncil (outgoing VP)

2016 Winter Program, continued

SARAH BARTLETT, CONTINUED:

discovery and social change. Recently published in *Chrysalis*, “I am Who I Was, But So Much More” describes this work.

Sarah’s first chapbook, *Into the Great Blue: Meditations of Summer* (Finishing Line Press, 2011) was followed by *HEAR ME, SEE ME: Incarcerated Women Write* (Orbis Books, 2013), which she co-edited. She has contributed articles to the award-winning *Women on Poetry: Writing, Revising, Publishing and Teaching* (McFarland & Co., Inc., 2012), *Contemporary American Women: Our Defining Passages*, (All Things That Matter Press, 2009) and *Ars Medica*; and poems to *Aurean*, *Adanna*, *LiteraryMama*, and *Minerva Rising*, among others. Sarah lives in Vermont and Massachusetts and blogs at sarahwbartlett.com.

She holds advanced degrees from Harvard, but continues her true learning from her children, grandchildren and the incarcerated women whom she mentors.

GARY LEE MILLER, CONT.

builds self-esteem, creates community around a commitment to sober living, and helps to destroy stereotypical views of addicts that make it harder for them to recover.

In this presentation, Writers for Recovery Creative Director Gary Lee Miller will talk about the origins and practice of Writers for Recovery, share work from participants, and talk about how Writers for Recovery is helping people of all ages and backgrounds to break free from addiction and live satisfying, productive lives.

About Gary: Gary Lee Miller earned his MFA at Vermont College of Fine Arts. His work has appeared in a number of literary magazines, including *Florida Review*, *Green Mountains Review*, *Hunger Mountain*, and *Chicago Quarterly Review*. Gary’s music writing can be found in *Seven Days*, Vermont’s weekly source for the arts, culture, and politics. His short story collection *Museum of the Americas* is the fiction finalist for the 2015 Vermont Book Award. Gary sings and plays guitar in the TrailerBlazers, a strictly hillbilly outfit, and serves as creative director of Writers for Recovery, a program using writing to help people overcome addiction. You can find more about him at garyleemiller.com.

DR PAUL FOXMAN, CONT.

About Paul: Paul Foxman, Ph.D., is a psychologist, author and international speaker on the topics of anxiety, stress, spirituality and relationships. He has also appeared on television and radio as an expert in his field. His books include *Dancing with Fear* (2007), *The Worried Child* (2004, nominated for Nautilus Book Award in Parenting/Family category) and a co-authored casebook, *Conquering Panic and Anxiety Disorders* (2003). Dr. Foxman is known for his knowledge and clarity, sense of humor, compassion, and engaging speaking style.

Dr. Foxman is the Founder and Director of the Center for Anxiety Disorders in Burlington, Vermont. In 1985 he co-founded the Lake Champlain Waldorf School, now flourishing from kindergarten through high school.

His education includes Yale University (B.A. in Psychology), George Peabody College of Vanderbilt University (Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology), and training at the Department of Psychiatry of Mt. Zion Hospital in San Francisco, the Kennedy Child Study Center in Nashville, and the San Francisco Psychoanalytic Institute.

TELL YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT THE LEAGUE!

HAVE THEM VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:

www.leagueofvermontwriters.org

Registration Form

LVW 2016 Winter Program & Annual Business Meeting (plus Inspiration Session)

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

Make check payable to: *LVW Winter 2016 Program*

Registrar: info@leagueofvermontwriters.org

DATE: January 23, 2016

TIME: 9:00am-4:00pm

LOCATION: DoubleTree Hotel, 1117 Williston Rd, South Burlington, VT 05403

Directions: From East -Take Williston Road from Taft Corners all the way into South Burlington. See DoubleTree on the left just before you reach Dorset Street. **From West, or I-89** - At Exit 14W off I-89, go through light at Dorset Street, see DoubleTree Hotel on right at next light.

Follow around to parking and conference entrance in back.

Schedule at a glance:

9:00-9:30 am *Registration*

9:45-10:45 am **Sarah Bartlett**

10:45-11:00 am *Break*

11:00-12:00 am **Gary Miller**

12:00-1:00 *Lunch*

1:00-2:00 pm **Paul Foxman**

2:00-2:15 pm *Break*

2:15-3:00 **Business Meeting** for members/
Inspiration Session with Annalisa for
non-members

3:00-4:00 **Wine Reception/**

Social - Cash Bar

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Members: _____ @ \$45 ea. registration = \$ _____

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

[Students, ask about our student discount]

Tax deductible donation: \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Check # _____

Do you have special dietary needs? _____

LVW Board: Alyssa Berthiaume, president; Mary Muncil, vice-president; Julia Hoover, secretary, Deb Fennell, past president; Elizia Meskill, treasurer; Pat Goudey O'Brien, Sharon Putnam, Wendy Heilig, Bobbi Jo Davis, and Lisa Halvorsen at large.

Membership: Tommy Waltz; 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 Waltz
157 Camp St.
Barre, VT 05641