



LEAGUE OF VERMONT WRITERS, INC.

League Lines

The League of Vermont Writers Newsletter

Register now!

October 6, 2018

8:30 AM to 5:00 PM

Trinity Episcopal Church

Shelburne, VT

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

LVW Fall Program



Other Paths to Publication: Independent Presses & Self-Publishing

Saturday, October 6, 2018

8:30 AM to 5:00 PM

Trinity Episcopal Church

5171 Shelburne Rd., Shelburne, VT 05482

Rates:

\$42 members / \$62 non-members

No door rate (pre-registration required)

AGENDA

8:30 AM – 9:30 AM

9:30 AM – 10:30 AM

10:30 AM – 10:45 AM

10:45 AM – 11:45 AM

11:45 AM – 1:00 PM

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

2:00 PM – 2:15 PM

2:15 PM – 3:15 PM

3:15 PM – 3:30 PM

3:30 PM – 4:15 PM

4:15 PM – 4:45 PM

Registration & Morning Refreshments

WHAT WOULD WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE DO IN TODAY'S PUBLISHING LANDSCAPE? with Sonja Hakala

Break

DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS: THE CRASH COURSE IN GOING THE INDEPENDENT PUBLISHING ROUTE with Ed Vincent

Lunch

Genre Breakout Session

Break

THE PUBLISHING JOURNEY REQUIRES PERSEVERANCE, COURAGE, AND HUMILITY: TIPS AND LIFE LESSONS FROM A PRO

with Bill Schubart

Break

Genre Breakout Session

Genre Panel

To register, please visit leagueofvermontwriters.org online, or send the registration form with a check to the League's P.O. Box postmarked by September 21, 2018.

(continued on page 3)

Letter from the President

Dear LVW Members,

We are now a big step into the second half of this year. It is a time when I like to reflect on the accomplishments to date and reevaluate my goals moving into the rest of the year. The same goes for my reflections for the League.

It was wonderful to see so many of you at the Winter Program and Annual Meeting held in South Burlington. The fireside chat and open mic in Killington this April was well received, and the Spring Program had a good turnout. The highly anticipated “Writers Meet Agents” event was a huge success: the speakers were informative, the pitch sessions went extraordinarily well, and the overall mood during the day was upbeat among both attendees and agents.

Reflecting on this year through the eyes of our organization, it appears we are heading in a positive direction. We have hosted three conferences, and we have LVW “swag” (pens and notepads with our logo). We have also offered workshops and had several people come forward to volunteer.

We are moving in the right direction. Where do we go from here? I believe over the years, we have created a firm foundation to keep building upon. I would like to see the League grow its membership—inspire other writers in our community, published and pre-published, to join the League so we can keep building on what we have now as a writing organization.

I believe by doing this, we will be able to provide more opportunities like workshops and seminars. A larger membership will allow us to reach the attendance rates we need for such events.

I want to take a moment to thank all members who have volunteered this year. It has been a big help and has added to our ability to make events run smoothly. We continually have need for volunteers. For those interested in volunteering for our Fall Program on October 6, please email:

lvw@leagueofvermontwriters.org

Let’s all take a moment to reflect on our year, readjust our goals, and make plans to achieve them.

All my best,

Bobbi Jo Capone

President

League of Vermont Writers



FALL PROGRAM

(continued)



Fall Into Words: A Reading and Gathering for Lovers of the Written Word

Friday, Oct. 5, 2018 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Join other League members on Friday, October 5, for an informal open mic and social emceed by Immediate Past President, Alyssa Berthiaume. Beverages will be provided.

Please bring no more than five minutes of reading from your own works (poems, short stories, articles, book chapters, etc.).

Please email alyssa.berthiaume@gmail.com by Friday, September 28, if you plan to attend. Include your contact information and whether you'd be willing to bring a baked good. This event is free of charge.

Location: Meeting Room 2, Town Offices of Shelburne, 5420 Shelburne Rd., Shelburne, VT

Other Paths to Publication:

Independent Presses & Self-Publishing

Saturday, Oct. 6, 8:30 PM – 5:00 PM



PRESENTATIONS

WHAT WOULD WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE DO IN TODAY'S PUBLISHING LANDSCAPE?

When William Shakespeare wrote his first full play, *Richard III*, in 1593, the publishing industry as we know it didn't exist. What would he do if he had access to all the publishing choices we have today? Would he look for an agent to guide him through the traditional publishing process? Would he use a vanity publisher like iUniverse? Would he publish his work independently?

Given all these choices, what should you do? Author and publishing professional Sonja Hakala is going to take you on a whirlwind tour of contemporary publishing so that you can make wise choices for your wallet, your books, and your career as an author.

Sonja Hakala



Sonja Hakala has been a professional writer since 1982. Her work has appeared in publications as varied as *Mother Earth News*, *Boston Globe*, *Yankee*, and *Vermont Magazine*. She is the author of 11 books, some of them with traditional publishers such as St. Martin's Press and Wiley Publishing, and others independently published through her own company, Full Circle Press LLC. Until she retired at the end of 2017, Sonja also worked as a publishing professional, editing and designing books for authors from all corners of the globe.

FALL PROGRAM

(continued)

DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS: THE CRASH-COURSE IN GOING THE INDEPENDENT PUBLISHING ROUTE

Drawing from his experience with Encircle Publications and years of publishing and graphic design, Eddie Vincent explores the details of independent publishing—including discussions on book production and cover design. He will be our resident expert on the nitty-gritty details and business decisions that are a part of a writer's path when they choose the Independent Publishing route.



Ed Vincent

Eddie is the co-owner of Encircle Publications LLC and has been in the publishing and graphic design field for over 30 years. His expertise is in complete book production. Eddie serves on the board of Independent Publishers of New England (IPNE). Eddie is also available to consult with publishers and independent authors, helping them bring their book to life.

THE PUBLISHING JOURNEY REQUIRES PERSEVERANCE, COURAGE, AND HUMILITY: TIPS AND LIFE LESSONS FROM A PRO

Bill Schubart will divide his time between comments and Q&A. He will open with his thoughts on and experience with traditional publishing, indie publishing, and self-publishing, having done all three. He will also address how important the writer's attitude to their work is in achieving success and will share in detail the specific costs he incurs in self-publishing, answering any and all questions.



Bill Schubart

[Bill Schubart](#) has lived with his family in Vermont since 1947. He co-founded [Philo Records](#) and is the [author](#) of the highly successful *Lamoille Stories* (2008), a collection of Vermont tales. His bibliography includes three short-story collections and four novels. His latest novel is *Lila & Theron* distributed by Simon and Schuster. He has served on many boards and currently chairs the [Vermont College of Fine Arts](#).

GENRE BREAKOUT SESSIONS/PANEL

Genre Breakout 1:

During this midday breakout session, we'll gather in genre-specific groups to collaborate on an original piece prompted by the day's emcee. Afterwards, a representative from each group will share their final piece.

Genre Breakout 2:

In the afternoon breakout session, we'll get back into our genre groups to network, swap business cards, and talk about current projects, recent publications, writing challenges, etc.

Genre Panel:

To end the day, a representative from each genre group will participate in an informal panel and report what they learned about their genre and its writers.

SUMMER 2018 PROGRAM—RECAPS

Writers Meet Agents

“This was probably the best ‘Writers Meet Agents’ event we’ve ever had,” said the League’s Immediate Past President, Alyssa Berthiaume. “And a huge part of the work was done by our Vice President Shawn Anderson.”

The participants seemed to agree with Berthiaume’s assessment. Attendees praised the event as well organized, entertaining, and informative—and the mood around the pitch room was exceptionally upbeat.

Following are recaps of the five presentations from the event in chronological order. A big thanks to League member Jerry Johnson for taking all the photos used in this article.



Your Getting-Published Action Plan

By Karen Knowles Wahrenberger

“Writing is solitary, but publishing is collaborative,” said Katharine Sands, an agent with Sarah Jane Freymann Literary Agency, in her presentation.

Your Action Plan:

Start taking notes. Anytime something important crosses your path, write it down. Find agents in *Writers Digest* or literaryagents.com. These are curated names with the titles of books they have sold.

Come up with five words that describe your writing. Understand what makes you truly interesting. In about 25 words, describe your novel in the most appealing, dynamic, engaging, exciting way.

Think of any award or achievement in the field you are writing about. Record any piece of praise that has come your way for any reason. Find statistics that show your viability.

Editors and publishers are seeking ways to measure your potential success. Can you identify a gap in the market, an interesting age demographic, hooks, newsworthiness? Find something numeric that communicates the excitement and possibility. Formulate a plan to build your readership.

Why does the world need this book? Why would you buy your own book? Decide which genre/category your book belongs in—you can only be on one shelf in the bookstore. Figure out your comp titles: What other titles have been recently published that are like yours? What other writers do you compare yourself to?

Work on a query letter for an agent that is one page and has all of the above packed in.

It is the author’s job to sell the book. Once you have an agency-author agreement, everything is about gearing up to be successfully published. You need a big opening, and you have to orchestrate it.

Discoverability means all the ways your book can be discovered. Have you written something that has gotten traction in social media—something that has been reposted, touched a nerve, or hit the *zeitgeist*? Is it something that would work regionally or nationally? Do you have a celebrity endorsement? A good byline?

Publishers want to know what the author is coming in the door with—any way eyeballs could fall on your book. You are out to get readers and numbers; it is all about the money.

SUMMER 2018 PROGRAM—RECAPS (Continued)

Writers Meet Agents

A publisher will give you a 20-page questionnaire about your life experiences. Be prepared enough to discuss your work on a talk show—what would you say about the book? Was there a life experience that helped you write this book? Compose five questions to give to a producer to ask you on the show.



How to Write a Page Turner

By Gail Ruggles

Hopefully, you had your pen poised and ready when Paula Munier, an agent with Talcott Notch Literary, began speaking, because she packed an hour with some of the most valuable “author hopeful” information you could want.

Munier quoted John Burnside as saying, “The definition of a page-turner really ought to be that this page is so good, you can’t bear to leave it behind, but then the next page is there, and it might be just as amazing as this one.” She then proceeded to teach us how to make it so.

She reflected on some timeless books that have endured through decades and even centuries— from the Bible to Sherlock Holmes. She explained that not only did they deal with timeless subjects, but they were paced, placed, and presented in ways that made them likeable and memorable.

The best stories pose questions to the reader and never fail to provide answers. *The reader must keep turning the page to get the answers to his or her questions.* One sign of a good writer is when a reader complains, “I stayed up way too late reading so-and-so. I just couldn’t put it down before I found out whether or not...”

Frailties to beware of: Never give lesser characters more glory than the hero or heroine. Don’t water down their power and luster! Beware of the stuffy beginning, the crammed middle, and the race to the finish line.

Munier reminded us of what we should all know—that first sentence, and then that first paragraph, is the do-or-die bookmaker. A good opening sentence should always make the reader ask: How could that happen? Where is he? Why did she murder the janitor? The result of an internal question is a turned page.

She surprised some writers by admonishing us not to be too kind to our protagonists. There was laughter when she quoted Vladimir Nabokov, who said, “The writer’s job is to get the main character up a tree and then, once they are up there, throw rocks at them.”

Munier also warned against endings that make the reader mad. The hero can die but not go missing. The house can burn down, but not without telling us if the cat got out.

She read us the riot act about backstory dumping. She went through how to choose language and reading level, chapter length, and how to cut to the chase, literally. If you paid attention to her lecture, took good notes, and then applied all you learned to your writing, you’d definitely be a lot closer to writing that coveted page turner.

SUMMER 2018 PROGRAM—RECAPS (Continued)

Writers Meet Agents



Embracing the Writer's Life

By Laura Power

Is this your life? At seven AM on a Saturday, you sit alone, teeth unbrushed and face unwashed, in front of a computer screen, tapping at a keyboard. Hours later, you've got 500 painstakingly selected words. After another 100, you promise yourself that you'll get up and stretch, but a third cup of coffee and a handful of jellybeans aren't fueling any inspiration. Outside, a warm sun shines on a patch of daisies that sway in the breeze.

Why are you inside writing instead of feeling the sun on your face, or walking the dog, or checking off the dozen items on your to-do list?

"It's not for the money," said literary consultant and developmental editor Ron Hogan. "Most writers have second jobs, and very few writers are famous."

One step to success is to ask yourself, "What is standing between me and my writing?"

Grit your teeth, look hard at your schedule, and carve out some uninterrupted time. Cultivate a habit of choosing writing rather than unproductive diversions. Get up an hour earlier or have a notebook ready on the commuter train. Be ready to jot down a thought or idea. Get ideas out of your head as soon as you have them, before they vanish. Always be thinking about writing.

Face your fears! Don't waste time fretting about finishing a piece, or pleasing friends and family with your work, or finding an agent or publisher. Write! Do the work and see where it takes you. Develop a support group of people who believe in you and understand why you aren't out partying, or cooking gourmet meals, or obsessively vacuuming. Then cherish those people. Minimize the time you spend with detractors who aren't encouraging and empathetic.

Hogan also suggested joining a writing group, but advises participants to stick to the fundamentals of productive feedback. Meditation, breathing exercises, therapy, or regularly talking with a nonjudgmental friend or coach can help writers cope with isolation and the need for extreme tenacity inherent in their lives.

Thankfully, the elements of the writing life don't all add up to hardship.

"There will also be times," said Hogan, "when your writing has its intended effect, when it falls into someone's hands and connects and hits them like a thunderbolt out of the blue. That's what we want from the writing life!"



Six Secrets of Successfully Published Authors

By Shannara Johnson

Sheree Bykofsky, agent and owner with Sheree Bykofsky Associates, Inc., is the author of over 30 books, a busy literary agent, travel writer, and expert poker player.

In her presentation, she shared six secrets every writer should know.

Secret #1: Persistence is more important than anything else.

You need to have a hard shell to become a published writer. Bestsellers all have stories of persistence behind them. *Chicken Soup for the Soul* was rejected by 144 publishers before Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen managed to entice a small publisher to take them on.

SUMMER 2018 PROGRAM—RECAPS (Continued)

Writers Meet Agents

Secret #2: Develop a keen sense of the marketplace.

Do some research at a bookstore. End caps (end-of-aisle displays) and themed book tables are the prime locations. Which books take up a whole shelf? How is your book different and better than what's out there?

Know your reader. Who is your audience, and how big is it? The wider the audience, the more likely it is that you have a potential bestseller.

Secret #3: Have a professional attitude toward your writing.

Abide by the submission guidelines on an agency's website. Remember your book has to be right for the agent you query. Don't go to agents for feedback, and don't pay any "reading fees".

If you send a manuscript by snail mail, don't stamp "Copyright" on every page. It's a sign that the author is paranoid and fears that an agent will steal their idea (which never happens).

Once your book is out, some people will bash or ridicule it. But through all of that, you have to maintain a professional attitude.

Secret #4: You must be able to meet deadlines.

Rupert Murdoch canceled all the books from authors who were late delivering their manuscripts and demanded the advances back. When you sign with a publisher, they don't wait around until you deliver your book—they create catalog copy, prepare for printing, create the cover, etc. So you need to take that deadline very seriously.

Secret #5: You need a good understanding of the publishing business.

Writers conferences are great opportunities to absorb information, make friends with other writers, and learn more about agents. You should also read some relevant books, like Bykofsky's *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Getting Published*.

Secret #6: Learn how to market your book.

Crime novelist Andy Straka is a master at marketing. His protagonist owned a falcon, so he invited local media to a park for a reading and book signing. At the park, a handler from the Ornithological Society presented a live falcon and demonstrated how these birds hunt. Straka used the same creative genius he used to write his novels to create the marketing events.

Many writers misunderstand what a platform is. Your platform is your stage, your fanbase. Dr. Oz's fans will buy anything he publishes on health issues, but he *does not* have a platform to write about, say, antique cars.

Wrapping up, Bykofsky compared her experience of becoming a contestant on *Wheel of Fortune* to becoming a published author. Her conclusion: Presenting yourself in the right light is as important as "knowing your stuff".

SUMMER 2018 PROGRAM—RECAPS (Continued)

Writers Meet Agents



How to Get into Bookstores—And What to Do There

By Pat Goudey O'Brien

Bookstores: a writer's natural habitat. But how to get our books into bookstores, aye, there's the rub.

Bookseller Elizabeth Bluemle from The Flying Pig Bookstore in Shelburne had some advice for getting books onto shelves and for attracting readers to buy those books.

High on her list of things to do: know your local bookstore from the inside. Go there, meet the staff, buy books there. When it's time to approach a store to stock your book or plan an author event, it's great if you already have a relationship with the store. The bookseller knows you support her efforts, so she'll feel good supporting yours.

Aim to patronize bookstores in your area rather than buying exclusively online.

When visiting brick-and-mortar stores to hawk your own book, don't tout its presence on Amazon. For many booksellers, hearing you crow about their number-one competitor is not the best way to start a conversation.

How you can let booksellers know you have a book in print:

1. Send flyers with a picture of your cover and info on your content. Provide title, author's name, ISBN, and how they can order the book: Directly from you? Through Ingram or Baker & Taylor? Another distributor? Consignment, if the store uses that option?
2. Visit the store with copies of your book. If you can, call ahead for an appointment. If you're making cold calls, ask if it's a good time to talk before launching into a sales pitch. Be ready to leave flyers and contact info if the bookseller is too busy to talk when you drop in.
3. Follow up with a call if you don't hear back. You might fall through the cracks, a polite call can put you back on their radar.
4. Make sure your book is a worthy product! Good writing, professional-looking design and printing/binding—these make your book more attractive to a bookseller and to readers.

Once you have a book in stores, it's up to you to generate interest and drive readers to the store.

Talk to booksellers about doing an in-store event. Or plan an off-site event and invite the bookstore to participate.

Once an event is planned, *spread the word*. It's your job to get people to come. Most book events attract people who know the author or have some connection with the author or topic. Market yourself; build your readership; use social media; build your audience.

Elizabeth mentioned Front Porch Forum as a great way to reach out to your local audience about an event, in-store or off-site. Post notices in local newspapers, hang posters on local bulletin boards, tell friends.

These are just a few highlights from Elizabeth Bluemle's presentation—if you missed it, talk to members who were there. And don't miss the next one.

RECENTLY PUBLISHED

League Members' Credits and Accomplishments

Katherine Quimby Johnson

Kathy published [an "In Memory" article](#) in honor of former LVW board member Charlene Wil-ling McManis on Cynthia Leitich Smith's blog, *Cynsations*.

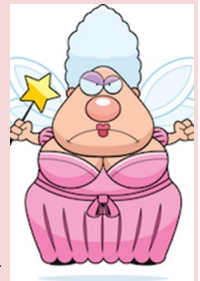


Alyssa Berthiaume

In April, A.Y. Berthiaume joined the team of Burlington VT *Mom's Blog* as a monthly contributor. To date, [she's published five posts](#). In June, Berthiaume launched her own [website](#) and blog, and invites you all to check it out and subscribe to her list for post notifications.

Shannara Johnson

In August, Shannara launched her new Law of Attraction website and blog, "[Grumpy Manifestation Queen](#)". Sign up on the homepage to get notified whenever she publishes a new blog post and to receive special reports and announcements. You can also find new Law of Attraction posts and comments on her [@GrumpyLOAQueen Twitter page](#).



Carolyn Cory Scoppettone

Carolyn's article "Horses as Healers Around the World" appeared in [FACES magazine](#) in October 2017. The article centered on the practice of therapeutic riding, which helps people with autism and other disorders.

Lisa Halvorsen and Pat Goudey O'Brien

Lisa and Pat are the co-authors (along with Christina Tree, a Massachusetts writer) of two Vermont guidebooks: [Backroads and Byways of Vermont](#) (May) and [Explorer's Guide Vermont](#) (August). Both are published by Countryman Press, an imprint of W.W. Norton. Lisa also had a travel article on Burlington, Vermont, in the July/August issue of *AAA Home and Away Magazine*.



Registration Form

Fall Program 2018: OTHER PATHS TO PUBLICATION-INDEPENDENT PRESSES & SELF-PUBLISHING

Register online at www.leagueofvermontwriters.org or fill out the form below and send the registration form with a check to the League's P.O. Box postmarked by September 21, 2018.

League of Vermont Writers, P.O. Box 5046, Burlington, VT 05402.

Please make your check payable to: **League of Vermont Writers.** Write "Fall Program" on the memo line.

Registrar: lvw@leagueofvermontwriters.org

DATE: Saturday, October 6, 2018

TIME: 8:30 AM – 9:30 AM Check-in/registration/
morning refreshments
9:30 AM – 5:00 PM Program

LOCATION: Trinity Episcopal Church, 5171 Shelburne Rd., Shelburne, VT 05482

DEADLINE: September 21, 2018. Please register as soon as possible.

Schedule at a Glance:

8:30–9:30	Registration & Morning Refreshments
9:30–10:30	WHAT WOULD SHAKE SPEARE DO IN TODAY'S PUBLISHING LANDSCAPE? with Sonja Hakala
10:30–10:45	Break
10:45–11:45	DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS: THE CRASH COURSE IN GOING THE INDEPENDENT PUBLISHING ROUTE with Ed Vincent
11:45–1:00	Lunch
1:00–2:00	Genre Breakout Session
2:00–2:15	Break
2:15–3:15	THE PUBLISHING JOURNEY REQUIRES PERSEVERANCE, COURAGE, AND HUMILITY: TIPS AND LIFE LESSONS FROM A PRO with Bill Schubart
3:15–3:30	Break
3:30–4:15	Genre Breakout Session
4:15–4:45	Genre Panel

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Members: _____ @ \$42 each registration = \$ _____

Non-members: _____ @ \$62 each registration = \$ _____

(Students, ask about our student discount)

For the genre breakout sessions, which genre group would you like to be placed in?

- Fiction
- Nonfiction
- Children's/YA
- Poetry
- I would like to opt out of the genre breakout sessions.

Tax deductible donation: \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Check # _____

Do you have special dietary needs? _____

TELL YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT THE LEAGUE!

HAVE THEM VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:

www.leagueofvermontwriters.org

LVW Board: Bobbi Jo Davis, president; Shawn Anderson, vice-president; Alyssa Berthiaume, past president; Ron Jensen, treasurer; Shannara Johnson, secretary; Lisa Halvorsen, Annalisa Parent, Tammy Hetrick, Amy Braun, and Joan Grant at large.

Membership: Tommy Walz

League Lines is published four times per year. Questions or information can be emailed to us at

lvw@leagueofvermontwriters.org