



LEAGUE OF VERMONT WRITERS, INC.

League Lines

The League of Vermont Writers Newsletter

March 2020

The League's Spring Program Has Been Canceled



Usually, we would have opened registration by now for our Spring Program that was scheduled for April 18, 2020, in Waterbury, Vermont.

However, considering the COVID-19 outbreak and its impact on New England, we have made the difficult choice to cancel/postpone this program.

The good news is we now have the challenge and opportunity to take a fresh look at how and when we deliver our programming and get creative.

Through recent events, we have remained in constant contact with speakers and the hotel to shift these resources to future programs with zero to minimal financial impact on the League.

Thank you for your flexibility and support of the League.

Wishing you and your families health and safety,

Shawn & the LVW Board of Directors

Letter from the President

Dear LVW members and friends,

I'm happy to serve you as the president of the League of Vermont Writers.

Thus far, 2020 has thrown us a few curveballs, and some big transitions in leadership. As we adapt and shift priorities, I believe we are positioned to make some changes that will ensure our growth and success as an organization.

I look forward to working with Vice President Amy Braun and this new configuration of our Board of Directors to increase membership and strengthen our place in the writing community. To achieve these goals, here are some priorities that the team will be looking at and working on in the first part of 2020:

Building membership

To grow and further ensure our financial health, we need to identify and welcome new writers, both published and pre-published, into our ranks. To do so, we will increase our engagement with potential members, offering new dynamic benefits to create compelling reasons to join the League.

Forging new connections

There are pockets of writers in our state that we have yet to identify and tap into. To find these people, we will explore organizations and professional groups with similar objectives in Vermont and New England and foster relationships with them.

Delivering quality programming

Developing the writing craft and professional development of our members is key to the League of Vermont Writers' mission. We are committed to thinking outside the box to bring you excellent speakers and program experiences while optimizing the value of everything we do.

I look forward to working with each and every one of you in 2020 to ensure the continued success of the League.

Shawn Anderson

President, League of Vermont Writers



MISCELLANEOUS

A Very Special Announcement: Lisa Halvorsen Has Been Appointed to Secretary

By Shawn Anderson, President

I'm pleased to announce that one of my first presidential initiatives was to appoint Lisa Halvorsen to the open secretary position.

Lisa has been on the board for a long time and her skills, expertise, and historical knowledge of the League strengthen our Executive Board. Her recent work on the League's history video and anniversary celebration exemplifies how we need to look back to move forward.

She reflects the heart and soul of what we want the organization to stay true to.

Please join me in welcoming Lisa officially back onto the board in her new, vital role.

SAVE THE DATE: WRITERS MEET AGENTS Is Scheduled for July 18

Please continue to save the date for **Saturday, July 18, 2020**, for our biennial **WRITERS MEET AGENTS** summer program.

The Delta Hotel in South Burlington is reserved, and we are working hard to book presenters and agents and editors to offer pitch sessions.

We are cautiously optimistic that the situation will be different by the date set for this program. In light of everything going on, we will continue to keep a close eye on the COVID-19 pandemic and alter plans as needed.

More details are on the way, so check www.leagueofvermontwriters.org and our Facebook page for updates.

RECENTLY PUBLISHED

League Members' Credits and Accomplishments

Lynda Graham-Barber



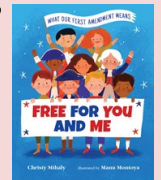
In 2019, Lynda's picture books *Cookie's Fortune* and *KokoCat Inside and Out* (Gryphon Press) were translated into Chinese as part of a countrywide humane education program. Her book, *Say Boo!* (Candlewick) was selected as a Scholastic Book Club selection.



Christy Mihaly



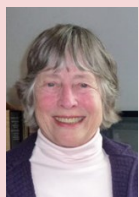
Christy's new picture book, *Free for You and Me: What Our First Amendment Means*, was published in March 2020 by Albert Whitman & Company (illustrations by Manu Montoya).



The book introduces young readers to their First Amendment rights: freedom of religion, of speech, and of the press, and the rights to assemble peacefully and to petition the government.

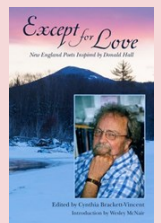
Free for You and Me features short poems, historical vignettes about the development of the First Amendment, and a contemporary story told in dialogue bubbles, showing young people exercising their rights to engage in community issues, all paired with colorful, kid-friendly illustrations.

Kathleen McKinley Harris



Kathy's poem on D-Day, the second she has written on this subject, was accepted by PoemCity in Montpelier and read at an event on June 6, 2019.

Her poem, "Valentine's Night," was published in the anthology, *Except for Love: New England Poets Inspired by Donald Hall*, which was edited by Cynthia Brackett-Vincent, Encircle Press, and released on June 23rd, 2019.



Kathy participated in the Vermont Authors Fest on Aug. 17, 2019, at Craftsbury Common, and read her poem "Bear Fear," a winner of the Ralph Nading Hill, Jr. Literary Award.

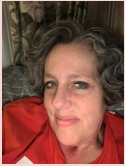
On Nov. 13, 2019, her poem, "The Guerrilla Girls Poster," was published in the Fleming Museum chapbook, *Ekphrastic Poetry Reading*. The poem was based on Ruth Greene Mould's "Portrait of a Vermonter" in Fleming's permanent collection.

Kathy was a judge at the poetry slam contest at the Dorothy Alling Memorial Library in Williston for students grades 1–12 on Nov. 20, 2019.

RECENTLY PUBLISHED

League Members' Credits and Accomplishments

Amy Braun



In December 2019, Amy's short story, "Hospice Holiday," won first prize in the holiday story contest of the *Herald of Randolph* newspaper.

In January 2020, her essay, "[Solstice Saturday](#)," was published on the [essaydaily.org](#) website.

Louella Bryant



Louella's novel, [Cowboy Code](#), was published in August 2019 by Black Rose Writing; it is available on Amazon and Barnes & Noble.

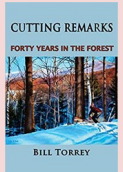


Bill Torrey



In June 2019, new League member Bill republished his first book, [The Ta Ta Weenie Club](#) (Onion River Press).

In September, he published his second book with Onion River Press, [Cutting Remarks—Forty Years in the Forest](#), which chronicles his career working in the woods



beginning when he was 16.

Northern Woodlands magazine published a chapter from *Cutting Remarks* titled, "Mad River Glen—Log It If You Can" in their Winter 2019 issue. Bill occasionally hosts "Storytelling VT" at the Light Club Lamp Shop in Burlington and did so in January 2020.

Jean Yeager



In 2020, Jean published his e-book, [The Kite of Your Genius](#), a collection of very short essays and intense creative nonfiction.

In 2019, he hosted quarterly readings by Ageless Authors at the Phoenix Bookstore in Rutland.



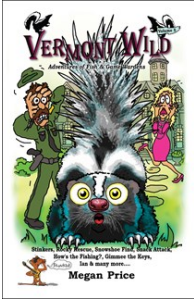
Also in 2019, Jean's movie script, *How Santa Claus Came to Simpson's Bar*, became a finalist in the Western film category of the Las Vegas International Film & Screenwriting Competition.

Submit your recent accomplishments and publishing credits to Shannara Johnson (shannara.johnson@gmail.com) for inclusion in *League Lines*. Please only include published works from the past year, including books, short stories, magazine articles/columns, guest blogs, plays, and movie/TV scripts. Other accomplishments may include the facilitation of writing workshops, hosting of open mics, and more. Unfortunately, works in progress or older than one year cannot be considered for *League Lines* but may be posted on the League's Facebook page.

WINTER PROGRAM Recaps

Megan Price: “Secrets of a Successful Writer”

By Shannara Johnson



In her riveting presentation, Megan Price, best-selling author of the popular *Vermont Wild* series, said horror stories she heard from traditionally published authors influenced her decision to go indie. One author who was promised that he’d have some say in the cover design found himself looking at pink and white cartoon characters (his book was about Ebola).

Megan said the *Vermont Wild* series basically saved her life. Life wasn’t great: She had a chronic illness and was in severe pain; she had neither money nor health insurance, and had just bought a new house. Her friend Eric Nuse kept pestering her about writing down the amusing and often outrageous things fish and game wardens experience. At first, she resisted, but the stories were

truly funny and she desperately needed to make money.

Initially, Megan said, she wrote for the wrong audience, namely for game wardens instead of the general public... until she had an epiphany when a librarian told her that the number one book boys checked out was about grizzly bear attacks.

So how do you get your books out there? First, you need to do your research about the different publishing options available to you, from pure indie to hybrid publishing. You should also develop an elevator pitch to describe your book in less than 20 words. You have to find your own niche; compare yourself to other authors in your field, see where you fit in, and what’s different about you.

Make sure you get the best cover artist because you have only 3–5 seconds to capture the attention of potential readers. Don’t use paperback covers treated with varnish, because they curl easily. Instead, you’ll want UV-treated covers since they are more resistant to the weather. And don’t use teeny-tiny print because the population is aging, and many people can’t see very well.

Don’t use gory or bad language; it cuts down your target audience. Megan initially thought that mostly men would buy her books, but it’s actually mothers and grandmothers buying them for boys, girls, and men.

It’s very important that you’re not just online but also in bookstores. Usually, they will want something like a 40/60 revenue split, which is fine because they will help you greatly get eyeballs on your book. It’s also a good idea to buy stands for books and give them to bookstores.

Megan said she does fewer print ads now because people don’t read newspapers anymore. She does radio and podcasts, though, and speaks personally to bookstore owners and managers.

A good time to publish is before Christmas. January to April is not a good time for book sales, at least not in Vermont. Learn how to write a press release, put it on your Facebook page, and send it to newspapers. Sometimes, Megan also brings the game wardens with her to book signings.

WINTER 2019 PROGRAM Recaps (continued)

There are many ways to become successful as an indie author. One guy writes vampire stories and publishes them on Amazon, a short e-book every three weeks. He sends them to his editor and then publishes them for 99 cents each.

Megan recommends Onion River Press, Phoenix Bookstore's self-publishing arm, as well as Vistaprint for bookmarks and book cards (which you should definitely have). Whenever you approach a new market, bring one book and one bookmark, and only go when the store manager is there.

Ann Dávila Cardinal: "The Moveable Feast of Promoting Your Writing"

By Lauren Palmer

Marketing. Self-promotion. Social media. A few authors relish the challenge. Many would rather pack their belongings and run the other way.

Ann Dávila Cardinal, twice-published young adult novelist and self-proclaimed "tattooed punk," presented her thoughts on navigating the ever-changing and sometimes perilous world of book marketing.



Even in traditional publishing, self-promotion is becoming more and more of a necessity. Social media is booming. Facebook, though still popular with the older crowd, is on its death bed. The hot new royalty of social media is Instagram. Ann shared some top tips on creating Instagram posts: post photos about your book *and* about yourself. Build your brand while balancing the professional with the relatable and everyday.

Ann also delved into hashtags. Hashtags essentially act as an index to your post, the most popular of which include: #bookstagram #writersofinstagram #writingcommunity #authorsofinstagram. Instagram users subscribe to these hashtags. All you have to do is add a few relevant hashtags to each of your posts to allow users outside of your current followers to see and connect with your page.

Ann touched on Twitter, advertising it as a great way to connect with librarians, booksellers, and writers from around the world. Beware, however, the danger of getting sucked into the often toxic wonderland of daily Twitter drama.

Goodreads, though great for readers, is often "where the trolls hide," as Ann put it. Approach Goodreads, should you so dare, bearing your armor well.

YouTube is another developing art form for writers, especially worth exploring if your target audience is younger. Ann briefly discussed the dreaded Amazon, emphasizing that author pages can help readers connect with you as the writer as well as discover your work.

Beyond social media, Ann encouraged forging partnerships with local bookstores and themed writers groups, both great ways to cross-promote. She also recommended seeking out the aid of younger generations. Utilize the resident experts on technology living in your community and even in your own house.

Within all this chaos, Ann impressed the importance of taking care of yourself. Find what works for you. Take a break when needed. She heartened the audience to "be good literary citizens." It's easy to get drawn into the negativity of today's politics and social trends. Support your fellow writers so we can build instead of destroy our community.

So #timetogettechsavvy!

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

LVW Board: Shawn Anderson, president; Amy Braun, vice president; Bobbi Jo Capone, immediate past president; Ron Jensen, treasurer; Lisa Halvorsen, secretary; Joan Grant, Pat Esden, Hank Parker, Caryn Connolly, Peter Hogenkamp 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