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Spring Event Recap

Under My Umbrella (ella, ella) with the League of Vermont Writers

by Kyle Munderville

When I arrived on a cold and rainy morning to the League of Vermont Writers spring event, I wasn't quite sure what to expect. It was enough of a challenge getting out of the house at 8 a.m., let alone making sure I "got the most out of the event."

That's always the rub, for me at least. The need to feel productive and maximize my time. With a demanding corporate day job, a young child at home, and nagging conscience, I knew I had five hours to learn everything I could. I did not want to squander the opportunity!

A mix of published authors, booksellers, and real writers were in attendance. I must admit, I was excited, but also a bit nervous. As soon as I got there, I began helping to set up the event. From the moment I started cutting pound cake in the kitchen, any hesitation I felt slipped away. This is such a welcoming group who truly embody the mission of helping anyone who makes writing a part of their life.

I learned about peoples' writing projects, both big and small. I heard from an amazing panel of speakers with such vast experiences. I networked with people who have published novels, secured agents, created successful careers as editors...the list goes on. Weeks later, something has stayed with me from the panel: the advice to not only remain passionate about my projects, but also to proudly tell people I'm a writer.

Of course, you need to believe in yourself, but you can't grow a career if you keep it a secret. It is time to get myself out there, build an audience, and network, network, network!

I am bubbling with new ideas following the event. I feel a newfound excitement about chasing my dream of becoming a published author. And now I have a list of (local) contacts who can help. Everyone I spoke with took the time to listen to me and provide genuinely helpful suggestions. I ran into people on the way out who said, "You should look at this publishing house." People in the parking lot who yelled, "Text me. I have some ideas."

I even had the joy of reconnecting with a former neighbor and catching up on work, life, and our shared history with a lawn buddha!

I feel reinvigorated, and I'm thrilled to be a part of the League of Vermont Writers.

**I am referencing Rihanna's song "Umbrella" in the title, a song about sticking with something through thick and thin.

Editor's Notes:

Our Spring Event was "The Job of the Author to Help a Book Succeed," a live, in-person event held in Underhill, Vermont. Forty-five people attended the event! Bradley Ferland, radio talk-show host at WDEV-AM-FM in Waterbury led a panel of speakers:

- Stephen Russell Payne, author of *You Were Always There*, *Life on a Cliff*, *Ties that Bind Us*, and others.
- Elizabeth Bluemle, owner of The Flying Pig Bookstore in Shelburne, Vermont, publishing commentator, and author of the Charlotte Zolotow Award-winning children's book *TAP TAP BOOM BOOM* and others
- Bill Schubart, an author who writes about Vermont in fiction, humor, and opinion pieces. His books include *Lila & Theron*, *The Priest*, *The Correctional Facility* and *The Lamoille Stories*.
- Gerette Buglion, author of *An Every Day Cult*, a true-life story.

After our Lunch break, there were breakout sessions – each of our presenters sat with a group of attendees and chaired an open discussion. Though the day was grey and drizzly, the mood inside the Underhill Town Hall was sunny and excited.

Free Zoom Events

Book Group

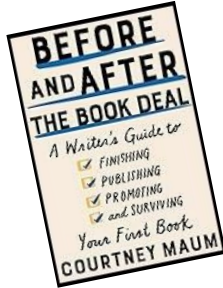
Book group met Thursday, June 12, from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. ET.

The book discussed was *BEFORE AND AFTER THE BOOK DEAL* by COURTNEY MAUM.

We are planning to continue meeting even months to discuss books on publishing, creativity, and writing craft.

If you would like to join the group, please email the League at lvw@leagueofvermontwriters.org and put "LVW BOOK GROUP" in the subject line, and I will add them to the email list. You don't need to be residing in VT to join.

As always, please feel free to come and join the discussion even if you have not read or finished the selected work. We love to get together and talk craft!



Open Mic

Open Mic is held on alternating months with Book Group. Open Mic is odd months: January, March, May, July, September, and November. Book Group is even months: February, April, June, August, October, and December.

The next Open Mic night is on July 5th, 2025, 7:00 p.m. This is a live, Zoom event. (It is a bit early this month as Gail will be unavailable the next three Thursdays.)

We encourage all members to attend. Bring your friends! Listen to and support these brave presenters.

If you are curious about what our open mic nights look like, just join the Zoom and sit back. You can leave your video blank and just be a "fly on the wall." You will find it a comfortable, sharing space.

We welcome authors in all genres to share their published and/or unpublished work. This is also a safe space to try out something new on a supportive crowd.

POETRY

From the NPR April 17, 2025 Newsletter – Life Advice

(By Permission)

A great poem can help you process feelings of sadness, anger, or fear, and it can also bring joy.

However, connecting with these emotions may be more challenging if you haven't engaged with poetry in some time.

In honor of National Poetry Month, here are some tips shared by poets with *Life Kit* to help you establish a meaningful connection with this art form.

- You shouldn't approach poetry like it's school. Remember, there's no quiz or essay you have to write about it after.
- Don't put pressure on yourself to unlock the meaning behind the poem. Instead, ask yourself how you feel or what your overall impression of the work is.
- Poetry is an oral art. Try reading it out loud in different ways, including savoring every word and every syllable.
- If the poem doesn't offer visuals, try visualizing it in your mind.
- You can also doodle images that stick out in your head while reading.
- For more guidance on how to read poetry like a poet, listen to this episode of PR's *Life Kit*.
- Subscribe to the *Life Kit* newsletter for expert advice on love, money, relationships and more.
-

Libraries and Bookstores News

How Do You Move 10,000 Books?

by Gail Wind

If you write jokes for *Reader's Digest*, this could be a great straight line. But for Michelle Tuplin, owner of Serendipity Books in Chelsea Michigan, it was no joke. She had recently moved to a new, larger storefront. But she was faced with a daunting project – moving her entire inventory from one store to another.

If she were moving across town, she'd have little choice. She'd have to box everything up, load it in a truck, and unload it at the new digs.

But her new storefront was in the same town, and not far from the first — around the corner in fact. You could walk from the old to the new without ever leaving the sidewalk. And that's what gave her an idea.

“Tuplin put out a call for volunteers, hoping some might lend a hand. What she got was a full-on movement — a human conveyor belt stretching 350 feet from the old store's stockroom, around the corner and into the new location. More than 300 people — and one very good dog — showed up to help. Neighbors, customers and even passersby joined in, forming two human chains to get the job done.

In less than two hours, Serendipity Books' entire inventory had been transferred — in alphabetical order, no less. “There was a 91-year-old woman. There was a good customer who has issues with his heart. There was somebody with their 6-year-old child. And we figured if we just did it book by book, everybody could be involved,” Tuplin said.”¹

Film crews were on hand – as were dozens of cell phones – to record the amazing community event as they passed the books ‘fireman's bucket brigade style’ from the shelves of the old store, right around the corner, down the street and into the new store, where they were immediately shelved appropriately. Luckily, it was a lovely day, people were joyous and the job got done flawlessly.

On their Facebook page, Tuplin posted this, “Today this community showed up beyond our wildest dreams. In just under 2 hours, around 300 of you moved OUR ENTIRE BOOKSTORE from old store to new. Grateful doesn't even begin to express how we are feeling. Thank you, thank you, thank you, we love you, Chelsea!”

¹ [Link to the NBC news story](#)

Above the Flood

by Gail Wind

If you were a newspaper reporter, you might accidentally read the title as “above the fold.” In newspaper parlance, “above the fold” is the cherished top half of the front page (the part visible when the paper is folded), the most prominent and visible area. Nowadays, it means the content on a webpage that is visible without the user having to scroll down.

But for one small public library, stay relevant (and dry), they had to literally get “above the flood.” Since the early 1900s, The Johnson Public Library of Johnson, Vermont has suffered many flooding events, including the flood of 1927 that destroyed all its books!

In 2023 and 2024, the flood waters struck again and the Town Administrator, Thomas Galinat decided enough was enough. With a nod from the Johnson Select Board, the library applied for, and was awarded a grant through the U.S. Department of the Treasury Capital Projects Fund grant program to move the library to higher ground.

Over 100 people helped in just the planning and prep work. The electric company moved hundreds of feet of overhead wires, and they had to remove a few trees. One special crabapple tree was actually dug up and replanted.

The library, (also the only historic Georgian revival-style building in Johnson, according to State Register of Historic Places documents) is now located next to the town's elementary school. It will get new meeting rooms, a computer lab and extended parking space.

A full story about this remarkable move can be found on the Vermont Public Website at this link:

https://www.vermontpublic.org/local-news/2025-04-29/johnson-moves-historic-library-out-flood-zone-begins-new-chapter?fbclid=IwY2xjawKyW4hleHRuA2FlbQIxMQBicmlkETBnYlJnd1lUUE5mcXQ5MExlAR6nVNn4nkapZiZ1iNy6j_w6B-k1-2tX6FeZyp-QuXbGHBbtJlwAcJjhZixdlw_aem_IoPEdSiMiZs-IqYosOqkMg

A Poem by LVW Member George Longenecker

Rib Cage

by George Longenecker

Bones barely show,
just a bit of red flesh left,
ribs stick out of snow,
almost gnawed away by coyotes.

My dog is fascinated by
these remains of a deer,
nose in the air, straining at his leash,
perhaps he'd like to b
Two chickadees land
to peck at bones,
sing their late winter whistle.

We wander up the trail,
chickadees' songs carry me back years,
to a cemetery where Shirley Leonard
was buried our senior year
after her motor scooter crashed,
buried in her prom dress,
nothing left now,
but threads and bones—
skull and rib cage.

We leave the chickadees to their snack,
climb the trail beneath pines,

but my mind wanders
back to the cemetery,
Veterans' graves on a knoll.

Rick Kearns is buried there,
he made it back from Vietnam,
but on his way from a wedding,
ran his car into the wrong lane,
killed himself and a family of five,
buried in his Marine dress uniform,
nothing left now but threads,
medallions and bones—
skull and rib cage.

A prisoner I know
called this morning,
said he'd love to be free
to walk here in the woods,
with my dog and me,
40 years of slow death in a cage,
no birdsongs, only clanging doors.

My dog greets death differently,
but what do I know of
bones in snow,
of those who die young—
on the way home
sweet scent of pine and hemlock.

"Rib Cage" was published in *Third Street Review* at
<https://third-street-review.org/poetry/rib-cage/>

George Longenecker's poems and short stories have been published in *Atlanta Review*, *Evening Street Review*, *Gyroscope Review*, *Main Street Rag*, *The Mountain Troubadour* and the anthology *2021 Best Short Stories* from the *Saturday Evening Post Great American Fiction Contest*. His book *Star Route* was published by *Main Street Rag*. He lives in Vermont.

LVW Book Group / Open Mic Reports

Open Mic 2025 Update

by Gail Wind

LVW has hosted three open mic nights so far this year. January 30th, March 20th, and May 22nd. We've had a total of twenty readers present at our events.

We are slowly building an audience too. I firmly believe that open mic will be more fun if we can gather a nice audience of onlookers. Who doesn't like applause? We unmute our microphones after a reader is finished and give them a good round of appreciation.

Everyone is invited to attend open mic nights and bring friends, family, teachers, and students to listen, comment, and applaud.

As in publishing, performing one's work is an addition to your bio and is an indication to agents and publishers that you are willing to promote what you have written. The group is always a cordial and supportive one and a wonderful place to start practicing for those bigger performances at bookstores, libraries, and writers' conventions. Our next open mic is Thursday, July 5th. More information will be coming via email.

The LVW Book Group Updates: Before and After the Book Discussion

by Shawn T. Anderson

The book for June's discussion is *BEFORE AND AFTER THE BOOK DEAL* by Courtney Maum. The virtual discussion will be held on June 12 from 7:00PM–8:00PM ET. Book group discussions are usually on Thursday nights in the even months of the year. This was a well welcomed reread for me, and I picked up new things this time around. It's a great crash course into the world of the publishing industry, a book I'm sure I'll come back to time and time again.

2025 is off to a great start with this book joining Rick Rubin's *THE CREATIVE ACT* (February's pick) and our very own Sharon Darrow's *WORLDS WITHIN WORDS* (April's selection) on the LVW book club's shelf. We are currently compiling a list of all the books we've read since the book group has started to use as a resource, so stay tuned.

Our August book will likely be *1,000 WORDS: A Writer's Guide to Staying Focused and Productive All Year Long* by Jami Attenberg. The meeting date will be set at our June discussion and announced soon after.

Run by League Vice President Shawn Anderson and friend of the League, Gowri Savoor, the LVW Book Group will continue throughout the year. We exclusively select and discuss books on publishing, creativity, and writing craft. If you would like to join and invite friends, please email the League at lvw@leagueofvermontwriters.org and put "LVW BOOK GROUP" in the subject line, and I will add you to the email list.

As always, please feel free to come and join in the discussion even if you have not read or finished the selected work. We love to get together and talk craft!

Kudos Korner – Where League Authors can “Krow” a Little!

First Things First

Everyone is at a different place along their writing path. Sure, some of the folks in our Kudos Korner are polished, novel-published authors. For some, it is their first and joy is abundant. For others it might be their fifth or tenth, but it is still a milestone.

But for many of us, being published means one poem or one short story or one letter to the editor made it into print. THOSE are still milestones, still reasons to celebrate and “Krow a Little.”

Even the “almost won” is a cause for sharing. Runners-up in contests can let us know they had the courage to enter, to work on a story or poem enough that it made the grade to Finalist, or Honorable Mention.

We want everyone who is marking milestones to let us know. We share a very common goal: to see what we've written come to life in print.

So, share, share, share!

Kudos to George Longenecker



George Longenecker had his poems “Blood Drawing,” “Two Wolves,” and “A Barred Owl and a Death” published in the online journal *The Ravens Perch*. He also had his poem “Rib Cage” published in *Third Street Review* (link below).

<https://third-street-review.org/poetry/rib-cage/>

Kudos to Gail Wind

Gail Wind was a finalist in the 2025 Next Generation Short Story Awards. Her entry in the General Non-Fiction, Humor category was “The Quill is Mightier than the Sword.”

<https://shortstoryawards.com/winners.php?year=2025>



Kudos to Cindy Hill

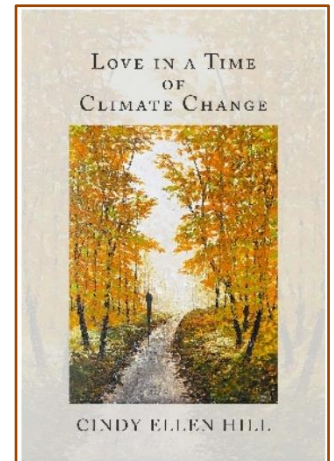
Press Release: Middlebury – Poet Cindy Ellen Hill’s fourth collection, *Love in a Time of Climate Change*, has been published by Finishing Line Press. The poems examine our increasingly fragile relationships in reflection of our increasingly precarious natural environment.

The book is prophetic, according to Philip Metres, author of *Fugitive/Refuge*, “naming us humans as our own willing self-executioners—burning the world up with our own desire, unable to be at home in any real sense of the word.” Vermont author and poet Jay Parini adds that *Love in a Time of Climate Change* “is rich with natural imagery, with a love of this earth, which is painfully at risk.”

The poems include free verse, featuring a series of poems in the voice of Blue Mother—the earth personified as a cranky older woman. Most of the poems are formal, with an emphasis on sonnets. “Through careful, often almost chant-like repetition and exquisite attention to poetic form, these poems displace our common assumptions about the world and substitute them with a radically unexpected vision of our climatologically ruined planet,” says John James, author of *The Milk Hours*.

Hill lives and writes in Middlebury, Vermont. She is the author of *Wild Earth and Other Sonnets* (Antrim Press 2021), *Elegy for the Trees* (Kelsay Books 2022), and *Mosaic: Poems from Travels in Italy* (Wild Dog Press 2024). Her poetry has been included in Open Door Review, Flint Hills Review, Anacapa Review, and The Lyric. Her essays on sonnet elements have recently appeared in American Poetry Review and Unlikely Stories. She holds an MFA in Writing from the Vermont College of Fine Arts and lives in Vermont.

Love in a Time of Climate Change is available from Finishing Line Press, or through your local independent bookstore. <https://www.finishinglinepress.com/product/love-in-a-time-of-climate-change-by-cindy-ellen-hill/>

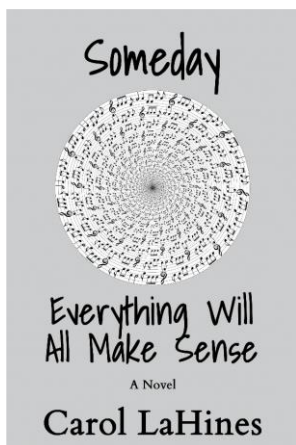


Kudos to Carol Lahines

Press Release: SOMEDAY EVERYTHING WILL ALL MAKE SENSE *Someday Everything Will All Make Sense* follows Luther van der Loon, an eccentric professor of medieval music at a New York university, as he navigates the stages of grief after his 62-year-old mother chokes on a wonton from a Chinese take-out.

Luther invokes the American justice system against the restaurant whose “sloppy methods” he blames for his mother's death. He blames himself for failing to perform the Heimlich, a maneuver so simple that a child of six or seven could execute it.

Luther, who spent the entirety of his forty earthly years living with his mother in a co-op apartment in Tudor City, New York, must learn to conceive of a world in which his mother is no longer present. Luther finds redemption in music as he plans the annual symposium for his oddball group of early music colleagues. Slowly, and with the help of his therapist girlfriend, Cecilia, Luther gropes toward resolution. The novel speaks to the universality of loss and the struggle to make sense of the nonsensical.



Carol LaHines’ debut novel, *Someday Everything Will All Make Sense*, was a finalist for the Nilsen Prize for a First Novel and an American Fiction Award. Her second novel, *The Vixen Amber Holloway*, is forthcoming from Regal House in 2024. Her fiction has appeared in numerous literary journals. She has received the Lamar York Prize for Fiction. Her short stories and novellas have also been finalists for the Mary McCarthy Prize in Short Fiction from Sarabande Books, the David Nathan Meyerson fiction prize, the *New Letters* short story award, and the Disquiet Literary Prize. Publisher: Paul

Stream Press. <https://www.carollahines.com/>

Kudos to Celia Ryker

Kirkus Review: *BIG GUY*

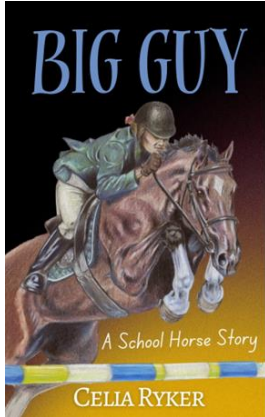
A SCHOOL HORSE STORY

By Celia Ryker, Illustrated by Kathy Connell



Full Time, who prefers his nickname Big Guy, is a colossal, ribbon-winning thoroughbred colt. It's not easy for him to stay humble with Nancy, his person, constantly praising him for his good looks and his skills ("You're the biggest, prettiest horse I have ever seen").

But aging is inevitable, as are the various aches that come with it. When he's no longer at the top of his game, Big Guy moves to the adjacent school-horse barn, where humans learn how to ride horses. In a much tinier stall, he meets his school-horse stablemates, including warmhearted Shorty and pessimistic Kaiser.



When he was a show horse, Big Guy spent time in a fenced paddock alone; now, he's regularly surrounded by other horses who sport a diverting mix of personalities that he soon grows fond of. For the first time since he was a pony, Big Guy feels like he's part of a herd. Ryker's breezy, good-natured story has its share of humor.

The horses fall into misadventures: Kaiser takes pleasure in kicking the barn wall to knock hanging saddles to the floor, and part-Clydesdale Slippery is, proudly, an escape artist. They're full of curious tales, as one is an ex-racehorse and others have worked at rodeos. But there are serious moments as well; horses become injured or sick, and they fear being sent to the zoo, where the unspeakable allegedly happens.

Readers unfamiliar with equestrianism and horse care will pick up loads of details, including relevant terminology and specifics about what horses go through (being a show horse can be lonely, as owners intentionally keep them away from other horses). Connell's simple black-and-white sketches capture some of the best moments, as when Slippery makes his way to a snack regardless of the novice rider trying to lead him elsewhere. This remarkable story of friendship is a perfect showcase for exquisite animals. Read the Kirkus Review in its entirety at <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/celia-ryker/big-guy/>

Kudos to George Woodard

Press Release: June 2025

"The Christmas Calf" by George Woodard www.georgewoodard.com

On a twenty-five-cow farm, a dairy farmer with a movie camera has written and illustrated a new children's book "The Christmas Calf". With over sixty pen and ink drawings, the story of a nine-year old boy who goes to the barn on a cold winter night to check a cow expecting a calf...and it's on Christmas eve.

With a small herd to milk every day, George Woodard has squeezed in directing, shooting, and editing two farm related critically acclaimed feature films. "The Summer of Walter Hacks," a mystery adventure where an eleven-year-old fiddle playing farm boy in 1952 rides around town on his bicycle fixing farm equipment. And "The Farm Boy", a WWII era love story about a young man who drives milk truck for his father then later ends up in Belgium in what would become the Battle of the Bulge. Both films are in black and white using camera techniques of those time periods.

And now "The Christmas Calf." Drawn in black and white, George Woodard has used his filmmaking knowledge of shot lists and story boards combined with his farm experiences to create a heart-warming story that all farmers will recognize. It is a children's book for ages eight to eighty and beyond.

Who is George Woodard? He is a seventy-two-year-old Vermont dairy farmer who has milked cows nearly every day for fifty years. He also understands the importance of stories about farm history. The cows, the horses, early tractors and vehicles and the characters in a visual setting that older people today will remember. That is George Woodard, and mostly he milked cows.

Contact: oldgeorgew@gmail.com



2025 Activities to Date

Date	Event	Description
1/25/2025	Annual Meeting	Business Meeting and Guest Speaker – Nadia Colburn
1/30/2025	Open Mic	Seven Readers – Cynthia Bogard Featured Reader
2/13/2025	Book Group	The Creative Act, a Way of Being, by Rick Rubin
3/20/2025	Open Mic	Five Readers – Louella Bryant Featured Reader
4/10/2025	Book Group	<i>Worlds Within Words</i> , by Sharon Darrow
4/12/2025	Spring Event	LIVE EVENT! Underhill Town Hall. 5 Panel Discussion and Breakout Sessions, “The Job of the Author to Help a Book Succeed.”
5/08/2025	Town Hall	Open discussion of the future of the League
5/22/2025	Open Mic	Seven Readers – Celia Ryker Featured Reader

2024 Activities

A look back at the events of 2024.

Date	Event	Description
1/27/2024	Annual Meeting	Business Meeting and Guest Speaker – Chris Citro
3/7/2024	Book Group	<i>BIRD BY BIRD: Some Instructions on Writing and Life</i> by Anne Lamott
4/25/2024	Book Group	<i>How to Write a Sentence: And How to Read One</i> by Stanley Fish
4/27/2024	Spring Event	Dawn Reno Langley and Jennifer Wilkov – Zoom
7/18/2024	Book Group	<i>THE CREATIVE HABIT: Learn It and Use It for Life</i> by Twyla Tharp
7/27/2024	Writers Meet Agents	Premier In-Person Event of the year at Delta Hotel, South Burlington. Five Agents, plus Jennifer Wilkov
8/29/2024	Book Group	<i>THE WRITING LIFE</i> by Annie Dillard.
10/10/2024	Book Group	<i>Meander, Spiral, Explode: Design and Pattern in Narrative</i> by Jane Alison
11/2/2024	Fall Event	Event via Zoom: Ann Dávila Cardinal
12/11/2024	Book Group	<i>27 ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES OF STORY</i> by Daniel Joshua Rubin

"If there's a book that you want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it." -Toni Morrison

Our Basic Information

LVW Board:

- President, Alyssa Berthiaume
- Vice President, Shawn Anderson
- Secretary, Gail E. Wind
- Treasurer, Melinda Meyer
- Immediate Past President, Caryn Connolly

Board Members at Large:

- Pat Goudy O'Brien- three years
- Jeniah Johnson- two years left

Spread the word:

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/>

And, here's the link to our [Newsletters](#)

Kudos Korner: Please send information about your recent publication successes, public readings, or any writing awards you might receive to gailinvermont@outlook.com with a subject line Kudos Korner.

Please send submissions in a "press release" format. Write a nice, concise, third-party article that is press ready.

For other League Lines questions, corrections, or contributions:

Please submit these to the editor Gail Wind at:

gailinvermont@outlook.com; subject line re: League Lines 2024.

General questions: contact the League at lvw@leagueofvermontwriters.org

Membership questions: please contact Tommy Walz at twalz@aol.com

Snail mail: League of Vermont Writers, PO Box 3251, Burlington, VT 05408

The League of Vermont Writers, Inc. is a fully approved 501(c) (3) non-profit corporation.

All donations are tax deductible.

Writing Challenge:

This challenge is open to members and friends of LVW. Write alone or with a partner.

THESE ARE THE PARAMETERS OF THE CHALLENGE:

1. Characters – You must have **One main, two supporting**. (cast of minor characters is optional)
2. Choose the time frame – a few minutes, a day, a week, a year.
3. Specify the historic time period: Now, future, past – up to you.
4. Keep it on this planet. (Next challenge will be 'outer limits.')
5. **Max word count** 2500 words!

Here's the challenge:

Your main character sees a knothole in the woodwork (you pick where). He/she/they discovers that by pushing a finger into the middle of the knothole, they can enlarge it (as much as they want). What do they find beyond? Write that story.

The deadline to submit your short story (First Paragraph of a New Book??) will be August 1st. They will all be printed in the third quarter League lines. Any questions? Email me at

gailinvermont@outlook.com