

League Lines

The Newsletter of the League of Vermont Writers



LEAGUE OF VERMONT WRITERS, INC

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2026-No. 1, January

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LVW Winter Zoom Event

January 31, 2026

11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Register now for:

"From Page to Playback: Creating an Audiobook That
Sounds—and Sells—Like a Pro"

with Mary Catherine Jones

[CLICK TO REGISTER](#)

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**Save the date for the League of Vermont Writers Winter Zoom Event:
“From Page to Playback: Creating an Audiobook That Sounds – and
Sells – like a Pro” with Mary Catherine Jones.
January 31st from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**

**Stay inside, stay warm, join your friends at
this special workshop!**

**90-Minute Virtual Workshop with Mary
Catherine Jones of The Audiobook
Experience**

**“From Page to Playback: Creating an Audiobook
That Sounds—and Sells—Like a Pro”**



Audiobooks are the fastest-growing format in publishing—but creating one that truly serves your book, your voice, and your business requires more than hitting “record.”

In this comprehensive 90-minute workshop, audiobook producer Mary Catherine Jones takes authors through the entire audiobook journey: preparing your manuscript for audio, getting your voice recording-ready, choosing the right production path, and understanding how your finished audiobook lives in the marketplace.

You’ll learn how to:

- Determine whether you should narrate your own audiobook or hire a professional, based on voice, brand alignment, budget, and goals
- Adapt your manuscript for the listener’s ear, including how to handle quotes, charts, footnotes, dialogue, and back matter
- Prepare for recording day with confidence—what to wear (and avoid), what to eat (and not), vocal warm-ups, mic technique, and performance tips
- Choose the right recording and production approach, from home setups to working with a studio or producer, including timelines and realistic costs
- Navigate distribution options—exclusive vs. wide, royalties, libraries, and major retailers
- Repurpose your audiobook for marketing and visibility, using retail samples, clips, and other audio assets

- Take smart, cost-conscious steps to bootstrap the process without sacrificing quality

Participants are invited to bring up to 150 words from their manuscript for optional live narration feedback, offering a behind-the-mic look at how small adjustments can dramatically improve listener experience. (And yes—bringing a cork is encouraged.)

With built-in Q&A and actionable takeaways throughout, this session equips authors with the clarity, confidence, and next steps needed to create an audiobook that sounds professional, reaches new listeners, and works as a powerful extension of their author brand.

About Mary Catherine Jones

Mary Catherine Jones is the Owner and Executive Producer at The Audiobook Experience, an award-winning boutique audiobook recording and production studio. She delights in working with authors in her Vermont Studio as well as partner studios across the country to bring their stories into the world, either using their voices or finding the perfect narrator for their audiobook.

To attend this Special LVW Zoom presentation, please sign up at Zeffy.

You can [CLICK THIS LINK](https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/90-minute-virtual-workshop-with-mary-catherine-jones-of-the-audiobook-experience), or copy and paste this URL into your browser.
<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/90-minute-virtual-workshop-with-mary-catherine-jones-of-the-audiobook-experience>

**If you would prefer to pay by check, you can register by mail and send your check to:
League of Vermont Writers
PO Box 3251
Burlington, VT 05408**

A Goodreads Experiment

A Goodreads Experiment – by Donna Rae Menard

Hi all,

I am Donna Rae Menard – email me at menarddonnae@gmail.com member of League of Vermont Writers.

I have done a lot to promote my own books and I have found some ways that work really well and some that hardly work at all.

I have a proposal to help a group of authors promote their books, whether self-published or traditionally published.

Lately there's been a lot about authors changing algorithms, the dos, and don'ts of how to advance the popularity of your book and get it seen by the public. Having it mentioned by readers in Goodreads [at <https://www.goodreads.com/>] is a great way to boost your book's visibility.

Now, Goodreads, which is free (like – no money) is basically a source for readers. But it can be a tool for authors too, if a group of authors work together.

Before you read the rest of this, even if you are somewhat familiar with Goodreads, please watch this short video. **What is Goodreads and why should you care?** by Stephen Booth

<https://geniuspubstudio.substack.com/p/91a408e1-f52b-421b-864e-7f1ac3af5547>

Using what I've learned, this is the experiment I propose:

- We'll use Goodreads, which is a reader-based program, so, if you want to participate, first, get an account on Goodreads, if you don't already have one.
- I will collect some information to share with the people in the experiment. (And to no one else.)
- If you're an author, send me
 - Your email address
 - Title, and ISBN of YOUR book that you want on the list
- If you're a reader, send me just your Goodreads login to participate.
- I'll compile the information I receive and share the list with all participants.
- Everyone will be notified of a time (3-hour window) and a date to go to Goodreads.
- You don't have to say you read the books on the list or create a recommendation, but,
- What we'd like you to do is
 - Put them on your "to read list,"
 - Put the book "on the shelf," and then
 - Go to the author page and click to "follow" the author.

Those three items are common in all my research and they boost the algorithm for exposure.

We'll do this once every two weeks, over a period of six months. It doesn't take much time. – Time and sequence I don't quite understand. And how do they do the same things over and over.

Ongoing Free Zoom Events

Book Group – Hosted by Shawn Anderson

The LVW Book Club: New Year, New Opportunities to Connect with Writers and talk Craft and Creativity



Join our virtual book group! Our next Zoom meeting will be **Thursday, February 26, 2026 from 7:00pm – 8:30pm ET**. The book we'll be discussing is ***THE SECRETS OF STORY: Innovative Tools for Perfecting Your Fiction and Captivating Readers* by Matt Bird**. The first hour is book discussion, and then we open it up and chat about our progress and current projects.

Since 2020, The LVW Virtual Book Group has met virtually in even months. We're focused on reading and discussing books that focus on creativity, writing craft, and the publishing industry.

To join, simply email the League at lvw@leagueofvermontwriters.org and we'll add you to the email list to receive updates and Zoom links to the discussions. Please put "BOOK GROUP" in the subject line. You don't have to be a member or live in Vermont to join, so feel free to invite friends to join—the more the merrier.

We read some amazing books in 2025! These titles included *Devotion* by Patti Smith (DEC), *Never Say You Can't Survive* by Charlie Jane Anders (OCT), *1000 Words* by Jami Attenberg (AUG), *Before and After the Book Deal* by Courtney Maum (JUN), *Worlds within Words* by our very own Sharon Darrow (APR), and *The Creative Act* by Rick Ruben (FEB).

We hope to see you virtually at upcoming 2026 meetings.

Shawn Anderson

Open Mic – Hosted by Gail Wind

The first 2026 Open Mic was January 22nd

Seven people attended, and even though the host was a bit late, the readers took the time to share what they have been doing, both personally and in the craft!

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. Our next open mic will be March 19th, 2026.

Emails are sent out prior to each open mic, but if you want to secure a spot, contact Gail Wind at gailinvermont@outlook.com.

Each reader, depending on how many participate) will have 5-6 minutes to introduce themselves and read. A featured writer will have 10-12 minutes.

We encourage all members to attend, even if they don't read. Share the link and bring your friends for moral support! Listen to and support these courageous presenters.

When you publish, presenting your work in public is part of advertising your work.

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. Come, read to us!

Gail Wind



Free Writing Webinars

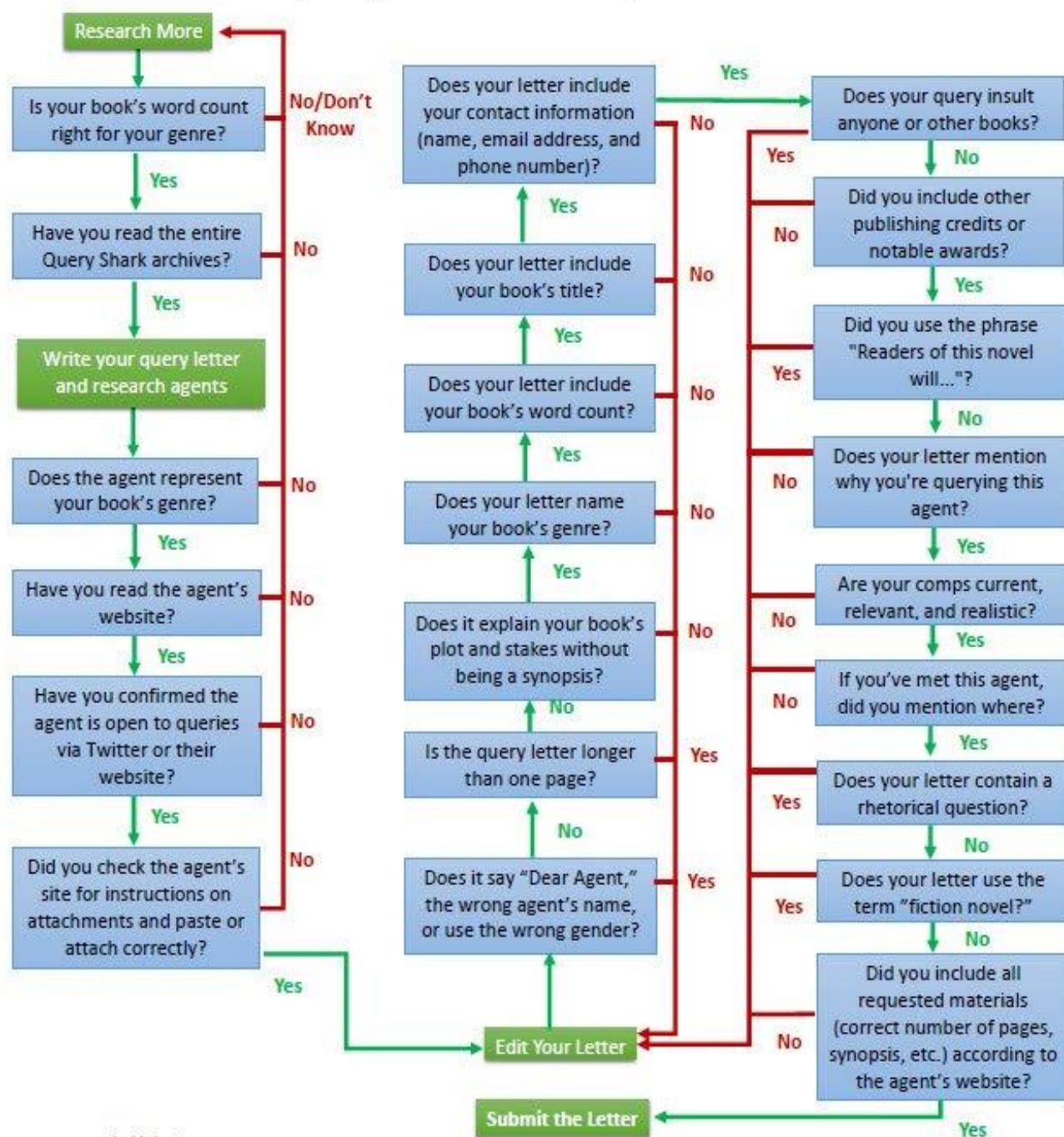
<https://community.prowritingaid.com/c/free-webinars/>

Prepping Your Query Letter

David Slayton Shares his Chart for Preparing a Query

In David's May 19, 2016 Blog [<https://davidrslayton.com/is-my-query-letter-ready-for-submission/>] he shared a chart to follow for prepping a query that he and his writer's group created.

Is Your Query Letter Ready for Submission?



Libraries and Bookstores News

The Book is Not Dead – by Gail Wind

Independent Book Stores in the News

I just googled “Indie book stores in the news” and found a wonderful YouTube video, and I highly recommend it. It is an eye opener. It backs up the importance of Indie Book Stores. The American Booksellers Association has been supporting Indie Book Stores for over 125 years! Find the video on YouTube here and it may inspire you to support your local book store!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q9p173xAyuQ>

Little Free Libraries

Libraries without library cards

<https://littlefreelibrary.org/> is the place to go to learn more about this amazing practice. According to the website, there are over 200,000 Little Free Libraries in 128 countries.

There is a Little Free Library down the street from where I live, just a bit south of Maple Ridge Road and Brook Road in Newark.

I finally stopped there and found a copy of a book I had been wanting to read. I took it home, and started to read it. I set it on a side table in my living room on top of the last few books I had finished. I moved it over and took three of the books I’d finished back down the road and donated them.

A few days later, I took the borrowed book back and to my delight, two of the three books that I’d donated were taken, and four new books from others had appeared. I felt an oversized joy, knowing I had shared a book with a neighbor – one I may know well or maybe one I had never met. Perhaps I’ll tuck a note in the next one I donate. And then I realized someone had done the same for me. Oh Joy!

All of this got me to thinking: if you have a Little Free Library near you – hopefully one you have borrowed from or donated to – please send me a photo and location and anything you want to write about it and I’ll post it in the next League Lines. <https://littlefreelibrary.org/>



Current Writing Contests

Current Contests:

Wergle Flomp Humorous Poetry contest –

NO FEE <https://winningwriters.com/our-contests/wergle-flomp-humor-poetry-contest-free>

The Big Moose Prize

Ends on Sun, Feb 1, 2026 11:59 PM

Each year Black Lawrence Press will award The Big Moose Prize for an unpublished novel. The prize is open to new, emerging, and established writers. The winner of this contest will receive book publication, a \$1,000 cash award, and ten copies of the book. Prizes will be awarded on publication.

<https://winningwriters.com/our-contests>

Tom Howard/John H. Reid Fiction & Essay Contest October 15, 2025-May 1, 2026

- STORY: First Prize, \$3,500
- ESSAY: First Prize, \$3,500
- The top two winners will also receive two-year gift certificates from our co-sponsor, [Duotrope](#) (a \$100 value)
- 10 Honorable Mentions will receive \$500 each (any category)
- Top 12 entries published online
- Enter via [Submittable](#)

[Editor's note – send me contest information and I'll post it. <mailto:gailinvermont@outlook.com>]

Kudos Korner

Celia Ryker has taken the plunge into audio book publishing.

***Augusta* – a novel based on my grandmother's life will be available as an audio book.**

Celia writes, "I have partnered with Maria McCann to narrate my book and I'm so excited to bring it to you. She will be recording it at [Voice Over Vermont](#).

I love talking to people at libraries and book stores about *Augusta*. Promoting my current novel puts *Walking Home: Trail Stories* in the background but I get to mention that *Augusta* shows up in *Walking Home* several times. Sitting on top of Mount Baker the snakes sunning themselves on the rock ledge reminds me of my grandmother who, when she saw that I was afraid of snakes, caught them and showed me how beautiful they were. Their skins softer than I thought they would be, with amazing coloring.

Telling *Augusta's* story has been exciting. There were moments during the writing process that I imagined her sitting in the corner and times when I felt as if she were guiding my story. I hope she would have approved of my effort.

Augusta, born in 1894, was married off to the widowed father of one of her Arkansas classmates when she was thirteen years old. She was abandoned by her second husband in 1920s Detroit with four children to provide for and pushed into a decision that would haunt her."



Review of 2025 Events at LVW

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	IN PERSON! 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
6/12/2025	Book Group	<i>Before and after the Book Deal: A Writer's Guide to Finishing, Publishing, Promoting, and Surviving Your First Book</i> , by Courtney Maum.
7/10/2025	Open Mic	Six Readers- Nancy Kilgore Featured Reader; 18 in the audience - total at meeting -24!
8/23/2025	Summer Event	Into the Words – 9 teachers, Beautiful Day – Great Fun
8/25/2025	Book Group	<i>1000 Words</i> by Jami Attenberg
9/25/2025	Open Mic	Seven Readers and four extra in the audience – Super!
10/23/2025	Book Group	<i>Never Say You Can't Survive: How to Get Through Hard Times by Making Up Stories</i> by Charlie Jane Anders.
11/1/2025	Fall Event	"Fall into Flash" with Grant Faulkner
11/13/2025	Open Mic	Seven Readers – Peter Cobb was our Featured Reader
12/16/2025	Special Meeting	Discussion of Bylaws to delay 2026 Annual Meeting

Our Basic Information

LVW Board:

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

Board Members at Large:

- Pat Goudy O'Brien- three years left
- Jeniah Johnson – two years left
- Melissa Lindberg – two years left
- Celia Ryker – 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](#)

To be included in Kudos Korner: 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
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