

League Lines

The Newsletter of the League of Vermont Writers



LEAGUE OF VERMONT WRITERS, INC

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2026-No. 2, April

IN PERSON – LIVE PEOPLE
LVW Annual Meeting Event with 2 Speakers!

April 11th, 2026

10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Register now for:

**"Now's the Time: The World Needs Your
Stories!"**

with Joni B. Cole and Jennifer Belton

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

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Your Attendance is Crucial: League of Vermont Writers' Annual Meeting and Presentations: "Now's the time; the world needs your stories" with Joni B. Cole

January 31st from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

We need "all hands on deck" for this meeting. This is our annual meeting; we need a quorum of members to conduct business.

We'll review the past year and plan for the future. We have a great slate of people to vote on who are offering their time and energy to help drive LVW toward its 100th Birthday. We need a quorum of members to do that.

We will be discussing proposed changes to our bylaws and making plans for the year's events.

Please support LVW and attend this very important meeting.

You can [CLICK THIS LINK](https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/lvw-spring-program-and-annual-business-meeting-jen-bensen-and-joni-cole-early-bird-discount), or copy and paste this URL into your browser.

<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/lvw-spring-program-and-annual-business-meeting-jen-bensen-and-joni-cole-early-bird-discount>

Members \$40

Non-Members \$50

Plans for the day

DETAILS

Who?

Anyone may attend. (Members in good standing have voting rights)

What's Happening?

Early coffee meet-and-greet, two presentations, a business meeting, a pizza party with the trimmings for lunch, making plans for the future. Authors' tables of books. Meet other authors!

When?

April 11th, 2026

Where?

Bridgewater Community Center (7 miles from Woodstock) 76 Southgate Lp, Bridgewater, VT 05034. This is a brand-new Community building and the League is the first group to use the venue! The location was chosen to be more central to the state in hopes that it would encourage more members to come. We hope that means You!

Schedule for the day:

10:00-10:30 Welcome and breakfast nosh.

10:30-11:30 Bookstock Guide to Book Fair Success with Jennifer Belton, Librarian extraordinaire. See description on the next page.

11:30-11:45 Break 11:45-12:30 Networking and lunch (pizza and salad)

12:30-1:30 Annual Meeting (Lunch can continue)

1:30-2:00 Networking and break

2:00-3:45 "Why Our Stories Matter Now More Than Ever" with Joni B. Cole; writing prompts with Joni, Q & A. See Description on next page

3:45-4:30 Wrap up and networking

4:30 Clean-up

Our Speakers for the Annual Meeting April 11th, 2026



Joni B. Cole

Why Our Stories Matter Now More Than Ever with Joni B. Cole Few things serve the world better than sharing our stories, given the profound ability of prose and poetry to move the spirit, allow readers to escape to new worlds, engender empathy, and forge connections across humanity. And yet... In a world swirling with strife, it can be all too easy for writers to succumb to self-doubt—the worst enemy to creativity. As part of this workshop, author and writing instructor Joni B. Cole offers a convincing reminder of why our stories matter now more than ever, and how you can tap into the possibilities of your own creativity. As part of this session, we'll be doing a guided writing exercise, so please bring something to write on/with, and leave all self-doubts at the door.

Joni B. Cole is the author of seven books, including *Party Like It's 2044: Finding the Funny in Life and Death*, and two acclaimed writing guides: *Good Naked: How to Write More, Write Better, and Be Happier* (listed as a “Best Books for Writers” by Poets & Writers magazine) and *Toxic Feedback: Helping Writers Survive and Thrive*.

For twenty-five years she has taught creative writing to adults online and in person at a variety of academic programs and community organizations. Joni lives in Vermont and is currently under contract for her third collection of personal essays. www.jonibcole.com



Jen Belton

Jen Belton has worked at various public and private libraries, starting at the Canadian Embassy Library and later at the US Office of Management and Budget.

Years afterward, she founded the first White House Library for a sitting president, former President Jimmy Carter, in the Old Executive Office Building. She also established the first White House Law Library.

She then chose to leave her civil service position to follow her passion for the press.

She worked for the National Journal and then spent twenty years at the Washington Post, where she created the News Research Center.

Her dream of working in a public library in a New England village came true when she served as director of the Norman Williams Public Library in Woodstock, Vermont, for five years. She now resides in Woodstock.

She will talk on Bookstock and a guide to book fair success.

Bookstock, Woodstock's annual celebration of books and storytelling, will host a remarkable group of award-winning authors and poets at Bookstock 2026, on May 15-16-17

Ongoing Free Zoom Events

Book Group – Hosted by Shawn Anderson

Reading About Writing & Talking Craft: the LVW Book Group
by Shawn T. Anderson

For our April book discussion, we are reading *Fear Less: Poetry In Perilous Times* by Tracy K. Smith. Please grab your copy and plan to join us on Thursday, April 23 from 7:00 pm–8:30 pm et (and you don't need to be residing in VT or have read the book to attend the discussion). These virtual zoom events are free and open to anyone who wants to discuss books and writing craft.



In 2026, the LVW book group will continue to meet on even months to discuss books on publishing, creativity, motivation, and

writing craft. We usually hold meetings on Thursdays, late into the month, so our next meeting will be at the end of June. If you would like to invite friends to join, please have them email the league at lvw@leagueofvermontwriters.org and put “LVW book group” in the subject line, and we will add them to the email list.

Fear Less is a fairly short read, so there's still time to get to the bookstore or library and dive in. At our next meeting we will pick and officially announce the books for the rest of the year, so please come and join the discussion. *Dear Writer* by Maggie Smith, *Novelist As A Vocation* by Haruki Murakami, and *The Art Of Brevity* by past-presenter Grant Faulkner are a few of the titles we're considering.

We hope to see you at the April meeting!
Shawn Anderson

The second 2026 Open Mic was March 26th

Eight people attended. Many poems were shared, the first chapters of a couple of books, the beginning of a short story about a young teen with super powers. One reader shared a story from her memoir-in-progress, and another from their book about a robot discarded in space. Talk about variety in genre!

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 May 23, 2026.

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



Each reader, (depending on how many participate) will have 5-7 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 off 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/>

Libraries and Bookstores News

Independent Book Stores in the News

I 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>

The Most Magical Libraries in the World to Visit

I googled “Famous Libraries” and found Kelly Prince’s website. Kelly Prince is a UK Travel Blogger and a dual citizen of both the USA and UK. And this is the beginning of a blog post she wrote.

“Do you ever see images of those beautiful libraries around the world on social media?

And did you ever sit back and wonder...

Can I actually REALLY visit them?

YOU BET YOU CAN!

I have lusted over many picturesque libraries and bookshops in my time. It was only as I got older and started to travel more that I realized that I could *actually* visit these places in real life.

Travel, my friends, is a beautiful thing. So, I’m in the midst of working on a series of visiting the most magical, beautiful libraries (and bookshops) around the world.

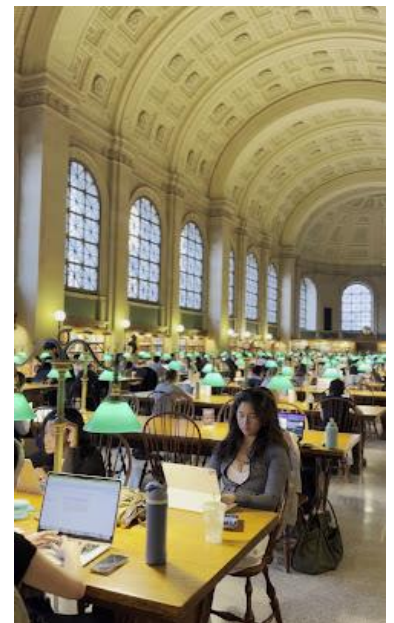
I know I won’t get to them all, *but isn’t it fun to try?* And I’m taking you along for the journey too so we can discover these amazing spots together.”

This is Kelly’s list of The Most Magical Libraries You NEED to Visit Around the World

- United Kingdom
- Ireland
- Germany
- Czech Republic
- Switzerland
- United States of America

When I looked at the photos and ogled the vaulted ceilings, dark passageways, spiral staircases to upper stacks, wood carvings, tiny table lamps and Oh-my-gosh, sooo many books, I was enchanted and amazed. If you can’t travel, at the very least travel vicariously at Kelly Prince’s blogsite:

<https://www.kellyprincewrites.com/magical-libraries-around-the-world/>



Boston Public Library

Prose Contribution

Posted. No Trespassing. Keep Out

by Susan Smith

Tom Eldred and I were sitting on his Mom's front porch in November, just trying to figure out what to do with this bright but chilly fall day. Tom's Mom had given us some lunch—her famous cheese muffins with chokecherry jelly, and we were feeling fidgety, needing adventure.

We hadn't really done anything exciting since we went down into that cave on Old Man Martin's hillside. That was an adventure alright. We took a wrong turn, then our flashlights died. Luckily, Tom's old Ford pickup was parked on the hill, and the next morning, Martin got his boys to go down in that cave after us, swearing at us when we came out, like a banshee with a bot fly. Boy when the guys who hang out down at Reggie's Diner heard about what we did, spending the night in the cave, terrified out of our wits, they teased us mercilessly for months. We won't do that again.

We sat there on the porch for an hour, not thinking of anything that we could do without getting into any major trouble. Stealing from Fred Sanders' garden was out. That guy has a bb gun that will make your legs and butt sting like crazy.

We probably won't ever go jumping off the blocks into the old granite quarry over to Websterville, either. I scratched my arms on an outcropping and Tom got a cut across the side of his head. I guess you have to be sure you know how far out you have to jump.

"We could go down to the junkyard," Tom suggested, "and maybe find some hubcaps to fling off of the Putnamville bridge. That was a hoot."

"Oh yeah," I scowled at him, "we hit a damn forest ranger out in his boat and we got big fines, remember."

"Oh yeah," said Tom. "I think I've got some firecrackers left in the old shed. We could light those off and toss them at Billy Jones' Pit Bull."

"Good grief, Tom," I said, "We need to find something we won't get arrested for."

"Too cold for swimming," said Tom, "and too late for fishing, I think."

"Let's just go for a walk in the woods and see what we can find," I said, "and bring your rifle. You never know when you might need one. Might be a wild turkey or a partridge we could shoot and have your Mom cook for dinner."

Tom shrugged his broad shoulders, brushed back his shaggy black hair, and said, "Well, I'm thinking, and trying to remember what Bugger Chase said this morning at the diner."

"Oh yeah!" I answered, getting excited, "That's a great trophy to go after, for sure."

We put on our boots and plaid flannel shirts and headed up the big hill toward Pete Bailey's field. There was a large sign on the barbed wire fence, warning "Posted. No Trespassing. Keep Out." That red sign didn't stop me and Tom from charging up through Baily's field. We had heard him bragging in Reggie's Diner about a wolverine up there, holed up in a den under a fallen oak, but nobody had a picture. If we could get a pic, we'd be the talk of the diner tomorrow. We were sick of those guys finding reasons to laugh at us.

We wore our barn boots as it was still wet from this week's heavy rain, and If you'd ever lost a sneaker in the mud escaping a porky-pine, then you know why. It was cloudy but still light enough for a picture, so we high-tailed it into the woods right between two big rocks as Bugger Chase had said was where the den was. Bugger is kinda crazy in the head, but he don't usually lie. John and Pete French said they had heard that the animal was bigger and twice as ferocious as a badger, and badgers are no little pussycats. We'd have to be really careful.

We were a little bit scared as we carefully approached that big hole under the oak tree, but Tom, sometimes just needing to beat me at something, and sometimes just being stupid, just had to stick his head in. The critter came charging out at us and we turned and ran as fast as ever in our lives, but not fast enough to escape the putrid shower we got from the angry skunk. We ran all the way to Tom's house, swearing at Bugger and the French brothers all the way.

Tom's Mom made us scrub with lye soap under the frigid outdoor shower out back, but it didn't get all the stink away. We were the talk of the diner next morning alright, with all the gang hooting and laughing and holding their noses soon as we walked through the door.

I know one thing, I ain't never gonna ignore a posted sign again.

Kudos Korner

Dr. Ernest D. Lapierre, 77 years old, launched his newly published book *Life Happens Even When You Are Standing Still* on Sunday, March 8 at 2 p.m. at the Craftsbury Community Care Center, in East Craftsbury, VT.

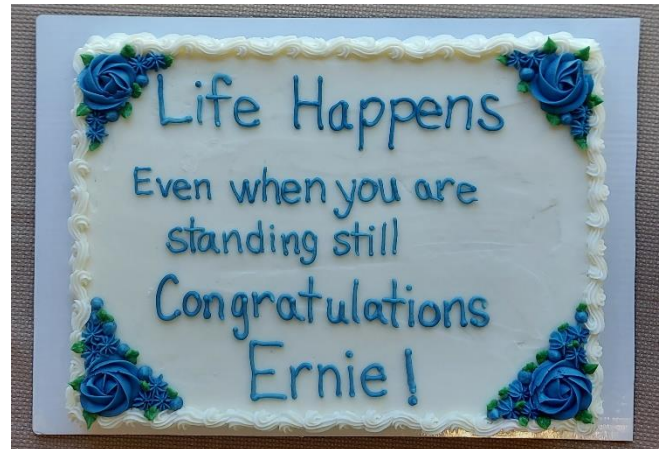
There were about 30 people at the event, filled with book signings, readings, books at discounted rates, light refreshments, and human exchange.



His memoir is about adoption, abandonment, anger, survival, and love. Ernie lives in a retirement complex in the northeast Kingdom of Vermont, surrounded by luscious Maple trees and vibrant fall foliage.

He is proud to have grown up on a medium sized dairy farm with his adopted parents, brother, and sister.

He began his education in a one-room schoolhouse, an experience he credits for shaping his values and stamina for life. He went on to earn



three degrees in nursing, the last was a PhD. Ernie spent fifty-one years working in psychiatric mental wellness nursing and found nothing more fulfilling than helping others improve their lives physically and mentally.

He has worked in nursing education, administration, research, and private practice as a nurse practitioner. Ernie is now enjoying both the benefits and the challenges of retirement. His book is truly an example of the fact that “Life happens even when you are standing still.

What is Changing in the World of News Journalism?

by Gail Wind

2/26/2026 John Byrne, Founder Raw Story and Raw America wrote:

“Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter.”

Thomas Jefferson wrote those words in 1787, understanding what we’re forgetting today: journalism isn’t just information: it’s democracy’s immune system.

This week, as Jeff Bezos took a wrecking ball to the Washington Post, conservative columnist Peggy Noonan captured something that should terrify every American: “The capital of the most powerful nation on earth appears to be without a vital, fully functioning newspaper to cover it. That isn’t the occasion of jokes, it’s a disaster.” ...

This isn’t about nostalgia for newspapers. It’s about survival. Jefferson wasn’t being romantic when he said he’d choose newspapers over government—he was being practical. He understood that without independent journalism, democracy dies from a thousand small surrenders.”

Having been a journalist for part of my life, I have become increasingly worried about the state of independent journalism in our country. As I watch small town newspapers fold, small town radio stations get swallowed up by larger competitors and other media outlets get crushed by the “powers-that-be,” I wonder where to turn to get the real news.

I subscribe to a few “independent” journalism sites, and I feel that they are going to be, at least for some time, a stand-in for standard newspapers. Yes, even some of those have a bias or slant to them, but I feel that because they are not the puppet papers of billionaires or giant companies, I might get a larger glimmer of truth from them. When I am skeptical of something they print, I do my own research.

And so, I researched “unbiased news outlets in 2026.”

I found this site: <https://newsdata.io/blog/unbiased-news-sources/>

Unbiased News Sources That You Must Follow In 2026 – by Aditi Choudhary

Here is the opening of her article:

“In today’s time, news delivery has shifted from traditional to digital news consumption. And the need for the most trusted, reliable, and unbiased [news sources](#) is what it’s all about. This article covers the most unbiased news sources available globally, which you must follow for authentic and genuine news.

Unbiased News Consumption In 2026

The scenario of news and information consumption has changed widely around the world. The trend of online newspapers and [news sites](#) has increased, as it is convenient, saves time, and is available everywhere. But could it be possible that whatever we see or read online is true or not manipulated?”

This is Aditi’s list of unbiased news sources. (One person’s list; make up your own mind.)

Top Unbiased News Sources In 2026

Sr. No.	News Sources	Link
1	Reuters	https://www.reuters.com/
2	Associated Press	https://apnews.com/
3	BBC News	https://www.bbc.com/news
4	The Wall Street Journal	https://www.wsj.com/
5	The Economist	https://www.economist.com/
6	The Indian Express	https://indianexpress.com/
7	CBS News	https://www.cbsnews.com/
8	The New York Times	https://www.nytimes.com/
9	CNN	https://www.cnn.com/
10	The Guardian	https://www.theguardian.com/

Current Writing Contests

Current 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>]

Can anyone get a book deal? What it takes to be a novelist in 2026.

Josh Rivera from USA Today talks about this in his March 23rd article.

The article explains how publishing consolidation and fewer editorial slots have made it tougher to secure a traditional publishing deal.

“From Pitch to Publication” is a series taking readers behind the curtain of modern publishing as a business.

I’m so accustomed to rejection that I brace myself for every email – even before opening. Even when good news may be waiting after that click.

[My book took] six years from spark to publication date. And that’s not unusual. Two years from acquisition to publication is considered a “normal” timeline. So, when people ask, "Can anyone get a book deal?" what they’re often asking is something else:

- Is this still possible for people who aren’t famous?
- Do I have to know somebody in the industry?
- And if I do everything “right,” will it still take years?

The brutal truth about getting a book deal today

In short: Yes, no, and maybe. A book deal is attainable – to some extent. It’s also not a finish line. Here’s what aspiring novelists and readers should know about the behind-the-scenes of publishing a fiction book.

His in-depth article can be found at:

https://www.usatoday.com/story/life/2026/03/22/how-to-be-a-novelist-author/89199046007/?utm_source=usat-DailyBriefing&utm_medium=email&utm_...

LVW Events to Date 2026

Date	Event	Description
1/31/2026	Winter Presentation	Audio Books with Mary Cathrine Jones / Zoom
1/22/2026	Open Mic	Seven attending- Liz Gauffreau was our Featured Reader
2/26/2026	Book Group	<i>THE SECRETS OF STORY: Innovative Tools for Perfecting Your Fiction and Captivating Readers</i> by Matt Bird
3/26/2026	Open Mic	Eight attending – one guest.
4/16/2026	Book Group	Upcoming - <i>Fear Less: Poetry In Perilous Times</i> by Tracy K. Smith
4/11/2026	Upcoming Annual Meeting	Annual Meeting and Writers’ Presentations with Joni B. Cole and Jennifer Belton at Bridgewater Community Center

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; 18 in the audience -total of 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 extras 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 Change date of 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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All donations are tax deductible.