

**EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!**

The League  
of Vermont  
Writers' 85th  
Year

*Celebrating Our 85th Year*

# *League Lines*

The League of Vermont Writers Newsletter

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*\*Keep a watchful eye for  
news and announcements!*

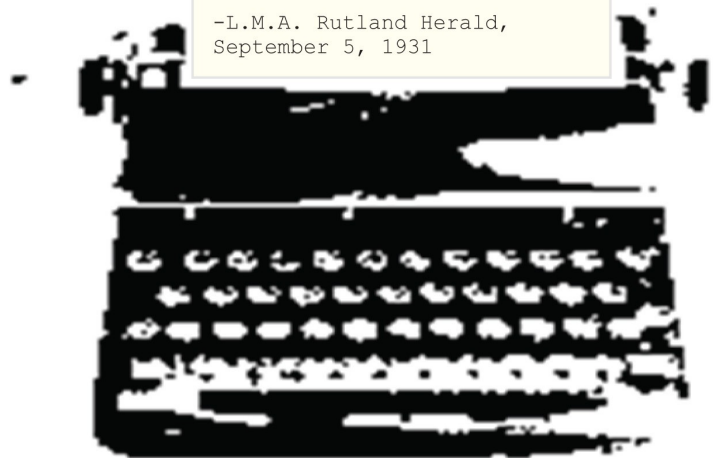
*"Probably there is no person who does not, at times, feel the urge for self expression... Without this desire for self expression there would be no creative art. And without creative art there would be no unity of interest...In Vermont there is evidence of both creative art and unity of interest. It has found expression in the League of Vermont Writers..."*

*-L.M.A. Rutland Herald,  
September 5, 1931*



LEAGUE OF VERMONT WRITERS, INC.

OPEN TO ALL WHO MAKE WRITING  
A PART OF THEIR LIFE.



## Letter from the President

As LVW's president, I want our organization to continuously strive for newer and better things without losing sight of our history and tradition. I want us to reach for these goals, and in so doing, be purposeful in our planning and in our actions. And I want to be forthcoming about these developments with all of you—our membership, the heart of this League. In my last letter, I told you about some of our goals and I am happy to say we continue to work toward them.

In this last quarter, we have worked closely with Burlington Writer's Workshop as their fiscal sponsor; we began to develop a relationship with Renegade Writer's Collective, though sadly they will be closing; and we invited numerous organizations and bookstores across the state to participate in Writers Meet Agents. The response was tempered, but it did open up new doors for communication, more visibility for the League, and in a few instances created new opportunities for potential future collaboration. *(Goals: creating new relationships with other organizations; increasing presence in other parts of the State; adding an exhibit hall element to this summer's WMA.)*

The board developed and agreed upon a new website layout. The project will continue to move forward with the brunt of the work occurring after Writers Meet Agents has concluded. With hard work and luck, we will have a new website by December. *(Goal: updating the website)*

The board has also developed a membership subcommittee to attend to issues regarding membership operations and procedures, the directory, and bringing in new members. Wendy Heilig and Mary Muncil (both members-at-large) will be serving on this committee and working with our Membership chair, Tommy Waltz, on this initiative. *(Goals: bringing in new people; looking at membership operations; working towards a directory)*

Though this is just a snapshot of the business happening behind-the-scenes, and certainly does not speak to all our intended plans, it is encouraging to be able to report we remain on-course despite the extensive planning required in the development of this year's Writers Meet Agents—the details of which you can find in this issue.

Only happening every other year, Writers Meet Agents is the League's most exciting and unique event. Set-up like a mini-conference with the added pomp of agents who travel many miles and cover many genres to give you an opportunity to pitch your work, this event hosts folks from all over the state and beyond. It is an incredible gathering of writers, an exclusive event for building communities and networks, and one whole day devoted to nothing other than your craft. Plus, we have an all-star lineup of presenters and agents. The combination of these things makes this event worth every hour spent planning and every penny spent to make it happen. I can only hope you'll agree. Of

course you'll have to come and see for yourself.

If you do believe it to be a raving success, please share that feedback with one of the dedicated members of the programming committee who have worked tirelessly to bring you all an amazing program: Paula Diaco, Pat Goudey O'Brien, Deb Fennell, Amy Kolb Noyes, and Katherine Quimby Johnson. We could not have the engaging and valuable programming that we do without their dedication and service and they deserve our utmost appreciation.

For the good of the cause,

**Alyssa Berthiaume**



### Help Raise Scholarship Funds

Jerry Johnson (The Creek Road Poet at [vtpoet.com](http://vtpoet.com)) is donating all profits from the sale of his Limited Edition children's picture book, NOAH'S SONG, to scholarships in memory of Adrien "Yellow" Patinaude, the book's illustrator. The Limited Edition includes a CD recording of the book's poem set to music by Vermont singer Jon Gailmor.

For more information or to order your copy of NOAH'S SONG, visit [www.vtpoet.com](http://www.vtpoet.com)

### Vote for Your Favorite!

Every year, the Peace Corps Writers present awards to writers in their ranks for excellence among current publications by Peace Corps volunteers.

Dan Close, a past treasurer in the League of Vermont Writers, published THE GLORY OF THE KINGS in 2013, and is eligible for the award in fiction.

To vote for Dan's book, email your support to [jpcoyne@optonline.net](mailto:jpcoyne@optonline.net)

To read more about the prize, visit:

<http://peacecorpsworldwide.org/pc-writers/2014/>

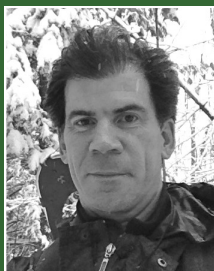
**CHECK OUT THIS YEAR'S ROSTER OF AGENTS ON PAGE 6 & 7**

**JULY 19, 2014**

**WRITERS MEET AGENTS!**

Hampton Inn,  
42 Lower Mountain Dr.  
Colchester, VT 05446  
8:30am—4:30pm

David Dobbs



Jo Knowles



Peter Biello



Katharine Sands



Our Summer Program, Writers Meet Agents, includes an opening panel and q&a with all of our agents. After a short break, morning classes will be conducted by radio personality and founder of the Burlington Writers Workshop Peter Biello, and award-winning writer for young readers Jo Knowles (see descriptions below).

After a catered lunch, the afternoon will include breakout sessions for roundtable discussions with authors addressing specific genres, and New York agent and author Katharine Sands will coach us all on how to become “discoverable” among the vast sea of writers and books that are published every year (see description on page 4.)

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER, SCIENCE WRITER AND BOOK AUTHOR, DAVID DOBBS**

David Dobbs is the author of four books including the #1 best-selling Kindle Single *My Mother's Lover*. He is now writing *The Orchid and the Dandelion* (Crown, ETA 2015), about how genes and culture generate temperament and behavior. His features and essays, which appear in publications including the *New York Times*, *National Geographic*, *New Yorker*, *Slate*, *Aeon* and *Pacific Standard*, are regularly chosen for leading anthologies. He keeps a blog at Neuron Culture and spends too much time on Twitter. David lives in Montpelier, Vermont.

**PRESENTATIONS** (continued on page 4)

**JO KNOWLES,  
ON THE PROCESS OF REVISION**

Jo Knowles is the author of *See You At Harry's* (a DCF nominee), *Pearl*, *Jumping Off Swings*, and *Lessons from a Dead Girl*. Her newest book, *Living With Jackie Chan*, has received four starred reviews and was called "undeniably powerful" by the *New York Times*. Her awards include a *New York Times* Editor's Choice and Notable Book, An International Reading Association Favorite, an American Library Association Notable, and YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults.

Jo has a master's degree in children's literature and teaches writing for young adults in the MFA program at Southern New Hampshire University. She'll offer writers some helpful tools for the task of revising a manuscript, from storyboards to world-building questionnaires, and exercises that help writers map out key plot points, recognize themes, build emotion, and create consistency and believability in the worlds they've created. Her talk applies to fantasy, science fiction, realistic fiction and nonfiction. Be prepared to participate in some quick and easy exercises!

**PETER BIELLO,  
ON GIVING AND RECEIVING  
CRITICISM ON WRITING**

Peter Biello is the founder and organizer of the Burlington Writers Workshop and managing editor of *The Best of the Burlington Writers Workshop* anthology series. By day, he works as a producer/announcer at Vermont Public Radio, and his journalism has appeared on PRI's *This American Life*, NPR's *All Things Considered*, *Day to Day*, and *Weekend Edition Sunday*. His creative writing has appeared or is forthcoming in *Lowestoft Chronicle*, *Three Percent*, *Busted Halo*, *South85 Journal*, *Green Writers Journal*, and *The Drunken Odyssey*. He holds a BFA in Creative Writing from U-Maine Farmington and an MFA in Fiction from UNC-Wilmington. Visit his website at: [peterbiello.com](http://peterbiello.com).

In this workshop, Peter will share what he has learned about giving and receiving feedback in more than a decade of workshop-style feedback sessions. We'll cover a variety of topics, including: the problems inherent in "tough" criticism, the danger that lurks behind the word "critique," the benefits of honesty, and how to stay friends with those who offer or receive your critical responses.

## KATHARINE SANDS, ON CREATING “DISCOVERABILITY”

A literary agent with the Sarah Jane Freymann Literary Agency, Katharine Sands has represented such projects as *Talk to Strangers: How Everyday Random Encounters Can Expand Your Business, Career, Income and Life* by David Topus; *The New Rules of Attraction: How to Get Him, Keep Him and Make Him Beg for More* by Arden Leigh; *Making Healthy EZ* with Dr. Oz guest, Dr. Julie Chen; *Dating the Devil* (producer: Vast Entertainment) by Lia Romeo; *Chasing Zebras: THE Unofficial Guide to House, MD* by Barbara Barnett of Let's Talk TV; Ford model Helen Lee's *The Tao of Beauty*; *Taxperts: Dirty Little Secrets the IRS Doesn't Want You to Know*; *Make Up, Don't Break Up* with Oprah guest Dr. Bonnie Eaker Weil, to name a mere few. Katharine is also the agent provocateur of *Making the Perfect Pitch: How to Catch a Literary Agent's Eye*, a collection of pitching wisdom from leading literary agents. She recently contributed “Grey is the New Black” to *Fifty Writers on Fifty Shades of Grey*, a nonfiction look at the cultural phenom of the best selling novel.

Take a look with new eyes at your work along with Katharine. Ask yourself: what is my unique voice? What is my lens, the prism through which I am writing? Who are your readers, and how will you reach them? This is a new way to think about writing ...what is specific, unique, fresh and interesting about you, and about your work? Why? How do you want readers to respond to you? Are there regional hooks in your writing? Demographics to use? Where do you find ideas to showcase you, the author? What are the new and emerging markets? Here are guiding principles of successful writers, new media marketing opportunities, and new uses for content. Katharine says there are countless lucrative opportunities for professional writers to find readers. In this presentation, she'll reveal how to sell books by becoming discoverable.

### A Publishing Opportunity

The History Press is a traditional publisher of local and regional history books, always seeking unique slices of local history and the local experts who are working to preserve and share stories that have shaped their communities in northern New England.

Their authors research, write and gather 60-80 historic images for 30-40,000-word, non-fiction local history books. A project management, editorial, production, design, printing, sales and marketing expertise are honed for the local market and devoted to the success of our local authors and books. Authors earn royalties based on book sales.

To learn more: [www.HistoryPress.net](http://www.HistoryPress.net). For submissions: [katie.orlando@historypress.net](mailto:katie.orlando@historypress.net)

### You and Your Credits

Melinda Meyer: as M. LaRose, published her first novel, *The Flower Eater*, from Archway Publishing.

Jean Jesensky: index for *Unfolding of American Labor Law*, by Jeffrey Kahana, published by LFB Scholarly Publishing. Index for “Special Report on 2013 Boston Marathon,” published by *Journal of Bone & Joint Surgery* and *Journal of Orthopedic & Sports PT*.

Janet Hayward Burnham: wrote the text for Vermont's *Elusive Architect George H. Guernsey*, published by the Bethel Historical Society, with many researchers, including Heidi Nikolaidis.

Marion Stahl: *Anita's Piano*, released in February, 2014.

Diane Moore: *Miracles, Magic and the Divine Spirit*, self-published and available from Amazon.

Mary Muncil: blogs at WhiteFeather-Farm.wordpress.com.

Nancy Hayden: “Coffee Break on the Western Front, 1918” – short story in *Something's Brewing*, an anthology of stories and poetry about coffee, Kind of a Hurricane Press, 2014.

James Gamble: short story, “The Gift,” published in *The Best of Burlington Writers Workshop 2014* anthology

Spencer Smith: started “Inspiration Session” workshop for Burlington Writers Workshop.

Patricia Braine: photographer; radio personality (program, DJ) at WMRW independent radio in Warren, Vermont.

Joanna Tebbs Young: columnist for the *Rutland Herald* and *RutlandReader.com*; blogs at [wisdom-withinink.com](http://wisdom-withinink.com).

## RECAP

### David Corey

by Pat Goudey O'Brien

David Corey characterized The Query Letter as a writer's first date in the relationship with an editor or agent. The Book Proposal is the next few dates. In this little scenario, The Pitch is how you get that first date. It's your chance to make a great first impression and spark enough interest for more.

Always pitch in the present tense, David advises. Stories exist in the now! And a pitch is a story--a very short story. Can you tell it in just one sentence? [For instance: "When a man visits Uruguay and discovers that his long lost sister is living in a cloistered monastery, {this} happens."]

Explain what the characters are doing and what is happening. This is not the time for theme or concept. In a few words, tell the story. And always pitch in the third person, even when describing the character in a memoir. Avoid the temptation to be vague or keep the ending a secret. The agents needs to evaluate the whole story. Reveal whether or nor not your hero survives!

David advised against using what he called "sheilding" words that are vague, hackneyed, and don't really convey the content of your story." Things like "finding love" don't say how or who or when or ... Even sentences like "She finds a man who challenges her only to realize he's not Mr. Right" say almost nothing about YOUR story. Also, is someone "beautiful"? Or does her dark-eyed, sculptured face draw attention from all around the room?

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### SAVE THE DATE!

September 27:  
Fall program

# PROGRAM RECAPS

## TELL YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT THE LEAGUE!

[www.leagueofvermontwriters.org](http://www.leagueofvermontwriters.org)

(continued from previous page)

We're advised to avoid adjectives and adverbs (again!). Instead, use your pitch to draw a scene that can be seen. Use the mind's eye, put a picture in an agent's head. It's that age old adage that still holds true--show, don't tell.

Following his initial advice, David gave us all a chance to practice our pitches (ouch!), and to hear some constructive criticism. We took a few minutes to draft some lines, and then several brave writers read theirs aloud. They weren't horrible (well, I did NOT read mine), but they pointed up the effort that is needed to keep a pitch tight, terse, and targeted. It's easy to get caught up in unnecessary details, plot points, explanations, and lose the main thread of your story (this carries in non-fiction, too!).

David and other agents down through the years have counseled time and again, know your project! Understand who your audience is, and know what you are saying to that audience.

Basically, you have to put your authentic story out there. And convince an agent to ask your book out on another date ...



## Joni Cole

by Melinda Meyer

Joni Cole, founder of The Writers' Center in White River Junction, said the typical format of a query letter can be found online, and the good news is that the formula can be followed. But a query letter must also be infused with your personal voice and your enthusiasm for your subject. Joni explained while that many writers find the marketing process to be daunting, sending out a query to "sell" your manuscript to an agent or an editor is part of that process. The anxiety writers feel at writing a query letter often causes their passion to evaporate before it can reach the page. She said a successful query letter is both "professional and memorable." In the course of her work, Joni has seen many queries that were professional, but not so many that were memorable.

Joni suggested that a good query letter has a "heartbeat." Avoid stiff language and get specific about your book as quickly as you can. Remember, agents see a lot of projects. When writing your letter to them, think about "the power of the personal versus the universal" and avoid generalities. The query letter should begin with the genre and word-count.

Then, Joni advised, you should tether that premise to a nugget of specific information from the book. The query is "more than a pitch," but is not a summary of plot-points. Get to the essence—provide the core desires and conflicts but not a detailed plot outline for your book.

One of the hardest parts of writing a query letter, noted Joni, is striking an authentic note of professional friendliness towards the

agent. Only use flattery that is sincere. Let the agent know that you know who they are, what projects they represent and what they like to work with, etc.



Joni suggests thinking of the query as a conversation you are having at a party. Make the letter's opening

sound "human" and sincere. Also, you "definitely need a paragraph showing who your market is." Show how you can help the agent sell the book.

The last paragraph of the query letter should provide credentials and biographical background on yourself, the author. This adds to the "heartbeat" of the query letter: your aim is for the agent to care about both the book and the person who wrote it. Joni advised that, "Vulnerability is a key way of getting people on your side." However, she noted, this is tricky to do. Remember to be yourself. If a personal detail may help sell the book, do put it in the letter. But do not make grand promises or claim that the book will appeal to "everyone." Narrow down your target audience—Joni advised that "any niche audience is significant."

It's important, Joni noted, that the query letter be written in your own voice. Show your personal connection to the topic. Joni urged that "it's okay to do many drafts." As you re-read and edit you will see what works and what doesn't. Ask friends to give you feedback on the letter, but remember that no book will appeal to everyone. (For more encouragement and advice on handling criticism, read Joni Cole's book, *Toxic Feedback*.)

## Michael Metivier

by Susan Moegenburg

# PROGRAM RECAPS

### A Not Indecent Proposal

Michael Metivier is Assistant Editor at Chelsea Green Publishing. He is also a poet, and he's on the editorial board of *Whole Terrain Journal*.



Michael analyzed what a book proposal needs and shared how to achieve a selling proposal.

First, proposals are an essential part of the process for an author working on a book that has not been solicited by a publisher. Chelsea Green receives about 800 proposals per year and around 300 of those books are published, Michael said. If those odds are typical, then creating a standout proposal is clearly necessary.

Using a recent book about cheese making as an example, Michael walked us through the purposes and steps of "crafting a successful book proposal with the right frame of mind." The proposal can function to improve the book's organization, promote an author's self-evaluation and self-assessment of the work, and help to find the right publisher and the right audience. Michael stressed the following general principles: do your research, follow all guidelines for the publisher you've chosen (found on publishers' websites), edit and have the proposal reviewed by

A successful proposal can gain the author wider readership, sales and marketing assistance, prestige, editorial support, money, and personal fulfillment. It is also important to keep in mind the publisher's goals, which are sales – both short- and long-term – maintaining compatibility with their list and mission, acquiring high quality work, and maintaining good working relationships. There are six basic elements of a book proposal:

1. Cover letter: The what, why, and how of your book; it can be adapted from your query; its tone, style, and approach should reflect the way you write as you summarize your book. Michael said "the cover letter is like a thesis, and the body of the proposal backs up that thesis."
2. Preliminary table of contents: A basic outline for rapid assessment.
3. Expanded table of contents: The "most important part" of the proposal,

an experienced professional, and strive for a tone that is both natural and professional in writing the proposal.

providing a 1-to-2 paragraph description of each chapter. Here Michael stressed the importance of writing clearly.

4. Marketing research: Include target audience and your plans for promoting your book. Include at least seven comparative titles published within the last five years, with their subject, theme, publication date, publisher, and sales figures. How is your book similar to and different from these? What special sales potential (e.g., clubs, classes, events) exists for your book? Will your book be coffee table-book sized or pocket book-sized, and will it include photographs? What does a publisher need to know to market your book successfully?

5. Biographical material: Write your biographical material to demonstrate your expertise about your subject, including previous publications and relevant achievements. Include a link to your professional and/or educational website.

6. Sample chapters: Include preferably two chapters; they do not need to be sequential. Make sure they have been reviewed, edited, and polished.

The audience showed a lot of gratitude for the wealth of information that Michael shared with us. I left feeling like I had a new grasp of a very important part of the book-writing process and hoping that I find an editor as friendly and helpful as Michael.

### 2014 WMA AGENTS INCLUDE:

(see more info at [www.leagueofvermontwriters.org](http://www.leagueofvermontwriters.org))

**Maria Ribas: the Howard Morheim Literary Agency**, specializing in practical non-fiction; interested in cookbooks, self-help, health, diet, home, parenting, humor, from authors with a strong platform. Very selectively looks at narrative non-fiction. <http://www.morhaimliterary.com/agents.html>

**Eric W. Ruben: Literary Agent, Attorney at Law**, seeking YA, all romance, erotica, LGBT, mystery, and more. <http://www.rubenlaw.org/contact/>

**Katharine Sands: Sarah Jane Freymann Agency**, interested in commercial fiction and nonfiction. Looks at popular culture, personal growth, leisure activities, lifestyle, wisdom, relationships, parenting, home arts, entertainment, and cookbooks, psychology, social thought, history, health to the more eclectic popular reference, travel, spir-

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# Registration Form

## League of Vermont Writers 2014 Summer Program: Writers Meet Agents

Register online at [www.leagueofvermontwriters.org](http://www.leagueofvermontwriters.org) or make check payable to: *LVW*

*Writers Meet Agents* and mail to:

League of Vermont Writers Registrar, PO Box 172, Underhill Center, VT 05490

**Late Registration begins July 8, Members \$140; Nonmembers \$160**

Questions: [info@leagueofvermontwriters.org](mailto:info@leagueofvermontwriters.org); phone: (802) 3439-7475

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Members:** \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$125.00 ea. registration = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (late: \$140)

**Nonmembers:** \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$140.00 ea. registration = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (late: \$160)

[Students, ask about our student discount]

**Pitch sessions:** \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$25.00 ea. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Tax deductible donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Check # \_\_\_\_\_

Your choice of entree: Salmon \_\_\_\_\_ Chicken \_\_\_\_\_

OR, do you have special dietary needs \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate the name of the agent(s) you would like to pitch to:

**July 19, 2014**

**Hampton Inn**

Colchester, VT

8:30am-4:30pm

### Menus:

*Continental Breakfast:* includes yogurt, fruit, pastries, beverage

*Luncheon choices:*

Salmon entree w/vegetables

Chicken Cordon Bleu w/vegetables

*Vegan Option:*

Chef's Choice (veggie stir fry)

*Dessert Served Mid-Afternoon*

### Schedule at a glance:

8:30 a.m.: Check in, Meet & Greet

9:00 a.m. - 12:30 pm: Opening Words; panel discussion; Peter Biello and Jo Knowles Presentations; pitch sessions.

12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.: Lunch

1:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.: Katharine Sands presentation; Round Tables; pitch sessions.

4:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Closing Words

### Directions to the Conference Center:

The Hampton Inn hotel is located at the end of the exit ramp, Exit 16 off I-89.

The address is 42 Lower Mountain View Drive, which is Route 2 in Colchester. USE ENTRANCE C at the back of the building!

### **AGENTS** continued from previous page

ity. For memoir and femoir, she looks for a world rarely or newly observed. [Sarahjanefreyermann.com](http://Sarahjanefreyermann.com).

**Beth Campbell: BookEnds, LLC**, interests include fantasy, YA, and sci-fi novels and also romantic suspense, women's fiction, and cozy mysteries. She also works on some non-fiction titles and will look at some related queries for her agency, which handles true crime, self-help, and business writers as well as mystery, romance, and women's fiction novelists. <http://www.bookends-inc.com/>

**Kaylee Davis: Dee Mura Literary**, special interests include sci-fi, fantasy, speculative fiction, young adult, new adult,

steampunk, urban fantasy, social commentary, and counter-culture. <http://www.deemuraliterary.com/>

**Kimiko Nakamura: Dee Mura Literary**, works with new and emerging writers on fiction and non-fiction, especially contemporary fiction, young adult, new adult, women's lit, romance, upmarket literary, mystery, urban fantasy, satire, memoir. Also, Narrative nonfiction, mind and body, cookbooks, spirituality, and health. <http://www.deemuraliterary.com>

**Emily Mitchell: Wernick & Pratt Agency**, Emily is accepting new clients in all genres for children. <http://www.wernickpratt.com/>

**LVW Board:** Alyssa Berthiaume, president; Pat Goudey O'Brien, vice-president; Deb Fennell, secretary, past president; Elizia Meskill, treasurer; Amy Kolby Noyes, Paula Diaco, Mary Muncil, Wendy Heilig, and Kerry Skiffington, at large.

Membership: Tommy Waltz; Critique service: Sharon Putnam.

**LVW Volunteer Opportunities:** Pat Goudey O'Brien is looking for someone with editing and graphics skills to help out with (and eventually take over) the workings of League Lines and the League's web site. If you'd like to put your skills to use for the League (or work with Pat to learn new skills), drop us a line at [lvw@leagueofvermontwriters.org](mailto:lvw@leagueofvermontwriters.org). (NOTE: Pat says she's a lot of fun to work with.)

The League also needs volunteers for marketing and publicity purposes as well. Please email the same address if interested.

League Lines is published four times per year, in January, April, July, and September. Questions or information can be emailed to [lvw@leagueofvermontwriters.org](mailto:lvw@leagueofvermontwriters.org)

Tommy Waltz  
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