

# League Lines The League of Vermont Writers Newsletter

Join us!

July 18, 2015:

Jerry Johnson's Residence, 870 Creek Road, Albany VT

Directions, page 7

10:00am~5:00pm

### SUMMER 2015 PROGRAM

### Some of our presenters include members:

Alec Hastings
Amy Kolb Noyes
Jerry Johnson
Joan Grant
Joy (J.P.) Choquette
Mark Pendergast
Melinda Meyer
Michael Caldwell
Pat Goudey O'Brien
Paula Diaco
Stephen Payne
Ted Tedford

### If you plan to attend, keep in mind:

- Coffee, tea, bottled water, and light snacks will be provided by LVW, but not lunch; please bring a bagged lunch (if refrigeration is needed, bring your own small cooler)
- Plan for any kind of weather; dress appropriately

#### Please be sure to bring

- writing utensils and paper
- pieces of your work, in-progress or finished (some sessions might require work)
- a voice recorder (if you have one); there's at least one session where this may be useful
- a lawn chair or blanket for sitting outside

## "INTO THE WORDS" LVW'S SUMMER RETREAT AND MEMBER SHOWCASE

In the earliest days of the League, programs for members centered around gathering to share ideas and to spend time together. In efforts to build a stronger community (see more on this in the President's Letter on page 2) and bring LVW back to "its roots," a special Summer Program Planning Committee has worked to orchestrate a day-long retreat that pays homage to LVW members. Purposefully named "Into the Words" playing off the hit-musical and movie *Into the Woods*, event planners wanted to create that feeling of getting lost in the thing that you love (words) with people who share that adoration (writers).

The day will be comprised of members showcasing their skills and talents by leading a variety of ½-hour and hour-long sessions (from craft to publishing to the writing life) and exhibiting their work in a designated "Member Showcase" area. (See page 6 if you would like to learn more on exhibiting your work). There will also be a lunch break (this is a bring-your-own!) mid-day that will feature a reading of the 10-minute play, Fish and Game, written by member Marge Sharpe, and a reading from our host, Jerry Johnson. Johnson will read from his books Up the Creek Without a Saddle and Noah's Song. The rest of lunch will be devoted to time to mingle. After several more sessions during the afternoon, LVW is offering an ice cream and watermelon social. During this time, member Mark Pendergast, accompanied by Sophia Donforth, will sing some his poems that have been set to music. And, once again, the remainder of the time will be spent in socializing and community building.

Throughout the day there will be a fundraising tag-sale (see page 6 for details) and a storytelling open-mic lead by member Recille Hamrell. This won't be a traditional open mic, so don't come with anything prepared. (See more details on page 5).

In addition, it's important to note that as part of the ambience of the day, no one is required to go to any of the sessions, but this is strongly encouraged so that attendees can see what other members of LVW are doing and can meet new folks. But if people would rather slip away to a quiet corner and just write or talk with a fellow writer, that is okay, too! A full schedule of the day will be provided at check-in that morning.

If the program is successful and everyone raves about it at the end of the day, LVW may just make this event a new biennial tradition to happen during the years Writers Meet Agents isn't happening. So, if you come and enjoy yourselves, please let someone at the Welcome-and-Registration table know. As always, members' feedback is important.

Scour the pages of this *League Lines* edition for more details of the day and sign-up to come using details provided on page 7!

### Letter from the President

Dear Members,

This note is brought to you by the letters: P (is for people), C (is for community), and B (is for belonging).

"People" and "community" are particularly resonant for me as I review the first half of the year and think about what we've accomplished (see side bar on this page) and our future direction. "People" has been a consistent thread throughout my president's letters since my induction in 2014. I've always attempted to emphasize the importance of the people of this organization, because without people we have nothing. My hope has always been that through my leadership, I would show members that they are valued, heard, enjoyed, appreciated, and that they belong to a community where they are accepted and celebrated. The return would be that they would pay this forward by donating time or a skill to the organization, or that they would contribute in some other way to the development of this community. We've all joined LVW for one reason or another, but underlying all of those reasons, I believe, is one common motivation: to belong to something bigger than our singular (writing) selves.

The feeling of belonging, however, doesn't come from sending in our dues or attending a program. "Belonging" is reared by breaking bread together—time together to talk, to get to know, to find things in common, and ultimately, to develop relationships. When we begin to cultivate relationships, we begin to care. In caring, we invest a new time and energy in keeping those relationships alive. Suddenly, networks and connections are formed, sharing and growing are organically nurtured, and we have

ourselves a community of people who feel that they belong. In that belonging, those people want to give back and ensure that others have that same experience, and so we have a continuously growing and developing entity that is unwavering.

Our membership continues to be over 150 strong, but I have the sense that regardless of our numbers, that the feeling of true community and the sense of belonging is waning. Somewhere along the way, we've turned to focusing programs on development and education and less on time together. In the earliest days of the League (the 1920s), when members came together, it was about the gathering of the minds. More present than the roaring 20s but still several years ago, members used to go on a weekend-retreat where people bunked together, brought wine, stayed up late, and spent time writing. These times together were more about community and belonging. I believe this was a reason that people wanted to be a part of LVW and why people stayed members.

We (me and the Board) want to see those elements re-cultivated. Thus, my member-event brain child was born. This is my active attempt to bring these principles back to the surface by providing a space and platform for people to come together and learn about one another through member-led discussions and workshops; through members sharing and showcasing their work; and by offering a day where members can make it about them.

In some ways, it's a thank you to the people of LVW for their continuous affiliation with our group. In another, it's a way of celebrating them for the richness and diversity they bring to our organization through their breadth of talents, skills, and experiences. It's about community. It's about belonging. It's about investment in each other and this organization. It's about the future and our sustainability. It's about you. And me. But, mostly, and most importantly, it's about "us."

For the good of the cause, Alyssa Berthiaume



#### 2015 Accomplishments (to-date)

- Successfully hosted two workshops (one on author platforms with Barnes / MacQueen Publishing Resources, one on selfpublishing with Pat Goudey O'Brien and Paula Diaco)
- Sent monthly e-newsletters via MailChimp
- Established a new marketing committee
- Planned Fall 2015 program (see page 5)
- Started surveying locations for Writers Meet Agents 2016
- Recruited several new volunteers
- Continued work on the new website
- Finished our first semester of overseeing a (fabulous) intern (see her article on page 6)

#### Re-Ink Your Life, Joanna Tebbs Young

by Marilyn Taylor McDowell

Re-Ink Your Life.

What does this mean? Joanna Tebbs Young, transformative writing coach and creator of a business called Wisdom Within, Ink led us on a journey of her personal experience with journal writing, "morning pages," expressive writing and ultimately, the writing of her memoir.

Find your story. Find your voice. Find yourself.

These words Joanna shared with the audience, telling us her story, how through expressive writing she was led to her own healing and much selfdiscovery. She spoke of her "soulful calling to become who she truly is." Writing in a journal, Joanna says, is like some kind of magic, peeling away "You are" and "You should" and giving way to the raw honest truth of "I am" and "I can." It became her passion to help others in a similar way, even pursuing graduate studies at Goddard College, designing an Individualized MA as part of the Transformative Language Arts concentration.

Raised in a strict religious household, she grew up feeling as if her true self had been stifled, gone underground, and yet through years of expressive journal writing, she began to understand that

she was being faithful to someone else's script and not her own. Once this awareness took root she was able to rise up, let go and move toward her personal truth. This may sound very "new age" and "woo-woo," but as a long-time journal keeper myself, I can attest to the power and wisdom of her words. As Joanna says, "Stories tell us how things work, how to make sense of the world."

She talked about the importance of writing one's own story and "making the connections." When she facilitates writing workshops, one of the first writing prompts she gives her students is "I am..." knowing that their story is the most important story they need to tell. She encourages free-flow writing, which is fast writing and the way to "outrun the censors."

Expressive writing and discovering "our own life script" may lead to anger, rage and pain, says Joanna, and we need to accept this, and yet it is possible to transcend "negative" emotions. Joanna prefers not to think of any emotion as negative but instead as messages. "It is possible to turn potentially unhelpful emotions into catalysts for change/ growth." She talked of this deeply personal writing as akin to a prayer or a practice of meditation. Its healing power often leads to resolution. "We have the ability to turn anger into action, silence

### PROGRAM RECAPS

into voice and submission into selfconfidence. We learn *all* of our experiences are part of and necessary to the whole of our story."

Joanna gave the audience two writing prompts. The first: "I was raised to be ..." and the second: "I am the author of my own life and the next chapter is about ..." Pens scratched upon paper for the allotted number of minutes and then Joanna asked us to read our writing silently to see what most surprised us and what insights were revealed. A few brave souls shared their writing.

So, what does Re-ink Your Life mean?

- Self is a choice.
- Be this or be that.
- Be the author of your own authentic life.
- Determine your truth.
- Find your voice.
- (Re)write your script.

Joanna Tebbs Young, MA-TLA is a transformative writing facilitator. You can find her at wisdomwithinink.com and read her writing in weekly columns in the Rutland Herald and the Rutland Reader.

#### You and Your Credits

Cecile G. Betit, Ph.D.: "Employee Ownership and Governance: the Carris Companies Making Change Impacting the Whole," in the Journal of Corporate Citizenship, special summer 2015 edition focused on Whole Systems Transformation, Sheffield, UK: Greenleaf Publishing.

**Alice Eckles**: The Literature Preferred by Wild Boar, a novel, published by Dancing Bee Press, February, 2015.

**Darlene Scott [d. Rae Scott]** Last Hope, a science fiction novel available on Kindle.

**Lori L. MacLaughlin**: published her fantasy adventure novel, *Lady,Thy Name Is Trouble*, through her Book and Sword Publishing imprint, 2015.

Kathleen McKinley Harris: nonfiction piece in *Open Doors: Stories From Wildlife Nation*, a collection compiled by Janet Fancher to entice children into the outdoors. All proceeds benefit the National Wildlife Federation. Available through Amazon.

**Linda Cruise**: children's picture book, Around the World from A to Z, from Tandem Light Press (Atlanta), late summer/early fall 2015. Two, additional picture books will follow in the series.

Melinda Meyer [M. LaRose]: published The Flower Eater [summer, 2013], a novel released with the help of Archway Publishing.

# A Few Titles of Sessions Being Offered at the Summer Program:

What is Your Fictional Voice?

Poetry and Music Coming
Together

The Importance of Literary

Mentors

Performance Techniques for Writers

Poetry into Song

### Real Life Writing with Ben Hewitt

By Julia C. Hoover

In an engaging slide presentation that was both touching and humorous, Ben Hewitt joined the LVW to discuss how the rules of writing have impacted his everyday writing. Ben showed pictures of his multigenerational "family" assisting local Vermont farmers during harvest time, reminding LVW members that for many in Vermont, "family" means "community."

Ben grew up in rural Vermont, a child of writers who stressed literature and experience over technology, traditions he has tried to pass on to his children and that are reflected in his writing. Ben founded and self-published a small ski-and-biking magazine while he held down a job at a local ski/bike shop. His work was discovered by a national biking magazine, and Ben started getting assignments to write for regional and national magazines. He currently writes a blog and has written several books about living, parenting, and loving in hometown America—the America that LVW members cherish.

And the rules?

There are no rules.

But when there *are* rules, these are the rules:

I) Readers aren't going to hear what you expect—what you want—them to hear. Readers' perceptions deviate wildly from writers' purposes, no matter how

carefully crafted the words. The closer writers can come to driving home the point without explicitly stating it, the more likely readers' experiences will reflect that.

- 2) The less written the better.
- 3) 98% of being a good writer is being curious and remembering that curiosity. Writing is about exposing vulnerability, because it is that vulnerability that creates moments of connection with readers.
- 4) Half of the remainder is not caring what anyone thinks of you; naturally, some people won't like your writing. But allowing the fear of people's opinions of you to control your writing does yourself and your readers a disservice. When you push through your vulnerability and fear, you write material that becomes enriched, and it resonates most with readers.
- 5) The other half of the remainder is actually writing. "The only difference between someone who is doing what they want to do and someone who is not doing what they want to do—is that the former is actually doing it."
- 6) If there could be more than 100 %—the remainder would be reading.
- 7) Write fast. Write so fast that that you have no idea what the next word will be or what the last word was. Be a vessel for your writing; let it flow through you. Go back and edit later.
- 8) Allow readers a way to establish trust. A blog is a good way to do this—

give them a chapter or two, or a magazine article. Establish that connection.

- 9) Accept your bad writing, because you need to get through that to get to the good. Write badly now; don't wait for the good.
- 10) Never ever wait for inspiration. "Waiting for inspiration is like waiting for a baby to sleep." Sit down and write, and the rest will come.
- II) Finally, there really are no rules—most of the best writing is probably written with broken rules. Rules simply help guide you through the process; they are not a mandate. Don't let the rules box you in. It can be helpful to know rules of good writing and then understand when and why you are breaking them, but they should not inhibit writing.

Final points had to do with writing out loud to discover pacing and word choice issues and the importance of letting work sit before editing and submitting.

Ben Hewitt's books include: The Town That Food Saved: How One Town Found Vitality In Local Food, Rodale Books, 2010; Making Supper Safe: One Man's Quest to Learn the Truth About Food Safety, Rodale Books, 2009; Saved: How I Quit Worrying About Money and Became the Richest Guy in the World, Rodale Books, 2013; Homegrown: Adventures in Parenting off the Beaten Path, Unschooling, and Reconnecting with the Natural World, Roost Books, 2014; and The Nourishing Homestead: One Back-to-the-Land Family's Plan for Cultivating Soil, Skills, and Spirit, Chelsea Green Publishing, 2015.

#### **Cheryl Young**

By T. Gerbode

The League of Vermont Writers does not wait for the rainbows to come out or the flowers to bloom before they meet and dive in to the business of writing. Raw, untold stories were the mission of the day, and once again I was not disappointed in my decision to spend it at an event on Saturday, April 18, in Rutland, Vermont.

For the third presentation of the day, unbeknownst to me when I volunteered to write the review summary of Cheryl Young's talk, she spoke of female pilots;

specifically the female pilots of WWII. At that time women qualified to get into the Air Force training program, called WASPS, by having a minimum of thirty-five flying hours on record. I have forty-seven- and- a- half hours on record myself from the early 2000's, so Cheryl's first of three topics had me hooked.

Originally from the Midwest, Cheryl's experience in Vermont includes the School of International Training in Brattelboro. She is a social studies teacher with a Swedish background and a large family back in Omaha, Nebraska, where she learned how powerful a story could be to family and connection. As an original researcher in college at Dartmouth's New England Studies, she

learned about a group of women left out of traditional studies. They were the women pilots of WWII, called WASPS, who served their country without military status, registration, or benefits. They were given no ribbons and they were to adhere to government regulations, classified as "experimental" though they flew every plane and were in as much danger as the

Continued to the right, page 5

PROGRAM RECAPS



### FALL PROGRAM SEPT. 19TH MONTPELIER

Mark your calendars and plan on joining us for a day of expanded thought, inspiration, and fun. This is just a sneak peak at our fabulous fall program which will include presentations by Vermont's poet laureate, Sydney Lea, novelist Sara J. Henry and professor, educator, writer and editor, Katherine Quimby Johnson

Place: Vermont College of Fine Arts, Montpelier, VT STAY TUNED FOR MORE DETAILS!

male pilots. By comparison, Russian women were totally integrated into their military (read about them in the book *Night Witches.*)

Elizabeth Martin (married later in life) is one of the first female pilots who qualified for the WASPS. In fact, Elizabeth sold her bicycle for \$100 to get into flight school. Cheryl contacted her and developed a close working relationship with her when writing the book. Through their relationship and mutual interest, they took to the challenge of bringing the story alive. Cheryl wrote a children's book illustrated by Elizabeth's grandson, Andy Martin, titled My Grandma Is a Pilot. The collaboration between Elizabeth and Cheryl

went beyond a children's book. Two books were published, art was created, music was written, a video made, postcards printed and many miles of speaking engagements for the two of them, in educational settings, were a result.

Cheryl's writing life included becoming a book coach for friend, Tim Brandt, who shared some of his writing with her one day. With her encouragement, the two friends eventually formed a publishing company and published A Father's Gift. "Every story ends in, 'I love you dad."

"And with every story lessons are integrated," Cheryl says. "Don't let your stories die, or turn to dust and rust," she urges.

### A Venue for True Stories Told Live: Open-Mic at the Summer Program

Treat yourself to an afternoon session of shared personal stories.

Come just to listen or to tell.

Prompt sheet provided to trigger memories.

7-minute story limit.

No reading from writings.

To sign up to tell your story – see Recille Hamrell. Find out more at the event!

### SHOWCASE YOUR WORK AT THE SUMMER EVENT: SIGN UP!

Are you interested in showcasing your work in our members' showcase this July? This is a free perk for members (which means you have to be current on your dues, write to Tommy Walz, membership chair, if unsure: twalz@aol.com).

Please note that you must bring your own table and be responsible for its supervision. This includes the sale of your own books and the exchange of monies.

Please email Ivw@leagueofvermontwriters.org if you intend to showcase your work so event-planners can account for appropriate amounts of space.

### TAG SALE OF THE ARTS: PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT LVW

We thought it might be fun, and a good way to raise some funds (for LVW), to have a tag sale at our summer program. The theme for your donations should be related to the arts (writing, painting, sculpting, music, etc.). Please, no books, LP's, 8-track tapes or clothing. Bring cash for making a purchase.

If you have any questions about this, feel free to contact Vice President, Mary Muncil, at <a href="mailto:mmuncil@verizon.net">mmuncil@verizon.net</a> or 518-677-2929.

#### Intern Spotlight!

#### By Kara E. Joyce

The first semester of my junior year was spent frolicking through Europe, and in the last month there, I received an email from Kim MacQueen telling me that there was an internship opportunity with the League of Vermont Writers waiting for me when I got back to Burlington. It's not in my nature to say noto anything—and Champlain has been drilling into my head the importance of multiple internships since day one. So I replied with a resounding YES, and continued to contact Kim about once a week until I was connected with Alyssa, LVW's president. When we first met in January, I wasn't sure what to expect, as I hadn't encountered the League outside of a trip to the Burlington Book Festival in 2012. Alyssa filled me in on the League's current goals, including expanding web presence and reaching a younger crowd of writers. This internship would be great, I only had classes three days of the week, and I'd been appointed group leader on a semester long project. I remember calling my mother after that first meeting, bragging about how perfect the next few months would be.

I may have spoken too soon.

This semester I tackled this internship, six classes, two additional jobs, and

several extracurricular activities. It was an experience to say the least, with new tasks popping up almost every day. From trying to tweet daily writing challenges for the League (on the new Twitter account I created for them), to attempting to raise \$4,000 in a month for the project I was leading, to tracking down time to sleep, there was always something on the back of my mind.

Luckily, Alyssa was very understanding of my situation and helped me as much as she could. She helped me become familiar with new software programs like Adobe InDesign and Microsoft Publisher and sent along everything I needed to put together the monthly e-newsletters. More times than not the newsletters ended up coming together at one o'clock in the morning...or later—but at least I always finished them and Alyssa (and others) seemed pleased with my final product. And then there was Spring "Break" 2015 when I spent most of my time locked in my room trying to write my first press release for the Author Platform workshop in March and giving input when I could about how we could make sure the program ran smoothly, while simultaneously attempting to edit together a four minute video.

The best part about working with the League has been meeting everyone. I love meeting and talking to people about, well,

everything. It's been fantastic to meet so many people at the League's programs who are accomplished and willing to help. From Pat O'Brien, who so kindly edits everything I put together before it gets sent out, to Annalisa Parent, who kindly let me edit some of her work for a class, to Mary Muncil who gave me advice on who to contact in regards to possible work in the magazine industry. Sometimes in writing communities, they will be rampant with competition and people trying to consistently be better than everyone else, but I haven't seen that here. From what I can tell, everyone is more than willing to help each other out.

I've had a lot of various temporary jobs, some with a strong sense of community and others that weren't as inclusive. I have always found that I thrive more in familial-like atmospheres. I'm happy to say that, to me, the League has always felt like one of those environments. I hope that the League feels I have made a significant contribution to its community, and I hope I can continue to contribute in the coming months.

Always saying 'yes' has its ups and downs, and I definitely feel that, even with everything on my plate (actually, it felt more like a full table), working with the League has been a fantastic experience.

**Spotlight on Members:** We would like to take the time to highlight some individuals who have been actively cultivating our LVW community:

Kara Joyce (intern); Kim MacQueen and Cindy Barnes (Barnes / MacQueen Publishing); Christine Moriarty (Moneypeace, offering time and talent to help create our budget); Lo Thamm-Alvarez (100 North Designs, offering time and talent to create our new website); Paula Diaco (volunteering to look at WMA 2016 space); J.P. Choquette, Karen Boushie, Jess Fennell and Elizabeth Gaucher (marketing committee); Tommy Walz (membership committee, chair); Annalisa Parent and Mary Muncil (member-event planning committee); Pat Goudey O'Brien and Mary Muncil (planning Fall 2015 program); All members of the Board (names listed on back page); All members who have volunteered to participate in the upcoming event (a full list to appear in the next issue of League Lines).

### Registration Form

#### **LVW 2015 Summer Program**

Register online at **www.leagueofvermontwriters.org** or fill out the form below and mail with a check to: Mary Muncil, LVW Vice President: 148 Dunbar Rd. Cambridge, NY 12816

Make check payable to: LVW Summer Program

If you have questions, please email lvw@leagueofvermontwriters.org

**DATE:** July 18, 2015 **TIME:** 10:00am-5:00pm

**COST:** \$28 members/ \$35 nonmembers

**LOCATION:** Jerry Johnson's Residence, 870 Creek Road, Albany VT (physical location); 870 Creek Road, Irasburg, VT (mailing address).

If using Mapquest, use the above <u>mailing address</u> to get directions that will bring you right to lerry's door.

If using a GPS, please use Jerry's physical address.

**Directions from the common in Irasburg:** Pass Ray's Market on your left with Irasburg's common on your right. You are now 3.3 miles from Jerry's schoolhouse. Just after Ray's Market, you will pass a church on your right. Continue straight ahead down Creek Road. (It may not have a sign.) About 100 feet past the church you will come to a road that forks to the left. Do NOT take it. Continue straight. After about 3 miles you will come to a blinking light at a 4-way intersection. Continue straight. Jerry's schoolhouse is the 2nd place on the right, about 0.2 miles after the blinking light. Look for "870" just below the mailbox. Park along the road. If you get lost, you can ask people in Ray's Market or anyone on Creek Road, "Hey, how do I get to Jerry Johnson's schoolhouse?" Jerry's number: (802) 754-2265.

#### Schedule at a glance:

\*A day-schedule will be provided upon check-in

10-10:30 Welcome/Arrival

10:30-12:30 Sessions (offered at 1/2 hour and hour long increments)

12:30-1:30 Picnic Lunch (bring your own bagged lunch)

1:30-3:30 Afternoon Sessions

3:30-4:30 Ice cream/watermelon social (provided by the League)

4:30-5:00 Send off and closing

\*At any point, people may skip a session and opt for writing or social time

Name(s)	
Address	
City State	Zip
Phone Email	
Members: @ \$28 ea. registration =	\$
Nonmembers: @ \$35 ea. registration =	\$
[Students, ask about our student discount]	
Tax deductible donation:	\$
TOTAL ENCLOSED	\$
Check #	

LVW Board: Alyssa Berthiaume, president; Mary Muncil, vice-president;

Julia Hoover, secretary; Deb Fennell, past president; Elizia Meskill, treasurer; Pat Goudey O'Brien, Sharon Putnam, Wendy Heilig, Bobbi Jo Davis, and Lisa Halvorsen, at large.

Membership: Tommy Walz; 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.

In general, the League needs volunteers for a variety of other purposes. Please email the same address if interested.

League Lines is published four times per year, prior to the quarterly programs in January, April, July, and September. Questions or information can be emailed to us at lvw@leagueofvermontwriters.org

Tommy Walz 157 Camp St. Barre, VT 05641