

The Quill

The Monthly Newsletter of the Monadnock Writers' Group

January 1, 2026

Supporting Writers Since 1984

The Monadnock Writers' Group is a registered 501(c)(3) organization.

PO Box 3071, Peterborough, NH 03458



NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS FOR WRITERS

A Penguin Random House *Blast from the Past*. Several years ago, Random House came out with eight recommended resolutions for writers. Following are the general ideas, lovingly modified with my own spin on them ☺.

1. **Set a realistic writing goal for 2026.** Consider calling a writing friend to share in a mutual goal-setting session. Write down your resolution and hold yourself accountable.
2. **Meet other authors.** This might mean getting out to author talks, participating in local and regional conferences, or connecting on social media. Writing groups are a great way to connect with others who share your stresses, excitement, and necessary diligence. To learn more tips and tricks of the trade, seek out writing retreats, author panels, and bookstore discussions.
3. **Set a 2026 reading goal.** Reading is the key to good writing. Keep on top of current trends, hone your own writing skills, and share your passion for the written word by joining a book club. You can keep track of your goals and share recommendations on Goodreads.
4. **Try something new.** Alter your writing time, try a new style or genre, outline (if you usually don't) or don't (if you usually do). The more tips and tools you have at your disposal, the smoother your writing process will go.
5. **Improve your social media skills.** This is a way to build your audience while learning from others along the way. Set goals here, too, and make a point of reciprocating the follow.
6. **Write badly.** Don't be afraid of the ugly first draft. It is a necessary evil! There will be plenty of time to revise later. First, breathe life into the words and let them live on the page. Take your time with those improvements. You can't edit a blank page, so keep moving forward, and learn to feel comfortable with the process.

7. **Schedule time for writing and revision.** Consider setting a writing calendar to notch out those precious sessions. Perhaps writing can be the first or last thing you do every day. Building a routine will help you generate more work. Once you've established a schedule, protect it. Carry a notebook and pen, text yourself passages while driving, and, if you need to, don't hesitate to call a (writer) friend to capture a concept.
8. **Refill your reserves.** Take time to replenish. Take a long walk, or a long bath. Read a great article. Unplug from social media. Climb that mountain. Your work will be waiting for you when you return, and your brain will appreciate the break.

DECEMBER MEETING

December 20 at the Peterborough Library:
Member Read Around. A full circle of attendees joined for our December Read Around event. Folks shared novel excerpts, poetry, short stories, and personal essays.

As always, the event offered an opportunity to get to know each other better, and to discover unique writing styles, compelling topics, and lyrical stanzas. Members expressed an interest



in modifying the next Read Around to allow time for critique. The Board will discuss concepts before then.

MWG Board President, Jesseca Timmons shared a photo opportunity with Board Members at Large Mary Marchese and Karen-Marie Scolforo.



CONTESTS, SUBMISSIONS, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR WRITERS

HerStry Open Submissions and New Critique Groups for 2026. This organization offers writing groups, storytelling opportunities, contests, and critiques. Check out the HerStry website for exciting opportunities: <https://herstryblg.com>.





Swamp-Pink Offers Prizes in Fiction, Nonfiction, and Poetry. It's contest time at Swamp-Pink, so pull out your short stories, essays, and poems. For more information, click [here](#).

All entries will be considered for publication with a \$20 entry fee. More than one manuscript may be entered. Before you submit, please remove your name and any other identifying information from your manuscript. Simultaneous submissions are okay, as long as you contact Swamp-Pink should the work be accepted elsewhere.

From **Authors Publish** comes the following early 2026 recommendations for submissions.

Vine Leaves Press is an international press with staff in the United States, Germany, Greece, England, and beyond. They were founded in 2011 as a literary journal and started publishing vignette collections in 2014. Vine Leaves Press publish books in a variety of genres including memoirs, coming of age, literary and multi-genre novels, poetry and short story collections, and reference books. They are open to submissions from December 1st 2025, and close on January 31st, 2026.

Hohm Press is a small print publisher based out of Arizona, Hohm has been around for many years. They are a respected press that has published a number of well-known authors. They generally focus on health and wellness. They are not interested in fiction or short story collections.

becker&mayer! kids is often abbreviated as b&m!. This is an imprint of **The Quarto Publishing Group** that focuses on publishing children's books that focus on portraying varying cultures, races, and abilities. They say this about the imprint, "We believe authenticity is even more important than just visibility. When people read about their own culture, it is often the nuances of the experience that are relatable. Our inspiring children's list brings representation and positivity to the reading landscape of young readers everywhere." They publish fiction and nonfiction for children.

Tuttle Publishing was originally founded in 1832 in Vermont. This makes it one of the oldest American publishers still in operation. In 1948, the company established a publishing outpost in Japan, and since then they have become much more focused on producing English-language books about the arts, languages and cultures of Asia. In fact currently Tuttle Publishing is only open to unsolicited submissions of work on "Asia-related topics". This includes Asian languages, cuisines, martial arts, arts and crafts, Eastern philosophies, etc. Do not submit any work outside of those topics to them. They are not interested in any fiction submissions.

Eclipse is the dark romance focused imprint of Entwined Publishing, which we have reviewed [here](#). This is how they describe the imprint "Eclipse delves into the shadowy realms of dark romance, where love and danger intertwine. We are interested in submissions featuring dark billionaires, mafia kings, biker gangs, and anti-heroes who blur the lines between right and

wrong. Your stories should evoke intense emotions, explore forbidden desires, and offer complex, multi-dimensional characters that captivate and challenge readers.”

Headpress was established in 1991 although the publishing arm wasn’t active till 1992, according to their [FAQ](#). Headpress focuses on publishing nonfiction. The subject matter they publish varies widely. They say “When Headpress first started, much of this was considered the counterculture. Now it is pop culture.” They publish work on cult film, strange music, pulp literature, fanzines, conspiracy theories, sex and gender, occult and folklore, true crime, etc. It is still run by one of the three founders, David Kerekes.

Bookouture is a digital publisher that was purchased in 2017 by Hachette. Bookouture was extremely successful in their own right. They started out in the UK but they have outposts in a number of countries now. They focus on publishing commercial fiction. They primarily publish women’s fiction, romance, thrillers, and chick lit.

Deep Hearts Jr. is an imprint of [Deep Desires Press](#), is launching a new sub-imprint called Deep Hearts Jr. Deep Hearts Jr. will focus on publishing middle grade (or MG) books for readers between the ages of 8-12. They will be focusing mostly on publishing LGBTQ+ middle grade fiction, in all genres and sub-genres. The other imprints of the same publisher all focus more on romance. The focus on romance is not necessary for readers of this age. The publishers stress that. “The queer element of a Deep Hearts Jr. book should be present in the main character’s immediate life, which could be an identity they are coming to terms with, they may be in a queer family, or there may be other opportunities for queerness in the character’s life. (Having queer friends is too “distant”; queerness must be immediately present in the character’s life.) Some themes we enjoy are self-empowerment, self-acceptance, or other related messages.”



Bloomsbury Publishing was founded in 1986 in Britain and has since expanded with offices in a number of other countries. They are very established with excellent distribution. They publish a wide range of fiction and nonfiction but are only open to submissions for their academic imprint. For this imprint they accept textbook and academic proposal forms, including proposal forms for play anthologies and collections, and series proposals.

Hurst is a UK-based independent publisher that was founded in 1969. They only publish nonfiction and the core of their list focuses on “African Studies, Islamic & Middle Eastern Studies, South Asian Studies, History, War & Conflict, and International Relations.” Nonfiction work outside of those areas of study are not a good fit for them.



You can spend more time with their catalogue [here](#). It is very easy to get a feel for what they publish, and what they do not.

REMINDER: 2025-2026 MEETING & SPEAKER SCHEDULE

January 17 at the Peterborough Library: Betsy Small. Revisiting journals and photos from



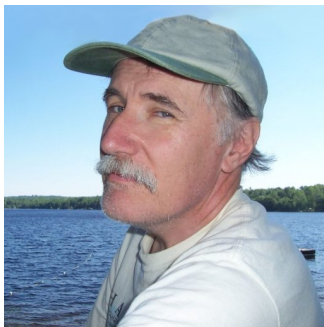
her Peace Corps days between 1984 and 1987 inspired Betsy Small's memoir *Before Before: A Story of Discovery and Loss in Sierra Leone*. In 1988, Small worked for the Peace Corps in Washington, D.C. and subsequently traveled to Africa to support a farming cooperative in Ghana. During her visit, Small hoped to visit with dear friends in Sierra Leone. Instead, the government of Ghana mistakenly accused her of belonging to a subversive group, which led to her arrest, detention, and deportation. Kirkus Reviews called Small's *Before Before* "A powerful commentary and memoir that challenge Western narratives of Sierra Leone."

February 21 at the Peterborough Library: Sebastian Lockwood. Storyteller and podcaster Sebastian Lockwood tells the great epics: Gilgamesh, Odysseus, Caesar, Beowulf and Monkey. His studies in Classics and Anthropology at Boston University and Cambridge University in the UK laid the foundation for bringing these great tales into performance. Lockwood's

performances are designed to take complex texts and make them accessible and exciting for audiences from 5 to 95. Lockwood has tutored and taught classes in higher education for 25 years. Lockwood launched two storytelling podcasts in 2022: *Blowing Up Stumps- tales from New and Old England* (with Maine storyteller Matt Gile), and *Monkey- the Journey to the West*. He now concentrates on performance, podcasting, workshops, and audiobook narration. Lockwood lives under Crotched Mountain in a 1792 house with his wife, jazz singer and LUX Lifestyle founder, Nanette Perrotte.



March 21 at the Peterborough Library: Ken Sheldon is a novelist, composer, playwright and



performer. Formerly the West Coast bureau chief for *Byte Magazine*, his writing has appeared in publications ranging from *Acoustic Guitar* to *Yankee Magazine*. He writes music for children and adults and created the bestselling *Sing Along and Learn* series published by Scholastic. His writings appear under his own name, and also as suspense novelist Michael Manley and Yankee humorist Fred Marple.

Michael Manley is the pen name of the late Stanley Michael Miastkowski and Kenneth Manley Sheldon. Stan was a search and rescue worker who participated in dozens of rescue and recovery operations, including operations following the September 11 attacks in New York. He was a broadcast and print journalist for nearly 35 years, including stints as a columnist for *Esquire*, *PC World* and *Byte Magazine*. Stan passed away in 2009.



April 18 at the Peterborough Library: Brian Evans-Jones is a poet and teacher who has lived in South Berwick since 2014. He was born in Britain, where he was Poet Laureate of the Hampshire region for 2012-13. In 2017, he won the Maureen Egen Writers Exchange Award from Poets & Writers in New York City. His poems have appeared in competitions, magazines, and art events in America and the United Kingdom, and he has taught poetry in schools across Maine and New Hampshire, as well as in England. He publishes free poetry learning resources at [The Poetry Place](http://ThePoetryPlace.com).



May 16 at the Peterborough Library: Member Read-Around. Please come, share your writing, and try to keep your selection to ten minutes so everyone will have a chance to share!

June 20 at the Peterborough Library: Lorraine Ash's journalistic life led her to the White



House, homeless shelters, disaster zones, psychiatric wards, forests, caves, and castles. Ash has interviewed astronauts, Olympians, economic gurus, politicians, doctors, artists and, perhaps most importantly, ordinary people. Her articles, which won twenty-six writing awards over the years, appeared in newspapers nationwide, including *USA Today*. A love of American history led to penning three historical plays about American presidents—

Tyler, Monroe, and Jackson—published by The History Project. Ash had produced numerous short stories and essays for literary journals and anthologies. These include *Tiferet, Cairn, Journeys, Ducts, Recovering the Self: A Journal of Hope and Healing*, and *Steeped in the World of Tea*. In midlife a significant event changed Ash: her daughter, her only child, was stillborn in June 1999. Suddenly she understood the importance of telling stories from the inside out. Subsequently, she wrote *Life Touches Life: A Mother's Story of Stillbirth and Healing* (NewSage Press), a memoir that has reached stillbirth mothers in the United States, the Middle East, Australia, Europe, China, Canada, and Mexico. Next came the spiritual midlife memoir, *Self and Soul: On Creating a Meaningful Life* (Cape House Books). Ash has worked one-on-one with more than sixty writers to either ghostwrite, edit, or coach their book manuscripts into existence. Her mission is to facilitate quality storytelling.



EVENTS, CONFERENCES, AND RESOURCES FOR WRITERS

Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP). Runs March 4-7, 2026, Baltimore, MD. The AWP Conference & Bookfair is the essential gathering for writers, teachers, students,

editors, and publishers. Join thousands of attendees, explore hundreds of events and exhibitors, and immerse in four days of vital literary community and celebration in Baltimore!
registration@awpwriter.org

Lorraine Ash Returns to The Center at Mariandale for a Memoir Writing Retreat. Writing a Braided Memoir: A classical memoir tells a single, linear story. A braided memoir—beloved in today’s marketplace—yields a more complex story by interweaving multiple themes and narrative threads. We’ll explore how to infuse your memoir, making it both a compelling story and a way for readers to rethink socially significant issues. Perfect for writers at all levels. Come ready to write. For more information, [email Karen Bernard](#) or [contact Lorraine](#).

- 4-day option: 5 p.m. Thursday through 1 p.m. Sunday, March 29, 2026
\$435 (includes all meals and lodging)
- 6-day option: 5 p.m. Thursday through 1 p.m. Tuesday, March 31, 2026
\$685 (includes all meals and lodging)

ALL ABOUT MWG

Welcome to the Monadnock Writers’ Group! Since 1984, the MWG has provided community, inspiration, and support to the writers of the Monadnock region. All are welcome! Our membership includes writers of every variety: from poets to journalists, from mystery writers to playwrights, and from career writers to those just getting started. We meet on the third Saturday morning of each month, September through June, at the Peterborough Town Library, unless otherwise noted. Monthly meetings start at 9:45 a.m. and go to about 11:30 a.m., but times can vary. Meetings include a 15-minute meet-and-greet, announcements, a ten-minute reading from a member, and a main speaker sharing professional writing experience and answering questions. Coffee and light refreshments are provided. Our monthly Speaker Series is open to the public and free of charge. Our speakers are instructive and inspirational for writers of all literary forms, genres, and levels of experience. For more information, please go to our website at www.monadnockwriters.org, or join our Monadnock Writers’ Group Facebook page.

Website: www.monadnockwriters.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/monadnockwriters

Email: monadnockwriters@gmail.com

Membership Renewal. It’s that time of year, as membership runs from September through June. Membership fees for one year are as follows:

Regular - \$30
Student/Senior - \$25
Patron - \$50
Benefactor - \$100
Corporate Sponsor - \$250

If you pay by check, please click [here](#) for a membership form that you can print. Write your check to Monadnock Writers' Group and mail it to:

Monadnock Writers' Group, P.O. Box 3071, Peterborough, NH 03458

- **Submit your bio as a member of MWG.** Are you a member? If you would like your bio added to the [About Our Members](#) page on the MWG website, please send it to Mary Marchese at mwgwebmaster@gmail.com. Bio: Maximum 200 words, 3rd person, feel free to include links to your website, most recent publication, or listing on Amazon, and social media.
- **Volunteer!** If you would be interested in bringing refreshments, being our ten-minute reader or have ideas for speakers or events, please let us know at monadnockwriters@gmail.com.
- **Send your writing news or announcements to The Quill.** If you would like to submit to our monthly newsletter, please contact Jess at mwg.quill@gmail.com at least a week before the end of the month. As a member, you may include your author events and announcements.
- **Who are we at MWG?** Established in 1984, the primary mission of the Monadnock Writers' Group is to offer fellowship and support to professional writers and to those actively engaged in developing their writing skills. To learn more: www.monadnockwriters.org/about-us
- **Please explore MWG online.** Visit our website, www.monadnockwriters.org, for news, member profiles, speakers series information, contests, publications, and more. Find us on Facebook under Monadnock Writers' Group: www.facebook.com/groups/monadnockwriters/
- **Monadnock Writers' Group membership information:**
 - Annual membership fees are \$30, or \$25 for students and seniors, \$50 for Patrons, \$100 for Benefactor, and \$250 for a Corporate membership.
 - Individual members are encouraged to announce their own projects such as workshops, social gatherings, group support sessions, or whatever the writing-related endeavor. Feel free to take the floor at the monthly meeting, or contact the newsletter editor at mwg.quill@gmail.com to send an announcement to the membership in the monthly newsletter.
 - Bring a friend to one of our monthly meetings, and if they join MWG, you will receive a \$20 gift certificate for the Toadstool Bookshop!

The MWG 2025-2026 Board of Directors

President: Jesseca Timmons; Vice President: Rodger Martin; Treasurer: Carl Mabbs-Zeno; Secretary: Susan Gebo; Members at Large: Tori Haring-Smith, Maura MacNeil, Mary Marchese, Ronnie McIntyre, and Karen-Marie Scolforo