

**Friday, May 1, 2026**

**12 — 3 p.m. Registration (Lobby)**

*We have Friday night dinner reservations at various nearby restaurants – if interested, sign up in the lobby by 3 p.m. for the restaurant of your choice.*

**1 — 1:50 p.m. Breakout Sessions**

**How to Set a Writing Routine (Henrietta)**

*Sarah Read*

If getting started writing is the hardest part, staying on task is the second hardest. Sarah will share tips, strategies, and tools to help you build a writing routine that works for you.

**A Bulletproof Beginning: Five Ways to Anchor Your Story in Urgency from Word One (Thistle)**

*Larry Sommers*

Learn how to start your story with immediate momentum. This session explores five techniques for structuring openings that create urgency and draw readers in—while using less information than you might think. Discover how strong structure and strategic restraint can make your first lines impossible to ignore.

**Write a Dynamic Query Letter (Hutchinson)**

*Barry Putt Jr.*

Learn how to craft a dynamic and compelling query letter that captures attention. Participants will explore the key elements of an effective query letter, including structure, tone, and how to present their work in a way that engages agents or publishers.

**2 — 2:50 p.m. Breakout Sessions**

**The Power of an Inciting Incident and Why Every Scene Needs One (Henrietta)**

*Kate Penndorf*

Discover the difference between a character’s agenda and goal and learn how an inciting incident lays the foundation for obstacles and choices. In this workshop, participants will identify or create their scene’s inciting incident and map their character’s “X without Y” foundation.

**The Heroine’s Journey: A Story Structure for Connection and Growth (Thistle)**

*Meadoe Hora*

This session introduces a story structure ideal for novels and memoirs that focus on relationships, community, and personal transformation. Participants will learn how it differs from the traditional Hero's Journey, explore the key story beats, and discover practical ways to apply this framework to their own writing.

### **Find and Grow Your Audience with Substack (Hutchinson)**

*Bruce Landay*

Learn how Substack functions as both an email platform and a social media site, and why growing your audience before publishing is key. This workshop will show you how to use Substack to authentically connect with readers and fellow writers, helping your content find its voice and reach the right people.

**2:50 — 3:10 p.m. Break**

### **3:10 — 4 p.m. Breakout Sessions**

#### **How to Write a Picture Book (Henrietta)**

*Christina Fennell*

Discover the simple yet powerful structure behind great children's picture books and learn how to create rhythm—whether your story rhymes or not. This session will guide you in crafting stories that flow naturally when read aloud, keeping them engaging for children and the adults who read them, again and again.

#### **Tighten Your Shorts (Thistle)**

*Judy DuCharme*

Short pieces can have a powerful impact—if they're crafted with intention. Whether you're working on personal essays, blog posts, articles, devotionals, or a collection of brief pieces, this session will focus on shaping your work so it connects clearly and effectively with your audience and give you the ability to edit and adapt your piece to a variety of genres.

#### **The Art of Lyrical Writing (Hutchinson)**

*Keenan Jones*

Participants will explore the fundamentals of lyrical writing. The program emphasizes incorporating rhythm and flow, creating vivid imagery, and conveying emotional impact, allowing participants to develop a unique and compelling voice in their work.

**4:30 — Meet in the lobby if you have signed up for dinner reservations.**

**6 — 9 p.m. Lakefly After Dark Open Mic - Oshkosh Public Library**

*Please enter via front entrance on Washington Ave. The one flanked by the lions; street parking available.*

**Saturday, May 2, 2026**

**8 a.m. —12 p.m. Registration (Lobby)**

**9 a.m. — 4 p.m. Lakefly Book Fair (Paul L.)**

**9 — 10 a.m.**

**Keynote: The Universal Truth of Shaping Your Writing Life (Leander Choate)**

G. Anthony

G. Anthony is a poet, author, speaker, and creator of @HomemadeAuthor, a creative platform dedicated to writing, healing, and human connection. His work blends philosophy, emotional insight, and clear, grounded storytelling to help people understand themselves and express their truth with confidence.

Through books, workshops, and talks across Wisconsin, G. Anthony has guided individuals of all ages in exploring the power of writing as a tool for clarity, inner growth, and personal legacy. His calm presence and thoughtful voice make him a trusted guide for audiences seeking meaning and inspiration in their own life stories.

**10 — 10:30 a.m. Shopping at Book Fair (Paul L.)**

**10:30 — 11:50 a.m. Breakout Sessions**

**The ABCs of Character Development (Henrietta)**

*Beth Amos*

Characters who are compelling and believable, who display understandable actions and justifiable emotions, are the very heart of good fiction. In this session, learn how to craft compelling, believable characters. Participants explore flaws, motivations, and emotional depth that help readers identify with a character's hopes and struggles. Using an ABC profiling guide, you can build detailed character backgrounds and choose only the traits most essential to the central story.

**Author Platform Essentials (Thistle)**

*Celeste Anton*

Many writers feel overwhelmed by all the options for an online platform. Gain a big-picture understanding of an author's digital platform—website, email, social media, and promotional tools—and how each supports your goals. Learn how your website can serve

as the central hub of your platform. Leave informed and encouraged, with a realistic sense of where to begin.

### **Subject Expert – Medical Examiner (Hutchinson)**

*Deputy Medical Examiner McKenzie Repinski*

Ms. Repinski will present an inside look at crime scenes, medical examiner procedures, and the evolving role of support animals in this work. Learn how investigations are conducted and how a therapy dog helps staff and families during difficult moments. Meet K9 Brie, a one-year-old Goldendoodle now serving with the Winnebago County Medical Examiner's Office, and enjoy plenty of time for questions.

### **Tell Your Story! Inspiration for Writing Memoir and Personal Essay (Lynch)**

*Tara Huck*

By sharing our personal stories, we encourage others to share their stories. During this session, you will learn techniques of journaling and writing to move ideas to the page. Understanding the role of fiction-writing techniques, developing a narrative arc, and identifying the theme and purpose of your work will bring your personal story to life.

### **Lakefly Writing Contests (Dixie)**

Celebrate this year's Lakefly Writing Contest winners at a relaxed, welcoming get-together! Hear winning entries from this year's contest while enjoying creativity and community.

**12 — 1:30 p.m. Lunch (Leander Choate)**

**1:30 — 2:20 p.m. Breakout Sessions**

### **Injecting Humor into Your Writing (Henrietta)**

*Melissa Westemeier*

This program explores how humor can enrich even serious writing. Through examples and short exercises, participants will practice five simple strategies to make their writing more engaging, memorable, and relatable.

### **Public Speaking for Writers (Thistle)**

*Bailey Hansen*

Being nervous about public speaking is normal (especially for introverted writers!) but it can also get in the way of sharing your words with the world. In this session, we will share tips and tricks about how to tell your story out loud, in front of a crowd. The brave will even get an opportunity to practice presenting!

## **Choose Your Path to Publication (Hutchinson)**

*David Bruns*

Explore the creative and business trade-offs between traditional, small press, indie, and crowdfunding publishing. This session helps writers define what success means to them, understand the practical and artistic differences between publishing paths, and make informed decisions to align their goals with the route that fits best.

## **Not Just Ink on Paper (Lefevre)**

*Panel Discussion Moderated by William Gillard*

There are creative writers who make exciting and satisfying careers, and never publish a book. We'll talk with professionals who write creatively for television, films, radio, video games, and other media. We'll learn about the fun and interesting ways their careers have gone and how you might find a way into these exciting worlds.

*Panelists:*

*[Greg Cebulski](#): Television and film producer, writer, director, editor*

*[Al Seeger](#): Writer, designer, and editor for Point of Insanity Game Studio*

*[Cole Sheldon](#): Writer, director, producer, and owner of False Take Films*

*[Courtney Wright](#): role-playing game content writer, ghost writer, novelist*

## **2:30 — 3:20 p.m. Breakout Sessions**

### **How to Make it as an Independent Author (Henrietta)**

*James Hamilton*

Learn what to expect when self-publishing, including the key differences and nuances compared with traditional publishing. Discover what success looks like for independent authors and explore practical steps to make your book launches more effective. This session equips writers with strategies to navigate the indie publishing world confidently.

### **Your Story is in You Gene's Pocket: Writing Family in Fiction (Thistle)**

*Janis Falk*

Explore the rich material your family stories can provide without turning your fiction into memoir. This session shows you how to transform real-life relatives and anecdotes into compelling, original characters and narratives. Learn to mine family lore, blend personalities, and create stories that resonate with authenticity

### **Set the Setting in Mystery Writing (Hutchinson)**

*Carol Paur*

Plot, character, or setting: which matters most? All are vital, yet setting is often an afterthought. This program explores how setting shapes mystery fiction by influencing plot, revealing character, and creating atmosphere. Using literary examples and the speaker's own novels, participants will analyze effective settings and practice techniques through interactive exercises and games. Short activities help writers apply settings with purpose.

### **Meet the Fresh Water Press Authors! ( Lefevre)**

Fresh Water Press is a traditional-model, independent publisher located in Two Rivers. Since forming in February 2024, the company has published four books and has five forthcoming titles.

A panel of FWP authors will provide a behind the scenes look at what it's like to publish with a local, small press. Discussions will center on the personal experiences from seasoned and first-time authors. Ask about the selection process, the development of the book, and the character of the company.

### **Featured Authors:**

Raquel Durden, author of *Dial Down: Holistic Strategies to Move from Chaos to Calm* (2025)

Lisa Lehmann, author of *Radio Starr* (2025)

Julie A. Jacob, author of *Bicentennial Eve: A Wisconsin Novella* by Julie A. Jacob (forthcoming May 2026)

Brittini Nelson, author of *The House on Hemlock Hill* (forthcoming July 2026)

Karin Derenne, author of *The Show Must Go* (forthcoming 2027)

Tina & Jason Prigge, co-authors of *Unbroken Us* (forthcoming 2027)

### **3:30 —4:20 p.m. Breakout Sessions**

**The Magic Pill for Writers Block: How to Write When You're Not Feeling It (Henrietta)**  
*Wendy Wimmer*

The past few years have been rough on creative ambition. Your muse has been bingeing reruns, and motivation feels impossible. In this session, we'll trick your brain into generating stories and poems anyway. Bring a blank notebook and leave with at least two new starts—and a repeatable method for the next hundred blank pages.

**Stanzas to Stories: Borrowing from Poetry to Write Better Everything (Thistle)**  
*Tom Cannon and William Gillard*

Explores how poetic techniques can transform and elevate your prose. This session focuses on blurring genre boundaries, helping you write in ways that deeply resonate with readers on an emotional level. Whether you already identify as a poet or are simply looking to enrich your fiction or nonfiction, you'll leave with fresh tools and inspiration to enhance your writing.

**DIY Book Covers in Canva: A Designer's Step-by-Step Guide for Authors (Hutchinson)**

*Katie Klockow*

Learn how to create a professional-looking book cover in Canva with a guided step-by-step process. Explore essential design principles for authors and discover sources for royalty-free images safe for commercial use, complete with handouts to support your creative journey.

**Knocking Boots: Tips for Writing Intimate Scenes in Fiction (Dixie)**

*Samuela Owens Reid*

Learn how to craft compelling intimate scenes for any genre, from “fade to black” intimacy to open-door romance. This workshop covers building tension, avoiding common pitfalls, and integrating intimacy seamlessly into your story without losing focus on the plot.

**4:30 p.m. Door prizes and Farewell (Leander Choate)**