

The Island Muse

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LIAG 2015 Founder's Award Presented to Patrick P. Astre

It wasn't an ordinary Wednesday; it was March 4th, 2015, the First Wednesday of the month—and that meant the Long Island Authors Group was meeting at the Bonwit Inn. To kick-off the meeting, John P. Cardone, LIAG Founder and 2015 President, introduced the nominees for this year's award.

Being nominated is an award itself because it recognizes those people who in special ways have helped and assisted the LIAG as an organization and/or have contributed to the Long Island writing community, or both.

This year the nominating committee, made up of the LIAG past-presidents including, John P. Cardone, Phil Keith, Kerriann Flanagan Brosky, and Dorothy McPartland had reviewed the descriptions of the nominees approving long time LIAG member, Patrick P. Astre and from the LI Writer's Guild, Beverly and Dennis Kotch.

Patrick P. Astre, a professional financial advisor and CPA who operates his own accounting firm, was nominated for his long time support of the LIAG serving as a member of the board. In addition, years ago it was proposed that the LIAG seek non-profit status from the IRS which was not only a daunting task, but an expensive legal process. After all, how could a relatively new organization with limited resources, manage to win this status from the IRS?

Patrick volunteered to take up the challenge and over the next months, gathered the necessary information, filled in the non-profit tax status forms, and filed the LIAG application to become a non-profit corporation. All of this while donating his services and expertise free-of-charge. Some eighteen months later, and after numerous communications with the IRS, Patrick announced the IRS had approved the LIAG as a 501(c) 3 Not-for-Profit

Corporation. Even these days, Patrick continues to assist the organization by filing the LIAG yearly tax returns, answering financial questions, and providing guidance when needed.

Beverly and Dennis Kotch were nominated for their work as leaders of the LI Writer's Guild.

The Guild has been devoted to helping and supporting the LI writing community since 1993 offering a forum open to the public that accepts all genres of writing from all levels of writing experience.

Beverly & Dennis Kotch, with a number of dedicated Guild volunteers, have given their time and energy to organize and run on-going monthly writing workshops selecting locations that crisscross Long Island. The members of the Long Island Authors Group recognize and applaud their work and accomplishments.

Meanwhile back at the Bonwit Inn, Beverly & Dennis took a bow as they were introduced to the group as nominees and received a well-deserved round of applause. What Beverly and Dennis accomplish for the LI writing community, without asking for anything in return, is amazing.

David B. Axelrod, the 2014 award-winner, presented Patrick with the 2015 LIAG Founder's Award. Joining in on the presentation were nominees Beverly and Dennis Kotch from the LI Writer's Guild, John P. Cardone, LIAG Founder & 2015 President, and Kerriann Flanagan Brosky, LIAG President Emeritus, who represented the nominating committee. It truly was a heart-felt occasion.



In This Issue

Page 1- Article: 2015 Founders Award

Page 2 - Article: Write On
Article: Inspiring Stories are Welcome

Page 3 - Article: Who Says What's 'Told To'

Page 4 - Members in the News

Page 5 - Members in the News

Page 6 - Spotlight, New Members

Page 7 - 'Did You Know' articles

Page 8 - Board of Directors and Committee Chairs

LIAG Mission Statement

Please share your articles and photo submissions - send to newsletter editor, Karen Bonnet at kbonnet7@gmail.com.

Write On!

By Linda Maria Frank

One of the joys of being a writer is the ability to share our stories, philosophies and knowledge with others. It's so satisfying to get feedback from our readers.

An even greater reward is to share those writings with our peers – other authors. Appreciation, critiques, and constructive criticism are some of the benefits of belonging to an author's group like LIAG.

This very concept has been the impetus for a new feature offered by LIAG to our members. "Write On" is a monthly meeting where LIAG members can workshop ideas, brainstorm, and get feedback from other members.

The 2-hour sessions will be limited to 8-10 members so that we can work in small groups where everyone will have time and opportunity to read and/or

discuss his or her work. The groups will be led by Linda Maria Frank and Jennifer Cusumano, with guest facilitators on occasion.

We plan to hold the meetings in alternating Suffolk and Nassau locations on the second or third Saturday of each month, starting in April (venue to be determined). You will receive an email soon with further details about locations, dates, and how to sign up for a session.

We hope to provide you an opportunity to workshop in a collegial environment, sharing our diverse skill, knowledge and ideas to address both the satisfaction and frustrations of producing a written work.

Please consider joining us. We look forward to hearing from you.



Inspiring Stories Are Welcome

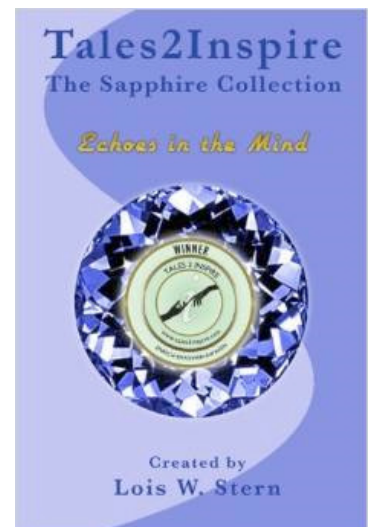
I would like to introduce you to Tales2Inspire by offering you a FREE sampler of some of the stories already published in one of my four current collections. Read about the newborn baby, left in an abandoned building in the dead of winter, whose life is saved in a most remarkable way. Read about the young girl who comes to grips with her own adoption by traveling to Nicaragua on a home rebuilding project.

Read about the B-51 bomber pilot, shot down during WWI, who comes face to face with the hand of destiny twenty some years later. These are the themes of three of the six inspiring stories that you will receive when you click on this link to download the sampler and receive a monthly update on new stories:

http://tales2inspire.com/?page_id=809.

Perhaps it will even inspire some of you to submit an inspiring story and possibly win a contest award.

Creator of Tales2Inspire™
An Authors Helping Authors
Project/Contest



*"It is not in the stars to hold our destiny,
but in ourselves."*

- William Shakespeare

WHO SAYS WHAT'S 'TOLD TO?'

Advice on Writing an As-Told-To Book

by David B. Axelrod



There is all manner of authorship, from the composition of a single, immortal line which renders a person forever “famous,” to the paid work of anonymous drudges doing their daily tasks. But what of those who toil to tell a story for someone else? The term, “as told to,” carries with it certain assumptions that preempt any authorial individuality. If an author undertakes such an assignment, it requires a fair measure of skill, but more so, a great deal of patience.

For my part, I volunteered to help a friend who needed to work his way out of his grief at losing a life-partner of over thirty-four years. His mate was the pioneer feminist, Merlin Stone, author of the million-plus-selling book, *When God Was a Woman*. I can only write this article about my work with Lenny Schneir because he is a true friend, and tolerates my craziness—and I tolerate his.

What I learned as I worked with Len is that the task of assuming someone else’s voice is much like ghost writing, only the skeleton is out of the closet, telling you what to do. There is no pretense about who is writing the work, yet the task of the writer is to subordinate any personal mannerisms and become the subject. I couldn’t use David Axelrod’s vocabulary and style. I had to learn Lenny’s way of seeing and speaking. If you can’t let go of your identity, don’t do an “as told to.” The more you assume the voice of the other person, the better the writing.

But where does “voice” end and standard, good writing begin? Len asked me to help because he had no idea how to shape a memoir of his years with Merlin. That meant I was to delve into his life for details rich enough to make a good story, while shaping sentences into good grammar and a well-structured narrative.

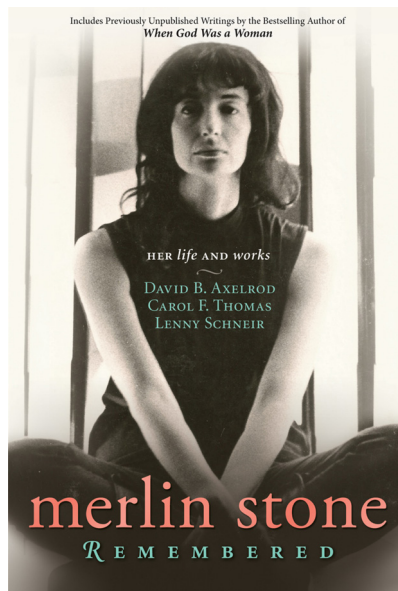
We argued most about grammar and vocabulary. Even simple sentences could be a challenge. I would say, for example, “Merlin sat on the beach in a lotus position until she finished meditating.” Len said it should read, “until Merlin stopped meditating.” That’s right, Len wanted no personal pronouns. He so loved Merlin that her name need to be repeated constantly. He actually counted how many times I used “she,” and “her” and said they occurred far more often than Merlin’s name and I had to fix that.

Luckily, common sense prevailed.

If I wrote a sentence with more “academic” language, or even correct grammar, as often it had to be shifted to words Len would actually use, or idiomatic English. In addition to such practical writing issues, there was also family politics. Family members who read the initial memoir wrote back, “You can’t say [this] about [that].” Although many details were both salient and entertaining, they got cut in the final version, to avoid offending the family. And don’t you know, some of the criticism that does show up in reviews of the memoir could have been avoided if more drama, controversy, and yes, even more sex had been included.

Writing an as-told-to can be a very gratifying job. I am closer to my friend and feel I know his life-partner all the better through the process. In fact, the reaction to the sixty pages we wrote was so good, we attracted a very reputable, mid-level, niche publisher. I was asked to assemble an entire book about Merlin. The rest, as the say, is history. After the book was published, we got a trifecta of decent reviews: *Kirkus*, *Publisher’s Weekly*, and *Library Journal*. The book is selling well. But am I the author or just the fellow who helped get the words on paper? I must have done something right. *Merlin Stone Remembered* (Llewellyn Worldwide, 2014) has won the Gold Medal for nonfiction in the Florida Book Award competition.

Len sometimes tells folks I drove him crazy doing the project. But I have to say, I certainly put up with as much from him. He’s a champion of his wife’s work, a highly knowledgeable man, and as stubborn as I am—and I thank him profusely for letting me co-author and edit the book. I should also mention, the advance bought me a little sports car I am running around in—to book parties and events.



Dr. David B. Axelrod was the 2014 recipient of the LLAG Founders Award and is an advisor to the Board. He served as Suffolk County Poet Laureate, and had published twenty-one books of poetry, the most recent entitled RUSTING: Ways to Keep Living. He has written and published a variety of work, from TV and stage scripts to hundreds of journalist stories, academic papers and even advice on income taxation. His website is www.poetrydoctor.org.

Members In the News...

Lois Kipnis' new book, *Without a Script: A Caregiver's Journey*, is a collection of stories, poems, letters and vignettes that capture the roller coaster of emotions as she and her mom are cast in new roles and set out on a journey without a script, stage directions or understudies in the wings.

From a story of the author convincing her mom to reconsider entering a national television competition, to one where she discovers a message in a bottle from an elderly woman awaiting rescue from a nursing home, the story unfolds with humor and insight.

"I wrote the book with the hope that caregivers will realize it's okay to swear, feel guilt and resentment, and to question their decisions. I've raised questions people are afraid to ask, such as what do you do when someone is void of determination and aspiration, and dreams only of expiration? ("Dream Catcher"). It's also a wake-up call and dress rehearsal. We'll all be there one day!"

And it's working! Caregivers are identifying with feelings they're afraid of or ashamed to admit to themselves or others. One caregiver writes, "Although my own story involves my mother with Alzheimer's rather than physical problems, this book rang so true in my emotions... you suddenly realize you're not alone in your days, even though you may feel isolated. There's so much humor in the book that also lifts the spirit."

Another caregiver writes, "The magic of the book is that the author is so honest, and the scenes with her mother are so real, that you'll feel like you're right there with the author and her mom. You'll laugh with them, cry with them, and above all, nod your head knowingly."

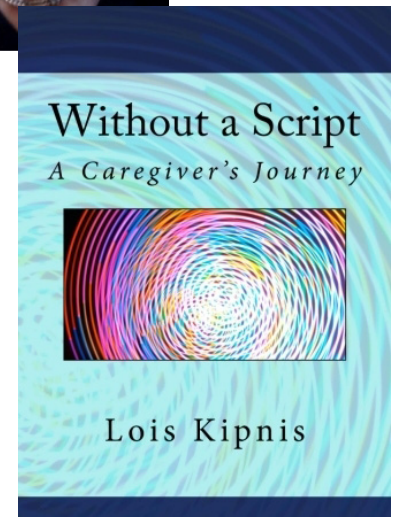
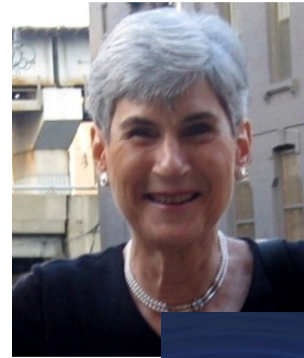
The New Jersey Foundation for Aging recently included an article about the book in their newsletter. The article is entitled "Caught on the Roller Coaster."

http://www.njfoundationforaging.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Ren_Winter_Final_2015.pdf.

Lois Kipnis is a creative arts consultant with forty years of experience as a drama teacher and arts administrator. Her publications include a one-act play, *Things Can Always Be Worse!* and three educational books she co-authored: *Together We Can Improvise* (Volume 1 and Volume 2), and *Have You Ever...Bringing Literature to Life Through Creative Dramatics*. In addition, her story "I Did Not Understand," appears in the December 2014 publication of *Chicken Soup for the Soul: The Power of Forgiveness*.

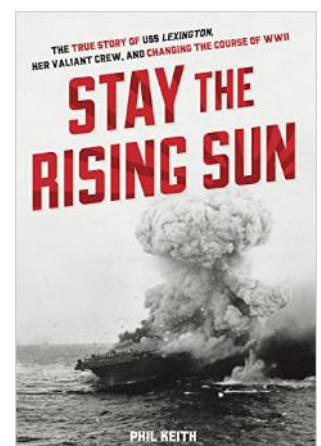
Without a Script: A Caregiver's Journey is available on www.amazon.com.

Lois' website: www.loiskipnis.com



Phil Keith's latest book, *Stay the Rising Sun*, Zenith Press, May 1, 2015, has been selected as a "Feature Book"

for April by the WW II History Network. This book is a true account of the crucial May, 1942, Battle of the Coral Sea and the loss of the US Navy's first true aircraft carrier, the USS Lexington. The brave men who fought in this historic confrontation dealt the mighty Japanese Imperial Forces their first major defeat in WW II. They stemmed the tide of Axis expansion in the Pacific and "stayed the rising sun." ISBN 13: 978-760347416



Members In the News...

Eugene Ligotti's New Book: *Incredible Deception*

I'm proud of the fact that *Incredible Deception* is my eleventh published book. Those who have read it have told me that it cries out to be the first book of a series. I am presently working on that. Most of my previous novels have been suspense thrillers with a love story as a sub-plot. This novel is a love story with thrilling suspense laced throughout. I have included a short synopsis below if you care to print it along with a copy of the novel's cover. For those interested, my website is www.GeneLigotti.net.

Book Summary

Identical twins ... the idea alone stirs unique thoughts of something special because identical twins are exceptional in this complicated world of ours. Originally designated to be one person, the original cell split and two separate but identical human beings were the result. Identical in appearance, but are they identical in their mind, heart and soul? Certainly nature vs. nurturing comes into play, but really, deep down, how alike are they? Although the initial setting for this story is the Catskill Mountains in New York, Ligotti takes you

to the big cities of New York City, New Orleans and Houston and then on to an Afghanistan war zone before returning you to where it all started, a horse farm in the Catskill Mountains.

This story is about identical twins who part company in their late teens and live separate and different lives. Will the way they live change the way they think and act or was it all predetermined by genetics?

How far apart from their 'oneness' will they be taken? *Incredible Deception* will guide you through each of their separate lives and then bring them together in a spell binding and dramatic conclusion where one twin forces himself to return to the home he hated and to a woman, his wife—who he doesn't know. It's a must read for those who love a love story, and readers of suspense thrillers.



Ron Scott Announces the Publication of *Twelve Fifteen*

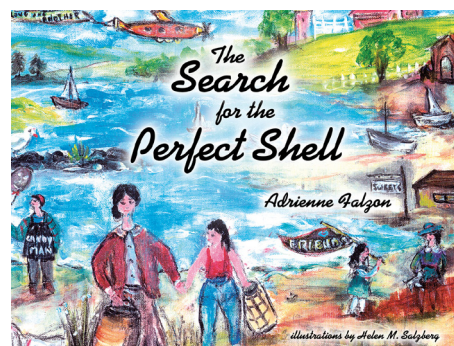
Congratulations to Ron Scott on the publication of his new book, *Twelve Fifteen*. Ron invites readers to visit his website www.ronscott.info for detailed information. The book is an adult suspense novel that depicts life after war for two men, once soul mates, who lived diabolically different lives. It is a suspense story about a skilled murderer as he travels cross country on a mission of revenge at all cost. Contributing editors have agreed: *This book will appeal to readers because the suspense begins on page one and continues up to the end.*



Adrienne Falzon's Book is a Hit with Children and Adults

The Search for the Perfect Shell is a young girl's frustrating hunt to find the perfect shell for her grandmother when she goes to visit her in Florida. Through her quest for this "perfect" shell, her grandmother shares with her an invaluable lesson.

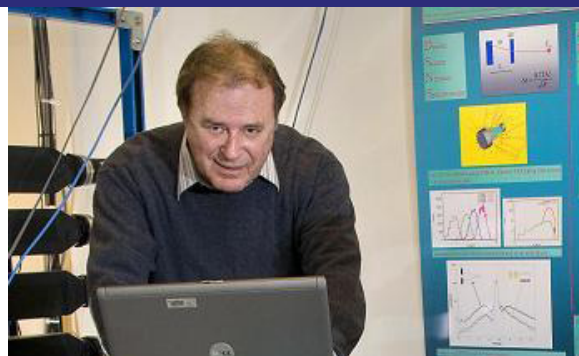
Adrienne is delighted to have experienced an amazingly positive acceptance of adults buying the book not only for children, but also for adults they know in their families.



LIAG's Newest Members...

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Dr.
Leon Forman



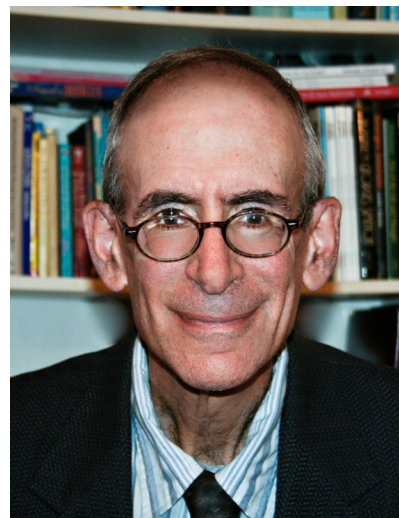
Dr. Forman joins the LIAG as a first time author. He has been a contributing nuclear scientist since 1967. His specialty is the study of the interaction of radiation with matter applied to the fields of nuclear weapons development, arms control verification, detection of nuclear proliferation, and the treatment of cancer. He moved to Long Island in 1992 to work at Brookhaven National Laboratory where he now is a consultant and also serves on the faculty of Stony Brook University Cancer Institute.

A few years ago he started writing a novel based on his participation in the nuclear weapons development field test program at Los Alamos in the period of creation of the modern stockpile. It would be an opportunity to transport the reader into an exotic scientific realm during dangerous times. However, he found that there was little memory of that struggle because arms control limitations have reduced the concern to below consciousness. Review of an early draft indicated that those readers under 45 years old had little knowledge of the nuclear arms race and that its purpose was deterrence that was hoped to prevent the destruction of civilization. Almost none had knowledge of the environment that nuclear test scientists had to deal with where an accidental venting from a nuclear detonation could lead to lethal radiation exposure. There was no understanding of the intellectual challenge dealing with designing weapons and measuring their performance, for example the neutron bomb generated the highest thermonuclear reaction rates that have occurred in the universe. So the story was rewritten and morphed from adventure/thriller into an almost dark tale of the development of the modern stockpile to include explanation of what was done and why it was done in the context of historical events. This was possible because the US and former USSR made public their nuclear weapon systems' capabilities for 'benchmarking' forces included in the strategic arms reduction talks.

Dr. Forman's career positions have been at Los Alamos National Laboratory, Department of Energy offices of International Security Affairs and Foreign Intelligence, Idaho National Laboratory, and Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL). He has received numerous awards for technical achievement (e.g., R&D 100 Award for best US inventions) and government service (e.g., Director of Central Intelligence National Medal of Achievement). His background only assures the reader that his story credibly reflects description of what actually occurred, but as a first time author he relies on participation in the LIAG to help bring his work to the attention of the reading public.

Martin Levinson

Martin H. Levinson is a member of the Authors Guild, National Book Critics Circle, the book review editor for ETC: A Review of General Semantics and president of the Institute of General Semantics (a nonprofit think tank). He has published nine books, among them *Brooklyn Boomer Growing Up in the Fifties* (2011), *When Good Things Happen to Bad People* (2009), and *Practical Fairy Tales for Everyday Living* (2006), and numerous articles and poems in various publications. He holds a PhD from NYU, and lives in Forest Hills and the hamlet of Riverside in the Town of Southampton.



Did You Know?

For most of us, making time to write will always be something of a struggle. With friends and family, financial obligations, and emotional issues all vying for our attention, it takes determination to make a writing schedule and stick to it. There is no easy answer, but there are concrete things we can do to make time to write.

1. **Pinpoint Underlying Issues.** Invest some thought in figuring out the source of your writer's block. Is it a fear of failure, a longstanding tendency to procrastinate, or something as simple as a lack of writing space? If it's not immediately obvious what the block is, spend some time in the self-help aisle, or talk it over with a friend, therapist, or life coach. As you begin to understand the things that prevent you from writing, whether internal or external, you can make a plan to overcome them.

2. **Just Say "No."** Time is limited, and for most people, the demands on their time are unlimited. "Once you've determined what you want to say yes to, the ability to say no becomes an important muscle to build," writes Cheryl Richardson in *Take Time for Your Life*. "If you don't say yes, the schedule doesn't fill. And if you say yes only to those things that you really want to do, you can avoid feeling frustrated or angry later." While your writing time should not be the most important thing in your life, it should give way only for the most important things in your life.

3. **Schedule Time to Write.** It's not glamorous or exciting to adhere to a schedule, but it really does help. If you work full-time, it may actually be easier to establish a regular time each day in which to write. Get up early and write before you leave the house, take a notepad with you to lunch, or stop off at a coffee shop on your way home. Most people get more done if they have a regular writing time. Make that time golden, as you would any important appointment.

4. **Resist the Impulse to Overdo It.** If you're the kind of person who tends to throw yourself into a new project only to burn out after a week or two, consider giving yourself stop times for writing. Write for your hour or two and then continue with your daily routine. And all of us benefit from scheduling time for fun, even if it's only sneaking out to a movie or calling up an old friend.

5. **Know That It Won't Always Be Easy.** You may be more tired at the end of the day. Some social obligations might get pushed aside. Your family might have to pitch in. Decide what you're willing to sacrifice for a few hours a week dedicated to writing. Most of us have obligations we can't avoid, but if you're determined, you can manage both. At the same time, be content with whatever you can realistically give to your writing.

6. **Find Resources to Help.** What you're trying to do isn't easy. Support yourself in as many ways as possible. Books on writing can help, as does having a dedicated writing space. And almost all writers benefit from some kind of writing community. If other people you know are sacrificing aspects of their careers or social lives for creative endeavors, it will be easier to do it yourself. As with any lifestyle choice, associating with a few people who share your priorities and your struggles will help sustain you over time.

Editor's Note: If you are like many of us, finding time to write can be challenging. I found the article above by Ginny Wiehardt, fiction writing expert, very helpful and hope you will too!



Shelf Unbound Magazine brings you "the best of small press and independent books in a digital magazine."

Publisher's Weekly states it to be "richly designed." Each issue features author interviews, excerpts, photo essays and more. In addition, *Shelf Unbound* is a free publication.

The publisher invites everyone to sign up for a free subscription. This publication also offers advertising/author services and contests. Shelfmediagroup.com consists of *Shelf Unbound*, *Middle shelf*, ("cool reads for kids") and *Foreground*, for the culturally curious to include published art and photography books. Competitions are offered in all magazine categories. Distribution: 125,000 in more than 70 countries. Currently offering special book promo rates of \$250 for 1/4 page and \$500 full page. No cost ad design.

Please visit: www.shelfmediagroup.com to learn more or for additional information.

This article was contributed by Lily Bedell.



Board of Directors and LIAG Mission Statement

LIAG LOVES ACTIVE MEMBERS! YOUR THOUGHTS AND GOOD IDEAS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

2015 Long Island Authors Group, Board of Directors and Officers

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Communications, John P. Cardone

Website, Joe Giaquinto
Newsletter Editor and Art Director, Karen Bonnet



The LIAG Mission Statement

The mission of the Long Island Authors Group is to encourage, support and promote authorship, primarily in the Long Island, New York area.

We are a group of local book authors who have joined together to conduct activities and events that add to the availability of our published works while promoting the Long Island writing community. Our group works with retail bookstores arranging book talks and signings, and conducts events at various locations that are open to the public.

Our group fosters knowledge and experience by conducting educational seminars on assorted topics such as writing workshops, marketing techniques, promotion strategies, and the use of emerging Internet outlets & new technologies.

Join Us For LIAG's next First Wednesday Meetings
7:00 PM
The Bonwit Inn
1 Vanderbilt Parkway
Commack, NY

