**SPECIAL FEATURES**

**Erma Bombeck Writing Competition Awards Ceremony (Virtual)**

*Took place at 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 23*

Featured keynote speakers Kathy Kinney and Cindy Ratzlaff, authors of *Queen of Your Own Life* and hosts of the popular website of the same name. Sponsored by the Washington-Centerville Public Library.

**Erma’s Got Talent: The Stand-Up Auditions (Virtual)**

*Took place at 7 p.m. Tuesday, May 3*

Hosted by Nancy Berk with celebrity judges Brian Kiley, Wendy Liebman and Joel Madison. Contestants tested their two-minute stand-up routines before an EBWW audience and three stand-up veterans armed with insight and constructive criticism. Selected participants from these auditions will perform in the Saturday night show lineup. The remainder were chosen randomly.

**Pitchapalooza: American Idol for Books (Virtual)**

*Took place at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 28*

*Arielle Eckstut and David Henry Sterry*

A workshop favorite! Pitchapalooza is *American Idol* for books — only kinder and gentler. Twenty writers were selected at random to give a one-minute pitch. At these events, Eckstut and Sterry, known as the Book Doctors, critique ideas, style, potential in the marketplace and much more, giving authors concrete advice and a greater understanding of the publishing industry. From Los Angeles to Hawaii to New York City and many stops along the way, Pitchapalooza draws standing-room-only crowds, press and blog coverage and the kind of bookstore buzz reserved for celebrity authors. The winner receives an introduction to an agent or publisher appropriate for their book.

**Book Signings**

Book signings with keynoters follow their talks, and a book signing with all workshop presenters — including for the EBWW book *Sisters! Bonded by Love and Laughter* with co-editors Marcia Stewart and Teri Rizvi — will run from 8:30 to 10 p.m. Friday, Oct. 21.

**Erma Road Trip!**

*3:30-5:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 22*

Take a drive down Erma Bombeck Way to Woodland Cemetery to visit Erma Bombeck’s gravesite, followed by photo opportunities at the Erma Bombeck historical marker and commemorative tree outside St. Mary’s Hall on the University of Dayton campus, concluding with a sneak peek of the Erma Bombeck Collection in the Stuart and Mimi Rose Gallery on the first floor of Roesch Library. Shuttle bus tours available. Attendees with cars are encouraged to carpool.

**Stand-Up Comedy Night**

*9:30–11 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 22*

*Hosted by Wendy Liebman*

Stand-up comic Wendy Liebman returns to emcee the traditional Stand-Up Comedy Night, featuring 18 attendees. Some comics were selected at the pre-workshop event after performing before a panel of celebrity judges. Others were chosen randomly after the auditions. Liebman will have chosen another three from her Stand-Up Comedy Boot Camp workshop.

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**Nuts-and-Bolts Sessions (optional — for early risers!)**

7:45–8:45 a.m. Friday, Oct. 21, and Saturday, Oct. 22

**Publishing 101**

*David Braughler*

What’s the right publishing path for your book? Struggling to understand the difference between traditional, hybrid publishing and do-it-yourself self-publishing? Grab a cup of coffee and a bagel and learn about the essentials of editing, cover design, formatting, ISBNs, copyright, marketing, and retail and library distribution. You’ll leave knowing the questions you should be asking yourself before you publish your book.

**Yes, You’re Running a Business**

*Lori B. Duff*

Licenses? Contracts? Accounting? Estate planning? What does any of that have to do with the art of writing? A lot! Maybe everything. Judge Lori B. Duff will explain what you need to know to keep your writing business on the right side of the law. From navigating contract legalese, deciding whether to incorporate, managing business expenses, even considering what happens to your work after you're gone, Duff will educate in an entertaining, understandable way. There's a reason she was awarded the title “Atlanta’s Funniest Lawyer” in 2018.

**Launching and Marketing Your Book**  
*Elysse Wagner*

Approximately 3,000 books are published on average every day. How do you creatively market your book in such a crowded marketplace? In a changing publishing industry, it’s imperative to keep up with digital and social media promotional strategies. Learn from campaign strategist and publicist Elysse Wagner about the various ways to promote your book, whether you’re an indie author or a traditionally published one.

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**CRAFT OF WRITING**

**Reflection and Takeaway: The Heart and Soul of Memoir**

*Brooke Warner*

Memoir is more than just a story of what happened to you. Its heart and soul lies in two elements of craft that every memoirist needs to have a firm handle on: reflection and takeaway. Most beginning memoirists are so focused on the plot of their story that they forget that readers love memoir for what it says about the human condition, for its capacity to help us understand something about the world we live in or about ourselves. Reflection requires you to stop your narrative and answer the question, “What sense do I make of this part of my story?” Takeaway asks you write about your thoughts and impressions on your subject matter, to delve deeper into your experience and your message and to be a wise voice for your reader. In this session, Brooke Warner, publisher of She Writes Press and author of three books on memoir, will address reflection and takeaway and show you exactly how to implement this kind of writing into your memoir, complete with examples from published works. You’ll leave knowing how to tap into the heart of your memoir and to connect with your reader on a whole new level.

Offered Friday at 10:35 a.m. and 3:35 p.m.

**Songwriting: The Healing Power of Music***Kellie Haddock*

Singer/songwriter Kellie Haddock has lived through tragedy and found hope and joy on the other side. In her workshop, she will invite writers into the behind-the-scenes experience of crafting a song and help them find their own writer’s voice as they explore song structure and lyrics. As part of the workshop, she’ll perform original music, written from the heart, that speaks to love, compassion and hope.

Offered Friday at 2 p.m. and Saturday at 10:35 a.m.

**Fear Not the Blank Page!**

*Susan Pohlman*

Erma Bombeck was a master at mining her life for meaningful and relatable material. This interactive workshop will explore how to sift through our own lives for stories and anecdotes that can be crafted into essays and short stories. We all sit on a treasure chest of material; the secret lies in knowing where to dig. Come ready to write and have fun!

Offered Friday at 2 p.m. and Saturday at 9 a.m.

**How to Plot Your Book with Ease**

*Ann Garvin*

What’s the biggest mistake writers make? They have difficulty merging the technical aspects of plot with the desire of the character at the helm. Without these things working together, authors get rejected. The job of a writer is to entice, compel and seduce readers — to tell a story while entertaining and evoking real feelings. Emotion and scene are the secret weapons of plot and creating a truly compelling story. In this workshop, participants will be taken step by step from idea to emotion to story. Participants will understand plot and never get stuck in the mushy middle again.

Offered Friday at 10:35 a.m. and Saturday at 2 p.m.

**The Power of Story***Julie Cantrell*

If you have ever read a book and thought, “I wonder if I could write a story,” Julie Cantrell is here to tell you, “Yes, you can!” Whether you’ve already finished a manuscript or you’re just beginning to brew some ideas, Cantrell will help you understand the basic building blocks of narrative structure, discuss the secret ingredient that keeps the pages turning and offer prompts to help you bring your words to the page. Come ready to write and to celebrate the power of story!

Offered Friday at 9 a.m. and Saturday at 2 p.m.

**Good Naked: Wit, Wisdom and a Writing Workshop**

*Joni B. Cole*

Don’t worry — there will be no shedding of clothes — but this lively, interactive session will expose the creative process in all its glory. Together, we’ll discover practical ways to skirt self doubt, mine meaningful material and make the most of the creative process from your first draft through your final revision. Come prepared to write in response to a guided prompt and share aloud your efforts for insights and appreciation. Bring something to write on and leave self-doubt at the door.

Offered Friday at 9 a.m. and Saturday at 10:35 a.m.

**How to Uncover Your Own Voice and Get it Down on Paper**

*Kathy Kinney and Cindy Ratzlaff*

Using a series of improvisational writing techniques and a simple kitchen timer, this hands-on workshop will get you past your self-criticism, reveal your unique voice and help you incorporate that voice into your writing. You’ll learn how to use your voice to paint a clear picture for readers, helping them experience who you are, where you are, who you are to the others in your scene and what makes this day so important in the story. Come prepared to write without self-editing and to give your imagination a good workout.

Offered Friday at 2 p.m. and Saturday at 2 p.m.

**Adapting Your Story or Novel Into Television or Film (offered once)**

*Adriana Trigiani*

Bring your work from book to screen. Do you think your story has potential to come to life? Learn the steps of adapting your art into television or film. You have your writing; now turn it into screenwriting. You will learn both the business and the art of adaptation and have access to creators who’ve mastered this themselves.

Offered Friday at 10:35 a.m.

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**HUMOR WRITING**

**Form Is Funny: [Insert Your Own Funny Subtitle Here]**

*Julie Schumacher*

Here’s a way to combat the terror of the blank page or screen: Rather than beginning a story or essay or memoir by concentrating on subject matter, try starting with a shape or a form. We’ll experiment with options, turning that minefield of a family gathering into a board game or describing that climb up the corporate ladder in terms of a never-ending to-do list. Bring material from your real life or your imagination and get ready to have fun with form.

Offered Friday at 3:35 p.m. and Saturday at 9 a.m.

**Finding the Funny in Your Story**

*Annabelle Gurwitch*

*New York Times* bestselling author, Thurber Prize finalist and humorist Annabelle Gurwitch leads this creative brainstorming session on current project ideas and works in progress. She’ll share her process of cultivating humor in even the most serious subjects and work with writers on finding opportunities in a piece of writing they send in advance. You’ll learn a process you can apply each time you sit down to write. This workshop combines short lectures, writing, reading short excerpts of their work (unless a writer prefers not to), discussion of craft and brainstorming.

Offered Friday at 3:35 p.m. and Saturday at 10:35 a.m.

**When Humor Goes, There Goes Civilization: How to Use Your Gifts to Change the World (and Have a Laugh Along the Way)**

*Karen Walrond*

So writing and humor are your superpowers — but can they change the world? Join Karen Walrond, author of *The Lightmaker’s Manifesto: How to Work for Change Without Losing Your Joy,* to learn how your gifts of expression and perspective can not only be catalysts for change, but even be the keys to shifting mindsets while creating joy — for others and yourself.

Offered Friday at 10:35 a.m. and 2 p.m.

**Turn Problems into Punchlines**

*Judy Carter*

Bring in your breakups, heartache and character flaws, and Judy Carter, author of *The New Comedy Bible*, will help you turn those into comedy gold for stand-up performances or funny essays and stories. What will you learn?

* How to develop strong openings that make them love you in 17 seconds.
* How to write comparison and dialogue and mix in jokes.
* Create comedy material from your life experiences.
* Turn the crazy characters in your family into material.
* Get an instant connection with any audience.

Offered Friday at 10:35 a.m. and Saturday at 2 p.m.

**How to Tell Your Story**

*Margot Leitman*

In this interactive workshop, you’ll learn how to turn painful, strange or even mundane life experiences into performable funny stories from a master. Dig inside your own life to find humorous, relatable material that unifies an audience, making them laugh at their own experiences through your performance. You will leave with a strong direction of how to structure a live story while thinking, “I can't believe I told a room full of strangers about that — and I can’t believe they all laughed!”

Offered Friday at 2 p.m. and Saturday at 10:35 a.m.

**Is There a Secret to Writing Funny?**

*Alan Zweibel*

Erma Bombeck wrote, “There is a thin line that separates laughter and pain, comedy and tragedy, humor and hurt.” Great humor writers — from Mark Twain to Tina Fey — have been adept at straddling those thin lines. Learn how to write funnier from one of the funniest writers in the country. Tapping into his wealth of experience as a television writer, screenwriter, playwright and novelist, Alan Zweibel will offer his secrets for writing humorous essays, sketches, stand-up routines, blogs and novels.

Offered Friday at 9 a.m. and Saturday at 10:35 a.m.

**Improvisor’s Mindset (offered once)**

*Dion Flynn*

Want to add more creativity and confidence to your life? The basic tools of improv are the basic tools of human relationship. In this interactive workshop Dion Flynn will show you how to develop an improvisor’s mindset that will prepare you to move through the unknown without a script and thrive. Described as the Dave Chappelle of applied improvisation, Flynn uses insightful humor to share innovative ways to connect.

Offered Friday at 3:35 p.m.

**Stand-Up Comedy Boot Camp (offered once)**

*Wendy Liebman*

Stand-up comic Wendy Liebman will share writing techniques to make your stories funnier — and ways to deliver them to get a laugh. The workshop is open to stand-up performers and anyone who wants to learn the techniques for writing and performing stand-up comedy. Scribble down your own hilarious ideas and come prepared to laugh. While most performers for Stand-Up Comedy Night will be selected in advance, Liebman will choose an additional three from the writers she meets in the workshop.

Offered Friday at 2 p.m.

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**PUBLISHING**

**Ask the Agents**

*Wayne Arthurson, Margaret Danko and Naomi Eisenbeiss*

This Q&A with a panel of agents provides you with an opportunity to find out what agents look for in sample chapters, what makes them stop reading, what they can do for self-published authors and what they want to hear during a live pitch. You’ll get the chance to ask the agents about any topic, from platform and marketing to self-publishing and series writing.

Offered Friday at 9 a.m. and Saturday at 9 a.m. (moderated by Lian Dolan on Friday and Katrina Kittle on Saturday)

**The Birds and the Bees of Being an Author: (Mostly Undiscussed) Advice for New Writers (offered once)**

*Eva Lesko Natiello*

This presentation is a supportive-big-sister session for new writers. Eva Lesko Natiello talks about topics that new writers wonder about but are afraid to ask or don't know whom to ask. Topics include how to start, writer’s block, getting feedback, waning enthusiasm, self-doubt (“What if this is horrible?”), finding community, ego, bad reviews, how to forge ahead when insecurity strikes — and more.

Offered Friday at 9 a.m.

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**MARKETING AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

**Not Having a Podcast in 2022 Is Like Not Having a Fax Machine in 1987 (offered once)**

*Dave Jackson*

What does it take to start a podcast? How much does it cost? What are the benefits? Hear amazing stories of listener loyalty that have sent books up the Amazon charts. You already have the skills to be a podcaster; you just didn’t know it.

Offered Friday at 9 a.m.

**Erma Would KILL on TikTok — A Writer’s Guide to Social Media Videos**

*Rebecca Regnier*

Rebecca Regnier’s videos on TikTok and Facebook have racked up millions of views. Regnier will break down how she uses social media to connect to new readers for her books and columns. You’ll also learn about BookTok, where voracious readers are discovering new authors every day. From TikTok to Instagram reels to YouTube shorts, you’ll see examples of how to turn your columns into videos and use your videos to build an audience for your work.

Offered Friday at 10:35 a.m. and Saturday at 10:35 a.m.

**Newsflash: Newsletters Work!**

*James Breakwell*

There are many, many ways to sell books. They all suck. Well, almost all of them. If you actually want to move copies, build an audience and generate income, you need a newsletter. Yes, the art of the mass email is alive and well. Unfortunately, most people screw it up. James Breakwell will show you a way that works. After building up huge and mostly useless audiences on social media, he finally mastered newsletters — the one consistent way to achieve real-world results. He learned everything the hard way, and he has the scars to prove it (they’re mostly emotional scars, but trust us — they’re there). The future isn’t TikTok; it’s the inbox.

Offered Friday at 3:35 p.m. and Saturday at 9 a.m.

**So You Wanna Start a Podcast: Hosts and Producers Weigh In (offered once)**

*Moderated by Lian Dolan and featuring guest podcasters*

These days it seems like everyone has a podcast, from top celebrities to your barista. How hard could it be to conceive, launch and sustain a successful podcast? If you’re thinking that you want to turn your written material into a podcast, this is the session for you. Successful podcasters and producers will dive into the pros and cons of hosting and break down how they do it, from creative development to the production process to post-production obligations.

Offered Saturday at 9 a.m.

**The Art & Business of Author Platform (offered once)**

*Jane Friedman*

Most working writers have at least one thing in common: They seek to grow readership. But what leads to readership growth? And what can you do, especially without a publisher’s help or a large bankroll? Sometimes this is called “platform development.” Author platform is visibility to your target audience — which translates into an ability to sell your work. Platform building requires consistent effort over the course of a career; the work is never really done, and the strategy will evolve over time. We’ll discuss how to develop an approach and philosophy that fits your personality and the unique qualities of your work.

Offered Friday at 3:35 p.m.

**Marketing Is Not A Four-Letter Word: Find Your Readers and Increase Sales (offered once)**

*Eva Lesko Natiello*

When authors ask, "Do I really need to market my book?" there’s only one answer: "Only if you want to sell it." Have you published a book but wish your sales were more robust? Are you about to publish and want to strengthen your launch? No matter how authors publish these days, they need to contribute to the marketing. This talk is designed for all authors, indie or traditional, introvert or extrovert, fiction or nonfiction. Learn actionable marketing strategies that even the most introverted author will not balk at. Grab hold of the power you have and get your book noticed.

Offered Saturday at 9 a.m.

**Writing + Speaking = Bestseller (offered once)***Lian Dolan*

Not all book marketing is done on TikTok or Reese Witherspoon’s Insta feed. Face-to-face interaction with readers still works! For over 20 years, author Lian Dolan has maintained a busy speaking schedule supporting six bestselling books. Dolan teaches how to craft your writing into material for talks; shares how to connect with booksellers who report to “the list”; and walks through the nuts and bolts of putting together an appearance schedule to support a book launch or writing career.

Offered Saturday at 2 p.m.

**Your Author Website: Mistakes You’re Making and How to Fix Them (offered once)**

*Jane Friedman*

Whether your website is one day old or 10 years old, you want to make sure the resources you’ve put into your site will pay off with more readers, more sales and more opportunities for your career. Learn the biggest mistakes authors make with their websites that can affect their usefulness and impact. You’ll also learn best practices for design and content; the most important visual areas to focus on; and online strategies to help grow your career.

Offered Saturday at 2 p.m.