



**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11, 2012, 7pm**

## ▶ The Publishing History of Rachel DuPree

At the April meeting you will hear the inspiring story of how first-time novelist Ann Weisgarber overcame fear and doubt to complete her first book—a novel that was published by Penguin.

Here, in her own words, Ann shares part of her journey:

“I was a reader, not a writer. I taught sociology, not literature, at a junior college. But when I was inspired by a photograph of a woman, I was determined to write a story. I didn’t know anything about writing fiction, but that was a minor detail. I would figure it out. Libraries were full of books, and if those authors had managed it, so could I.

“It took seven years to write *The Personal History of Rachel DuPree*. During the first four years, I didn’t think about publication, platforms, or finding an audience. I wrote because the woman in the photo sat on my shoulder and prodded me on. I focused on learning how to write, one word at a time. I attended writing workshops and listened to harsh critiques from fellow novice writers. The lettering on my computer’s delete key faded as I revised, tossed out pages, and tried again.

“Praise? I rarely heard that. I kept on, though, fueled by an *I can’t stop now* attitude and the willingness to revise. You can do the same. It’s a matter of hard work and determination to do the best you can.

“In my presentation, I’ll talk about my route from novice writer to publication with Penguin. If I can do it, so can you.”



Ann Weisgarber lives in Sugar Land, Texas, and met SLPA board member Linda Austin last summer at Left Bank Books. Weisgarber’s first novel, *The Personal History of Rachel DuPree*, has been published in England, France and the United States. It was nominated for England’s Orange Prize and the Orange

Award for New Writers. It won the Langum Prize for American Historical Fiction and the Stephen Turner Award for Best Work of First Fiction. It was a Barnes & Noble Discover Great New Writers selection and a finalist for the Ohioana Award. The film rights have been optioned by actress Viola Davis. Weisgarber’s second novel will be published in 2012.

Learn more about Ann at [www.annweisgarber.com](http://www.annweisgarber.com).

## ▶ Four Things You Can Do to Reach Your Publication Goal

**Writers write.** We consider word choices, we compose sentences or phrases, and we arrange paragraphs or stanzas so that one flows to the next. That’s ninety percent of what we do. The other ten percent calls for connecting with other writers and with readers. When that happens, we think all the more like writers and that takes us one step closer to publication. Here are a few suggestions that can help make that happen for you.

**Join Professional Organizations** You belong to SLPA so you know the importance of connecting with other writers. Now, make a commitment to attend every meeting. They’re inspiring and your fellow writers are often the only people who understand the joy and the agony of writing. Consider joining other organizations such as Historical Novel Society, Western Writers of America, Society of Children’s Book Writers, and Mystery Writers of America to name a few. These groups have conferences and competitions which can lead to publication.

**Read Professional Magazines** Every profession has a lingo, and we need to be savvy so that we understand how publication works. Magazines such as *Poets & Writers*, *The Writer*, and *The Writer’s Digest* discuss literary agents, competitions, conferences, as well as publishing houses, big and small. This was all news to me when I picked up my first copies. So were the existence of university presses and literary journals, both of which can be avenues to publication.

**Join a Book Discussion Club** This is your chance to hear what readers like and dislike about published books. Does the plot hold up? How’s the pacing? Do readers connect with the characters? A book that is beloved by some might be a big snooze for others. As writers, we need to see books as readers do.

**Join a Writing Critique Group** My group is the most important reason why I’m published today. We’ve been meeting for three hours every Friday for seven years. There are eight members, and each person presents six pages. If the pages aren’t working—and mine rarely are—we brainstorm and consider possibilities. We revise and bring the same scene again the next week. The members are my audience, and I’m theirs. They make me a better and braver writer.

Time is a factor, and your priority is writing and refining your work. But make a commitment to do one or two of the above suggestions. You’re a writer. Connect, learn the lingo, listen to feedback, and you’re on your way to publication.

*Ann Weisgarber ([www.annweisgarber.com](http://www.annweisgarber.com)) is the author of the award-winning novel, The Personal History of Rachel DuPree. Her second novel will be published in the fall of 2012.*

## ▶ FEATURED MEMBER

### Mary Elizabeth Moloney, Heart Whisperings

Author, *Elizabeth: Learning to Dress Myself from the Inside Out*  
[www.heartwhisperings.wordpress.com](http://www.heartwhisperings.wordpress.com)

### You Can Do It!

I retired from Pathways Community Hospice in 2001 and began writing my memoir, *Elizabeth: Learning to Dress Myself from the Inside Out*. Years of courses and seminars followed, and nineteen drafts later, a clean manuscript emerged. During its composition, others critiqued chapters and urged publication—in my perception, a bewildering world of literary editors, big and small houses, and political intrigue. Marketing and promoting workshops decried self-publishing as unprofessional and expensive. In no way could you call yourself an author. Besides, no bookstores would carry such books. Read more: <http://slpa.memberlodge.com/blog?mode=PostView&bmi=873852>

## ▶ News You Can Use

The following is a selection of timely articles, resources, and information to help you CREATE, PRODUCE, and MARKET your books. Visit the SLPA website at [www.stlouispublishers.org](http://www.stlouispublishers.org) to find the live links!

### CREATING

#### The Writing Process: Step One. 2/29/12

Roseann Biederman

Whether you opt for the tried-and-true “wheel” approach (with subcategories radiating like spokes from your central theme), or a linear, list-based approach, the goal of all prewriting exercises is the same: freeing your subconscious mind to generate ideas, with a focus on quantity versus quality.

Read more: <http://www.writersdigest.com/uncategorized/the-writing-process-step-one>

### PRODUCING

#### Smart Planning: The Reality of Book Distribution. 3/2/12

Misconceptions in publishing abound, and there are certain realities many people don't understand about the book distribution system. In a step towards clearing some of the confusion, let's clarify the difference between a distributor and a wholesaler.

Read more: <http://www.seahillpress.com/resources/articles/the-reality-of-book-distribution>

### MARKETING


#### Creating a Personal Social Media Campaign to Get Published. 3/12/12

Adria Saracito

You can build up an audience and bring the publishers to you—or end up leaving them out altogether—with social media marketing. The key is to have a plan.


Read more: <http://www.amarketingexpert.com/creating-a-personal-social-media-campaign-to-get-published> 

## ▶ The SLPA Mission

The St. Louis Publishers Association empowers authors and publishers to create and market quality products and books. A nationally recognized organization, the SLPA provides educational, informational resources on publishing. Through its monthly meetings, the organization provides networking opportunities for people involved in all aspects of the publishing industry. 

## ▶ What's Ahead? May 9, 2012

### The Business Side of Self-Publishing

Like any small business, self-publishing includes best practices to embrace and pitfalls to avoid. Hear firsthand from an expert on the legal side of media and communications. Our speaker will be Mary Ann L. Wymore, an officer at Greensfelder, Hemker & Gale, P.C., in St. Louis, Missouri, where she is a member of the firm's litigation, communications and media, and intellectual property practice groups. She represents a variety of media organizations, businesses, advertising firms, and individuals in the areas of communications, media, defamation and privacy, advertising, constitutional and technology law, unfair competition, and intellectual property. 

## ▶ SLPA Meetings

SLPA meets on the second Wednesday of the month:

Brentwood Community Center  
 2505 S. Brentwood Blvd., Room 101  
 Brentwood, MO 63144

(Enter through the door closest to the flagpole)

Doors open for networking at 6:30pm and meeting begins at 7pm. The formal meeting concludes at about 8:30pm with networking continuing after the meeting.

Our regular meetings are free to members. Guests – \$10 at the door, cash or check only. 

## ▶ Questions about SLPA?

### Contact Membership Chair:

Kim Wolterman, [membership@stlouispublishers.org](mailto:membership@stlouispublishers.org)

SLPA News & Views is produced and distributed by the **Communications Committee:**

Manager: Katherine Pickett, [katherine@popediting.net](mailto:katherine@popediting.net)

Designer: Cathy Davis, [cathy@daviscreative.com](mailto:cathy@daviscreative.com)

PR: Linda (Louie) Louis-Van Reed, [louie@miraclecanyon.com](mailto:louie@miraclecanyon.com)

**Members:** Get your article featured in the SLPA newsletter and posted on our blog. E-mail Katherine Pickett at [communications@stlouispublishers.org](mailto:communications@stlouispublishers.org) for more information. 

