

WEDNESDAY, March 12, 2014 • 7PM

## What You Should Know About Writing a Book, *Before* You Start Writing

**W**HAT SHOULD YOU KNOW *BEFORE* YOU WRITE YOUR BOOK—besides how to construct a coherent sentence and the difference between a colon and a comma? Have you thought at all about the *process* of writing a book, or are you just flying by the seat of your pants?

Presenters Bobbi Linkemer and Eleanor Sullivan are seasoned authors who have written a combined total of thirty-eight published books. What they now know about how to write a book has been learned OTJ (on the job) over the years. At our March meeting, they will share all the things they wish they had known when they were starting out.

You will be ready to write your book after you have learned about:

1. Writing—not the *craft* of writing but the *process*: the things to do, the things to avoid doing
2. The many differences between writing fiction and nonfiction
3. What it takes to write a book—any book
4. The parts of the book you have to write—*besides* the chapters
5. What to do before you write
6. How to get organized and stay that way
7. Why you absolutely, without a doubt, need an editor, even if you are an editor

Bobbi Linkemer is a ghostwriter, book-writing coach, and editor, as well as the author of eighteen books. In her forty-five-year career,



Bobbi Linkemer

she has been a feature writer, magazine editor, corporate communicator, marketer, teacher, and entrepreneur. Her passion is helping writers convey their messages through books. She is the creator of “How to Write, Publish, & Promote a Nonfiction Book,” eight online courses for aspiring authors. You can reach her at [WriteANonfictionBook.com](http://WriteANonfictionBook.com), [bobbi@writeanonfictionbook.com](mailto:bobbi@writeanonfictionbook.com).



Eleanor Sullivan

Eleanor Sullivan is the award-winning author of books for nurses, the Monika Everhart medical mystery series, and the Singular Village Mysteries. This series is set in Zoar, Ohio, the nineteenth century religious settlement of her ancestors. *Graven Images* is the second book in the series, following the release of *Cover Her Body*. The third book, *Tree of Heaven*, is due out in 2015. Connect

with her at [EleanorSullivan.com](http://EleanorSullivan.com) and read about nineteenth century lore at [EleanorSullivan.com/blog](http://EleanorSullivan.com/blog).

## Why Didn't Anyone Tell Us? Things We Wish We Had Known About Writing Books

by Bobbi Linkemer and Eleanor Sullivan

**W**hen we wrote our first books (Bobbi in 1987, Eleanor in 1985), neither of us had any idea what we were doing. For my (Bobbi) first small books, the editor gave me no instructions, no guidelines. All he said was, “Here’s the title; write a book.”

In my (Eleanor) first experience publishing a book, the editor approved my proposal and gave me a deadline. That’s it!

Now, twenty-nine years and more than forty books later, we have learned a lot more about the process, mostly by figuring it out for ourselves. Here are some of the things we now know:

- To create a book, you have to have a burning desire to do it. Then, you need a solid idea, a plan, the self-discipline to

focus on what you’re doing, and a long attention span to get you through the whole process.

- There is more to a book than the main contents. As the author, you write all the parts, including the front and back matter, and even the back cover. If you have a publisher, they’ll do the cover (sometimes terrible covers!).
- The way to start a book is not by sitting down and waiting for inspiration. The way to start a book is to plan first and then write.
- The worst thing that can happen to an author is to lose what you have 50 percent written. There are all kinds of tricks to making sure that doesn’t

happen. The most important is save, save, save your files.

- There are things you should do and things you should never do. For example, do pay attention to grammar, and don’t expect an editor to fix your bad writing. Do research what you need to know, and don’t trust secondary sources.
- As an author, you are constantly learning, but the more you know about the writing process, the better your book will be.

*Special offer to those in attendance at the March meeting: from Bobbi, five e-books on writing at a 35 percent discount (\$30); from Eleanor, her latest two mysteries for the price of one (\$15).*



SLPA'S NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS met on Saturday, January 11 to get to know each other better and plan this year's programs. Following up on our January presentation—Jump-start your book in 2014—this will be “the year of the book.” By the end of the year, we hope to cover every aspect of writing, publishing, and promoting your book and help you achieve your personal “vision.”

Board members, from left to right: Kevin Ericson, web-master; Bob Baker, president; Linda Austin, treasurer; Warren Martin, secretary; Cathy Wood, newsletter designer; Jeff Steinmann, publicity; Bobbi Linkemer, communications and newsletter editor; Nancy Baumann, vice president; Tim Hill, content coordinator; and Peggy Nehmen, membership. (Since this photograph was taken, unfortunately, Nancy Baumann has left the board; and Warren Martin has assumed the dual roles of vice president and secretary.)

## News You Can Use

The following is a selection of articles, resources, and information to help you CREATE, WRITE, MARKET, and/or PUBLISH books.

### CREATE

**When Flaws Go Too Far** by Angela Ackerman, February 20, 2014

“To be credible, characters must have flaws as well as strengths, just like real people. There is a tipping point for flaws, however.”

<http://www.writersdigest.com/online-editor/when-flaws-go-too-far-avoiding-unlikeable-characters>

### PUBLISH

**4 Key Book Publishing Paths** by Jane Friedman, 2014

“You won’t find a universal, agreed-upon definition of what it means to “traditionally publish” or “self-publish.”

<http://www.thecreativepenn.com/2013/06/13/identify-your-target-audience/>

### MARKET

**Writers: 5 Tips on How to Identify Your Target Audience** By Joanna Penn, June 13, 2013

“While the Twilight saga might be plagued by jokes about Bella’s undying love (no pun intended) for a too-perfect vampire shinier than a package of Lisa Frank stickers, the series is the perfect example of a target market.”

<http://www.digitalbookworld.com/2014/why-publishers-should-partner-with-start-ups/>

**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.

**MEMBERS:** Do you have a new book you would like to announce? For more information, email Bobbi Linkemer mail to: [communications@stlpublishers.org](mailto:communications@stlpublishers.org)

## THE BOOK CORNER

### *Prepare Your Heart and Be a Great Mom*

by Maria Rodgers O'Rourke

MRO Communications / \$12.95

ISBN: 978-0-9800227-1-1

Available through: [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com),

[www.greatmombook.com](http://www.greatmombook.com),

[Maria@MROCommunications.com](mailto:Maria@MROCommunications.com)

Moms have one of the most important jobs in the world but often find themselves “running on empty,” writes author Maria Rodgers O'Rourke. *Prepare Your Heart and Be a Great Mom* combines scripture-based reflections with journaling to get help moms recharge their hearts, souls, and minds and find the energy to enjoy spontaneous moments with their children and attend to their busy days.

Maria Rodgers O'Rourke is a popular speaker, columnist, and radio host. She has served in church ministry for more than twenty years in communications, adult spirituality, family life, and retreat direction.

## 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 after the meeting.

Regular meetings are free to members. Guests—\$10 at the door, cash or check only.

## Questions About SLPA?

Contact membership chair:

Peggy Nehmen

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