

Summary Report on MiPA General Meeting—September 8, 2020
32 Participating on Zoom

**Hosting from Home: Online Book Talks with Jenna Kahly and Hillary Stevens,
Lake Agassiz Regional Library**



1. Opening Comments by MiPA, by President Suzzanne Kelly and Awards Chairperson Jennifer Baum

- Welcome to first session of the new MiPA season, every 2nd Tuesday of the month.
- The Midwest Book Awards are now open on the MiPA website with new categories added. There will be virtual readings by last year's winners starting at the end of September.
- Speaker introductions: Jenna Kahly, Program Coordinator Lake Agassiz, and Hillary Stevens, Marketing Coordinator

2. Overview, Jenna

They coordinate the work at 22 library locations in south central Minnesota, with an arts and legacy programming focus for local authors. Another goal is to promote diversity and cultures.

3. Marketing Approaches, Hillary

- Facebook live was their first platform approach because most customers were there, but switched to Be Live, <https://be.live>, because it was easier to facilitate conversations, and the meeting and chat could then be projected into Facebook. They are reaching far more people than before at their in-person events.
- They do press releases, newsletters, and social media marketing (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter), which has reduced printing expenses. Their webpage is larl.org. If the author has a Facebook page it should be used and shared with LARL or whoever is sponsoring the talk so it can be tagged.

4. Getting on the Speaker Lists, Jenna

Her role is Legacy Coordinator, and she gets hundreds of requests. She suggests including:

- A high-resolution picture of book cover and head shot
- Description of book and talk
- Make all your submittals seem professional, so they are easy to accept
- Perhaps record a 20-second book talk intro and send it in
- Some libraries may ask for a prerecorded talk as backup. Get help with these if you need it. Prerecording can be done easily by just going on zoom to yourself and start recording.
- Jenna prefers submittals from Minnesota, but accepts some from out of state.

- A prearranged panel discussion is of interest to many.
- A writing workshop can be highly marketable. Several libraries have special outreach to teens but that might be more successful in the summer.
- Family history stories are good for LARL as well.
- She books events six to eight months in advance and pays the authors for their talk. Go to legacy.mn.org to see payment and other details.

5. How to Do a Good Talk, Jenna

- For clarity, have good lighting on your face, use a strong internet, use a simple background, and keep the camera slightly above your eyes.
- Have someone else coordinate the chat. Some may prefer few interruptions, but at other times fostering a conversation is best. Discuss with the chat watcher before the meeting.
- Repeat the chat questions so everyone understands.
- Look directly at camera to make eye contact.
- Don't read the whole time, maybe 10-15% only.
- Occasionally ask questions, keep talking for a while, and then go to chat to see what has come in. This makes it seem like more of a conversation.
- It may be good to have some slides for main points.
- Many want to know about the craft of writing and it adds a lot to the presentation.
- Remember people may be checking in and out, so reintroduce yourself occasionally.
- About 45 minutes is a good talk length but leave time for questions at the end.
- If it is appropriate, show a link for book purchases several times. Ask if and how they would like the book signed.
- It might be good to include a survey with your talk to see what worked and didn't. Put the link into the chat several times and at the end. You can also collect email addresses that way. Google forms is good for this. Check out, LARL.org/legacysurvey, for an example.

6. Chat Questions and Answers

- Q—How can you persuade librarians to buy books when there are a lot of holds?
A—Develop a relationship with your collection development librarian. Calling on the phone is best for this. Reach out several times per year. If there is a local club with a special interest, show a connection to your book or ask them to talk to the librarian. Offering a free copy won't help (maybe offer a discount). A few copies are bought for big speaker events. Of course, you and your friends can suggest purchases, and those suggestions always get read. You usually need a library card from that system.
- Q—I'm getting a lot of email suggesting that I buy a list of librarians. Is it worth it?
A—Don't do it. The best way in is through the "suggested-title" page.
- Q—Do you have any special events related to NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month) in November?
A—Yes, but they haven't been particularly successful. If you have organized ideas, let us know.
- Q—Does it help to make marketing materials for the library?
A—No thank you, unless they don't have a dedicated marketing person or you are really good
- Q—Will people get tired of virtual events?

A—Even if we go to in-person events at LARL, we will probably find ways to stream them as well. Children’s events will be live, so they don’t have to spend all day on a screen. Using zoom breakout rooms is a good way to promote more natural conversation. Another option is some take home activity, like artistic kits, so there is a tangible output. Find some tangible activity you can tie to your book.

Q—Have you seen people use zoom annotation, polling, and reaction tools?

A—Some zoom features, like chat, don’t flow to Facebook well, and most of our followers are there. Haven’t seen those other advanced tools. Many of our users are on phones.

7. Final Comments, Suzanne

- Thank you all for coming
- We have meetings like this every second Tuesday, starting at 6:30 for informal chat, and at 7:00 for the official meeting. Our October meeting will be about Distribution and Sales and the November meeting about Children’s Book Publishing. We have a nice short survey at <https://mipa.org/survey> we are asking everyone to fill out and that will help us know who is attending.

8. After-Time Extras

- On September 16, on the 10 pm KARE 11 News, Holly will be on with her friendly sunfish.
- Jenna’s email, if you want to suggest a talk, is: kahlyj@larl.org
- Library coordinators share the names of great event speakers.
- Light rings work well for your face, but test it if you wear glasses.
- Consider attaching a small picture of people above the camera, so you talk toward them. Note cards up there might work too.