

## **EVENT TITLE: Close to Zero: Publishing without a Budget**

**Event Description:** Every magazine and press starts with an idea, an aesthetic, and a passion. Some also start with grants, a network, and funding. Others don't. Our presenters will give immediate and practical advice on establishing and maintaining e-journals, print journals, and presses from one's personal finances. We will discuss web development, printing, distribution, sales, the business aspects of zero-budget publishing, and free ways to expand audiences. Additional resources will be explored and provided.

**Event Category:** Publishing, Editing, and the Technical aspects thereof

### **Event Participants:**

**Leah Angstman:** Leah Angstman is a historian, editor, publisher, poet, and fiction writer. She is the founder (1993) and editor of Alternating Current Press, editor of *The Coil*, and copyeditor of *Underscore News*. Her debut historical novel, *Out Front the Following Sea*, is available everywhere books are sold.

**Jesi Bender:** Jesi Bender is an artist and author from Upstate New York. She helms KERNPUNKT Press ([www.kernpunktpress.com](http://www.kernpunktpress.com)), a home for experimental writing. Her shorter work has appeared in *Vol. 1 Brooklyn*, *Split Lip*, and *Lunch Ticket*, among others, and she is the author of the play *Kinderkrankenhaus* (Sagging Meniscus 2021), the novel *The Book of the Last Word* (Whisk(e)y Tit 2019), and the chapbook *Dangerous Women* (forthcoming from dancing girl press). [www.jesibender.com](http://www.jesibender.com)

**Keny Garcia:** Kenning (aka Kenyatta) JP García is a performer, antipoet, humorist, and diarist. JP is the author of innovative diary collections such as *OF (What Place Meant)*, *Furthermore*, and *Slow Living*. JP is also an organizer for the St. Rocco's Reading Series and is an editor at *Rigorous* and Dream Pop Press.

**Rosalyn Spencer:** Rosalyn Spencer, educator and advocate, holds a BA in English, MLS in public library studies, and MEd in educational leadership. She directs youth art programs and teaches English Language Arts in greater New Orleans. She is a grant writer, advocate, and supporter of the arts in education and equitable curriculum.

**Jonathan Penton (Moderator):** Jonathan Penton edits the journal *Unlikely Stories* and its print arm, Unlikely Books. He is the technical director for the New Orleans Poetry Festival and *Rigorous* and has worked in management and technical roles for a number of arts organizations. His most recent chapbook of poetry is *Backstories*.

**Opening Remarks:** Thanks, everyone, so much for coming here and spending some time with us this afternoon. We know you've got a lot of places that you can be, and we want to express our appreciation that you chose us, presumably out of financial desperation.

We're here because we believe in the continued democratization of literature, and that micropresses and zero-budget journals provide an essential service to the small press, and to literature in general. We're here to give you immediately practical advice on running such a venture. Now, we've all been doing this a long time, and have a lot to say, so let me turn it over to our participants.

### **Participant Remarks:**

**Jesi Bender:** KERNPUNKT started because I wanted to foster work that was experimental in form and language-driven. I have a background in editing but not in publishing, so it was a learning experience every step of the way. I will talk about successes and pratfalls we've encountered since beginning in 2015, focusing on the elements that have made us financially sustainable.

**Keny Garcia:** There are many ways to approach publishing on a budget. The first thing to do is to try to establish yourself as a writer to be read. This begins with submitting and being published by lots of literary magazines, many of which are free to submit to. From here one can consider various approaches to self-publishing and serialized publishing while also submitting manuscripts to various presses. There are a lot of options for putting one's work out online for little to no money and even making a little money in the process. Patreon and Substack work well. Flash and serialized work. Kindle is still a go-to option for many and PDFs can easily be posted on WordPress pages for e-chaps.

**Rosalyn Spencer:** After many years working with grantwriting and advocacy for the arts in the youth and education field, I knew that if we offered a website that provided something needed to the literary community, we would be able to sustain the literary journal. *Rigorous* was born after sitting in numerous K-12 educational meetings, discussing literature by BIPOC authors. I was always being confronted with the phrase, "Is it rigorous enough?" This led to some reflection of my years in academia and the workforce and a need to create a literary website that published BIPOC work of all genres with no demands on what their narrative or authenticity should be. Establishing a strong mission statement, manageable timeline and small but dedicated crew with varying skill sets and aesthetics, we were able to create a small online literary magazine on a small budget.

**Leah Angstman:** After 29 years of running a publishing company in the small press, going from the pre-Internet days to blogs to digital and traditional printing, I have a lot of experience with different types of printing, packaging, and distribution. I'll talk about different options for the actual printing and distribution of books, what's worked and what hasn't, which options give you the most freedom, and which are the most cost-effective. I'll talk about warehousing, print-on-demand, how to price a book effectively, the best distribution needs for the size of your press, and mailing/packaging options that small presses can handle.

**Jonathan Penton:** And if there's time, I'll outline the skill sets you're going to want to develop to run a press, while depending on outside help as little as possible. I'll discuss the tools, external

and internal, that you'd be well-advised to invest in. An outline of these skills is also available on **Supplemental Handout 1**. There's only a few copies, so please feel free to take pictures with your phone or download it from the AWP web site.