

Local author continues winning independent book awards

By Matt Cizek
Winchester Sun

A Winchester author has once again met success. The following press release from the Independent Book Public Professionals Group says as much and more.

" 'The Witness' by Winchester, Kentucky resident Jordan Standridge has been named by the Independent Book Publishing Professionals Group as one of the best indie books of 2026.

Standridge's book is a two-time Gold Medal Winner of the Second Novel and Suspense categories in the 2026 Next Generation Indie Book Awards, the world's largest book awards program for independent publishers and self-published authors. The winners and finalists (were) honored at a gala on June 26, 2026, at The Newberry Library in Chicago, IL, coinciding with the American Library Association Annual Conference.

Entering its 20th year, the awards honor outstanding independently published books in over 80 categories. Organizers of this year's gala (hoped) to livestream the awards presentation on Facebook, commencing at approximately 5:00 pm CT at <https://www.facebook.com/NextGenerationIndieBookAwards>.

This year's Platinum Sponsor is FabJob.com, a leading publisher of dream career guides with over half a million satisfied customers across 6 continents. IAP Career College (iapcollege.com), which offers online certificate courses in more than 100 career fields, including book editing and book publishing, returns as a Gold Sponsor of this year's awards.

The Next Generation Indie Book Awards are judged by leaders in the indie publishing industry, many of whom have had long careers at major publishing houses. Drawing on their deep experience and love of great storytelling, they recognize books that deserve a wider audience.

In an article at CNN.com titled 'If it's cool, creative, and different, it's indie', journalist Catherine Andrews wrote: 'The term 'indie' traditionally refers to independent art – music, film, literature or anything that fits under the broad banner of culture – created outside of the mainstream and without corporate financing.' That definition remains true for

book publishing.

Independent book publishing companies are independent of the major conglomerates dominating the book publishing industry. Indies include small presses, larger independent publishers, university presses, e-book publishers, and self-published authors.

According to Catherine Goulet, Founder and Co-Chair of the Next Generation Indie Book Awards, 'Like other independent artists, many indie book publishers face challenges that the industry giants (don't) experience. The indies have to work much harder to get their best books into readers' hands.'

'Authors and publishers who compete in the Next Generation Indie Book Awards are serious about promoting their books,' adds Goulet. 'They aim to stand out from the crowd of millions of books in print.'

According to the Association of American Publishers' latest StatShot Annual report, the U.S. publishing industry generated an estimated \$32.5 billion in revenue in 2024, up 4.1% from 2023, with trade/consumer books accounting for \$21.2 billion of that total.

Book output has also continued to climb: Bowker figures reported by Pub-

lishers Weekly show that more than 4 million books with ISBNs were published in the U.S. in 2025, driven largely by self-publishing, which accounted for more than 3.5 million print and ebook titles.

To help indie authors and publishers reach a wider audience, the top 80+ books in the 2026 Next Generation Indie Book Awards will be reviewed by New York literary agent Marilyn Allen of Allen Literary Agency (formerly the Allen O'Shea Literary Agency), or one of Ms. Allen's co-agents, for possible representation in areas such as: distribution, foreign rights, film rights, and other rights."

Standridge gave her initial reactions.

"I was excited because the Next Generation Indie Book Awards is the largest program," she said. "They are very serious when it comes to judging...it's a huge honor."

She also mentioned a passion for independent book writing, which, as noted in the press release, presents certain challenges.

"Being an indie author is a learning process, and that's really the crux of everything, because being an indie author is doing everything," she said. "I do my own proofreading, editing, formatting, (and) the



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Jordan Standridge stands with two gold medals from the 2026 Next Generation Indie Book Awards

publishing. I help make the covers through a professional cover company. I do all the marketing. I set up my own book signings."

However, Standridge is also optimistic for the future, noting that she is inspired by much of what she sees every day.

"Most of my ideas come when I'm driving down the road," she said. "When I get home, I just start typing it out."

Standridge's new release, "The Guardian", comes out on August 4th on Amazon as an eBook edition. Two paperbacks, in regular and large print, are released on Amazon on Wednesday, July 15th. Other retailers should release the books in August.

A GoFundMe Link to continue supporting her journey can be found at: <https://www.gofundme.com/join-jordan-in-bringing-new-stories-to-life>, and Standridge's personal website is www.JordanStandridge.com.

She will have a book signing at the Barnes and Noble location at 1932 Pavilion Way in Lexington on Saturday, August 8th, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Your COMMUNITY Your CALENDAR

TUESDAY, JULY 14 Bluegrass on the Patio @ J. Render's: 7-9 p.m. J. Render's Southern Table & Bar, 3191 Beaumont Centre Circle. Free. www.jrenders.com Camp Carnegie: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Carnegie Center For Literacy, 251 W 2nd St. \$75.00. carnegiecenterlex.org Celebrate Recovery: 7-9 p.m. Calvary Christian Church, 15 Redwing Dr. Free. calvarychristian.net Farish Planetarium Daily Shows: 10 a.m.-6 p.m. The Living Arts & Science Center, 362 N Martin Luther King Blvd. www.lasclex.org Quilter's Group: 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Clark County Public Library, 370 S Burns Ave. Free. Ron Kibbey's Comedy Classic: 6-7:30 p.m. Clark County Public Library, 370 S Burns Ave. Free. clarkbooks.org Summer Camps, Week Seven: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Lexington Children's Museum, 440 W Short St. \$175.00 - \$325.00. bit.ly Wick + Mortar Studio / Craft and Candle Cocktail Bar: 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Wick + Mortar Studio / Craft & Candle Cocktail Bar, 526 East High Street. \$15.00 - \$48.00. www.poppyandpomelo.com	Lexington SC vs. New Mexico United: 7 p.m. Lexington SC Stadium, 200 Shives Drive. www.lexsporting.com Mobility: Learn to Move Well: 8-9 a.m. SHALA, 309 North Ashland Ave. ste. 180. \$30.00. www.lissasims.com Nerd's Night Out at Wise Bird Cider: 4-8 p.m. Wise Bird Cider Co, 1170 Manchester Street, Suite 140. Free. www.facebook.com Singo: 7-8:30 p.m. DJ's Steakhouse Bar and Grill, 836 Bypass Rd. Free. business.winchesterkychamber.com Summer Camps, Week Seven: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Lexington Children's Museum, 440 W Short St. \$175.00 - \$325.00. bit.ly Tango Class: 7:15-8 p.m. Bluegrass Ballroom, 4750 Hartland Parkway Unit 190. \$12.00 - \$18.00. www.bluegrassballroom.com Wednesday Matinee: 2-4 p.m. Clark County Public Library, 370 S Burns Ave. Free. clarkbooks.org Winchester Kiwanis Club: 12-1 p.m. Arby's, 100 McCormick. Free.	WEDNESDAY, JULY 15 AA Meeting: 7 p.m. Ascension Episcopal Church Annex, 48 W. High St.. Camp Carnegie: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Carnegie Center For Literacy, 251 W 2nd St. \$75.00. carnegiecenterlex.org Career Services Assistance: 1-4 p.m. Clark County Public Library, 370 S Burns Ave. Free. www.clarkbooks.org Creative Community Book Club: 5-6:30 p.m. Fayette County Extension Office, 11140 Harry Sykes Way. Free. www.facebook.com Farish Planetarium Daily Shows: 10 a.m.-6 p.m. The Living Arts & Science Center, 362 N Martin Luther King Blvd. www.lasclex.org Free Live Music by Xander Tuttle & Friends: 6-8 p.m. girlsgirlsgirls Burritos, 395 S Limestone. Free. www.girlsgirlsgirlsburritos.com	www.bluegrassballroom.com Wick + Mortar Studio / Craft and Candle Cocktail Bar: 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Wick + Mortar Studio / Craft & Candle Cocktail Bar, 526 East High Street. \$15.00 - \$48.00. www.poppyandpomelo.com Wildcat Thursday Comedy Showcase!: 8 p.m. Ethereal Public House, 102 w vine st. Free. Www.wildcatcomedy.co Write Out There!: 6-7 p.m. Clark County Public Library, 370 S Burns Ave. Free. clarkbooks.org FRIDAY, JULY 17 Farish Planetarium Daily Shows: 10 a.m.-6 p.m. The Living Arts & Science Center, 362 N Martin Luther King Blvd. www.lasclex.org Fritz Farm Christmas in July!: 4:30-8:30 p.m. Fritz Farm, 120 Fritz Farm. www.facebook.com Golden Hour: \$5 Friday: 5-8 p.m. Harkness Edwards Vineyards, 5199 Combs Ferry Rd. Free. www.harknessedwardsvineyards.com Live Music @ J. Render's Southern Table & Bar: 7-10 p.m. J. Render's Southern Table & Bar, 3191 Beaumont Centre Circle. www.jrenders.com Music at the Mansion with 64West: 7-10 p.m. Marriott Lexington Griffin Gate Golf Resort & Spa, 1800 Newtown Pike. www.griffingateevents.com PATCH BAR: Trucker Hats Beanies Tote Bags Pencil Bags Always Open: 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Poppy & Pomelo, 526 E. High St. www.poppyandpomelo.com Pizza at the Peach House: 12-8 p.m. Harkness Edwards Vineyards, 5199 Combs Ferry Rd. Free. www.harknessedwardsvineyards.com Summer Camps, Week Seven: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Lexington Children's Museum, 440 W Short St. \$175.00 - \$325.00. bit.ly SATURDAY, JULY 18 Adult Ballet Class!: 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Bluegrass Ballroom, 4750 Hartland Parkway Unit 190. \$15.00. www.bluegrassballroom.com Bald Cypress Master Class with	John Geanangel: 9 a.m.-12 p.m. UK Horticultural Research Farm, Classroom Building, 4321 Emmert Farm Lane. Free. app.joinit.com Book Sale!: 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Clark County Public Library, 370 S Burns Ave. Free. clarkbooks.org Brunch Boards & BOGO Mimosas: 12-2 p.m. Harkness Edwards Vineyards, 5199 Combs Ferry Rd. Free. www.harknessedwardsvineyards.com Central Kentucky Bonsai Monthly Meeting: 9 a.m.-12 p.m. UK Horticultural Research Farm, 4321 Emmert Farm Lane. Free. drive.google.com The Dinner Detective True Crime Murder Mystery Dinner Show - Lexington, KY: 6-8:30 p.m. Hilton Lexington Downtown, 369 W. Vine St.. \$88.44. eventvesta.com July Grow Your Perspective: Tour an Organic, Regenerative Farm: 9-11 a.m. Elmwood Stock Farm, 3636 Paris Pike. \$0.00 - \$22.31. grow-your-perspective-july-2026.eventbrite.com Lexington Public Library Cooking Show: 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Central Library, 140 E. Main St.. Free. events.lexpublib.org Live Music @ J. Render's Southern Table & Bar: 7-10 p.m. J. Render's Southern Table & Bar, 3191 Beaumont Centre Circle. www.jrenders.com Pizza at the Peach House: 12-6 p.m. Harkness Edwards Vineyards, 5199 Combs Ferry Rd. Free. www.harknessedwardsvineyards.com Poolside Yoga: 9-10 a.m. Marriott Lexington Griffin Gate Golf Resort & Spa, 1800 Newtown Pike. \$75.00. na.globalspa.marriott.com Reiki Level II Class with Sandy McManus in the studio: 1-4 p.m. Lexington Salt Cave & Wellness, 309 N. Ashland Ave, Suite 180. \$250.00. lexsaltcave.as.me Tales from the Oregon Coast, an exhibit of new paintings by John Lackey: 5-8 p.m. Luigart Gallery, 110 Luigart Court. Free. www.homegrownpress.com Telford YMCA/Soccer Stars: 10:30 a.m.Telford YMCA, 1110 E. Main street. www.facebook.com
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