

REGAN
COMMUNICATIONS
GROUP

Jewish Journal

August 31, 2023

UVPM: 6,240

[Link](#)

Read all about it: Salem Literary Festival coming Sept. 5-10



Jenna Blum/JANNA GIACOPPO and Hank Phillippi Ryan>IDEN FORD

SALEM – Fans of the Jewish Community Center of the North Shore's Jewish Book Month speaker series will be thrilled to learn that two favorite authors, Jenna Blum and Hank Phillippi Ryan, will appear at the upcoming Salem Literary Festival.

Presented by The Salem Athenaeum, the Salem Lit Fest will run in virtual and in-person format from Sept. 5 through Sept. 10 with a host of events that range from writing workshops and moderated author panels to a puppet show and a Spanish/English bilingual community read.

On Saturday, Sept. 9, Hank Phillippi Ryan fans will have the opportunity to hear her moderate an author discussion titled, “Crime Time: Secrets of Suspense.” The in-person event starts at 4 p.m. at the Community Life Center.

An on-air investigative reporter for Boston’s WHDH-TV who has won 37 Emmy Awards, Ryan is also the USA Today bestselling author of 15 psychological thrillers, winning the most prestigious awards in the genre: five Agathas, five Anthonys, and the coveted Mary Clark Higgins Award.

Of growing up as one of the only Jewish kids in rural Indiana more than 55 years ago, Ryan said, “I didn’t know it was strange until it was strange.” At that time, she ascribed her lack of friends, dates, and invitations to garden variety unpopularity. She remembers wondering what she had done wrong until her mother explained that behaviors she took for granted – celebrating Jewish holidays, attending temple, observing Passover – marked her as “different.” Her high school class voted her “Most Individual.”

Ryan always loved reading, and was especially drawn to Nancy Drew books, Sherlock Holmes short stories, Dorothy Sayers, and Agatha Christie. “I fell in love with storytelling, and the architecture of a mystery,” she said. That love blossomed into her first mystery novel, the Agatha Award-winning “Prime Time,” which she wrote in 2007 after she “simply had a good idea” while working at Channel 7 on what was otherwise an ordinary day. Finishing writing that book was encouraging evidence she could succeed as a writer.

Ryan crafts her books with her readers in mind, wanting them to be unable to resist finding out what happens next. She creates compelling characters, an important problem that needs to be solved, life-changing secrets and stakes, and an ending that gets justice and changes the world a little.

“The big key of suspense is to have readers care about what happens,” she said. Her fast-paced thrillers weave intricate plots, but also tackle thought-provoking themes like female empowerment and the power that persuasive words in the wrong hands can have to devastatingly change a person’s life.

Ryan, 72, considers herself the poster child for undertaking new pursuits at midlife and urges others to consider following suit. “I’m proof, as I sit here writing my 16th book, that it’s never too late to follow your dreams,” she said. ☺