DeKalb, IL – Kazoo Books, an independent bookstore in Kalamazoo, Michigan, invited Switchgrass Books, the fiction imprint of Northern Illinois University Press, to participate in a publishing discussion for local authors entitled “You’ve Written a Book—Now What?” The event took place at the Portage Public Library on March 3, 2010 and drew over 80 local authors and potential authors.

Director of Switchgrass Books J. Alex Schwartz spoke to authors about the publishing process: what an editor looks for in a submission, how to write an appropriate proposal letter, what to expect from a publishing contract, etc. “I love to talk about publishing and was excited to offer advice to local authors who wanted to learn how to polish their manuscripts, submit them to a publisher, and reach the goal of a signed contract,” Schwartz commented.

Also participating in the event was Donald Lystra, who published his debut novel Season of Water and Ice with Switchgrass Books in 2009. Lystra discussed his experience as a first-time author and helped the attendees understand what to expect from a publisher. Lystra said, “Though I had published short stories, I learned that maneuvering in the world of publishing where a novel is concerned is much different. The process can be challenging but rewarding, and I enjoyed sharing this with other authors.”

Schwartz expects to receive many manuscript submissions as a result of the event. Switchgrass Books published its first two novels in October 2009 and will be publishing two more novels this spring. For more information about Switchgrass Books, please visit www.switchgrass.niu.edu.