



# THE OWL'S HOOT

Official Newsletter of  
The Ozarks Writers League 501(c)(3)  
[ozarkswritersleague.com](http://ozarkswritersleague.com)  
[ozarkwriters@gmail.com](mailto:ozarkwriters@gmail.com)

Newsletter Editor: Kimberly Pennell ([Kimberly@Pen-L.com](mailto:Kimberly@Pen-L.com))

**SPECIAL  
CONFERENCE  
AND CONTEST  
EDITION!**

## **THIS WEEKEND! April 22–23 Live & In Person!** **OWL goes LIVE again!**

### **Tex Thompson: Juice-Box Hero: Squeezing Plot from Character**



They say there are only six plots. Maybe seven. But there are a million characters—and a great one can make an author's career. If you have an AMAZING character (or ten), but are struggling to sustain their storylines—or if your intricate, masterfully-crafted plot feels a bit flat on personality—have no fear. Come and discover how to distill a story that readers will remember from characters they'll never forget. Bring your enthusiasm and all your burning questions!

Arianne “Tex” Thompson is a literary locksmith, egregiously enthusiastic educator, and professional ruckus-raiser. She is the author of *Children of the Drought*, an internationally-published epic fantasy Western series from Solaris, as well as ‘chief instigator’ of WORD—Writers Organizations 'Round Dallas. Now she's blazing a trail through conferences, workshops, and conventions around the country—as an endlessly energetic, catastrophically cheerful one-woman stampede. Find her online at [thetexfiles.com](http://thetexfiles.com) and [wordwriters.org](http://wordwriters.org)!

### **Heather Burch: Being A Bestseller: Are You Ready?**

In a candid discussion about what it takes to write a bestselling novel and what it takes to be a bestselling author, Heather takes you through her journey while giving advice to those hoping to hit bestseller status. Included in the discussion, you'll learn keys to writing a **bestselling novel**—what are the magical ingredients? Why do some books have mass appeal, far beyond their particular genre, and how can authors apply those keys to their own writing?

Being a **bestselling author** means—in many ways—your life is no longer your own. Are you ready for the pressure, the accolades, the financial boom, and the failures? Yes, failures. As the stakes rise for an author, constant life adjustments must be made. Heather plans to give you tips and tricks to stay balanced while seizing your dream. You too can be a bestseller. But it takes guts, humility, and mettle. Her hope is to help position you for success.

Bestselling author Heather Burch has sold over half a million books worldwide. She splits her writing time between upmarket women's fiction novels and angsty teen urban fantasy. Heather has spoken at writers' conference around the country and has served as conference coordinator and vice president of one of the many writers' organizations she's a part of. Her writing career spans over a decade. Heather once held the #1 bestseller spot on Amazon for all fiction. Her novel *One Lavender Ribbon* was one of the top 100 bestselling books for the year on Amazon.

She has been featured in *USA Today*, *Booklist Magazine*, *Publisher's Weekly*, *Romantic Times*, *Woman's World*, and was a celebrity guest on Princess Cruise Lines. Her books are translated into a dozen languages. She lives to tell unforgettable stories and to meet unforgettable people. Learn more about Heather, [www.heatherburchbooks.com](http://www.heatherburchbooks.com)



## **Creative Book Marketing Ideas for Writers**



You've spent countless hours writing and editing your book. Maybe you are even holding the finished product in your hand.

Congratulations!

*Now what?*

We writers love to write, don't we? But the marketing part of being an author often leaves us scratching our heads.

The truth is in today's competitive market, a well-written book is not always enough to attract readers.

No matter where you are in your writing process, Talya's fresh and creative ideas will help lessen the intimidation of book marketing. In this conference session, she will discuss her proven marketing strategies, resulting in authentic reader connection. Topics will include fresh

ways to make social media work for you, tips on how to get early reviews, and clever book launch ideas.

You've put your heart and soul into writing. Now put that energy into book marketing.

Talya's two novels—*The Accidental Salvation of Gracie Lee* and *Gene, Everywhere*—have won multiple books awards from Reader's Favorite International and National Indie Excellence. Her short stories and essays have been published in *Arkansas Review*, *Writer's Digest*, and *Fourth River Literary Journal* and in several online publications, including *Deep South Magazine* and Farm Bureau's *Front Porch Magazine*. As both an Arkansas Master Naturalist and Arkansas Master Gardener, her writing often reflects the inspiration she draws from nature.

Talya, a former commercial lender in Dallas, Texas, traded loan reviews for book reviews ten years ago (and she hasn't looked back). She lives in Fayetteville, Arkansas, with her husband and two miniature schnauzers. When she isn't writing, gardening, or walking the dogs, she can be found poking around in bookstores. Talya is a voracious reader and a self-professed homebody who raises butterflies on her back porch during the summer. Her third book, *Bernice Runs Away* (fictional, about late-in-life second chances), will be available in 2022.

Visit [Talya's website](#) to learn more about her books. Visit [her blog](#) to learn all sorts of valuable and entertaining information about gardening, farming, food, and finding beauty in the ordinary.

**Michael Fontana**

## **Finding A Home For Your Work: Researching Journals And Other Publishers**

You've completed writing and revision of your work. Now what? This presentation will look at several online resources designed to match your masterpiece with the right journal, magazine, literary agent, or publishing house. It will include tips on how to access and navigate each site, as well as how to figure out which of the many publishing options is right for you. With plenty of time for questions and answers, it's suitable for writers just beginning their journey as well as more seasoned ones in search of publishing glory.

Michael Fontana was born and raised in Columbus, Ohio and has been a resident of Arkansas since 2005. Awarded a B.A. in English from Charter Oak College of Connecticut and M.A. in English from Miami University of Ohio, he has taught writing courses at Miami as well as at Northwest Arkansas Community College. Fontana spent more than a decade as an activist for the homeless and people living with mental illness, developing successful creative projects for both groups. Fontana is the author of two published novels, *Sleeping with Gods* (Apodis Publishing, 2010) and *The Sacred Machine* (Dancing with Bear Publishing, 2012), as well as a chapbook of spiritual reflections, *Dozen Meditations* (The Medulla Review Publishing, 2016). Fontana has published more than 80 short stories in journals and magazines, along with a number of poems and nonfiction works. Support has come through an Ohio Arts Council Individual Artist Fellowship in Nonfiction in 1995 and, more recently, an Arkansas Arts Council Sally A. Williams Artist Fund Grant and a Speculative Literature Foundation Older Writers Grant, both in 2015.

Fontana earned a B.A. in English from Charter Oak College and M.A. from Miami University. A teacher of writing courses at Miami and Northwest Arkansas Community College, Fontana also worked as a homeless and mental health activist, developing creative projects for both groups. Fontana is the author of two novels and a chapbook, and has published short stories, poems and nonfiction. Awarded an Ohio Arts Council Individual Artist Fellowship in Nonfiction, an Arkansas Arts Council Sally A. Williams Artist Fund Grant, and a Speculative Literature Foundation Older Writers Grant. Fontana lives in beautiful Bella Vista, Arkansas.



## Sean Golden

### Adverbs, Adjectives, and Dialog Tags: The Do's, Don'ts, and Don't Worries



There are a lot of universal truths in the world. I am a big fan of Theodore Sturgeon's Law. If you're not familiar with that, it goes like this: "Ninety percent of everything is crap." And that goes for the advice you will find about writing. Writing stories may be an endeavor that only a small percentage of humans can perform well, but it still suffers from the common human malady of herd mentality, especially when it comes to advice. Some of the most common advice given these days is that adverbs and adjectives are bad. Don't use them.

This advice would be news to most of the greatest writers of all time, including J.R.R. Tolkien, Herman Melville, Mark Twain, and John Steinbeck. As in most things, this advice is given because of the grain of truth contained in the shell of fashion. It would be better to say "be concise, choose adverbs and adjectives judiciously." A sentence that illustrates its own wisdom.

Dialog tags have similar admonitions. Writers are told that "they said," "she said," or "he said" are ignored by the reader, so they can and should be used with impunity. And again, this is advice that is generally good, but can stifle creativity and color in your writing.

So let's talk about each of these, and go over some guidelines about when you should follow this advice, and when you should ignore it.

I've wanted to write and publish stories my entire life. After graduating college I spent thirty-plus years in various IT positions in companies ranging from small entrepreneurial to Fortune 500 globe-spanning. In 2015, I decided to self-publish my first novel, *Warrior*, the first of the War Chronicles trilogy. That story managed to get some traction on Amazon.com, and I picked up an audio book publisher who put the trilogy on Audible, where it sold reasonably well. Since then I've written additional novels and short stories. I got my Science Fiction Writers of America card in 2016 and I am still a member. My almost-done WIP has been described as "Lord of the Rings meets *The Expanse*." It should be ready for publishing in a few weeks.



### FRIDAY, APRIL 22: 7 PM to ... later

Open mic, live music, and a writer-type game in the Mimosa room. Bring your beverage of choice.

### SATURDAY, APRIL 23 in the Mimosa Room

8:00–8:45 AM	Art and Photography Contest entries due by 8:45 AM	
9:15 AM	Welcome, announcements	
9:30 AM	<b>Talya Tate Boerner</b>	<i>Creative Marketing Ideas for the Author</i>
10:20 AM	Break	
10:30 AM	<b>Sean Golden</b>	<i>Adverbs, Adjectives, and Dialog Tags: The Do's, Don'ts, and Don't Worries</i>
11:30 AM	Lunch, social time	
12:50 PM	Writing contest kickoff, door prizes, and raffle	
1:00 PM	<b>Tex Thompson</b>	<i>Juice-Box Hero: Squeezing Plot From Character</i>
1:50 PM	Break	
2:00 PM	<b>Michael Fontana</b>	<i>Finding a Home for Your Work: Researching Journals and Other Publishers</i>
2:50 PM	Break	
3:00 PM	<b>Heather Burch</b>	<i>Being a Bestseller. Are You Ready?</i>
3:50 PM	Wrap-up	

Thanks for joining in the fun!

# ANNUAL ART & PHOTOGRAPHY SHOW

## APRIL 23, 2022

Contest Chair: Rochelle Wisoff-Fields

### **RULES FOR ALL ART & PHOTO CONTEST CATEGORIES:**

- 1) You must be a member of Ozarks Writers League to enter any category. **Entry fee is \$15.00 and includes entry of as many pieces as Participant would like to enter, in any or all of three categories listed below. Entry fee may be paid the morning of the contest. Make checks to Ozark Writers League.**
- 2) Each entry must have a 3x5 index card attached with a paperclip—DO NOT GLUE OR TAPE, or the entry will be disqualified. The index card should include the following:
  - Name
  - Address
  - Phone number
  - Email address
- 3) Names must not appear anywhere on any piece of art or photography entered, except on the index card which is attached with a paperclip.
- 4) All entries must be delivered to the Registration Desk at the April 23 conference at the Barrington Hotel between 8:00 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.

***Entries may be disqualified for not following the above rules.***

- 5) Participants may enter as many pieces of art or photography as they'd like, in any or all of three categories: Photography, Art and Alternative Art.
- 6) Qualified judges will conduct blind judging. Judges shall not enter the contests they judge. Decisions are final.
- 7) At the end of the meeting, all entries must be retrieved by the member before leaving. **OWL is not responsible for anything left at the close of the day.**
- 8) Ribbons and cash prizes will be given for First, Second and Third Place in each of the following three categories: Photography, 2-Dimensional Art and Alternative Art.
- 9) A "Best of Show" ribbon and cash prize will also be awarded, which is the best of the First-Place winners in the three categories.

### **CATEGORY 1: Photography**

All photos entered must be 5x7 or 8x10 and must be matted.

### **CATEGORY 2: 2-Dimensional Art**

Includes watercolor, oil, pastels, pencil, acrylic, or mixed media. Artwork must be matted and may be any theme.

### **CATEGORY 3: Alternative Art**

Includes any and all other kinds of art: weaving, sewing, pottery, quilting, woodwork, crafts, etc. Follow rules above for placing owner's information on the item, as far as possible, however, information must NOT be visible to the judges.

**Questions? Email Rochelle:**  
OWLartcontest (AT) gmail.com



# 2022 OWL Adult Writing Contest Rules and Categories

Join us for another exciting year of award-winning writing. OWL members may enter as many of the adult categories as they wish for a flat fee of only \$15! -Not a member yet? You are most welcome to join and submit your entry fee at the same time by check for \$45 or via the PayPal button.

## Gratitude and Appreciation

First things first: We sincerely thank all our contest sponsors. Every category you see is here because a generous person or group donated the prize money. There would be no writing contests without YOU! Sponsors are listed with their categories.

### **SUBMISSION DEADLINES:**

**Best Book of 2021 (fiction and nonfiction) – Deadline is August 1, 2022**  
**Everything else – August 31, 2022**

## What You Get for Your \$15 Contest Entry Fee:

1. A chance at a cash prize!
2. You may enter as many categories as you like, making it much more affordable than others that charge you per category or include an expensive three-figure conference!
3. You get motivation to WRITE.
4. The categories and themes give you some guidance, so you're not staring clueless at a blank screen.
5. You can use your entries in other contests or submit for publication afterwards.
6. Since we are a regional group and not a national one, your odds of winning something are higher!
7. Winning any prize, even an honorable mention, empowers you to use the brag-worthy accolade of "award-winning author" and a credit to add to your portfolio.

## How to pay the contest entry fee:

You may pay online or via check.

**Online:** Use our handy PayPal button. Please note: There is a \$1 charge to cover the PayPal processing fees.

**Check:** Send \$15 if you're a member, or \$45 to include membership and contest fee (\$30 for student membership plus entry) to:

### **OWL Contests**

Veda Boyd Jones  
505 W. 34<sup>th</sup>  
Joplin, MO 64804

Please note: This address is ONLY for the contest/membership fee. Contest entries sent to this address will be disqualified.

# Writing Contest RULES

## General Guidelines

- No gratuitous or graphic violence or sex. Let's keep it clean.
- Only one entry per category is allowed.
- You may only enter a manuscript in ONE category.
- EVERY piece needs a title, including haiku.
- All entries must abide by the rules, including manuscript and submission expectations. Any deviation, such as a wrong font or font size, lack of a title, or missing author information, will result in disqualification of that piece.
- Physical entries (Best Book/Crawford) must be mailed to the contest coordinator. Contest entries mailed to the treasurer or anyone else in OWL will be disqualified.
- All entries, with the obvious exception of best published book, must be UNPUBLISHED at the time of submission, and be the original work of the writer. (If your entry has appeared in any written form, such as in a blog, website (like Wattpad), or other electronic outlet, it is considered published and ineligible for entry in any OWL contest.)
- Best Fiction and Best Nonfiction Book of 2021 is just that. Any book with a publication date other than 2021 is disqualified.
- Both Best Book categories require an ISBN, or they will be disqualified.
- Submit all entries except Best Fiction Book, Best Nonfiction Book, and/or Crawford Poetry Prize categories via email to [adult.writing@ozarkswritersleague.com](mailto:adult.writing@ozarkswritersleague.com) (adult "dot" writing "at" ozarks writers league "dot" com.) See Special Exceptions for those categories that differ.
- Payment of contest entry fee will be verified by the Contest Facilitator. No entry fee, no entry.
- Once published at the opening of the contest period, these rules are fixed and final.

## Manuscript Formatting Guidelines

- Improperly formatted manuscripts will be disqualified. You should know your word processor's settings. If you do not understand how to set your margins, change your font to the standard, add a header, or set the line spacing to double, look it up and get it right before submission.
- TITLE: For the love of all things writerly, GIVE YOUR PIECE A TITLE!
- WORD COUNT: Word **Limit** is just that. The title does not count toward your word count.
- FILE TYPE: All files EXCEPT for Best Book (fiction or nonfiction) must be in MS Word (.doc or .docs) format.
- TITLE LOCATIONS: The title must appear in 3 places: the filename, the header, AND on the first page of your submission. (Exception: Published Books)
- STANDARD FORMATTING: Use standard submission format and rules: Times New Roman, 12-point, double-spaced (except for poetry), and 1" margins.
- FIRST LINE: Put the contest ID and word count flush left on the first line. Example: N2 Memoir, 1200 words. Categories with no word count designation, such as haiku, poetry, and first page of a WIP, do not need a word count but still need the proper category designation.
- HEADER: Your page should have a header that includes Category ID & story title on the left and page number on the right. Exceptions: Haiku, Crawford Poetry, and Best first Page. DO NOT include your name.
- EBOOKS: Ebook entry for Best Fiction Book and/or Best Nonfiction Book must be attached to an email as either .PDF, .doc, .docx, .mobi or .epub formats. Full author information must be in the body of the email.
- ATTACHED FILES: The attached submission file(s) must have NO author identification details, but each MUST have the contest identifier (Like B1) and a TITLE. This means that in the submissions (file or files you attach), nothing identifying the author may appear. The only exceptions are Best Nonfiction and Best Fiction Book, which obviously have the author's name printed in it.

## Submitting ELECTRONIC Entries:

1. The **BODY** of your email must have FULL AUTHOR CONTACT Information and SUBMISSION INFORMATION. That means:

- Author Name
- Pseudonym, if applicable
- Mailing Address
- Email
- Phone
- Submission ID, title and word count where applicable

### EXAMPLES:

- B1–Best First Page of a Fiction WIP – Title
- N1–Magazine Article – Title, word count

YOUR FILES MUST INCLUDE THE **TITLE IN THE FILENAME**. Please label each **file** as follows: Contest Designation (like N1) – Title,

EXAMPLE filename: B1 – Best Book Ever Written

2. Suggestion for your sanity's sake: Put all your contest files into a folder on your computer and write the file names as follows: Contest ID, title. Example: "P1-MountainPoem."
3. Email digital entries to [adult.writing@ozarkswritersleague.com](mailto:adult.writing@ozarkswritersleague.com) (adult "dot" writing "at" ozarks writers league "dot" com)

## Special Exceptions: Crawford Poetry Prize and the two Best Book Categories

- For **Crawford Prize**, send TWO (2) copies of your titled poem and ONE (1) cover page with the title and full author contact information to the contest coordinator.
- For hard copies of your **Best Fiction Book and/or Best Nonfiction Book entries**: Submit ONE (1) copy of your print book published in calendar year 2021 along with a cover page containing all author information **AND THE BOOK TITLE** as detailed below. Do not suggest on your submission sheet that "the book has all the information you need," because no, it does not. Entry sheets that do not list the book title along with full author information are disqualified.
- DO NOT mail contest entry fee checks to the contest coordinator.
- MAIL your Crawford Poetry Prize &/or Best Book Award Entries to the contest coordinator. We need books by August 1, because the mail has been slow lately. Besides, your book was already published, so you aren't pushing at the last minute to produce a book that was published last year.

### Mail to:

Bonnie Tesh  
3511 S. Moffet Ave  
Joplin, MO 64804

## Once again: SUBMISSION DEADLINES:

**Best Book (both): August 1, 2021**

**Everything else: August 31, 2021**

## **The Rest of the Fine Print:**

- You must be an OWL member to enter the contest. You may pay the \$30 membership dues plus \$15 contest entry fee for a total of \$45 in order to participate. Your membership includes information-packed conferences plus other benefits.
- Neither OWL nor the Contest Coordinator is responsible for misdirected or lost entries. You will receive an email to confirm receipt.
- **DISQUALIFICATION:** Late entries or those breaking any rule are disqualified.
- No manuscripts will be returned, and all will be deleted/destroyed after judging is final. Those entering Best Fiction end/or Best Nonfiction Book Award may have it returned if a mailer AND sufficient postage is sent with the entry. Otherwise, they will be donated.
- Qualified judges will conduct blind judging.
- Judges and sponsors, if OWL members, may not enter the category they judge or sponsor, but may enter other categories.
- Even if we receive three or fewer entries in a category, those will still be judged and awarded prizes.
- First Place winners may not enter that manuscript in any subsequent OWL writing contest.

## **2022 Adult Writing Contest Categories**

NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, prizes are a certificate of achievement plus **1<sup>st</sup> \$50, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$30, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$20**. Honorable Mentions, if granted, receive a certificate.

### **S1 Humorous Short Piece**

Go Ahead. Make me laugh but do it fast!

**Limit** 3,000 words

**Sponsor:** Russell Gayer

### **S2 Flash Fiction Story - EXACTLY 100 Words**

Tell a complete story with a beginning, middle, and end inspired by the photo prompt in precisely 100 words.

**Limit:** EXACTLY 100 words.

**Sponsors:** Rochelle Wisoff-Fields and Jan Fields

### **S3 Inspirational Romance Short Story**

Write an inspirational romance, set in any time period, that inspires the reader to be a moral fiber in a weather-worn fabric. Story must have the essentials of a romance, including a HEA (Happily Ever After) ending.

**Limit:** 2,000 words

**Sponsor:** Diane Yates

### **S4 “I didn’t see that coming!” O’Henry Style Story**

Write a story that concludes with a “Wow I didn’t see that coming” ending.

**Limit:** 1,500 words.

**Sponsor:** Bud Hanks

### **S5 Western Short Story**

Write a Western short story with a beginning, middle, and end. Must be set in America, on the frontier before 1900.

**Limit** 3,000 words

**Sponsor:** Duke Pennell



### **S6 “Write the Old Stuff” Historical Fiction**

Write a historical tale set before 1970 with an ordinary person (your fictionalized character) reacting to a historical event or encountering a well-known person from that time period. Need an example? A little girl encounters Sitting Bull at Wild Bill Hickock’s Wild West Show or a boy and his dog watch tea thrown into Boston Harbor. Maybe watching TV with your grandfather and seeing Neil Armstrong walk on the moon. Tell us how your character reacts. Give us a sense of the time period, the event, and your character. Let your imagination run free.

**Limit** 2,000 words.

**Sponsor:** Nancy Hartney

### **S7 A Western Wedding. In memory of Jeanie Horn**

Write an RSVP letter explaining why the recipient can’t attend an upcoming Western wedding. It can be serious, sad, humorous, or downright pitiful, but it must include these four words: huckleberry, swallow, current, and fire.

**Limit:** 1,000 words.

**Sponsors:** Richard and Bonnie Tesh

**Prizes:** 1<sup>st</sup> \$25, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$15, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$10

### **S8 Humorous Paranormal Short Story**

Tell a funny tale about a paranormal investigation. It might be spooky or chilling as well, but it had better make me laugh out loud.

**Limit:** 2500 words.

**Sponsor:** Ronda Del Boccio

### **S9 Romantic Adventure Short Story**

Write a story about finding unexpected romance on a planned adventure, whether it’s fishing on a local pond or skiing in the Swiss Alps. There’s a whole world out there. Have fun.

**Limit:** 2000 words

**Sponsor:** Anonymous

### **S10 Western Faction Short Story**

Write a tale about the Old West that is 50% fact and 50% fiction. It can be about a person, place, thing, or incident. Tell the story of, **or as**, an actual Old West character, a minor character, or see an incident through the eyes of your fictitious protagonist.

**Limit:** 1,500 words

**Sponsor:** Bud Hanks.

### **S11 Juvenile Short Story—Fiction.**

A fictional story targeted toward young readers ages 9 – 12. The subject matter may be informative but should also be entertaining and feature themes of interest to youth.

**Limit:** 1500 words

**Sponsor:** Anonymous

### **N1 Memoir & Creative Nonfiction**

In memory of Black & Kiddo. An interesting true story or essay of something you have experienced or witnessed.

**LIMIT:** 3,000 words.

**Sponsor:** Brenda Black

### **N2 Travel Article**

Take me somewhere I’ve never been or make me want to go back. What is unique and appealing about this place or spot?

**Limit:** 1,200 words. No photographs, please.

**Sponsor:** Larry Wood.

**Prizes:** 1<sup>st</sup> \$25, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$15, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$10

### **N3 Humorous Anecdote Prize**

“This Really Happened to Me” Humorous Anecdote: Write an amusing story about something that actually happened to you.

Anecdote (definition): a short account of a particular incident or event, especially of an interesting or amusing nature.

**Limit:** 300 words

**Sponsor:** John “Doc” Crawford and Ronda Del Boccio

**Prizes:** 1<sup>st</sup> \$25, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$15, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$10, 3 HMs \$5

### **N4 Hometown Newspaper Column**

Write a nostalgic article about the Ozarks that is suitable for a newspaper column. The article should have a headline (title) and give your column a name.

**Limit:** 500 – 1,000 words.

**Sponsor:** Lonnie Whitaker

**Prizes:** 1<sup>st</sup> \$25, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$15, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$10

### **N5 Creative Nonfiction: My Favorite Hobby**

Through your prose, make me want to take up your hobby, whether it’s golf, gardening, cooking, sewing, or tinkering on car engines. Make me see it, feel it, taste it, smell it, or hear it, whatever is appropriate to your hobby.

**Limit:** 1,000 words

**Sponsor:** Linda Apple

**Prizes:** 1<sup>st</sup> \$25, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$15, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$10

### **N6 Ozarks History Article**

Write an article about an interesting person, place, or event in the history of the Ozarks region.

No photographs, please.

**Limit:** 1,200 words

**Sponsor:** Larry Wood

**Prizes:** 1<sup>st</sup> \$25, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$15, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$10

### **P1 Crawford Poetry Prize**

The theme is Everyday Miracles. Things we take for granted. This will be lyric (rhymed) form.

**Limit:** 24 lines.

**Sponsor:** John “Doc” Crawford

**Prizes:** 1<sup>st</sup> \$100, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$50, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$25, 1<sup>st</sup> HM \$15, 2<sup>nd</sup> HM \$10, 3<sup>rd</sup> HM \$5

### **P2 Haiku**

Set a vivid scene while making me feel something. In five-seven-five.

**Limit:** 17 syllables

**Sponsor:** Jan Morrill-Vanek

**Prizes:** 1<sup>st</sup> \$25, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$15, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$10

### **B1 Best First Page of a Fiction Book in Progress**

Share the first page of your WIP (work in progress) and be sure to pull us into your story. You can start near the top of the page. Be sure to give the book a title.

**Limit:** 1 page

**Sponsors:** Prose Squad Critique Group (Margarite Stever, April Brock, Bonnie Tesh, Darrell Lacy)

**Prizes:** 1<sup>st</sup> \$25, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$15, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$10

**B2 Best Published Fiction Book of 2021**

Best fictional book in hardcover, paperback or e-book published during the calendar year of 2020 (book must show a copyright date of 2021 and have an ISBN).

**Sponsor:** Billie Holladay Skelley.

**1 prize** of \$100

**B3 Best Published Nonfiction Book of 2021**

Best nonfiction book in hardcover, paperback or ebook published during the calendar year of 2021 (book must show a copyright date of 2021 and have an ISBN).

**Sponsor:** Veda Boyd-Jones

**1 prize** of \$100

**Questions?**

First, read carefully. Everything you need is in here. If you can't find it, email  
[adult.writing \(AT\) ozarkswritersleague.com](mailto:adult.writing(AT)ozarkswritersleague.com)

## OWL MEMBER SPOTLIGHT!

### DIANA WEST



Diana has served as OWL vice-president and in many other essential capacities over the years. We are fortunate to have her as a member!

**Share something interesting or unusual about yourself:**

I'm a storyteller, which I perceive as an extension of my writing. I have developed several of my non-fiction

articles into storytelling events. One is "The Honey War," which I perform in period dress for fourth-graders in who are studying Missouri history.

**Where do you live?** In Duenweg, Missouri, a suburb of Joplin.

**What do you write?** Travel, historical, and feature articles about quirky or unusual people, places or events.

**What authors influenced you?** Margaret Truman, who can explain a complicated part of government in a few sentences. Jane Austin, who could write an entire book about everyday occurrences and make the reader care about the characters. Truman Capote's books and short stories had such beautiful prose.

**When did you start writing?** In school I penned poetry. I once had a teacher who gave me an F because he thought I had copied the poem. He changed it to an A when he realized I had written it. In college, I majored in English with a minor in journalism. It wasn't until I attended my first Joplin Writers' Guild meeting in the spring of 1981 that I heard about freelance writing. I sold my first article to *Ozarks Region Healthcare* in Springfield for \$30! Since then, I have had more than 400 articles published in local, regional, national, and foreign markets.

**Do you have a day job or a past job?** Early on, I worked as Public Affairs Director for the Economic Security Corporation, a Community Action Agency, promoting anti-poverty programs in a four-county area. I worked for the State of Missouri Family Support Division as a caseworker for 12 years and then 6 ½ later. In the interim, I worked 17 years for FEMA as a Disaster Assistance Employee. I worked on-call there and was subject to travel to all 50 states and U.S. territories with 24-hour notice. I saw America at its worst with that job, where I guided disaster survivors through the recovery process. I presently work part-time as a simulated patient at Kansas City University of Medicine & Biosciences in Joplin. I think it is important for a writer to keep in contact with the real world. Writing is such a solitary endeavor, I need that.

**Do you have any hobbies or interests aside from writing?** Cooking, reading, crafts.

**When did you join OWL?** Late 1980s.

**Do you belong to other writer's organizations?** Joplin Writers' Guild

**Finally, what do you enjoy most about OWL?** So many diverse writers to learn from.

**P.S.** In 2019, multi-talented Diana won Best of Show in our art contest and First Place in Photography.



## Know your OWL history?

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfGkejxhsgs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfGkejxhsgs)

## LAST CHANCE 4 TIX !!! Friday, Oct. 22 at 9 pm

**Raffle drawing will be held after lunch  
on Saturday of the conference.**

### Prizes include:

- A one-year Scrivener subscription
- \$50 cash
- \$50 Red Lobster gift card
- \$50 Darden Restaurants gift card good at Olive Garden, Longhorn Steakhouse,
- Cheddars, Yard House, Bahama Breeze, and Seasons 52
- \$50 Walmart gift card (Two will win)
- \$50 Target gift card
- Critique of up to 3000 word by the Prose Squad
- Critique of up to 3000 words by Duke Pennell
- A memory book (\$60 value)
- Set of four Dick and Jane books (\$40 value)
- Autographed hardcover book of poetry: *Jimmy Stewart and His Poems* (1989) by Jimmy Stewart (Two will win)



## KUDOS!

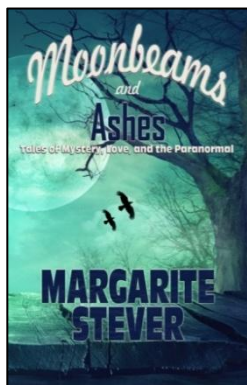
**Cindy McIntyre** won a bronze Independent Publisher eBook Award for her YA novel, *Love at the Center of Grief*.

**John W “Doc” Crawford** placed in the Utah State Poetry Society contest of the NFSPS Convention in June; won 1st in the On-the-Spot poetry contest of the Arkansas Writers conference in June; and his 5th book of poetry was published by Austin Macauley Publishing (NY and London): *Just Off Highway 71: Memories in Lyric*. (Due to Covid-19, there was a year’s delay in publication.)

**Billie Holladay Skelley** has a story in the recent *Chicken Soup for the Soul: My Clever, Curious, Caring Cat*. Purchase of this book helps to support American Humane’s work to create a better life for cats everywhere.



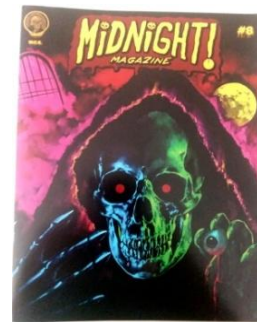
**Ronda Del Boccio** has been a featured author at SpoFest and Uncloistered Poetry events alongside writers and poets, including several poet laureates, from across the country. She won several awards for her poetry, short stories, nonfiction, memoir and novels, including first prize for her memoir, “Believing in Thunder” and her unpublished novel, *Deadly Mist*.



**Just Published:** *Moonbeams and Ashes: Tales of Mystery, Love, and the Paranormal* is a collection of fifteen short stories from the imagination of **Margarite Stever**. These tales take you on a rollercoaster ride of emotion from laughing out loud to spine-tingling chills. Experience the unbreakable bonds of family love to bitter-sweet poignancy that will leave you brushing away a tear.

**Diana West** has the cover story about the 200th anniversary of the Santa Fe Trail in the October issue of *Wild West* magazine. It’s an 8-page spread that includes three sidebars. In that same issue she also wrote a two-page piece about the Indian perspective and involvement on the trail. Also in the October *Wild West*, she had a piece in the Roundup section about Michael Martin Murphey who has been a spokesperson for the 200th anniversary of the Santa Fe Trail.

**Michael Koch** has a short story in *Midnight! Magazine* #8. His article is a biographical study entitled: “Grant Williams: Forgotten Sci-fi/Horror Star.”



**Nancy Hartney** recently published “Springbrook Farm: The Old White Farmhouse on the Prairie,” in the Washington County (AR) Historical Journal, *Flashback*. The Farmhouse, nestled on the Washington Regional Hospital campus, is a testament to a marriage between old and new, historical preservation and modern use. See the full article in the Fall issue.



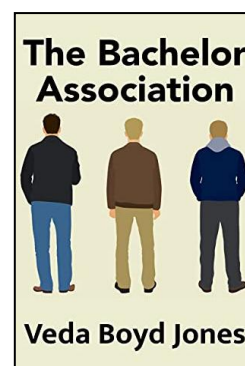
**S.V. Farnsworth’s** new book *Hard Start: Mars Intrigue*, had its worldwide release on Oct. 10. She served as the editor for the award-winning anthology *Seasons of the Four States*.

Sign up for her newsletter at [www.svfarnsworthauthor.com/newsletter](http://www.svfarnsworthauthor.com/newsletter).

*Solving Peculiar Crimes* Kirkus Review: “Prolific Arkansas author

**Radine Trees Nehring’s** Some-thing to Die For series continues with this latest installment featuring married sleuths Carrie McCrite and police detective Henry King. They solve a series of confounding mysteries that play out in a variety of settings with a creatively drawn cast of supporting characters. Overall, this is a splendid, G-rated, collection of capers established and resolved with seamless ease by employing intelligence, intuition, and cunning sure to appeal to mystery fans.”

**Veda Boyd Jones’** annual Christmas romance novella is available on Amazon as an ebook. This year’s title is *The Bachelor Association*.



Fiction writing is a strange business when you think about it. You sit down and weave a network of lies to explore deeper truths.

Wally Lamb

— [www.writerswrite.co.za](http://www.writerswrite.co.za)



## A Chance to Win:

### The Power of Entering Writing Contests

By Ronda Del Boccio, OWL Vice President and Writing Contest Coordinator

Although the deadline for our contest has passed, entering contests is always a good idea, and there are plenty out there for you. Here's what you gain by entering, whether you win or not:

1. A chance to make money writing. Perhaps you've noticed that, for most writers, it isn't that easy getting paid for your work. Contests give you that opportunity.
2. Motivation: Do you need a prompt or a reason to write? Contests give you that.
3. Structure and freedom: Contest categories give you some structure and a lot of freedom to be your creative self.
4. Multiple Entries: with OWL contests, as long as your entry never took first prize in any of our competitions, you may enter it in future contests. Beyond OWL, you can take those same pieces and enter them elsewhere.
5. Publication: Once you've entered a few contests, and perhaps won a few prizes, you might consider submitting to an anthology, periodical, or other venue for publication.
6. Bragging rights: Winning any prize, even an honorable mention, empowers you to use the brag-worthy accolade of "award-winning author" and a credit to add to your portfolio.

#### Places to look for contests

- Non-writing-organization contests: Perhaps you're part of a fan or service club, fraternal organization, or hobby enthusiast group that offers a writing contest.
- Local: perhaps there is a group in your local area, or one that Springfield Writers Group, for example, offers a seasonal contest for members (who, BTW, do NOT have to live in the Springfield area). Anyone paying the \$10 annual membership is eligible to enter.
- Genre: If you belong to a genre organization, such as Sleuths' Ink for mystery writers, check for contests you can enter.
- Regional: Ozarks Creative Writers and other regional hubs offer contests.
- National: Ready to kick it up a notch? These contests will have more people vying for prize money and can be pricier, but it's all up to you.

#### Contest Cautions

If you choose to enter contests, be aware that not all contests are created equal.

- Some unsavory companies sponsor fake contests and charge "winners" to publish their work. While this may technically give you a writing credit, it comes at a high cost.
- Some contests charge a fee for each category.
- Many larger contests have a high entry fee and a huge amount of competition.

If you weren't sufficiently fired-up in time to enter our competition, perhaps you'll try your pen on another. And get ready for next year, because whoever becomes contest coordinator will line up a great experience for you.

So, dear OWLs, go ye forth and enter contests! It's good for your writing muscles, and potentially, your bank account!

## Congratulations to our 2021 Art & Photography Contest Winners!

#### Photography:

- 1st - Hovering Gulls - Ricky Yates
- 2nd - The Chimp - Joy Keeney
- 3rd - Iced Berries - Joy Keeney

#### Art:

- 1st - Wild Flowers - Rhonda Harvey
- 2nd - Horse - Katie Bennett
- 3rd - Insomnia - Margarite Stever

#### Alternative Art

- 1st - 3D Birthday Card - Ronda Del Boccio
- 2nd - Golden Pot - Margarite Stever
- 3rd - Mythical Equine Journal with Ephemera - Ronda Del Boccio

*You can see the winning art at*  
[www.ozarkswritersleague.com/photo-and-art-contests](http://www.ozarkswritersleague.com/photo-and-art-contests)

## OWL Board Minutes

Are available to members at

[www.OzarksWritersLeague/Minutes](http://www.OzarksWritersLeague/Minutes)



# Spinneret Tracings

By Sandy Jordan

## *Listening*

A writer becomes so submersed in his writing he forgets to “listen,” especially in rewrites and re-vision. There are phrases, descriptions and dialogue we love. We cling to them with the desperation of a drowning person. We must incorporate these gems into our manuscript.

This is where listening is so important. We must separate ourselves from our words. We need to become the reader, the person holding your book in their hands. We need to see through their eyes, hear with their ears. Even though we read with our eyes, the story plays out in our mind, as if we are hearing it and experiencing it much like on a TV screen.

These leftovers often do not translate well. They turn a passage, a paragraph or even a chapter into a jarring, bumpy road. Yes, we love them, they are brilliant insights but they are useless if they don’t merge seamlessly with the surrounding words. There is nothing more jarring than misplaced words. I have read works with chapters that did not fit, paragraphs that confused and transitions that left you hanging off a cliff with no answers to rescue you. The book doesn’t leave you satisfied, the novel or article feels incomplete.

Remove the clanging symbols in your Brahms lullaby, then listen to its flow and enjoy. If the intrusive pieces are real gems, instead of sending them into nothingness, start a new manuscript. You can always use these gems to launch a new manuscript. They are not wasted but like sourdough giving rise to a new manuscript, a piece you might be interested in using.

## **OWL BOARD MEMBERS FOR 2021**

Duke Pennell, president  
Ronda Del Boccio, vice president (outgoing), adult writing contest director (outgoing), social media  
Diane Yates, treasurer (outgoing)  
Summer Farnsworth, secretary (outgoing)  
Bonnie Tesh, membership chair (outgoing)  
Rochelle Wisoff-Fields, art contest director  
Linda Runnebaum, historian  
Ricky Yates, webmaster  
Margarite Stever, fundraising chair (outgoing)  
April Brock, member-at-large (outgoing), youth writing contest chair (remaining)  
Brenda Black, member-at-large (outgoing)  
John Crawford, member-at-large (outgoing)  
Veda Boyd Jones, past president  
Diana West, member-at-large  
Russell Gayer, member-at-large

**Welcome NEW 2022 Board Members!**

## **THANK YOU TO ALL OUR WRITING CONTEST SPONSORS!**

NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, prizes are a certificate of achievement plus 1<sup>st</sup> \$50, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$30, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$20. Honorable Mention, if granted, receives a certificate.

### **Humorous Short Piece**

Russell Gayer

### **Flash Fiction Story**

Rochelle Wisoff-Fields and Jan Fields

### **Inspirational Romance**

Diane Yates

### **“I didn’t see that coming!” O. Henry Style Story**

Bud Hanks

### **Paranormal Western**

Bud Hanks

### **Western Short Story**

Duke Pennell

### **“Write the Old Stuff” Historical Fiction**

Nancy Hartney

### **Memoir & Creative Nonfiction**

Brenda Black

### **Nonfiction Article**

Veda Boyd-Jones

### **Crawford Humorous Anecdote Prize**

John “Doc” Crawford

### **Crawford Poetry Prize**

John “Doc” Crawford

### **Haiku**

Jan Morrill-Vanek

### **Best First Page of a Fiction Book in Progress**

The Prose Squad: April Brock, Bonnie Tesh, Darrell Lacey, and Margarite Stever

### **Best Published Fiction Book of 2020**

Billie Holladay Skelley (1 prize of \$100)

### **Best Published Nonfiction Book of 2020**

Veda Boyd-Jones (1 prize of \$100)



## **Did you and your friends win any of the writing contest categories?**

### **Find out **FRIDAY!** at the 2021 OWLies Writing Contest Awards Ceremony, at 7 pm.**

Our Vice President, Ronda Del Boccio, will host the celebration again this year.

After we hand out the loot and cheer the victorious, Diane Yates hosts our Open Mic.

Next, we can all just hang out and visit,  
Happy OWLer Mixer style!

We’re so excited to get together, even if it has to be on screens again.

# OWL FALL CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Via Zoom

*Members, look for the link in your email!*

**Friday, October 22: Writing Contest Awards, Open Mic, and Social Time**

**7:00 pm – ? pm**

**Saturday, October 23**

**10:00 – 10:15 am**

Announcements, greetings from OWL President Duke Pennell

**10:15 – 11:00 am**

**JC Fields**

The Importance of Writing a Series: (How to Have Long Term Success as an Author)

**11:00 – 11:15 am, 2–2:15 pm, 3–3:15 pm**

Breaks. Get a snack, refresh your beverage, visit with other attendees.

**11:15 am – 12:00 pm**

**Dorian Cole**

How To Make Your Stories Rise to the Top

**12:00 – 12:30 pm**

Lunch break and social time

**12:30 – 1:00 pm**

**Business Meeting & Elections**

**1:15–2:00 pm**

**Aliki Barnstone**, past Missouri Poet Laureate

Play + Practice = Work: Establishing a Generative and Synergistic Writing Practice

**2:15–3:00 pm**

**Anita Paddock**

Meet the Grandma Moses of True Crime Novels

**3:15–4:00 pm**

**Sean Golden**

Endgame: Getting from First Draft to Publishable Story

**4:00–4:15 pm**

Closing Remarks

**We hope you enjoyed another OWL Writers' Conference!**

**See you in the spring—in person we hope!**

