



THE OWL'S HOOT

Official Newsletter of
The Ozarks Writers League 501(c)(3)
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ELECTIONS Oct. 23!

VOTE ON SLATE:

President – Duke Pennell

Vice President – Larry Wood

Secretary – Cindy McIntyre

Treasurer – Veda Boyd Jones

Saturday, October 23! Join us virtually to learn, connect, and share

Time to recharge your muse with these terrific speakers!



Alik Barnstone

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

Alik is a poet, translator, critic, editor, and visual artist, and Professor of English at the University of Missouri. She

served as poet laureate of Missouri from 2016-2019 and is the author of eight books of poetry, the most recent of which include *Dear God Dear*, *Dr. Heartbreak: New and Selected Poems*, *Bright Body*, and *Dwelling*. She translated *The Collected Poems of C.P. Cavafy*. *Portrait Before Dark*, her translation of the Greek poet, critic, and translator, Liana Sakelliou, is forthcoming and Sakelliou's translation of Barnstone's *Eva's Voice* into Greek is pending in a bilingual edition.

Her first book of poems, *The Real Tin Flower*, was published when she was 12 years old, with a forward by Anne Sexton.

Among her awards are a Senior Fulbright Fellowship in Greece, the Silver Pen Award from the Nevada Writers Hall of Fame, a Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Fellowship in Poetry, and residencies at the Anderson Center and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts.

J.C. Field

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


Back by popular demand, J.C. is an award-winning and Amazon Best Selling author. He is a full member of the Missouri Writers' Guild. His Sean Kruger Series has won numerous awards, including multiple gold and silver medals in the Readers' Favorite International Book contest. *The Imposter's Trail* earned Best Mystery/Thriller at the 2017 Ozark Indie Book Fest.

In March of 2020, his novel, *A Lone Wolf*, became a #1 Amazon Best Selling Audiobook. His second novel in the series, *The Last Insurgent* became a #1 Amazon New Release in January 2021. He lives with his wife, Connie in South-west Missouri.

His talk will include:

- How to stand out as an author in a crowded field
- Building an author brand
- Why is a series important
- Keeping your characters and story fresh
- Maintaining the story over a series of books
- Why marketing a series is easier than a stand-alone.






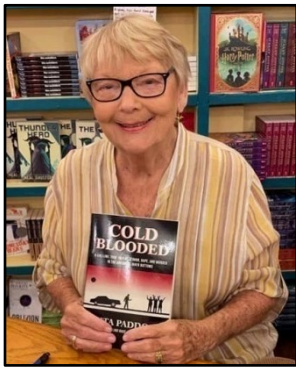
Join us for OWLIE Writing Awards and Open Mic!

Friday, October 22 from 7 till ?

Social time to follow.

If you'd like to read, send your bio, photo & website to
Diane@DianeYates.com to reserve a reader slot.





Anita Paddock

Meet the Grandma Moses of True Crime Novels

How to take the mystery out of writing about murders, the victims, and the families of both

Anita grew up in Van Buren, Arkansas, and attended high school with Linda and Sam Hugh Park, the children of the publishers of *The Press Argus* newspaper. In May of 1981, Mrs. Ruie Park was found murdered in her beautiful home on top of Logtown Hill. Nearly everyone, including the local and state police thought the Park son, a drunken homosexual lawyer, committed the crime because he and his mother often argued about his sinful lifestyle. When Anita read about the case, she vowed to her husband, a Fort Smith attorney, that this was the book she would someday write. Some thirty-five years later, she came through on her vow with her account, [*Blind Rage*](#). Next came [*Closing Time*](#), where she brought the story of the father and daughter Staton murders to the written page, then [*Cold Blooded*](#), a recounting of the execution-style murders of a police officer and two innocent civilians during what was called “the summer of blood.”



Dorian Cole

How to Make Your Stories Rise to the Top: Creating engaging stories, based on work and research with the National Writers Workshop in LA

Producer, writer, director, Dorian Cole worked in development at

Writers Workshop in LA, which was supported by all of the major studios. He was a marketing manager for two companies, and author of visualwriter.com since 1996 with articles and writing research.

He’s a veteran of 15 years of TV pilot focus groups, and wrote and produced STL Comedy for TV, with 22 actors and several writers.

Dorian is author of two books on writing, and is an annual contest judge. He publishes terrible fiction and nonfiction on Amazon.com and on Smashwords.com.

Sean Golden

End Game: How to turn a first draft into a finished manuscript

The talk will cover a short discussion of editing as a discipline, and will move into specific steps to follow to “finish” your first drafts. For each step you’ll get specific examples of what to look for, along with examples of how it helps, and/or why it matters. The important thing is that each of these is done from start to finish for the story. I explain that if you try to do it all at once, it is virtually impossible to avoid missing something.

The steps are:

1. Spell and grammar check
2. Read like a reader
3. Plot review/fixing
4. Character review/fixing
5. World building review/fixing
6. Conflict review/fixing
7. Dialog review/fixing
8. Spell and grammar check
9. Read like a reader

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.


TEN DOLLARS OFF!

OWL dues are usually **\$30** for the year but if you renew for 2022 before January 1, they are **only \$20**. The discount is to make up for not having in-person conferences. Here’s to next year!

You may pay via the PayPal link on our website (with a \$1 surcharge) at

www.ozarkswritersleague.com/membership

or mail a check to:

OWL c/o Russell Gayer
20053 Pug Gayer Rd.
Fayetteville, AR 72703

What a bounty of spooktacular speakers!

It’s ALL FREE to members so be sure you’re up-to-date before the 23rd!



Hello, fellow OWLs!

To quote the 1970 song, "What a long, strange trip it's been." You may feel the same about the past 18 months. The OWL board of directors has decided to hold our fall conference online despite all hoping we could once again meet in person. We know that half the fun of a conference is being with kindred spirits to exchange

information and experience, books, and air, in a communal setting. But with Covid numbers still unacceptably high and many of our members in high-risk groups, we can't afford the risk to OWLs and their local hospitals. On the positive side, the spring conference was online, and it was a great success. We expect the fall conference to be even better! Keep watch for an email with details on how to connect via Zoom and make sure your 2021 dues are paid so **admission is free**.

We know many of you are disappointed to not have an in-person conference. We all feel that way. There's nothing like the camaraderie of renewing old friendships and meeting new friends that happens at our get-togethers, and we all miss it. To take a little of the sting out, we've decided to lower the dues for next year to \$20.00 if they are paid before January 1, 2022. If you've already paid for 2022, we can refund \$10.00 to you if you ask.

This past year, we've been holding monthly board meetings via Zoom, as well as having virtual social time (yay, Happy OWLers) and mini-classes, and it's worked out really well. From my perspective, we've been able to provide even more opportunities to members to learn and hone our craft than when we met only in person. Nevertheless, I'll admit I'm looking forward to doing that drive again. I miss the hugs and handshakes, the stimulating conversations, and just being in a room with other people who love writing and are committed to improving their skills.

I guess it all boils down to this: we do what we have to do, and we make it as good as we can in the process. That's what wise old OWLs do.

Give a Hoot! Due to a two-year term limit, we have several board openings that offer you an opportunity to step up and make a difference. You could be our next Vice President, Secretary, or Fundraising Committee chair. To make your decision easier, we've put together an OWL Leadership Manual and posted it on the OWL website. Here's the link: [OWL Leadership Manual](#). If you have ever wondered what was involved in doing something for OWL, here's your chance to see for yourself. The duties of the various positions are laid out,

HEY!

Friday Conference Festivities Feature Fantastic Fun

Following OWL's pre-conference tradition, the evening before our Fall Conference gives us a chance to end the suspense of who won the writing contests, hear snippets from each other's writing, and have fun socializing. So, mark your calendars for **Friday, October 22**. You'll receive a Zoom link closer to the event. The virtual doors open at **6:30**, and the main event begins at **7 PM**.

Bring your favorite festive beverage and snacks and come ready for a party!

Thanks!

to everyone who bought raffle tickets to support OWL, and to the tireless Margarite Stever who single-handedly procured the delicious array of prizes!

And to our generous sponsors:

Always Buying Books, Ruth Wilson, West 7th Street Joplin Walmart, Webb City Walmart, Joplin Target, Ronda Del Boccio, Duke Pennell, Bonnie Tesh, April Brock, Margarite Stever, and Darrell Lacey

MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND JOIN OUR NEXT OWL MIXER!

Tuesday, November 16, at 7 PM

Zoom link will be emailed to all members

along with personal observations and helpful hints from past officeholders. I'll bet if you took a look at it, you'd say, "Heck, I could do that!" So check it out. Maybe there's a way you can pitch in. If not you, who?

Hope to see you **Friday and Saturday, October 22-23**, for the conference. It's going to be great!

Thanks, Duke

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

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)

Woot!
Woot!



KUDOS!

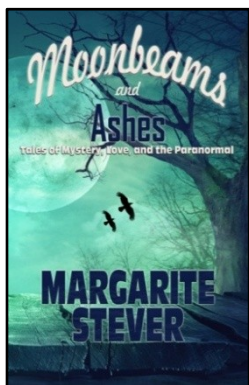
Cindy McIntyre won a bronze Independent Publisher eBook Award for her YA novel, *Love at the Center of Grief*.

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.



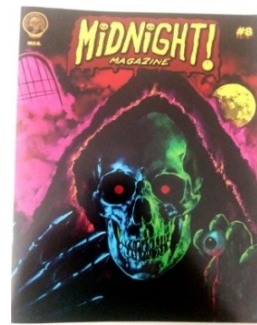
Ronda Del Boccio has been a featured author at SpoFest and Uncloistered Poetry events alongside writers and poets, including several poet laureates, from across the country. She won several awards for her poetry, short stories, nonfiction, memoir and novels, including first prize for her memoir, “Believing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



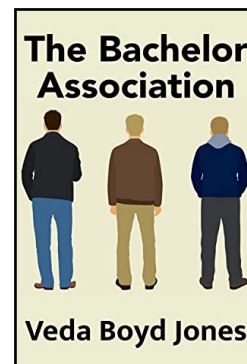
Nancy Hartney recently published “Springbrook Farm: The Old White Farmhouse on the Prairie,” in the Washington County (AR) Historical Journal, *Flashback*. The Farmhouse, nestled on the Washington Regional Hospital campus, is a testament to a marriage between old and new, historical preservation and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

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

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

OWL Board Minutes

Are available to members at

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 1st \$50, 2nd \$30, 3rd \$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!

