



THE OWL'S HOOT

Official Newsletter of
The Ozarks Writers League 501(c)(3)
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Join Us Live April 28 & 29!

2023 OWL Spring Conference Returns to the Honeysuckle Inn in Branson, Missouri

To make your reservation, contact the Honeysuckle Inn at

www.HoneysuckleInn.com
417-335-2030

Standard room with two queen beds: \$75 (plus tax and fees).

Be sure to mention **OWL!**

to get the discounted room rate.

Hotel amenities include an indoor swimming pool and a free hot breakfast.

For more details please go to:

www.OzarksWritersLeague.com/Conferences.php

Conference schedule can be found on page 7.

NOT AN OWL MEMBER YET?

Go to: www.OzarksWritersLeague.com/Membership.php

Questions?

Contact Membership Director Mary-Lane Kamberg at:

www.facebook.com/OzarksWritersLeague

Conference Highlights

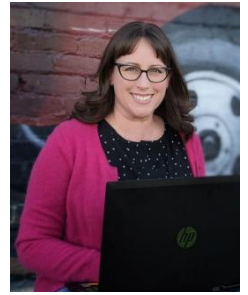
Penny Richards



How to hook your reader in the first pages and amp up the conflict as you deliver on them.

Penny is the author of forty-four books for traditional publishing houses, including Silhouette, Harlequin, Harper, and Kensington, many that have made best-seller lists, including Barnes and Noble and USA Today. Her books have been nominated for, and won, many industry awards including a Lifetime Achievement Award from Romantic Times magazine, (Eden/Calloway Corners Series) and Reader's Choice award for Best Single Title of the Year (*Dreamers and Deceivers*). *Unanswered Prayers* (Crystal Creek) was a nominee for Romance Writers of America's prestigious RITA Award in the Inspirational category as well as a launch title for Harlequin's Inspirational imprint. She is currently working on a non-fiction book, *Romance on the Run: Keeping Love Alive*.

Annie Lisenby Smith



The Roving Third Hand: Writing Romance and Combat Scenes Without Getting Your Characters Tangled

A native of the Missouri Ozarks, Annie has traveled to exciting places that she brings into her writing. She primarily writes for teens and young adults, but has expanded into other areas too. In most of her work you'll find a generous dash of romance.

Annie's debut novel, *A Three-Letter Name*, was released in May 2022. This YA survival romance featuring characters with disabilities won Best YA Book by an Indie Missouri Author through the Indie Author Project.

Before starting writing, Annie earned her MFA in Theatre Performance. She taught at local colleges and worked as a professional actor and stunt performer on stage and screen. Currently, she is a regular contributor to *Connection* magazine and has been published in *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. She is on submission with her newest YA novel and is represented by Amy Brewer with Metamorphosis Literary Agency.

Rose Heaser



Rose Heaser is a published author; an award-winning author of non-fiction; member of the Ozark Writers League and Joplin Writer's Guild; writer-director-performer for *Kid Biz* 20 years; director and joint writer for *Crowder's Silver Follies* for nine years; coordinator of Neosho's Fall Festival for eight years; producer of Neosho's Little Theater; directed *Halo Benders* and *Village Creatures Puppeteer's*, *Stix Ministry*, and 40 years *Children's Liturgy* for St Canera Catholic Church.



Panel Discussion:

Success Secrets Every Writer Needs to Know: Publishers & Pros Tell All

During this panel, three publishers and a couple of pro writers will share their very best tips for people who REALLY want to be published. Be prepared to take notes and put your big writer panties on.

They are going to tell you what you need to know to get published.

Meet the panelists:

The publishers - Duke Pennell of Pen-L Publishing, Sharon Kizziah-Holmes of Paperback Press, and Lia Wu of Ozark Hollow Press.

The authors: Multi-published and award-winning authors Rochelle Wisoff-Fields and John Cawfield
Q&A time follows.



Pitches to
Ozark Hollow
Press begin
right after the
Panel
Discussion



From the President's Perch

Greetings, OWLs, and welcome to another year of writing, reading, learning to improve our writing, procrastinating, and connecting with others who share our fascination with the written word.

Here I am with my guide dog, Glamour, and my cat, Twitch, trying to fit in everything for OWL and Lions Club as well as accomplish all my writing projects and help my Mom. I'm certainly kept hopping!

We're busy planning the Spring meeting at the Honeysuckle Inn in Branson April 28-29 right now. Friday night will be all about having fun and getting to know each other better. Saturday will be all about learning, building skills, and taking action. You'll even have a chance to pitch your book to a publisher. You'll read more about that elsewhere, but suffice it to say that we'll keep you engaged and help you build valuable skills. Get ready to DO, not just listen and absorb.

And we're continuing the popular Happy OWLer Zoom mixers each month. Those are fun, and a great way for get together with OWL friends between meetings, and maybe you'll even make a new friend. These are open to anyone.

So now, some questions for you

What do you plan to accomplish this year as a writer? Do you have specific goals with timelines? And are they in your calendar? How are you measuring your progress?

Happy writing.

Cheers! Ronda Del Boccio, OWL President



**Door prizes will
be given out
throughout the
conference on
Saturday.**

2023 OWL

Adult

Writing Contest

Rules and Categories

Coming Soon!

KUDOS!



February

Ronda Del Boccio sent a media release to her local media about her 2022 OWL Writing Contest wins, and a reporter did a HUGE feature on her. It made the front page of the *Branson Tri-Lakes News*, even starting above the fold.

You can read it at [Lampe author wins awards for her writing | News Free | bransontrilakesnews.com](https://www.bransontrilakesnews.com).

Michael Don Fess was a guest speaker at the February meeting of the Diamond Writers Association in Murfreesboro, Arkansas. He brought a guest, OWL member **Harold Pelton**. Harold and Michael will be participating in a book signing in Delight, Arkansas, at the library on March 11.

Rose Heaser has her first book, *My Little RoseBud*, in print. She is working on the outline of the next book for her family while waiting to take advantage of her research on the Sioux Indians.

Lindsey Hobson sold her debut middle grade horror novel, *The Girl in the Window*, to Monarch Educational Services, LLC for publication April 2nd, 2024.

The University of Arkansas Press has announced the upcoming publication of **Susan Croce Kelly**'s book, *Newspaperwoman of the Ozarks, the Story of Lucile Morris Upton*. The book will be out in August.



Laura (Redford) Lewis has a story, *The Killer Cow*, published February 5 and still available online by *The Milk House*. This publication is a global effort to lift up rural literature and was founded by Ryan Dennis, a former upstate New Yorker and a child of dairy farmers who now lives in Ireland. *The Killer Cow* is one of many stories from a work-in-progress that tells the tale of a single-woman, Laura (Redford) Lewis, and her twenty-five years of farming alone in North Missouri.

Penny Richards has had a good month with an article about love/romance printed in the Winsboro and Mt. Vernon, TX, newspapers. Her fourth book in the Lilly Long Mystery series, *Hasten to Their End*, (Level Best Books) was spotlighted by Linda and Caleb Pirtle in their "Spotlight of the Moment" blog.

Billie Holladay Skelley has a story in the new *Chicken Soup for the Soul: The Advice that Changed My Life*, which will be on sale at retailers March 14, 2023. The book features 101 inspirational stories containing advice and words of wisdom that can make a difference in your life.

Bonnie Tesh won the Elevator Pitch Contest at the Sleuth's Ink JANO Party on February 11. The goal of JANO participants was to write 50,000 words on a novel during January.

March

OWL President **Ronda Del Boccio**, aka the Queen of BLISS, was featured on Synova Cantrell's Writer's Wednesday. You can watch the interview on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/ZvN9vtnGhJQ>.

Billie Holladay Skelley's new book for young readers, *Bass Reeves: Legendary Lawman of the Wild West*, will be available in bookstores and at Amazon Books on March 24, 2023. This biographical work describes the life of one of the most amazing and respected lawmen in the West. It is Book # 5 in the Crossing Time Book Series.

Margarite Stever has begun publishing *Sally's Secret Legacy*, her paranormal romantic suspense on Kindle Vella. The first few episodes are up, and a new one is added every three days. The first three episodes are free for anyone to read, and the others are unlocked with tokens that may be purchased from Amazon. Margarite is very excited by this adventure and plans to publish *Sally's Secret Legacy* as a novel later in the year. Here's the link: <https://amzn.to/42vVfTd>

COOL TOOLS

For Authors

If you are a self-published author, or a traditionally published author looking for ways to pump up your sales, your friends at OWL are here to help.

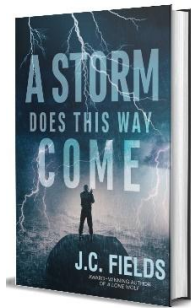
Here is an easy-to-use website known as DIY Book Design. It produces great results and the best part, it's FREE.

Click on the link below to check it out.

<https://diybookcovers.com/3Dmockups/#>



Create 3D book images with this easy-to-use website



HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES FOR 2023?

You may pay via the PayPal link on our website (with a \$1 surcharge). Dues are \$30 per year and include the Spring and Fall Conference.

www.OzarksWritersLeague.com/Membership.php

or mail a check to: OWL Treasurer
Veda Boyd Jones
505 W. 34th, Joplin, MO 64804



2023 PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

Contest Chair: Rochelle Wisoff-Fields

THEME: REFLECTIONS

You must be a member of Ozarks Writers League to enter.

- 1) Entry fee is \$15.00 for members. \$45.00 for entry plus membership dues for non-members. (Welcome to OWL 😊) Entry fee may be paid the morning of the contest. Make checks to Ozark Writers League. (There is a small processing fee for paying with PayPal.)
- 2) **LIMIT 3 PHOTOS.**
- 3) **Cash Prizes will be given: First – \$50, Second – \$30, Third – \$20**
- 4) Photos must be 5x7 or 8x10. Each must be matted.
- 5) Each entry must have a 3x5 index card attached with a paperclip—**DO NOT GLUE OR TAPE.** The index card should include the following:
Name – Address –Phone number –Email address –
Photo Title
- 6) Photographer's name should NOT be visible anywhere on the front of the photo.
- 7) All entries must be delivered to the Registration Desk, **Saturday, April 29** at the Honeysuckle Inn between **8:00 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.**
- 8) *Entries not following above rules will be disqualified.*
- 9) Qualified judges will conduct blind judging. Decisions are final.
- 10) 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.**

Register with the link below:

www.OzarksWritersLeague.com/Photo-contest-2023.php

Everyone welcome!

2023 Upcoming Writers Conferences In The Ozarks:



Register now for the second Between the Pages Writers Conference
June 9-11, 2023
Early Bird
Registration ends April 30.

MISSOURI WRITERS' GUILD

One-Day Conference
Saturday, **September 23, 2023**
Columbia, MO



OWL Fall Conference

October 27-28, 2023

Stay tuned for details at
www.OzarksWritersLeague.com



Registration Is Now Open

<https://btpwriterscon.com/registration>

2022 OWL Youth Writing Contest

For grades 7-12

Cindy McIntyre, Chairperson of the Ozarks Writers League youth contest, reported that Missouri and Arkansas submitted stories and poems from 12 public schools and 2 homeschools in the Ozarks. Richland, Missouri, introduced their writings to OWL for the first time, and three Richland students won awards. In Carthage, Missouri, Katherine Wagner entered pieces for each category and found winning success. Congratulations to all who participated!

Thank you to sponsors!

Fiction—Sponsor: Larry Wood

Non-fiction—Sponsor: Russell Gayer

Poetry—Sponsor: Veda Boyd Jones

Congratulations to the Winners!

FICTION

First place

"His Wish" by Kai McVay
Southwest Junior High, 9th

Second place

"Crossroads" by Katherine Wagner
Carthage High, 10th

Third Place

"No Talking" by Kylee Mellody
Richland High, 10th

Honorable Mention

"All I Crave" by Brooklyn Dickens
Richland High, 10th McVay

HOLIDAY SHORT STORY

First Place

"Dear Grandpa" by Katherine Wagner
Carthage High, 10th

Second Place

"No More Thanksgiving" by Mila Baethke
Harrison Middle, 7th

Third Place

"The Creepy Night in Missouri"
by Kaleb Poulson
Richland High, 12th

POETRY

First place

"Instinct" by Lizette Sanchez
Rogers New Technology High, 9th

Second place

"I Bet" by Katherine Wagner
Carthage High, 10th

Third Place

"Sonnet of Slumber" by Esther Exley,
Homeschool, 8th



Richland High School had three winners in the youth writing contest this year. From left: Kaleb Poulson, Kylee Mellody, Brooklynn Dickens

OWL 2023 **SPRING CONFERENCE SCHEDULE**



Friday, April 28:

6 PM Dinner at Little Hacienda, across the street and up the hill, just behind Red Lobster. Eat or drink whatever you wish. This is a fun time to visit. Consider sitting with someone you don't know well.

8:15ish Mix & Mingle – Cardinal Room at Honeysuckle Inn

You are in for a Hoot of fun at the social mixer, getting to know your fellow authors better while having a good time. OWL Member Rose Heaser is leading us through some fun activities! After that, we can hang out and socialize. BYOBeverage.



Saturday, April 29

8:30 AM Registration, mingling, coffee, photo contest check-in

9:00 AM Welcome, announcements, & a few surprises. Be prepared to introduce yourself **quickly**. We'll give away Door Prize #1.

9:15 AM *Success Secrets Every Writer Needs to Know: Publishers & Pros Tell All*
During this panel, publishers and pro writers will share their very best tips for people who REALLY want to be published. Be prepared to take notes and put your big writer panties on, 'cuz they're gonna tell it like it IS!

10:15 AM Door prize #2, then BREAK. PITCHES to Ozark Hollow Press begin after break.

10:30 AM *The Roving Third Hand: Writing Romance and Combat Scenes Without Getting Your Characters Tangled* – Annie Lisenby Smith shares techniques on how to keep track of characters and their movements and create engaging scenes that keep readers turning the pages.

11:25 AM Quick question before lunch. Door Prize #3.

11:30 AM Lunch on your own. There are numerous options in the area.

1:15 PM Photo contest awards, adult writing contest kick-off, door prize #4

1:30 PM *Make 'em Click, Not Get Sick (of you) – Interactive PlayShop with PRIZES*
You won't be snoozing after lunch! Get ready to have some productive fun as your OWL President and others teach techniques to make people WANT to click your links and read your stuff.

2:30 PM BREAK, then door prize #5

2:40 PM *Great Expectations* – Penny Richards teaches how to hook your reader in the first pages and amp up the conflict as you deliver on them.

3:20 PM Closing Remarks and a Fond Farewell

See you again in the fall!