



# THE OWL'S HOOT

Official Newsletter of  
The Ozarks Writers League 501(c)(3)  
ozarkswritersleague.com  
ozarkwriters@gmail.com

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

**ELECTIONS Oct. 29!**

**SLATE:**

**President – Ronda Del Boccio**

**Vice President – Larry Wood**

**Secretary – Cindy McIntyre**

**Treasurer – Veda Boyd Jones**

**Nominations are open.**

**October 28–29!** Join us **LIVE** to learn, connect, and share

## 2022 OWL Fall Conference Is Back at the Honeysuckle Inn Again!



### MARY-LANE KAMBERG

#### **"What's So Funny?"**

Humor writing techniques that work

Put your sense of humor on paper. Mary-Lane Kamberg will show you how to get your readers (and editors) roaring with laughter.

Help them laugh with you and at you. This workshop includes practical advice for using humor in fiction, poetry, and nonfiction, as well as thank you notes, letters to the editor, and complaints to politicians, store managers and corporate executives.

You'll learn answers to the questions:

- Are you funny?
- What is the two-step process for writing humor?
- What are the three ways to add humor to your writing?
- What are the three parts of a humor piece?
- Where do I get ideas?
- What are the best formats for humor?
- What makes something funny?

... and more proven humor writing techniques that work. Join her for a laugh fest and a raucous good time.

Mary-Lane is co-leader of the Kansas City Writers Group and author of *The "I Don't Know How to Cook" Book* and the essay collection *A Ride to Somewhere*. Her humor pieces have also appeared in *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Kansas City Star*, *Kansas City Parent*, *The Olathe Daily News* and other publications. She has also published more than 30 nonfiction books for school libraries. She is a former education

(Con't p. 3)

### PHYLLIS HARRIS

#### **Patience and Persistence Pave the Road to Publication: The Journey to the Final Stage**



So many people have told me through the years that writing children's books is easy. After all, they are just sweet little rhyming poems or simple stories where the child learns some moral or lesson. NOT!

The more accurate description is by the amazing award-winning, Mem Fox. She said, "Writing a picture book is like writing *War and Peace* in Haiku."

Writing and illustrating for traditional children's publishing is not for the faint of heart. It takes passion, persistence and maybe even obsession.

Harris has always leaned on her own passion and persistence to help get her through the years of stumbling to eventually become an illustrator and writer. She will tell you how she turned "No" into "Yes" and how it eventually led to her success and eventually publication.

She will share her journey of how it all started from childhood artist to graphic designer and then to where her career path slowly transformed into becoming an author/illustrator of children's picture books. She will also reveal some tips and resources for both writers and illustrators to help manage their own journeys through the competitive world of publishing.

Phyllis first started her career in graphic design at a newspaper while also freelancing at Hallmark Cards,

(Con't p. 3)

**Join us for OWLIE Writing Awards and Social!**

**Friday, October 28, from 7 till ?**

**Social time to follow. Bring a date if you like.**

**It'll be a HOOT!**



## BRENDA MINTON

### Backstory Matters: Beyond Goal, Motivation and Conflict

What is Backstory? The correct definition of backstory is the history or background of a fictional character.

Backstory is everything that has happened to the character before the story begins.

Why is backstory important?

We all have a backstory that shapes who we are today. In the same way, our characters need a well-thought-out backstory so that their actions and reactions throughout the book make sense.

When the author understands the character's past—the situations or struggles they've lived through, the heartaches, the successes—it will help to create characters that act and react in a manner that is believable to the reader.

In this workshop we will discover how to use backstory to create stronger fictional characters and also understand our nonfictional characters.

Every journey needs conflict in order to create growth and show the characters working through their problems, overcoming their obstacles and having clear resolution to these situations.

If an author understands the backstory of their characters, they can clearly define the conflict in a way that is believable to readers and creates a stronger plot and stronger characterization.

Brenda Minton is a wife of 36 years. Her husband Doug has been her biggest supporter in not only writing, but all her other crazy ideas and projects. They have 8 children, plus daughters and sons-in-love and adorable grandchildren. Brenda attributes her imagination and even her writing career to growing up on a farm in rural southwest Missouri. In a world before cable television and cell phones, she spent her time imagining stories that she would someday write. Brenda has been published since 2006, with more than one million books sold worldwide.

## LINDA APPLE

### Know Your Character: Why Using the Elements to Build Characters: Assigning an element such as earth, fire, air, or water to a character



Using the visual of nature's elements: fire, earth, air, and water, as a tool in characterization, you will not only better understand your characters, but they will also emerge in sharp focus to your reader. Your characters will have definitive, consistent, behaviors, habits, and emotions. Another bonus to this approach is being able to show how they think, speak and interact with other characters of a different element. Think fire and wind. This out-of-the-box approach is yet another effective tool in your writer's toolbox. Pennsylvania school district's one-book program.

Linda has conducted writing workshops both nationally and internationally. She's served as the president of Oklahoma Writers Federation, Inc and the Ozark Creative Writers Conference. Linda lives in Northwest Arkansas with her husband, Neal, and her co-author, a spunky Scottish Terrier named Winston. He barks, she types. She is an inspirational speaker and author and has ten published books including fiction, nonfiction, and children's books. Sixteen of her stories are in the Chicken Soup for the Soul books. Her early reader chapter book, *BOWWOW ~ Book of Winston's Words of Wisdom*, was chosen for a Pennsylvania school district's one-book program. Linda has conducted writing workshops both nationally and internationally. She's served as the president of Oklahoma Writers Federation, Inc and the Ozark Creative Writers Conference. Linda lives in Northwest Arkansas with her husband, Neal, and her co-author, a spunky Scottish Terrier named Winston. He barks, she types.

## BIG TV RAFFLE!



**Get your tickets to win  
at the conference  
\$5 each or 3 for \$10**

*Book lovers love fall. F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote,  
"Life starts all over again when it gets crisp in the fall."*

## What a bounty of SPOOKTACULAR speakers!



**It's ALL FREE to members so  
be sure you're up-to-date  
or pay at the gate on October 29.**

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND  
JOIN OUR NEXT OWL MIXER!**

***Tuesday, November 16, at 7 PM***

**Zoom link will be emailed to all members**

# CALLING ALL OWLS in LOGO LAND

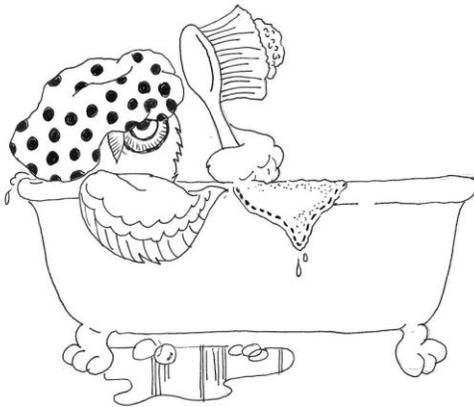
Are you artistic? Love to draw as well as write? If so, this challenge is for you!

It has been suggested that our tired old OWL owl could use a makeover. Do you have an idea for how our new logo should look? Now's your chance to put your illustration skills to work.

Bring your ideas to the fall conference in the form of a black and white line drawing (you're not limited to one)—something that can be copied and used on newsletters, fliers, or website. Preferably that can be viewed in a square about 2 x 2 inches.

Unsigned sketches will be voted on by OWL members by secret ballot.

**Ready! Set! Draw!**



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(Continued from Mary-Lane, p.1.)

editor for *Johnson's County Gazette* and is retired from a 40-year career as a coach for the Kansas City Blazers swim team. She also served a 5-year stint as the municipal court clerk for the Kansas City suburb of Prairie Village, Kansas, where she was a certified police matron. Her desk was across the hall from the booking room where police officers brought in suspects of such violations as shoplifting, driving under the influence, and letting their weeds grow too high. No banks were robbed during her tenure. She has a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Kansas and cheers for the Jayhawks during March Madness. She has swum with dolphins, ridden an elephant, and been kissed by a camel.

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(Continued from Phyllis, p. 1)

then shifted into illustration full time where she has continued for the past 20 plus years creating the art for over 30 children's books, including *On Christmas Day* by Margaret Wise Brown, author of *Goodnight Moon*.

In recent years, Harris has focused on both writing and illustrating children's picture books. Her debut as author/illustrator, [THE GIFT SHOP BEAR](#) was released on October 26, 2021. Harris currently resides in Raymore with her singer-songwriter husband, Bradley Harris.

# PAINTBRUSH, PEN OR KEYBOARD?

By Rochelle Wisoff-Fields, Author/Illustrator

An interviewer once asked me which, I preferred writing or visual art. I didn't have to think about my reply. "Both. They're equal passions."

What place do visual art forms have in literature? Like the written art form, a painting, sketch, collage, or even a sculpture tells a story.



Ever see a children's book without illustrations? Nor have I. Children are attracted by bright colors and cartoons. I'm not convinced we outgrow picture books. Who doesn't pick up and enjoy a children's book now and then? Oh sure, you may use your children and grandchildren as an excuse, but you can't fool me. Admit it, it's for your own pleasure.

Let's not forget book covers. It's the first thing a potential reader sees. How many are attracted by an illustration of a shapely goddess or beefcake on the front. Nope, this isn't one of those.

Many of us who consider ourselves authors enjoy dabbling in the visual arts. It's another outlet for creativity.



Having said all this, it's my hope that next year's art and photography contest will garner more entrees in other categories beside photography. Which is not to discourage photography. It's most certainly a valid art form. One that requires a well-developed sense of composition. Not everyone who snaps a picture with their cell phone is a photographer.

Back to the other art forms. Why not spend the next few months letting those creative juices flow through a brush, a pencil or even a lump of clay? Illustrate your own children's book. Design a book jacket. Give the judge a challenge. I dare you. I double dog dare you.



"Books are a  
uniquely portable  
magic."

*Stephen King*

# Fall OWL Member Spotlight!

## MARGARITE STEVER



*Margarite has been a stalwart member of OWL since 2016 and served as board president in 2018-2019. She's a blogger, nana, country cook, gardener, pecan farmer, preserver of nature's bounty, author AND has a full-time job. Whew!*

### Share something interesting or unusual about yourself.

I'm descended from German candy makers. I've been making my own homemade Christmas candy since I could reach the kitchen table. My friends and family love it.

### What do you write?

I write romance, paranormal romance, mystery, fantasy, science fiction, and nonfiction. I also write a lot of ghost stories.

### Do you have any weird or unusual writing rituals?

I enjoy listening to Celtic, Irish folk, and Native American music while I write. I listen to heavy metal music if I'm writing violent scenes.

### What's your drink or snack of choice while writing?

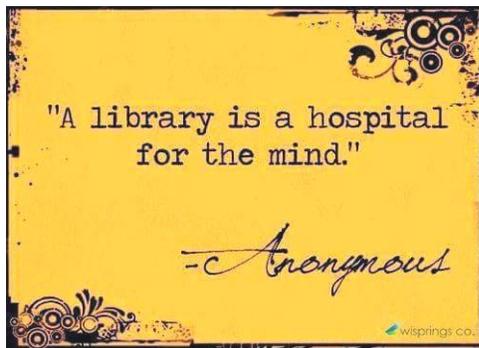
I usually drink Diet Coke, coffee, or iced herbal tea. I like to snack on popcorn, cheese, or trail mix. Then there are times when only chocolate will do the trick.

### What authors influenced you?

Lori Foster, Janet Evanovich, Christine Feehan, James Patterson, Madeleine L'Engle, Terry McDermid, and Larry Wood are some of the authors who've influenced me.

### When did you start writing?

I wrote my first book in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade as an assignment. I began writing for pleasure at age 12.



### Did YOU know?

- October 1-31: National Book Month
- October 1-31: National Cookbook Month
- October 1-31: National Reading Group Month
- First Week of October: Mystery Series Week
- Second Week of October: National Newspaper Week
- October 6: Mad Hatter Day
- October 11: Myth and Legends Day
- October 16: Dictionary Day
- Third Week of October: Friends of Libraries Week
- Last Friday of the Month: National Frankenstein Day

### Do you have a day job or a past job?

I work full-time for Economic Security Corporation of Southwest Area, a community action agency.

### How do you fit writing into your busy life?

I write in the evenings after work and on the weekends before my husband gets out of bed. I attend the Women's Get-away Writers Retreat twice a year, which gives me the opportunity to concentrate on my writing for four glorious days in which I have no other responsibilities.

### Do you have any hobbies or interests aside from writing?

I enjoy reading, painting, and making pottery. I also grow and preserve some of my own food. I practice the age-old art of canning.

### Are you writing more or less during COVID?

My office was shut down for six weeks during 2020 due to COVID, and I wrote a lot during that time. Otherwise, I'm writing the same amount of time as normal.

### What do you enjoy most about OWL?

I love the educational presentations meant to improve our writing, editing, and marketing skills. I also love spending time with other OWL members.

### Do you belong to other writers organizations?

I belong to five writers groups – OWL, Ozarks Romance Authors, Sleuths' Ink Mystery Writers, Joplin Writers' Guild, and Missouri Writers' Guild.

### What advice would you give to beginning writers?

Take the time to nurture your craft. Write as often as possible. Don't ever believe you know everything because there's always something new to learn.

### Where do you live?

Webb City, Missouri.

### Where can members find you on the web?

I blog at [ozarksmaven.com](http://ozarksmaven.com). I can be found on Facebook at [Margarite R. Stever Author | Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/Margarite-R-Stever-Author/). My book, *Moonbeams and Ashes: Tales of Mystery, Love, and the Paranormal*, can be found at [Amazon.com/dp/1951772989](https://www.amazon.com/dp/1951772989).



### ARE YOUR DUES DUE SOON?

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

[www.ozarkswritersleague.com/membership.php](http://www.ozarkswritersleague.com/membership.php)

or mail a check to: OWL Treasurer

Veda Boyd Jones

505 W. 34<sup>th</sup>

Joplin, MO 64804



## A Moveable Feast: Writing Anywhere

By Veda Boyd Jones

In my writing life, I've written wherever and whenever I have a spare moment, but that's because I always carry paper and pen and can write easy things: a description, a character sketch, or a list of markets I'd like to break into. Like most writer moms, I've written at the ballpark and the swimming pool, yet when it comes to day-to-day writing, I am my best in my home office.

But recently I started volunteering at the local center for the arts, where I now spend two afternoons a month answering the phone and directing visitors to the art exhibits. On my first day, I took a book club book, but I just can't read a non-page-turner for four hours straight. I needed something more, so I pulled out my pen and paper to make a few notes.

On my next volunteer session, I carried my laptop, and more importantly, a deadline. As a writer who usually craves silence, I settled right down to business, and although interrupted several times, I hunkered down in the moments I sat alone and hammered out a first draft.

Although I still prefer the familiarity of my home office, with its bookcases filled with reference works, and silence, I am now open to the thought of writing in public, with my laptop, looking like a writer. Still, it's one thing to write when you're forced to be somewhere else, but why go somewhere else on purpose when I have a space of my own?

"That's easy," my friend Kris says. "There's no washer and dryer at the coffee house." Niggling chores sit on her shoulder and whisper to her when she tries to write at home, where she lives alone. So, she packs up her creative thoughts and her laptop and heads out for a bottomless cup of joe. Morning or afternoon, makes no difference, and she uses the soft classical music background as white noise that drowns the chatter of other customers. The energy of the public place flows by osmosis into her.

When I was writing out of a corner of the family room, I dreamed of an outside office where I could report at a regular time, like a regular job. Once I converted a bedroom into my office, that need to get away from the house dimmed. After all, for me one of the beauties of a home office is the ability to take breaks from writing and get a few household chores done.

But all writers do not think the same about that moveable feast of where to write. I know writers who go to a calm setting, usually facing the ocean, and write in their cars. They describe a cozy feeling in such a limited space with absolutely no distractions, except white noise of the surf. Other writers rebel against the solitary confinement of writers and want a spot where others can affirm that they are typing words, where they really can't get up and do something entirely different, where they must completely focus to get the work done.

Fifteen years ago a friend and I dreamed of converting a building into office space for writers, with separate offices, shared kitchen area, and a common space with reference books and a copy machine. Writers could confer when they needed or be alone without being isolated. Our dream remained a dream, but we learned a place like that already existed. For a reasonable fee, writers in cramped apartments in New York City can join the Writers Room, an urban writing colony. This loft has Wi-Fi, plug-ins for laptops, open carrel stations for writers, a kitchen area and a writers' library. What a deal. It is the ultimate office combo of apartness and togetherness.

*From the OWL Perch*

## Hello, fellow OWLs!

Our fall conference is coming on Halloween weekend and it's going to be LIVE again in Branson! Zoom is great when we can't come together but there's nothing like being in a room with a bunch of other motivated writers. Kinda like Heaven.

I think you're really going to enjoy this one. **Phyllis Harris** will be there to tell us how *Patience and Persistence Pave the Road to Publication*. **Brenda Minton** will talk to us about *Knowing Your Character: Why Backstory Matters*. Several brave OWLs have submitted the first page of their Work in Progress for comments from three experienced editors, and you'll get the chance to hear about it! **Linda Apple** will be doing an interactive workshop on *Using the Elements to Build Characters*. Wrapping things up, **Mary-Lane Kamberg** will let us know all things humorous.

All that plus the other things we've all come to expect at an OWL conference ... visiting with old friends, making new ones, the annual Adult Writing Awards Ceremony, perusing (and maybe even buying?) the books and other things fellow OWLs have brought to show off, and laughing together.

We're holding this conference at the Honeysuckle Inn in Branson. It's convenient to restaurants and attractions, it's freshly remodeled, and they've got a full breakfast on Saturday morning! It feels like returning to an old friend. Don't forget to register for your room (and tell them OWL sent you). Details are on another page and there's more information at [www.OzarksWritersLeague.com/Conferences.php](http://www.OzarksWritersLeague.com/Conferences.php). We'll also be **electing new officers** and deciding whether or not to **amend the bylaws**.

I'll be there, and I hope you will too! Meanwhile, **Write On!**

Your outgoing president,  
*Duke Pennell*



Writing colonies exist in many locales and many are residential, where writers stay for a week to a month or longer. For the chosen few whose applications are accepted and scholarships are awarded, kudos. Most writing colonies have websites, so if that experience is one you crave, why not apply? Someone has to win those scholarships. And many of these colonies really are moveable feasts—with meals provided!

For the rest of us, we'll make do with planned writing times and stolen moments to create our moveable feasts of ideas and productivity. Whether we choose the kitchen table or a library table, a corner of the bedroom or a corner booth at the café, a bench on the back porch or a bench in the park, our goal remains to keep writing.

**Please share with the students, teachers, and others in your life  
who might spread the word!**

## **Writing Contest 7-12 grades**

### **ATTENTION YOUTH!**

#### **2022 Ozarks Writers League Youth Writing Contest**

Prizes in three categories:

**1st Place \$50 - 2nd Place \$25 - 3rd Place \$10**

**No entry fee!**

- Fictional short story: Any genre. Any topic. Limit 2,000 words. Sponsor: Robert Laurence
- Non-fiction short story: Favorite holiday memory. Limit 2,000 words. Sponsor: Russell Gayer
- Poetry: Any form. 26-line limit. Sponsor: Veda Boyd Jones

#### **– Contest Rules –**

**You must be in grades 7 - 12 at the time you submit your entry.**

**Mail TWO copies of EACH entry in a large flat envelope postmarked by November 15, 2022, to:**

**Cindy McIntyre, Contest Chair**

**PO Box 356**

**Richland, MO 65556**

- **Only one entry per category. All entries must be UNPUBLISHED and the original work of the writer. (If your entry has appeared in a blog, website, or other electronic outlet, it IS considered published and cannot be entered.)**
- **Entries may be typed or hand-written. Double-space entries for fiction and single-spaced for poetry. Use black ink on 8 ½" x 11" white paper.**
- **Attach a 3"x5" index card with a paperclip to the top copy of each category entry with the number and name of the category, the title of your entry, and your name, address, phone, email, current grade, and school attending or home-schooled.**
- **DO NOT put your name on any part of the entry. Staple multiple pages together.**

**Winners will be announced by February 15, 2023**

**Good luck to all who enter!**

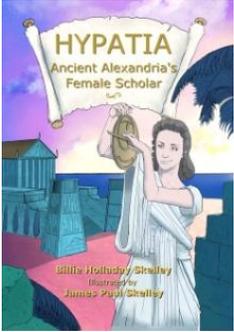
**For rules, writing contests, conferences, and membership information: [www.ozarkswritersleague.com](http://www.ozarkswritersleague.com)**



# KUDOS!



**Ronda Del Boccio** took 3<sup>rd</sup> place in Yorkshire Publishing’s pandemic story contest for “Down the Road to Nowhere in the Land of No Life.” She won several other awards, including 1<sup>st</sup> prize for her memoir, “Believing in Thunder” and her unpublished novel, *Deadly Mist*. She also participated in an international pet summit along with Canadian pet psychic Sue London. She recorded an interview and wrote a chapter for the anthology. She has been a featured author at SpoFest and Uncloistered Poetry events alongside writers and poets, including several poet laureates, from across the country.

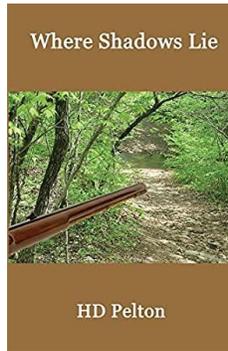


**Billie Holladay Skelley’s** new book, *Hypatia: Ancient Alexandria’s Female Scholar*, which won a Bronze Medal in the 2022 Moonbeam Children’s Book Awards. Her poem “Coming Home” was nominated by *Ember: A Journal of Luminous Things* for Sundress Publication’s 2023 *Best of the Net Anthology*. She has a story in the recent *Chicken Soup for the Soul: My Clever, Curious, Caring Cat*.

**Susan Croce Kelly** won the Gold Quill Award from the Missouri Writers Hall of Fame.

**Jane Elzey’s** Book 3 in the Cardboard Cottage Mystery series, *Poison Parcheesi and Wine* (Scorpius Carta Press) was released this month. Jane and her team had signings at the OZ INC Maker Market and the Art, Books and Wine Walk in Eureka Springs; at the Homegrown Festival in Siloam Springs; and at War Eagle Fair in Rogers. [JaneElzey.com](http://JaneElzey.com)

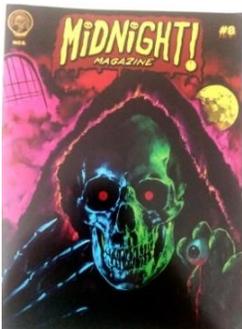
**H.D. Pelton’s** first book in his Light series, *Where Light No Longer Shines*, won first place in OWL’s Book of the Year contest in 2020. The second in the series, *Where Shadows Lie*, is now available for purchase. [hdpelton.com](http://hdpelton.com)



**Rose Heaser** placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Joplin Writers Guild contest; took an Honorable Mention in Indignor’s latest contest; and attended Terry McDermid’s Women’s Retreat

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

**Mary-Lane Kamberg** has two essays accepted for *Chicken Soup: Wacky Families*, due out in November.



**Michael Koch** had a nonfiction short story, “Smiley Burnette: Western Sidekick,” featured in the Winter 2021 edition of *Saddlebag Dispatches* [saddlebagdispatches.com](http://saddlebagdispatches.com). Also, *Ricou Browning: The Gill-Man* in the *Midnight Magazine* #9 [Midnightmagazine.bigcartel.com](http://Midnightmagazine.bigcartel.com). He also has a short story in *Midnight! Magazine* #8, a biographical study entitled: “Grant Williams: Forgotten Sci-fi/Horror Star.”

## Congratulations to our 2022 Art & Photography Contest Winners!



### 2-Dimensional Art

- 1st - “Inspiration” - Margarite Stever
- 2nd - “Winter Blooms” - Rhonda Harvey

### Photography

- 1st - “Farm at Sundown” - Margarite Stever
- 2nd - “Morning Visitor” - Margarite Stever
- 3rd - “Striking Light” - Joy Keeney

### Alternative Art

- 1st - “Elephant Journal” - Ronda Del Boccio
- 2nd - “Fluttering in the Blue” - Ronda Del Boccio
- 3rd - “Floral Fantasy” - Ronda Del Boccio

You can see some of the prize-winning art at [www.ozarkswritersleague.com/Photo-and-art-contest-winners.php](http://www.ozarkswritersleague.com/Photo-and-art-contest-winners.php)

At the end of the day, a cliché walks into a bar—fresh as a daisy, cute as a button, and sharp as a tack.

(Ba-dum-ch!)

Can YOU name these fine members from years past?



Welcome NEW 2022

**Board Members and Officers!**

Thank you for your time and dedication to writers.

# MORE KUDOS!

**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.



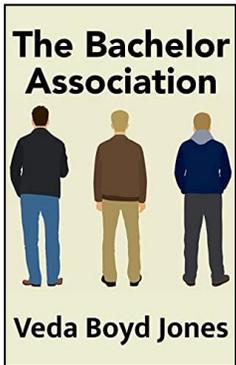
**Margarite Stever** had two short stories and three poems published in the recent *Romance, Poetry, Mystery and More: An Anthology by Ozarks Romance Authors Members*. She wrote 50,810 words during the month of January for the Sleuths’ Ink Mystery Writers’ JANO competition and won the pitch competition at the JANO party. She published *Moonbeams and Ashes: Tales of Mystery, Love, and the Paranormal*, a collection of 15 short stories, and also won Best of Show in the

OWL Art Contest with her photo “Inspiration.” (See winners at [OzarksWritersLeague.com](http://OzarksWritersLeague.com))

**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).

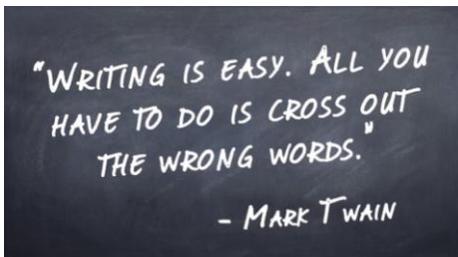


**Diana West** has the cover story about the 200th anniversary of the Santa Fe Trail in the October issue of Wild West magazine. It’s an 8-page spread that includes three sidebars. In that same issue she also wrote a two-page piece about the Indian perspective and involvement on the trail. Also in the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

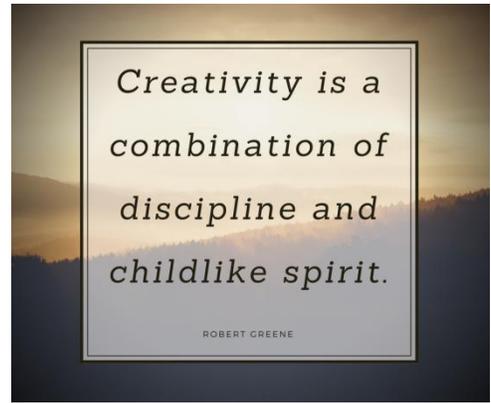


*Solving Peculiar Crimes* Kirkus Review: “Prolific Arkansas author **Radine Trees Nehring’s** Something to Die For series continues ... Overall, this is a splendid, G-rated, collection of capers established and resolved with seamless ease by employing intelligence, intuition, and cunning sure to appeal to mystery fans.”

**Veda Boyd Jones’** annual Christmas romance ebook novella, *The Bachelor Association*, is available now.



**John “Doc” Crawford** won numerous prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> Place, Arizona State Poetry Society contest; 1<sup>st</sup> Place, Ouachita Life, Marie Brass Haiku Contest; 2<sup>nd</sup> Place, Massachusetts Poetry Society’s Naomi Cherkofsky Memorial Contest; Honorable Mention, Peggy Vining Memorial Essay, Arkansas Writers Conference; Honorable Mention, Ouachita Life, Carlos Colon Haiku Contest. He had two poems published in Mississippi Poetry Society 2022 Anthology; had a reading of 1<sup>st</sup> Place poem “Miss Emma” at Wednesday Night Poetry, Hot Springs; was featured Poet at Wednesday Night Poetry in Hot Springs; and was inducted into **Hall of Fame** at the Arkansas Writers Conference. He placed in the Utah State Poetry Society contest; won 1<sup>st</sup> in the On-the-Spot poetry contest of the Arkansas Writers conference; and his 5<sup>th</sup> book of poetry was published by Austin Macauley Publishing: *Just Off Highway 71: Memories in Lyric*. (Due to Covid-19, there was a year’s delay in publication.)



## GIVE A THOUGHT!

to volunteering for OWL as a committee chair, board member, or officer. OWL needs new folks who have fresh ideas, perspectives and experience.

**YOU** are the reason for OWL, and its fuel.

Give a thought to giving a year.

There’s even a manual at

[OzarksWritersLeague.com/OWL\\_Leadership\\_Manual.pdf](http://OzarksWritersLeague.com/OWL_Leadership_Manual.pdf)

**Go ahead, join the team. It’s all via Zoom. And it’s probably more fun than you imagine!**



# Spring 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 story-teller, 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.



Want to know your  
OWL history?

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

**Dear OWL Members,**  
**The newsletter editor would like to apologize to all of you, especially those who submitted items for the spring issue of the *Hoot*, for the long delay in publication.**

**Beginning in January, the newsletter will be posted to the website monthly, so please plan to submit kudos, articles, and tidbits for the enjoyment of others. Thanks, Kim**

***Write on!***



# A CHANCE TO WIN:

## The Power of Entering Writing Contests

By Ronda Del Boccio,  
Former OWL 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.

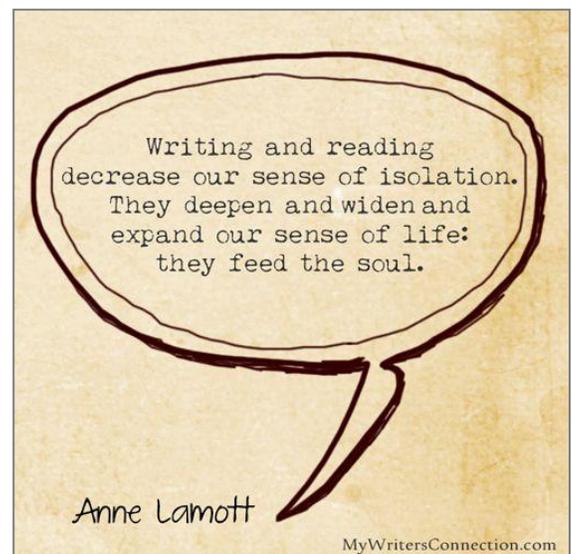
### Contest Cautions

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!



# THANK YOU TO ALL OUR WRITING CONTEST SPONSORS!

## **Humorous Short Piece**

Russell Gayer

## **Flash Fiction Story**

Rochelle Wisoff-Fields and Jan Fields

## **Inspirational Romance Short Story**

Diane Yates

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

Bud Hanks

## **Western Faction Short Story**

Bud Hanks

## **Western Short Story**

Duke Pennell

## **Western Wedding, in memory of Jeanie Horn**

Richard and Bonnie Tesh

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

Nancy Hartney

## **Humorous Paranormal Short Story**

Ronda Del Boccio

## **Romantic Adventure Short Story**

Anonymous

## **Memoir & Creative Nonfiction**

Brenda Black

## **Humorous Anecdote Prize**

John “Doc” Crawford & Ronda Del Boccio

## **Juvenile Short Story–Fiction**

Anonymous

## **Travel Article**

Larry Wood

## **Hometown Newspaper Column**

Lonnie Whitaker

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

Linda Apple

## **Ozarks History Article**

Larry Wood

## **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 2021**

Billie Holladay Skelley (1 prize of \$100)

## **Best Published Nonfiction Book of 2021**

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

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**Thank you to all the sponsors** who made our 2022 contest possible. We have some oldies but goodies, and some new ones this year, for a total of 21. Winners to be announced at conference on **October 28**.

Bonnie Tesh, Contest Coordinator, with help from Ronda



## **Proposal to Amend Bylaws of the Organization** **To be voted on by Members on October 29, 2022**

The OWL bylaws have contradictory phrasing. In Article II, Section 1, Historian and Webmaster are explicitly named as board positions. But in Article III, Section 2, they are named as Chairpersons. The relevant areas are as follows:

### Article II, Section 1, reads in part:

The Director positions may include the Historian, Membership Director, Web Master, Fund Raising Director, Contest Director, Member-at-large, and Publicity Director.

### Article III, Section 2, reads in part:

The League President shall:

- appoint Chairpersons .... Such persons ... may include: Webmaster, Newsletter Editor, Associate Editor, Grants Officer, Contest Chair, Parliamentarian, Historian, and others as needed.

To remedy the overlap of naming and to eliminate possible confusion, it is proposed that Article II, Section 1, be amended as follows.

### Currently, that section reads:

The Board of Directors shall consist of up to fifteen (15) voting members, as follows: four (4) elected Officers, namely the President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer, hereinafter referred to as the Officers. Officers may serve terms of one (1) year with a limit of two terms per officer position, allowing two consecutive years in any one position and up to eight consecutive years as an officer. However, a former officer may serve again after a two-year lapse in holding office. The year of service for each position begins immediately following the close of business at the annual membership business meeting at which they are elected; the immediate Past President, Past Vice-President, Past Secretary, and Past Treasurer who may serve one-year terms; and up to 7 appointed Directors. **The Director positions may include the Historian, Membership Director, Web Master, Fund Raising Director, Contest Director, Member-at-large, and Publicity Director.**

*(Continued next page)*

Director terms of office are not limited and they may continue to serve from year to year

We propose deleting the above highlighted text so that the section reads as follows:

The Board of Directors shall consist of up to fifteen (15) voting members, as follows: four (4) elected Officers, namely the President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer, hereinafter referred to as the Officers. Officers may serve terms of one (1) year with a limit of two terms per officer position, allowing two consecutive years in any one position and up to eight consecutive years as an officer. However, a former officer may serve again after a two-year lapse in holding office. The year of service for each position begins immediately following the close of business at the annual membership business meeting at which they are elected; the immediate Past President, Past Vice-President, Past Secretary, and Past Treasurer who may serve one-year terms; and up to 7 appointed Directors. Director terms of office are not limited and they may continue to serve from year to year.

The effect would be that if we cannot fill a particular position on the board (Historian or Fund Raising, for instance) we would not have lost a voting member; and we will still have as many non-voting committee Chairpersons as needed.

This amendment will maintain the original intention of having a maximum of seven non-elected voting board members while giving the President, with the board's approval, maximum flexibility in filling needed positions. The re-wording of Article III, Section 2, still allows the appointment of various named Chair positions "and others as needed."

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

**Find out **FRIDAY** at the 2022 OWLies Writing Contest Awards Ceremony, at 7 pm.**

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)

## What's better than young writers winning awards?



**Please pass along the included flyer wherever you can!**

IF YOU FALL IN  
LOVE WITH THE  
VISION AND NOT  
YOUR WORDS, THE  
REWRITING WILL  
BECOME EASIER.

NORA DELOACH

### **OWL Board Minutes**

Are available at

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

## **PLAN TO VOTE!**

**2022 slate of officers : President – Ronda Del Boccio**

**Vice President – Larry Wood**

**Secretary – Cindy McIntyre**

**Treasurer – Veda Boyd Jones**

**You may also nominate yourself or another person. Service is the highest form of kindness!**

# OWL 2022 FALL CONFERENCE SCHEDULE



**Friday, October 28: Writing Contest Awards  
followed by Social Time**

**7:00 pm – ? pm**



**Saturday, October 29**

**9:15 AM** Welcome, announcements

**9:30 AM**

**Phyllis Harris**

*Patience and Persistence Pave the Road to Publication:* The journey of getting to the publication stage

**10:20 AM** Break

**10:30 AM**

**Brenda Minton**

*Know Your Character: Why Backstory Matters:* Beyond Goal, Motivation and Conflict

**11:20 PM** Business meeting, elections, and TV raffle!

**11:40 PM** Lunch on your own, social time

**1:00 PM**

**1st Page Critique Panel**

**1:50 PM**

**Linda Apple**

*Using the Elements to Build Characters:* Assigning an element such as earth, fire, air, or water to a character

**2:45 PM** Break, door prizes

**3:00 PM**

**Mary-Lane Kamberg**

*"What's So Funny?"* : Humor writing techniques that work

**3:50 PM** Wrap-up, welcome new officers and board



**We hope you enjoy another OWL Writers' Conference!  
See you again in the spring**