

# The Owl's Hoot

Official Newsletter of  
**The Ozarks Writers League 501(c)(3)**

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## President's Corner

### INFLUENCE

By: Diane Yates

You may not think you're very influential, but you might be surprised. It doesn't matter if you're rich or poor, or the color of your skin, we all have an opportunity to influence the world, or at least the people around us.



From the minute we're born, the clock begins ticking. We start out on our journey in this life and it lasts as long as when that second ticks that we draw our last breath. No, I'm not being morbid. I'm being

realistic. Death is a fact of life. For many of us, we believe we're just passing through on our way to a more glorious existence. When that time comes, what kind of influence will we have been? What kind of impact on the world and those around us will we have had?

The everyday things, sometimes the small things, matter the most. How we treat others—lending a helping hand, extending charity to those in need are all things that live on after we're gone.

As a writer, we are more blessed than others to leave a lasting impression through our written word. EB White, author of *Charlotte's Web*, said, "Writers do not merely reflect and interpret life, they inform and shape life." That's me and you, writers! A noble calling to be sure!

So, man your journals, ready your computers, and march on, penning not only entertaining words, but inspiring stories that shape life and live forever.

**Bio:** Diane is the author of *Pathways of the Heart* and *All That Matters*, both of which are biography memoirs, telling not only her mother's story, but the stories of her father and herself. Diane and her husband, Rick, has served in youth and adult ministries in their church, where she wrote plays and skits as well as Sunday School curriculum and Bible studies. She has three children and eight grandchildren who are the crown of her life. She is currently working on her third novel, *Melissa's Fate: The Untold Story*.

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**Publishing Today**

- Pitch your book to agents and editors
- Submit entries for annual Art & Photo Contest Writing Contest
- Informative sessions And more ....

Ozarks Writers League Conference  
August 18th - 19th 2017  
Honeysuckle Inn, Branson Missouri  
[www.ozarkswritersleague.com](http://www.ozarkswritersleague.com)

Gina Panettieri, founder of Talcott Notch and Anna Michels, Sr. Editor at Sourcebooks share industry insights

Traditional Publishing  
Self Publishing  
E-Book  
MUST have an agent  
**NO AGENT NEEDED**

Ever feel like a child looking at these options through adult glasses?

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## Why I Write

By: Russell Gayer



I write humor because it's fun and requires very little research or effort on my part. I enjoy having people tell me they laughed out loud, spewed coffee through their nose, or had a coughing spell because they got tickled at something I wrote. In my opinion, spreading laughter is one of the

greatest rewards a writer can achieve.

Most of my stories and essays are inspired by observing ordinary people caught up in their daily routine. The original brain farts for *Dodging Miss Daisy* and *Donut Abuse* were spawned during my morning commute. Medical procedures such as a colonoscopy, vasectomy, or brain scans also provide good material and interesting characters. Although, I don't recommend running out and getting a root canal just so you'll have something to write about.

Once the basic concept for the story has been conceived, I start adding the bricks and mortar as time and inspiration allows. I don't outline or follow any kind of structure, nor do I set lofty word-count goals. I take my role as an underachiever seriously and follow the mantra, "Never do today what you can put off until tomorrow."

The best advice I ever received in regard to writing humor came third-hand from Patrick McManus. In his Writers' Forum, he shares a tip from an editor on how to come up with ideas for articles: "Take the ordinary and reverse it." This advice has served me well in stories such as *The Joys of Watching Paint Dry* and the title story from my upcoming book, *One Idiot Short of a Village*.

You can see Russell's blog at <http://russellgayer.com> or reach him by email at [russellwrites2@gmail.com](mailto:russellwrites2@gmail.com).

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**Note:** For our next newsletter, if you'd like to share with us your achievements, releases, progress, or just what you're currently working on, please email the editor. We'd love to share and be encouraged by your success!

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## Kudos. . .For the Success of Our Members!

### Paul William Bass



This past May, at the Missouri Writers Guild Annual Conference in Columbia, Missouri, Paul William Bass was honored to receive the prestigious 2017 First Place

Walter Williams Major Work Award for his book on The History of Fort Leonard Wood. The attached photo is of Paul and the new Missouri Writers Guild president, George Sirois. You can check out Paul's Facebook page at [Paul William Bass](https://www.facebook.com/PaulWilliamBass), or contact him at [BASSP@obu.edu](mailto:BASSP@obu.edu).

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### John W. Crawford

John has two poems in the August issue of the Missouri State Poetry Society newsletter, *Spare Mule*. He will have one poem in *GRIST*, the Missouri State Poetry Society yearly anthology for 2017. At the OWL meeting, he will be reading from his new book, *Female Voices From the Bible*, which can be found on Amazon.com. You can contact John at [docshakespeare@gmail.com](mailto:docshakespeare@gmail.com)

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### Veda Boyd Jones

Veda has sold a mini-mystery, *Morning Jog*, to



Woman's World and has three articles in Harris' Farmer's Almanac 2018, just hitting newsstands. You can learn more about Veda at [vedaboydjones.com](http://vedaboydjones.com) or Amazon.com; contact her at [info@vedaboydjones.com](mailto:info@vedaboydjones.com); or

request speaking fees and availability at [speaking@vedaboydjones.com](mailto:speaking@vedaboydjones.com).

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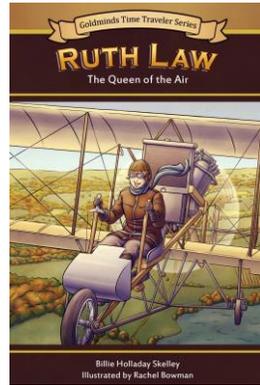
### Michael Koch

Michael has had his short story, *The Ozark Howler*, accepted for publication in the upcoming anthology for High Hill Press' *Mysteries of the Ozarks, Vol. V*. Also, he has had his first western magazine article, *Audie Murphy: From American Hero to Western Movie Star*, published in the Spring 2017 issue of *Saddlebag Dispatches*. Michael can be reached by email at [packers52@valornet.com](mailto:packers52@valornet.com).

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## Billie Holladay Skelley

At the 2017 Missouri Writers' Guild Conference held recently in Columbia, Billie received a First Place Award in Juvenile Book, Best Magazine Article, and Best Column in the annual President's Awards contest. She also took second place in the Best Poem category. Her book, *Ruth Law: The Queen of the Air*, recently won First Place Awards in the Biography and Historical Nonfiction Categories of the Purple Dragonfly Book Awards contest. This book, the second text in the *Goldminds Time Traveler Series*, was illustrated by Rachel Bowman and details the historic 1916 flight of aviation pioneer Ruth Law. Billie's contact information is [bhskelley24@gmail.com](mailto:bhskelley24@gmail.com).



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## Maryann Wakefield

On Sunday, July 30<sup>th</sup>, Maryann had a surprising and wonderful day at Barnes and Noble for a book signing for her newly published novel, *A Gentle Sun Coming*. The book sold out in the first hour. She's hoping for the same response for her second book, *A Raging Storm Coming*. Barnes and Noble is taking orders or the book can be ordered from Amazon.com. Maryann can be contacted at [annieswake@sbcglobal.net](mailto:annieswake@sbcglobal.net).



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## I Must Write

By: Margarite R. Stever

I began writing when I was 12 years old. My life was in turmoil due to my parents divorcing and all of the problems that accompany such an event. One of my teachers suggested I keep a journal or write about my troubles in some other way. I was never consistent with my journaling, but I poured my soul into my poetry. Once my feelings were put into words on the page, they no longer haunted me.

I've always had a vivid imagination. When I was a child, I made up elaborate stories for my Barbies who had jobs, children, working farms, divorces, cars that broke down, and hobbies. Two small flower vases served as my

antagonists. They were everything from evil step-mothers to mean bosses.

I began writing short stories in high school, and discovered my passion for prose. Writing without the restrictions of rhyme and meter allowed me to elaborate on my musings. As I grew older, my imagination progressed from Barbie's life to stories of new love, runaway livestock, dragons, ghosts, werewolves, and stalkers.

I often have vivid dreams. My husband occasionally remarks that he never remembers his dreams and can't believe it when I tell him about mine in great detail. The explanation is simple. I'm a story teller. My mind never shuts down. Sometimes I work my dreams into my writing, and the result is usually among my best work.

I write because I can't stop telling stories. I must write. I don't feel like myself if I go for an extended period of time without putting my words on paper. I write for my own mental stability and wellbeing. I wish to share my stories with the world and bring some color into a dull day.

Margarite's romantic short story, *Once Upon a Winter Storm*, will be in Grey Wolfe Publishing's November issue of their literary journal *Legends: Passion Pages*. The expected release date is November 1, 2017, and will be available in print and Kindle formats. Proceeds will benefit the American Heart Association. She is extremely proud to have her work support such a great cause. Other accomplishments include placing and publication in the 2017 and 2016 issues of The Crowder Quill. Margarite can be found at Ozarks Maven, Ozarks Maven on Facebook, @OzarksMaven on Twitter, and by email at [margarite95@yahoo.com](mailto:margarite95@yahoo.com).

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## OWL Shirts and Tote Bags

You can visit the website below to order your own OWL t-shirts and tote bags! Go to: <http://www.ozarkswritersleague.com/products>



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# OWL Board Meeting Minutes

From: May 19, 2017

Called to Order by Diane Yates at 4:12 p.m. Those Present: Diane Yates, Rick Yates, Diana West, Ronda Del Boccio, Beth Urich, Duke Pennell, John Crawford and Lori Ericson.

## Secretary's Report:

All present at the February meeting agreed they had read the minutes of the meeting and they were acceptable.

[Motion by Beth Urich to accept the secretary's report/Second by Duke Pennell/All approved]

## Treasurer's Report:

Beth Urich said she'd sent out the Treasurer's Report, and members reported reading it. Urich said the balance was \$2,471.00 at the end of April. She also discussed the organization's federal 501(c)(3) status and that it now has state tax-exempt status, which covers only items related to a league event such as: venue, speaker-related, and catering expenses.

[Motion by Duke Pennell accept the treasurer's report/Second by Diana West/All approved]

## Membership Report:

Rick Yates reported 119 members as of the last meeting. He reported an effort to contact previous members about renewing.

## Old Business:

Youth Writing Contest:

Diane Yates reported that the Youth Writing Contest has ended and the award checks have been distributed. Diana West stated that there were 23 entries in fiction, 15 in poetry and one in fan fiction. She suggested the contest shift from age limits of 12 to 18, to a grade limit instead, and possibly be limited to two categories. The board agreed to discuss the contest again in August.

Adult Writing Contest:

Diana West then reviewed the pending categories for the adult fiction contest and which contest categories lacked sponsors. The board agreed the rules would remain the same and that additional sponsors would be sought or those categories eliminated. Diane Yates said the contest needs to be

posted soon since the deadline for submittals is the end of August.

## New Business:

Diane Yates reported that there are several new Board Members: Anne Roberts, Newsletter Editor; John Crawford, Fundraising Director; and Ronda Del Boccio, Publicity Director.

The OWL Newsletter Editor, Anne Roberts, lives in another state and won't be able to attend. All agreed that the recent newsletter was well done, and Roberts could be informed of board meetings without having to attend.

[Motion by Beth Urich to accept the new board members/Second by Duke Pennell/All approved]

The Vice President position still needs to be filled. Diane Yates said it's very important for OWL to find a vice president since the vice president will likely serve as president in 2018. She said she won't be able to serve another term but is willing to serve as a back-up to the new president. She asked board members to think about possible vice president and provide input.

Beth Urich noted that OWL isn't getting local newspaper coverage, but flood coverage could have prevented recent coverage of the May meeting due to publication space constraints. Ronda intends to address that issue as part of her normal process as publicity chairperson.

Discussion of the membership survey to include number of meetings a year.

[Motion by John Crawford to table the issue of a survey until August/Second by Duke Pennell/All approved]

Discussion of August Conference:

Diane Yates reported that she has booked Gina Panettieri of Talcott Notch Literary Agency for August, along with Anna Michels from Sourcebooks. Board members briefly discussed financial costs for transportation, etc. for the speakers.

Fundraising:

The Board discussed the Blind Date with a Book and the cost. They agreed to sell the books for \$5

each. John Crawford agreed to run the auction for the Fruits of OWL basket. Diane Yates discussed the possibility of purchasing an item that can be raffled. The two items raffled last year were donated. Beth Ulrich reported that last year's laptop and quilt raffles were successful. The Board discussed purchasing an item that would appeal to members and be affordable on the OWL budget to raffle off in 2017. Yates and Crawford agreed to explore the idea further.

Other: (not applicable)

Motion to Adjourn by Beth Ulrich Seconded by Ronda Del Boccio: Time: 5:17 p.m.

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### **2017 Board Members:**

President: Diane Yates  
Vice President:  
Secretary: Lori Ericson  
Treasurer: Beth Ulrich  
Historian: Fred Pfister  
Membership & Webmaster: Rick Yates  
Writing Contest Director: Diana West  
Art & Photo Contest Director: Jan Morrill  
Fundraising Director: John Crawford  
Publicity Director: Ronda Del Boccio  
Newsletter Editor: Anne Roberts  
Past Secretary: Jess Nelson  
Past Treasurer: Ellen Thompson

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## **2017 Annual Photo & Art Contest August 18-19**

For OWL Members only. The August conference will include our 2017 annual Art and Photo Contest. Judging will be held in three categories: Photography, Art, and Alternative Art. Please bring your entries to the Cardinal Room Saturday morning at 8:00 a.m. For contest details, entry rules and awards, visit our website at: [https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/95097b\\_e0fd0aad52ef4f079592c7667132cf5a.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/95097b_e0fd0aad52ef4f079592c7667132cf5a.pdf)

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**Reserve a Table for Book Sales:** Contact: Rick Yates at [Ricky@DianeYates.com](mailto:Ricky@DianeYates.com)

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## **August 18-19, 2017 OWL Conference Agenda Honeysuckle Inn & Conference Center Branson, Missouri [www.OzarksWritersLeague.com](http://www.OzarksWritersLeague.com) **\*\*Pre-Registration Required\*\*****

### **Friday Night 7:00 – 8:30**

(No Charge) Join fellow OWL members at the Honeysuckle Inn & Conference Center for **open mic**. Plan now to share five minutes from your current work or another of your favorite passages. Reserve your spot now. Contact [Diane@DianeYates.com](mailto:Diane@DianeYates.com).

### **Saturday**

8:30 – 9:00 Registration  
9:00 – 9:15 Announcements  
9:15 – 9:30 Agent/Editor Introductions  
9:30 – 10:30 Gina Panettieri – Publishing Today (New Publishing and Publicity Trends)  
10:30 – 11:00 Break, Networking, Browse Book Tables, Hotel Check Out  
11:00 – 12:00 Anna Michels – Straight from the Source (What Editors Are Looking for In Today's Fiction and Nonfiction Markets)

### **Lunch**

12:00 – 1:00 **(Advance-purchase required! \$10.50 Please pre-order before August 17<sup>th</sup> 6:00 p.m. at [www.ozarkswritersleague.com](http://www.ozarkswritersleague.com) Order your lunch now and dine with fellow writers and artists without ever leaving the conference!**  
1:00 – 1:45 Rochelle Wisoff Fields – Using Flash Fiction as a Tool  
1:45 – 2:00 Art & Photo Contest Winners Announcement  
2:00 – 3:00 Agent/Editor Panel on Getting Your Work Noticed (Gina Panettieri, Anna Michels, Cheryl Ferguson, Patrick Sanders, Duke Pennell)

### **Pre-registration (Required):**

Please register online via the registration tab at <https://www.ozarkswritersleague.com/registration>. Conferences are still free to members and \$10 at the door for non-members.

**To Pitch Your Manuscript:** Sign up early to one or all our visiting editors and agents as space is limited. Contact: [Diane@DianeYates.com](mailto:Diane@DianeYates.com)

### **Accommodations:**

The Honeysuckle Inn & Conference Center is the feature hotel for OWL events. Book your room for an overnight experience to complete your conference weekend. Website: [HoneysuckleInn.com](http://HoneysuckleInn.com)  
Special OWL Rate - \$65 + tax  
Includes complimentary breakfast



### **Make reservations with:**

Honeysuckle Inn, 3598 Shepherd of the Hills Expressway, Branson, Missouri, USA, 417-335-2030.  
Email: [reservations@honeysuckleinn.com](mailto:reservations@honeysuckleinn.com)

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## **Guest Speakers:**

### **Gina Panettieri**

**President, Talcott Notch Literary Agency**



**“Publishing Today”**

### **New Publishing and Publicity Trends**

Gina Panettieri founded the Talcott Notch Literary Agency in 2003. It is a rapidly-growing mid-size literary and screen rights agency representing the freshest new voices in both fiction and nonfiction. Gina has expertise in every aspect of writing and publishing and has helped thousands of writers achieve their goals. She has successfully placed hundreds of books with such well-known publishers as Berkley, St. Martin's Press, Macmillan, McGraw-Hill, John Wiley & Sons and many others. Some of her recent projects include the WSJ bestselling thriller *WAR SHADOWS* by the writing team of Brian Andrews and Jeffrey Wilson, the Hillerman Prize-winning mystery *THE HOMEPLACE* by Kevin Wolf, and the film option of a pair of Frankenstein-themed YA romances, *BROKEN* and *TAINTED* by A.E. Rought to Piller/Segan/Shepherd.

Gina has appeared as a speaker at scores of national and regional conferences, leading workshops on a range of subjects ranging from characterization, dialogue and query letters, to the changing publishing market, publicity and new trends in fiction.

Gina talks about the specific role she plays as “being given the chance to find and nurture new books, to work with some of the most creative and talented writers, scientists and psychologists, cooks and criminologists, experts from every field of study, makes what I do feel so different from work that my inbox feels like Santa's magical Christmas bag. It's always full, always overflowing, but brimming with the potential of something spectacular. All I have to do is pull the little ribbon...”

Besides nonfiction, she represents upmarket women's fiction, historical fiction, dark fantasy and psychological suspense, and all types of crime fiction, including techno- and speculative thrillers. She's looking for quirky, edgy characters and work based on original research. She's open to YA and MG children's fiction and nonfiction. The rare moments she's not reading or editing or talking about reading or editing or arguing about contracts, sleeping on the train, or tweeting about industry news, she adores classic films and old-time radio shows.

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### **Anna Michels**

**Senior Editor at Sourcebooks**



**“Straight from the Source”**

### **What Editors Are Looking for In Today's Fiction and Nonfiction Markets**

Anna Michels is a Senior Editor at Sourcebooks and over the course of more than five years with the company has worked on a wide variety of projects, most recently focusing on acquiring adult fiction and nonfiction. She is looking for fiction that hits the sweet spot between commercial and literary with interesting settings and a strong narrative voice; mystery (particularly cozies and crossover literary—think *Ordinary Grace* by William Kent Krueger), literary thriller, and psychological suspense; and memoir by writers who connect the events of their lives to readers through incredible storytelling, as well as a wide variety of prescriptive and narrative nonfiction, and gift books.

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Also, speaking:

## **Rochelle Wisoff-Fields**

### **Friday Fictioneers**

#### **“Using Flash Fiction as a Tool”**

Rochelle, a graphic artist, has discovered her passion for creating word pictures as well as visual ones. Both her original artwork and short stories have been published in her eclectic debut anthology, *This, That and Sometimes the Other* by High Hill Press. Another facet of Rochelle’s writing is 100-word flash fiction for a weekly blog challenge called Friday Fictioneers.

A few of her short stories were included in High Hill Press collections, *Voices III, IV, VI, and IX Echoes of the Ozarks*.

Rochelle’s trilogy of historical novels, *Please Say Kaddish for Me*, *From Silt and Ashes*, and *As One Must, One Can*, chronicle the life of Havah Cohen, a rabbi’s daughter from 1899 to 1908 are published by Argus Books. Her coffee table book of original illustrations, a companion to the novels entitled, *A Stone for the Journey*, is due to be released in 2018.

Rochelle calls the Kansas City, Missouri, area home where she lives with her husband Jan. Married over forty-five years; they have three sons and one adorable granddaughter. All of whom are scattered from one coast to the other.

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**Our panel of editors and agents include our guest speakers as well as:**

## **Cheryl Ferguson**

### **Ferguson Literary Agency**

Cheryl founded The Ferguson Literary Agency (FLA) in 1996, and it is part of the new film and literary mecca that has exploded in Kansas City—which is known as the City of Fountains. FLA is a full service literary agency devoted to selling clients’ books, guiding their careers and offering whatever professional support needed to make them a success—including editorial and marketing support. The mission of FLA is to provide quality literary management for the writer of excellence.

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## **Patrick Sanders**

### **Agent/Intern, Metamorphosis Literary Agency (MLA)**

MLA is interested in commercial fiction that is well crafted. Besides interning at MLA, Patrick is a writer, musician, and artist living in Kansas City. He is studying English and sociology at UMKC, and is particularly interested in Postmodern Critical Theory. He reads mostly literary and experimental fiction, and his main sonic fascination is with experimental folk and ambient music. He dabbles in painting and mixed media film photography. His first published work "Impostor's Notebook" was released in early 2017.

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## **Duke Pennell**

### **Pen-L Publishing**

Since Duke and his wife, Kimberly, founded Pen-L Publishing in 2012, they’ve published over 100 great books. The goal of Pen-L is to help connect writers and readers, and its books run the gamut from non-fiction on space flight, domestic violence, and minor league baseball of the 1920s Ozarks to thrillers, cozy mysteries, and cowboy poetry that’ll have you crying in the saddle.

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