



The Owl's Hoot

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

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Newsletter Editor: Anne Roberts
areadywriter2@gmail.com

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President's Corner

THE OFFICE

By: [Diane Yates](#)

Being "The President" comes with enormous responsibility, weight and power. The office holds prestige, yet not without obligation. Fulfilling the commitment requires dedication, but also affords privilege.

The past two years, I've been honored to serve as your president, albeit at times not acting very presidential! I've stood before you and admitted I was on drugs! I've suggested that strange people spend time in each other's rooms! I've mispronounced words as well as some of your



names. Despite my behavior, you've endured me, bless your hearts. You've laughed at my calamities and offered me praises.

Even though I fumbled with planning conferences, important and influential people received my calls and committed to speak. Long-lasting friendships have been forged with educators, agents, and editors at publishing houses; friendships I hold dear.

I've gotten to know many of you even better than before. We've learned together, laughed together, and encouraged one another. It's in that same spirit that I will continue to be a member of OWL and support in any way I can, serving as the past

president on the 2018 board. (Yes, as some may not realize, officers commit to serving an additional year in the "past" role.) I've been fortunate to have had the support and advice of some of OWL's past presidents.

Now, if I may, I'd like to share some advice of my own. Whoever said, "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me" lied! What a blessing it is to have the ability to compose words that convey a message; a message of hope, honesty, and love. Although, my skill is far from adequate, I know that the choice and placement of each word matters in painting an accurate picture. One wrong word choice could influence a different view, could succeed in creating a deception. Rearranging the order of words could paint a picture stained by misconception. Write responsibly!

I wish each and every one of you a successful, long, and fruitful writing career. It has been my distinct privilege to serve as your president the last two years, a time near and dear to my heart. I look forward to continuing to be a part of this great group, Ozarks Writers League.

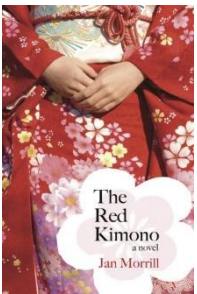
Bio: Diane is the author of [Pathways of the Heart](#) and [All That Matters](#), both of which are biography memoirs, telling not only her mother's story, but the stories of her father and herself. Diane and her husband, Rick, have served in youth and adult ministries in their church, where she wrote 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*.

Why I Write



By: Jan Morrill (Author of [The Red Kimono](#))

From the time I was a little girl, it was easier to write my feelings than to speak them. When I was in junior high, I began keeping a diary where I wrote about my hopes, my dreams, my anger, and yes, perhaps especially my crushes. If I had something difficult to say to someone, I almost always said it in writing before speaking in person.



One day, someone I trusted read my diary, and for a long time, I quit writing. Never again would I allow the world to see my true thoughts. But, of course, I was young and impetuous at the time, and “never” was a frequent word in my vocabulary. It wasn’t long before I felt caged in a self-imposed prison.

Enter fiction. In my 30’s, I learned I could tell my truths through my characters. Better yet, in my 50’s, I realized it was okay for the world to know my true feelings. I even started a blog—a kind of public diary. And though there are still some things I keep to myself, writing is my freedom.

And that’s why I write.

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www.janmorrill.com

Blogs:

www.janmorrill.wordpress.com

www.haikubyhaiku.wordpress.com

For the Write Reasons

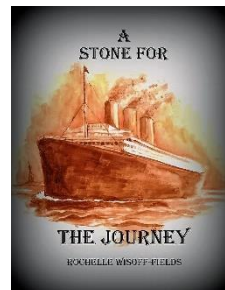


By: Rochelle Wisoff-Fields (Author of [Please Say Kaddish for Me](#))

My love of writing goes back to elementary school but didn’t become a passion until 2003, when the idea of writing my family’s history caught me. It occurred to me that the plight of Jews in Eastern Europe was much lesser known than the Holocaust. My desire to tell the story began with the frustration of there not being much about my personal family history. This led to Google and numerous Jewish history websites.

Oh, that we’d had the internet when I was in high school. I might have been a straight A History student.

After several months, I had written a 114,000-word manuscript, suitable for publishing. Or not. OWL member, Nancy Beverage, invited me to join a few writing groups where I began to learn the craft of writing. Several times she invited me to Ozarks Writers League.



“A bunch of ‘Cowboy’ writers aren’t going to be interested in my Jewish historical fiction,” I said.

Finally, Nancy convinced me to go to the August 2007 conference with her. In a workshop on constructing the 5-minute pitch, co-taught by Linda Lowe Apple and Dusty Richards, I nervously presented my first attempt. I began with the line, [Please Say Kaddish for Me](#) ([Barnes & Noble](#)) could be subtitled “The Dark Side of Fiddler on the Roof.”

I can't believe it has been ten years this month since I pitched my first novel to Terry Burns at OWL. I guess it's cliché to say a lot has happened since then. Or as my mother once said, "That's a lot of water under the dam."

After telling me he was interested and requesting a book proposal which took a month to write, he turned my book down. However, I framed his rejection which began with "This was just excellent, Rochelle..." He went on to explain that he wasn't the right agent. Suffice it to say, I appreciated his honesty.



Argus Books picked up PSKFM and released it in the spring of 2015. They went on to publish the sequels [From Silt and Ashes](#) (winter 2015) and [As One Must, One Can](#) in December of 2016.

The publisher asked some time back if I might be interested in doing a coffee table companion book of excerpts and illustrations of the novels. That didn't take much arm twisting since I saw myself as a visual artist long before I discovered my passion for writing. There's no release date scheduled but it will come some time in 2018. I'm finding that putting together a book of this type is more of a challenge than writing a novel.



Over the past few months I've had prints made of the illustrations and participated in a few arts and crafts festivals. My husband Jan has stepped up as my roadie and cheerleader. In his enthusiasm he has helped put together quite a display of purple tent, grid walls and folding tables. Happily, the artwork and books seem to sell each other. At any rate, they make for great conversation starters.

Contact Information for Rochelle:

runtshell@gmail.com

Blog: www.rochellewisoff.com

Google "Addicted to Purple" and you'll find me.

<https://www.facebook.com/rochelle.w.fields> or

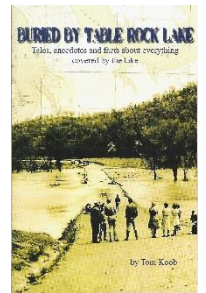
<https://www.facebook.com/RochelleWisoffFields.author/>.

Twitter @RochelleFields

Author Update

By: Tom Koob

I am happy to say my book [Buried by Table Rock Lake](#) continues to be popular in this area. Although originally self-published in 2006, it still sells well to both residents and visitors to the Ozarks. People seem to be very interested in what this area was like before the big lakes and how the damming of the rivers changed the Ozarks forever. *Buried* is available at several area retailers, but I am particularly proud that the Barry County Museum, Stone County Museum and Branson Centennial Museum all carry my book.



I have two other books, [The History of Fishing Table Rock Lake](#) and [Enon to Radium Spring](#) that are out of print, but still available as Kindle eBooks. Last year I published my first novel, [Virgin Bluff](#). Writing fiction was a new experience for me, but I enjoyed it and am already working on a sequel. I incorporated some of what I learned in researching my non-fiction books into my novel. I have found that marketing a novel is much different than promoting non-fictional history.

Because *Buried* still sells well, I am working on a revised edition that will include new and updated stories and some new photographs. I hope to complete the revision for my tenth printing next year. **Contact Information for Tom:** wolpublish@gmail.com

Author Update

By: Margarite R. Stever

I'm currently working on my paranormal romance novel. I've recently joined a critique group where I've received valuable feedback on my book. I'm consequently revising everything they've read so far. I hope to have my book ready for pitching by the spring.

Author Update

By: Nancy Hartney



Nancy has been with OWL for over eight years. This November, Nancy is celebrating the one-year anniversary of [If the Creek Don't Rise](#), a second collection of short stories. She also had an article, *Tally-Ho*, on foxhunting in the September 2017 *Arkansas Life*

Magazine.

In October, Nancy participated in the True Lit Festival at the Fayetteville Public Library in Arkansas. This November, she was at the workshop, Writing the Short Story: Five Essential Steps, at the Village Writing School in Rogers, Arkansas.

Contact information for Nancy:

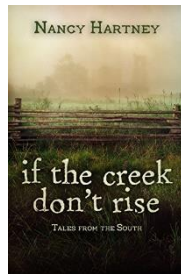
www.NancyHartney.com

nancy.hartney@gmail.com or

Pen-L Publishing [http://pen-](http://pen-l.com/LiteraryFiction.html)

[l.com/LiteraryFiction.html](http://pen-l.com/LiteraryFiction.html)

<https://nancyhartney.wordpress.com/>



Author Update

By: Barb Thomas



This is Barb's first year at OWL. She started [blogging this year](#). She finished a three-novel series which is now in the hands of the three agents and one editor who requested it. Meanwhile, she waits... In January of 2018, Barb will begin researching and writing

for a children's book and a memoir in novel form, based on a true love story of the 1920's.

Contact information for Barb:

Blog: www.midweststoryteller.com

rbjthoma@gmail.com

For Midwest Storyteller: barb@midweststoryteller.com

Instagram: @midweststoryteller, Twitter:

@mwstoryteller, Pinterest: @mwstoryteller,

Facebook: Midwest

Kudos. . .For the Success of Our Members!



Billie Holladay Skelley

Billie Holladay Skelley's book, [Spice Secret: A Cautionary Diary](#), received a silver medal in the Young Adult Fiction – Mature Issues Category of the 2017 Moonbeam Children's Book Awards. Her book, [Ruth Law:](#)

[The Queen of the Air](#), received a bronze medal in the Non-Fiction – Chapter Book Category of the contest.

Contact Information for Billie:

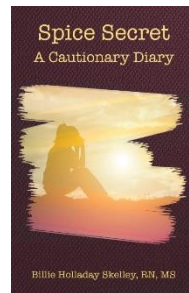
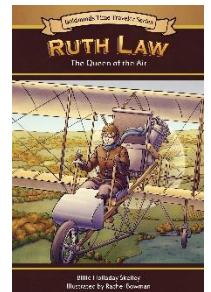
Billie Holladay Skelley

3780 West 26th Street

Joplin, MO 64804

E-mail: bhskelley24@gmail.com

Website: www.bhskelley.com



Margarite R. Stever

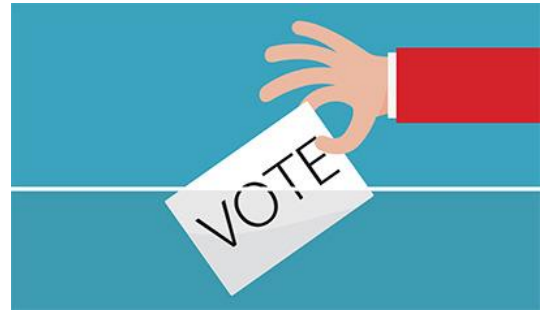
Margarite's publication of *Once Upon a Winter Storm*, by Grey Wolfe Publishing in *Legends: Passion Pages* is due out November 1st.



She attended the Ozarks Creative Writers Conference in October for the first time. Not knowing what to expect, she was shocked when she placed in seven competitions. Margarite won the following awards:

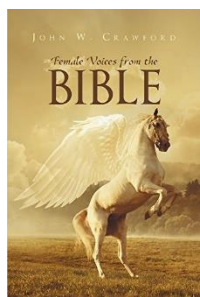
- 1st Place in the Your Lucky Dog Award
- 1st Place in the Writing is a Blast Award
- 1st Place in the Amphorae Publishing Group Award
- 2nd Place in the Tell Me a Story Award

- 3rd Place in the It Was a Dark and Stormy Night Award
- 1st Honorable Mention in the Your Lucky Romance Award
- 3rd Honorable Mention in the Jimmy Richardson Memorial Award



Contact information for Margarite:

Blog: ozarksmaven.com
 Ozarks Maven on Facebook
 @OzarksMaven on Twitter.



John W. Crawford
 John's book, [Female Voices from the Bible](#) has a good preview on YouTube. The book can be found on Amazon.com and [Barnes & Noble](#).

John has received the following awards:

A 2nd place and an H.M. from

Tennessee Poetry Society

An H.M. from Ohio Poetry Day contests

An H.M. from Arkansas Poetry Day contests

Contact Information for John:

docshakespeare@gmail.com

C.D. Albin

Craig's short story collection [Hard Toward Home](#) (Press 53, 2016) received the 2017 Missouri Author Award in fiction from the Missouri Library Association this month at their annual convention in St. Louis.



Contact Information for C.D.:

CraigAlbin@MissouriState.edu

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!

2018 Slate of Officers:

President	Lori Ericson
Vice President	Russell Gayer
Treasurer	Beth Urich
Secretary	Kent Bonham

These are the nominating committee's choices for the 2018 election of officers. There will be a general membership vote at the November meeting.

OWL Shirts and Tote Bags

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



OWL Board Meeting Minutes

From: August 18, 2017

Called to Order by President Diane Yates at 4:12 pm.
Those Present: Diane Yates, Rick Yates, Beth Urich,
Ronda Del Boccio, Jan Morrill, Duke Pennell, & John
Crawford.

Secretary's Report:

All present at the May meeting agreed they had read the minutes of the meeting and they were acceptable.
[Motion by Duke Pennell to accept the secretary's report / Second by Jan Morrill / All approved]

Treasurer's Report:

Discussion: Treasurer Beth Urich reported that Arvest Bank balance at end of July was \$3,407.96. All present had reviewed the reports and had no questions.
[Motion by Jan Morrill to accept the treasurer's report / Second by Rick Yates / All approved]

Membership Report:

Membership Chairperson Rick Yates reported there are currently 75 paid members, including 18 new. He also reported that the on-line meeting registration tab is working well and helps on meeting day.

Old Business:

Member/Non-Member Survey

Following discussion of the draft survey developed by Lori Ericson and Beth Urich, they decided on the following:

1. There should be separate surveys – one for members (available on-line) and one for non-members (available at meetings to evaluate the meeting experience).
2. The on-line member survey will be created in Google Forms and accessible through an email link. Ronda Del Boccio volunteered to create the Google Form based on the draft and comments noted during Board's discussion. Ronda and Rick will coordinate to ensure access by website.
3. To provide incentive to members to fill out the survey, we will have a drawing for an Amazon Gift Card among all entrants who include their email on the survey.
4. Ronda will distribute a test version of the survey to board members for review and comment.

No other old business

New Business:

Board member for the 2018 OWL Officer Nominating Committee: Diane Yates suggested Duke Pennell represent the board on the 2018 Nominating Committee. [Jan Morrill moved to approve / Beth Urich seconded / All approved]

November Conference: Diane Yates suggested an EDUCATION theme with as much diversity as possible. Jan Morrill and Ronda Del Boccio volunteered to sessions on Writing Basics and Social Media, respectively.

Fundraising: Following discussion, the board agreed to raffle a Kindle Fire with Keyboard for our November fundraiser. Diane/Rick will acquire device & John Crawford will facilitate activity. Ticket price – \$5/one; \$20/five.

Daily Attendance Fee: Rick Yates suggested we do away with a daily fee to encourage membership, effective with the November 2017 meeting. He noted that nothing in the Bylaws requires a daily attendance fee. [Duke Pennell moved to approve / Jan Morrill second / All approved]

Motion to Adjourn by Jan Morrill Seconded by Ronda Del Boccio / All approved. Meeting adjourned at 5:13 pm.

2017 Board Members:

President: Diane Yates
Vice President:
Secretary: Lori Ericson
Treasurer: Beth Urich
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

Reserve a Table for Book Sales: Contact: Rick Yates at Ricky@DianeYates.com

November 17-19, 2017
OWL Conference Agenda
Honeysuckle Inn & Conference Center
Branson, Missouri
www.OzarksWritersLeague.com
****Pre- Registration Required****

“Putting the ‘Creative’ in Your Writing”

Friday Night 7:00 – 8:30

Annual Writing Contest Awards Banquet – Join fellow OWL members at the Honeysuckle Inn & Conference Center for a festive dinner and awards ceremony. [Purchase your banquet tickets now](#) on our website www.ozarkswritersleague.com. If you have any questions, please contact Diane Yates at Diane@DianeYates.com.

Saturday

- 8:30 – 9:00 Registration
- 9:00 – 9:15 Announcements
- 9:15 – 10:00 **Russell Gayer** – Personal Branding and You
- 10:00 – 10:15 OWL Member Business Meeting / Officer Elections
- 10:15 – 10:45 Break, Networking, Browse Book Tables, Hotel Check Out
- 10:45 – 11:45 **Dr. James Brubaker**, Southeast Missouri State University Press
- 11:45 – 12:00 Raffle and Auction
- Lunch**
- 12:00 – 1:00 **(Advance-purchase required! \$10.50 Please pre-order before November 16th, 6:00 p.m. at www.ozarkswritersleague.com**
Order your delicious lunch now and dine with fellow writers and artists without ever leaving the conference!
- 1:00 – 1:45 **Jan Morrill** – Internalization: Demonstrating a Character’s Inner Conflict
- 1:45 – 2:00 Break, Networking, Browse Book Tables
- 2:00 – 2:45 **Ronda Del Boccio** – Managing Your Social Media Presence
- 2:45 – 3:00 Wrap-Up

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.

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
 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

2017 Annual Writing Contest Awards Banquet

Friday, November 17, at 7:00 p.m.

The festivity begins in the Cardinal Room of the Honeysuckle Inn and Conference Center in Branson. Purchase your meal on our website at www.ozarkswritersleague.com or contact Diane at Diane@DianeYates.com

Kindle Raffle Drawing

Saturday, November 18th

We will have a raffle drawing for a brand-new Kindle Fire with attachable keyboard. Tickets are 1 for \$5, 3 for \$10, or 7 for \$20.

OWL Board Book Basket Auction

Saturday, November 18th

We’ll be auctioning off an OWL Board Book Basket and another basket full of neat surprises.

Guest Speakers:

DR. JAMES BRUBAKER

Director of Southeast Missouri State University
Press



“Putting the ‘Creative’ in Your Writing”

James Brubaker is from Dayton, Ohio, originally, but now teaches and lives in Missouri. He is the author of one book of short stories, *Liner Notes* (Subito Press), a short volume of pilot episodes for fictional television shows, *Pilot Season* (Sunnyoutside Press), *Black Magic Death Sphere: (Science) Fictions* (which won the 2014 Pressgang Prize and is still looking for a publisher), and a number of short stories that have appeared online and in print. James is also the director of Southeast Missouri State University Press and the editor of *Big Muddy*. Before that, he was a founding and associate editor of *The Collapsar* (2013-2017), and served as music section editor of *The Fiddleback* for that journal’s entire run (2010-2013). In 2013, James

received his Ph.D. in English, with an emphasis in Fiction Writing, from Oklahoma State University. He recently finished writing a novel called, *The Taxidermist’s Catalog*, and is seeking either representation or a publisher.

JAN MORRILL

Author



“Internalization: Demonstrating a Character’s Inner Conflict”

Jan Morrill is a wife, mom, grandma, sister, daughter, friend and writer. She loves all of her roles, but the first six are her priority, which tells you a bit about why it’s taking her so long to finish the sequel to *The Red Kimono*. After her dreams of supporting herself as a writer metamorphosed into the practicality of a regular paycheck, she returned to an 8-5 job and was serendipitously surprised to discover that when her income didn’t depend on writing, the joy of writing returned. Though the quantity of time to write is less, the quality is so much better. Currently, Jan is STILL working on the sequel to *The Red Kimono* and is also editing her latest novel, *Mo’s Shadow*.

Guest Speakers (Continued):

RUSSELL GAYER

Author



“Personal Branding and You”

All I can say is “A picture is worth a thousand words, but Russell only gets 99 words per picture??? Don’t miss his session! An accomplished writer and humorist, he is always helping others to learn and be funny while doing it.

Contact Information for Russell:

<https://russellgayer.com/>

RONDA DEL BOCCIO

Author



“Making the Most of Your Social Media Presence”

Ronda is an author, speaker and mentor living in rural Missouri with her beautiful guide dog, Jemma. A contributor in twenty-four books, she is the author of several books of her own, including the #1 bestseller, *Mover and Shaker*, [The Peace Seed: Personal and Global Transformation Through Storytelling](#), [The Instant VIP](#), and [Instant Author Formula: 6 Simple Methods for How to Write a Book FAST!](#). Her fiction books include: [A Tasty Morsel](#), and [The Assassin and the Prince](#). Ronda says helping authors is such fun! She loves hanging out with people who love stories and want to make a difference.