



The Owl's Hoot

Official Newsletter of

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

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Hoots from the President

Be Proud of Yourself

By: Margarite R. Stever

I'm a writer. Deep down in my soul, that's all I've ever wanted to be. I'm often surprised by the response I receive when I tell people I'm a writer. It seems to make some folks uncomfortable. Out of polite obligation, I'm usually asked where I'm published. After I list my publications, which are all short prose and poetry so far, the responses aren't always positive.

I took one of the anthologies in which I have a story to a family dinner last year. I was excited because the book was comprised of only Missouri writers. Most of my family members looked at the book and said nice things. A couple of them refused to look at it, but it's their loss.

They think I'm wasting my time, and I've made peace with their lack of interest. At least if they aren't saying anything, they aren't actively trying to hurt me. Nothing could have prepared me for the moment my cousin read my first paragraph and asked me if I paid to have my story included.

I was stunned at his harsh question and rendered speechless. Another relative answered him with a brilliant, "She's a professional. She doesn't pay to be published. She gets paid to be published."

My cousin wasn't finished being snide, though. He asked me why the first paragraph wasn't indented. He knew it should be because that's how he learned to write in school. He didn't know why I thought I was special enough to ignore the rules of writing. I explained the publisher is the one who left-justified the first paragraph, and it's a common practice in the publishing industry.

Most of us have stories like this. I follow several bestselling authors on Twitter, and happened across a post from Lori Foster discussing snide remarks and backhanded compliments she receives. I was amazed that someone as accomplished as Lori suffers such negative comments. She is one of my idols, and she's been in the business for a long time. She has her own motor coach with her face on the side of it. She's world famous. People line up around the block to have her sign their books. She is who I aspire one day to emulate. Yet, she deals with people trying to hurt her feelings and make her feel bad about herself, just like the rest of us.

I deal with this sort of negativity by connecting with other writers. When someone manages to get a barb into my ever-thickening writer skin, I email the Prose Sisters who offer me support, encouragement, and validation. Then I look at the beautiful books on my shelf that comprise most of my publishing credits.

I attend gatherings with writers of various genres and different approaches to writing, marketing, and publishing. I go to writers' conferences where I meet others like me from all over the country and learn from those who have achieved great success.

I want each of you to know that writing is a noble art. It's not a waste of time or something for which you should feel ashamed. You should be proud of your efforts. Putting the words of your heart on paper is difficult and takes a special kind of person. Sharing those words with others can be terrifying. If you are doing those things, then I applaud you. If you aren't quite there, but are striving, then I encourage you to keep going. Take a moment to pat yourself on the back for pursuing your dream.

We writers are a special breed of people. The beauty of OWL is how we encourage and support each other. We educate and enlighten even as we receive education and enlightenment from other members. It has been an honor to serve as 2019 OWL President.

I hope to see you all at the 2019 OWL FALL CONFERENCE September 21, 2019 at the Camden Hotel in beautiful Branson, Missouri.

Margarite R. Stever

PRESIDENT BIO:



Margarite Stever grew up in Asbury, Missouri, a tiny town of just over 200 people. She currently lives in a larger Missouri city with her husband and beloved fur babies. She writes stories and essays that touch a person's heart. She is the 2019 President of Ozarks Writers League and a member of the Joplin Writers' Guild, Sleuths' Ink Mystery Writers, and Ozarks Romance Authors. She has upcoming publications in *Chicken Soup for the Soul's It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas* and the *2019 Joplin Writers' Guild Anthology*. Her work has recently appeared in *Anthology 2019 Sleuths' Ink Mystery Writers*, *Missouri's Emerging Writers; Legends: Passion Pages*; *50-Word Stories* website; the 2019, 2018, 2017, and 2016 issues of *The Crowder Quill*; the Fall 2015 issue of *The Maine Review*; *Mamalode Magazine's 2015 Better Together*; and *Writer's Digest 2014 Show Us Your Shorts Collection*. She has placed in several contests, and her seeds of wisdom and joy can be read at ozarksmaven.com. She has a Bachelor of Arts in English from Missouri Southern State University. She works for a community action agency where she is instrumental in assisting low income people achieve more energy efficient homes. authormargarite@yahoo.com

TO DO LIST

- Schedule your pitch sessions with our amazing speakers now by contacting us at ozarkwriters@gmail.com.
- Reserve your book table by contacting us at ozarkwriters@gmail.com
- Enter our 2019 Writing Contests! (See details below)

Don't forget to enter our 2019 Writing Contests!

One \$15.00 submission fee is all you need to enter as many categories as you like.

DEADLINE IS AUGUST 5, 2019.

You must be an OWL member in good standing to enter. Fees may be paid via our PayPal link on our website: <https://www.ozarkswritersleague.com/writing-contest>

Check payments may be mailed to:

John Daleske - OWL Contest Facilitator
7011 State Hwy DD
Branson West, MO 65737

OWL is seeking volunteers to serve as 2020 President, Vice President, and Secretary. If you are interested in one of these important positions, please contact us at ozarkwriters@gmail.com.

Reserve a Table for Book Sales

Don't forget to reserve your book table by contacting us at ozarkwriters@gmail.com.

Author Updates & Kudos. . .For the Success of Our Members!

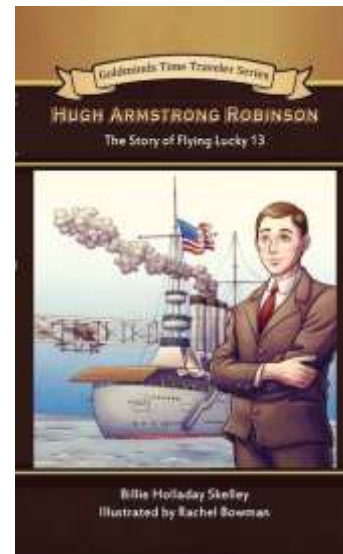
Kudos. . . Rochelle Wisoff-Fields' coffee table book *A STONE FOR THE JOURNEY* September 2018. It is the companion to her novel trilogy, *PLEASE SAY KADDISH FOR ME*, *FROM SILT AND ASHES*, and *AS ONE MUST ONE CAN*. It is replete with novel excerpts, new short stories, and original illustrations by the author. For those who haven't read the series, the book of illustrations and character portraits—some actual historical figures—whets the appetite to learn more about the main character, Havah and the facts behind the fiction.



Kudos. . . **Margarite R. Stever** is having a busy year. She won Honorable Mention and publication by the Crowder Quill for her Haiku in May. She won 1st Place in the Joplin Writers' Guild Romantic Short Story Contest, and her winning story, "The Slippery Road to Love," will be published in the Joplin Writers' Guild 2019 Anthology in December. Her story, "Lost Sheep," is being published in Anthology 2019 Sleuths' Ink Mystery Writers in July. Her memoir, "Dollhouse," will be published in Chicken Soup for the Soul's Christmas book, *It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas* in October. She is also serving as OWL President, which keeps her on her toes.



Kudos. . . **Billie Holladay Skelley** has a new book, *Hugh Armstrong Robinson: The Story of Flying Lucky 13*. This text details the life, accomplishments, and contributions of a remarkable aviation pioneer. Illustrated by Rachel Bowman, the book is published by Goldminds Publishing/Amphorae Publishing.



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 (madison@wildozark.com). We'd love to share

Author Update/Event:

From Phyllis York ... This event is free to attend, and the only people profiting are the authors themselves.

BOAT TOWN BREWING



GROWN UP BOOK FAIR

OWL Shirts and Tote Bags

Available at the conferences: Get your own OWL t-shirts and tote bags!



OWL Conference Agenda

NEW VENUE: Camden Hotel
275 Tanger Blvd.
Branson, MO 65616
(417) 334-8404

The conference details will appear in the next newsletter.

Accommodations:

Camden Hotel
275 Tanger Blvd.
Branson, MO 65616

Guest Speakers & Presenters



Stephanie Hansen

“How to Successfully Pitch”

Stephanie Hansen represents debut to New York Times bestselling authors. She's signed authors with small press to major publishing house. She holds a master's degree and Creative Writing Specialization. Predominately she represents YA SF/F but has a secret addiction for romance. While these are her favorite, she handles everything fiction from children's books to adult thrillers. Previously an editor for Mind's Eye Literary Magazine, she became a part of Metamorphosis July 2016. Originally looking to help Midwest authors garner the attention of major publishing houses, despite residing in "flyover states," she found camaraderie with multiple agents and editors. Stephanie is unilaterally deaf with 90 dB tinnitus. She's dedicated to elevating voices that often go unheard.

She's seeking: Romantic comedies YA & Adult and YA contemporary with unexpected antagonists. She is intrigued by prose that flows as smoothly as poetry, unforgettable plot twists & well-rounded characters.

Stephanie will be taking pitches.



Kourtney Price

“Reading Your First Five Pages Like an Agent”

Kortney was (and still is) that person in the bookstore who recommends books to strangers based on what they're buying. When she realized that she could make a career out of helping authors and getting excited over books, she decided to pursue a career in agenting. So, after graduating with a B.A. in English from Greenville University in 2014, she started out with her first agency internship. Since then she has interned with Andrea Hurst & Associates, Amphorae Publishing Group, and Inklings Literary Agency. She was an associate agent at Holloway Literary before finding her home with Corvisiero.

Outside of her world of books and publishing, Kortney can typically be found attending musicals, meandering through art museums, watching an absurd amount of movies, pretending she understands and can teach sports at her aunt's special needs nonprofit, exploring the city, catering to her diva dog's every whim, and trying to rein in her corgi puppy.

To learn more about Kortney, visit her [website](#).

Middle Grade:

- Adventure or Survival stories
- Mysteries – *The Westing Game* by Ellen Raskin or *39 Clues*
- Historical
- Science Fiction – shenanigans on the space station or a space colony please!

- Steampunk
- Fantasy
- Contemporary – *Pictures of Hollis Woods* by Patricia Reilly Giff
- Graphic Novels

Young Adult:

- “Geeky” or “artsy” romance
- Magical realism that is just dripping with atmosphere
- Historical
- Psychological thrillers- *The Cellar* by Natasha Preston
- Fantasy of any kind – Atmospheric historical or retellings of unique myths, culture based high fantasy are her favorites
- Science fiction – especially near future, but space opera is also welcome
- Steampunk -*Airborn* by Kenneth Oppel and *The Finishing School* series by Gail Calliger

For more about what Kortney is looking for, check out the extended editions of her wish list on her [blog](#) or her page at [#mswl](#)



Kaitlyn Johnson

“How to Structure Your Synopsis”

After receiving a BA in Writing, Literature, and Publishing from Emerson College, Kaitlyn refused to leave the concept of nightly homework behind. As well as being an associate agent for Corvisiero Literary Agency, she is also a freelance editor at her own company, [K. Johnson Editorial](#), and has worked as a copyeditor for academic publisher code Mantra, a YA editor for Accent Press, and a Conference Assistant for GrubStreet, Boston. She has written various articles for *Writer's Digest* and

has had a flash fiction story published in the anthology *A Box of Stars Beneath the Bed*.

Kaitlyn will accept pitches and is interested in:

- upper MG, YA, NA/A are her main interests
- Kaitlyn adores fantasy works (yes, that very much includes urban!) and time travel
- General Romance (erotic elements OK) and Contemporary Romance
- Historical Fiction: anything other than Henry VIII, Shakespeare, American Civil War, Greek gods/myths
- Contemporary can grab her attention only if the concept is unique and well-executed
- LGBT (as well as characters questioning their sexuality) welcome in all above genres



Regina Riney

“What Publishers Look For and What Makes Them Stop Reading”

Ms. Riney is an award winning author with publications in the following magazines and anthologies: *Midwest Literary Shorelines Literary, Horse & Mule, Black Powder Annual, Rural Arkansas, Black Petals, Futures Mysterious Anthology, Ozarks Monthly, and Dead Mule*. She’s also been published in the following anthologies: *Smile: American Short Humor, Writing on Walls I, II, and III, Echoes of the Ozarks I, II, III, IV, and V, Tales of the South, Cuirve River, Shadows After Midnight, Voices I, II, and III, Fifty Shades of Santa, and Cupid’s Quiver*. Her work has also appeared online at *Fiction Addiction*. *Tales of the South* is also a radio program on NPR in Little Rock, Arkansas, where she read her stories to be included on the program.

Ms. Riney is the past vice-president and past-president of the Ozarks Writers League.

For the past seventeen years, Ms. Riney has been the editor/publisher of *The Storyteller* magazine, and for the last year has been the editor/publisher of Mockingbird Lane Press, a small press book publisher.

www.thestorytellermagazine.com

www.mockingbirdlanepress.com



Diane Yates

“What Came First Pros or Prose? Pros of an Agent/Prose Strengthening”

Diane is the author of *Pathways of the Heart* and *All That Matters*, published by W&B Publishers. Her short stories have been published in anthologies and journals. Her third novel, *Melissa’s Fate*, won first place in OWL’s 2017 unpublished manuscript category. Diane’s love for romantic fiction fuels her passion for writing. She believes she should write with purpose. She loves creating a story where characters receive strength and hope amidst real-life struggles. As a past president of Ozarks Writers League for two consecutive terms, she understands the benefits of such organizations to foster growth and success in writers. Besides OWL, she is a member of American Christian Fiction Writers, the Columbia Writers Guild, Boonslick Creative Writers, and Clean Fiction Writers. She is currently writing an historical fiction. Diane works in youth and adult ministries at her church and has written plays and skits, as well as Sunday School curriculum and Bible studies. She and her husband, Rick, spend winters in Florida and summers in Missouri. She has three children and eight grandchildren who are the crown of her life.

Contests

2019 OWL Writing Contest Rules

\$15.00 Flat Submission Fee to enter as many contests as you like.

The Contest email is:

OWL.Contests@gmail.com (can be all lower case)

The only exceptions to online submissions are that books, of course, must be shipped to the Contest Facilitator and John prefers the Crawford Poetry entries to be typed and mailed.

Submission Fee may be paid via PayPal link: <https://www.ozarkswritersleague.com/writing-contest>

Mail two copies of book submissions, poetry submissions, as well as submission fees via check to:

John Daleske - OWL Contest Facilitator
7011 State Hwy DD
Branson West, MO 65737

All other entries must be submitted online to the above email address with the standard submission format and rules. Nothing identifying the author may appear on the submission.

The submission email must include the author’s name, address, email address, and phone number.

- Only one entry per category and cannot enter same manuscript in more than one 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 in any OWL contest.)
- DO NOT put your name on any part of the entry. (Except Best Book Award)
- Entries must be emailed or postmarked no later than August 5, 2019. Contest Chair is not responsible for misdirected or lost in mail entries.
- No gratuitous or graphic violence or sex. Let's keep it clean.
- No manuscripts returned and all will be destroyed after judging is final. Those submitting books for Best Book Award may have them returned if sufficient postage is sent with the entry. Otherwise, they will be donated.
- Qualified judges will conduct blind judging. Judges and sponsors, if OWL members, may not enter the category they judge or sponsor, but may enter other categories.
- If only two or three entries received in a category, those will still be judged. If only one entry received in a category, it will receive First Place.
- First Place winners may not enter that manuscript in any subsequent OWL writing contest.
- Winners will be announced on Friday evening of September OWL meeting. For those winners not present, certificates and checks will be mailed.

Send your best work. Good luck to all who enter! Questions may be submitted to the OWL Contests email, as well.

OWL BOARD MEETING AGENDA

Friday, April 26, 2019

Camden Hotel & Conference Center, Branson, MO

Members attending: Margarite Stever, Beth Urich, Russell Gayer, John Crawford, Bonnie Tesh, Ronda Del Boccio, April Brock, Sasha Ball Rives, Brenda Black, John and Reina Daleske and Rochelle Wisoff-Fields

President Margarite Stever called the meeting to order at 4:39 PM

Minutes from the November 17, 2018 board meeting were read by Secretary Rochelle Wisoff Fields.

Russell Gayer made a motion to approve. The motion was seconded by Bonnie Tesh.

Treasurer Russell Gayer read the treasurer's report. \$132.00 has been paid for our Website fee. We have 305.00 coffee can money we have bought a credit card reader that is already paying for itself. There is currently \$2,330.56 in the OWL bank account.

September Conference: Margarite opened discussion on the September conference to be held September 20 and 21nd. Kortney Price and Kaitlyn Johnson from Corvisiero Literary Agency and Stephanie Hansen from Metamorphosis Literary Agency will be there. All three will accept pitches. Stephanie and Lisa Miller from Amphorae will be coaching on how to pitch.

Margarite is still looking for a publisher who will accept submissions without an agent to speak and take pitches.

Sasha Ball Rives has potentially volunteered to schedule pitches. She may also take on the duty of website mistress.

Beth brought up the issue of pitch spaces. One of the members' hotel rooms was suggested. Brenda Black suggested the breakfast room.

Suggestions were made for a raffle at the September meeting, including a Kindle, Focus Writer laptop or a Scrivner.

Sasha has possibly volunteered to take on the duties of web mistress. She is looking for a mobile friendly template for the membership directory.

Beth suggested we have membership renewal for 2020 at the September meeting.

Bonnie brought up the subject of publicity for the meetings. Ronda said she's sent notices to the Stone County Gazette but the papers won't print them.

Margarite presented the need for a nominating committee to choose officers for 2020. Bonnie suggested we elect co-presidents.

Writing Contests: John Daleske suggested the contest fee be raised from \$10 to \$15. Brenda so moved. Beth seconded. The motion carried.

Contest deadline for entries will be July 20.

April Brock is taking on the youth contest but says that gmail has eaten her files.

Art and Photography Contest: Bonnie says the entries looked good. There were several entries this year. The Cliff Edom photography category is being dropped.

Russell Gayer moved to adjourn. April Brock seconded. The meeting was adjourned by Margarite Stever at 5:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Rochelle Wisoff-Fields.

Note a few changes since the meeting:

1. Lisa Miller with Amphorae Publishing notified me last week that she will not be able to attend the conference. I'm currently trying to find someone who would be willing to do one-on-one pitch coaching because I believe our members would greatly benefit from such sessions.
2. Due to unforeseen difficulties, our contest deadline will not be June 20th. We are extending the deadline to August 5.
3. Sasha resigned as our webmaster. Our new webmaster is Marty Knox.