

THE OWL'S HOOT

Official Newsletter of
The Ozarks Writers League 501(c)(3)
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A Fantastic April Conference is Coming to Your House!

Join us virtually on Zoom to learn, connect, and share.



Liz Schulte:
Marketing for Introverts: Create a Brand That Speaks to Your Market

We work hard and spend countless hours creating literary worlds with stories of life. The hope is that our words will connect with the

audience, but how does your audience find you? That's where marketing can help. Learn how to create an online marketing presence that helps your audience find you and solidify your brand as an author.

Liz is a self-published author in mystery and paranormal romance with more than twenty novels, multiple short stories and audiobooks. She is a member of RWA and her local chapters, the Missouri Writer's Guild, Sisters in Crime, and International Thriller Writers of America.



J.C. Field: Taking Your Book to Audio

J.C. Fields is an award-winning and Amazon best selling author. He serves on the board of the Springfield Writers' Guild. His degree in psychology, five years in the computer industry

and a long career of dealing with quirky personality types, have been incorporated into his writing.

Field's Sean Kruger Series has won numerous awards, including multiple gold and silver medals in the Readers' Favorite International Book contest.

In March of 2020, his novel, *A Lone Wolf*, became a #1 Amazon best selling audio book. His second novel in the series, *The Last Insurgent* became a #1 Amazon New Release in January 2021.



Join us for a pre-conference Open Mic!
Pick a 5-minute piece of your writing to read to the group on Zoom.
Email Diane Yates at diane@dianeyates.com with a short bio to nab a spot.
7:00 – 10:00 pm on Saturday, April 23
Social time afterward!



Mandie Tepe: The Care & Feeding of Your Book Designer

Mandie has been working in the graphic design field for over 30 years. Experienced in all types of print design (including magazine and newspaper ads, brochures, magazines, newsletters, logo

design, outdoor billboard ads and displays), recently she has been doing a lot of book cover design and formatting for both publishing companies and self published authors.

As an author of 14 books, she believes she has a unique understanding of how to use design to enhance the message of a text and the importance of making that design clear, organized and readable.



Sharon Kizziah-Holmes: From the Big Four to Do It Yourself: Be Informed

Sharon and her husband are retired road musicians. They have a boutique recording studio in their home and record everything from karaoke singles and live bands to audiobooks. Sharon has assisted writers in self-publishing since the mid-1990s. However, in 2013 she realized authors, rejected by traditional publishing houses, were under-compensated and under-served by the popular vanity press venues. After thorough research on the ins and outs of publishing, she launched Paperback Press. Now she assists writers in making better choices as to the best way to get their books to market. When she joined Ozarks Romance Authors, a whole new world opened up for her. She is now the ORA president, vice president of Sleuths' Ink Mystery Writers and a proud member of Springfield Writers Guild and The Missouri Writers Guild. She loves writing, editing and teaching folks the basics of writing.



Veda Boyd Jones: Top 10 Writing Tips I Learned in School —Take a shortcut to earning a master of fine arts degree from these tips.

Want to save a couple of years and lots of money? Veda has the secret.

You may remember her as a past president of OWL but you may not know that her published credits include 47 books by traditional publishers, 10 original e-books and over 600 articles and short stories in magazines. She earned an MFA in creative writing from Stonecoast in the University of Southern Maine, and is a member of the Authors Guild, American Society of Journalists and Authors, and Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators.



**What a bounty of spectacular speakers!
It's ALL FREE to members so be sure
you're up-to-date before the 24th!**

TO DUE LIST 😊

OWL Dues are \$30.00 for the year and our treasurer is ready to take your 2021 dues now. You may pay via the PayPal link on our website (with a \$1 surcharge) at

www.ozarkswritersleague.com/membership

or mail a check to:

OWL c/o Russell Gayer
20053 Pug Gayer Rd.
Fayetteville, AR 72703

POSSIBLE MARKETS?

If you have found a market open to submissions, please share with other writers. Send the markets to ozarkwriters@gmail.com

2021 Virtual Art & Photography Contest Rules

CASH PRIZES!
Enter now!

1) You must be a member of Ozarks Writers League to enter any category. **Entry fee of \$15.00 must be paid by April 15** and may include as many pieces as Participant would like to enter, in any or all of three categories listed below.

2) Entries must be sent as a jpeg attachment to owlartcontest@gmail.com **by April 15**. Include the following in the body of the email.

- Name
- Address
- Phone number
- Email address

3) Participants may enter as many pieces of art or photography as they'd like, in any or all of three categories: **Photography, Art and Alternative Art.**

4) Qualified judges will conduct blind judging. Decisions are final.

5) **Cash prizes** are \$35, \$25, and \$15 for 1st, 2nd, 3rd place in each category.

CATEGORY 1: Photography

The photos are not restricted to any theme.



Example

“A bad review may spoil your breakfast, but you shouldn’t allow it to spoil your lunch.”

– Kingsley Amis

CATEGORY 2: Art

Includes watercolor, oil, pastels, pencil, acrylic and any other form.



Example

CATEGORY 3: Alternative Art

Includes any and all other kinds of art: weaving, sewing, pottery, quilting, woodwork, crafts, etc.



Example

- Make sure jpegs of your art are clear with no visible signatures. For three dimensional pieces you may send more than one view.

Entries may be disqualified for not following the above rules.



The Power of the Group



Hello, fellow OWLs!

This is my first column to you as President of OWL, and it's an especially challenging one. Being new at this position, and being the first column, is enough to give anyone pause. But to have this during this pandemic ... well, I hope you'll forgive me for any mess-ups. Truth to tell, I'm not too worried about it, because I know you. I've

known most of you for years, and I know what a good bunch of people you are.

I first joined OWL because of other writers just like you. I was at the Fayetteville, Arkansas, public library when I saw several tables filled with people and, of course, books. I wandered over and met a big man who wore a cowboy hat. Turned out the man was Dusty Richards, someone known to a lot of you. After some conversation, he invited me to come to a critique group he was running with Velda Brotherton, another long-time OWLer. I did and, as they say, the rest was history. Because of Dusty, I met a lot of good folks. I came with him to an OWL meeting and met even more writers—an inspiring bunch! Dusty was a mentor and teacher to hundreds of aspiring writers, and his wife, Pat, was as sweet a lady as I've ever met. It's no stretch at all to say if it wasn't for these folks, and people like them, I would never have become a writer, an editor, and a publisher. At every OWL meeting, I learn something new, something that helps me with the business of writing.

I could go on and on about the people who've made such an impact on my life, but I don't think I have to. I think each of us has met people at OWL events and other such gatherings who've helped us find our way when we were feeling a bit lost or unsure. And that's why this is such an important organization. Here we can find ways to support each other, to help each other when we need it. And we usually have a ball in the process!

I miss seeing you all. I miss the camaraderie, the sharing of information, of time over a meal, of sitting in a room with like-minded souls. But I have faith that, even though we're still in the middle of this pandemic, it won't be forever. I hope to see you all on our online Zoom conference on April 24. And I'm planning on seeing you in Branson for the **Fall Conference**. That one will be (cross your fingers!) *in person!* I can hardly wait.

In the meantime, be sure to come to our new virtual (Zoom) events. Ronda Del Boccio has set up wonderful mini-workshops and mixers known as Happy OWLers!

Bring a beverage, see some old friends, and make new ones. Don't miss these opportunities to learn something and be with kindred spirits. What could be better than that?

We're all in this together. And that's what makes OWL great—The Power of the Group!

Hope to see you soon,
Duke

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THESE ZOOMS!

Fri, May 28 at 7 pm CDT

[Wise OWL Mini-Class: *Let's Learn to Live in a Tight Girdle* with Sandy Jordan](#)

Tue, Jun 22 at 7 pm CDT

[WIDE Digital Publishing Mini-Class](#)

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE TREASURER

My name is Diane Yates and I write inspirational romance. Because OWL has meant so much to me, I'm thrilled to serve as Treasurer for 2021. Through OWL, I signed with an agent and had my first two books published. The free-to-member OWL conferences, packed with knowledgeable and informative professional speakers, have been the best and most affordable options for honing my craft. I've made many good friends and valuable contacts in a fun and easy-to-learn environment.



OWL MEMBER SPOTLIGHT!

RONDA DEL BOCCIO

Meet OWL's Vice President and Adult Writing Contest Coordinator, Ronda Del Boccio:



Share something interesting or unusual about you.

I don't know how interesting it is to others, but I'm a psychic medium, which means I help dead people cross into the hereafter. So yeah ... I see dead people, and talk to them, and move them around. I'm also mostly blind, which is not at all interesting to me, but seems to fascinate other folks.

What genre(s) do you write?

I'm eclectic. I've had poetry, articles, memoirs, short stories, novellas, novels, and inspirational tales published across the globe.

When did you join OWL?

I think I've been a member for about fifteen years. Hard to believe. When I attended my first OWL conference, the president asked how many in the room had a book published. Many raised their hands. My heroes, all.

What do you love most about OWL?

I love coming out of my hermitage, hanging with other authors, and getting good people time. That's what prompted me to host the monthly "Happy OWLer" mixers. That way, even though we can't hand out at the in-person conferences or in someone's hotel room on the Friday nights right now, we can still get acquainted and have fun.

SHAMELESS PLUG: they happen mid-month, and you can find details at the OWL Facebook page at

www.facebook.com/OzarksWritersLeague/events.

Do you have any weird or unusual writing rituals?

When I get stuck or need inspiration, I either walk the dog, jump on my rebounder, or bounce on my ball chair. Works every time.

What's your drink of choice while writing?

Coffee

Are you a planner or pantsier?

For books, a "plantser" (a little of both), for most everything else, I'm primarily a pantsier.

What authors influenced you?

When I was about seven, my mom took me to the library and made me read all of *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* by

Richard Bach. I'd always loved stories, but that's when I learned how much a writer could do with one. Terry Goodkind is another influence.

When did you start writing?

I cut my teeth as a writer in high school creating Dr. Who fan fiction. I've written on and off since then but really got going when I moved to the Ozarks and soon thereafter joined OWL.

What do you love about writing?

I enjoy creating something, whether that's a character, a story, or even an article, that sticks with someone long after they've finished reading it.

Do you have any hobbies or interests aside from writing?

I make journals and greeting cards.

Where can members find you on the web?

I'm The Story Lady on most networks. You can link directly to my social accounts from the Connect page on my blog at

<https://magicalstoriesbyronda.wordpress.com/connect>

and message me from <https://m.me/RondaDelBoccio>

\$\$\$!

OWL's Fundraising Committee

has been hard at work planning this year's campaign. Due to our virtual environment and uncharted territory, we have been forced to rethink how we raise money to support OWL. Our best ideas have pointed us to an old standby with a twist – online raffle ticket sales. The drawing will take place during our fall conference whether it's in person or virtual.

We've already secured some nice prizes for our raffle, including a year's subscription to Scrivener and a critique, but we are still looking for more prizes. OWL needs the support of all members in order to be successful.

If you have a service such as editing, proofreading, sensitivity reading, or anything write-related you'd like to donate, we'd love to include it in our raffle. We're also interested in objects such as software, virus protection, laptop, e-books, and gift cards. Please contact Margarite Stever at authormargarite@yahoo.com if you'd like to make a donation.

More details will be forthcoming in the near future. Until then, HAPPY WRITING!

Woot!
Woot!

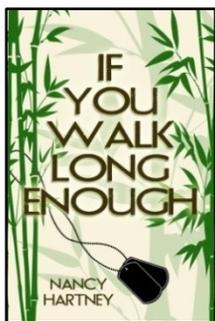


KUDOS!

Retired Ozarks journalist (and new OWL member) **Gary Sosniecki** of Lebanon has presented 19 programs in five states—some in person, most by Zoom—since his first book, *The Potato Masher*

Murder: Death at the Hands of a Jealous Husband, was published last summer by the Kent State University Press. In his program, “Uncovering a Deadly Family Secret,” Gary discusses his 24-year journey in researching and writing about his great-grandmother's horrific murder. He also has appeared on the “Most Notorious” and “Tracy O Show” podcasts. Upcoming virtual presentations are to the Indiana chapter of Sisters in Crime and to Rotary clubs in Missouri, Indiana, and Ohio.

Mary-Lane Kamberg's essay "Sidewalks" appeared in *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Be You*, published in March. Her poem "My Obituary" was run in *Months to Years*.



Nancy Hartney's debut novel and her third published book, *If You Walk Long Enough*, has arrived. A series of blogs about Vietnam, clothing, festivals, a soldier's experience, homeplace interludes, and other topics can be found at www.NancyHartney.com.

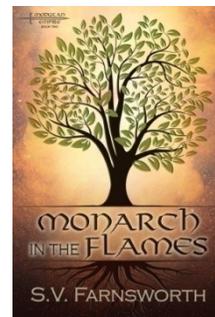
Rochelle Wisoff-Fields' manuscript with working title “Last Dance with Annie” is the story of a middle-aged woman's battle with anorexia nervosa. The novel which is based on a dark time in Rochelle's life is being represented by agent Diane Nine. www.ninespeakers.com Fingers crossed for the right publisher.

Margarite R. Stever recently won 2nd Place in the Joplin Writers' Guild Romantic Short Story Contest. She won 1st Place in the Sleuths' Ink Mystery Writers Contest in July. She was honored to place in a few contests at the OWLies, OWL's fall online awards ceremony in. She won 2nd Place in Humorous Short Story, 3rd Place in Haiku, 3rd Place in Flash Fiction, and 3rd Place in O. Henry Style Short Story. In October, she won 1st Place in the Joplin Writers' Guild Spooky Story Contest.



Ronda Del Boccio has been a featured author at SpoFest and Uncloistered Poetry events alongside writers and poets, including several poet laureates, from across the country. She has won awards for her poetry, short stories, nonfiction, memoir and novels, including first prize for her memoir, “Believing in Thunder” and her unpublished novel, *Deadly Mist*.

Summer (S.V.) Farnsworth's latest book, *Monarch in the Flames*, book 2 in the Modutan Empire epic fantasy adventure series, came out last October. She had speaking engagements via Zoom on DIY Authorpreneurship and spoke for the Springfield Writers' Guild and the Joplin Writers' Guild last fall. More at svfarnsworthauthor.com.



Michael Koch had a western feature story published in Saddlebag Dispatches, Summer 2020 issue, entitled: *Rory Calhoun: Western Bad Boy*. Also, published in the latest publication of Midnight Magazine, Vol. 1, No. #6, July 2020 is: *Eddie Carmel: The Good Monster*. Lastly, *Midnight Tales*, Fall 202, Number #3, has within its book my fictional short story, “Witch Is It?”

Diane Yates is a Winged Publications author for their Forget Me Not Romances imprint. Her recent *Christmas on the High Seas* novella came out in September. Her previous novel, *Melissa's Fate*, is in audio book now. Find out more at www.DianeYates.com.



Billie Holladay Skelley's book, *Ruth Law: The Queen of the Air*, was selected to receive the 2021 American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) Children's Literature Award. This award is presented for an outstanding and significant contribution in aeronautics and astronautics. The engraved medal and certificate for the award will be formally presented during the 2021 AIAA SciTech Forum.

Celebrate!

For the next newsletter, send your writing news to ozarkwriters@gmail.com

OWL BOARD MEMBERS FOR 2021

Duke Pennell, president
Ronda Del Boccio, vice president, contest director, social media
Diane Yates, treasurer
Summer Farnsworth, secretary
Bonnie Tesh, membership director
Rochelle Wisoff-Fields, art contest director
Linda Runnebaum, historian
Ricky Yates, webmaster
Margarite Stever, fundraising chair, past president
April Brock, member-at-large
Brenda Black, member-at-large
John Crawford, member-at-large
Veda Boyd Jones, member-at-large
Diana West, member-at-large
Russell Gayer, member-at-large

OWL Board Minutes

Board Meeting November 22, 2020

Present: Veda, Margarite, Summer, Diana, Russell, Ronda, Rochelle, Ricky and Diane, Bonnie, and Duke

Approved minutes from last meeting.

Treasurer's report: Diane Yates is coordinating with Russell Gayer. Bank account is at \$4,396.35. 68 members had paid dues in 2020.

Website Committee: Ricky Yates said website is up but is getting low traffic. Ways to boost traffic to the website landing page. Show our value and send an email about our 2021 offerings.

Membership Committee report: Bonnie Tesh. The 3% PayPal fee for dues was discussed. It was decided to give members the option of paying it since we are a non-profit.

Writing Contest Committee report: Ronda Del Boccio

Historian report: Linda Runnebaum

Art Contest Committee report: Rochelle Wisoff-Fields

Spring Virtual Conference: Duke has contacted the speakers who were scheduled for the fall conference to ask if they are amenable with doing an online presentation in April. Veda has agreed. Discussion of speaker pay.

Board Job Duties: Duke needs duties descriptions from everyone for a How-To manual he is compiling for new board members.

Member Events: Ronda raised the topic of a monthly happy hour mixer and some virtual lunch and learns with a speaker. It was suggested that weekends are too busy so weekdays would be better.

Board Meeting January 4, 2021

Present: Duke, Ronda, Veda, April, Margarite, Diane & Ricky, Rochelle, Bonnie, Diana, Linda, and Russell

Approved minutes from last meeting.

Treasurer's report: Diane Yates—balance is \$4483.13. Twenty-four members have paid 2021 dues.

Website Committee: Ricky Yates—Updates in progress. Suggestions to drive more traffic to the site. Suggestions for online activities. Accepted unanimously.

Membership Committee report: Bonnie Tesh—Discussed a membership email and newsletter.

Writing Contest Committee report: Ronda Del Boccio—just getting started.

Historian report: Linda Runnebaum—Linda intends to scan things into a digital format.

Art Contest Committee report: Rochelle Wisoff-Fields—Rochelle has taken copious notes about how to do this virtually as opposed to in person. Discussion ensued.

Fundraising Committee report: Margarite Stever and John Crawford—Discussion on ways to raise money online only.

Newsletter report: Extensive discussion on what the newsletter should contain.

Spring Conference: Duke has contacted the speakers who were scheduled for the fall conference to ask if they are amenable with doing an online presentation in April.

Board Job Book: Duke needs duties descriptions from the board members and committee heads to compile for future board members.

Fall Conference: Suggestions for speakers for the fall conference. Duke will contact them.

Online Events for Members: Ronda proposed monthly Happy OWLer social time and Mini-Classes.

Board Meeting February 9, 2021

Present: Margarite Stever, Summer Farnsworth, John Crawford, Ronda Del Boccio, Linda Runnebaum, Rochelle Wisoff-Fields, Bonnie Tesh, and Duke Pennell

Minutes from last meeting approved

Treasurer's report: \$5,234.90 in the bank

Website Committee report: Updates in progress.

Membership Committee report: Five new/renewal members added.

Writing Contest Committee report: Ronda has a few sponsors and is reaching out for more.

Historian report: Not available.

Art Contest Committee report: Planning in progress.

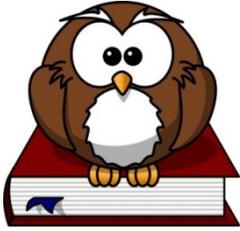
Fundraising Committee report: Margarite has put out a bunch of feelers. Bob Wolfe with Always Buying Books issued a challenge; if Margarite gets 3 donations, then he

(continued)

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Via Zoom

Link will be sent out the day of the meeting



Friday, April 23: Open Mic
7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 24:

10:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

Announcements, greetings from OWL President
Duke Pennell

10:15 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Liz Schulte

Marketing for Introverts

11:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

Break. Get a snack, refresh your beverage, visit
with other attendees.

11:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Mandie Tepe

The Care & Feeding of Your Book Designer

12:00 pm. – 12:45 p.m.

Lunch break and social time

12:45 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Art Contest Awards! & Writing Contest Kick-Off!

1:00 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.

Veda Boyd Jones

Top 10 Writing Tips I Learned in School

1:45 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Break.

2:00 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

J.C. Field

Taking Your Book To Audio

2:45 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Sharon Kizziah-Holmes

From the Big Four to Do It Yourself

3:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.

Conference Wrap-up

SEE YOU THERE!

(continued)

Fundraising Committee report: Margarite has put out a bunch of feelers. Bob Wolfe with Always Buying Books issued a challenge; if Margarite gets 3 donations, then he will donate a \$50 gift certificate. She is looking for items like a subscription to Scrivener, Walmart gift card, critique services for up to 3000 words, etc.

Newsletter report: The newsletter is in progress. Kimberly has requested photos for inclusion.

Old business:

- Planning for spring conference April 24 via Zoom: Veda has agreed to speak. Need to aim for at least 4 more speakers/panels. Names discussed.
- Fall conference: We have a contract in place for the October 23 conference at the Camden Hotel in Branson. Lodging rooms will be available on the 22nd and the meeting room will be available on the both days.



New business:

- Report on Happy OWLer and Mini-Workshop: Ronda said the Happy OWLer meeting via Zoom was successful in January. Ronda will automate a “Here’s what you get with your membership” email.
- Welcome message to new and/or renewing members. Duke suggested that Ronda be in charge of sending the welcome email.