

# The Owl's Hoot

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

Visit the [Website](#) ([ozarkswritersleague.com](http://ozarkswritersleague.com))

[Email Us!](mailto:ozarkwriters@gmail.com) ([ozarkwriters@gmail.com](mailto:ozarkwriters@gmail.com))

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May 2018

Volume 32, No. 2

All About  
the Story.

## Out on a Limb

### Juggling What's Important

By: Lori Ericson

I believe OWL to be a strong group with dedicated members who enjoy a rewarding experience participating in our events. The amazing part to me about OWL is the supportive nature I find in all the members, each reaching out to cheer on each other's efforts as authors and artists. We're all there to learn more about the craft, and get that shot in the arm of creative inspiration that OWL thrives in.

To encourage just that, OWL tries to provide the best in craft curriculum. We tap into a combination of regional speakers, including OWL members who know their stuff, and professionals who can provide insight on making it to the shelves and maybe even a connection that gets you there. We also try to provide a welcome environment to encourage OWLs to connect with each other, our speakers and other guests.

The OWL Board of Directors and I are doing all we can to ensure our League stays strong and an enriching part of your writing life. Yet, as strong as any organization is in what it does and how it serves its members, things must evolve over time to continue to thrive. That goes for OWL.

Don't worry about any major changes in the immediate future. We have, however, made a few decisions that will help us function better.

Each quarterly gathering takes a LOT of work. And, all that work is done by volunteers. It's not just the arranging of speakers, gathering the information for the newsletter, making sure nametags are ready, preparing the event room, etc., but it's also dealing with a lot of

emails, phone calls, and paperwork between the quarterly meetings. I like a lot of communication to help keep OWL members informed and excited about the next meeting, but those things take time.

So, in an effort to allow us to concentrate on more important issues for OWL members, we're making two small changes.

**CHANGE #1:** We will no longer require you to register for the meetings. It's not necessary. If you're a member, you're welcome to join the meetings. If you're not a member, what the heck is wrong with you? OWL is only \$30 a year! So, show up and join, learn a lot and enjoy the benefits of writer camaraderie.

**CHANGE #2:** We have eliminated pre-ordered lunches. We've decided to cut out the meals brought in for OWL conferences. Next year's president may want to bring it back and that's fine, but I've found that most of the members would just soon go pick something up or dine out. Keeping track of the lunch orders, making sure funds were collected to cover the cost, ordering and then arranging for someone to pick up and deliver the food was too much. The lunches were at cost, so any mistake costs OWL money as well.

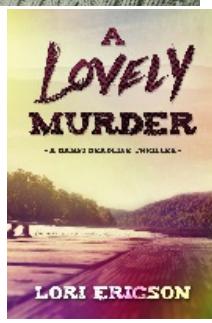
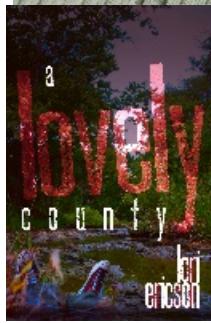
Our conference itinerary will now include a one-hour and fifteen-minute lunch break, which should give OWLs enough time to visit an area restaurant and get back. There are a number of eateries close to the Honeysuckle Inn.

We want to continue to focus on meeting preparation, communication efforts, etc. and, honestly, not get bogged down worrying about who's coming and what they're having for lunch. I hope each of you come, enjoy every minute, and have whatever you want to eat.

OWL officers have made it clear they support these minor changes and agree we're better off using our limited resources to concentrate on making the meetings the best possible. However, if you don't agree and have a better solution, please feel free to discuss it with me or another officer.

Happy writing!

#### PRESIDENT BIO:



Lori Ericson grew up in her family-owned cemetery and spent years as a newspaper reporter, but isn't sure which experience helped more to shape the dark stories that spill from her head. The author and her husband, Lloyd, live in northwest Arkansas with their rescue dogs Charlie and Otis, where she often drags them all off to walk through old cemeteries occasionally. Lloyd insists those walks occur during the daylight hours.

*A Lovely Murder* received The President's Award and 1<sup>st</sup> Place in the Unpublished Manuscript contest from Ozark Writers League in 2015. *A Lovely County*, the first novel in the *Lovely* series, was published in January 2015. Look for *A Lovely Grave* in 2018 from Pen-L Publishing.

**Contact Information:** loriericson.author@gmail.com  
loriericson.com

## TO DO LIST

- **Sign up** for a book table (Email [booniehatbandit@yahoo.com](mailto:booniehatbandit@yahoo.com))
- **Sign up** to read at Open Mic on Friday evening (Email [loriericson.author@gmail.com](mailto:loriericson.author@gmail.com))
- **Make room reservations** at Honeysuckle Inn—link at OWL website.
- **Sign up for a critique group.** (Email [loriericson.author@gmail.com](mailto:loriericson.author@gmail.com))
- **Invite** your writer friends!

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

### Kudos . . . Mary Nida Smith

#### An OWL Hits the Airways

Author Mary Nida Smith was featured on Liberty Watch Radio in April to discuss submarines and submariners, and her book *Heroes Beneath the Waves*. The one-hour radio show, hosted by Charles Heller, is titled "America Armed and Free." Smith says you can go to [www.libertywatchradio.com](http://www.libertywatchradio.com) to stream the show. It aired live on April 8 on Tucson radio station KVOI, AM 1030, a Salem Radio Network station.

### Kudos . . . Paul Bass

#### Another Bass Historical Non-Fiction Out Soon

OWL Paul Bass is excited to announce his book *Missouri Innovators* is in production at Acclaim Press and will be out this summer.

### Kudos . . . Caroline Giammanco

#### Screenplay in the Works for *Bank Notes*

Caroline Giammanco recently signed a contract with Ron Chepesiuk, host of Crime Beat (a large syndicated radio show), and successful screenwriter. Giammanco interviewed with him in mid-February to discuss her new book *Guilty Hearts*. Chepesiuk was so impressed by the story that he also read her first book *Bank Notes*, then contacted her about writing a screenplay based on Keith and Caroline Giammanco's story.

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May 18-19, 2018

## OWL Conference Agenda

Honeysuckle Inn & Conference Center  
Branson, Missouri

**“All About the Story”**

### Friday

#### 7:00-9:00 p.m. Open Mic

Join your fellow OWL members for an evening of entertainment and fun.

### Saturday

8:30 – 9:00 Registration and OWL Coffee Social

9:00 – 9:20 Greetings and OWL Reading

9:20 – 9:45 M.G. Miller, Southern Gothic Author

9:45 - 10:30 Rochelle Wisoff-Fields, Researching Your Story

10:30 – 10:45 OWL Reading

10:45- 11:05 Social Break & Book table browsing

11:05 - 11:35 M.G. Miller, Southern Gothic Author

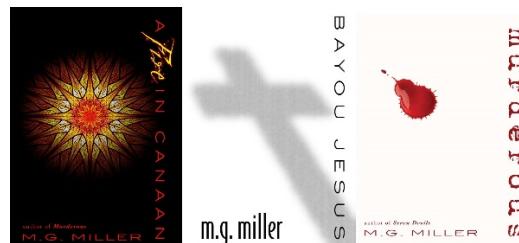
11:35 – 11:45 OWL Reading

11:45– 1:00 LUNCH (on your own)

1:00 – 1:45 Russell Gayer, Top Ten on Reading Your Work in Public

1:45 – 3:15 Critique Sessions

## Guest Speaker:



## Southern Gothic Author to Speak in May

Southern Gothic literature is a mainstay of the south. Southern Gothic authors like Harper Lee, Truman Capote, and William Faulkner have been fascinating readers for decades with stories of a tough southern life. Wikipedia describes the Southern Gothic genre as employing “macabre, ironic events to examine the values of the American South.”

Common themes of the genre include “deeply flawed, disturbing or eccentric characters who may or may not dabble in hoodoo, ambivalent gender roles, decayed or derelict settings, grotesque situations, and other sinister events relating to or stemming from poverty, alienation, crime, or violence.”

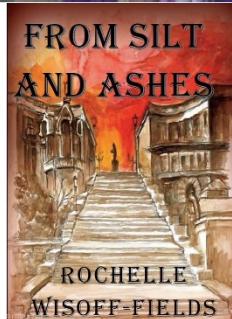
M.G. Miller’s books no doubt fit that description, but what makes Miller’s writing stand out is the way his characters lure you into the story. That’s a skill mastered by the greats of this genre. Hear him read from his work at the OWL May Conference.

### BIO:

M.G. Miller is the author of numerous southern gothic novels ranging from literary fiction to psychological thrillers and

horror. His work has received Best Novel awards from Arkansas and Oklahoma states, a Deep South Prize from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, and an Arkansas Governor's Award for Literature. Miller works for the University of Arkansas, enjoys the opera, and is currently procrastinating a new novel. His 2015 book, *Murderous*, was recently optioned for movie rights.

## Guest Speaker:



## Enriching Your Story with Research

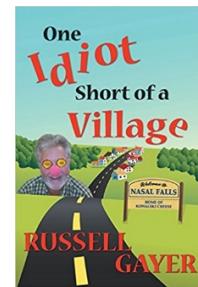
Join Rochelle Wisoff-Fields for an interactive workshop on the in's and outs' of research. Take a hike down the path, from thread to shining thread as she shares her process. Pick up a few simple tips for adding authenticity and depth to your writing.

### BIO

Rochelle Wisoff-Fields lives in Belton, MO with her first husband Jan of 46 years. She facilitates a blog challenge called Friday Fictioneers and is recognized worldwide for her addiction to purple. In addition to hundreds of hundred-word

flash fictions she has published a trilogy of novels: *Please Say Kaddish for Me*, *From Silt and Ashes*, and *As One Must, One Can*. She also has a short story anthology called *This, That and Sometimes the Other*. Her coffee table book entitled *A Stone for the Journey* will be out later this year. Rochelle is not known for brief titles.

## Guest Speaker:



## Russell's TOP TEN!

How do you want to present yourself at author events? What's key to keeping your audience's attention as they hear the words you've written? Laugh and learn with Russell Gayer as he explains, *from experience*, what to do and what NOT to do when reading your work in public.

### BIO:

Russell Gayer is a 4<sup>th</sup>-generation Ozark native, retired and residing on his family's original homestead near Goshen, Arkansas. His first book of humor, *The Perils of Heavy Thinking*, gained him notoriety in certain circles, and his humorous short stories and poetry have won several awards.

His latest book, *One Idiot Short of a Village*, was released earlier this year.

Russell is a mainstay of the Friday Fictioneers, a motley crew of humorists who post flash fiction at [www.RochelleWisoff.com](http://www.RochelleWisoff.com).

*Join us for OWL's next conference August 17-18, 2018!*

## Accommodations:

**The Honeysuckle Inn & Conference Center**

Website: [HoneysuckleInn.com](http://HoneysuckleInn.com)

OWL Room Rate: \$65 + tax  
(Includes complimentary breakfast)  
Conference Events are in the Cardinal Room



### Make reservations:

Honeysuckle Inn, 3598 Shepherd of the Hills Expressway, Branson, Missouri, USA, 417-335-2030.

[Email to Reserve \(reservations@honeysuckleinn.com\)](mailto:reservations@honeysuckleinn.com)

## Welcome to new OWLs and Returning OWLs!

Thank you to every OWL who renewed their membership in 2018, and an especially big welcome to our new members and those who are coming back to roost with us OWLs after a lapse in membership for some time. There are currently 10 returning OWLs listed on our membership rolls for this year.

### New OWLs for 2018 include:

- Tamara Allen
- Sumner Farnsworth
- Michael Fletcher
- Noreen Gallagher
- Carolyn Hall
- Gary Hoffman
- John Ketchum
- Kathy Maples
- Cynthia McIntyre
- Jenny Offutt
- Harold Pelton
- Gwen Plano
- Kimberly Plumb
- Deborah Ratliff
- J.R. Reed
- Josie Roetto

- Derrick Schaffer
- Wilbur (Bud) Steed

## Another Perspective Through Critique

Critique groups can be a phenomenal asset to a writer. Every writer needs a sounding board and that's what you get and more with a good critique group. OWL can't take the place of regular critique sessions for a dedicated writer, but might provide a different perspective or a chance for new writers to see how such a group works. OWL will offer a 90-minute critique session during its May Conference.

To participate, contact OWL President Lori Ericson at [loriericson.author@gmail.com](mailto:loriericson.author@gmail.com) and state what genre of writing you're bringing. Poetry is welcome as well.

**IMPORTANT:** You're limited to 5 pages, double-spaced at 12 pt. type. Bring eight copies to the May Conference.

## Author Voices Wanted!

Open Mic, Friday at 7:30 p.m.

There's a list going for Open Mic Night in May that's promising to lead to an entertaining evening. There's still time to sign up to read from your work-in-progress or your published book. Let's hear your author's voice! Even if you don't want to read, please come listen to other OWLs. There's lots of inspiration floating around when OWLs gather for Open Mic Night. To reserve a 5-minute spot to read, send a short bio to [loriericson.author@gmail.com](mailto:loriericson.author@gmail.com).

May's OWL Open Mic is Friday, May 18 at 7:30 p.m. in the Cardinal Room, our regular spot at the Honeysuckle Inn in Branson.

*(If the room is too full, we'll leave the door open so you can still hear OWLs reading if you'll gather right outside.)*

## Reserve a Table to Show Your Stuff

Got a new book out? How about an awesome book table display? What about that art work? Set up an artist and/or author's table at the May 18-19 Ozarks Writers League conference to show your stuff to other OWLs! To reserve a table for books or other art, contact Caroline Giannanco at [bonniehatbandit@yahoo.com](mailto:bonniehatbandit@yahoo.com).

## OWL Conference Info COMING SOON!

Information will be released soon about the 2018 OWL Writing Conference. The deadline's not until August 31, so you still have time to create that prize-winning short story or novel! More information to come.

## The OWL Board

### OWL Officers:

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

### OWL Board of Directors:

Historian - Fred Pfister  
Membership Chairperson - Caroline Giammanco  
Fund Raising Chairperson - Crawford  
Social Media Publicity Chairperson - Ronda Del Boccio  
Writing Contest Chairperson - Rochelle Wisoff-Fields  
Youth Writing Contest Chairperson - Diana West  
Photo & Art Contest Chairperson - Jan Morrill Vanek  
Past President - Diane Yates  
Board Member-at-Large - Brenda Black  
Board Member-at-Large - Lloyd Ericson

## OWL Board Meeting Agenda

May 18, 2018

5 p.m.

Honeysuckle Inn & Conference Center  
Branson

- Call to order
- Secretary's Report
- Treasurer's Report
- Membership Report
- Old Business
- Membership survey results
- Fundraising efforts
- New Business
- Honorary membership for Youth Contest Winners
- Publicity
- Adjourn

## OZARKS WRITERS LEAGUE BOARD MINUTES

February 16, 2018

**CALLED TO ORDER BY:** Lori Ericson at 5:04 p.m.

**THOSE PRESENT:** Ronda Del Boccio, Rochelle Fields, Diana West, Beth Urich, John Crawford, Russell Gayer, Lloyd Ericson, & Lori Ericson

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:** All present agreed they had read the minutes of the November 18, 2017 board meeting. Diana West pointed out that the date in New Business, item 1, should be December 15<sup>th</sup> not 30<sup>th</sup>. No other comments.

MOTION to Approve Secretary's Report: Beth Urich

SECONDED: Rochelle Fields

MINUTES APPROVED

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Treasurer reported an amount of \$1954 in the OWL bank balance as of end of year 2017.

**DISCUSSION:** Beth brought up lack of sponsors for photo contest and board decided to consider issue and discuss with Jan Morrill.

MOTION to Approve Treasurer's Report: Russell Gayer

SECONDED: Ronda Del Boccio

REPORT ACCEPTED

**MEMBERSHIP REPORT:** Fifty-three people have paid 2018 dues, plus fifteen life members, for a total of sixty-eight.

NO MOTIONS MADE

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

**MEMBER SURVEY:** Lori reported 45 responses thus far with 52% wanting some change in meeting schedule and 48% wanting no change. A full report will be issued later and any meeting changes discussed at that time in an effort to have members vote for bylaws change in November 2018.

**FUNDRAISING EFFORTS:** Discussion of offering different items (shorts, cups/mugs). For now t-shirts will be ordered.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

1. *Membership Drive:* Caroline has outreach to schools; other ideas discussed as well.
2. *Venus & Lunch options:* Venue set for 2018. Discussed pros/cons of not providing lunch service & decided to discontinue at least for May. Need ideas for banquet in November including going to another location for the dinner.
3. *Newsletter Editor & Publicity:* Ronda will do print media; Beth will forward previously compiled media contact spread sheet to Ronda. Current Newsletter editor has resigned; need new volunteer.
4. *Honorary one-year membership for speakers:* All agreed.

**MEETING ADJOURNED BY:** Lori at 6 p.m.

### **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!

## OWL Swag



### OWL Shirts and Tote Bags

Visit the website to order your own OWL t-shirts and tote bags! T-shirts for a minimum donation of \$20 or \$15 for the tote bags.

<https://www.ozarkswritersleague.com/products>

Need to reserve an author's table?

[booniehatbandit@yahoo.com](mailto:booniehatbandit@yahoo.com)

## OWLS at Work

Check out the current Work in Progress by OWLs. Some titles may be working titles.

- *Will Bajollie* by Veda Boyd Jones, mainstream fiction
- *Inside the Death Fences* by Caroline Giammanco, memoir
- *Leaves of Life* by Mary Nida Smith, poetry
- *Caring for Dad: With Love and Tomatoes* by Cindy McIntrye, memoir
- *A Valley to Die For* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) by Radine Nehring, mystery
- *Autumn's Palette* by Dennis Gallemore, inspirational essays
- *Rivers* by Meredith Suzanne O'Connell (a.k.a. Karla Lowe-Phelps), women's fiction, mystery
- *A Stitch in Time* by John Crawford, lyrics and short essays
- *Legacy of Secrets* by Margarite R. Stever, paranormal romance
- *The Marital Scandal* by Jonita Mullins, historical fiction
- *Kalvin Taylor-son of Thunder* by Lori Younker, YA fiction
- *Seven, Eight – Full of Hate* by John Achor, mystery
- *Monarch Moon* by Bonnie K. Tesh, regional romantic mystery
- *A Lovely Grave* by Lori Ericson, mystery/thriller
- *Arkansas Innovators* and *Kentucky Innovators* by Paul Bass, historical non-fiction
- *Elves at Bonniebrook* by Bud Henderson, middle-grade fiction
- *The Ground-Breaking* by Catherine Crowner, hillbilly lit (regional fiction)
- *2<sup>nd</sup> Hit* by Ima Erthwitch (a.k.a. Madison Woods), rural fantasy

## Endnote, Uncategorized, or Aside:

From the OWL President, Lori Ericson - *"I want to welcome Madison Woods as our new newsletter editor. I truly appreciate your instant offer to support OWL when called upon. Thank you, Madison, and please include your bio and website information with this note in the next issue so OWLs can know you better."*

Thank you, Lori. I'm happy to be doing the newsletters for this great collection of writers! For those of you who don't know me, I'm somewhat of a lurker in the OWL community. I call myself a "nature farmer" these days because everything I do, including my writing, draws upon the natural world surrounding me here on our land at Wild Ozark. My fiction website is [www.RuralFantasy.com](http://www.RuralFantasy.com). Aside from being a self-published author, I grow American ginseng, wander the woods and hills, and create Nature Art. I blog about all of that at [www.WildOzark.com](http://www.WildOzark.com).



If you have something that needs to go in the next newsletter, email me at [madison@wildoziark.com](mailto:madison@wildoziark.com).