

# The Report . . .

OCTOBER 30 2014



## The Winds of Change

When the winds of change  
blow, some people  
build walls and  
others build windmills.  
-Chinese proverb

As October draws to a close, the autumn season kicks into full force. The leaves turn and the air takes on a delightful bite. The days grow shorter, the nights grow longer, and the times are changing, quite literally. Daylight savings, anyone? Change can be a messy and uncomfortable

affair, but there's no denying it's also a force of good, to be utilized both in life and in literature.

Though some writers are afraid of change, its affect on the craft cannot be denied. Change might mean hard choices, painful cuts to precious words, or the death of subplots and side characters. It might mean hours, days,

weeks, or even months of revising, of small changes with sometimes overwhelming affects on an entire manuscript. It could even mean scrapping a project entirely and starting from scratch, which in turn leads to facing the blank page yet again. The mere thought is nightmare inducing, but if we face our fears, we can use them to our advantage.

Change might look like taking steps backward, it might *feel* regressive, but it's the complete opposite. Change is the ability to recognize what isn't work-

ing in a story and swapping it out for what will. It's accepting feedback that works for your manuscript and tossing the rest. It makes good stories into great ones. Change takes many forms and has many meanings, the most significant of them all being this simple and eternal truth: change means growth. Reject it and you'll find yourself and your work dull, listless, and stagnant. But if you embrace it, change can carry you further than failure could ever follow.

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"I'm just going to read a few pages of my book."

Translation: I'm going to read at least 100 pages. Leave me alone. I'll see you when I see you.



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## The President's Spotlight: Volunteers

**“VOLUNTEERS  
ARE THE ONLY  
HUMAN BEINGS  
ON THE FACE  
OF THE EARTH  
WHO REFLECT  
THIS NATION'S  
COMPASSION...”**



There is nobody more overworked and unappreciated than volunteers. For an individual to put aside his/her own work, hobbies, and life to be there for others

is an incredible gift. Non-profits often run on the blood, sweat, and tears of people willing to sacrifice their time to benefit others. Our organization is blessed with these people. This month I want to highlight a few of our volunteers, nominated by those of us working behind the scenes.



Jen McMurrain nominated Jen Gentry. “She was asking about volunteering before our first board meeting. It is my understanding that she is in charge of registration this year and when I saw her in Tulsa a few weeks ago she started picking my brain. So, because of her enthusiasm and just overall willingness to take on a huge job having only attended one conference before I nominate her.” She is a wife, a mother, a grandmother, and a Registered Nurse. She knows what it means to walk through the fires of faith, as she knows the pain and the joys of life.

This is just the tip of the iceberg where our organization is concerned. Do you have someone who is a great volunteer? Nominate them by contacting me. If someone nominates you, I'll want a short bio and a headshot to include when we honor you. Thanks to all our volunteers. Virtual hugs and chocolate don't begin to cover what we owe you but rest assured, all of OWFI applauds your efforts.

Volunteers are the only human beings on the face of the earth who reflect this nation's compassion, unselfish caring, patience, and just plain loving one another. ~ Erma Bombeck



Our first Vice President: Tony LoPresti is a veteran of theater and independent film. He has coached youth soccer on a local level and fencing with high school age

kids on an international level. Tony has served in his position and willingly stayed on, and it's this dedication and passion that keep our contest one of the best in the country.



Our Second Vice President: Jim Martin, writing as Joe Scavetti, is a storyteller in the nicest sense of the word. He is a retired Human Resources manager. His last assignment was Employment Coordinator

for the University of Central Oklahoma. Jim has served two years as our Second VP and like Tony, when I begged another year commitment, he didn't hesitate. The two work brilliantly together, and their sense of humor makes even the most stressful of situations bearable.

*Dawn Allen*



## Holiday Hijinks!

Hear ye, hear ye!  
Lend me your ears!  
Or something along those lines...

This is an official call for *your* stories. Starting next month, just in time for Thanksgiving, the new OWFI website will be featuring stories written by our talented members, focusing on the holidays! And we don't mean those that take place during the last couple of months on the calendar, we mean all year long.

New Years, Valentines, St. Patrick's Day, Mardi Gras, on and on. Each Holiday two stories will be selected from the submissions and featured on the site for everyone to enjoy. Now to throw the rules and regulations at you, because those are things that exist.

In order to be considered for Holiday Hijinks, stories can be of any age category (MG, YA, NA, Adult) and any genre. They must be minimum 1000 words long, maximum 2000, and they **must** feature the holiday in question.

Submissions for Holiday Hijinks will be accepted starting now, right now, in this moment as you're reading this, this very instant, up until two weeks prior to featured holiday.

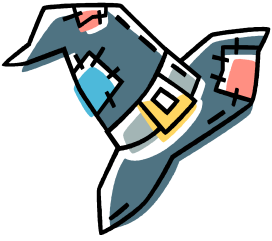
This means you can start writing a story for Valentines Day but its not due until February 1st. We realize this doesn't leave much room for Thanksgiving, but we believe you can work your magic. Keep an eye on the website for the official holiday list.

The stories that best capture the spirit of the holiday, or provide a fresh, gripping perspective on the traditional themes will be chosen. Of course if you can make us laugh, cry, or scream, those are winners, too. V-Day does mark a massacre, if our history is correct, so why not give us a thrilling suspense or horror story.

So, go forth and create. Plunge into the depths of your hearts and minds and unearth for us the gems of your imaginations. Sew the seeds of creativity and reap the literary bounty of the harvest. In short... let the shenanigans begin!

**HEAR YE,  
HEAR YE!  
LEND ME  
YOUR EARS!  
OR SOMETHING  
ALONG THOSE  
LINES...**





## Affiliate News – Norman Galaxy of Writers

### Acceptances and Sales:

**KEITH EATON:** ARTICLE: "OK Foster Wishes and Lisa Feist, Fostering Compassion for Oklahoma's Forgotten Kids," *Distinctly Oklahoma Magazine* (11/14).

**ROBERT FERRIER:** POEMS: "Visiting the Alzheimer's Patient," and "The Dante Dreams, Inferno: James Earl Ray," *The Exhibitionist*, thexzb.com (07/14); POEM: "Sleeping in a Rain Forest Tree House," *The Exhibitionist*, thexzb.com (10/14).

**CAROL COLE FROWE:** feature assignment for *The New York Times*.

**ANDREW HORTON:** ESSAY: "I Want to Live!" and SCRIPT: "The Dark Side of the Sun" (Brad Pitt's first feature) to appear in the book, *Deconstructing Brad Pitt*, ed. Christopher Schaberg and Robert Bennett for Bloomsbury Press.

**LISBETH MCCARTY:** ARTICLE: "The Strange World of Indian Law," *Mensokie* (08/14).

**JOCELYN PEDERSEN:** ARTICLE: "Well Drilling Permit in Slaughterville Protested," *The Norman Transcript*, (August 22, 2014), this article was also picked up by the AP.

**SHELLEY ANNE RICHTER:** POEM: "The Antique Boutique," *Antique Trader Magazine* (2015).

**FRANCES SEARCEY:** POEM: "I Pull and Tug to Open Some Lids," *Mature Living* (10/14)

**STAN SOLLOWAY:** HUMOROUS SPORTS ARTICLES: [www.sillimanonsports.com](http://www.sillimanonsports.com) and [www.humoroutcasts.com](http://www.humoroutcasts.com).

### Novels and New Books:

**ANDREW HORTON & JULIAN HOXTER,** editors: BOOK: *Screenwriting*. Rutgers University Press (08/14).

### Professional Activities:

**CAROL COLE FROWE:** Signed contract with *The New York Times* as stringer in Oklahoma and Texas (August).

**VICKEY MALONE KENNEDY:** JUDGE for FenCon's Science Fiction writing contest and APPEARANCE at FenCon in Dallas, TX, September 26 and September 28, 2014.

**LISBETH L. MCCARTY:** appointed editor of the "Oklahoma Mensokie" newsletter, beginning July 3, 2014. Appointed Toastmasters District K1 Area Governor for the 2014 - 15 year.

**STAN SOLLOWAY:** one of ten stand-up comedians selected (out of hundreds who submitted) to perform in the 1st annual Blue Whale Comedy Fest in Tulsa. On July 11th, shared the stage with the legendary Darryl Rhoades at the Bricktown Hotel and Convention Center, OKC.

### Contest Winnings:

**ANN CHAMPEAU:** Oklahoma Senior Poetry Contest, POETRY WOMEN'S DIVISION: 2nd Place, "Where's There's a Will".

**NEAL HUFFAKER:** Poetry Society of Oklahoma Spring Contest, POEM: 2nd place, "Concert in the Cathedral"; SPOON RIVER POEM: 3rd place, "Emma Worthington"; POEM: 3rd place, "Inside the Storm"; VIVIANNE SONNETS: 1st HM, "The Saga of Route 66"; second HM, "The Shipwrecked Poet"; 2nd HM, "David and Granny"; Arkansas Writers' Conference Contest, VOICES INTERNATIONAL POETRY AWARD: 2nd Place, "Nirvana"; SUMMER VACATION AWARD: 4th HM,, "Ancestral Quest".

**LISBETH MCCARTY:** Cover Photo, Mensokie (08/14); Toastmasters: Best Speaker ribbon, June 2014, "Look to the Cookie"; Best Speaker ribbon, July 24, 2014, "No Interruption during Function".

**MARY PAYNE:** SPEECH: 1st Place, July 24, 2014, 720-word speech, "Happy unBirthday!".



## Affiliate News – Norman Galaxy of Writers continued...

**SHELLEY ANNE RICHTER:** Arkansas Writers' Contest, CHRISTIAN POETRY AWARD: 2nd place, "Spellbound"; INSPIRATIONAL SHORT STORY, 3rd place, "Miz Crip"; Stillwater Writers' Contest, SHORT STORY: 1st HM, "The Hellcat of Custer County".

**SHELLEY ANNE RICHTER & NANCY VINEYARD:** Arkansas Writers' Contest, HUMOROUS SHORT STORY: 3rd place, "A Mouse in the Mousse"; ESSAY: 2nd HM, "Lodi, Ohio"; HUMOROUS POETRY: 1st HM, "Seventy"; PARANORMAL SHORT STORY: 2nd HM, "Five Claws of the Dragon"; ARTICLE: 2nd HM, "The Pinto Ranch".

**BARBARA SHEPHERD:** Christian Writers Fellowship Annual Contest, DEVOTIONAL: 2nd Place, "Conch Shells," CHILDREN'S: 1st Place, "Sarah's Search for the Flying Pigs," ADULT NON-FICTION: 1st Place, "You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down," ADULT FICTION: 2nd Place, "Night of Thieves"; Arkansas Writer's Conference, 2014 SUMMER VACATION AWARD, HM, "Painting on Safari".

### Club News:

Norman Galaxy of Writers meets the 2nd Saturday of each month. Meetings are free and open to the public. For more information go to: <http://normangalaxyofwriters.blogspot.com/> or <https://www.facebook.com/NormanGalaxy>

## Affiliate News – Writers' Guild of Arkansas

### Acceptance and Sales

**MARILYN H. COLLINS:** ARTICLE: "Curiosity Never Retires," *2Njoy Magazine*, Oct/Nov issue (10/14).

**RHONDA FRANZ:** ARTICLE: "Farmer's Market Favorite: Vegetarian Taco Salad," *TasteArkansas.com*, (08/14); ARTICLE: "Back to School 101: 6 Tips for Making the Transition from Summertime to School Time," *Palm Beach Parenting magazine* (08/14); ARTICLE: "6 Simple, Low-Cost, Kid-Friendly Home Decorating Ideas," *Okanagan Child*, summer issue (07/14); ARTICLE: "Your Lunch Box is Served," *TasteArkansas.com*, (09/14); ARTICLE: "Shady Characters: Veggies for Shade, Arkansas Gardener Magazine (09/14); ARTICLE: "Fall Time Pasta Soup," *TasteArkansas.com*, (10/14). ARTICLE: "Cultivating Carrots," *Arkansas Gardener Magazine* (10/14).

### Professional Activities

**MARILYN H. COLLINS:** BOOK LAUNCH: Four-week writing course, "You Can Sell Your Book," (09/14-10/14) Story Circle Network; INDIVIDUAL COACHING & EDITING for writers (06/14-10/14), [mentorsforwriters.com](http://mentorsforwriters.com); WORKSHOP LEADER: "Market Yourself, Market Your Book," True Lit Fest, Fayetteville Public Library, (10/14). WORKSHOP LEADER: OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute/Univ. of AR), "Marketing Your Writing: Fun and Easy," (10/14-11/14); PUBLISHED: Proficient Writer News, September issue (09/14), [proficientwriter.com](http://proficientwriter.com).

**RHONDA FRANZ:** Co-Presenter & Panel member, "Freelancing 101: Writing all the Words and Making All the Money," The Arkansas Women Bloggers Conference, Embassy Suites, Rogers, AR, (09/14).

**NANCY HARTNEY:** PRESENTER/PANEL MEMBER, "Why Are You Using that Red Pen? Finding and Using a Critique Group for Your Writerly Growth," True Lit Festival, Fayetteville Public Library, Fayetteville, AR (10/14).

### Contest Winnings

**RAYMONA ANDERSON:** Ozark Creative Writers Awards (10/14): Jim Richardson short story genre: 1<sup>st</sup> place: "Mama's Dirty Money," Search for Excellence category: 1<sup>st</sup> Honorable Mention: "Night Train to Palenque."

**BRENDA BLACK:** Ozark Creative Writers Awards (10/14): Susan Wittig Albert Life Writing Competition: 3<sup>rd</sup> place "Balancing Buzzards," Finalist for Chicken Soup Series: "Angel in Flip-Flops."

**NANCY HARTNEY:** 1st place, short story entry: "The Bull and the Kitten" Tallahassee Writers Association, Tallahassee, FL (10/14); Ozark Creative Writers Awards (10/14): Honorable Mention, Oxbow Award for western short story: "Built for a Lifetime." 3<sup>rd</sup> place: "The Bull and the Kitten," 2<sup>nd</sup> place: Flash Fiction: "Coping," Travel Article: 1<sup>st</sup> place: "Backside at Oaklawn Park 24/7." (10/14)



## Sponsor Your Favorite Category Chair for the OWFI Contest!



The generous contributions of our sponsors help pay for the awards and maintain affordable entry fees for OWFI's prestigious writing contest.

Affiliate Groups are encouraged to sponsor one or more categories. Individual and business sponsorships are also welcome. All sponsors will be acknowledged in the awards booklet and during the awards banquet. (Great advertising opportunity folks!) No contribution is too small. We will gladly take your pocket change. It all adds up in the end.

Full sponsorship for Categories 1-30:  
Unpublished Manuscripts is \$105 (partial sponsorships are \$50 or \$55)  
Full Sponsorship for Categories 31-34:  
Published Books (Trophy Awards) is \$310.  
(Partial sponsorship for the trophy awards are \$60 each and \$70 for the CDLC award)  
Full sponsorship for the Crème-de-la-Crème Award is \$500.

As a special incentive there will be a free table reserved, front and center during both OWFI banquets, for the individual, group, or business contributing a full sponsorship for the CDLC award.

Send sponsors name, contact information (email and phone number), and which category you would like to sponsor to:

Sponsor Chair  
Vickey Malone Kennedy  
721 E Boyd St  
Norman, Ok 73071

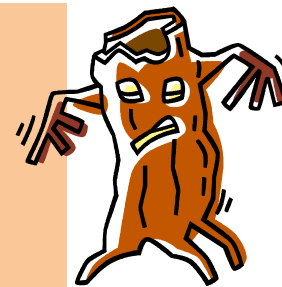
Make checks payable to OKLAHOMA WRITER'S FEDERATION INC. (OWFI)  
MEMO: CATEGORY SPONSORSHIP

**DO NOT PUT THE CATEGORY # IN MEMO AREA OF YOUR CHECK** (please indicate a 2nd and 3rd choice of categories you would like to sponsor with your contact information just in case someone has already sponsored your first choice)

I will forward checks and sponsorship information to the Treasurer.

Your donations are sincerely appreciated by the winners and the entire Oklahoma Writers' Federation Inc. organization. Please direct inquiries to [vck@cox.net](mailto:vck@cox.net)





## Banquet Table Reservations!

Reserve tables for the 2015 OWFI banquets EARLY. Seating assignments will be made when reservations are confirmed.

Tables are \$20 per night. \$40 for both nights.

Maximum seating per table is 10. If your group needs more than one table they will be seated together.

E-mail questions to [vck@cox.net](mailto:vck@cox.net)  
SUBJECT: Banquet Tables

Reservations will not be final, nor confirmed, until reservation fee is received.

Send CHECKS payable to: Oklahoma Writers' Federation Inc

In the memo area write:  
BANQUET TABLES and the initials of your group. This will help the treasurer identify what the check is intended to pay.



MAIL checks to:

BANQUET TABLE CHAIR  
Vickey Malone Kennedy

721 East Boyd Street  
Norman, Ok 73071

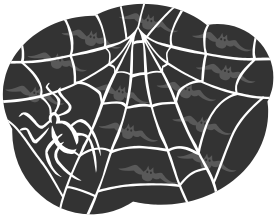
I WILL FORWARD THE  
CHECKS TO THE TREASURER.

Include a brief note with the name of your group, number of tables needed, and which nights tables are to be reserved. Include contact information for a group representative: e-mail, snail mail, and cell phone number.

Confirmation and instructions will be sent to representatives via email.

A seating chart will posted during the conference. Changes will not be made to the seating chart. It will be provided to help decrease congestion at the banquet entrances and allow people to plot their route to their tables in advance.

As a special incentive there will be a free table reserved front and center, both nights, for the group sponsoring the Crème de la Crème award.



## Affiliate News – Bartlesville WordWeavers

### Acceptances and Sales

#### **CHARLOTTE BLOOD**

**SMITH:** ESSAY: "Cats Are Excellent Dog Trainers," *Chicken Soup for the Soul: The Cat Did What?* Simon and Schuster (8/14).

**MARY KINCAID:** SHORT STORY: "The Map," *Teapot Tales: Pirates, Mermaids and Monsters of the Sea*, Melusine Muse Press (9/14) and SHORT STORY: "The Zombie Cat," *Ghostly Echoes: Spooky Tales from Around the World*, Melusine Muse Press (9/14).

**JENNIFER MCMURRAIN:** ESSAY: "A Hot Dog," *Chicken Soup for the Soul: The Dog Did What?* Simon and Schuster (8/14) and NOVELLA: "The Divine Heart," LilyBear House (1/15).

**ABIGAIL SINGREY:** SHORT STORY: "The Curtain Rises," *Pockets* (01/15) and ARTICLE: "Invisible Theft: Why Our Downloading Choices Matter," *Encounter* (07/26/15).

### Novels & New Books

**MARILYN BOONE, HEATHER DAVIS, CHRISTINE JARMOLA, JENNIFER MCMURRAIN:** COLLECTION: A Weekend with Effie, LilyBear House and Tubb's Press (11/14)

**HEATHER DAVIS:** HUMOR BOOK: *TMI Mom: Girlfriends Rule*, Buzz Books USA (11/14).

**CHRISTINE JARMOLA:** NOVEL: *Do-Overs*, Tubb's Press (10/14).

**JENNIFER MCMURRAIN:** NOVEL: *Return to Quail Crossings*, LilyBear House (10/14).

### **WORDWEAVERS:**

ANTHOLOGY: *Seasons of Life*, Gilcrease Publications and LilyBear House (11/14).

### Club News-

Bartlesville WordWeavers officers : President – Barbara Shoff, Vice President – Eloise Needleman, Treasurer/Public Relations – Jennifer McMurrain, Secretary – Diana Purser, OWFI Executive Board Members – Christine Jarmola (past president) and Jennifer McMurrain (public relations manager), OWFI Delegates – Charlotte Blood Smith and Barbara Shoff.

The WordWeavers of Bartlesville meet the third Tuesday of the month at 6:30 pm at the Bartlesville Public Library.

## Affiliate News – McAlester's McSherry Writers

### Acceptance and Sales:

**SHARON ERVIN:** HISTORICAL ROMANCE: *Nightingale*, Crimson Romance, an imprint of F+W Media, Inc. was selected for inclusion in the publisher's "Timeless Passion Bundle." (10/13/2014)

**TAMMY HINTON:** SHORT STORY: *She-Devil Justice*, Saddlebag Dispatches e-magazine, Oghma Creative Media. (09/2014)

### Novels and New Books:

**NITA BESHEAR:** E-BOOK: *Beyond the Grief: A Widow's Survival Guide*, Bear and Butterfly Publishing. (07/04/2014)

### Honors and Awards:

**TAMMY HINTON:** WESTERN FICTIONEERS AWARD, Finalist. WILL ROGERS MEDALLION AWARD, Finalist.

### Professional Activities:

**NITA BESHEAR:** Kiamichi Quilt Guild, McAlester, OK (07/10/2014)  
"Sisters Reunited," Ada Area Speakers, Ada, OK (10/07/2014); "Never Say 'Can't'," Okmulgee Toastmasters, Okmulgee, OK (10/16/2014)  
"Thanks to Grandma, Momma, Korean War Mash Nurse Jacqueline Croxton," Quilt of Valor presented, McAlester, OK (10/12/2014)  
BOOK SIGNING: Coffee with the Author, at the Bean and Berry in the

Shawnee Mall, Shawnee, OK (06/17/2014); Our Favorite Place, Eufaula, OK (06/21/2014); Marantha Bookfest, Kansas City, MO (09/28/2014); Read Local Book Fair, Stillwater, OK (10/11/2014)  
INTERVIEWED: Dawn Colclasure's Blog, online (07/21/2014)  
Rose State College Writer's Workshop, Midwest City, OK (09/19-21/2014)  
**SHARON ERVIN:** BOOK SIGNING: Our Favorite Place, Eufaula, OK (06/21/2014)  
**TAMMY HINTON:** BOOK SIGNING: Our Favorite Place, Eufaula, OK (06/21/2014)





## Affiliate News – Enid Writers’ Club

### Club News

**Lucy Smoker** has branched out into free-lance writing this year, and for her it was a quarter of firsts:

- First published memoir in Outside In Literary and Travel Magazine (Issue #17), "In the Company of Forever;"
- First feature in a major national zine, Salon, "Why We're Addicted to Mysteries and How the Search for the Unknown Brings Out the Best in People" (August 10, '14)
- First commissioned international feature for Britain's eBookSoda, "Paper Tech: How Technology is Changing Our Reading Habits;"
- Ongoing Book Buzz column for ionOklahoma Magazine and features for Art Focus Oklahoma Magazine plus various others

**Peggy Chambers** attended a book signing in Winslow, Arkansas last month along with 5 other authors from Oghma Creative Media. She also attended the Read Local Author Fair at Stillwater this month along with 42 authors from across our great state. She was interviewed online by Anne Stenhouse Graham’s “Novels Now” and Dennis Speilman of “Uncovering Oklahoma” online magazine.

**Marsha Kay Oldham**, President of Enid Writers’ Club, was in an automobile accident and was badly injured with two broken legs. After surgery, she is home recuperating and healing nicely – writing poetry I’m sure.



## Affiliate News – Green Country Ruff Ritters

### Acceptances and Sales

**PAT KELLEY:** NOVEL: Rich Mountain, HPG Press(10/2014)

### Club News

On October 11, 2014 Green Country Ruff Ritters hosted our first Author Fest at The Coffee Cup in Poteau, OK at 6pm.

Green Country Ruff Ritters meet the first Thursday of every month at the Patrick Lynch Public Library in Poteau, OK at 2pm.

Green Country Ruff Ritters now has a Facebook page. If you are interested, please send us a request to join.



## The Music Box. . .

“Mother Gauf is nice, but a little creepy,” I tell my mother while I gather my things.

“You’re only house-sitting, Trish.” Mom smiles and kisses my forehead. “Besides, she seems to favor you. Always asking you over for tea and such.”

“Know why she has me ‘house-sit’ for a single evening at a time? So the plants don’t get lonely.” I roll my eyes. “And she says I remind her of her dead granddaughter, who was seventeen too. Annie, or something. Cree-py. At least she has On Demand.”

“Her granddaughter is a missing person, not a corpse.”

“Still creepy.” I shoulder my bag and head out.

“See you tonight,” Mom calls after me.

I reach the house in a few minutes.

Mother Gauf bustles around inside the door, getting ready to go...wherever.

“Make yourself at home, Dear.” She ties a scarf around her head. “Eat what you want, drink what you want. Use the spare room upstairs if you get tired. Better for your back than the couch.”

“Thanks.” I manage a smile.

“Order any movie you like. Take care.”

I hit the sofa the second her cab hits the corner. I’ve brought my books, but I don’t think I’ll be bothering with homework. Not with a universe of flicks at my fingertips.

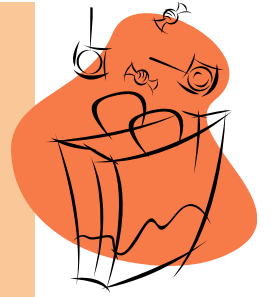
Half an hour into an episode of Hoarders, I hear it. Music. At first I think it’s the neighbors. Bobby, a boy I know from school—gorgeous—practices with his band in the garage next door. I mute the TV, hoping to hear him sing, but...that isn’t his guitar. No, this sound is gentle. Fluid.

And it isn’t coming from outside.

The remote clatters to the floor. I jump, freed from staring at the ceiling like a zombie. A rush of air escapes me. My heart pistons in my chest, pushing everything else aside. Lungs, ribs, everything aches.

After a few deep breaths, my nerves settle and eventually I can hear more than blood rushing through my ears. I push to my feet and cock my head to the side, listening. Silence permeates the air, filling my ears with so much nothing it gives me a headache. I hadn’t imagined it, had I?





I'm not crazy. There was music coming from upstairs. Maybe Mother Gauf left the radio on, or another TV going, and it would be rude to just leave it running. Two seconds, I tell myself. I'll peek around, turn whatever it is off, and be back down in time for Conan.

A strip of carpet down the center of the stairs mutes my steps. The wood still creaks under my tennis shoes. It's dark. Shadows twist and curve around the shaft of white cast by the moon. The light sweeps in through a small window overlooking the landing. There's just enough for me to make out three doors along the hall. I stop at the first door tilt my head to the side, listening.

Nothing.

It's unlocked, and swings inward. There's a switch just inside. Yellow light bathes a dusty bathroom full of ceramic turtles. Big turtles, little turtles, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. I stifle a snicker and turn the light out before shutting the door.

The next door reveals a simple bedroom. Dresser, bed, closet, nothing special. And no radio. I'm closing the door behind me when I hear the music again. Louder this time, delicate and clear, like the twinkling of chimes. I hold my breath and listen. I know this song, Swan Lake. Mother Gauf always hums it. I don't know how many times I've gone home with it stuck in my head.

There's another door at the end of the hall. That's got to be where the music's coming from. I press my ear to the wood. The tinkling builds into a chorus of strings and horns, like there's a symphony on the other side. Before I realize what I'm doing, my hand grips the knob and twists.

This room is smaller than the others, with bare walls and floorboards staring back at me. Some spare bedroom. It's completely empty, save an old wooden stool in the center. No violins, no trumpets, just a stool with a box.

The music has faded as well, but isn't gone. Not completely. I inch further into the room, searching for hidden speakers, an iPod, anything.

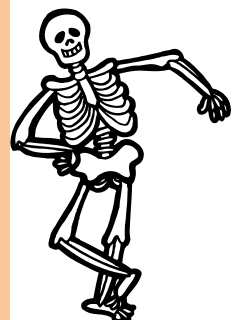
That's when it hits me. The box is a radio!

I cross to the stool, searching for the off button on what looks like a mini treasure chest. The tinkling is muffled, but I'm certain this is the source. Maybe the off button is inside. I press at the latch and jump when the top pops open.

The chest is the source of the music all right, but not how I thought. There's no CD or MP3 player inside. A little ballerina in a red dress pirouettes on a spring.

A music box. It's laughable. All that fuss over a silly kid's toy. Scoffing, I try to close the lid. It does budge, even using both hands. The music just keeps tinkling, and the ballerina keeps spinning. And spinning. And...spinning...

I can't take my eyes off of her. As she twirls, I'm not sure if it's my mind playing tricks, but she begins to wave her arms and lift her legs to the melody. The music swells into a symphony again.





It surrounds me, invading my senses, burrowing into my limbs and coaxing them into motion. I mirror her movements without effort. Our arms lift, arching through the air. We sway together and twirl masterfully. I'm so light on my feet, but every inch of me feels like lead. I push up onto my toes, and draw one leg up higher than I ever thought possible. Pain jolts through my hip and clear to the sole of my foot.

*Ouch!* I'm not supposed to bend this way, but when I attempt to lower my leg it doesn't give. The rest of my body won't listen to me either. It moves on its own, twisting around and around. Faster and faster.

*Stop it!*

My body ignores me and leaps into the air. Bones snap when I land. I scream, or try to, but my mouth won't open. Pain erupts from my ankle and boils over, spreading up my leg as I spin on the same foot. My stomach lurches. I'm going to throw up.

Something tickles my face. It takes me a moment to realize it's my hair, stuck to my cheeks with tears. They blur my vision, pour down my face. I can't wipe them away.

*Please, no more.*

Darkness dances on the edges of my vision. The heavy feeling in my body intensifies. I can't fight it. Can't keep my eyes open. Everything starts to fade.

*I can't...*

\* \* \*

Every evening Mother Gauf opens the music box to peer down at me. "Won't you perform for Granny, Amy?"

My name is Trish, but I've stopped correcting her. She can't hear me. No one can. They've stopped looking for me, anyway. It's been months. Mother Gauf twists the key with her boney fingers, winding the clockwork, and smiles as music fills the air.

Then, she watches me dance.

Cree-py.





## Round the Holiday Table: Rascals & Saints by Marilyn H Collins

Holidays evoke memories of family time where we tell our twice-told stories. We reminisce with “remember-when” tales—some funny, some sad. A perfect time to record the words and feelings that capture who we are as a people to save for generations to come. A “family” is defined many different ways. Ogden Nash describes a family this way:

*A family is a unit composed not only of children, but of men, women,  
an occasional animal, and the common cold.*

Regardless of the components that make up your family—rascals or saints— you have a history and a story to tell. What better time to focus on these stories than the holidays? Like fiction, there is no story without characters. Fortunately, these characters already exist. This does not mean that we know everything about each person in the family. Siblings who grew up together can still discover new adventures about the other.

If you or a member of your family are not already writing these stories, you could suggest that this year is the time to begin compiling a family history. Ask each person to come with a story to tell—maybe even send a few story prompts to start the ball rolling. Add some of your own:

- Family sayings – repeated over and over through the years
- Funniest story
- Best place ever visited
- Grandpa’s prayer at Thanksgiving
- First bike/fishing pole/ballerina shoes/high heels/suit & tie
- Greatest adventure
- First time away from home
- Favorite family recipe
- Special talents—music, dance, art, writing, quilting, sports
- Best memory of a holiday

If you have young children in your family, provide large sheets of paper and crayons for each to draw a holiday picture. Encourage each to share their story in the drawing. Add the child’s name and date. These are fun to keep and bring out from year to year.

In the past, family stories were often told sitting on the front porch on a warm summer afternoon or around a blazing fireplace on a cold, winter evening. In today’s world, this is a rare occasion. So, make the most of the time your family has together. Ask someone to be the scribe or take notes yourself to preserve these stories as they’re told. A great way to instigate a lively conversation is to interview two or more people about the same event. They will soon start building on each other’s facts or fiction. The fish Uncle Mike caught may grow larger, the winter spent traveling in an RV colder, the trip to Venice more romantic—the versions are all worth saving. Don’t leave your own story out of the family history.

As a former historical association director, I was always sad when families came in with a box of old photos found in a relative’s attic and no one could identify the faces. Family gatherings are a good time to pull out these old photographs and identify the people, places, events, and approximate dates of each. These visual memories are so much easier to preserve today—but records of our family are worth taking the time to document and save. We can see our own faces reflected in their faces and future generations may see themselves in ours.

Why not start a tradition this year by adding another dimension to your family gathering?

Marilyn H. Collins is a member of the Writers’ Guild of Arkansas and author of *You Can Write a Book about Your Family*, *Memoir Writing Guide*, and *Market Yourself, Market Your Book*. [www.chspublishing.com](http://www.chspublishing.com) [www.mentorsforwriters.com](http://www.mentorsforwriters.com).



### Watching Your Language by Kathleen Norris Park

Do you ever say, “I feel good!”? Or pretty, sexy, lucky, mean, happy, wonderful, sad, creepy, changed, murderous, or tired? Of course you do. And the words following feel are adjectives (or participles acting as adjectives). They are called predicate adjectives or subjective complements. In other words, the adjective or participle in that position describes—or completes—I. And so it is with bad. You may feel bad, honest.

Why so many people want to use badly, an adverb, here is a puzzle, but maybe they think it sounds more erudite. Here’s a cartoon for your mind: The guy who feels badly is the one who flunked the Braille test. Or some other test we won’t discuss here. Maybe you’ve heard this one: “My boyfriend loves me terribly. I hope he’ll soon improve.” To explain it all a bit further, feel, seem, appear, come, grow, become, wax, and surely others that don’t come to mind right now, all take the predicate adjective, just as is, am, was, be, will, or were do.

Some years ago a venerable CBS reporter said these very words on television: “President Nixon waxed thoughtfully.” If you have a sufficiently irreverent head, you might visualize Nixon with one hand curled under his chin, like “The Thinker,” and the other busily spreading Simonize on a car fender. The highly paid reporter got it wrong. Nixon waxed thoughtful, not thoughtfully.



## Contest News: Changes by Tony LoPresti

Welcome to the 2015 OWFI contest. Last year as I celebrated the end of being General Contest Chair and looked forward to maybe taking it easy for a year, Dawn asked me to do it again.

In 2013 Sonia Gensler did an incredible overhaul of the contest. In short, she laid the ground work for what was done this year. Without her efforts, what Jim Martin and I did this year would not have been possible.

A committee was put together to go over the categories and rules. When the committee was formed, representatives were chosen from a wide cross section of OWFI. A call for suggestions also went out and many of these were taken into account.

What did we do? We redesigned the contest to better reflect the changes the publishing industry is undergoing. We worked on four areas; categories, rules, submissions, and entry fees.

**CATEGORIES:** Categories have been totally renumbered. The new order is to place each category of writing, poem, short, and novel together instead of interspersed with each other.

The categories of Western Novel, Western Article, and Column have been eliminated. Categories for Blog and New Adult have been added. Horror, both long and short, now have their own categories.

If you write column, enter it in blog. In no way is there a limit on what can be written. A blog, in many ways, is a column. Western Novel, what is the big story. Is it the old west? Enter under historical. Is it romance in the west? Enter under romance. The Western hasn't been kicked out, please enter western writing under a different category.

**RULES:** Most changes are small to add clarification. The big change here is in the awards section. If a category does not have at least ten (10) entries, it is not given a cash prize. In the past winners of these categories that did not "make" have been given an honorable mention. On a resume an honorable mention is a far cry from first place. Therefore, if there are less than ten (10) entries a first place will be awarded with no cash prize. First place is the only award for categories that do not have ten (10) entries.

**SUBMISSIONS:** This year our entries will be electronic only. Our reasoning is as follows: The cost of snail mail is constantly going up. Almost every contest in the country is electronic only. If submitting to an editor or an agent they will ask for an electronic submission. What the entry process is trying to replicate is what a writer will go through to submit work to an editor or an agent. Better to make the mistake where we have category chairs to help than to make the mistake sending to an agent and ruin an opportunity.

**FEES:** Fees for entry have been raised from \$20 to \$30. This is still the best deal around. Finding a contest where second and third submissions are not charged for is a task in futility. The least expensive contest we found was \$25 for a single entry with discounts for a second and third entry. The cost of everything is going up, unfortunately, to make sure our contest can at least break even, we are forced to submit to the economic pressures around us.

The 2015 contest promises to be a good one. As you enter, please go over both the general rules, and category rules to avoid any disqualifications. Enter early to allow time to make any adjustments that might be needed. As always the contest volunteers will help you in any way they can.





### Getting the Entry to the Judge by Tony LoPresti

The work was weeks, months, and in some cases even years in the making. The time has come to try it out. The decision to enter the work into a contest and see if it floats or sinks has been made. After all, the writing is great, the idea is even better. The work is sure to win first, no doubt, it is that good. And if there is a bad critique, it will act as guidance for a rewrite.

The work might be incredibly good. Truly, it could be head and shoulders above the rest of the field. A sure win to claim potential prize money, honors, and maybe even publication. However, if the work is shoved into an envelope and mailed away, it will fizzle and sink to the bottom of the heap along with all the other disqualified entries. Nothing gained by submitting, except aggravations because those #@\$\$ judges don't know what they are doing by disqualifying the entry.

It's not the judges. Odds are the entry never got to them. The disqualification came from the contest administrators.

What am I talking about? The submission rules. It may seem obvious. There is a contest. The writer has a beautiful piece of work needing recognition. It is a marriage waiting to be made and the climb up the best sellers list is assured. Right? Not so fast.

Contest administrators put out submission guidelines (rules) to insure each entry is represented as impartially as possible to the judges. Others guidelines are to help move the entry through the contest to the correct judge. In many contests the rules are also used as discriminators. Contests with thousands of entries and large prizes will use any infraction of the rules to disqualify (DQ) an entry. By DQing entries it reduces the load on the judges and administrators while still bringing in revenue for the contest.

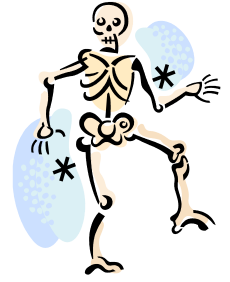
In order to maximize an entry, the published rules have to be adhered to or money, time, and hope are wasted instead of helping to advance the writing goals.

After deciding to enter a contest, read the rules. Then read them again, slow. Why slow? After entering multiple contests the rules all look alike and a quick read will not turn up the little things that could get the entry DQed. When entering a contest the focus for the entry must be on DQ avoidance. Print out or copy the rules so they are available to work with. Make sure there are no specialized rules directed at the entry if it is being entered in a genre category such as non-fiction, screenplay, and so on. If there are special rules affecting the entry, copy them along with the general rules.

Go through the rules one by one. Read it, yes again, and with the entry material laid out. Make sure the entry is compliant with the rule. Correct and/or tweak the entry as each rule is reread. Do not intend to fix something later, it can be forgotten; instead fix everything before each rule is checked off. Be meticulous and watch for the smallest of details. Remember, the big contests will use it to cut down on the work they have to do. Don't give them that luxury.

After going over each individual rule and satisfying it, place a check mark by it and move to the next rule. As each rule is met, make a list of what is needed to submit, cover sheets, synopsis, word count, category number, and where on the entry they need to be. The info will be in the rules, sometimes together, other times scattered throughout the rules.





Once the entry has met all the rules return to the top of the rules. Go over them again one at a time. It can be surprising how much can be missed even when trying to deliberately follow them. Highlight the rule on this second go around to show at a glance the rule is now completely satisfied. Continue until each rule has been highlighted.

Tedious? Yep, but remember, time and money are on the line and nothing is served if the entry is DQed. The writer's resources will be wasted since capturing the award of the contest is no longer possible. Putting up with the mind numbing tedium will pay off with the entry being received and passed on to the judges.

Remember the list that was made? Now is the time to consult it as the material is put together for shipping, be it paper or electronic\*\*. With conscious effort, place everything together, if there is an order to put things in, follow it, if not, use logic. Put the coversheet on top followed by the synopsis and finally the entry. Don't use staples. Paper clips are much easier for the administrators when attaching items. When sending checks, always paper clip to the front of the top sheet, usually the cover letter, so it is visible and is not missed when taking the entry packet out of the envelope.

Pay attention to dates. If entries must be post marked by a certain date, make sure it is under the deadline date. Better yet, send it early. Yes, common wisdom says the first or the last entry has the best chance of winning. Set the bar or make sure the entry is well above the bar. Face it, there is no way to control where in the pile of material the entry will end up. Send it early, forget it, and move on to the next contest secure in the knowledge each rule was followed and the entry will be judged instead of being disqualified.

By following the above procedure, your entry is insured to get into the contest and be judged. What happens after the judging is a subject for another day.

Good luck.

**\*\*ONLY PUBLISHED NOVELS CAN BE MAILED. EVERYTHING ELSE IS ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED.**





## Contest Categories for 2015

### *Categories 1-30: Unpublished Manuscripts*

**1. Poetry, Unrhymed-Short** — Any theme, any form. A poem is characterized by intense, compressed language. Every word is carefully chosen. A poem can tell a story, create an image, or evoke an emotion. In all cases, it is an art form and should go beyond plain prose to evoke something deeper. **16 lines and shorter.** (Epigraphs and spaces are not part of the line count.)

**2. Poetry, Unrhymed-Long** — Same description as Category 1 above, but longer. **17 lines and longer.** (Epigraphs and spaces are not part of the line count.)

**3. Poetry, Rhymed-Short** — Same description as Category 1 above, but written in rhyme. Any rhyming form may be used. **16 lines and shorter.** (Epigraphs and spaces are not part of the line count.)

**4. Poetry, Rhymed-Long** — Same description as Category 1 above, but longer and written in rhyme. Any rhyming form may be used. **17 lines and longer.** (Epigraphs and spaces are not part of the line count.)

**5. Essay (Any subject of contemporary interest.)** — Essays are personal opinion pieces using narrative form to convince the reader of a certain point of view, or at least to better understand that writer's view. There are formal, fact-driven essays (George Will), and informal, lighter essays (Erma Bombeck). Bear in mind the quality and logic of the argument and how well the author uses facts, reasoning, and literary tools such as analogy to convince. Sometimes an opinion can be presented, a point of view expressed, an argument driven home, in a novel or unusual way: by telling a story or seeming to take the opposite point of view, or a fable with a clear moral at the end. Limit 2000 words.

**6. Technical and/or How-To Article (Any subject.)**— This category is made up of two different genres that both aim to educate readers in different ways. Each style presents a problem, describes why it matters, then provides the solution—and sometimes offers a call to action. **Technical Articles** generally are longer, and cover a narrow but serious subject in great depth and rely on more than one expert (often including the author) to provide information that educates and informs a specific target audience. While the article may be scientific, it should also be readable and easy to understand and absorb. The reader should come away with useful information. **How-To Articles** often are shorter info-tainment (1500 words may be too long!) lighter fare that may rely on the expertise of the author alone. These articles not only educate and inform, they also provide specific and detailed steps for the reader to accomplish the stated goal (how to bake cookies, make a craft, prepare a devotional, write a novel). A central theme follows through to the end. *Help the judge by noting "technical" or "how-to" on your mss.* Not more than 3000 words.

**7. Feature Article: Nonfiction (Any subject.)** — These are the articles listed prominently in a publication (magazine, newspaper, online, etc.) covering a subject of great interest to that venue's target audience. The article must clearly have a reason to exist and not simply serve as a vehicle for advertising. Nor should it be a vehicle for presenting the author's opinion about a particular topic (For opinion pieces, see the "how-to" or "inspirational" or "essay" category descriptions).



More than just the facts, a feature article uses a great hook, expert quotes, and a bang-up conclusion to convey its topic. The author's style or "voice" gives the piece life. Not more than 2500 words.

**8. Blog: Nonfiction** — personal reflections, comments, opinion, or even reporting, posted to a website. Entries can be published or unpublished, however, all active links must be removed. **NOTE: the category will be treated as unpublished.** Submit one (1) blog of 1,100 words or less.

**9. Inspirational Article** — Should concern a *personal* experience or struggle, which provides inspiration or hope to others. A profile or personal story should touch the reader in some way and/or impart a valuable message and/or educate the reader in some way. Not necessarily religious in nature, the piece should strive to *inspire and motivate* the reader. It may be a vehicle for presenting the author's opinion about a particular topic that has personally affected him or her, and may also include a call to action. The author's style or "voice" gives the piece life. Limit 3000 words.

**10. Memoir/Nostalgia: Short Stories** — Memoir is first-person, narrative nonfiction that focuses on one specific aspect of the writer's life or experience. Nostalgia focuses on down-home occurrences reflecting the past; these pieces evoke a fond remembrance of a time gone by, or memories of childhood. Limit 4000 words.

**11. Flash Fiction** — An extremely short but complete work of fiction. As with longer stories, a flash fiction story must contain the four elements of fiction: setting (which is usually implied rather than fully described), one or more characters, a conflict, and a resolution. Because of the length limitations, these stories often make use of suggestion and innuendo. This is fiction in its barest, most essential form; every word must move the story forward. Stories submitted in this category should be targeted to an adult audience. Limit: 500 words.

**12. Short-Short Story (Adult): Fiction** — A short short story is a brief piece of fiction pointed and more economically detailed as to character, situation, and plot than a novel. They often revolve around a single theme, one climactic event developing a single character in depth. Narrower than a novel, a short story contains these basic elements: characters, setting, plot, conflict, resolution, climax, dialogue, protagonist, and antagonist. All short stories should present the major character with an important problem that the character must struggle to solve, and engage the reader in caring about whether the character achieves that goal by story's end. Limit: 2000 words.

**13. Juvenile Short Story: Fiction** — A Juvenile short story is a brief piece of fiction pointed and more economically detailed as to character, situation, and plot than a novel with a subject matter aimed at children. They often revolve around a single theme, one climactic event developing a single character in depth. Narrower than a novel, a short story contains these basic elements: characters, setting, plot, conflict, resolution, climax, dialogue, protagonist, and antagonist. All short stories should present the major character with an important problem that the character must struggle to solve, and engage the reader in caring about whether the character achieves that goal by story's end. For readers ages 7-9. Limit: 600 words maximum. For readers 8-12, 1000 words maximum. **Must put age range with word count on page one of manuscript.**



**14. Young Adult Short Story: Fiction** — A YA short story (subject matter aimed at readers 12-18) is a brief piece of fiction pointed and more economically detailed as to character, situation, and plot than a novel. They often revolve around a single theme, one climactic event developing a single character in depth. Narrower than a novel, a short story contains these basic elements: characters, setting, plot, conflict, resolution, climax, dialogue, protagonist, and antagonist. All short stories should present the major character with an important problem that the character must struggle to solve, and engage the reader in caring about whether the character achieves that goal by story's end. Limit **2000** words.

**15. Short Story (Adult): Fiction** — A short story is a brief piece of fiction pointed and more economically detailed as to character, situation, and plot than a novel. They often revolve around a single theme, one climactic event developing a single character in depth. Narrower than a novel, a short story contains these basic elements: characters, setting, plot, conflict, resolution, climax, dialogue, protagonist, and antagonist. All short stories should present the major character with an important problem that the character must struggle to solve, and engage the reader in caring about whether the character achieves that goal by story's end. 2000 to 4000 words.

**16. Sci-Fi/Fantasy Short Story: Fiction** — **Science Fiction**, A novel in which futuristic technology or otherwise altered scientific principles **contribute** in a significant way to the adventures. Often the novel assumes a set of rules or principles or facts and then traces their logical consequences; **Fantasy**, A novel in which magical, otherworldly, or supernatural elements are a central part of the plot or setting. Many fantasies take place on imaginary worlds. Characters may be something other than human or may possess magical powers. A **Sci-Fi/Fantasy** short story (genres limited to Sci-Fi and Fantasy) is a brief piece of fiction pointed and more economically detailed as to character, situation, and plot than a novel. They often revolve around a single theme, one climactic event developing a single character in depth. Narrower than a novel, a short story contains these basic elements: characters, setting, plot, conflict, resolution, climax, dialogue, protagonist, and antagonist. All short stories should present the major character with an important problem that the character must struggle to solve, and engage the reader in caring about whether the character achieves that goal by story's end. **Help the judge by noting "sci-fi" or "fantasy" on your mss.** Limit 5000 words.

**17. Horror Short Story: Fiction** - A Horror short story (subject matter aimed at scaring the reader) is a brief piece of fiction pointed and more economically detailed as to character, situation, and plot than a novel. They often revolve around a single theme, one climactic event developing a single character in depth. Narrower than a novel, a short story contains these basic elements: characters, setting, plot, conflict, resolution, climax, dialogue, protagonist, and antagonist. All short stories should present the major character with an important problem that the character must struggle to solve, and engage the reader in caring about whether the character achieves that goal by story's end. Limit 5000 words.

**18. Prose Humor: Fiction or Nonfiction** — Prose humor is exactly that: a piece of writing meant to evoke humor. Everyday experiences can resonate with the reader, or common interest stories when written in a clever and entertaining voice bring forth a smile. The humor piece should also meet the criteria of its form: column, short story, article/feature or essay. Manuscripts submitted in this category should be targeted toward an adult audience. Limit 2000 words.

**19. Play, Film, or TV Script** — One, two, or three acts. As in all categories, must be unaccepted at the time of submission, and never optioned or produced at the time of submission. **Help the judge by noting, "play" or "film" or "TV script" on your mss.** Format must follow accepted industry standards. Submit complete synopsis and opening scene(s). Complete submission limited to 30 pages (or less).

**20. Picture Book: Fiction or nonfiction (for ages 1-8)** — Picture books are large art-filled books for children, which are primarily targeted to ages 0-8, but are also appealing to older kids and even adults. They are designed to bring



information and/or entertainment to life for young eyes, and the text must be minimal. These books have a beginning, middle, and end. Picture books do not necessarily feature a character, but when they do, the protagonist must solve his or her own problem and the problem should be something significant. Often a picture book portrays a concept such as numbers, letters, weather, colors, etc. Picture books may also evoke a mood, such as a bedtime story. These books should be engaging and present the topic in a fresh, child-like way. (Show, don't tell). Limit 750 words.

**21. Middle Grade Book: Fiction or nonfiction (for ages 8-12)** —Written for children making the transition from picture books to chapter books. For fiction, think *Hank the Cow Dog* or *Geronimo Stilton*. Submit first chapters, complete synopsis or outline, prologue if any and/or nonfiction proposal (per industry standard). Submission limited to 20 pages (or less).

**22. Young Adult Novel: Fiction or nonfiction for ages 12 and older** — This category has the same rules as all books: for novels, write compelling stories with beginnings, middles, and ends. For nonfiction, provide accessible and interesting content that informs, inspires and/or educates. For **novels**, think *Harry Potter*; the main character should have an important problem he/she struggles to solve. The story should engage the reader in caring whether the character achieves that goal by story's end. These often deal with the tribulations of growing up. **Nonfiction** should focus on providing information that educates and informs the reader. Review the various novel and nonfiction book categories for further descriptions. **Help the judge by noting "novel" or "nonfiction" on your mss.** Submit first chapters and prologue, if any, with complete synopsis or outline, and/or nonfiction proposal (per industry standard). Submission limited to 20 pages (or less).

**23. New Adult Novel: Fiction or nonfiction** - New Adult (NA) fiction bridges the gap between Young Adult (YA) and traditional fiction. Protagonists are generally between the ages of 18 - 25 and they face struggles unique to their age group. Leaving parents, going to college, financial independence, first jobs and serious relationships are popular themes in NA works. Much of the popular NA work is in contemporary romance, but it can be found in all genres, including speculative and historical fictions. Submit first chapters and prologue, if any, with complete synopsis. Complete submission limited to 25 pages (or less).

**24. Mainstream Novel: Fiction** — A successful mainstream novel tackles subjects of universal appeal, driven by characters and plots that find acceptance in the "mainstream" of readers. This category is large and diverse. Think Jodi Picoult, John Grisham, Harlan Coben, etc. Genre novels such as science fiction, mystery/suspense, romance, and historical should be entered in the appropriate categories. Submit first consecutive chapters including prologue, if any, and synopsis. Complete submission limited to 25 pages (or less).

**25. Romance Novel: Fiction** — The romance novel follows strong, vivid characters on their journey of discovery and emotional conflict to a shared and satisfying conclusion. No plot point, setting, or event takes precedence over the one central theme: the relationship between the two main characters. The end must leave the reader believing the protagonists' love will endure the rest of their lives. This category includes **all** forms of romance including **historical romance**. Submit first consecutive chapters including prologue, if any, and synopsis. Complete submission limited to 25 pages (or less).

**26. Historical Novel: Fiction** — Historical encompasses novels set anytime in the recent or distant past such as ancient Greece, the Middle Ages, or World War II. These novels are time capsules of an era and/or culture—the setting serves as a character itself. Submit first consecutive chapters including prologue, if any, and synopsis. Complete submission limited to 25 pages (or less).



**27. Mystery/Suspense Novel: Fiction** — This category is made up of two broad categories. **Mystery Novels** are all about *'whodunit.'* These books have a strong hook/murder and a cast of suspicious and compelling characters, and readers compete to solve the puzzle before the author reveals the answer. Whether told in first person or third, mystery novels showcase the main character as he/she follows a maze of clues and incidents leading to the Big Reveal. Detective and police procedural, espionage/spies, amateur sleuth, series or stand-alones, a winning mystery novel is a tightly-woven question from beginning to end. **Suspense Novels** and related **Thrillers** also require a strong hook that often includes a murder/death involving a strong main character and compelling cast. But unlike mysteries, suspense/thrillers more often focus on *'how-dunit.'* The antagonist may be an individual, organization (government), or thing (virus) known to readers from the beginning but often hidden from the protagonist. Suspense novels and thrillers may be first person but more often third person, and often employ more than one viewpoint character. The main character may be the good guy or the bad guy. Whether a medical, psychological, techno, legal, or other sub-genre, the winning suspense novel is action-driven from beginning to end. **Help the judge by noting "mystery" or "suspense/thriller" on your mss.** Submit first consecutive chapters including prologue, if any, and synopsis. Complete submission limited to 25 pages (or less).

**28. Sci-Fi/Fantasy Novel: Fiction** — This category is made up of two totally different genres: **Science Fiction**, A novel in which futuristic technology or otherwise altered scientific principles **contribute** in a significant way to the adventures. Often the novel assumes a set of rules or principles or facts and then traces their logical consequences; **Fantasy**, A novel in which magical, otherworldly, or supernatural elements are a central part of the plot or setting. Many fantasies take place on imaginary worlds. Characters may be something other than human or may possess magical powers. Submit first consecutive chapters including prologue, if any, and synopsis. Complete submission limited to 25 pages (or less).

**29. Horror Novel:** - Fiction intended to scare, unsettle or horrify the reader. Historically, the cause of the "horror" experience has been the intrusion of an evil, or occasionally misunderstood, supernatural element into everyday human experience. Any fiction with a morbid, gruesome, surreal, exceptionally suspenseful or frightening theme has come to be called "horror." Submit first consecutive chapters including prologue, if any, and synopsis. Complete submission limited to 25 pages (or less).

**30. Nonfiction Book: (Any nonfiction book)** — This category is made up of an enormous range of divergent topics, which all seek to educate, inform, and/or entertain and sometimes inspire. **Narrative Nonfiction** follows the form and style of various fiction genres (think *The Perfect Storm* and *First, Do No Harm*). Depending on style, biographies and autobiographies or family histories may fall under the narrative nonfiction umbrella, which basically consists of any "true" subject told in a narrative form. The author often has a personal stake or shared experience in the story. This form requires strong viewpoint character(s), story problems and satisfying resolutions. Length of complete work parallels similar works of fiction. **Memoir** is first-person, narrative nonfiction that focuses on one specific aspect of the writer's life or experience. **Nostalgia** focuses on down-home occurrences reflecting the past; these pieces evoke a fond remembrance of a time gone by, or memories of childhood. **General Nonfiction** more commonly presents technical, self-help, how-to information, inspirational works, or otherwise fact-based material derived from an author's own expertise, author research, and outside expert sources. Style varies widely but in all cases content must be presented in a pleasing and accessible format. Chapters typically are broken up with

sidebars, bulleted lists, photos/illustrations, tables and other value-added materials and may include direct quotes, footnotes, etc. Length of finished work varies widely, from short (under 20,000 words) illustrated gift books to encyclopedia-length reference books over 150,000 words. **Help the judge by noting “narrative” or “general” on your mss.** For **Narrative Nonfiction** submit *first consecutive chapters* (and prologue, if any) with full synopsis. For **General Nonfiction** submit **any representative chapters**, and include a chapter outline **OR** book proposal per industry standard (overview, market analysis/competition, table of contents, etc). Submission limited to 30 pages (or less).

### ***Categories 31-34: Published Books (Trophy Awards)***

Must have a copyright date of 2014. E-books, self-published books, and traditionally published books of any length are eligible.

**31. Best Juvenile Book Award** — Published book of fiction or nonfiction for readers ages 1-18.

**32. Best Nonfiction Book Award** — Published nonfiction book.

**33. Best Book of Poetry Award** — Published book of poetry (chapbook or full-length collection).

**34. Best Book of Fiction Award** — Published book of fiction (novel or short story collection).

### ***Crème-de-la-Crème Award***

A “best of contest” award will be chosen from among the first-place manuscripts in all 29 unpublished categories. The winner receives a trophy and an additional cash award. Welcome to the 2015 OWFI contest. Last year as I celebrated the end of being General Contest Chair and looked forward to maybe taking it easy for a year, Dawn asked me to do it again.





## Affiliate News – Forth Worth Writers

### Novels and New Books

**AMANDA STONE NORTON:** BOOK: *Muddy Madeleine Meets An Arach-A-Doo*, Progressive Rising Phoenix Press, LLC (10/14).

### Professional Activities

**OLYVE HALLMARK ABBOTT:** Olyve presented the program and signed books for Fort Worth Paranormal Group (07/14); Spoke for the Cameo Club, Dallas (08/14); Signed her books at the East Texas Book Fest, Tyler Junior College, Tyler, TX (09/14).

**ROBYN CONLEY:** As “Book Doc,” Robyn offered critiques for two days at the Writer's League of Texas Editors and Agents Conference, Austin, TX (06/14); She presented the program, offered critiques and signed books for the Montana Romance Writers (10/14).

### Club News

**DENNIS BECK,** author and instructor, presented our program on 10-04-'14.







## Affiliate News – Mid-Oklahoma Writers

### Acceptance and Sales

**DAVID ROPER:** Two stories and a poem from *Highlights* reprinted by educational publisher Rally Education: “*The Year the Pilgrims Stepped on Governor Bradford*,” “*The Dishonest Merchant*,” and “*Don’t Eat the Gigggleberries*.” *Highlights* scheduled another of David’s “Worm” story’s for publication: “*The Three Little Worms to the Rescue*.” Also, Truth for Today Commentary Series recently published: *Romans 1-7*

### Contest Winnings

**CHARLES VASSEL:** Stillwater Writers First Annual Writing Contest. Second Place Short-Short Story, “*The Mysterious Mr. Smith*.” Third Place Short Story, “*Elke and the Major*.”

**BARBARA SHEPHERD:** 2014 Arkansas Writer’s Conference Contest: Summer Vacation Award category, “*Painting on Safari*.” Rose State Conference, Honorable Mention Non-Fiction, “*You Can’t Keep a Good Woman Down*.” Read a poem in the Voice of the Fair competition at the OK State Fair: Fourth Place, “*Women’s Words*” She had a poetry read at the Norman Galaxy of Writers and at the

Poetry Society of Oklahoma Annual Awards Luncheon. Attended a conference with the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI) in Stroud.

### Professional Activities:

**JOHN “JAZ” PRIMO:** Interviewed on the KAUT-43 “Rise and Shine” Morning Show. Promoted and signed his novels at the “Red Dirt Book Convention” held at the Oklahoma City Sheraton Hotel convention center. John was a speaker at the Rose State Short Course on Writing “The Best Time to be a Writer” held in September.

### Club News

The Mid-Oklahoma Writers announced their annual writing contest. A new category for this year’s competition is a Novel Synopsis, plus first page of a novel. The writers returned from summer break in September. Members welcomed Janis Contway who entertained the group with a laugh filled discussion about her career as a playwright.

## Affiliate News – Writers of the Purple Sage

### Acceptances and Sales

**MARY ELLEN MAIN:** ARTICLES: “Postcards From Abroad” Travel Series, *Herald Democrat*; “Home Away From Home---Away From Home” (07/10/14). “Don’t Breathe” (07/17/14). “Mini Town---Mega Fun!” (07/24/14). “What’s the Major Complaint?” (08/07/14). “Baked Cheetos and Rubber Stamps” (08/21/14). “Everybody Loves a Parade” (09/14/14). “John’s Incredible Story” (09/18/14). “Doctor Dad to the Rescue” (09/25/14).

### Novels and New Books

**LINDA ZOOK,** writing as **KITRA KASPAR:** E-BOOK: Inspirational Romance: *The Greatest Is Love*, Astraea Press (8/3/2014) Available on Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Smashwords, Kobo, etc.

### Contest Winnings

**DICK WILKERSON:** Short Course on Writing, Rose State, MEMOIR: First Place, “Brothers”.

**SUE MCMURPHY:** Short Course on Writing, Rose State, MEMOIR: Second Place, “Dollar-A-Carload”.

**CAROLYN LEONARD:** Short Course on Writing, Rose State, MEMOIR: First HM, “Thoreau, Walden and Me”.

### Professional Activities:

FIELD TRIP FOR RESEARCH: The historic Harvey House Restaurant and the Railroad Museum in Waynoka, Oklahoma: **MECHELLE ANDREWS, LEON BEALL, LEORA BRIDGEWATER, GWEN HEWITT, MARY ELLEN MAIN, JOANNA PEARD, JESSIE VANDERPOOL, LINDA ZOOK** (8/23/14).

THE SHORT COURSE ON WRITING AT ROSE STATE COLLEGE: Attending: **CAROLYN LEONARD, SUE MCMURPHY, DICK WILKERSON** (9/19 - 9/21, 2014).

**OKLAHOMA WRITERS' FEDERATION, INC.**

9800 South HWY 137  
Miami, OK 74354

**When witches go riding, and black cats are seen,  
the moon laughs and whispers, 'tis near Halloween.**

**A gypsy fire is on the hearth, Sign of the carnival of mirth;**

**Through the dun fields and from the glade  
Flash merry folk in masquerade,**

**With treats galore and tricks so keen,  
Take heed, for this is Hallowe'en!**

See You Next Time~!



**Happy Halloween!**

