

Summer 2017

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The Report

In this issue:

The 2017 OWFI Contest Winners

Virtual Workshop Details

Sneak Preview of the 2018 Conference staff!

... and much more



OWFI Report, Summer 2017

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OWFI is a non-profit federation of writers' groups dedicated to promoting higher standards for the written word.

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It's easier than ever to visit www.owfi.org to update your membership today!

Don't forget: the 2016-2017 membership period ends on October 1, 2017.

With our new membership database, you will be able to set up for auto-renewal so you won't miss a thing!

Don't Miss it: Virtual Workshop with Bess Cozby

**All OWFI Members Are Invited to the:
1ST OWFI VIRTUAL WORKSHOP**

Speaker: Bess Cozby, Editor - TOR Books

Topic: The Revision Process - From Beginning to Final Product

When: August 3rd, 2017 @ 7-8pm CST

Where: Online - Slack Chat Platform

How: Sign-up on the OWFI Website

The Revision Process: From First Draft to Final Book

A book can change drastically between writing the first, fresh lines to holding the final version in your hands. As both an editor and a writer, Bess Cozby is acquainted with every step of the revision process. In this talk, she'll discuss the basics of revising on your own, with critique partners, an agent and, finally, editor, with a focus on making your book the strongest it can be, and building powerful relationships along the way.

And the best part? This first one is FREE!!!! You don't have to go anywhere. Grab your comfiest jammies, a glass of wine, and a notebook & pencil if that's your jam. You'll log into the Slack app (you'll receive the link to this after you sign up on the OWFI website) and get ready to chat.

Ms. Cozby will present her material for the first half hour, then we'll open the floor to your questions.

I hope you're as excited about this as I am! Feel free to email me at owfipresident@gmail.com with your questions.

BESS COZBY is an Editor at Tor/Forge books, where she is actively building her list with a focus on historical fiction for adult, young adult and middle grade audiences. On the adult side, Bess is also seeking suspense and women's fiction with a literary feel. For YA and MG, she also would love to find fun, fast, or nail-biting thrillers and contemporary novels with a high-concept hook. A few things she is particularly interested in: fame and its effects on people, sibling dynamics, American history, and philosophy. An element of romance is always a plus. The intersection of commercial, heart-warming, and surprising is where she is building her list.



From the Past President

Fifty Reasons Why

We did it. Another successful OWFI conference is in the books and it could never have taken place without all the wonderful, dedicated people who volunteered. I spent a lot of time during the event thanking people and I'm sure that some got overlooked for which I am sad, but once again I'd like to say thank you to every single person who gave either a little and most who gave a lot to make the weekend run smoothly. And it did!

We have now entered our fiftieth year of OWFI and we are not even going to lie about our age, rather rejoice. So, after celebrating a successful OWFI 2017, I want to say a just a few things I'm excited about for OWFI 2018.

Number One: Most importantly are the people who have volunteered to step up

to the plate and run our organization. I know that it is a volunteer position that at times becomes a full-time job. Yet, our wonderful board, chairs, delegates, affiliate officers—everyone does their part to keep our organization running.

Number Two: I'm so excited that we have so many young people stepping into leadership positions. (Yes, I know I sound like a geriatric and soon I'll be screaming, "You pesky kids get off my lawn.") But in all sincerity, the only way we can make it to the next fifty years is to listen to the next generation and encourage them to embrace leadership.

Number Three: Already OWFI 2018 is shaping up to be an epic conference. One little conversation at a book signing, morphed into a Facebook friendship, and then a little request and Jennifer McMurrain snagged the one and only Jay Asher to be our next keynote. Here is

a great reminder why networking in our profession is effective and why it is so important to go to book signings and most importantly OWFI.

Number Four: Our numbers are back to growing. Thanks to our wonderful website, magazine and PR information is out there, but remember that We Are OWFI so don't rely on them to do all the recruitment. Most people are much more likely to join because a friend invites them than all the flyers and emails we can produce.

Number Five: - What? Okay Mari says I can't write fifty reasons why – so I'll stop here and just say, thanks for giving me a second time with the gavel and making my time leading this group a positive, exciting, wonderful time.

See you in May.

Christine

Christine Jarmola was the OWFI President for 2016–2017.



From the President

Can you feel the excitement in the air?! A sense of anticipation? Is it just me?

Maybe it's the firework stands opening for the celebration of our nation, or the increased numbers of people filling their carts in obvious preparation for time on the lake. It could be that this is summer and things always seem to be happening or about to happen...but I don't think it's any of that.

No, I think this excitement I can feel building has to do with that fact that planning for our 50th year celebration is rolling along at a high rate of speed. I think it has to do with the implementation of new programs like our Virtual Workshop coming in August, and more communication between the OWFI board and the OWFI members via our easy to use website, social media, the SLACK chat app,

and face-to-face visits by members of the board to monthly affiliate meetings.

Regardless of what's causing it, I hope you feel it too.

This year our 2018 theme is: 50 Years of OWFI, Celebrating Our Legacy, Forging Our Future

And our goal is to do exactly that. We want to celebrate all those who've worked so hard to build us into the amazing organization we are today...an organization built on volunteers who've built a home for writers of all genres across Oklahoma and the surrounding states. We also want to turn an eye to building our future with added member perks through new programs and a strong community of writers helping to build each other up so we can all have a chance at success.

It starts with each of us, individually. Will you join me in this celebration?

We already have an amazing group of speakers lined up for our #50YearsofOWFI

2018 conference. See Staci Mauney's speaker update on pg. 14 for a more in depth look at what we have lined up so far. And that's just the beginning. We'll be bringing back old favorites including our annual writing contest, our fabulous Friday night costume



contest, basket wars, and the fun opening session skit we introduced last conference. We also have plans to add new fun to the lineup, but I'll keep you in suspense as we iron out those details.

In the meantime, be sure to sign up for our first Virtual Workshop with TOR Editor, Bess Cozby, in August. This new program is for members only, so be sure to invite your friends to join OWFI and take advantage of all the member perks. Why not join a local affiliate while you're at it? You can find more info on all affiliates at www.OWFI.org and don't forget to start work on your entries for the writing contest. If you start now you could take advantage of the "enter as many categories as you want for only one entry fee" rule and have something ready for every category. (If you do manage to do this, please let me know! I must study the creature capable of such a grand accomplishment!)

Afterall, 2018 is about you: Our Legacy and Our Future!

Sabrina Fish is the OWFI President for 2017-2018.



2017 OWFI Writing Contest Winners: Unpublished Manuscript Awards

Category 1 POETRY, UNRHYMED-SHORT

Category Sponsor: Sandra Soli
Judge: Robert Ferrier

Category Chair: Carol Johnson

FIRST PLACE: "The Young Wife's Promise" by Ann Cleary, Bartlesville WordWeavers

SECOND PLACE: "Once on a Snowy Morning" by Karen Kay Knauss (Bailey), Member at Large

THIRD PLACE: "The Last Snow Storm" by Carol Lavelle Snow, Tulsa NightWriters

1st Honorable Mention: "Hats" by Theresa Hupp, Kansas City Writers Group

2nd Honorable Mention: "While You're Blinking" by Eric Reitan, Member at Large

3rd Honorable Mention: "Season's Grace" by Terri Lynn Cummings, Oklahoma City Writers Inc.

4th Honorable Mention: "Fading Light, Burning Bright" by Diane Morrow-Kondos, Member at Large

5th Honorable Mention: "Fall 2016" by Martha Draper, Enid Writer's Club

Category 2 POETRY, UNRHYMED-LONG

Category Sponsor: Norman Galaxy of Writers

Judge: Lance Hawvermale
Category Chair: Carol Johnson

FIRST PLACE: "To Whom... etc." by Judith S. Rycroft, Oklahoma City Writers, Inc.

SECOND PLACE: "Unmet" by Nancy Scott Hanway, Member at Large

THIRD PLACE: "How to Leave" by Maria Veres, Oklahoma City Writers, Inc.

1st Honorable Mention: "My Sidekick's Journey" by Nikki Hanna, Tulsa NightWriters

2nd Honorable Mention: "Moving Day" by Eric Reitan, Member at Large

3rd Honorable Mention: "Martha, I am Sorry" by Robbie White, Oklahoma City Writers, Inc.

Category 3 Poetry, Rhymed-Short

Judge: Bill Bernhardt
Category Chair: Carol Johnson

FIRST PLACE: "Sonnet 14.1" by Natalie Rebacz, Bartlesville WordWeavers

SECOND PLACE: "Battling Dreams" by Kathryn Spurgeon, Member at Large

THIRD PLACE: "No Regrets" by Mary Flowers Brannon, Norman Galaxy of Writers

1st Honorable Mention: "Hunter" by Malea Thomas, Nevermore Edits

Category 4 Poetry, Rhymed-long

Category Sponsor: Oklahoma City Writers, Inc.

Judge: Kristyn Reid
Category Chair: Carol Johnson

FIRST PLACE: "Sunday Suppers on the Farm" by Shelley Anne Richter, Oklahoma City Writers, Inc.

SECOND PLACE: "While Ridin' Slow" by Karen Kay Knauss (Bailey), Member at Large

THIRD PLACE: "Wayward Bloom" by Judith S. Rycroft, Oklahoma City Writers, Inc.



2017 OWFI Writing Contest Winners

1st Honorable Mention:
“Miscommunication” by Julia Harmon,
Oklahoma City Writers, Inc.

2nd Honorable Mention: “Christmas Card
Blessing” by Marilyn Boone, Bartlesville
WordWeavers

Category 5 Essay

Category Sponsor: Sisterhood of the
Traveling Pen
Judge: Heather Davis
Category Chair: Connie Blaylock

FIRST PLACE: “Me Tarzan, You
Hemingway: A Navigation Guide to
Writing Conferences” by Brandi Barnett,
The Inklings

SECOND PLACE: “The Sunrise” by Kim
Rogers, Member at Large

THIRD PLACE: “On Taking Ourselves
Less Seriously” by Maria Veres, Oklahoma
City Writers, Inc.

1st Honorable Mention: “New Year’s
Resolution Chinese Style” by Nancy
Hartney, Ozark Mountains Guild of
Writers

2nd Honorable Mention: “Brain Roulette”
by Donna Welch Jones, Tulsa NightWriters

3rd Honorable Mention: “Israel: The
Inconvenient Truth of Occupation” by
Maggie Villines, Tulsa NightWriters

Category 6 Technical and/or How-To Article

Category Sponsor: Anonymous
Judge: Wayne Harris-Wyrick
Category Chair: Marshall Bennett

FIRST PLACE: “Fairies Made Me a Better
Storyteller” by Joshua Danker-Dake, Tulsa
NightWriters

SECOND PLACE: “Beans: A Healthy
Cook’s BFF” by Maria Veres, Oklahoma
City Writers, Inc.

THIRD PLACE: “Becoming the Next John
Grisham” by Theresa Hupp, Kansas City
Writers Group

1st Honorable Mention: “Ask Aunt Sue” by
Renee’ La Viness, Tulsa NightWriters

Category 7 Feature Article: Nonfiction (Any Subject)

Category Sponsor: Dale Ingram
Judge: Ben Montgomery
Category Chair: Eva Mahoney

FIRST PLACE: “A World Gone Sepia” by
Abigail Singrey, Bartlesville WordWeavers

SECOND PLACE: “The Life and Legend
of Jesse B.” by David L. Roper, Mid-
Oklahoma Writers

THIRD PLACE: “They’re Off! Life on
the Backside” by Nancy Hartney, Ozark
Mountains Guild of Writers

1st Honorable Mention: “This is Ground
Zero” by F. Ray Gaskin, Member at Large

Category 8 Blog: Nonfiction

Category Sponsor: The Inklings
Judge: Mari Farthing
Category Chair: Julia Mozingo

FIRST PLACE: “Boston” by Nick Lyon,
Rose Rock wRiters



2017 OWFI Writing Contest Winners

SECOND PLACE: "Our Cracked Nation" by Jan Morrill, Ozark Mountains Guild of Writers

THIRD PLACE: "Thoughts of a White Woman Regarding White America" by Malea Thomas, Nevermore Edits

1st Honorable Mention: "Depression Lies" by Jennifer McMurrain, Bartlesville WordWeavers

2nd Honorable Mention: "Oxford Commas for Sale" by Lisbeth L. McCarty, Norman Galaxy of Writers

3rd Honorable Mention: "The Poopie Diaper Path to Enlightenment" by Brandi Barnett, The Inklings

Category 9 Inspirational Article

Category Sponsor: Bartlesville WordWeavers

Judge: Julia Mozingo

Category Chair: Adrean Messmer

FIRST PLACE: "We Were Warriors - Hell Bent" by Nikki Hanna, Tulsa NightWriters

SECOND PLACE: "Heavenly Breadcrumbs" by Louise Tucker Jones, Member at Large

THIRD PLACE: "Selfless" by Maggie Villines, Tulsa NightWriters

1st Honorable Mention: "The Vow" by Jennifer McMurrain, Bartlesville WordWeavers

2nd Honorable Mention: "Jesus Ointment" by Sally Jadlow, Kansas City Writers Group

Category 10 Memoir/Nostalgia Short Story

Judge: Cara Brookins

Category Chair: Shannon Iwanski

FIRST PLACE: "Uncle Skillet" by Nikki Hanna, Tulsa NightWriters

SECOND PLACE: "Varmints" by Laura Dye, Member at Large

THIRD PLACE: "The Backside of Knowledge" by Russell Gayer, Ozark Mountains Guild of Writers

1st Honorable Mention: "My Life as a Cattle Whisperer" by Renee Roberts, Member at Large

2nd Honorable Mention: "Before the Plague" by Eloise Needleman, Bartlesville WordWeavers

3rd Honorable Mention: "The Day I Forgave My Mom" by Eva Mahoney, Pen and Keyboard Writers

4th Honorable Mention: "The Courtship of Reverend Frank Wright" by Nancy K. Harmon, Member at Large

Category 11 Flash Fiction

Category Sponsor: Linda Apple, in Memory of Lois Spoon

Judge: Tamara Grantham

Category Chair: Shannon Iwanski

FIRST PLACE: "Picking" by Mari Farthing, The Inklings

SECOND PLACE: "Aphrodite's Tears" by Brenda Clark Thomas, Oklahoma City Writers, Inc.

THIRD PLACE: "Miscarriage" by Katy Mullins, Nevermore Edits

1st Honorable Mention: "Drip" by Jennifer McMurrain, Bartlesville WordWeavers

2nd Honorable Mention: "How to be a Good Member of Group Therapy" by Audrey Lentz, Pen and Keyboard Writers

3rd Honorable Mention: "The Mistake" by Josh Hutchins, Member at Large

4th Honorable Mention: "Waves" by Kimberly Holmes, Member at Large

5th Honorable Mention: "Night of Shame" by Renee' La Viness, Tulsa NightWriters

Category 12 Short-Short Story (Adult): Fiction

Category Sponsor: Brenda Clark Thomas, in Memory of Nita Clark

Judge: Connie Blaylock

Category Chair: Cynthia Stevison

FIRST PLACE: "Tromlui" by Shannon Iwanski, Nevermore Edits

SECOND PLACE: "Unreasonable Doubt" by Karen Ferrell, Member at Large

THIRD PLACE: "The Day of Reckoning" by Laura Atanacio Edington, Member at Large

1st Honorable Mention: "Family Legacy" by Winona Bennett Cross, Member at Large

2nd Honorable Mention: "The Stealthy Intruder" by Julia Mozingo, Lone Star NightWriters

3rd Honorable Mention: "Dodging Death" by Gail Mattingly, Oklahoma City Writers, Inc.

4th Honorable Mention: "Out Like a Viking" by Nancy K Harmon, Member at Large

Category 13 Juvenile Short Story: Fiction

Category Sponsor: Sue Cory Person

Judge: Renee Roberts

Category Chair: Connie Blaylock

2017 OWFI Writing Contest Winners

FIRST PLACE: "Visiting Daddy" by Linda J. Marshall, Member at Large

SECOND PLACE: "The Big Sister Hat" by Karen Ferrell, Member at Large

THIRD PLACE: "Shine One" by Cathy Collar, Bartlesville WordWeavers

1st Honorable Mention: "Coyote and the Snake" by Kim Rogers, Member at Large

1st Honorable Mention: "Settling Up with Shirley" by Gail Mattingly, Oklahoma City Writers, Inc.

2nd Honorable Mention: "The Academy of Spoiled Rotten Brats" by Russell Gayer, Ozark Mountains Guild of Writers

3rd Honorable Mention: "The Family" by Nelda Holliman-Paden, Oklahoma City Writers, Inc.

4th Honorable Mention: "The Tree House" by Bobbie Mardis, Enid Writers Club

Category 14 YA Short Story: Fiction

Category Sponsor: Marcia Preston
Judge: Bess Cozby
Category Chair: Eva Mahoney

FIRST PLACE: "Prisoner of War" by Abigail Singrey, Bartlesville WordWeavers

SECOND PLACE: "The Well" by Jennifer McMurray, Bartlesville WordWeavers

THIRD PLACE: No More MouseLisbeth L. McCartyNorman Galaxy of Writers

1st Honorable Mention: "Rich Man's Sport" by Nikki Hanna, Tulsa NightWriters

Category 15 Adult Short Story: Fiction

Category Sponsor: Gamut Magazine
Judge: Ally Robertson
Category Chair: Kristi Hanson

FIRST PLACE: "Twisted Little Women" by Donna Welch Jones, Tulsa NightWriters

SECOND PLACE: "What Was Hidden in the Watch" by Eric Reitan, Member at Large

THIRD PLACE: "Anatomy of a Divorce" by Mariana Llanos, Oklahoma City Writers, Inc.

Category 16 Sci-Fi/Fantasy Short Story: Fiction

Category Sponsor: Jay Scott King, in Honor of Edmond Writers Group
Judge: Jason Hough
Category Chair: Sharon Worthey

FIRST PLACE: "The Candles Brighter Than You Think" by Eric Reitan, Member at Large

SECOND PLACE: "Hail Proteus!" by F. Ray Gaskin, Member at Large

THIRD PLACE: "Amita Wizard & the Grimoire" by Claire Ellis, Member at Large

1st Honorable Mention: "The Lie" by Josh Hutchins, Member at Large

2nd Honorable Mention: "The Great Stone Head" by Shannon Iwanski, Nevermore Edits

Category 17 Horror Short Story: Fiction

Category Sponsor: A Murder of Storytellers
Judge: Ruth Weeks
Category Chair: Sally Jadlow



2017 OWFI Writing Contest Winners

FIRST PLACE: "The Surrogate" by Brenda Clark Thomas, Oklahoma City Writers, Inc.

SECOND PLACE: "The Gift" by Molly Ervin, McAlester's McSherry Writers

THIRD PLACE: "The Edge of the Dock" by Shannon Iwanski, Nevermore Edits

1st Honorable Mention: "The Dark Inside" by Shelley Anne Richter, Oklahoma City Writers, Inc.

2nd Honorable Mention: "A Little Too Much Salt" by LMG Swain, Member at Large

Category 18 Prose Humor: Fiction or Nonfiction

Category Sponsor: Maria Veres, in Memory of Kathryn Veres
Judge: Cathy Collar
Category Chair: Nick Lyon

FIRST PLACE: "Could He Do It?" by Mary Flowers Brannon, Norman Galaxy of Writers

SECOND PLACE: "The Battle of

Gardenville" by Russell Gayer, Ozark Mountains Guild of Writers

THIRD PLACE: "The Pug, the Cat, and the Rabbit" by Jayleen Mayes, Bartlesville WordWeavers

1st Honorable Mention: "The Proofreader" by Shelley Anne Richter, Oklahoma City Writers, Inc.

2nd Honorable Mention: "Laughing Gas and the Tornado" by Skye Brannon Lucking, Oklahoma City Writers, Inc.

Category 19 Play, Film, or TV Script

Judge: Frank Steele
Category Chair: Sally Jadow

FIRST PLACE: Believing Out Loud by Mary Flowers Brannon, Norman Galaxy of Writers

SECOND PLACE: Cheat the Devil by Eloise Needleman, Bartlesville WordWeavers

THIRD PLACE: The Fourth Wall, Episode 1: Clipped Wings by Mac Boyle, Nevermore Edits

1st Honorable Mention: Tales of the Borderland by Sidney Brammer, Bartlesville WordWeavers

Category 20 Picture Book: Fiction or Nonfiction (for ages 1-8)

Category Sponsor: Traci Ison Schafer, in Memory of Grandson, Lawson Morgan
Judge: Tony LoPresti
Category Chair: Adrean Messmer

FIRST PLACE: The Purple Problem by Cathy Collar, Bartlesville WordWeavers

SECOND PLACE: Why Bessie Won't Fly Any More by Vivian Zabel, Pen and Keyboard Writers

THIRD PLACE: Miss Locomobile Takes the Road by Sharon J. Wilson, Member at Large

1st Honorable Mention: Wanda Changes Phase by Natalie Rebacz, Bartlesville WordWeavers

2nd Honorable Mention: Wrinkles by Louise Tucker Jones, Member at Large



2017 OWFI Writing Contest Winners

Category 21 Middle Grade Book: Fiction or Nonfiction

Judge: Shelley Pagach
Category Chair: Julie Kimmel

FIRST PLACE: Petdemonium by Karen Ferrell, Member at Large

SECOND PLACE: Writing Prompts Through the Year by Maria Veres, Oklahoma City Writers, Inc.

THIRD PLACE: Melvin the Mysterious by David L. Roper, Mid-Oklahoma Writers

1st Honorable Mention: Finding North by Abigail Singrey, Bartlesville WordWeavers

Category 22 YA Novel: Fiction or Nonfiction

Judge: Sonia Gensler
Category Chair: Jodi Thompson

FIRST PLACE: The Day After You Save the World by Eric Reitan, Member at Large

SECOND PLACE: Death's Ally by Audra Williams, Member at Large

THIRD PLACE: Until the Meek Inherit by Sharon Ervin, McAlester's McSherry Writers

1st Honorable Mention: The Red List by Kim Rogers, Member at Large

2nd Honorable Mention: An Oversight by Marion Grace, Tulsa NightWriters

Category 23 New Adult Novel

Category Sponsor: Fawkes Press
Judge: Amy Collins
Category Chair: Jodi Thompson

FIRST PLACE: The Anuan Legacy by Traci Ison Schafer, Oklahoma City Writers, Inc.

SECOND PLACE: Cloverfield by Jennifer McMurrain, Bartlesville WordWeavers

THIRD PLACE: Ultimately by Lisbeth L. McCarty, Norman Galaxy of Writers

Category 24 Mainstream Novel: Fiction

Category Sponsor: Enid Writer's Club
Judge: Dr. Marty Ludlum
Category Chair: Julie Kimmel

FIRST PLACE: Return to the Triple Creek by Bobbie Mardis, Enid Writers Club

SECOND PLACE: White Chalk Road by Rodney Walther, Member at Large

THIRD PLACE: Lost in Appalachia by Jennifer McMurrain, Bartlesville WordWeavers

1st Honorable Mention: The Last Harvest by Joan King, Member at Large

2nd Honorable Mention: Undelivered Letters by Linda Shelby, Oklahoma City Writers, Inc.

Category 25 Romance Novel

Category Sponsor: Inkubus Publishing
Judge: Ann Leslie Tuttle
Category Chair: Mari Farthing



thank you to all who
made our 2017 contest
A SUCCESS!
THE SPONSORS, CHAIRS, JUDGES,
VOLUNTEERS AND
ESPECIALLY THE WRITERS!
we couldn't do it without you.

FIRST PLACE: Icarus Redeemed by Pepper Hume, Bartlesville WordWeavers

SECOND PLACE: Survivor by Connie L. Blaylock, Green Country Ruff Rriters

THIRD PLACE: Shifting Ozarks by Rebecca Cline, Member at Large

Category 26 Historical Novel

Category Sponsor: Green Country Ruff Rriters
Judge: Jennifer McMurrain
Category Chair: Mari Farthing

FIRST PLACE: The Call of the Redbird by Sandra Lawson, Member at Large

SECOND PLACE: The Banks of the Beautiful River by Olive Swan, Bartlesville WordWeavers

THIRD PLACE: Swaying with the Wind by Abir Sami Wood, Tulsa NightWriters

2017 OWFI Writing Contest Winners

1st Honorable Mention: An Angel's Heart by Connie L. Blaylock, Green Country Ruff Rriters

Category 27 Mystery/Suspense Novel

Category Sponsor: Christine Jarmola, in Memory of Charlotte Anne Smith
Judge: Staci Mauney
Category Chair: Sharon Worthey

FIRST PLACE: Promises to Keep by Kathleen Norris Park, Norman Galaxy of Writers

SECOND PLACE: The Falafel of Death by Linda J. Marshall, Member at Large

THIRD PLACE: Smart Vaccine by Richard D. Sadok, Bartlesville WordWeavers

1st Honorable Mention: Obsession by Connie L. Blaylock, Green Country Ruff Rriters

Category 28 Sci-Fi/Fantasy Novel

Category Sponsor: SoonerCon
Judge: Sam Morgan
Category Chair: Sharon Worthey

FIRST PLACE: Grassland by Joshua Danker-Dake, Tulsa Night Writers

SECOND PLACE: The Princess Dandelion and her Heroes Three by Nick Lyon, Rose Rock wRriters

THIRD PLACE: A World More Full of Weeping by Eric Reitan, Member at Large

1st Honorable Mention: Sybil Sybarite by Linda J. Marshall, Member at Large

Category 29 Horror Novel

Category Sponsor: Nevermore Edits
Judge: Peggy Chambers
Category Chair: Mari Farthing

FIRST PLACE: Hush by Jennifer McMurray, Bartlesville WordWeavers

SECOND PLACE: American Vampires by Connie L. Blaylock, Green Country Ruff Rriters

THIRD PLACE: And It Was Night by Joe Jared, Oklahoma City Writers, Inc.

Category 30 Nonfiction Book

Category Sponsor: Nikki Hanna
Judge: Amy Shojai
Category Chair: Mari Farthing

FIRST PLACE: Confessions of an Evil Child by Cassandra Gibson-Jones, The Write Ingredients

SECOND PLACE: The Miscarriage Survival Guide by Maria Veres, Oklahoma City Writers, Inc.

THIRD PLACE: Real Colors by Pepper Hume, Bartlesville WordWeavers

1st Honorable Mention: Black and Kiddo by Brenda Black, Writers' Guild of Arkansas



2017 OWFI Writing Contest Winners: Published Winners & Creme De la Creme

Category 31 BEST JUVENILE BOOK

Judge: Marilyn Boone
Category Chair: Evelyn Wilson-Martin
FIRST PLACE: The Night the Mice Sang by
Marla F. Jones, Member at Large

Category 32 BEST NONFICTION BOOK

Judge: Nikki Hanna
Category Chair: Evelyn Wilson-Martin
FIRST PLACE: The Jefferson Highway in
Oklahoma by Jonita Mullins, Tahlequah
Writers

Category 33 BEST POETRY BOOK

Category Sponsor: M. Hendry Fine Art
Judge: Maria Veres
Category Chair: Evelyn Wilson-Martin
FIRST PLACE: Where Once a Willow by
Karen Kay Knauss (Bailey), Member at Large

Category 34 BEST FICTION BOOK

Category Sponsor: LilyBear House, LLC
Judge: Jim Laughter
Category Chair: Evelyn Wilson-Martin
FIRST PLACE: A Splinter in Time by Linda
Shelby, Oklahoma City Writers, Inc.



Congratulations

to the 2017 Lifetime Member Award winner, Julia Mozingo!



Crème de la Crème

All first-place entries were read
anonymously during the judging
process for this award.

Sponsor: Ruth Weeks
Judges: Heather Davis & Carolyn
Leonard

Congratulations!

Cathy Collar, Bartlesville
WordWeavers
The Purple Problem, Category 20 -
Picture Book

First Person: Writers' Colony Weekend



I arrived at the Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow in Eureka Springs, Arkansas on a Thursday afternoon. The sun was bright and high, the air too warm for March. I'd come prepared—I packed comfortable clothes and my laptop. Notebooks and washi tape, a new pack of PaperMate felt tip pens, good snacks and wine.

The makings of a perfect writing retreat.

My traveling friend and I arrived to partake of a weekend at the retreat, both with our writerly goals in mind.



We were shown to our rooms—she and I a part of a group of bloggers and writers invited to come and experience the retreat. In the cottage adjacent to the main house, each of us had a suite to ourselves with a bathroom, bedroom, sitting area—and most importantly, a writing desk. The common areas in the home included a kitchen where we could store our foodstuffs (and enjoy the bounty of those provided or left behind by others), a dining area and a family room tricked out with a large board-room style table.

Thursday evening we enjoyed the Poetluck, a potluck dinner and reading in the main house, featuring local writers who drop in and share their dishes and their words and also featuring us, we writers who were new to the retreat. All through the delicious potluck dinner, I chatted with the visiting writers and fretted in anticipation of the reading. Nobody was more surprised than I when I volunteered to read first. I'd brought a poem and a flash fiction piece and I read them both. *I'm not the sort of person who writes poems and reads them out loud*, I said. One of the local writers placed a gentle hand on my arm. *You are now*, she softly rebuked. And I was. After a night of music and wine and laughter and deep conversation around that table in the cottage, I went off to bed ready to start the next day at my writing.

Friday morning brought my friend and I both up early in search of pre-writing coffee and chit chat. We decided to take advantage of the beautiful morning and went for a walk in our pajamas and sleep-mussed hair. Two hours later, after a meandering stroll around Eureka Springs that included an impromptu hike through the woods and getting lost more than once and a significant rise in the temperature, we returned, still in our pajamas and sleep-mussed hair. The locals were forgiving of us.

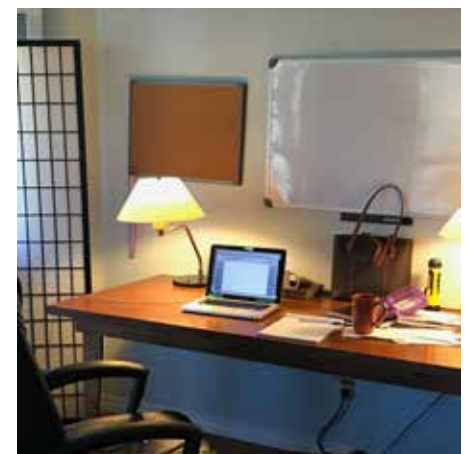
We made a lunch of cheese and meat and fruit and olives and crackers with our housemates. We cleaned our messes and all tiptoed off to our corners to write.

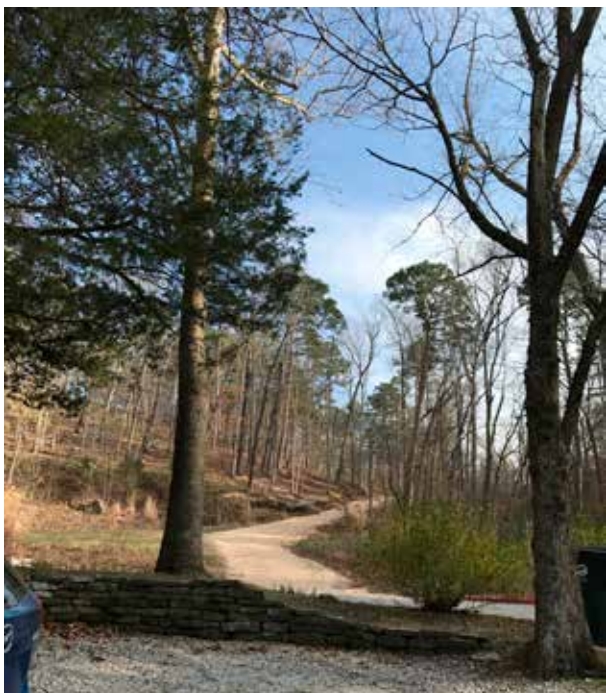
Well, that was my intention. But the words weren't coming, the story wasn't moving, no matter how I pulled at it. So I called home and organized my things and took a

shower and then a nap and by then it was well into the afternoon and I was feeling rather cross with myself but as I gazed out the window across the hollow and breathed in that mountain air and a soft rain fell, I thought about what I needed to do. My brain unclenched. My body sank into the moment. And pretty soon I was writing. Not on that story that I was pushing at like a fresh bruise, but a different story, one I'd started and set aside and rediscovered.

I wrote some great stuff. I also wrote some not great stuff. Did some planning, imagined some backstory, researched Latin words and Old English fonts. I spent time with my characters. After dinner that night, I didn't want to hang out at the table, I wanted to revisit my story. And the next day, the morning walk was shorter, the writing time was longer. I gave myself the luxury of not being on a schedule.

What I learned at the Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow is that it's a vibrant and active group of writers who seek out writers to support and engage. I learned that the





sort of beautiful space I might need to feed my writing is a short drive from my home and is not cost-prohibitive. I learned that some pretty big names had stayed there before me—little old unpublished me.

But more importantly, a weekend at a writer's colony reminded me what I love about writing. Losing myself in a story, connecting with other writers, creation and giving my brain room to play.

Learn more about the Writers' Colony at Diary Hollow by visiting www.writerscolony.org.

Mari Farthing is the editor of the OWFI Report. She's still writing that project she rediscovered at the Writers' Colony.

Do you have a first person story to share? Email your story idea query to owfinews@gmail.com for more information.



Watching Your Language: Modifiers

Oh! Dangle Me Not!

Anybody old enough to remember the big flap a few decades ago about “spy dust,” the chemical tracking agent the Russians were accused of shaking around in the path of our diplomats and correspondents? An NBC news story on the Today Show told it this way: “Sprayed on a doorknob or steering wheel, a diplomat can become an unknowing carrier . . .” I caught another station, KARK-TV in Little Rock, allowing a jewelry store to spew this one into the air waves: “Forced by the Bank of England to be sold, you can save a whopping . . .”

These ear-bangers are called danglers, or dangling modifiers. In both these examples the danglers happen to be participial phrases, but adjective or adverbs and their phrases are often found dangling as well. The problem here is one of positioning. The trick to remember is to put the noun or pronoun you mean the phrase to modify or describe nearest the modifier. Thus, you'll avoid such nonsense as spraying a diplomat on a doorknob. Or the misfortune of being sold by the Bank of England.

Like Mark Twain, I was very wise at age eighteen. Much wiser certainly than my elders, especially my Arkansas elders, who, I believed, had a monopoly on ignorance in most matters, notably the pronunciation and use of the English language. But unlike Twain, I required many more years, miles, schools, and books before coming to see how much the old folks had learned in my absence.

I learned, for instance, that the South has no monopoly at all on the doubling of “ed,” as in the substandard drowned-ed. Or spayed-ed as the past tense of spay. Actually, spade and spay share a common root in the Latin *spathe*, meaning sword. A Middle French derivative, *espeer*, meant “to cut with a sword.” It's a short step, then, to the meaning of spay: “to remove the ovaries of a female animal.” By cutting with a sharp instrument, naturally. The etymology won't rescue you from scorn, however, if you insist on “The vet spayed-ed my cat.” Meeorrrrrw, no!

Somebody posed this question to me in a note. He said he'd heard the phrase “black humor,” which his wife insisted pertained to humor dealing with blacks. He said it didn't seem so to him, and would I clarify? Here goes: the term is often misunderstood and misused, but it has nothing to do with blacks. It seems to be a new form of gallows humor. American Heritage Dictionary defines it this way: “the humor of the morbid and the absurd, especially in its development as a literary genre.” Barnhart Dictionary tells us it is “a form of humor in literature based on absurd, grotesque, or morbid situations.” Roy Copperud, in his *American Usage and Style—the Consensus*, cites an example of black humor from “The Godfather”: “Make him an offer he can't refuse,” that is, an offer whose refusal would have fatal consequences for the refuser.

Kathleen Park, M.A., calls herself an escaped English teacher and a forever lover of words. Send her your grammar-related question: katie.talks@gmail.com.



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2018 OWFI Conference Preview: Meet the Speakers



Keynote Speaker Jay Asher

Jay Asher's debut YA novel, THIRTEEN REASONS WHY, is a #1 New York Times and international bestseller. In 2017, it was released as a Netflix original series. His two other YA novels are THE FUTURE OF US and WHAT LIGHT, and his first graphic novel, PIPER, will be released later this year. His books are published in 40 languages.

Pre-Conference Speaker Diane Drake



Diane's produced original screenplays include ONLY YOU, starring Robert Downey, Jr. and Marisa Tomei, and WHAT WOMEN WANT, starring Mel Gibson.

Her original script for ONLY YOU sold for \$1 million, and WHAT WOMEN WANT is the second highest grossing romantic comedy of all time (Box Office Mojo). Both films have also recently been remade in China with major Chinese stars.

Prior to becoming a screenwriter, Diane worked in development as the Vice President of Creative Affairs for Academy Award-winning director/producer Sydney Pollack. She's a member of the Writers Guild of America and recently authored her first book, GET YOUR STORY STRAIGHT, a step-by-step guide to writing

your screenplay. She recently completed a sitcom pilot, teaches screenwriting through UCLA Extension, and does private story consulting and offers her own course through her website, www.dianedrake.com.

Agents Danielle Burby



Based in New York City, Danielle became an agent at Nelson Literary Agency (NLA) in January 2017. Previously, she was an agent at a NYC-based firm where she managed foreign rights in addition to building her client roster. She also interned at several top agencies and publishers before graduating from Hamilton College with a dual degree in creative writing and women's studies.

Danielle represents all genres of YA and MG along with select passion projects on the adult side in women's fiction, sci-fi/fantasy, and mystery. She particularly enjoys complex female characters, quirky adventures, narratives that ask readers to think deeply, girls with swords, and seaside novels. Danielle also looks for a strong narrative voice and characters she wants to spend time with. For more information about her wishlist, check out NLA's Submission Guidelines page. You can find details about her recent sales on Publishers Marketplace.

Stephanie Hansen



Stephanie Hansen represents debut to New York Times bestselling authors. She's signed authors with small presses to major publishing house distribution. She received her master's in 2008 and creative writing specialization in 2017. Predominately she represents YA SF/F but has a secret addiction for romance. While these are her favorite, she handles everything fiction from children's books to adult thrillers. Previously an editor for Mind's Eye Literary Magazine, she became a part of Metamorphosis in July 2016. Originally looking to help Midwest authors garner the attention of major publishing houses, despite residing in "flyover states," she found camaraderie with multiple agents and editors. @hansenwriter

Editors Rebecca Gober



Rebecca Gober has sixteen years of experience in upper level management, leadership, sales, marketing, and business relations. She has a history of finding ways to market outside the box and a passion for social media marketing and customer relations. She's not afraid to take risks and doesn't believe in the word impossible. Since entering the publishing world in 2011, Rebecca has co-authored seven young adult

novels and has since gone on to open Clean Teen Publishing. Rebecca is continually working hard to make new strides in the publishing world.

Courtney Knight



Courtney Knight graduated from UNT with a Bachelor of Science degree in interdisciplinary studies. She went on to teach middle school where she found her love for the young adult genre. Courtney is a perfectionist who loves to work behind the scenes in formatting and web design. She believes that the interior formatting of a book should shine as much as the exterior does. Since entering the publishing world in 2011, Courtney has co-authored seven young adult novels and has since gone on to open Clean Teen Publishing. Courtney is committed to making her mark in the publishing world.

Rhonda Penders

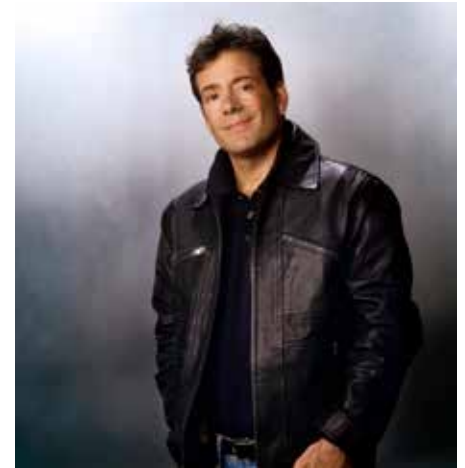


Rhonda is president and editor-in-chief of The Wild Rose Press. She and her business partner, RJ Morris, opened the company back in 2006. TWRP, as it is affectionately known, is home to authors worldwide and currently has over 3000 active titles. Although started as a romance-only publisher, they opened their garden gate to adult mainstream fiction (including historical fiction, science fiction, erotica, thrillers, etc.) in 2013. They also publish YA, but do not currently work with children's

books or poetry. They publish in ebook format as well as print and audio.

Rhonda lives in Upstate New York in a tiny hamlet nestled along the Erie Canal. She and her husband, Scott, have been married 32 years and have three adult sons, two cats, and an annoying spoiled Siberian husky. She enjoys writing, boating, cooking, and baking and is never happier than when all her sons are around her table.

Speakers Mark Alpert



Mark Alpert is an author of internationally bestselling science thrillers and a contributing editor at Scientific American. In his long journalism career, he has specialized in explaining scientific ideas to readers and simplifying esoteric concepts such as extra dimensions and parallel universes. And now, in his novels, Alpert weaves cutting-edge theories and technologies into high-energy thrillers that make the science come to life.

A lifelong science geek, Alpert majored in astrophysics at Princeton University and wrote his undergraduate thesis on the application of Einstein's theory of relativity to Flatland, a hypothetical universe with only two spatial dimensions. (The resulting paper was published in the Journal of General Relativity and Gravitation and has been cited in more than 100 scholarly articles.) After Princeton, Alpert entered the creative writing program at Columbia University, where he earned an M.F.A. in poetry in 1984. He started his journalism career as a small-town reporter for the Claremont (N.H.) Eagle Times, then moved on to the Montgomery (Ala.) Advertiser. In 1987 he became a reporter for Fortune Magazine, and over the next five years he wrote about the computer industry and emerging technologies. During the 1990s, Alpert worked freelance, contributing

2018 OWFI Conference Preview

articles to Popular Mechanics and writing anchor copy for CNN's Moneyline show. He also began to write fiction, selling his first short story to Playboy in 1991.

In 1998 Alpert joined the board of editors at Scientific American, where he edited feature stories for the magazine and wrote a column on high-tech gadgets. With his love for science reawakened, he wrote his first novel, *Final Theory*, about Albert Einstein and his historic quest for the Theory of Everything. Published by Touchstone/Simon & Schuster in 2008, *Final Theory* was hailed as one of the best thrillers of the year by Booklist and the American Booksellers Association. Foreign rights to the novel were sold in more than twenty languages, Reader's Digest condensed the book, and the movie rights were acquired by Radar Pictures, a Los Angeles film-production company.

Alpert continued the saga of the Theory of Everything in his second book, *The Omega Theory*, a gripping story about religious fanatics who try to trigger Doomsday by altering the laws of quantum physics. His next thriller, *Extinction*, focused on brain-computer interfaces and a collective intelligence that decides to exterminate the human race. His fourth novel, *The Furies*, told the story of an ancient clan who share a genetic mutation so shocking that its discovery changes the course of history. His 2016 thriller, *The Orion Plan*, described an extraterrestrial invasion of New York City. And his young adult trilogy -- *The Six* (2015), *The Siege* (2016), and *The Silence* (to be published in July 2017) -- is about six dying teenagers whose lives are "saved" when their minds are downloaded into U.S. Army robots. *The Six* earned extravagant praise from Booklist, School Library Journal, and Goosebumps author R.L. Stine and was nominated for the Cybils Awards.

Alpert lives in New York City with his wife and two non-robotic teenagers. He's a proud member of Scientific American's softball team, the Big Bangers.

Linda Apple



Linda Apple is a Mississippi gal whose roots run deep in the South. Her stories flow from generations of Southern women who shared their stories and their wisdom while cooking, enjoying meals together, and rocking on the front porch in the velvety, magnolia-perfumed evening breeze. From this rich heritage of storytelling and these memories, Linda's path to writing was formed.

She believes everyone has a story and that these stories matter. They are the thread that weaves humanity together and helps us to understand others. Her personal experience stories have been published in sixteen Chicken Soup for the Soul books, and she has two books, *Writing Life ~ Your Stories Matter* and *Writing From Your Soul*, that teach others to write their stories. She has taught workshops across the Midwest and East coast of the United States and in the United Kingdom.

She also tells her stories through fiction. Her books, *Women of Washington Avenue* and *Avalee's Gift*, are the first two books in her *Moonlight Mississippi* series. She is currently working on book three.

In addition to writing, she is also a motivational speaker. Her desire is to encourage, affirm, nurture talent, and equip people in order to help them achieve their goals and follow their dreams.

She has served as president for the Oklahoma Writers Federation, Inc. and

presently serves as the Arkansas Regional Speaker Trainer for Stonecroft. Linda and her husband, Neal, live in Northwest Arkansas. They have five married children and thirteen grandchildren.

William Bernhardt



William Bernhardt is the bestselling author of more than forty books, including the blockbuster Ben Kincaid series, the historical novel *Nemesis: The Final Case of Eliot Ness*, two books of poetry (*The White Bird*, *The Ocean's Edge*), and a series of books on fiction writing. In addition, Bernhardt founded the Red Sneaker Writing Center in 2005, hosting writing workshops and small-group seminars and becoming one of the most in-demand writing instructors in the nation. His monthly Red Sneaker Writers Newsletter reaches over twenty thousand people, and the Red Sneakers phone app reaches many more. He is the only writer to have received the Southern Writers Guild's Gold Medal Award, the Royden B. Davis Distinguished Author Award (University of Pennsylvania) and the H. Louise Cobb Distinguished Author Award (Oklahoma State), which is given "in recognition of an outstanding body of work that has profoundly influenced the way in which we understand ourselves and American society at large." In addition to his novels, he has written plays, a musical (book and music), humor, nonfiction, children books, biography,

Meet The Speakers

poetry, and puzzles. OSU named him “Oklahoma’s Renaissance Man,” noting that in addition to writing novels, he can “write a sonnet, play a sonata, plant a garden, try a lawsuit, teach a class, cook a gourmet meal, prepare homemade ice cream, beat you at Scrabble, and work the New York Times crossword in under five minutes.”

Jack Burgos



Jack Burgos is a 33-year-old author of transgressive, speculative fiction living in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He was born in Miami, Florida, the son of Colombian and Cuban immigrants. He graduated cum laude from Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 2007, with a B.A. in English, a B.A. in philosophy, a political science minor, and a concentration in creative writing. He graduated with an M.A. in clinical psychology from the University of Tulsa in 2013.

Jack co-founded the writing critique group Nevermore Edits in 2012, through which he continues to improve his craft. His work has been published in *Happy Days*, *Sweetheart*, *Beyond the Nightlight*, *Now Playing in Theater B*, *Dark and Dangerous Things III*, and *The Book of Blasphemous Words*. He edited *Broken Worlds*, published by *A Murder of Storytellers*. His series *Stormborn* debuted on May 1, 2017, with its first book, *13 Hearts to Start a Storm*.

Jack serves as the webmaster for the Oklahoma Writers’ Federation, Inc. and as the treasurer for Nevermore Edits. When he isn’t engaged in writing-related activities, Jack proudly works as a home-based counselor in Youth Services of Tulsa’s CARS program.

Henry Cline



Henry Cline was born in 1994 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Living in Mustang all of his life, he has been writing since he was seven and started writing novels consistently at the age of eleven. His other passions include playing the electric guitar, cooking, and baking. His first published novel, *Development Code: RED*, was self-published when he was only fifteen. *Too Close for Comfort* followed later when he was twenty, and *The Platinum Briefcase* will be released through Sands Press Publishing Company in the fall of 2017. His debut album, *Resilience*, was released September 2016. There is still plenty more to come!

Arlene Gale



If it needs writing, Arlene Gale “The Book Writing Business Coach” can do it with her 30 years of professional writing and

international speaking experience. Her writing services range from working with clients as a writing coach, accountability partner, or ghostwriter. She offers a full range of writing services, including editing, marketing, and best-seller campaigns. Arlene also helps authors create professional signature speeches and presentation materials. Through her passion for writing and her step-by-step writing program, Arlene works with professionals to write and market top quality books for leveraging their business expertise and growing their business. While Arlene specializes in writing nonfiction, she also coaches fiction writers. Arlene is responsible for helping clients win local, state, and national recognition. Her nonfiction book *Face Forward Move Forward* is a multiple international and national award winner. It was an Amazon.com “#1 Best New Release” and “#1 Best Seller,” both in four categories. During her extensive career, Arlene has written books for dozens of clients, more than a thousand magazine articles, hundreds of advertisements, multiple social media platform content, website content, and more. In 2016, the national SCORE office recognized Arlene’s writing business with a “Small Business Champions Award.” She has a B.S. in advertising/public relations, with a minor in radio, television, film and a master’s in marketing with a specialization in communications.

Tamara Grantham



Tamara Grantham is the award-winning author of more than half a dozen books and novellas. Dreamthief, the first book of her Fairy World MD series, won first place for fantasy in INDIEFAB'S Book of the Year Awards, and a RONE award for best New Adult Romance. It is also a #1 bestseller on Amazon in both the Mythology and Fairy Tales categories.

Tamara holds a bachelor's degree in English. She has been a featured speaker at the Rose State Writing Conference, and she also been a panelist at Comic Con Wizard World. She collaborated with New York-Times bestselling author, William Bernhardt, in writing the Shine series.

Born and raised in Texas, Tamara now lives with her husband and five children in Wichita, Kansas. She rarely has any free time, but when the stars align and she gets a moment to relax, she enjoys reading fantasy novels, taking long walks, and watching every Star Wars or Star Trek movie ever made. You can find her online at www.TamaraGranthamBooks.com.

Mariana Llanos



Mariana Llanos was born in Lima, Peru. The daughter of two journalists, Mariana developed an early passion for writing and reading. Mariana wrote poetry, short stories, and plays all the way through school. She studied theatre in the prestigious school CuatroTablas based in Lima, and moved to Oklahoma in 2002. In 2013, she published her first book, *Tristan Wolf*, which won a finalist spot in the 2013 Readers' Favorite Book Award and a spot in the 2013 Gittle

List Independent Book Awards. Since then, she has published eight children's books independently in English and Spanish. Her work geared toward an adult audience has appeared on *Writer's Resist*, *Blackbirds* *Thirds Flight*, *a Haunting of Words*, among others. But Mariana's real passion was ignited after discovering the magic of virtual technology. Using Skype and Google Hangouts, she has visited more than 150 schools in the United States and around the world. These visits allow Mariana to spread her love for reading and writing, as well as to promote understanding and cultural awareness. Recently, Mariana signed a contract with the publishing company Penny Candy Books for the publication of her new children's story, *Luca's Bridge*, which will be available next spring. Meanwhile, Mariana continues her work of visiting schools, enticing young minds with the magic of her children's literature.

Samantha March



Samantha March is an author, editor, publisher, blogger, and all-around book lover. She runs the book blog *Chick Lit Plus*, focusing on book reviews and author features. She currently has five published novels – *Destined to Fail*, *The Green Ticket*, *A Questionable Friendship*, *Up to I Do* and *Defining Her*, and one holiday novella, *The Christmas Surprise*, with her sixth novel due out in fall of 2017. Samantha created CLP Blog Tours in 2012 and has run over 500 online blog tours for authors, in addition to other book marketing services and also editing and proofreading services. You can also find Samantha on Youtube and Instagram as a beauty influencer, with a combined following of over 40,000 followers.

Adriana Mather



Adriana Mather is a full-time writer, producer, and actor. She owns a production company called Zombot Pictures, which produces feature films, including the award-winning *Honeyglue*. She lives in Los Angeles, California. *How to Hang a Witch* was her first novel and *Haunting the Deep* will be released by Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers in October 2017. Look for her on Twitter at [@AdrianaMather](https://twitter.com/AdrianaMather) and on Facebook at [@AdrianaMatherauthor](https://facebook.com/AdrianaMatherauthor).

BJ McMinn



B.J. McMinn lives in N.E. Oklahoma with her husband of fifty-four years. She published her first book of a six-book series in 2007. Since then she has published ten novels, three novellas, and three instructional books for beginning authors.

Fine print: this list of speakers, editors and agents is subject to change.

2018 Conference Preview: Meet The Speakers

Brian Roe



Brian S. Roe is a native of Indianapolis, Indiana, and a graduate of Herron School of Art and Design. Having grown up in his father's print shop, Brian has seen first-hand the transition from print to digital media and strives to embrace both the history and the future of graphic art. He is an artist, writer, and freelance graphic designer who enjoys the act of creating above all else and takes great pleasure in helping others to create as well.

Tara Lynn Thompson



Tara Lynn Thompson is an Emmy and Addy award-winning writer and author of *Not Another Superhero* and *Just Another*

Sidekick, the first two books in *The Another Series*. Starting her career as a newspaper beat reporter at age 19, Tara Lynn quickly moved into newspaper management within five years. After managing two Tulsa magazines, she launched her own creative content company, Tara Lynn Creative, running it for five years before taking a position in Oklahoma City as the senior creative writer for an advertising agency and moving into the position of manager of content strategy for a digital marketing agency. She has worked on national campaigns, written for national businesspeople and celebrities, taught as an adjunct professor, and makes frequent presentations on creative writing and marketing strategy to civic groups and businesses. She now works full-time as an author, teacher, contract creative writer and is currently working on her next book. You can connect with Tara Lynn on her website, TaraLynnThompson.com or via Facebook at [AuthorTaraLynnThompson](https://www.facebook.com/AuthorTaraLynnThompson).

Hannah Joy Wilkinson



Hannah Joy Wilkinson is a part time compliance specialist at a local bank as well as a writer, blogger, and Bethany House book reviewer. She received a bachelor's degree in English from Baylor University in Waco, Texas, before settling in McAlester, Oklahoma, with her beloved husband, Stan, and their two ornery cats. She enjoys spending time with God in His word with a good cup of coffee, discovering the joys of growing things in the garden, and reading too many books at one time. She has published numerous short stories full of fascinating history ranging from the time of ancient Israel's judges to the Russian Night

Witches of World War II. The Moor and the Maiden is her first Christian historical novel set in the time of the Crusades and debuts September 26, 2017.

Erin York



Erin York is an author and editor in her late 20s. She received her B.A. in creative writing from the University of Missouri, Kansas City, and her master's in education from the University of South Carolina. Her first collection of poetry, *The Light You Cannot Touch*, was published by Puff Puff in 2014 and won the international Author's Circle Award for Excellence in 2017. Currently, she is in her first year of her Ph.D. studies at the University of South Carolina; has co-authored a second collection of poetry, *La Petite Mort*, with renowned Chicago-based poet, Joseph Burrows; and has built a niche LGBTQ+ audience on Fanfiction.net where her first novel received over 75,000 reads (and counting). She co-owns Novel Edits, which helps emerging and well-known authors polish and publish their work and speaks nationally about writing, editing, and social media platforming. Follow her journey at www.erinyorkauthor.com to learn more.

The Adventures of Plot Bunny



In May, a group of writers met up to talk about their craft. They were joined by a very special guest who is small, white, fluffy, and full of ideas. They're also adorable, annoying, inspirational, and frustrating. Their name? Plot Bunny.

PB, as Plot Bunny is often called (along with Fu Fu), is a small stuffed bunny that has found its way into the charity auction for the past two years at the OWFI Writers Conference. The winner has kept PB until the next conference so they can be sold again.

There are no rules as to what is to be done with PB. I don't believe it was ever the intention of Plot Bunny's creator for them to return to the auction block either. But like all good plot bunnies, they are meant to be shared, to continue to inspire and take their place amongst Hesiod's muses. Because that is what plot bunnies are, the modern incarnation of the muse.

In the ancient world, the muses were created in an attempt to understand the

writing process. They are that spark of inspiration which spurs us into writing a thousand words in one go. They are responsible for the dread found staring at a piece of parchment and not being able to make words go. To our ancestors, these were real, external forces that dictated the creation of art.

Today, whether you still believe in some kind of supernatural or divinity based muse, there is no denying that sometimes our stories have a mind of their own. And this is why plot bunny has become deeply ingrained in the writing community.

The term likely comes from John Steinbeck. "Ideas are like rabbits. You get a couple and learn how to handle them, and pretty soon you have a dozen." This is far too apt to describe the writing process. Ideas breed until they can become unmanageable, taking up much time and resources. Yet they are so cute and adorable and fluffy that no one can say no to that face.

Which brings us back to the OWFI Plot Bunny. It's cute and adorable, and has so far this year been on many adventures. Its current guardians are the members of the Tulsa-based writer's group, Nevermore Edits. They have been posting pictures of PB on Facebook and Twitter under the hashtag #owfiplotbunny. So far PB has been to the House of Eternal Return, has gone fishing, and has bounded off on the back of a jackalope to escape the pink lion that was going to eat them.

Last year, PB got to travel to North Texas, believing they were going to be the Easter Bunny. After that was cleared up, PB settled in nicely with their new boss and sent OWFI some letters. It seemed like PB had a lovely, tranquil existence down there, perhaps on a small ranch, with a soft breeze, and cold lemonade every Sunday morning. Or maybe that was PB's cover story as they went around the world as an elite government spy? Or maybe they found love after recovering from a personal tragedy?

Oh dear, it looks like Plot Bunny is starting to generate their own plot bunnies.

PB occasionally still writes letters home to OWFI which you can find on the

OWFI website. You can also follow #owfiplotbunny to see what PB is getting up to. Then next year you'll have a chance to win your own adventures with PB as they'll be up for auction again at the 2018 OWFI Writer's Conference.

As long as PB isn't busy saving the world from dragons... from space... who are after the world's maple syrup reserves... and now this is just getting silly. Plot Bunny, what are we ever to do with you? I know, I know, love your adorable, cute, little face.

Jessica Coplen is a member of OWFI affiliate group Nevermore Edits. Find more of Plot Bunny's adventures at OWFI.org/plot-bunny or search #OWFIplotbunny on Twitter.



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