

Norman Galaxy of Writers Formed in March 1969 • Affiliated with Oklahoma Writers Federation, Inc.

WRITELINE

Norman Galaxy of Writers, P.O. Box 5581, Norman OK 73070 Vol. 43, No. 3 • March 9, 2024

“If there’s a book you really
want to read, but it hasn’t
been written yet, then you
must write
it.”

-- Toni Morrison

THE MISSION of Norman Galaxy of Writers is to provide a venue for published and non-published writers to develop and refine their writing skills through quality educational programs, mentoring, and networking with other professional writers.

MARCH PROGRAM HOWARD F. STEIN



March 9, 2024, 10 a.m.-12 Noon
210 South James Garner Avenue, Norman, OK
(ZOOM Available)

Our March speaker, Howard Finn Stein, is Professor Emeritus in the

Department of Family and Preventive Medicine, University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, in Oklahoma City. As an applied psychoanalytic, medical, and organizational anthropologist, psychohistorian, and poet, he is the author, co-author, and/or editor of 33 books, several hundred articles, and several hundred poems. In 2020, he and Seth Allcorn co-authored *The Psychodynamics of Toxic Organizations: Poetry, Stories, Analysis*. His most recent poetry books are *Presence: Poems from Ghost Ranch (NM)*(2020); *Centre and Circumference* (2018); and, co-authored with Seth Allcorn,

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Whiteboardings (2023). He is Poet Laureate of the High Plains Society for Applied Anthropology, and Psychohistorical Poet Laureate. He can be reached at hfs.dad@gmail.com.

GALAXY MEETING MINUTES

The Well—210 S. James Garner Ave February 10, 2024

President Bob Macfadzean called the meeting to order. In person attendees were Judith Coker, Jeannie Raney, Mary Spaulding, Jim Nichols, Kathleen Park, Dan Snell, Linda Basinger, Bob Macfadzean, Mary Payne, Helen Duchon, Sammy Kitchens, Mark Robinson, Lee Hester, Melissa Hearn, Anne Wimberly, and Danielle Sullivan. In spite of all Linda Basinger’s effort to make it happen, Zoom wasn’t available.

Announcements: Galaxy's Critique-athon will be held at Norman's West Library 10-12:00, March 30, 2024. Judith Coker has been appointed as Galaxy representative to the Norman Arts' Council. An informative article by Joy Hampton appeared in the *Norman Transcript* about Galaxy recently. The Tornado Alley Mystery Writers is sponsoring a conference March 23, 2024, from 9:00 – 4:00 at the Westwind Universalist Church, 1309 W. Boyd, Norman. Sammie Husbands will launch his book, *Barbados Stick Science*, at the Floating Bookshop, 617 W. Sheridan Ave., Oklahoma City, on March 23 at 2 p.m.

Reports: The minutes and treasurer's report were approved as printed in the *Write Line*.

- A. Publicity/Program: Chair Jennie Raney noted Howard Stein, poet, will speak at our March meeting. Shel Harrington will be in April.
- B. Membership: Mary Spaulding had no general comments, but four more members paid yearly dues.
- C. *Write Line*. Editor Mary Payne was commended for her excellent work on *WriteLine*. She reminded members to submit items by the 26th of each month.

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She noted members involved in community events can publicize Galaxy to grow membership.

Old Business: None

New Business: Bob Macfadzean led a general discussion about our meeting site at the Well, and how we would continue in the future when the Norman Central Library is reopened. Galaxy has been given the Well space until that occurs, when a decision would need to be made about future meetings.

Galaxy has always sponsored a contest category for OWFI, for \$105.00. Mary Payne moved that Galaxy send OWFI \$105 to sponsor a contest category, Dan Snell seconded the motion, and with no objections, the motion was approved.

Jennie Raney introduced our speaker, Mike Swain. The next Galaxy meeting will be March 9. Respectfully Submitted, Judith Briggs Coker, Secretary

**FEBRUARY TREASURER'S
REPORT**
by Linda Basinger

PREVIOUS BALANCE: \$1,232.06

INCOME

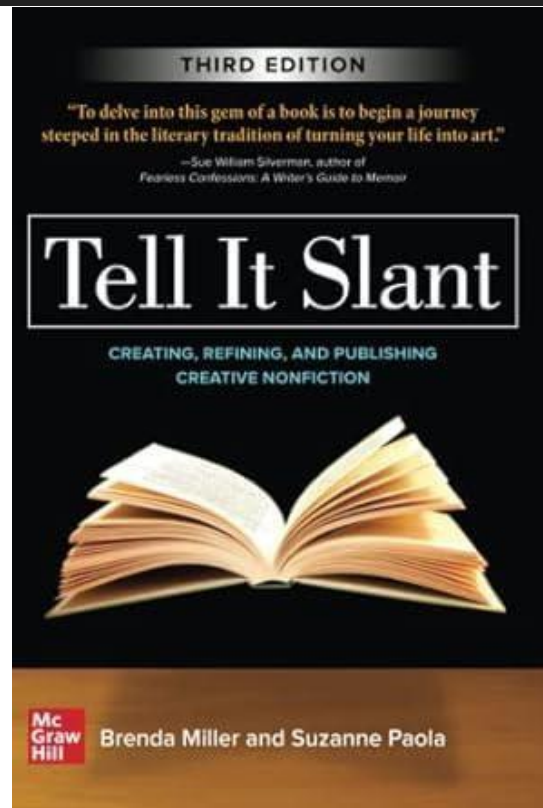
Hearn, '24 Dues	25
Husbands, '24 Dues	25
Robinson, M.E., 24 Dues	25
Schindler, '24 Dues	25
Wemberly, A., '24 Dues	25
TOTAL INCOME	<u>125.00</u>
 SUB TOTAL	 \$1,357.06
 EXPENSES	
L. Basinger, Reimb., OWFI Contest	
105 sponsorship	
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>105.00</u>
 CURRENT BALANCE	 \$1,252.06

Membership Dues!

Galaxy dues for the membership year 2024 are \$25 and they become due on **January 1, 2024**.

Mail dues to: Galaxy Treasurer, P. O. Box 5581,
Norman, OK 73070. If you have any questions, please
contact Treasurer Linda Basinger at
beammeuptoo@icloud.com

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BRAGS:

SAMMY HUSBANDS will host a book signing for *The Introduction to the Johnson Method of Barbados Stick Science, Vol. 1* on Saturday, March 23rd, 2:00 p.m., at The Floating Bookshop, 617 W Sheridan Ave., Oklahoma City. Congratulations, Sammy!

The Poetry Society of Oklahoma (1934-2024) celebrates 90 Years!

PSO will have its Annual Spring Contest Awards Luncheon on March 16, 2024, at Lakeside United Methodist Church (2925 NW 66th ST OKC) from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Awards will be presented, and winning poems will be read. An attendance fee is required and includes a catered lunch. Register no later than March 11 via email to karenkay@pldi.net

THE WRITER'S BOOK CASE

TELL IT SLANT by Brenda Miller and Suzanne Paola

Inspired by Emily Dickinson's quote, "Tell all the truth but tell it slant/Success in circuit lies," Miller and Paola delve into the many ways authors can use their own personal vision to illuminate the subjects they are writing about. "We chose her poem as the title for this book because it so aptly describes the task of the creative nonfiction writer: to tell the truth, yes, but to become more than a mere transcriber of life's factual experience."

Miller says our earliest memory becomes "our own starting point in our own narratives of the self." She encourages writers to construct a scene based on that first memory. Zoom in on the smallest details in the scene and allow them to build a picture of the era without the author having to bluntly state the facts. Stay with the memory long enough to build consensus for your childhood.

Muscle memory, memory through physical movements that you made, is one kind of memory. Then there are the five senses. We all have an innate connection to smell. Telling the reader how something smelled will automatically bring up that smell in the reader's brain. Mentioning taste, hearing, touch, and sight also heightens the reader's connection to your essay or story. If you're writing about your childhood, broaden it to include the inventions, history, and culture that shaped the world in that decade. "The more particular you make your own experience (with sensory details, compelling metaphors, and luscious rhythms) the more fully the reader will experience the memory along with you." P. 102

Miller writes essays (and I daresay other writing as well) have "two lines of movement: the horizontal (plot, story, linear development) and the vertical (insight, reflection, delving below the surface). Is (your story) more horizontal or vertical? Does the balance between the two seem adequate, or is it unbalanced in some way?"

Each chapter ends with exercises and other resources, including both print and online stories. The last section of the book reprints a number of stories that are examples of the suggestions the authors have shared.

Tell It Slant is a great book that's to be savored and enjoyed, much like Dickinson's poems. It's a worthy addition to any writer's bookcase.

SEEN IN A FACEBOOK POST: After Flannery O'Connor released her short story, *A Good Man is Hard to Find* (1953), a reader wrote to her and said, "Your book left a bad taste in my mouth." She wrote back to the reader and said, "You weren't supposed to eat it." LOL!

It's easier to get into Harvard Medical School than the UCLA film school, when you consider the number of applicants vs. the number of slots available. UCLA has an online version for those who qualify.

<https://professionalprograms.tft.ucla.edu>.

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— Richard Walter, author, screenwriter, instructor

HIP, HIP, HOORAY!!!

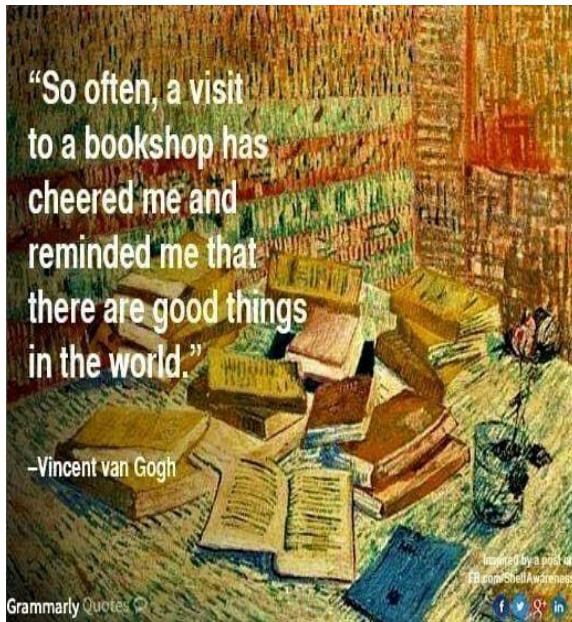
We are indebted to Hamp McCool for all his hard work on Zoom and for writing our speaker notes during 2023. THANK YOU, HAMP! — Happy Retirement.

The Write Line deadline for the April issue is March 26, 2024. Please send Mary Payne any pictures, brags, columns, articles, puzzles, and what-not to her email address, marpayne@netscape.com before that time. Also, if you are changing your email address, please notify her, so you won't miss a single issue.

THE RULE OF TWELVE

The 'Rule of Twelve' sells my stories — and it can do the same for yours. If you have at least 12 manuscripts in the mail, one (or more) will sell.

— Mary Bahr Fritts
(Reprinted from a 1993 *Write Line*)



OWFI 2024 WRITING CONFERENCE 'THE WRITING UNIVERSE'

May 2-4, 2024

Embassy Suites

1815 S. Meridian Ave., Oklahoma City

For more information and to register, go to

<https://www.owfi.org>, then click on "events"

Early-bird pricing expires March 15.

WHAT IS CONLANGING? According to Moriah Richard

(Writer's Digest, Mar/April 2024), it's constructing a new language for the story world you are creating, like Tolkien invented for *Middle-earth*. She lists several resources that may be helpful for authors, including *The Art of Language Invention* by Peterson and the Conlanger's Library, <https://Library.conlang.org>.

WRITING A MEMOIR? . . .

—A Tip from Darleen

Bailey Beard

Here are two blog posts that may help you structure your manuscript.

Authored by Lisa Cooper Ellison, the blog posts appear on Jane Friedman's website. <https://janefriedman.com/to-nail-yourmemoirs-beginning-stop-looking-in-the-wrong-direction/> and <https://janefriedman.com/4-voices-that-can-help-or-hinder-yourmemoir/>

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Watching Your Language By

Kathleen Norris Park

What's Your Pet Language Peeve?

Join my survey, will you? What word or phrase sets your teeth on edge when you hear or read it? One editor I asked said he hated the redundant "continue on" as in "He continued on speaking." Many people mentioned "couldn't care less." One of my favorite language gurus called that one "A vogue expression that has not only grown tiresome but also apparently fatigued some of its users to the extent that they cannot get it all out, and end by reversing its sense." Thus, we have the idiotic "could care less." "Per capita" is a term that can arouse some surprising arguments. Literally, it means "by heads," and "equally to each individual" and "by or for each person," as in "highest income per capita in the country," meaning per individual. But it is frequently misused to mean some vague group or number of people.

I'd like to put this one on the doorstep of teenagers or those Theodore Bernstein called "the literary unwashed," but it won't stay there. The misuse of *like* is like a virus. You can catch it without so much as a sneeze to warn you. We can look back and yearn for discussions about the error of using *like* instead of *as* or "as if," or as a conjunction. That concern is nothing compared with the constant, gravelgrinding sound of *like* peppered between breaths all across the country. I never thought I'd see the day I'd prefer "um," but maybe that day is here. So. Now it's your turn. Send in your favorite language gripes. Let's hear 'em. Send them to katie.talks@gmail.com. (Reprinted from the *Write Line*, August 2016).

IN LOVING MEMORY OF ANN CHAMPEAU . . .

In our February meeting, Galaxy members voted to sponsor one OWFI contest category. Treasurer Linda Basinger forwarded \$105 to them, requesting the YA short story category. She said the donation was being made in honor of our own Ann Champeau, who recently passed away.

Ann's daughter Denise sent a sweet note: "As we were cleaning out the house last month, we came across some of the award-winning pieces Mom wrote. She was a very talented writer. She had the ability to immerse the reader in all the sights, sounds, smells, and feels of what you were reading. It's as if she transported you into her story.

"We (members of our family) are all so grateful for the support and friendship that Galaxy, OWFI, and Friday Writers gave Mom. And continue to give that love."

Ann won the OWFI Crème-de-la-Crème Award in 1994. If anyone would like to read the story "Why Couldn't She Hear My Cry?" let me know. She helps readers feel the disconnect between the mother and daughter. It's super.
— Mary Payne

FEBRUARY SPEAKER NOTES by Kathleen Norris Park Mike Swain

If you had the misfortune of missing our February speaker, the rest of us are sorry for you.

Who knew what gems this teacher of writing—some 40-odd years of it—had ready to serve up? We couldn't take notes fast enough. Mike Swain is the author of 15 YA books, the *Hardy Boys Case Files*, a *Nancy Drew/Hardy Boys Super Mystery*, a six-book series *Universal Monsters*, and a YA fantasy called *Map Monsters*. He also wrote the bestselling book in the *Roller Coaster Tycoon* series called *Kidnapped!*

He also uploads stories to Substack and a new platform called Ream. But the best part of his presentation was his generous sharing of story tips, his engaging delivery, and his invitation for us to write to him for the three what I'll call diagrams of the famous Hero's Journey, the mythic and endlessly appealing story structure Swain himself frequently refers to in his storytelling. Email: mike@lmgswain.com.

Mike posted his PDF on the Galaxy Facebook page on February 14. You can also access his PDF by emailing Mary at marpayne@netscape.com and she will forward it to you. Enjoy!

HERE'S A LIST OF SOME OF THE WRITING CLASSES offered by the University of Oklahoma's Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication

<https://oupublic.courseleaf.com/courses/jmc/>

Anyone age 65+ may audit a course for free if there is room and if they have permission from the instructor. Younger people who audit must pay for the classes. The forms for each are available from Enrollment Services, 1000 Asp Avenue, Buchanan Hall, Room 230. Administrative Assistant Debbie Blevins will walk you through the process.

JMC 0123. Fundamentals of Writing for the Media. 3 Credit Hours.

JMC 1013. Introduction to Media. 3 Credit Hours.

JMC 2033. Media Writing & Storytelling. 3 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: 1013 or concurrent enrollment; passage of the school's writing skills test, and permission of instructor.

JMC 3003. Multimedia Journalism. 3 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: 2033.

JMC 3023. Feature Writing. 3 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: 2033 and 3003.

JMC 3504. Introduction to Professional Writing. 4 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: [JMC 1013](#), [JMC 2033](#), [JMC 3011](#) or concurrent enrollment in [JMC 3011](#), and instructor permission.

JMC 4493. Social Media Strategies. 3 Credit Hours. (Slashlisted with [JMC 5493](#)) Prerequisite: Permission of Instructor; [JMC 1013](#), [JMC 2033](#), and [JMC 3413](#).

JMC 4514. Writing the Novel. 4 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: 1013, 2033, 3504 and 3514; or permission.

JMC 4524. Writing the Short Story. 4 Credit Hours. (Slashlisted with [JMC 5524](#)) Prerequisite: majors only; [JMC 1013](#), [JMC 2033](#), [JMC 3504](#) and permission of instructor or department.

JMC 4533. Mystery Writing. 3 Credit Hours. (Slashlisted with [JMC 5533](#)) Prerequisite: [JMC 3504](#).

JMC 4543. Sci-Fi & Fantasy Writing. 3 Credit Hours. (Slashlisted with [JMC 5543](#)) Prerequisite: [JMC 3504](#).

JMC 4563. Category Fiction. 3 Credit Hours. (Slashlisted with 5563) Prerequisite: 3504 and 3514, or permission of instructor.

JMC 4573. Theories of Professional Writing. 3 Credit Hours. (Slashlisted with [JMC 5573](#)) Prerequisite: majors only; [JMC 3504](#).

JMC 4593. Young Adult Fiction Writing. 3 Credit Hours. (Slashlisted with [JMC 5593](#)) Prerequisite: [JMC 3504](#).

JMC 4723. Horror Writing. 3 Credit Hours. (Slashlisted with [JMC 5723](#)) Prerequisite: Junior standing; [JMC 1013](#) and [JMC 2033](#) or permission of instructor.

JMC 5594. Writing the Commercial Nonfiction Book. 4 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: graduate standing and permission.



NORMAN GALAXY OF WRITERS' CRITIQUE-A-THON

Saturday, March 30, 2024

10 a.m. – Noon

Norman West Library, 300 Center Ct.

(the old Borders' bookstore)

Bring 5 copies of up to 10 pages of your manuscript.

**We'll beta read each other's work and you'll get immediate feedback! Come join us.
We'd love to have you.**



Norman has a parking problem. 'No Parking'

signs are everywhere. If you're having a garage sale or other function where people need to park in front of your house in spite of the sign, you can go to the police department and apply for a sign variance to allow parking for a specific time period. YAY!

CraftTalks' Sharla Yates will host Heather Sellers on Wednesday, March 6, 1-2:30. The topic is "Scene Work: Crafting Compelling Stories through Powerful Scene Writing." \$25. Register at least a day ahead of time. There will be a longer follow-up workshop on March 23-24, for which registration is also required.

<https://craft-talks.com/event/scene-work/>

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THE OBSERVATION NOTEBOOK

Creative writing professors Lynda Barry and Heather Sellers recommend every writer keep an observation notebook. That advice has been around for years and it always seemed like a burden. *Who has time to journal? Not me.*

But then Sellers explained what she meant. "It only takes five minutes a day." *Huh?*

What she meant by writing in an observation notebook is to jot down four or five, or eight or ten, things that you saw or heard during the day that interested you. These are things that you would never remember next week or next month or next year. If you do it every day, then at some point in the future,

210 South James Garner Ave.

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you can scan through the entries to see if there is anything that would help you with your current manuscript, she said. Or, maybe it would create a spark that will take you in a different direction on a new manuscript. A fitted sheet blows across a highway. Or maybe you saw a hawk pick up a chicken. Or maybe it's two or three lines of dialogue you overheard.

Whatever caught your attention, write it down.

These are all external observations. Sellers also recommends reading *Ongoingness* by Sarah Manguso, which is a compilation of internal observations about the author's relationship with her own memories as she wrote them in her diary. It's authentic writing, the nitty-gritty stuff of life.

Sellers said she writes in her notebook every morning, memorializing whatever happened the day before. "You don't need to write much. Just a subject and a verb. You must have a verb, because that's the action. Verbs make your writing flow!"

I bought a notebook and labeled it. I'm on Day 3. How

NEXT GALAXY

MEETING

APRIL 13, 2024

at "The Well"

about you? — Mary Payne

210 South James Garner Ave.

FACEBOOK NEWS

The Norman Galaxy of Writers now has 267 followers on Facebook. Helen Duchon, our chief Facebook administrator, uploaded a new welcome to the page:

"We are authors who write in a 'galaxy' of genres from poetry to cookbooks; from sci-fi to children's picture books, from murder mystery to history and how-to articles. We meet in person on the second Saturday (10 a.m.) of every month at 'The Well,' 210 S. James Garner Avenue, Norman, OK. Our Facebook page and monthly meetings are free and open to the public.

"If you want to become an official Galaxy member in order to vote and to enter our annual writing contest, you must pay dues. They are \$25 per year.

"Guests are welcome. We'd love for you to join us."

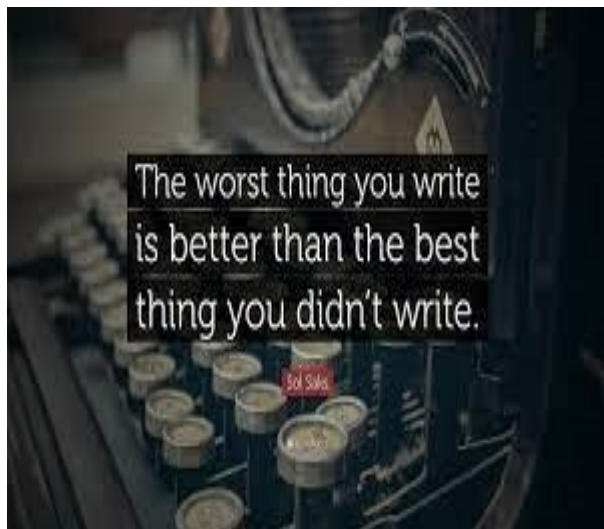
Thank you, Helen. ###

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NormanGalaxyofWriters@gmail.com/Galaxy

Editor: Mary Payne, marpayne@netscape.com

"If you fail to plan, you plan to fail."—Amanda Edgar



### GALAXY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE HEADS:

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