

WRITELINE

Norman Galaxy of Writers, P.O. Box 5581, Norman OK 73070 Vol. 44, No. 10 • October 11, 2025

October 11, 2025 10:00 a.m. - Noon

"The Well," 210 South James Garner Avenue, Norman, Oklahoma 73069

CONTEST DEADLINE: Midnight, 10/11/25

Don't waste time describing things that
don't need to be described...A single
40-watt light bulb dangling from a bare
ceiling tells you all you need to know
about the room. Describe the wart, not the
face.

-- Anthony McGowan

In Swallowed by a Whale

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.

OCTOBER PROGRAM MEL ODOM



October 11, 2025

**Business Meeting: 10 a.m.; Program:
10:30 a.m.**

**The Well, 210 South James Garner
Avenue**

MEL ODOM lives in Oklahoma and is the author of dozens of books in many genres, including science fiction, fantasy, suspense, mystery, romance, Western, and horror. He's written original novels based on television shows (The Secret World of Alex Mack, Sabrina, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Roswell) and novels based on screenplays (Tomb Raider, XXX, Blade, Vertical Limit). He's also written novels and gaming material for Wizards of the Coast's Forgotten Realms, Shadowrun, Android, and others. He teaches professional writing at OU. In 2002, his novel *The Rover* won the prestigious National Library Association's Alex Award, and in 1995 he was inducted into the Oklahoma Professional Writers' Hall of Fame.

In addition to being a writer, he is a hobbyist gardener and carpenter.

Come join Mel to learn the best way to write scene and sequel, a skill every writer needs. Nonfiction writers also use anecdotes in scene format, followed by a summary or reflection, so this topic is pertinent to everyone. [ZOOM Available]

GALAXY MEETING MINUTES

The Well—210 S. James Garner Ave

October 11, 2025

President Mary Payne called the meeting to order. Attenders included Mark Robinson, Melissa Hearn, Dan Snell, Gwenn Agiapal, Ravi Hall, Jennie Raney, Lee Hester, Vickie O'Neill, Linda Basinger, Mel Odom, Camaran Richards, Judith Coker, Darleen Beard, Leslie Vennochi, and Jim Nichols. Helen Duchon and Barbara Shepherd attended online.

Members accepted the September 2025 minutes as printed in the Write Line without corrections. We also accepted the September Treasurer's Report as printed in the Write Line without corrections.

Announcements: Nominating Committee Meeting met Sept. 17 and they hammered out a slate of officers. Of course, Judith has served as President-elect this year, so she will be president in 2026. The slate of officers is as follows:

President-Elect – Dan Snell

Program Chair – Mary Payne

Secretary – Jim Nichols

Treasurer – Linda Basinger.

We will vote on the 2026 officers at the November meeting. At that time, you may nominate someone from the floor for any of these offices as long as the person has agreed to serve. Or, if you would like to volunteer your services for any of these jobs, we will put your name on the ballot.

Reports.

A. Program Chair. Andrea Clark will present our program in November

B. Write Line. Mary Payne. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the October *WriteLine*. People can now see the *WriteLine* on our Facebook page. Our group received some nice compliments from people attending WriterCon. We were 11 strong!

C. Facebook. Jennie Raney. We now have 334 followers.

D. Contest. Contest Chair Melissa Hearn. All categories have sufficient entries.

New Business. Our Holiday Luncheon/Awards Ceremony is planned for December 13 at University Lutheran Church. We will plan for who will bring what dishes at the November meeting.

Our next meeting will be November 8. Andrea Clark will talk at that time.

Adjourn for our September speaker, Mel Odom.

Respectfully Submitted, Jim Nichols, secretary

SEPTEMBER 2025 TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE OCTOBER WRITE LINE by Linda Basinger, Treasurer

PREVIOUS BALANCE:

\$ 1,103.77

INCOME

None

00.00

TOTAL INCOME

00.00

SUB TOTAL

\$ 1,103.77

EXPENSES*

M. Payne, Printing & Supplies, Ck #1708

9.02

TOTAL EXPENSES

9.02

CURRENT BALANCE

\$ 1,094.75

*Our thanks to Darleen Bailey-Beard for declining Galaxy's honorarium for the excellent program she presented on September 13.

Membership Dues!

Galaxy dues for the membership year 2025 are \$25 and they became due on January 1, 2025.

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.



SPEAKER NOTES

by JENNIE RANEY

September 13, 2025

DARLEEN BAILEY BEARD

Great things can come from small beginnings. Memoir, like a rivulet feeding a stream, can sweep away the flotsam and jetsam—the pain and guilt caused by collateral damage—in our lives as well as in others. According to lauded Author Darleen Bailey Beard, memoir is all about showing us that it's okay to be human. While this journey can present a daunting task, Darleen shares strategies that will pilot us through unfamiliar waters.

Darleen uses the metaphor of a storage unit full of boxes to understand the difference between memoir and biography. Biography is similar to chronicling the contents of several boxes. However, memoir reveals only one or two boxes—and being brutally honest, dramatic, deeply reflective, poetic, or even fantastical in the process.

In order to tell your own truth, your writing must be authentic and honest. Be as critical of yourself as you are of others but remember to always show compassion. When in doubt about memories, go with your gut feelings. Ask yourself, what do my readers really want? Your audience wants to feel empowered, inspired, and uplifted. Your personal experience helps them to better understand their own lives and achieve their own transformation.

Popular memoirs have the following in common: “They’re usually beautifully written (using poetic devices, beautiful language, etc.) They must be character-driven with characters readers can relate to—flawed, messy, not perfect. They use “cause & effect” and “reflection” to make their points. They focus on emotions. Memoirs are as much about the reader as they are about the writer. They use beautiful

containers/boundaries which helps to focus the memoir’s contents and make it a fun read.”

Darleen highlighted Heather Seller’s book, *You Don’t Look Like Anyone I Know*. “Write your memoir using cause and effect. Cascades of events, described as scenes, are the rhythm and heartbeat of memoir. Reflect upon those scenes using the insight(s) you have gained from them. Ideally, 25% of your memoir is reflection, which equates to telling. The remaining 75% is cause and effect--the equivalent of showing.”

Micro, flash, mini, or tiny memoirs utilize the same techniques as fiction to tell a story. Their title sets the tone for a story told in a few hundred to one thousand words. A themed collection can be combined to create a full-sized book.

Since memories are subjective, it may prove helpful to jog them. Take one small incident from your life and answer the following questions:

- 1) What were your five senses telling you at the time of the event?
- 2) What were your thoughts and emotions?
- 3) What are your theories on the event?
- 4) Write down any conclusions or questions you’ve drawn from examining the event.

In conclusion, when writing memoir, keep it simple and take your time. According to author and poet Julie Benesh, whether your mini-memoir ends on a flash of humor, truth, emotion, insight, wisdom, or sarcasm, it is: “Not a drop in The Ocean, but the Ocean in a drop.”



CRITIQUE-A-THON NEWS!

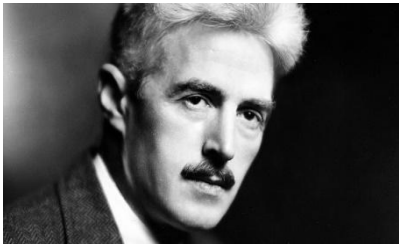
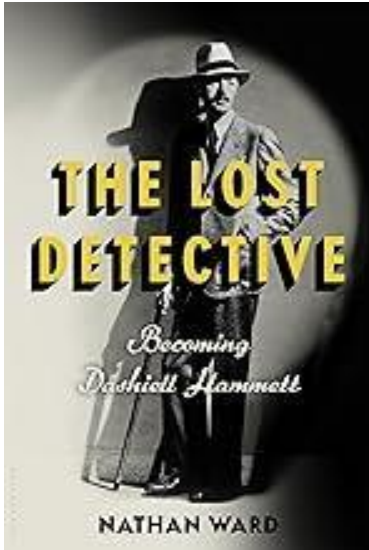
Nine members and friends attended our Critique-a-Thon at the Norman West Library on Sept. 20: Darleen Bailey Beard, Ravi Hall, Gwenn Agiapal, Jim Nichols, Mary Spaulding, Rebel Sowell, Mark Robinson, Dan Snell, and Mary Payne.

We’d love to read your stories! Stay tuned for our next Critique-a-Thon. Everyone with a manuscript to beta read is welcome to join us.



“The pen is an instrument of discovery, rather than a recording implement.”

--Billy Collins, U.S poet laureate,
2001-2003



Dashiell Hammett



Nathan Ward

“[The detective] must appear the careless, ordinary individual, particularly to those upon whom he is to operate. Assimilating, as far as possible, with the individuals, who are destined to feel the force of his authority, and by appearing to know but little, acquire all the information possible to gather from every conceivable source.” — Allan Pinkerton,

Thirty Years a Detective (1884)
THE WRITER'S BOOK CASE

***THE LOST DETECTIVE: BECOMING
DASHIELLE HAMMETT***

By Nathan Ward

For the mystery/crime writers among us—this is a biography of Dashiell Hammett (pronounced DA-SHEEL), author of numerous detective stories and novels all based on his own experience as an operative for the Pinkerton Detective Agency in the early 1900s.

Dashielle was Hammett's middle name—an Americanized version of his mother's family name who were French Huguenots.

After quitting school at 14 to work odd jobs, he continued visiting the library, reading as much as he could. Unfortunately, none of his jobs lasted. Mostly, he got fired for “lateness and sloppiness.” Finally in 1915, at age 20, he answered a personal ad—a company needed a salesman. Only, it wasn't true. The job was working for the Pinkerton Detective Agency. They surmised that a salesman would make an excellent “operative,” a detective who could infiltrate a group or a town and learn valuable information, criminal or otherwise, for their clients. Hammett joined their Baltimore office.

Ward devotes several pages to the founding of Pinkerton's and how they became like a national police force with the ability to cross county and state lines. An interesting side note is that Pinkerton put operatives inside the unions, then he forwarded their reports about strikes and other activities to the companies' headquarters, who were their clients.

Hammett learned to write by reviewing how his bosses edited the reports being sent to the clients. Ward writes that “it's interesting how familiar such reports sound from the Hammett style they later inspired: hopping streetcars, watching houses, quizzing neighbors, blind turns taken that nevertheless seem to add momentum, investigative failures that lend realism.”

In 1917, Hammett enlisted in the army. He was driving an ambulance in Europe with many wounded on board. The vehicle flipped and many were thrown out. Then in 1919, he contracted tuberculosis. It afflicted him for the rest of his life. He did go back to Pinkerton's, but the life of a detective took its toll. He

became weak and short of breath. He entered a sanitarium where he met a young nurse and they married. He began writing his stories shortly thereafter.

The Lost Detective is a very easy read with lots of interesting anecdotes. Highly recommend.

"The Library of Congress holds a Pinkerton archive with 60,000 documents and boxes of operative reports, agency employee records, etc. No writing by Hammett has been found, but the records from Baltimore and San Francisco are missing. There are also no reports of strike breaking. They may have been purged before being donated, in order to avoid being called to testify before Congress over union busting under the new National Labor Relations Act."--from *The Lost Detective*



BRAGS:

LINDA PEVAC, Mary Payne's Tulsa friend who has visited Galaxy, launched her third memoir, *Choosing to Breathe*, on September 9. Her pseudonym is Emma Stevens. All three of Linda's books chronicle her journey through adoption and her search for wholeness. Linda has set the gold standard for all adoptees to become the best version of themselves.

SAD NEWS:



DEWEY I. COFFMAN, a longtime Galaxy friend, passed away September 12, 2025 in Norman. He was 90. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Patricia and their

family. He was buried in Arkansas on September 27.

"Books written before 1975 are considered historical."

**--Merle Davenport
OUCH!**

**IS THE UNIVERSAL SMILEY FACE
COPYRIGHTED?**

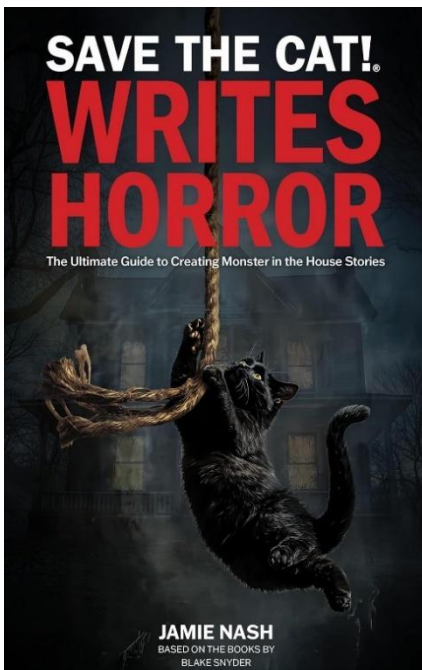
Harvey Ball created the first smiley face in 1963 for the State Mutual Life Assurance Co to bolster employee morale. He was paid \$45. In the 1970s, the owners of a card shop began selling smiley-faced merchandise, adding the phrase, "Have a Happy Day." Neither Ball nor the Spain Brothers copyrighted the image. In 1972, Franklin Loufrani, a French journalist, became the first person to register the mark for commercial use. In 1996, Loufrani's son Nicholas took over the business, making it a global company doing \$130 million in annual sales. Loufrani licenses businesses who want to use the emoji. If people want to copy the image for commercial purposes, it's best to research the steps in order to stay out of legal trouble. It's complicated in the United States because of Ball's original design.
--Ed.

ARE YOU READY FOR GALAXY'S ANNUAL WRITING CONTEST?

The deadline—October 11— is five days away from today. The Galaxy contest rules begin on page 8. It's all there, but if you have questions, email Contest Chair Melissa Hearn [pinpingranddog@outlook.com]. It's the cheapest contest around!

The awards ceremony will be during our potluck Christmas brunch on December 13, 2024, at the University Lutheran Church, 914 Elm Avenue, Norman, OK.

JB Caine, author of the Arcana Book Series, recommends a buy blank note cards. When someone helps you or goes out their way to give you good information that was helpful, send them a thank you note. If you don't have their snail mail address at least send them an email. Most of the time conference



FROM AMAZON:

Save the Cat!® Writes Horror: The Ultimate Guide to Creating Monster in the House Stories

by [Jamie Nash](#) (Author), [Based on Ten Save the Cat Books by Blake Snyder](#) (Author) Released 9/6/2025

Veteran horror screenwriter and novelist Jamie Nash leads us into the shadows of Blake Snyder's legendary Monster in the House genre—and sheds light over the secrets to crafting truly terrifying tales.

Save the Cat! Writes Horror is your guide to writing and delivering blood-chilling films and novels using the world's most successful storytelling method, including:

- A deep dive into horror's core ingredients—**Monster, House, and Sin**—with subtypes, examples, and tools to help you design your own diabolical tale
- The mad science of turning *Save the Cat!*'s 15 beats into a horror story that builds tension, sharpens scares, and leaves your audience squirming
- How to balance **Scares, Gross-outs, and Dread** to torment your audience flawlessly
- Why knowing your horror's heartbeat—**Slow Burn vs. Relentless**—changes everything

- How to build memorable horror characters—from first-to-die victims to final girls and guys—while exploring how their flaws, choices, and arcs mirror deeper fears and social truths

Whether you're a screenwriter, novelist, or seasoned horror-hound, *Save the Cat! Writes Horror* will help you write the kind of story that lingers long after the lights go out. —Amazon copy

From Jane Friedmann's Bottom Line Horror is big in comics right now. It's the second most dominant genre, behind superheroes. Gain more insights from the publisher of Oni Press;

RULES FOR THE 2025 NORMAN GALAXY OF WRITERS' ANNUAL CONTEST—Deadline 10/11/2025

Dues-paying Galaxy members are invited to enter our annual contest. Enter as many categories as you wish, but only one entry per category. Please read the rules carefully to ensure your manuscript(s) will meet all the submission requirements.

CATEGORIES:

Juvenile Fiction (for readers 8-12 years of age): 1,000 words maximum

Adult Flash Fiction: 500 words maximum

Adult Short Story (fiction): 2,000 words maximum

Novel: first pages with a one-page synopsis to a maximum of 15 pages

Rhymed Poetry: Any length

Unrhymed Poetry: Any length

Nonfiction Feature Article: 1,500 words maximum

Nostalgia Memoir or Essay: 1,500 words maximum

Personal Opinion Essay: 2,000 words maximum

CONTEST RULES:

In order to enter, you must be an official member of the Norman Galaxy of Writers and have paid dues (\$25) for the current year. You can pay dues at any meeting or send a check or money order to the Norman Galaxy of Writers at P. O. Box 5581, Norman, OK 73070. Please include your name, address, email, and phone number with your payment.

All entries must be unpublished or unaccepted for publication at the time of submission. All manuscripts entered must be your own original work. No Artificial Intelligence (AI).

You may enter each category once. No manuscript may be entered in more than one category. Manuscripts that have previously won a monetary award (1st, 2nd, 3rd, or Crème de la Crème) in a Galaxy contest may not be entered again. Neither sexual content nor graphic violence is acceptable in any category. In the event the Contest Chair receives a questionable entry, s/he will make a determination in concert with the club's president as to whether the guideline has been broken.

FORMATTING

1. The author's name **MUST NOT** appear on any page of the manuscript, or in the subject line of the digital entry.
2. All entries must be double-spaced, except for poetry and the novel synopsis.

3. Fonts must follow the industry standard, which is 12-point Times New Roman. Page 7
4. Margins should be one inch on all sides.
5. In the top right corner of each page of the manuscript, enter the category, title, word count, and page number. Example: Flash Fiction / Laughter / 498 words / p. 1.
6. On the first page of the manuscript, the title should be centered 1/3 to 1/2 of the way down the page. If the entry is a poem, the title and poem should be centered on the page. (To horizontally center a poem: center the longest line on the page; then align the other lines of the poem with the left margin you have created.)

SUBMISSION:

1. Manuscripts must be entered by electronic submission.
2. Send your digital entry as an attachment to the Contest Chair Melissa Hearn (pinpingranddog@outlook.com) on or before the deadline, October 11, 2025, at midnight.
3. Electronic entries must be sent in the form of doc (any version).
4. Send a separate email for each entry.
5. The subject line of the email should include the word "contest" and the name of the category. Example: Contest/Nostalgia Memoir.
6. A cover sheet must accompany every entry. Send it as a second attachment with your entry to the Contest Chair. If you need a cover sheet, email Mary Payne at marpayne@netscape.com.

CONTEST FEES:

\$5 per entry if you enter 4 categories or fewer. For example: \$20 for 4 entries.

\$3 per entry if you enter 5 categories or more. For example: \$15 for 5 entries.

Fees are nonrefundable. You can pay contest fees in person or mail them to Norman Galaxy of Writers, PO Box 5581, Norman, OK 73070. Please write the number of manuscripts you entered on your check or enclose a note providing this information. If you're not already a member of Galaxy, you can join by paying the \$25 membership dues when you send in your contest fees to the treasurer.

NOTICE:

*Judges will be selected by the Contest Chair based on each judge's experience in the genre and their willingness to write critiques. Judges' decisions are final. There must be a minimum of three entries in a category before it will be judged and prizes awarded. If not, in that specific case, the entry fee will be returned for lack of a category.

*Awards will be presented at the annual December awards luncheon, December 13, 2025. Certificates and cash prizes will be awarded in each category: first place, \$15; second place, \$10; third place, \$5. Certificates will be given to honorable mentions. The Bonnie Speer Crème de la Crème Award (\$30) will be awarded to the best of the first-place winners. Judges' comments will be returned to the entrants digitally following the announcement of awards.

GALAXY CONTEST CATEGORIES

1. Juvenile Fiction (Middle Grade readers, 8-12): This is a short story focusing on a child protagonist having a goal or a problem that s/he works to solve. It has character, setting, conflict, plot, and resolution. 1,000 words maximum.
2. Adult Short Story: The story revolves around a protagonist with a goal or a problem to solve. The five key elements are character, setting, conflict, plot, and resolution. It is similar to a novel, only shorter. 2,000 words maximum.
3. Flash Fiction (for adults): This is a short, short story that includes characters, setting, conflict, plot, and resolution. 500 words maximum.
4. Novel: Novels are long-form works of fiction. An interesting point-of-view character with a strong plot, conflict, and a satisfying conclusion are expected. Manuscripts from a wide variety of genres will be accepted. Submit the first consecutive pages with a one-page synopsis, for a total not to exceed fifteen pages. The synopsis can be single-spaced, but the manuscript pages must be double-spaced. Please limit the synopsis to one page.
5. Rhymed Poetry: Poems use figurative language, sound, and rhythm to tell a story, or to evoke imagination or an emotion. Any length.
6. Unrhymed Poetry: Unrhymed poems use the effects of rhythm and sound to create a story, mood, or emotion. Contains one or more stanzas. Any length.
7. Nonfiction Feature Article: This is a factual manuscript on any topic of general interest that might appear in a newsstand magazine, not a fictional or opinion piece. It's recommended the manuscript contain a quote from at least one expert in the field. 1,500 words maximum.
8. Nostalgia Memoir or Essay: This is a first-person narrative that focuses on one of the author's real-life experiences. 1,500 words maximum.
9. Personal Opinion Essay: This essay uses narrative form to convince readers of a certain point of view or, at least, to better understand the author's point of view. They can be fact-driven essays or lighter, humorous essays.

2025 MANDATORY COVER SHEET

Attach one digital cover sheet with each category entry for the contest chair. Send the appropriate entry fees to the Norman Galaxy of Writers, P. O. Box 5581, Norman, OK 73070. Note on your check or on an attached note how many categories you are entering. \$5 per entry if you enter 4 categories or fewer. For example: \$20 for 4 entries. \$3 per entry if you enter 5 categories or more. For example: \$15 for 5 entries.

CATEGORY _____

TITLE OF MANUSCRIPT _____

WORD COUNT _____

NAME OF AUTHOR _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

GOOD LUCK!!!

Watching Your Language by Kathleen Norris Park

“Quick Checks”

Compose, comprise. You hear or read it every day: “The series is comprised of 15 reports.” “The recipe is comprised of six ingredients.” EEEK. The meaning of *comprise* is to encompass, to take in: The US comprises 50 states. The team comprises five players. The correct word here is *compose*, meaning to make up, to constitute. This dish is *composed* of green chiles and cheese. The report is *composed* of five sections. Five players *compose* the team. Green chiles and cheese *compose* the ingredients list.

Compare to, compare with. This distinction was new to me when I took the Technical Editor training at Los Alamos National Lab. I was surprised to learn there was a difference. You might be, too. But here it is, and now you’ll be one of the few who can write it right! Don’t you love that feeling?

Turns “out “compare with” is more often called for than “compare to.” Use “compare to” when the object is impossible to be the same as the subject. It’s mostly used in poetry or poetic, fantastical writing: “Shall I *compare* thee *to* a rose?” wrote Shakespeare (I think.) The instructor *compared* my poem *to* the whinnying of a horse.

Compared with the fingerprints on the cane, these failed to match. When the scientist *compared* those blades of grass *with* our sample, she was surprised.

Center around, center on. Here’s another fine point. “Center on” is correct, the only correct use: The inquiry *centered on* voter registration. His search *centered on* this pair of suspects, who were seen entering the house earlier.

Blonde, blond. The word *blond* is an adjective. It means pale brown and often varies to such a pale color as to mean yellowish-white. The word *blonde* is a noun. It means a blond woman, period. It is never an adjective. This is another confused use. But now, dear writer, you are among the informed. ###

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Bill Kenower, editor-in-chief of Author Magazine, interviews Stacy Waldman Bass about her first memoir, *Lightkeeper: A Memoir through the Lens of Love and Loss* (published 9/16/2025). By profession, she’s a lawyer and a photographer. The book is based on her experience of grief when her father and two cousins died in an airplane crash. She talks about how she used photographs to access her memory as part of her writing process. You

## FUN THINGS TO DO FOR HALLOWEEN

Hear spooky stories from the Moore Lindsey Historical House.  
Jeff Provine interviews museum manager Amy Pence on YouTube. 508 N Peters.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=15CpvVp96K0>

Have a Halloween-themed ice cream—at the Ice Creamatory. 1200 12<sup>th</sup> SE, Norman.  
<https://www.tiktok.com/@tiffanyinoklahoma/video/7261251241072774442>

Watch paranormal investigators researching the Stone Lion Inn in Guthrie, OK – the most  
haunted place in Oklahoma--2 hours 1116 West Warner Avenue, Guthrie  
<https://z94.com/oklahomas-haunted-bed-breakfast/>

## A SKELETON LOOKS TOWARD BOYD STREET



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## **JANE FRIEDMAN'S ONLINE CLASSES FOR OCTOBER 2025**

**For other classes, see <https://janefriedman.com/online-classes/#janeclases>**

### **Mastering Voice in Fiction** with Tiffany Yates Martin / **Oct 8, 12 noon–1:30 p.m. CST.**

In today's competitive publishing market, voice is among the most important elements of story. It signals we're in capable hands, and creates books that feel fresh and unique. But voice can be an elusive quality, made even more challenging by the fact that it refers to three distinct areas of writing: **author voice**, **narrative voice**, and **character voice**. In this course we'll explore the key components of each: how to convey them effectively on the page, how they overlap and diverge, and how to use all three to create a story that connects, resonates, and lingers. With plenty of instructive examples, you'll learn to tap into the power of authentic voice on every level.

See <https://www.janefriedman/mastering-voice-in-fiction-with-tiffany-yates-martin> to register. \$25.

### **Hybrid Publishing Versus Self-Publishing** with Jane Friedman / **October 16, 12–1:30 p.m. CST.**

**Hosted by Writer's Digest:** Jane will cover everything you need to know about the self-publishing, hybrid publishing, and paid services landscape, in plain English. You'll learn how these differ from each other, plus the best practices of professional, self-publishing authors.

See <https://writersdigestuniversity.mykajabi/hybrid-publishing-vs-self-publishing> to register. \$89.99.

### **The Final Polish** with Tiffany Yates Martin / **Oct. 29, 12–1:30 p.m. CST**

Even if your story is compelling, well-paced and gripping, what sets a good book apart from a great one can be the prose itself. Learn how to eliminate useless verbiage, unnecessary modifiers, dueling descriptions and more, in order to make your style as tight as your storytelling.

See <https://janefriedman.com/the-final-polish-with-tiffany-yates-martin> to register. \$25.

### **Also from Jane Friedman: New imprint at the University Press of Kansas**

Plainspoken Books is a new nonfiction trade imprint focused on Midwestern stories. Editor Alec Loganbill said in a press release, "As a lifelong Kansan, I recognize the cultural value of the often-underestimated Midwest. It is truly exciting to create an imprint that brings together the incredibly talented authors, journalists, and storytellers from the Midwest, supports them with authenticity and understanding, and helps develop their impact and reach far beyond the boundaries of our region." Proposals are being accepted now.

**FOUR SCARY MAGAZINES THAT ARE OPEN FOR SUBMISSION** according to <https://authorspublish.com/30-magazines-and-anthologies-publishing-horror-fiction/>

**THE DARK MAGAZINE** is now open for submission. They are seeking fiction from 2,000 to 6,000 words. They will pay 5 cents/word for original fiction on publication and 1 cent/word for reprint fiction on acceptance. For more info, see: [www.thedarkmagazine.com/submission-guidelines](http://www.thedarkmagazine.com/submission-guidelines).

**COSMIC HORROR MONTHLY** has two open submission periods, Jan 1-7 & July 1-7. They pay 3 cents/word for original fiction. See <https://www.cosmichorrormonthly.com/submissions>

**GHOSTLIGHT: THE MAGAZINE OF TERROR** is now open for submissions until Dec. 1. They want stories from 500 to 5,000 words. Authors get one print copy. See <https://glahw.com/ghostlight-the-magazine-of-terror> for more information.

**THE HORROR ZINE** is a monthly ezine that produces new issues the 27th of every month. The Horror Zine also publishes anthology books and a quarterly print magazine. *The Horror Zine* was started in July of 2009 by founder and editor Jeani Rector. It was an instantaneous success and now receives around 100,000 website hits every month worldwide. They publish fiction — “not only horror, but mystery, suspense, science fiction, speculative, and most of all, good character development. I am also looking for Hitchcock-type endings, Twilight Zone-type weirdness, and/or something deliciously twisted. A surprising ending is a plus. I am also looking for good ghost stories, monster stories, vampires, but something exciting and new is even better. And! Remember the legends....vampires are killed by stakes, werewolves by silver bullets, and zombies by a shot to the head. If you are going outside the box on any of these, make it believable for readers who are used to the status quo of legends.” They also publish poetry and art. They will reopen for submissions in October or November. For more info, see <https://www.thehorrorzine.com/Submission%20Guidelines.html>

Here are some general guidelines to writing short stories from editor Jeani Rector:

- 1) start with action;
- 2) briefly familiarize the reader with your protagonist; make him/her likable or at least relatable;
- 3) provide an obstacle for your protagonist;
- 4) describe how your protagonist overcomes, or at least deals with, the obstacle;
- 5) a chase scene might be desirable but not essential;
- 6) give the reader hints as to the ending; and
- 7) provide a completely different ending than your hints.

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**“There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story within you.”**

**--Maya Angelou,  
*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings***

### Write Line Deadline

Please send in your brags, articles, columns, and/or pictures to [marpayne@netscape.com](mailto:marpayne@netscape.com) for the November issue to be received by Sunday, October 26. The earlier you send your stuff, the better. Thanks!

### AMAZON TIP

It's estimated Amazon has 1,600 book categories. The company updates their best seller lists for each category every hour. It's recommended any author with a newly published book check Amazon often in order to capture and print their bestseller designation page before the list is updated, and their best seller designation lapses. If an author has the proof, he or she can use it in marketing.  
—from Keri Rae Barnum, FreeAdviceFridays.

### CUTE STORY IDEA



Tiffany Yates Martin: [Writing 101: How to Fix an Infodump - WRITERS HELPING WRITERS®](#)

“How to Fix an Info Dump” by BECCA PUGLISI

*Don't do this:* The realm had been at war for years.  
*Do this:* They say the war started over a broken treaty. But no one knows who did the breaking—only that we've been fighting ever since.

See:

<https://www.writershelpingwriters.net/2025/08/writing-101-how-to-fix-an-info-dump/>

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