

**GALAXY CONTEST DEADLINE -- OCTOBER 14, 2023 -- ENTER ONE OR ALL EIGHT CATEGORIES**

**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. 42, No. 10 • October 14, 2023**

October 14, 2023 10:00 a.m. - Noon

Pioneer Room • Norman Public Library Central, 103 W. Acres St (with option to attend via Zoom)

(What makes a person a writer isn't having a degree, but it's) "the hours you spend with language, wherever you make space for them: in the very earliest stretch of the morning while your child sleeps; reading at night before your light goes out; in stitchedtogether minutes recording into your phone at a traffic light, trying to get the music of a sentence right."

– Molly McCully Brown, MFA  
program director, U. of Wyoming



**October 14, 2023**

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

**Pioneer Room, Norman Central  
Library ZOOM  
AVAILABLE**

**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**

*MICHAEL GIBSON*

Michael Gibson is a graduate of the Norman Public Schools and the University of Oklahoma. He received his Bachelor of Arts with Special Distinction in History in 1972 from OU, where he was selected *Phi Beta Kappa*, and received his JD there in 1975. He then left the state for stints in private law practice and the federal government. In 2008 he was appointed to his current position as a federal Administrative Judge with the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. He is the author of a non-fiction book, *Can We Stop the Radical Religious Right?* and two World War II novels – *The Broomcorn Field* and *Leaving Pontotoc County*. He is

OCTOBER 2023 | WriteLine

writing a third novel, *Aftermath*, which is in the immediate post-World War period. All three novels feature Oklahoma settings.

## SEPTEMBER MEETING MINUTES

September 9, 2023

President Mary Payne called the meeting to order. In person attendees were Mary Payne, Hamp McCool, Mary Spaulding, Melissa

Hearn, Nikki Gragg, Mark Robinson, Sandra Dark, Linda Basinger, Bob Macfadzean, Helen Duchon, Judith Coker, and Hugh Jeffers. We had one Zoom attendee — Barbara Shepherd.

Minutes and Treasurer's Reports for August were approved as printed in the *WriteLine*. Announcements. Mary Payne said nine people attended the Critique-A-Thon and had good feedback on their work. Also, the Galaxy contest deadline for this year is October 14, 2023. The first entry will receive a little gift. Rules are in the *WriteLine*. She reminded us these rules are important to ready everyone for industry standard submissions.

### Reports.

Publicity/Program Chair. Our October speaker will be Michael Gibson, an attorney who will speak on the topic of historical novel writing. In November we have scheduled a poet.

OWFI. Sherry Bynum's health no longer permits her to represent Galaxy at

OWFI. Mary Payne has appointed Linda Basinger to replace Sherry as our second delegate, and she will attend the quarterly board meetings for us, along with Lisbeth McCarty. The next meeting will be Sept. 10.

Website. If you have anything for the website, please email Lisbeth McCarty.

Membership. Mary Spaulding said that people she talks to who are looking for a writing group, usually say they are looking for critiquing and good speakers. She reminded everyone to take our club's cards and give them out when you come across someone who is a writer.

WriteLine. Mary P. said the 26<sup>th</sup> of the month is the deadline for submitting items. Facebook. Helen Duchon said we currently have 246 members on Facebook.

Old Business. None.

Page 1

New Business. Galaxy's nominating committee will announce the slate of officers for 2024 at our meeting in October. Voting will be in November. At that time, anyone can nominate a person for a position, but that person must have agreed to serve.

The next meeting is October 14<sup>th</sup> in the Pioneer Room. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary A. Spaulding, secretary

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## TREASURER'S REPORT by Linda Basinger

September PREVIOUS BALANCE  
\$ 1,160.01

### INCOME

J. Raney, '23 Dues 25.00

### TOTAL INCOME

25.00

### SUB TOTAL

\$1,185.01

### EXPENSES

None 00.00

## TOTAL EXPENSES

00.00

## CURRENT BALANCE

1,185.01

\$

### Membership Dues!

Galaxy dues for the membership year 2023 are \$25 and they became due on January 1, 2023.

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.

## THE TORNADO ALLEY PODCAST RETURNS

Melissa Hearn's Tornado Alley interview with Betsy Kulakowski will be released on Buzzsprout, Spotify, Google, and Apple podcasts on October 13. Betsy has investigated occupational safety issues for over 30 years and is the author of the paranormal thriller series, *The Veritas Codex*. YAY!

### SPEAKER NOTES by HAMP

### MCCOOL

Bob Macfadzean

9/9/2023

Mary introduced Bob Macfadzean to tell us about his journey in publishing — writing his non-fiction book, *Surface-Based Air Defense Systems Analysis*. He said his talk would be about how anyone could write about a profession or hobby they have and create a great book. Bob's particular background is in science and engineering, but this journey could apply to any number of areas of expertise.

In the mid-1980's Bob worked for General

Dynamics on what he called "airplane survivability", or how to keep an aircraft from being shot down by an air defense system. He worked with "operation research analysts" who would analyze data through simulations, but they typically had math and statistics knowledge but no engineering. That was in 1987. In 1989 he worked for the Navy in Calvert Virginia, and went to an electronic warfare trade show in Washington D.C. He saw a booth there from a publisher called Artech House Publishers. He had a couple of their books on radar, and although no one was at the table, they had a suggestion box and he filled out his idea for an air defense book and dropped it in the box.

Two weeks later he got a letter back from Artech, asking for a book proposal. He put one together and sent it back. In his genre there were only books from the 1950's about his topic. He received a call from the Artech acquisitions editor and they wanted to buy his book, and offered him a one thousand dollar advance. They sent him a contract and he signed it in January 1990. He was off to the races!

Bob said that he was initially concerned about his writing style. The editor at Artech said he could send a chapter and have them critique it for him. When they returned it, his manuscript was covered in blue and their biggest issue was his use of the word "since." After he processed all of their remarks, he really got to work on his book. He was using Word 6.0 for DOS at the time which helped with his editing. He used Quattro Pro for spreadsheets, which was available at the time. He also used Micrografx Designer for his artwork and figures, to help with that part of the manuscript.

During his actual process for writing, he had to convince his bosses that it was okay for him to write this book. Later on, the military security people also had to approve it. He used many examples in his book to show how the air defense systems would work. He wrote nights and weekends for about 17 months to complete the book.

He sent it to the publisher. When they returned it, he made corrections and sent it back to the publisher. Then he worked with a cover designer at Artech to create the artwork for the book. He sketched the initial design and then she added some other features to it.

Finally, their marketing person asked him to write a blurb for the book. It was published in 1992. The publisher sent him the sales' numbers over the years, so he could graph his cumulative sales. His publisher asked him in 1999 for a non-exclusive copyright deal, and he chose to sign that. He then put his book on Amazon and he would request a few copies at a time, as orders came in.

Bob said that if you do something like this, it leads to other opportunities like “short courses.” He did one of those once in D.C., and then in other locations for three times total. Later, he helped an Austin company develop a simulation for air defense situations.

He said that Artech approached him later about writing a follow-up book. He put together another proposal and sent it to them, and they decided they wanted to proceed with it. But, Artech wanted to include a secondary author to do at least one chapter of the book. Ultimately, he decided not to do that. His book continues to be available on Amazon.

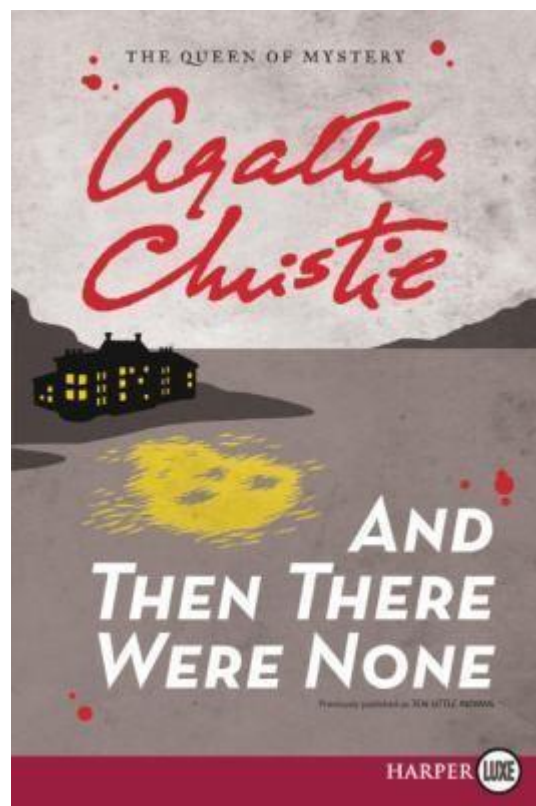
## That’s Puzzling by Lisbeth L. McCarty

[www.lisbethmccarty.com](http://www.lisbethmccarty.com)

Sally, Nita, and Henry all write in different genres (poetry, essays, or novels). They each use a different colored writing instrument to create their masterpieces. Use the clues to figure out who wrote what, plus the color of the instrument used. Sally writes poetry, although she doesn’t use a blue pencil. A pink pen was not used by any woman. The man does not write essays.

OCTOBER 2023 | WriteLine

Nita does not use a black marker. (Answers on page 4.)



## BRAGS:

Page 3

**Judith Coker's** novel *Firecracker* was released on Kindle June 2, 2023. It's also available in print. Congratulations, Judith!

**Barbara Shepherd** participated in book signings at the Blanchard Public Library and WriterCon. She was also one of the readers for the Annual Mysteries in Progress program for the Tornado Alley Mystery chapter of Sisters in Crime. She read an excerpt from her nearly completed suspense novel.

**Lisbeth L. McCarty** was awarded one firstplace, three third-places, and three honorable mentions in the 2023 White County Creative Contest. Her nostalgic story "Card Shark" was published on Becky Van Vleet's blog. She also spoke to Wordwrights about poetry and to an Ex Libris book club about a biography.

## ANSWERS TO LISBETH'S PUZZLE

(from page 3) Henry: pink pen,  
novels;  
Sally: black marker, poetry; and Nita: blue pencil,  
essays.

## “BE A HAPPY HOOKER . . . . . AND HOOK YOUR READERS”

This entertaining quote came from WriterCon2023. April Eberhardt, a literary change agent and author advocate, talked about how writers have to hook readers into reading the next paragraph and the next chapter. She suggested ending paragraphs and especially chapters with something surprising. Something unexpected. If we don't give our manuscript that extra oomph, we will lose readers to doing laundry, watching television, exercising, or any other activity that could pull them away.

Agatha Christie was a master of the hook. Every chapter of *And Then There Were None* ends in something surprising that catapults the reader into turning the page. Although this novel was first published in 1939, people from over the world are still buying and reading it. It's the top selling crime novel of all time. If Christie were alive today, she would be one “happy hooker.” Be like Agatha Christie and hook your readers!

### BOOK REVIEW: *LISTEN UP, WRITER— How Not to Write Like an Amateur* by Nikki Hanna

*LISTEN UP, WRITER* is perfect for any newbie writer at whatever age. It can also be helpful for more experienced writers who want to brush up on industry standards.

Hanna shares what every copy editor wishes his or her authors knew. When we adhere to “best practices,” our manuscript becomes much more appealing. No agent or editor has hours to spend editing a manuscript.

With simplicity and humor, Hanna teaches the reader how to edit a manuscript that is agent/editor ready. The first thing she writes about is sharing emotional depth. She uses three steps: write down facts about an incident, gather details, then write about the emotions people feel about them. She follows everything with examples.

Other topics are show/don't tell, metaphor and simile, passive and active verbs, tension and conflict, and myriad other things that help make a novice into a professional.

Hanna is very engaging and that makes *Listen Up, Writer* a fun read. One word of warning, though. I wouldn't read the

first chapter until I had read the rest of the book. While I appreciate that the author is being realistic about any writer's prospects for making it big in the publishing world, it was very depressing. But once the reader gets past chapter one, the mood and speed increase, and it's an enjoyable read. We all owe Ms. Hanna a debt of thanks for putting her moxie on the craft of writing to help us all move forward and become professionals!

Singularity is almost  
invariably a clue. —  
Arthur Conan Doyle

## Watching Your Language by Kathleen Norris Park

### It's You and Me Together in This, Right?

What a great job some elementary teacher did on some folks. Little first-grader You rushed in and cried, “Me and Susie ran a race!”

And the wise teacher said, “Say, ‘Susie and I,’ Dear. Always say, ‘Susie and I.’”

That wasn't the day to teach you about the nominative case.

And by golly, You learned. But then came the day another teacher presented the objective case, for the object of prepositions (for, by, to, of, etc.) and as the direct or indirect object. But it flew past many otherwise literate folks without snagging a single brain cell. Somehow the reasoning (and the rule) behind “The teacher called on Susie and me,” “Give Susie and me the books,” “Ask Susie and me the question” got lost. And today you—well, maybe not You exactly, but many of you—will say “He invited Susie and I to dinner,” “The teacher called on Susie and I,” and “What's best for Susie and I?”

Yes, you do.

Here's the trick never to make that mistake again. Just separate *Susie* and *I*. In your mind, try ‘He invited Susie. He invited I.’ Now grab your throat and stagger backwards. You'd never say, “He invited I,” would you? That suggestion is wrong! But now I have your attention. And you have the correct way to put *me* and *Susie* into the sentence as direct objects of the verb *invited*. See how smart you are? I'm betting you'll

remember to say, “He invited Susie and me.”

Maybe you’ve heard this one: Lulu answers the phone and replies to the caller, “Yes, this is she.” And in the next breath, says, “Her and Dad are outside.” Again, divide and conquer. Lulu wouldn’t say “Her is outside.” And if you accuse her of it, be prepared to run from her wrath over the insult. But she did. Let her know the trick. Your ear will guide you (and her) if you divide compound subjects or objects in your mind before speaking or writing them.

If you’d like to know more than just trusting your ear, here are a couple of pointers to further explain. I’ll use the schematic my Navajo students made me learn about teaching English, that rich but confusing language one sophomore called the “mutt language.”

To find the subject of a sentence (in my well-chosen examples), first ask, Who or What?

We settle on “Ettison,” after wearing out “Godzilla.”

To find the predicate, repeat the subject and ask, “Ettison does, did, or will do, what?”

“Ettison eats” comes the answer.

To find the direct object, repeat the subject, the predicate, and ask “Ettison eats what (or whom)?”

The wild answers start to fly, they’re getting into it now: “Ettison eats watermelon, Ettison eats dirt, Ettison eats bugs, Ettison eats Nathan’s chili!” And yet again, “Ettison eats Godzz-Zill-aaah!”

As the semester progresses, we get to indirect objects: To find the indirect object, repeat the subject, the predicate, and ask, “*For* or *to* what or whom?”

Now we have

Who?

Margaret.

Margaret did what?

Margaret gave

Margaret gave what?

Margaret gave her book

Margaret gave her book *to* or *for* what or whom?

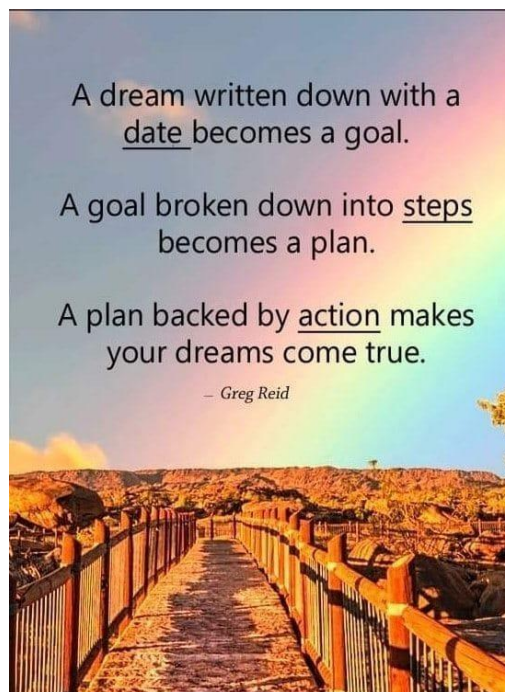
Again, they come up with some surprisingly wide answers. They speed past “Margaret gave her book *to* Geraldine.” And right to “Margaret gave the Book Drive her book.”

I learned a lot about teaching kids on the Navajo Reservation that my university never taught.



Six Galaxy members attended WriterCon2023. They are (l to r): Linda Basinger, Dan Snell, Mary Payne, Melissa Hearn, Mary Spaulding, and Steve Welchel. (Photo by James Snell, who came from Louisiana for the conference.)

**Write Line Deadline:** Please send in your brags, articles, columns, and/or pictures for the Nov. issue by Thursday, October 26, to [marpayne@netscape.com](mailto:marpayne@netscape.com). Please keep your email address updated with Galaxy so you don't miss a single issue of the *Write Line*. Send your changes to the same address.



## **RULES FOR THE 2023 NORMAN GALAXY OF WRITERS' ANNUAL CONTEST—Deadline 10/14/2023**

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:**

Nonfiction Feature Article: 1,500 words maximum

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

Rhymed Poetry: Any length

Unrhymed Poetry: Any length

Nostalgic Essay (personal): 1,500 words maximum

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

Adult Flash Fiction: 500 words maximum

Novel: first pages with a synopsis to a maximum of 15 pages

### **CONTEST RULES:**

1. In order to enter, you must be a member of the Norman Galaxy of Writers and have paid dues (\$25) for the current year. Dues may be paid in person to the treasurer by check or money order made payable 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.
2. Manuscripts must be entered by electronic submission.
  - a. Send your digital entry as an attachment to the Contest Chair (marpayne@netscape.com) on or before the deadline, October 14, 2023.
  - b. Electronic entries must be sent in the form of doc (any version), PDF, or RTF.
  - c. Send a separate email for each entry.
  - d. The subject line should include the word "contest" and the name of the category. Example: Contest/ Nostalgic Essay.
  - e. A cover sheet, downloaded from <http://www.normangalaxyofwriters.com>, must accompany every entry. Send it as a second attachment with your entry to the Contest Chair.
3. Each entry requires a \$2.00 nonrefundable processing fee. For example, if a member enters five categories, s/ he would send a check for \$10.00 and a copy of each cover sheet for the five entries to the Norman Galaxy of Writers at P. O. Box 5581, Norman, OK 73070. It must be received by the contest deadline, so don't wait until the last minute. Cover sheets are available to be downloaded from the Galaxy website at <http://www.normangalaxyofwriters.com>.
4. All entries must be unpublished or unaccepted for publication at the time of submission. Any manuscript entered must be your own original work.

5. You may enter each category once. No manuscript may be entered in more than one category. Manuscripts that have previously won a monetary award (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, or Crème de la Crème) may not be entered again in any Galaxy contest. [Contest Rules continued on next page]

*Contest Rules, Norman Galaxy of Writers:*

6. Formatting.
- All entries must be double spaced, except for poetry and the novel synopses.
  - Fonts must follow the industry standard, which is 12-point and either Times New Roman or Courier. c. Margins should be one inch on all sides.
  - In the top right corner of each page, enter the category, title, word count, and page number. Example: Flash Fiction / Laughter / 498 words / p. 1.
  - 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.)
7. The author's name **MUST NOT** appear on any page of the manuscript, or in the subject line of the digital entry.
8. Romance is okay, but entries may not include sexual content or graphic violence. In the event the Contest Chair receives a questionable entry, he will make a determination in concert with the club's president as to whether the guideline has been broken.

**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 9, 2023. 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. 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.

2. Short Story (fiction for adults): 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. Rhymed Poetry: Poems use figurative language, sound, and rhythm to tell a story, or to evoke imagination or an emotion. A single line is called a verse. Verses grouped together make a stanza. Any length. 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.
4. 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. [Contest Rules continued on next page]

[Type here]

5. Nostalgic Essay (personal): This is a first-person narrative that focuses on one of the author's real life experiences. 1,500 words maximum.
6. Children's Fiction (for readers 8-12 years of age): This is a short story focusing on a child protagonist having a goal or a problem that s/he works to solve with or without a sidekick. It has character, setting, conflict, plot, and resolution. 1,000 words maximum.
7. Flash Fiction (for adults): This is a short, short story that includes characters, setting, conflict, plot, and resolution. 500 words maximum.
8. 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 (including, but not limited to, sci-fi, romance, historical, mystery, horror, mainstream, etc.) will be accepted. Submit the first consecutive pages with a 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.

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## NORMAN GALAXY OF WRITERS' MANDATORY COVER SHEET

Attach one cover sheet to each category entry

CATEGORY \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE OF MANUSCRIPT \_\_\_\_\_

WORD COUNT \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF AUTHOR \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

**GOOD LUCK!!!**

The OWFI editor will publish an online newsletter each month. The deadline for submissions is the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. Affiliates are invited to send in club news. Other relevant submissions about writing may also be accepted at the editor's discretion. You can send them to [editor@owfi.org](mailto:editor@owfi.org). — Linda Basinger

P

### GREAT YOUTUBE VIDEO!

During Galaxy's September meeting, Hamp McCool played a YouTube video entitled "Why Your First Chapter Sucks" by Abbie Emmons. She has multiple writing videos to choose from, but this one is particularly good. Mary Payne told everyone to Google it, but Barbara Shepherd sent the exact web address to access the video. Here it is:

[https://video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?fr=yhs-trp-001&ei=UTF-8&hsimp=yhs-001&hspart=trp&p=why+your+first+chapter+sucks&type=Y143\\_F163\\_201897\\_102620#id=1&vid=52ffa93c884b354f86094bbe4d781901&action=click](https://video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?fr=yhs-trp-001&ei=UTF-8&hsimp=yhs-001&hspart=trp&p=why+your+first+chapter+sucks&type=Y143_F163_201897_102620#id=1&vid=52ffa93c884b354f86094bbe4d781901&action=click) ENJOY!

### OK WRITERS' FEDERATION, INC. NEWS

The OWFI board meets quarterly to plan its annual writing conference. Delegates Lisbeth McCarty and Linda Basinger represented Galaxy at the September 10 meeting.

The theme for the May 2-4, 2024 conference will be "The Writing Universe." Approximately 22 sessions, a master class, keynote speaker, and more are in the works. Planners hope to have an on-the-spot bookstore during the conference. Prizes will be awarded to the winning participants of the 2024 contest. Entries will be accepted online between January 2 and February 1. OWFI members may enter one or all 31 categories of unpublished works and 5 categories of published works. The categories and rules are listed on their website. The conference offers many other opportunities, including the availability of scholarships. For more information, go to [www.owfi.org](http://www.owfi.org).

PUBLISHER'S MARKETPLACE reports there were 7,000 domestic book deals in 2021. That's a lot of deals. One could be yours in 2023!



### Pioneer Room

[NormanGalaxyofWriters@gmail.com](mailto:NormanGalaxyofWriters@gmail.com)  
[www.normangalaxyofwriters.com](http://www.normangalaxyofwriters.com)  
[www.facebook.com/Norman Galaxy](https://www.facebook.com/Norman%20Galaxy)

WRITELINE Norman Galaxy of Writers Editor:  
Mary Payne, [marpayne@netscape.com](mailto:marpayne@netscape.com)

## **GALAXY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE HEADS:**

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