

WRITELINE

Norman Galaxy of Writers, P.O. Box 5581, Norman OK 73070 Vol. 44, No. 8 • August 9, 2025

August 10, 2025 10:00 a.m. - Noon

"The Well," 210 South James Garner Avenue, Norman, Oklahoma 7306

"In crafting a work of fiction, a writer has to choose among calamitous events. There is no value in piling on. This kind of piling on—a rookie mistake—might well come across as melodramatic. Do we really need the plane crash and a heart attack? The arson and the cancer? Choose one, or risk straining the reader's credulity."

--Dani Shapiro, author of the memoir, *Hourglass: Time, Memory, Marriage*

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.

AUGUST PROGRAM RENE GUTTERIDGE



August 9, 2025

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

The Well, 210 South James Garner Avenue

Rene Gutteridge has been writing professionally for over twenty years, with diversified expertise in fiction, non-fiction, comedy sketches, novelizations, and screenwriting. She is the multi-genre author of 24 novels plus several non-fiction titles. Her indie film *SKID* won deadCenter's Best Oklahoma Feature in 2015, and in 2016 her novel *My Life as a Doormat* was adapted into the Hallmark movie *Love's Complicated*. She is co-writer on the feature film *Family Camp*, a Movieguide award winner and a Dove Award nominee for 2023. She is also a Screencraft finalist in true-crime.

Rene is co-director of WriterCon in Oklahoma City, senior contributor at Writing Momentum, and is the head writer at Skit Guys Studios. Rene, her husband Sean, and two children live in Oklahoma City.

She will talk to us about story logic—a topic every writer should understand before typing the first sentence of a work-in-progress.

JULY MEETING MINUTES
JULY 12, 2025

1. Our president, Mary Payne, called the meeting to order and invited our online visitor, Stacy Richards, to introduce herself. Attending: Jim Nichols, Linda Basinger, Judith Coker, Melissa Hearn, Camaron Richards, Leslie Vennochi, Lee Hester, Jennie Raney, Darleen Bailey Beard, Ravi Hall, Gwen Agiapal, Mike Swain, and, online, Barbara Shepherd.
 2. The June 2025 minutes were accepted as printed in the Write Line with no corrections. The June 2025 Treasurer's Report was accepted as printed in the Write Line with no corrections.
 3. Announcements: Critique-a-Thon will be Sept. 20 at Norman Public Library West
 4. Reports.
 - A. Program Chair. Mary Spaulding. The August program will feature Rene Gutteridge speaking on "Story Logic."
 - B. Norman Arts Council. Judith Coker. The Council is hosting two new art shows in downtown Norman.
 - C. WriteLine. Mary Payne. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the June *Write Line*.
 - D. Facebook. Jennie Raney. Our page has 322 followers.
 6. Old Business. With the announcement of the 2025 Contest, we reviewed the new fee structure. Also, as a reminder, please be careful where you post your writing. If it's on the internet, that means it's published and can't be entered in the contest.
 8. Our next meeting will be August 9 with Rene Gutteridge as the speaker.
 9. Business meeting adjourned.
- Submitted by, Jim Nichols, Secretary

TREASURER'S REPORT by Linda Basinger

July 2025 Galaxy Report for August 2025

Writeline

PREVIOUS BALANCE:
\$ 1,330.65

INCOME
None 00.00

TOTAL INCOME
00.00

SUB TOTAL \$
1,330.65

EXPENSES*
Annual P.O. Box Rent, Ck #1704 \$188.00

TOTAL EXPENSES
188.00

CURRENT BALANCE
\$ 1,142.65

*Our thanks to both Mike Swain and Mary Payne, who opted not to accept the honorariums we offered for their July and May programs, respectively.

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.

AUTHOR TIP:
“Back everything up. And email your document to yourself every day. The

best novel you've ever written is the one you will leave in the back of an Uber."

**—Matt Haig, author of *A Boy Called Christmas*
and other books for adults and children**

SPEAKER NOTES

July 12, 2025

MIKE SWAIM

Mike Swaim gave us a wonderful talk—all about writing fantasy. He referenced a song eulogizing Uriah Heep, a wizard/ antagonist in Charles Dickens' novel. Ken Hensley and Mark Clarke wrote the lyrics. It comes from their album *Demons and Wizards*, recorded in 1972. You can listen to it here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lJnd_Tf5Kww

Mike believes the more fantastical the story, the more it speaks to the reader. It reminds us of how we'd like for our lives to be.

If you're writing a fantasy, it can have any of five different story lines: a journey; a coming-of-age; discovering a great truth; saving someone worth saving; or destroying a great danger.

The goal of the story is for the protagonist to come home alive. The magic in the story brings elements of uncertainty, danger, and/or great reward. This helps the story resonate with the important parts of our lives. It touches our deepest fears and greatest hopes.

It's imperative for a fantasy to have the protagonist move into/across/or out of new lands to establish the tale as a symbol of our lives. S/he must cross a threshold.

Dragons are usually the enemy because they tap into our fear of reptiles. They represent a genuine threat to humans.

You might ask, 'how does the protagonist know where to go?' Often another character tells them where he or she must not go. It's reverse psychology. Of course, that's the first place the protagonist wants to go.

When we re-purpose fantasy in 2025, it becomes magic in a contemporary setting. Our heroes have changed in the last few years. They are now a mix of supernatural beings, hybrids, and humans, living in cities. They juggle everyday life while on their journeys.

Mike said he believed this new wave began in 1977 with Ralph Bakshi's film, "Wizards." He pointed out several other urban fantasies (books): *Artemis Fowl*, *Young Genius*; *Moon Called* (Mercy Thompson series); and *Storm Front* (the Harry Dresden series).

All budding fantasy authors should look at the world-building questions on the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writer's Association' website and also to read Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* and his other books.

A link to the power point is on Facebook, but if you can't access it there, contact Mary Payne, marpayne@netscape.com.

That's Puzzling by Lisbeth L. McCarty

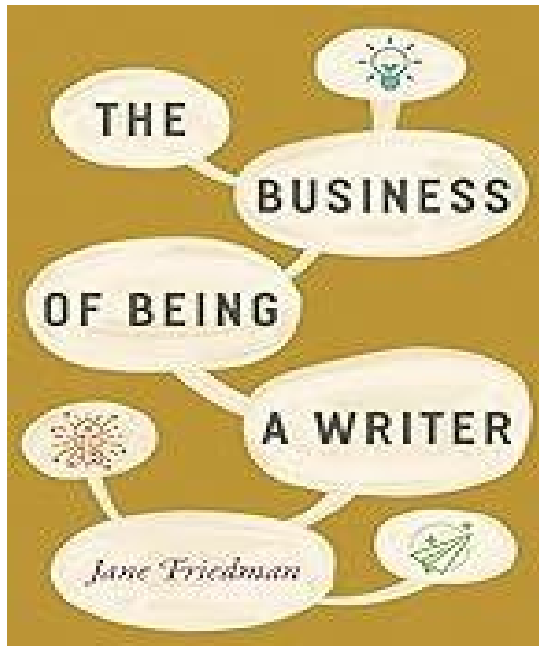
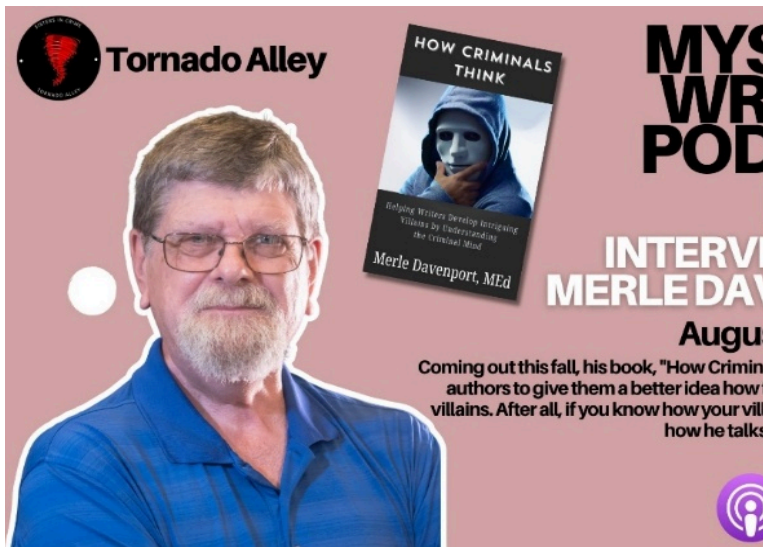
(Free, monthly newsletter at:

<https://lisbeth.substack.com>)

Fill in the blank with a word which has no vowel other than 'y.'

Answers on page 4.

1. A song that has become a jazz standard is "I Got _____."
2. There is a type of a wildcat known as a _____.
3. A popular boy band during the late 1990s and early 2000s was known as _____.
4. Sometimes, people want to be buried in a _____ when they die.
5. She was demure; she always behaved _____.
6. She was sneaky; she did everything _____.
7. She was a slim and graceful woman; some people called her a _____.
8. The secret lovers set up a _____.
9. One of the magi brought a gift of _____.
10. In "To Kill A Mockingbird," a _____ mob was outside the jail.



Jane Friedman

Please keep your email address updated with Galaxy so you don't miss a single issue of the *Write Line*. Email changes to:

marpayne@netscape.com

THE WRITER'S BOOKCASE *THE BUSINESS OF BEING A WRITER*

By Jane Friedman

"Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity."

--Seneca

Jane Friedman is the perfect person to write this book. She has covered a gamut of jobs in the publishing industry over the last 20 years. Copywriter, editor, columnist for *Publisher's Weekly*, and the founder of *The Hot Sheet*, a newsletter for writers. She stuffed *The Business of Being a Writer* with great information to help authors be the best they can be. If a writer doesn't have accurate information about

publishing, it's almost impossible to make good career decisions.

Every writer needs a bio. List the important things about your writing, what topics you like to cover, and where people can find more of your work. The kitchen-sink bio includes everything: your short and long-term goals, your experience, awards, what you've written and where it was published. This is for your website and usually 200-300 words.

The capsule bio is 50-100 words to run at the bottom of published articles you have written. It will tell readers where you've worked, been published, awards, and a statement of your writing goal. Include a human touch, a voice, that will resonate with readers. The capsule could also be included on any query letter you might write when you are querying magazines and newspapers about an article or manuscript idea.

When an author sends a manuscript to a publisher, it goes into a slush pile. If the editor likes what he sees, s/he will work up a profit & loss statement. It's a proprietary equation each publisher has that will tell them whether or not the manuscript is financially feasible. Friedman says this has to be done before the 'pub board' meeting. This is where company officials meet to give a green light to those manuscripts they want to acquire. The editor has to be careful that the advance doesn't overtake the P&L. Publishers don't give any royalties to an author whose book hasn't paid out the advance.

Once that happens, royalties are generally paid something like this:

- 1-5,000 copies sold: 8.0%
- 5,001-10,000 copies sold: 10.0%
- 10,001-20,000 copies sold: 12.5%
- 20,001 and higher: 15%

Amazon is the best way to go. If you want to sell independently, but if you want to sell through book stores, Ingram/Sparks is the distribution channel needed.

Friedman has nuggets of information on all 292 pages of *The Business of Being a Writer*. You can't go wrong by checking it out. Kudos to Jane Friedman for sharing her knowledge of the business.

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**Puzzle Answers from page 3:** 1) Rhythm; 2) lynx; 3) NSync; 4) crypt; 5) shyly; 6) slyly; 7) sylph; 8) tryst; 9) myrrh; 10) lynch.

## BRAGS:

**LINDA BASINGER** and **MARY PAYNE** enhanced their writing skills by attending Bill and Lara Bernhardt's five-day Cane-brake Writing Retreat in Wagoner, OK, in July.

**LINDA'S** short story, *Tricky Trixie*, has been accepted for publication in Tornado Alley SinC's next anthology.

**MIKE SWAIN** has been asked to lead a LibertyCon2026 workshop about writing horror. He says he's "frightfully excited."

**LISBETH L. MCCARTY'S** article "Strange Defenses: Hide and Seek" was published in *Q&A*, the newsletter of the Criminal Law Section of the Oklahoma Bar Association. Lisbeth also published two music-related articles in "The Notables of OKC Newsletter." They were "Shout Outs for Count-Ins," and "Opportunities to Volunteer." She also has a music-related puzzle column titled "Choir Conundrums" which appears regularly in the same newsletter. Lisbeth also has writing that will appear in the upcoming "Tornado Alley" anthology, the second in the series.

**BARBARA SHEPHERD** won 3<sup>rd</sup> place in an Arkansas poetry contest for her poem "Desert Snow." YAY, Barbara!

Lara and Bill Bernhardt stand with the  
WriterCon banner. YAY!!!

August 29 – September 1, 2025

<https://www.writercon.com>





**Mary Payne (l) and Linda Basinger(r) pictured with Amy Brewer,  
a literary agent with Metamorphosis Literary Agency.**

**Synopsis Class offered by Jane Friedman**  
**Mastering the Art of the Synopsis with Jessica**  
**Strawser / Sept. 10,**  
**1–2:30 p.m. EDT**

The synopsis reassures publishing professionals that the way your story plays out lives up to your query letter's pitch. Go beyond the basics and learn how to write one that's lean, powerful, and engaging.

[Learn more & register](#)  
[\(\\$25\)](#)

**CRITIQUE-A-THON**  
**SEPTEMBER 20, 2025**

**NORMAN WEST LIBRARY, 10-12**

**Bring 5 copies of up to 8 pages of your manuscript. We'll divide into groups and beta read everyone's work. You'll get immediate feedback. With comments in hand, you can make edits to your manuscript before the Oct. 11 Galaxy contest deadline.**

## BISACS — A NEW PUBLISHING TERM?

BISACS is actually an old publishing term which has flown under-the-radar for many years. It's critical for authors to become familiar with what it is, because BISACS is key to getting books into libraries and book stores.

Librarians and book store employees need guidance in where to place a book on their shelves for patrons and customers to easily find a book. Enter the Book Industry Study Group. This is a group of industry professionals who meet to set up standards and the categories which will fit every book that comes on the market.

When you hear the term BISAC, it's usually referring to the category where your book will be placed. You have to know your category before you can order the block of type that is inserted on the copyright page—the 'cataloging- in-publication' data. The CIP data. In July, the Write Line carried an article about the Cassidy Cataloguing Service.

I recently ordered a block of CIP data from them for my novel, *Lyncoya: Andrew Jackson's Adopted Indian Son*. The first thing to do was to figure out my BISACS. The website address is: <https://www.bisg.org/complete-bisac-subject-headings-list>. There are 53 general overbroad terms listed. Choosing one for *Lyncoya* was difficult. Many of you know that I write things having to do with adoption. That wasn't one of the choices. Finally, with help from Eli, a Moore librarian, I found that each one of the 53 categories have subheadings. Adoption and fostering are listed under 'Family and Relationships.' Cassidy recommends not sending more than three BISACS. Here is what I sent them:

Family and Relationship—Adoption & Fostering [FAM004000]

Family and Relationship—Siblings—[FAM044000]

Young Adult Fiction—Historical—United States—19thCentury[YAF024150]

I also had to send them a 2 – 4 sentence summary of the book in addition to seven keywords. The ISBNs for both print and Kindle. And a forward or some such. I sent the *Afterword* because it included what they really wanted to know. I filled out the form on the evening of July 22. They said they would get back to me within two days. An email came in 10 a.m. the next morning with the block completed and an invoice. So, basically, it was completed overnight. There was no work on their end, except for setting the block of type. Everything had been done for them. The easier we make things for other people, the better they will like us. And things will get done a whole lot faster.

You can do this! It's a step-by-step process. The first step is getting the block and placing it on the formatted page. Next, we'll be contacting Ingram-Sparks. They are the middle men going between the authors and the bookstores/ libraries. Tally-Ho!!!

--Mary Payne

Here is the PCIP block that Cassidy prepared for *Lyncoya*:

Names: Payne, Mary S., author.

Title: *Lyncoya : Andrew Jackson's adopted Indian son : a novel* / cMary S. Payne.

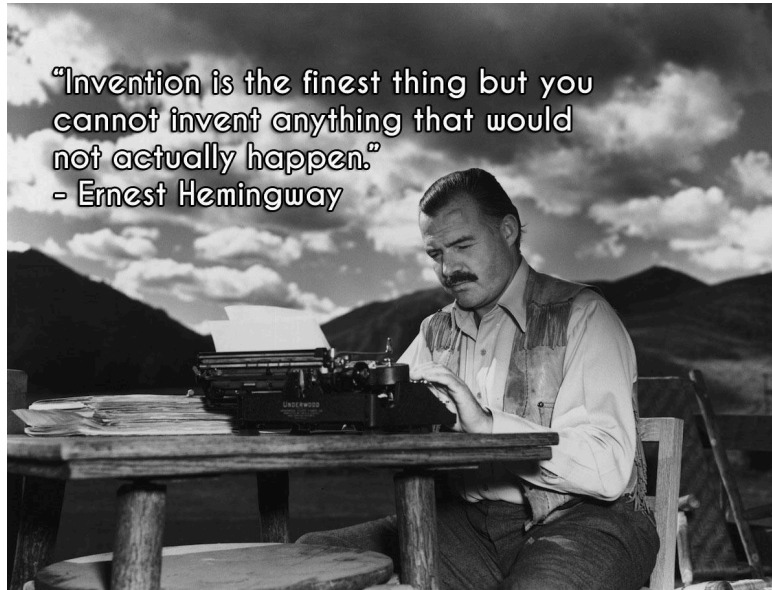
Description: [Oklahoma City, Oklahoma] : Safe Harbor Publishing, [2021] | Audience: young adult.

Identifiers: ISBN: 9781737433200 (paperback) | 9781737433217 (kindle)

Subjects: LCSH: Jackson, Lyncoya, 1811?-1828--Fiction. | Jackson, Andrew, 1767-1845--Fiction. | Indian children--History--19th century--Fiction. | Indians of North America--History--19th century--Fiction. | Siblings--United States--Fiction. | Sibling rivalry--United States--Fiction. | Adopted children--Family relationships--United States--Fiction. | Adopted children--Psychology--Fiction. | Interethnic adoption--United States--Fiction. | Slavery--United States--Fiction. | Young adult fiction. | LCGFT: Historical fiction. | BISAC: FAMILY & RELATIONSHIPS / Adoption & Fostering. | FAMILY & RELATIONSHIPS / Siblings. | YOUNG ADULT FICTION / Historical / United States / 19th Century.

Classification: LCC: PS3616.A9744 L96 2021 | DDC: 813/.6--dc23

## HEMINGWAY . . . HERE WE COME . . .



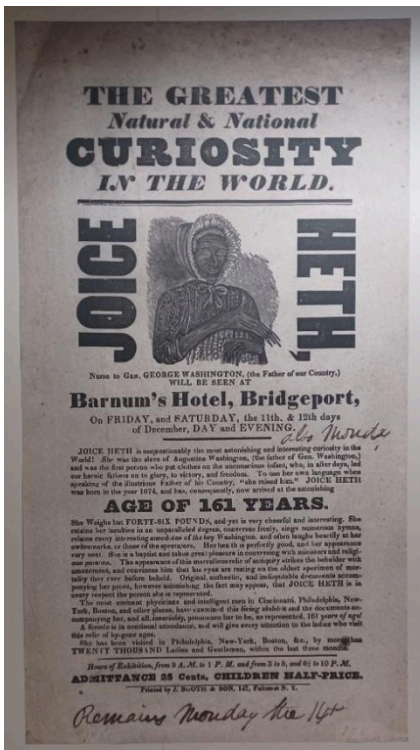
From: <https://www.turnerstories.com/book-reviews/2019/4/10/ernest-hemingways-tips-on-writing>

Below are 7 of the best Ernest Hemingway writing tips for fiction.

1. **To get started, write one true sentence.** "Sometimes when I was starting a new story and I could not get it going. I would stand and look out over the roofs of Paris and think, 'Do not worry. You have always written before and you will write now. All you have to do is write one true sentence. Write the truest sentence that you know.' If I started to write elaborately, I found that I could cut that scrollwork or ornament out and throw it away and start with the first true simple declarative sentence I had written."
2. **Always stop for the day while you still know what will happen next.** "The best way is always to stop when you are going good and when you know what will happen next. If you do that every day when you are writing a novel you will never be stuck. That is the most valuable thing I can tell you so try to remember it."
3. **Never think about the story when you're not working.** "I had learned already never to empty the well of my writing, but always to stop when there was still something there in the deep part of the well, and let it refill at night from the springs that fed it."
4. **When it's time to work again, always start by reading what you've written so far.** "The best way is to read it all every day from the start, correcting as you go along, then go on from where you stopped the day before. When it gets so long that you can't do this every day read back two or three chapters each day; then each week read it all from the start. That's how you make it all of one piece."
5. **Don't describe an emotion – make it.** "In writing for a newspaper, you told what happened and, with one trick and another, you communicated the emotion aided by the element of timeliness which gives a certain emotion to any account of something that has happened on that day; but the real thing, the sequence of motion and fact which made the emotion and which would be as valid in a year or in ten years or, with luck and if you stated it purely enough, always, was beyond me..."
6. **Use a pencil.** "After you learn to write, your whole object is to convey everything, every sensation, sight, feeling, place, and emotion to the reader. To do this you have to work over what you write. If you write with a pencil you get three different sights at it to see if the reader is getting what you want him to. First when you read it over; then when it is typed you get another chance to improve it, and again in the proof."
7. **Be brief.** "It wasn't by accident that the Gettysburg address was so short. The laws of prose writing are as immutable as those of flight, of mathematics, of physics."

From: <https://www.bosshunting.com.au/entertainment/tv/ernest-hemingway-7-tips-writing-fiction/>





The University of Oklahoma's Bizzell Library is currently displaying an exhibit of posters, books, and artifacts related to hoaxes. Almost everyone loves a good hoax—except for those who happened to be snookered by the ‘hoaxsters.’

P. T. (Phyneas Taylor) Barnum is said to be “the greatest showman on earth.” Born in 1810, he wowed the world with a variety of hoaxes

in his circuses and museums across America. Robert Wilson captured the essence of Barnum in his 2019 biography entitled *Barnum: An American Life*. One of Barnum’s first lies was advertising a former slave woman who was supposed to be 161 years old and the nanny to George Washington. On exhibit is the poster detailing where people could see the elderly woman. Barnum raked in a lot of money. woman. Barnum raked in a lot of money for his flimflammy.

## The Giant of Cardiff

George Hull manufactured one of the first hoaxes of modern times. In 1867, he learned about giants who roamed the earth as mentioned in Genesis. Wanting to have some fun with the preachers of the day, he ordered a large granite rock and paid some workers to chisel a human figure from the stone. Upon completion, he placed the figure in a casket and shipped it to his uncle in Cardiff, New York. They buried the form underneath the roots of an oak tree on the uncle’s farm. About a year later, Hull said it to time to “find” the ancient giant who had turned to stone. They dug it up. It was ten feet tall and weighed 3,000 pounds.

Newspapers all over the country hailed the find as “A Wonder.” Ripley tried to buy it and when Hull wouldn’t sell, Ripley made his own giant to display in his shows.

In February 1870, the hoax was exposed by the men who originally chiseled the statue into being. It was eventually sold to the Farmers’ Museum in Cooperstown, New York. Hull had made \$20,000 from displaying the hoax.



**NEXT PAGE: MORE**

## ANOTHER HOAX : *THE PILTDOWN PAPERS* by Frank Spencer



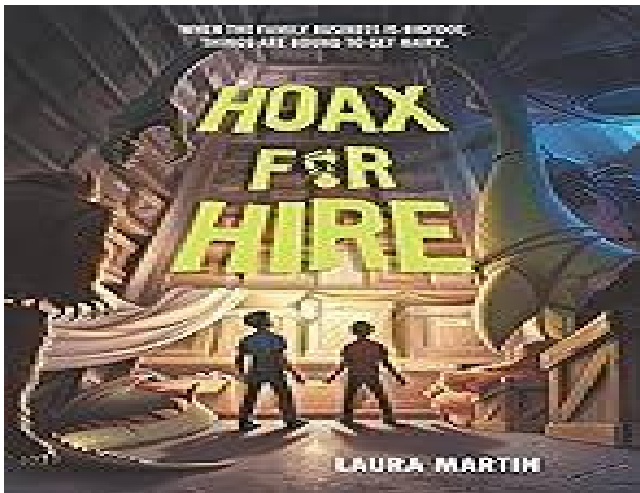
Lawyer and amateur archaeologist Charles Dawson spent years exploring England's Piltdown area, looking for ancient artifacts. In 1908, a workman brought him a human skull without its mandible. Five years later Dawson, in concert with geologist Arthur Smith Woodward of the British Museum, excavated the same area where they found the jawbone of an orangutan. They attached their new find to the human skull, publicizing "The Piltdown Man" as the link between apes and humans. They told the public that the Piltdown Man and other found fragments were 500,000 years old.

In the summer of 1953, Kenneth Page Oakley and Joseph Wiener tested the specimens with nitrogen dating using electron microscopy. The scientists also compared the wear patterns of the teeth with those of chimpanzees. They matched.

Newspaper headlines told the tale: “Fossil Hoax Makes Monkeys Out of Scientists!” and “Great Missing Link Hoax Rocks Scientists”

In 2009, anthropologist Isabelle De Groote stopped the hoax cold. She conducted computer tomography (CT) scans of the jaw and teeth. The scans revealed that the objects had been artificially altered.

--This article was aided by research placed on the internet by the Science History Institute’s Library and Museum.



Middle Grade author Laura Martin took the idea of hoaxes to a whole new level for today’s students by penning a story about a boy whose family makes their living by hoaxing others. He hates it, but when things go south, he and his friend must set up an elaborate hoax, if his family is to be saved. It’s a great way to use real world events to create an adventure story for kids, describing the ins and outs of how and why a hoax exists. ###

Along the same line, Galaxy member Darleen Bailey Beard penned THE FLIM FLAM MAN in 1988. She based it on a true story from Wetumka, OK. Check it out on Amazon.com.

## **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.
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](mailto: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](mailto: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!!!**

## **FINDING THE RIGHT WORD**

Mark Twain wrote, "the difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug." It's an illustration of the importance of precision in language use. We've probably all looked at a word or many words in our manuscripts and wondered if there would be a better word.

Enter the internet thesaurus. It's called "OneLook Thesaurus." You type in your word and 100 synonyms pop up. It also has phrases that incorporate your word and, if you click on the "idea map," it lists subgroups that are related to your word.

Here's the address:

<https://onelook.com/reverse-dictionary.shtml?s=murderer>

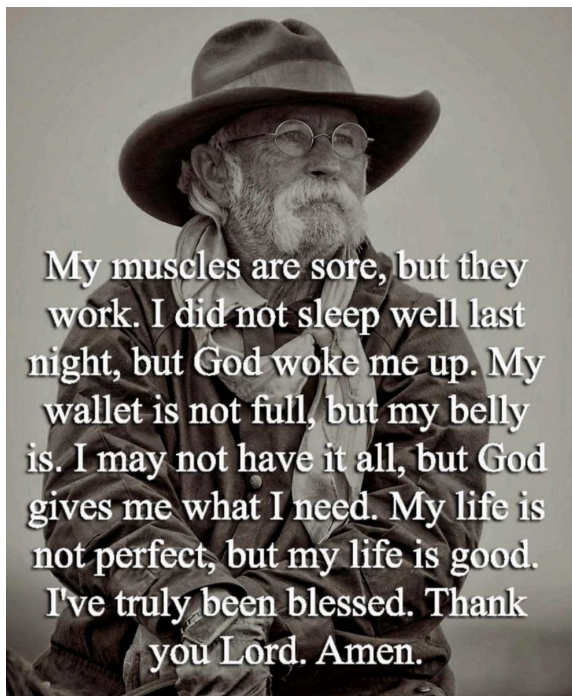
If that fails, you can always go to the Google search page, type in your whatever word you need and then type

"synonym" in the blank and a number of words will be listed.

### **Write Line Deadline**

Please send in your brags, articles, columns, and/or pictures to [marpayne@netscape.com](mailto:marpayne@netscape.com) for the Sept. issue to be received by Monday, August 26.

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POST AS SEEN ON 'NEXT DOOR'



NEXT GALAXY MEETING

Septembe
r 13, 2025

210 S.
James
Garner

From Jane Friedman's *Bottom Line*:

CircanaBookScan compiles data across the publishing industry. They have found that print book sales are down 10% in the first half of 2025, compared to the sales figures in 2024. All is not lost, however. The market is looking for the next big idea that will surpass the sales of Star Wars, Harry Potter, or the Hunger Games.

Want to get in on a trend? Write a book about Jeffrey Epstein! Those sales are exploding! LOL. Unfortunately, by the time you're finished, the trend will be in the rearview mirror. ☹

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