

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. 8 • August 12, 2023

August 12, 2023 10:00 a.m. - Noon

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

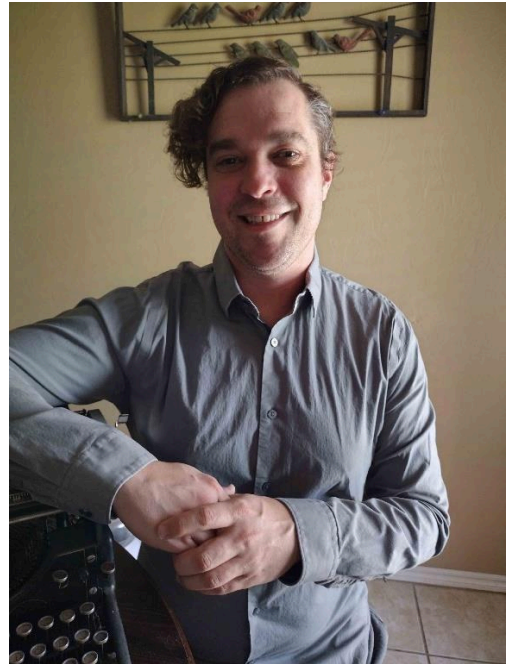
“The only certainty is
that...we are here, each one
of us, to write our own
story—and what
fascinating stories we make!”
— novelist

Madeleine L’Engle

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

Jeff Provine



August 12, 2023

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

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

Jeff Provine grew up on his family's Land Run farm north of Enid, where wide open plains gave plenty of room for his imagination to grow. Today he serves as a professor of English at Oklahoma City Community College, collects Oklahoma folklore while leading ghost tours, and writes speculative fiction and comics.

His books include: *Haunted Oklahoma: Ghosts and Strange Phenomena of the Sooner State*; *31 Ghost Stories*; *A Compendium of Creeps*; *Secret Oklahoma City*; *Campus Ghosts of Norman*; *Haunted OKC*; and four more books featuring other towns--Shawnee, Norman, Guthrie and Garfield

AUGUST 2023 | WriteLine
County.

JULY MEETING MINUTES

July 8, 2023

President Mary Payne called the meeting to order. In person attendees were Mary Payne, Hamp McCool. Mary Spaulding, Sammy Husbands, Carol Shearer, Barbara Schindler, Bob Macfadzean, Jennie Rainey, Linda Basinger, Jim Nichols, Helen Duchon, Kathleen Park, Melissa Hearn, Sandra Dark, Darleen Bailey Beard, Scott Barger, Judith Coker, and speaker Sharon Edge Martin. Zoom attendees were Barbara Shephard, Abhishek Kuma Jha, and Uday Singh.

Announcements. Kathleen Park has reserved a space at the University Lutheran Church for our holiday party meeting in December. Mary Payne reserved a space at the Norman West Library location for our next Critique-A-Thon on August 26th from 10 AM to 12 Noon. She reminded everyone to bring 5 copies of up to 10 pages for review.

Minutes and Treasurer's Reports for June. Approved as printed in the Write Line.

REPORTS.

Publicity/Program Chair. Dan Snell was on vacation. Mary Payne said our August speaker will be Jeff Provine. He writes books about ghosts in buildings in Oklahoma. He is a professor at OCCC and also writes nostalgia.

Facebook. Helen told the club we now have 240 members on Facebook. She recommended Galaxy members post information on their pages about our club meetings.

Membership. Mary Spaulding said she was in touch with Sherry Bynum, who wanted to thank everyone for their cards and calls. She feels better and hopes to be at our next meeting.

WriteLine. Mary Payne encouraged everyone to send along anything they want to share but also reminded us that you cannot say the material is unpublished if submitted. The deadline is July 26 for the August issue.

OWFI. The webpage has finally updated our information. Their new PR person asked for suggestions to make their

Page |

website better. Many thanks to Mary P and Linda for being persistent!

Old Business. Mary Payne talked about the Norman Galaxy Contest rules that were included in this month's issue of the WriteLine. Start thinking about what you want to submit.

New Business. Mary Payne said in September we need to have a nominating committee get together, so they can present a slate of proposed officers for 2024. Please volunteer if you would like to serve on the committee. Email marpayne@netscape.com.

Next meeting date is August 12th in the Pioneer Room. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Mary A Spaulding

TREASURER'S REPORT by Linda Basinger

June 2023 PREVIOUS BALANCE:
\$1330.51

INCOME

Sandra Dark, '23 Dues 25.00

TOTAL INCOME

25.00

1,355.51

EXPENSES

Sharon Edge Martin

July Prgm. Speaker, Ck #1575 25.00

USPS 1 YR PO Box Rent 166.00

TOTAL EXPENSES

191.00

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.

WRITERCON 2023 WILL BE AT THE RENAISSANCE WATERFORD IN OKLAHOMA SEPTEMBER 1 – 4, 2023 THERE'S STILL TIME TO REGISTER! Get all the details at <https://writercon.com>

Page 2

SPEAKER NOTES by Hamp McCool

Sharon Edge Martin
7/8/23

Mary Payne introduced our speaker with a list of Sharon's publications. She began her talk by reciting one of her poems about being a freelance writer. She queried our group as to how many of us were nervous she started with a rhymed poem. She said she had published more rhymed poems than most people.

When she began writing, her practice was to have a dozen pieces in the mail at all times, knowing that some of them would be rejected. It's critical that writers read the publications they are writing for. Now, almost all submissions are digital, often tracked with Query Tracker, but the changes have not dissuaded her. She keeps writing.

She followed with a poem entitled "What is Poetry?" She said poetry or stories should never ramble. She began writing poetry at age 7, influenced by her grandmother reading poetry when she put her to bed every night. She could sense her grandmother's love for words.

The next poem she read was about the challenges of being a writer, often a string of disappointments. It mentioned that inspiration does not always come, but the writer continues writing, perfecting their craft. It said that sometimes the

process of sticking with writing was all that defined success. She said that if you define yourself as a writer, then you must write.

She said she wanted to talk about expanding the boundaries of poetry. Once, when she was speaking on a panel she was asked "What did she have to gain by making poetry political?" After thinking about how she should have responded, she said poets have always been political, even if not about the immediate politics of the day. She writes about the things that matter to her, like hungry children, and failing schools, and about inadequate school funding. She said you should write whatever "your kind" of poetry is.

She said she writes all kinds of poetry. She followed with a poem called "How the World Works" which described many atrocities and those that did them. She posed the question "What can one poet do" and her response was to "listen, look, and tell the truth." She said the poetry of Canadian poet Robert Service in World War I did exactly that to let others know about the horrors that they were seeing. She said in that sense, the soldiers were the best peacemakers.

Sharon said poetry can be powerful, but also just fun. She followed with a short poem about a "handsome prince" to illustrate the fun. She followed with another humorous poem defining a crescent moon in the night sky like a peephole in the celestial outhouse. She said poetry is what you make it, and it can also be fiction. She then read to us a passage from her novel *Accordion Girl* about a girl growing up poor in Atoka, and her relationship with her gay brother.

She said she loves "novels in verse." She recommended authors Sonya Sones and Sharon Creech, two writers for young adult readers. She also mentioned Ellen Hopkins, whose writing echoed the lives of her high school students. She said that Ellen Hopkins wrote about her own daughter who died of a drug overdose. She said we should not hide the ugly truth from kids, as it sometimes lets them know they are not alone and there is something they can do about the situation.

She said poetry has so many different functions, including making us better writers if we work at it. While you may not be a poet first, if you work within the boundaries of a formal poem, and choose your words carefully, you will be a better writer. If you try to compress it into a shorter poem, you will be a more succinct writer.

Sharon said before she was a teacher, she started out in the newsroom as the women's editor, even though she mostly wrote and hardly ever edited. She had to fill up two pages every week, which made her good at checking the facts, being succinct, and meeting deadlines.

She followed with two poems about fishing and falling in love with a fisherman. Next, she read a poem about the one night each year that the homeless are counted, and called them "citizens with no claim to this land of plenty." She read many more of her poems, and later answered our questions. ###

Ann Napolitano is the bestselling author of Oprah's 100th pick, *Hello, Beautiful*. She has written a blog with four tips to becoming a better writer. She says if you're having a technical problem about how to get the characters to move in a certain way, ask yourself, "what is the easiest solution to this problem?" That's

AUGUST 2023 | WriteLine

usually the answer! See <https://www.oprahdaily.com/entertainment/books/a43299618/hellobeautiful-author-ann-napolitano-writing-a-dvice/>



BRAGS:

Lisbeth L. McCarty's poem *Clase de Espanol* was published in the July, 2023, issue of *Writers Monthly*. She was also featured in an interview in the July 21, 2023, online magazine *Bold Journey*.

Linda Basinger and Kathleen Park attended Bill Bernhardt's Red Sneaker writing retreat in Branson, MO.

NEWFOUND JOURNAL, a nonprofit publisher in Austin, TX, reopens for submissions on August 17, 2023. They are looking for fiction, flash fiction, poetry, interviews, and reviews. You can find information about

Page 3

submitting at <https://www.newfound.org>.

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.

NORMAN'S LITTLE FREE LIBRARIES

Extra copies of your book(s)? Here's an idea. Seed them in one or more little free libraries!

Lucky for us, there are ten book boxes (little free libraries) dotting the streets of Norman. Write a note on the back of your book mark and place it inside the book. (*Hi. I'm a Norman author. Thank you for choosing my book. I hope you enjoy it. If you'd like more information about my book, you can find me at ____ (insert publisher, website, or face book page).*) Then put your book with the note in one of the boxes and let it be your ambassador! The little free library concept began in 2009 in Wisconsin when Tod H. Bol created the first little free library book exchange in honor of his mother who was a teacher. He went on to co-found a nonprofit by the same name and it launched a worldwide movement that spans the globe. The website,

<https://littlefreelibraries.org>, says there are now over 100,000 book boxes in the USA. The idea behind the exchange is that anyone can go to a box (they look a little like bird houses) and pick out a book. Ideally, readers would also leave a book, exchanging one that's been read and loved for another one that piques their interest. A little free library can be a blessing in any neighborhood—and hopefully it will generate more sales for you. You can find a map and the addresses of all the free little libraries on their website.

MOVIE REVIEW: ***“Judy Blume Forever”***

Watching the documentary called *Judy Blume Forever* almost makes viewers feel like they are meeting Judy Blume in person. Blume has sold millions of books, mostly in the Young Adult category, although she has written adult fiction, too. Some of her books have been banned due to the subject matter.

At 85 years old, Blume claims she is retired from writing, but she and her husband are still closely attached to literature through their ownership of a bookstore in Key West, Florida, called “Books and Books.” The store, which proudly sells banned books, is part of “The Studios of Key West,” a cultural organization and non-profit art center.

In the documentary, Blume is candid about her ideas and motivations behind writing about what were previously taboo subjects in Young Adult literature. Her books unapologetically approach all sorts of topics related to genetic and sexual human experiences. This realistic approach is what endured Judy Blume’s books to so many.

Blume also took the time to correspond with those people who sent her fan letters. Various adults in the documentary reveal lengthy correspondence they had with Blume, often letters that greatly helped them find their way through difficult situations.

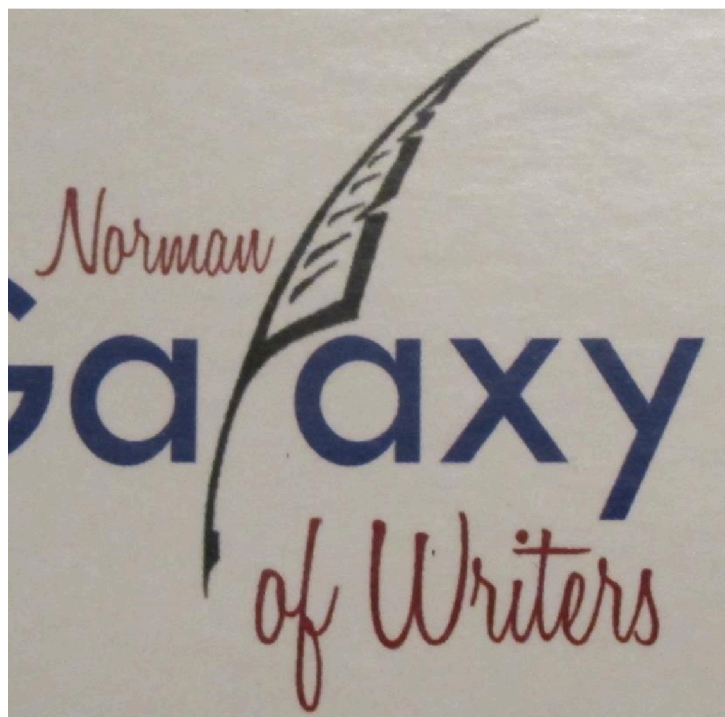
In the end, this documentary shows that Judy Blume herself, quite fittingly, can certainly be accurately described as an open book.

--Lisbeth

L. McCarty



Happy faces from Linda and Kathleen’s critique group during Bernhardt’s Branson writing retreat. The group was facilitated by Lara Bernhardt seated on the far left. YAY!!!



Lisbeth’s Puzzle Answers: 1) Unsung; 2) Unfurl; 3) Autumn; 4) Luxury; 5) Bureau; 6) Fugue; 7) Usual; 8) Ukulele; 9) Culture; and 10) August.

NORMAN GALAXY OF WRITERS'

CRITIQUE-A-THON

Saturday, August 26, 2023

10 a.m. – Noon

Norman West Library, 300 Center Ct.

(the old Borders' bookstore)

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

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

BOOK REVIEW

VOICE FIRST: A Writer's Manifesto by Sonya Huber

Almost every new writer has been told he or she must “find your voice.” Not many of us know what that means. Sonya Huber breaks it down. She says we all have many voices inside of ourselves. We’ve all been children and we can write from that perspective. We’ve been teachers, employees, fishermen, business owners, mothers, spouses, military men. Every one of these activities has its own voice and if we develop our character’s voice from that perspective, then we’ve “found our voice.”

My favorite chapter is entitled “Voices Live in the Body.” Huber suggests we write out the answer to several questions: 1) Find the organ in your body that carries the most tension, then write as if you are that body part. If your stomach had a voice, what would it say; 2) In a story of high tension, write about the physical sensations in your body; and 3) How does it feel to relax at the end of the day?

Other suggestions are 1) Write from a voice you would use when you are embarrassed or angry; 2) Write to an imagined audience at a failure workshop; 3) Write about a time when you were challenged; and 4) Write about a secret you carry. It’s all right to use first-person. You’re beginning to develop your voice and she says using first-person will strengthen your writing.

Huber weaves together concepts of voice and stories from her own life to show how voice is shaped by gender, location, race, and other factors to make a unified whole. She is a master at helping students learn how to develop their own voice. She’s a professor of English at Fairfield University and the author of several books, including two memoirs, *Supremely Tiny Acts* and *Pain Woman Takes Your Keys*. Hooray for Professor Huber!

--Mary Payne

THAT'S PUZZLING by Lisbeth McCarty

www.lisbethmccarty.com

In each sentence below, guess the word that consists of two Us. (Answers on page 5.)

1. A brave person without recognition is an _____ hero.
2. Watch the American flag _____ in the wind.
3. I love the season of _____ when the leaves start to fall from trees.
4. A personal yacht is a _____ item.
5. There are a lot of intelligent people working for the Federal _____ of Investigation
6. One of Bach's most famous compositions is _____ in D minor.

7. Round up the _____ suspects.
8. The notes strummed on the _____ are pleasant.
9. If you pay attention to what's around you, you might know a lot about pop _____.
10. The weather in the month of _____ is usually dangerously hot.

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 (1st, 2nd, 3rd, or Crème de la Crème) may not be entered again in any Galaxy contest. [Contest Rules continued on next page]

| WriteLine

Contest Rules, Norman Galaxy of Writers:

6. Formatting
 - a. All entries must be double spaced, except for poetry and the novel synopses.
 - b. 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.
 - d. 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.
 - e. 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]

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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.

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!!!

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WATCHING YOUR LANGUAGE

by Kathleen Norris Park, MA

Tidbits

Here is a collection of items writers have brought to my attention as well as several others that have banged my ear or leaped off a page to assault my eye. All given here to keep you from harm, careful writers.

This one popped up lately, the verb *pique*. Sounds like *peak*, and you can be persuaded to *peak* because of that meaning, but the right word is *pique*, meaning to stimulate or excite (The mention of ghosts piqued my interest). It can also be a noun meaning a feeling of irritation or resentment resulting from a slight, especially to one's pride (She flounced out in a fit of pique).

Want to know how to make an apostrophe go the way you want? Let's say you want to give your character his unique speech. If he says "I go there 'most every day," and you know that apostrophe should go the other way, just hit it twice: ‘ and erase the first one.

That reminds me of another common error, one that *Word* will sometimes contribute to. If *lets*, the verb, is what you want (Joe lets the dog out at noon), you can sometimes end up with *let's*, the contraction of *let us*, instead (Let's go to town). Don't ask me why it does that sometimes. The impudent, trigger-happy text corrector on my phone does it, too.

But you can love *Word* again for this feature. If you want an **em dash**, which expresses a sudden interruption in speech ("I didn't kill her," cried Effie. "I meant only to—"). Incidentally, put in the last quotation marks before inserting the **em dash** to avoid frustration. The **em dash** can also introduce a short list or explanation (We visited three towns—Slapout, Smackover, and Toad Suck Ferry).

Or if you want an **en dash**, which indicates range (100–250 lbs., 1999–2004), then here's how to get it. I know it

looks complicated, so you'll want to assign a shortcut key if you use either one often. Go first to INSERT then to SYMBOL, then to MORE SYMBOLS at the bottom of the drop-down menu. You'll see an offering of goodies there for future perusal. See the first two, **em dash** and **en dash**. They have keys assigned to them, but if you use, say, the **em dash** often, then you can give it your own shortcut keys. #

Write Line Deadline

Please send in your brags, articles, columns, and/or pictures for the Sept. issue by Saturday, August 26, to marpayne@netscape.com.

NEXT GALAXY
MEETING
MEETING

September 9, 2023

Pioneer Room

Pioneer Room

NormanGalaxyofWriters@gmail.com
www.normangalaxyofwriters.com www.facebook.com/Norman Galaxy

WRITELINE Norman Galaxy of Writers

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