

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. 11 • November 11, 2023

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

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

“The perfect word is like the perfect camera angle; it expresses the true nature of the situation. Change the camera position slightly and the picture tells tales.”

—Ruta Sepetys, author *The Fountains of Silence*

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.

NOVEMBER PROGRAM
APRIL WILKERSON



November 11, 2023

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

Pioneer Room, Norman

Central Library

ZOOM AVAILABLE

April Wilkerson makes her living as a writer at the OU Health Sciences Center and enjoys writing poetry in her spare time. She will speak about both types of writing and how each often informs the other. Like the research topics she writes about at work, she believes poetry should be accessible. She has

self-published a poetry chapbook and occasionally reads at open-mic gatherings. She appreciates the quote, “When reading something is effortless, great effort has gone into the writing.

October Meeting Minutes, 10-14

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

Robinson, Judith Coker, Sandra Dark, Bob Macfadzean, Melissa Hearn, Jim Nichols, Dan Snell, Dewey Coffman, Linda Basinger, David Levy, Helen Duchon, Paula Baker, Susan Bussey, James Wynn, Camille McGinnis, Hugh Jeffers, and Kathleen Park.

Zoom attendees were William Froehlich, David Keown, Cyndi Noble, Jean Dudes, Umer Bin Tariq, and Max Tremblay.

Minutes and Treasurer’s Reports for September were approved as printed in the *WriteLine*.

Nominating Committee. Mary Payne announced the 2024 slate of officers to be voted on at the November meeting. They are President-elect Mary Payne, Program Chair Jennie Raney, Secretary Judith Coker, and Treasurer Linda Basinger. If you are a Galaxy member and want to nominate yourself or someone else this can be done at the November meeting as long as the person is willing to serve. The new officers will be installed at the December meeting. Bob Mcfadzean, our current president-elect will automatically become president. Galaxy Contest. We have 35 entries for our annual contest. All categories have met the minimum requirement to make. The deadline is 12 midnight tonight to send more entries. Reports.

- A. Publicity/Program Chair. April Wilkerson, a poet, will be our November speaker.
- B. OWFI. This worthwhile organization has an annual writing contest and conference. They accommodate all genres. Please go to their webpage, OWFI.org for more details.

- C. Membership. Mary Spaulding said she talked to Barnes and Noble this month and they do have book signings but have changed their format. Now, authors aren’t necessarily in person. Galaxy members could take a Galaxy card with them to a signing, and give it to people who are looking for a writer’s club.
- D. Facebook. Helen Duchon said we have 251 participants on FB.
- E. WriteLine. Mary Payne reminded the club that our

deadline for submissions is still the 26th of each month.

Old Business. None.

New Business. Hamp McCool announced he will be retiring and traveling in 2024, so we will need to find a new ZOOM master. He has an email list and zoom account presently. Thank you so much Hamp for all the time you have served our club over many years!

Meeting adjourned. Respectfully submitted, Mary A. Spaulding, Secretary

TREASURER'S REPORT by Linda Basinger

OCTOBER PREVIOUS BALANCE:		\$
INCOME		
Contest Entry Fees	\$ 70.00	
TOTAL INCOME		
SUB TOTAL		\$1
EXPENSES		
M. Gibson, Oct. Speaker, Ck# 1575	\$ 25.00	
TOTAL EXPENSES		
CURRENT BALANCE		\$
1,230.01		

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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.

TORNADO ALLEY PODCAST

Peggy Chambers of Enid, Oklahoma, will be featured on the next Tornado Alley podcast which will be released on November 17, 2023. Interviewer Melissa Hearn will chat with Chambers about her twelve published titles, ranging from adult suspense to pulp fiction, then to fantasy for children. You can access the podcast on Buzzsprout, Spotify, Google, or Apple. It's Season III, Episode 26. For more information, contact Melissa at noirhorror@gmail.com.

Page 2

SPEAKER NOTES by HAMP

MCCOOL

Michael Gibson
10/14/2023

Dan Snell introduced our November speaker, Michael Gibson, saying his novels are “very engaging and a deeply researched study of people in World War II.” Michael said his presentation would cover how he came to be a novelist, and the challenges he found in writing historically accurate fiction.

Michael went over his background and talked about the time in 1968 when he had just finished high school in Norman, and started at O.U. He said while he was there, interesting people like Jimi Hendrix and Gloria Steinem visited the University. Michael chose history as his college major, because his father Arrell M. Gibson had been chair of O.U.’s history department. One of his father’s twenty books was *The Chickasaws*, which finished second in the balloting for the Pulitzer Prize in 1972.

Michael didn’t take courses from his father, but he said Dan Snell was his Early American History professor, and David Levy was his American Intellectual History professor. Michael said his father told him in 1971 that he was “not going to get a PHD in history.” He explained that his current PHD students couldn’t get jobs teaching history.

Instead, Michael went to law school at O.U. and practiced law for the next 33 years. In 2008 he received an appointment to become a judge with the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, where he has been serving for the last 15 years.

Michael’s first book, *Environmental Regulation of Petroleum Spills and Wastes*, was published 30 years ago. It didn’t satisfy his desire to get back to history. When he became an empty nester with more time on the weekends, he began researching his passion, World War II. He was particularly captivated by two World War II subjects. The first was the creation of the first Army Ranger Battalion as shown in James Garner’s movie *Darby’s Rangers*.

This first Ranger Battalion, the most elite fighting force of World War II was the subject of Michael’s book *The Broomcorn Field*. The second thing that captivated him about World War II was its alteration of American culture, especially the changing roles of women and African Americans. That is the central theme of his book, *Leaving Pontotoc County*.

He said he has read a lot of historical fiction and now has two pet peeves. The first is to read a historical novel and realize the author has made something up that could never have happened when or where the novel is set. In his own writing, he goes to great length to check and recheck his facts.

The other pet peeve is when the author fails to give the reader any context for events in the novel. This is particularly important for World War II, which was comprised of two main theaters, and three sub-theaters for each. He went on to further describe these six areas, and what was going on in each, and to impress us with how much America was transformed into modernity as a result of World War II. To win the war, the United States had to become the most powerful nation. When the war began, the United States had the 17th largest army just behind Romania. By the end of the war, the United States was the most powerful nation on earth.

He said Americans have lost knowledge about World War II because most of those who actually fought in the war are now dead. He said the children and grandchildren of those soldiers don’t know much about the war, primarily because the soldiers did not want to subject them to the pain and difficulties they endured. Also, most of us have a natural aversion to thinking about war. Very few readers are willing to dive into 800-page treatises of all the battles of World War II.

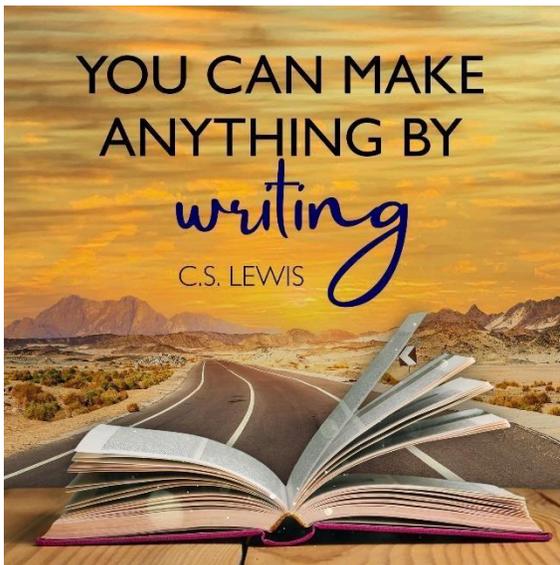
Michael said the problem is that, if you don’t know about World War II, it is impossible to understand the transformation America made into a modern industrial state. Michael’s

challenge was how to give his readers historical context for his novels' story lines. There was no ready-made format.

He found the answer in ancient Greek theater. In every Greek play, a chorus comes out before the action begins in each act of the play. After each act, they talk to the audience about what they just saw, about what has been happening off-stage, and about what they will see next. These are named: Parados, for the first choral address. Stasimon, for the choral addresses between episodes. And Exode, for the last choral address in the play. Michael used these as literary devices for conveying the protagonists of the novel, for describing the conditions that led the U.S. into World War II, and for the challenges their generation faced in its odyssey to win World War II.

He discussed many different events that happened during our "transition to modernity" and how they related to World War II and Oklahoma. There were many questions and Michael generously answered them all.

NOVEMBER 2023 | WriteLine



BRAGS:

Lisbeth L. McCarty's nonfiction article "Legal History: Know the Elements of the Crime" was published in the Fall 2023 issue of *Q&A, The Law Digest of the Criminal Law Section of the OBA*.

Write Line Deadline: Please send in your brags, articles, columns, and/or pictures for the Dec. issue by Thursday, Nov. 26, to 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.

The Nov/Dec 2023 issue of *Writer's Digest* is devoted to making readers laugh. There are articles on visualizing humor, writing funny fiction, rom-com, comedic writing for fun and profit and more! The Norman Central Library has a copy or you can buy a subscription from their website, <https://writersdigest.com>. Right now, there's a sale. It's \$19.96 per year. Barnes & Noble sells single issues.

William Kenower interviews Stephen P. Kiernan about how he got his inspiration for *The Glass Chateau*. Great Interview.

You can access it here:

<https://www.blogtalkradio.com/authormagazine/2023/08/01/author2authorwith-stephen-p-kiernan>

Page 3

[1/author2authorwith-stephen-p-kiernan](#)

BOOK REVIEW:

***SLOUCHING THROUGH BETHLEHEM* by Joan Didion**

This collection of essays by Joan Didion centers on American culture—and her memories of growing up in California. Despite its title, I didn't see one smidgen of religion between its pages. An essay about John Wayne and another about the Santana winds are poignant and make the whole read worthwhile. But for this book review, we'll focus on only one essay, entitled "On Keeping a Notebook."

Didion says she's kept a notebook since she was five years old, when her mother gave her a Big Five tablet, so she could write down her thoughts instead of whining about being bored. Her notebooks contain snippets of conversations, descriptions of clothing, and the like. Would she ever need to know that her friend's father paid \$650 per month to light their home before the Crash of '29 or that Jimmy Hoffa once said, "I may have my faults, but being wrong isn't one of them!"? Probably not, but what keeping a notebook did for her was to bring her back to the mood she was in at the time—wherever she was, whether that was tasting the salt on the beach or watching a conversation play out at a cocktail party. "We forget all too soon those things we

thought we could never forget.” She believes it’s a great idea to keep in touch with ourselves and with the memories of the scenes we want to write— and her notebooks did that for her.

The essay is only eleven pages—but it highlights the main reason why Didion became such a well-known and loved essayist and novelist—keeping numerous notebooks. *Slouching Through Bethlehem* is available through the Pioneer Library System.

JOURNAL WRITING FOR HEALTH —

The September 18, 2023 edition of *Woman’s World* has an article about the benefits of journal writing. It releases stress and we can become a healthier version of ourselves. They suggest using an app called JournalSpeak, a form of expressive writing. Developed by Nicole Sachs, LCSW, the program encourages people to write the “raw, unfiltered truth about how you feel. Don’t censor yourself or edit; try

to be honest about what you’re feeling even if it’s shameful, scary, or ugly. Nobody else is going to read it . . .” (Sonya Huber used this kind of writing as the foundation for her memoir, *Pain*

Woman.)

Iowa scientists say journal writing for twenty minutes a day can turn off the stress response and lower the heart attack risk by 48%. Researchers at England’s Southampton General Hospital say writing positive thoughts can decrease daily cortisol levels by 45%, reducing overall stress levels.

The *Woman’s World* article highlights Anna Holtzman, who had a pressurefilled job as a TV video editor and was plagued by migraines, nausea, and dizziness. When these symptoms began to increase, she started journal writing. After a year, her migraines became a rarity.

So, whether we write for our health or to have a record of our thoughts and feelings for future writing projects, journal writing can be a boon for any budding writer.

LISBETH'S PUZZLE

(Answers on page 7.)

PUZZLE PAGE — Thanksgiving Trivia



1. Who once described the turkey as being a little vain and silly, but a bird of courage?
2. Are yams the same vegetable as sweet potatoes?
3. How many turkeys receive a Presidential pardon each year?
4. Name the President who pardoned each of the following pairs of turkeys: Liberty and Freedom; Katie and Zack, Stars and Stripes, Biscuits and Gravy, Marshmallow and Yam, Flyer and Fryer, May and Flower, Pumpkin and Pecan, Courage and Carolina, Apple and Cider, Liberty and Peace, Cobbler and Gobbler, Popcorn and Caramel, and Cheese and Mac.
5. On Thanksgiving Day, some cooks serve Tofurkey, some Turducken. What's the difference?
6. What Thanksgiving rite of passage do most elementary school children experience in the U.S.?
7. Which two U.S. states have cities named Turkey?
8. What does Sarah Josepha Hale (the writer of *Mary Had a Little Lamb*) relate to Thanksgiving?
9. Which has more tryptophan — cheddar cheese or turkey?
10. What was once believed to make freckles disappear and cure snakebite?
11. What role did a pumpkin play in *Cinderella*?



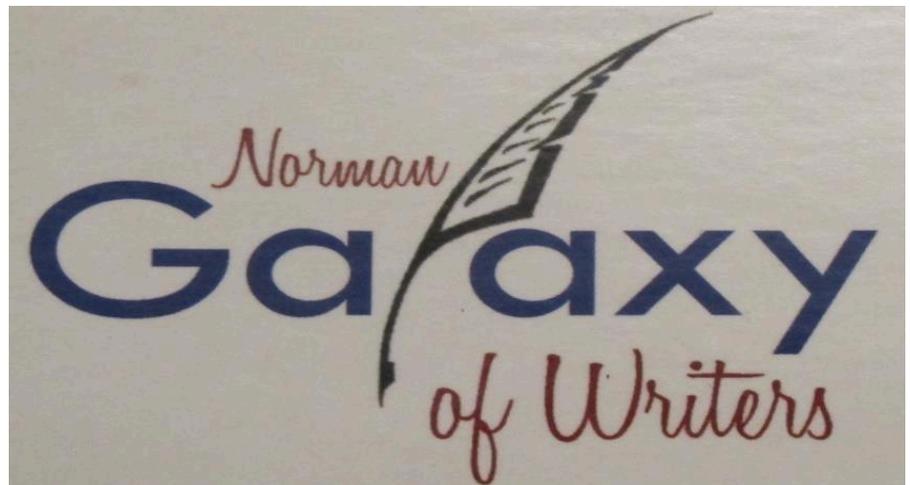
CENTER FOR FAMILIES & CHILDREN

Galaxy will have a box for donations to the Center for Families and Children at our Christmas lunch on December 9. They need diapers, formula, kids' books and toys (new). Or, you can give a cash donation to our treasurer, Linda Basinger. Last year, we collectively donated \$295 to the Center, thanks to our generous members. We appreciate



you.

The Frankfort Book Fair, the world's largest trade show, just wrapped up last week. Jane Friedman reported literary scout Bettina Schrewe said that (paraphrasing) publishing houses are continuing to focus on acquiring books trending on BookTok or on finding manuscripts that will most certainly be popular on TikTok. Teenagers are

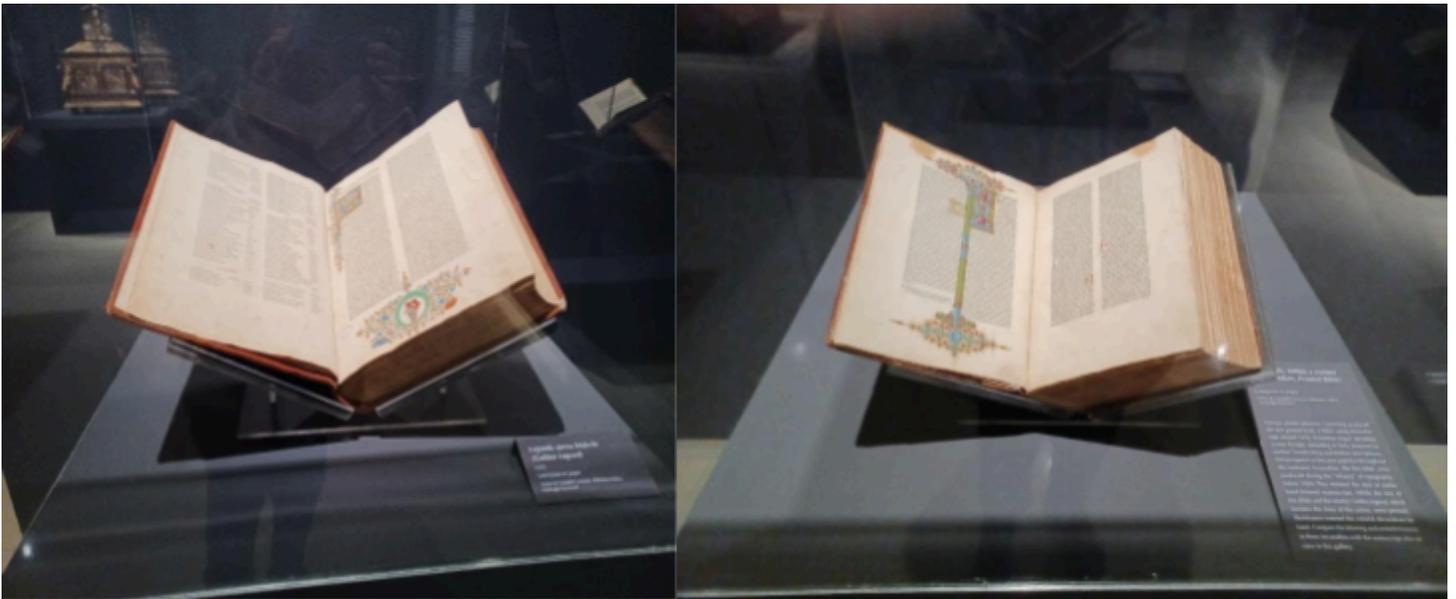


flocking to bookstores for these books—
authors Colleen Hoover, Scarlett St.



TREASURES
OF
TUSCANY
RENAISSANCE IN AREZZO

Residents and visitors of Norman are blessed to have a world class art museum — the Fred Jones Art Museum, located at the corner of Boyd and Elm. On exhibit, there's a wonderful collection of paintings, gold statuary, and books from 15th century Arezzo, a small town in Tuscany. It will remain on display until January 28, 2024. The artifacts have never been out of Italy. They will return immediately to Arezzo after the Norman showing. It's a special treat for us!



On the left is “The Golden Legend,” a book letterpressed on paper in 1475. It narrates the lives of saints. Printing was still in its infancy. Gutenberg printed the first Bible about 1450. On the right is “In Cunabulum,” a Bible printed in 1476. Colorists, called Illuminators, inserted the colorful decorations by hand. Pictured below is a manuscript on parchment dated November 18, 1458.



INDUSTRY NEWS

This fall Teacher's Two Tree Press will publish a history of modern book publishing with more than 100 essays contributed by authors and scions of the industry, capitalizing on the tremendous strides of the 1960s and 70s that made writing and publishing what it is today. Click on the link below for an editorial about *Among Friends: An Illustrated Oral History of American Book Publishing and Book Selling in the 20th Century*, written by Publisher's Weekly editorial director Jim Milliot.

<https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/bytopic/industry-news/publisher-news/article/92739-thehistory-of-modern-american-book-publishing-in-its-ownwords.html>

Mark your calendars for our December 9 potluck lunch in the fellowship hall of University Lutheran Church, 911 Elm. We will be awarding certificates and prize money to our 2023 contest winners at that time. Our judges, who are all professional writers, are busy evaluating the entries. There were 35 entries across eight categories from ten members. That's about onethird of our members. YAY!

BOOKLIST SHOWCASES TOP SELLERS

Do you want to know the top-selling books of the week? The #1 book for this week is *The Woman in Me* by Britney Spears. USA today publishes the top 150 titles online every Wednesday at 6 a.m. They use sales data collected every week from booksellers representing a variety of outlets: bookstore chains, independent

bookstores, mass merchandisers, and online retailers. The *Booklist* combines sales of titles in both print and electronic format, if available. It's based on sales from the previous Monday through Sunday. You can access the Booklist by searching for <https://www.usatoday.com/booklist>.

NEXT GALAXY MEETING DECEMBER 9, 2023

Pioneer Room

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