

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. 12 • December 9, 2023

DECEMBER PROGRAM

“The secret of getting ahead is **HAPPY**

HOLIDAYS! getting started.”

— Mark Twain

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“One of the things I had to  
learn as a writer was to trust

December 9, 2023



the act of writing.”

University Lutheran Church, 911 Elm, Norman 11 a.m. — 1 p.m.

— E. L. Doctorow

(No ZOOM — Sorry)

**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.

**COME JOIN US** on December 9, where we'll gather for food and fun at our annual pot luck Christmas luncheon. Please bring either a salad, vegetable, or a dessert. We'll announce our 2023 contest winners and award them their certificates and cash prizes. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend. We'll also be installing our new officers for 2024. We look forward to seeing you.

If you can, please come early to help set up the tables and buffet. See page five for information about Galaxy's Christmas charity,

Norman's Center for Children & Families.

NOVEMBER 2023 | WriteLine

Page 1

## NOVEMBER MEETING MINUTES November 11, 2023

President Mary Payne called the meeting to order. In person attendees were Lisbeth McCarty, Mary Payne, Hamp McCool, Mary Spaulding, Jim Nichols, Bob Macfadzean, Dan Snell, Judith Coker, Helen Duchon, Sammy Husbands, Linda Basinger, April Wilkerson, and six guests: Karla Willis, Linda Pevac, Leslie Gillies, Flora Ellis, Donita Fogel, and Guthrie Jenkins. Zoom attendees were Jennie Raney and Maham Khan.

Minutes and Treasurer's Reports for October were approved as printed in the WriteLine.

Announcements. Mary Payne said the judges are currently evaluating the contest entries. Winners will be given certificates and prizes at our December meeting.

Reports.

- A. Publicity/Program Chair. Dan Snell said next month we will have our holiday party. We won't have a business meeting and the program will be awarding certificates for the contest, and installation of our 2024 officers.
- B. OWFI. Their next meeting will be Dec. 3. The Galaxy officers would like to know how many members of our members are also members of OWFI. This determines the number of representatives we can have voting at their board meetings.
- C. Website. Lisbeth said she has a blog and to contact her if you would like to participate.
- D. Membership. Mary Spaulding said she has Galaxy cards which she places on the table each month. Please take some and give them out to others in the community who you may meet, and are interested in joining a writer group. Word of mouth is a very effective way to gain new members.
- E. Facebook. Helen Duchon shared we have 254 members as of today. She recommended we "share" on our pages.

Old Business. Mary Payne presented the 2024 slate of officers as printed in the November WriteLine. After asking if there were any other nominations from the floor, and none being named, the slate was approved by acclamation. These officers will be installed at our December meeting:

President, Bob

Macfadzean; President-elect, Mary Payne; Program Chair, Jennie Raney; Secretary, Judith Coker; and Treasurer, Linda Basinger. Galaxy thanks the outgoing and the incoming officers! Thank you for your time and talents to keep Galaxy running like the well-oiled machine it is.

New Business. Plans for the Dec potluck was discussed. The club provides the meat and members should bring a salad, vegetable, or dessert. Judith and Linda volunteered to warm the ham and turkey. The group voted by acclamation to give the church a \$50 donation for the use of their facility. Our next meeting is December 9<sup>th</sup> at University Lutheran Church. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Mary A. Spaulding, Secretary.

## NOVEMBER TREASURER'S REPORT

by Linda Basinger

|                    |             |
|--------------------|-------------|
| PREVIOUS BALANCE:  | \$1230      |
| INCOME             |             |
| Chambers, '24 Dues | 25.00       |
| McCool, '24 Dues   | 25.00       |
| TOTAL INCOME       | <u>50</u>   |
| SUB TOTAL          | \$1,280     |
| EXPENSES — None    | <u>00</u>   |
| CURRENT BALANCE    | \$ 1,280.01 |

### Membership Dues!

Galaxy dues for the membership year 2024 are \$25 and they become due on **January 1, 2024.**

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](mailto:beammeuptoo@icloud.com).

Page 2

## SPEAKER NOTES by HAMP MCCOOL

April Wilkerson

11/11/2023

Dan introduced April Wilkerson who makes her living as a writer working for the OU Health Sciences Center. She also writes and publishes poetry. April said she rarely talks about herself, but would try to tell a little of her story.

She quoted David Whyte, one of her favorite poets: "Poetry is the art of saying something that you didn't know, but you knew." She said that happens to her often. She will start with a kernel of an idea, and then she sits down to get it on the page.

April said she grew up southeast of Norman in the small farming community of Atwood, population 75. Her parents were teachers but they left the classroom to go back to farming. Their land had been in their family for many generations. She grew up working hard, but farming is a good life. She felt very connected to the land, and that helped her start the process of thinking she wanted to be a writer.

She read several poems about the difficulty of farming and how it sustains and connects to your soul.

April graduated from high school in the late 1980's, then went to college majoring in journalism. After graduation, worked for two different newspapers over the course of 20 years. She said that experience shaped her as a writer. She said she covered the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing when she was only 23 years old. From that, she learned how to interview people while they were feeling strong, difficult emotions. She listened carefully to them, honoring their experience.

About the same time, her father died of a heart attack at the age of 52. She said her grief was acute, but that she was able to process it and heal as she turned more to poetry. She then read two poems that spoke to that personal loss. The first was “Waiting” which talked about her father’s funeral and how his farm duties were transitioned to other family members so their animals could go on living. The second poem was “The News,” which was about how many years later, her father’s death still continues to impact her.

After twenty years working for newspapers, she got a job with the OU Medical Center, originally to write and edit the *OU College of Medicine Magazine*. Her work transitioned to promoting the research taking place on OU’s medical campus. She learned to tell the stories of the research projects so that the average reader could understand. She doesn’t have a science background, and that actually helped her writing about those projects.

She said writing poetry also helps her in her job, as she often needs analogies and metaphors while writing about the research. In a recent article she wrote about pancreatic cancer, which often leads to muscles “wasting.” She used the analogy of the researched “Zip-4” protein—that it “hails a cab” to take these molecules to the muscle cells.

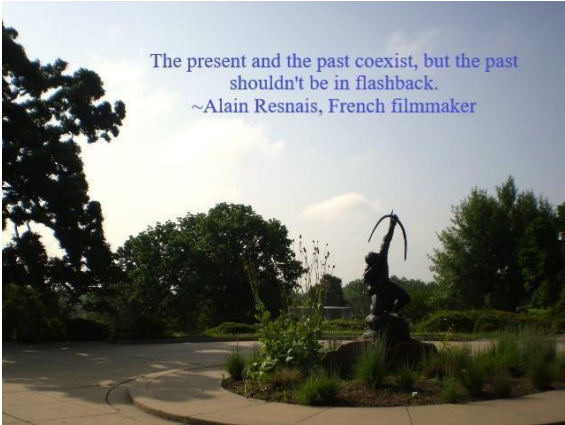
She read her poem “Floating with Butterflies” about Monarch butterflies that migrate through Oklahoma and feed as they go through, and how that relates to her “stopping to notice” things around her as they happen. She said that as much as medicine and technology has advanced, the “human connection to healing” is still a critical ingredient. She next read “The Ethics of Truth-Telling, which is about whether you should want to know when you have a disease that will shorten your life. She said that although “we have a right to know,” do we also have “a right to not know” in situations like this, so that we can live out the rest of our life without fear and despair.

April read a few more poems and then answered multiple questions from the group.

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**TORNADO ALLEY PODCAST**

Writer-editor Kathleen Park calls herself “an escaped English teacher.” In her interview, she reads from and talks about her first novel, *The Code Talkers*, based on her experience in the Southwest. Using her own voice and broadcasting background, she discusses her plans for turning it into an eBook. Currently, she is polishing the final draft of her next exciting novel, “Promises to Keep,” in which she’s mined her memories, recent contacts, maps, cemeteries, and a barrel of other sources from her

DECEMBER 2023 | WriteLine  
childhood. Find this interview under Tornado Alley Mystery Writers Podcast in Buzzsprout, Spotify, Google and Apple podcasts. Contact Melissa Hearn if you have any questions at [noirhorror@gmail.com](mailto:noirhorror@gmail.com).



Indian statue outside Tulsa’s Gilcrease Museum, which is currently closed. A new building will replace the aging one and will re-open in 2025(?). The museum owns a large and comprehensive collection of American Western art.

**FROM THE DECEMBER 2023 GUIDEPOSTS MAGAZINE:**

“The only things that we can truly give to each other are the only things that we truly need—an ear to listen, a heart to care, a word of encouragement, and a hand to help.”

**BOOK REVIEWS ABOUT FLASHBACKS**

Flashbacks are generally discouraged by editors and agents because they don’t move the story forward. However, if they are done well, the flashback(s) can

greatly enhance the story. Here are two books recommended by editor and writing coach Tiffany Yates Martin that use them to good advantage. They are both available from the library.

***THE ALICE NETWORK*** by Kate Quinn  
“Flashbacks” can be difficult for any writer. Kate Quinn deftly moves the action of her story *THE ALICE NETWORK* between World War I and WWII. It’s a great example of how flashbacks can work. If you need a book to curl up with on cold nights, then I recommend it because the story is that good. It’s historical fiction, inspired by a real spy ring headed by Louise de Bettignies.

Christmas

Breaking News: James Patterson will perform at Rose State College’s Hudiburg Chevrolet Center, “Literary Voices with James Patterson,” on April 9, 2024 at 7 p.m.

## NEW TESS GERRITSEN INTERVIEW

William Kenower interviews bestselling thriller writer

—Jimmy Carter, on gathering at

be

Tess Gerritsen, author of the Rizzoli & Isles series, about her new book, *The Spy Coast*. Gerritsen shares her thoughts about hitting roadblocks in writing and how she researches aspects of her novels that she knows nothing about. It’s a wonderful interview. Here’s the link:

<https://www.authormagazine.org/interviews/2023/11/1/tess-gerritsen>

graphic and the author does not shy away from depicting those scenes. They can easily be skipped. *The Alice Network* has over 66,000 Amazon reviews.

***FOUNTAINS OF SILENCE*** by Ruta Sepetys is another historical fiction that moves between present and past. It highlights the culture and pain of the Spanish people and their children who were stolen during the dictatorship of Francisco Franco from 1939 to 1975. Daniel, an American teenager who yearns to be a photojournalist, is thrust into this land and people

In May 1947, Charlie St. Clare, a nineteen-year-old American college student, goes to Europe and searches for a cousin who vanished during World War II. Quinn begins: “The first person I met in England was a hallucination...” I was hooked! Every young girl Charlie sees reminds her of her cousin. As she begins her search, she finds Eve (Louise de Bettignies), an old woman who was a spy for the Allied resistance in France during World War I. They don’t seem to have anything in common, but in the course of the story, they develop an understanding, each providing courage for the other. It’s a story of hope and redemption. Quinn weaves the stories together, transitioning smoothly between the two time periods. It’s amazing how she does it. Quinn’s he wants to understand. Rafa is a Spanish boy who lost his parents to violence. On page two, bullfighting triggers Rafa’s memories. Sepetys writes “Memories of war tap at his brain... *You do remember, don’t you?* He does.” Then the author drops right into a short flashback scene for about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a page. The author then transitions out of the scene and back to the present day. It’s masterful!

Daniel meets an older foreign correspondent who

character descriptions are priceless. Unfortunately, real life can

encourages him to take pictures of what life is like for the people of Spain under Franco’s dictatorship. He believes American newspapers would love to print them. “There’s a dark side here...one wrong move and the police will be on you. You’ll be dead in a dirt pit.” WOW! I want to know what happens. Don’t you? *Fountains of Silence* has almost 4,000 reviews on Amazon.

## LISBETH’S PUZZLE ANSWERS

(puzzle on page 8)

- 1) Exclamation mark added;
- 2) Star added on left;
- 3) Apostrophe removed;
- 4) More red scarf on back of bear;

- 5) Bears standing on different surface;
- 6) Polar bear now wears a Santa hat;
- 7) Capital 'S' of Seasons changed;
- 8) Bear has an eyebrow;
- 9) Extra snowflake branches in top left;
- 10) Mistletoe on scarf; and, 11) Reindeer added.



**The Frankfort Book Fair**, the world's largest trade show, just wrapped up. Jane Friedman reported literary scout Bettina Schrewe said that (paraphrasing) publishing houses are continuing to focus on acquiring books trending on Book Tok 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. Clair, and others.

Judith Coker teaches a class on haiku at the new Adult Wellness Center on Findley



## 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 cash in the form of a check made out to CCFI. To keep the funds totally separate from Galaxy, please give your check to Jennie Raney. Last year, we collectively donated \$295 to the Center, thanks to our generous members. We appreciate you.

## WANT TO WRITE A GRAPHIC NOVEL?

University of Oklahoma Visiting Professor Mel Odom will teach a "Writing Graphic Novels" class during the upcoming Spring semester. He posted on Facebook that the class will teach students "how to prep a story/character/world

for explanation on the comics page, newspaper scripts, manga, and on webcomicsapp.com. Whether your jam is superheroes, horror comics, or Naruto, (come) join us

in . . . learning how to use panels and pages for dramatic purpose.” There are no prerequisites. The course number is JMC4970-006.

Page 5

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO YOU AND YOURS—  
AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT!



(Picture taken at North Pole City, 4201 South Interstate 44 Service Road, Oklahoma City)

That's Puzzling by Lisbeth L. McCarty [www.lisbethmccarty.com](http://www.lisbethmccarty.com)

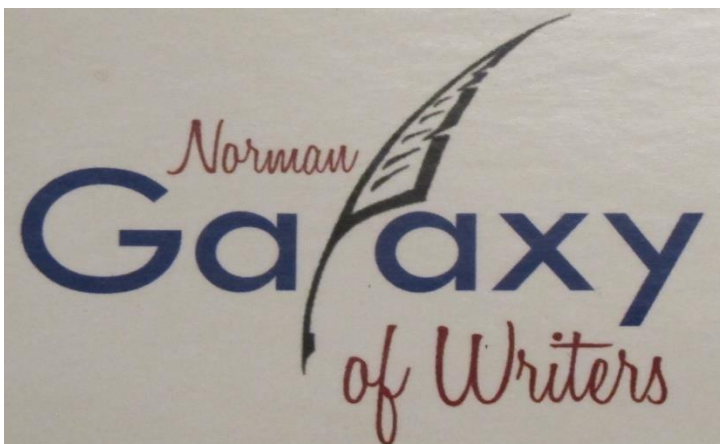
(Answers on page 5)

Spot the 11 differences in the two photos below. Happy Holidays!



"Writing, the art of communicating thoughts to the mind through the eye, is the great invention of the world.... enabling us to converse with the dead, the absent, and the unborn, at all distances of time and space."

— Abraham Lincoln



## **GALAXY'S NEW 2024 OFFICERS**

**President: Bob Macfadzean**

**President-elect: Mary Payne**

**Program Chair: Jennie Raney**

**Secretary: Judith Coker**

**Treasurer: Linda Basinger**

## **Watching Your Language** **By Kathleen Park**

### **What's Your Pet Language Peeve?**

Join my survey, will you? What word or phrase sets your teeth on edge when you hear or read it? One editor I asked said he hated the redundant “continue on” as in “He continued on speaking.” Many people mentioned “couldn’t care less.” One of my favorite language gurus called that one “A vogue expression that has not only grown tiresome but also apparently fatigued some of its users to the extent that they cannot get it all out, and end by reversing its sense.” Thus we have the idiotic “could care less.”

## ***NORMAN CENTRAL LIBRARY CLOSES FOR MONTHS !!!***

The City of Norman announced the closure of the Norman Central Library on Nov. 21 for mold remediation. It is projected to be closed for at least five months. The \$39 million building was originally opened in 2019, but has been plagued by leaks. The Norman Galaxy of Writers will continue our regular monthly meeting schedule at “The Well,” 210 South James Garner Avenue. They have a very nice room for us on the second floor. It is equipped for ZOOM and there is an elevator.

**Write Line Deadline:** Please send in your brags, articles, columns, and/or pictures for the Jan. issue by Jan. 1, to Mary Payne at [marpayne@netscape.com](mailto:marpayne@netscape.com). Also, please keep

We’re grateful to Katelyn Cooper and other staff

“Per capita” is a term that can arouse some surprising arguments. Literally, it means “by heads,” and “equally to

each individual” and “by or for each person,” as in is frequently misused to mean some

vague group or number of people.

I’d like to put this one on the doorstep of teenagers or those Theodore Bernstein called “the literary unwashed,” won’t stay there. The misuse of *like* is like a virus.

You can catch it without so much as a sneeze to warn

can look back and yearn for discussions about of using *like* instead of *as* or “as if” or as a

conjunction. That concern is nothing compared with the gravel-grinding sound of *like* peppered between [www.facebook.com/writeinokla](http://www.facebook.com/writeinokla) across the country. I never thought I’d see the **WRITELINE** Norman “um” but maybe that day is here. Editor: Mary Payne, [marpayne@netscape.com](mailto:marpayne@netscape.com)

So. Now it’s your turn. Send in your favorite language grammar tip to [katie.talks@gmail.com](mailto:katie.talks@gmail.com). GALAXY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE members at “The Well” for accommodating us. YAY!

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.

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