President’s Message
Shelley Pagach

I love New Year resolutions. You can set all sorts of goals—big or small, outrageous or conservative, anything you want. The only pressure involved is the pressure you put on yourself.

A quick google search shows the top 10 New Year’s resolutions are as follows:
1. Lose Weight
2. Getting Organized
3. Spend Less, Save More
4. Enjoy Life to the Fullest
5. Staying Fit and Healthy
6. Learn Something Exciting
7. Quit Smoking
8. Help Others in Their Dreams
9. Fall in Love
10. Spend More Time with Family

If you throw in: Read more books and write every day, you get the gist of my own list.

Another quick google search shows that only about 8% of the people who make New Year’s resolutions keep them. Although that is not surprising, it also doesn’t deter me from setting them. There is something empowering about the tradition of setting a new goal on the first day of a brand-new year.

—I can’t help myself.
—I must set the bar just out of reach so I have something to strive for.
—What is your New Year’s resolution?

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MEETING ROOM CHANGE
Room 130
Attention Paid OCWI Members

If you have a presence on the Internet—website, blog, books listed in online book providers, publishers, etc., and you want OCWI website, "Member Links" to activate the link, please email URL address to Bill Boudreau, billboudreau@flash.net and Lorelei Sawtelle, lsawtelle@cox.net.

President: Shelley Pagach, 496-8749, shelbell.sp@gmail.com
1st VP, Programs: John Biggs, 728-0198, johnbiggs73162@yahoo.com
2nd VP, Membership: Trina Lee, 728-7310, leetulsa@sbcglobal.net
Treasurer: Nelda Paden, 833-2611, neldapaden@aol.com
Secretary: Lorelei Sawtelle, 317-7845, lsawtelle@cox.net

Appointed Officers
Newsletter: Inez Phillips, 946-0981, inezbowman.cox.net
Publicity Chair: Barbara Shepherd, 478-0919, okcwriters@aol.com
Webmaster: TBA
Nominating Chair: TBA
Yearbook Chair: Shelley Pagach, 496-8749, shelbell.sp@gmail.com
Contest Chair: Gail Mattingly, 494-7384, evamattingly@cox.net
Historian: Office of the President
OWFI Reporter: Wayne Harris-Wyrick, 603-6566, wizardwyane@juno.com
Workshop Chair: John Biggs, 728-0198, johnbiggs73162@yahoo.com
Audio/Visual: Bill Boudreau, 946-6588, billboudreau@flash.net

2016 OWFI Delegates
Bill Boudreau, 946-6588, bill@billboudreau.com
Linda Shelby, 390-1451, okielas@aol.com
Shelley Pagach, 496-8749, shelbell.sp@gmail.com

2016 OWFI Alternates:
Carolyn Leonard, 740-1632,

MEMBER NEWS

John J. Dwyer's book The Oklahomans: The Story of Oklahoma and Its People, was #6 on the Oklahoma Best-sellers, nonfiction list.

Linda Shelby's new book, A Splinter in Time, is available from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and thewildrosepress.com. Linda had a book signing at Full Circle Books on Saturday, December 17 from 3 to 5.

Nelda Paden won Third Place in Short Story for “A Top Coat’s Life” and Lorelei Sawtelle for an Honorable Mention in Poetry for “Autumn Haiku” in the 2016 Art Affair Annual Literary Contests.

Barbara Shepherd won the following in the 2016 Norman Galaxy of Writers annual contest: Third place, Unrhymed Poetry - The Journey First place, Nonfiction Article - How to Turn Ninety in Style First place, Children’s Fiction - Granny’s Gift First place, Nostalgic Essay - Fighting Wildfire First place, Short Story - Daffodil Waltz Bonnie Speer – Crème de la Crème - Daffodil Waltz


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Shelley Pagach, 496-8749, shelbell.sp@gmail.com

2016 OWFI Alternates:
Carolyn Leonard, 740-1632,
Oklahoma City Writers, Inc.
Saturday, January 21, 2017
Coffee at 9:45       Meeting at 10:00
We meet in the St. Luke’s Methodist Church at NW 15th and Harvey, Oklahoma City.
Enter through the north door by handicap parking and go to Room 130.

January Speaker: Meg Welch Dendler

Topic: Oklahoma Book Award
John Biggs introduced this month’s speaker, Meg Dendler. Her presentation was titled *Writing Children’s Books*. She has also written adult books, movie reviews, etc. and has a Masters in Early Childhood Education.

“Good writing is good writing regardless of the genre. You must have good characters, plot, and setting.”

1. **Why is it a book for children?** You will still have all the same genres.
   a. **Picture Books**—500 words or less (hard, hard, hard to self-publish.)
   b. **Early Readers**—simple drawings simple vocabulary 1st or 2nd grade. Very few writers can do this.
   c. **Middle Grade**—3rd grade and up to about 8th grade. (This is a hard market to break into.) Much darker than it used to be, but not as violent or bloody or sexual as YA. (30,000 words or so—unless you’re famous) Large words should be avoided. Watch your vocabulary—avoid verbose sections and multisyllabic words. Keep sentences shorter. Boy mentality is different than a girl’s. (Boy books need to have stinky sections.)
   d. **Young Adult**—may overlap middle grade genre. These may have drug use, sex, violence. YA books tend to be dark. Age of main character determines whether it is YA or adult.
   e. **Do not talk down to kids** (or adults). The most important issue is who solves the problem. Grown-ups must not solve the problem. Adults cannot come and rescue anyone (think Charlie Brown’s teacher—wah wah, wah, wah..)
   f. When writing for kids, **avoid long descriptive paragraphs.** *(At the Corner of Magnetic and Main.)* As adults, we want more description. Kids don’t care.
   g. **Subject Matter** children learn what they read. Dark books are winning Newberry Awards. *The One and Only Ivan, Walk Two Moons, The Giver, A Snicker of Magic.* The classics are out. *(The powers that be are shifting away from white male writers.)*
   h. You **can** get pulled out of a slush pile; be willing to edit.

2. **How are you going to sell it?** Are you willing to sit in front of 200 kids and talk in a school gym or auditorium? No publisher will sell it for you—unless you’re good and in the 4th book in a series. As an author, once you have a book in your hand, it will be about 6 months before it sells so that the reviewers have a chance at it.

3. **Currently DIVERSITY is the hot topic.**

4. She gave us a list of resources:
   a. Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators SCBWI.org

*Provided by Lorrelei Sawtelle, Secretary*
I forgot to mention this in the print edition so you will probably see part of it next month.

Inez

Dear OCWI Members,
Re: January-February Editing Offer

Now is the time for writers to start new projects – new stories, chapters, poems. Time to begin, or revamp, those pieces you’ll want to enter into competition next fall and winter. Don’t wait until it’s too late, then worry if your writing is the best you could have made it.

January and February are my slow months, so I’m making you an offer: the going rate for editing is $3 a page (unless it’s gone up since I last looked!), but I’ll cut that in half.

Offer #1: Until March 15th, I will edit your work for $1.50 a page, with a minimum of $20. For that $20, I’ll edit, advise and encourage you regarding up to 13 pages, double-spaced. Additional pages are $1.50 each. This is an amazing offer!

Offer #2: If you’d like to send me a few pages then book 45 minutes at my kitchen table to talk about structure and other elements of your work, the cost is $40.

Offer #3: Arrangements can be made for longer works such as book manuscripts. (No scripts, please.)

All offers expire March 15, 2017.

Wishing you powerful writing,
Carolyn Wall,

Author, Sweeping Up Glass, Poisoned Pen Press and Random House,
Playing With Matches, a Target Summer Read
The Coffin Maker and The Eighteenth Word, Kindle online
Recipient of Oklahoma Book Award for Fiction and twice recipient
OWFI’s Crème-de-la-Crème.