

OKLAHOMA CITY WRITERS, INC.

June Speaker: John Dwyer

Topic: Writing and Marketing Historical Fiction and Non-Fiction

John J. Dwyer, who grew up in Duncan, has been an adjunct professor of History and Ethics at Southern Nazarene University since 2006. He is the former history chair at Coram Deo Academy, near Dallas.

He is the author of the new Oklahoma Dust Bowl-World War II-based historical novel *Shortgrass* and its upcoming sequel *Mustang*; *The Oklahomans: The Story of Oklahoma and Its People, Vol. 1, Ancient to Statehood*; *The War Between the States: America's Uncivil War*; the upcoming *The Oklahomans: The Story of Oklahoma and Its People, Vol. 2, World War I-Present*; the historical novels *Stonewall* and *Robert E. Lee*; and the novel *When the Bluebonnets Come*. He is the former editor and publisher of the *Dallas/Fort Worth Heritage* newspaper. John is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma and Dallas Theological Seminary.

President's Message

Shelley Pagach

Your speed doesn't matter. Forward is Forward.

I save quotes. I probably have enough to fill my own fortune cookie factory. This quote goes along with a picture of a small sea turtle making his way across of a wet sanding beach. Boy, does it resonate with me. I have often called myself a late bloomer, and I am comfortable with that, now. There was a time I struggled with confidence and self-esteem. I think all writers can relate to that, why else would we pour our hearts out on the page?

If you had told me nine years ago that not only would I be president of Oklahoma City Writers, but I would also be on the board of OWFI, I would call you are crazy, and hide under my bed until the terror from the idea subsided. Yet, here I am. No, I'm not published yet, but I am closer than I was nine years ago. If you are like me and beat yourself up because you haven't "made it yet", STOP IT.

Everyone's journey is different. For some people, it only takes a few years, for the rest of us...well, we'll let you know when we get there. Three steps forward and two steps back, is still a move in the right direction. So, if you find it difficult to sit down and write, rewrite, edit, or whatever; take a moment and think back to where you were nine years ago. I bet you will find you are much further along than you realize. And if you aren't, well maybe now is the time to take another step. You can do it.

Why is a question no animal can ask, because both the question and answers require speech. Have you ever seen an animal shrug?

~~~Tom Wolfe

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## Member News

Jim Logan, a contributing writer to *Oklahoma Today Magazine*, will have two pieces in the upcoming July issue.

*Member news is desperately needed. You can email it to*  
**inezbowman@cox.net**

## Fall Contest

**It's time to get serious about the fall contest. Only about 100 days are left for you to create and polish your entries.**

**If you have any questions about the rules in the Membership Directory, you can call Marcia Preston, the contest chair. Her number is 570-3824 and her email is marcia@marciapreston.com.**

You got to be careful if you don't know where you're going, because you might not get there.

~~~ Yogi Berra

You know, everybody's ignorant, just on different subjects.

~~~ Will Rogers

Few things are harder to put up with than a good example.

~~~ Mark Twain

I heard someone tried the monkeys-on-typewriters bit trying for the plays of W. Shakespeare, but all they got was the collected works of Francis Bacon.

~~~ Bill Hirst

"Denial ain't just a river in Egypt."

~~~ Mark Twain

The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it.

~~~ Oscar Wilde

**Inez Phillips**  
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## **Oklahoma City Writers, Inc.**

**Saturday, June 17, 2017**

**Coffee at 9:45      Meeting at 10:00**

We meet in the St. Luke's Methodist Church at NW 15<sup>th</sup> and Harvey, Oklahoma City.

Enter through the north door by handicap parking and go to Room 130.

**June Speaker:**      *John J. Dwyer*

**Topic:** Writing and Marketing Historical Fiction and Non-Fiction

## May Meeting Notes

Lorelei Sawtelle, Secretary

### Business items~~

- Several people have asked about critique groups. We will have a meeting to get some started. (Maybe at Panera Bread.) Keep an eye on your email for a note from Shelley.
- Treasurer report: Our current balance is \$3128.15.
- At the last board meeting we added a new category in our contest for juvenile books. For more information check the yearbook.
- Think about volunteering for an office or a committee position.
- We will need two delegates for OWFI.
- If you have published or will publish a book this year, consider entering it in the Oklahoma Book Awards Contest. To be eligible to enter, the book must be written by an Oklahoman or take place in Oklahoma. Kansas has a similar award with a slightly later due date.
- Our next contest will be here before we know it. Start getting those entries ready. It is barely more than 100 days away. Not much time when life starts getting in the way. The contest opens August 19, 2017 and closes September 16, 2017 (postmark deadline) or you may bring your entries to the September meeting.

- This month's speaker, Mary Coley** spoke on **page turning techniques**. Page turning techniques are important in every genre. Her recommendations for increasing interest include:
- ~~Suspense is all about anticipation. Pick more than one thing to occupy the reader's attention.
  - ~~Raise the stakes. Make sure the reader knows how important the stakes are. USE this in the 3 line synopsis and on the back of the boo
  - ~~Keep your main character in peril. Use your own phobias and fears for realism.
  - ~~Add a time limit.
  - ~~Make the main character unable to take action. (Immobilized either by physical, mental, or spiritual limitations.)
  - ~~Don't tell your reader everything you know. Keep them in the dark to increase their suspense.
  - ~~Add something dangerous or forbidden. (sexual tension)
  - ~~Add dramatic irony. Something the reader knows but the characters do not.
  - ~~Have the reader and the character anticipate the future. Show them worrying/thinking about the future.
  - ~~Use cliffhangers at the end of all or most chapters.
  - ~~DO NOT FEEL FROZEN BY ALL THE RULES when you're writing your first draft. Do not stop your action flow to follow the rules during your first draft. (Save that for editing.)
  - ~~Keep The Secret—I have to know the secret pretty early on. The secret can change. This may be a memory that the main character is blocking, or an action that they know they've committed but not admitted.
  - ~~Use character traits, including fears or desires. How will the character react?
  - ~~Slow it down—prolong anticipation—not frustration through thoughts, dialogue, and actions. Beta readers and Critique groups can help you figure out when to speed it up or slow it down.
  - ~~One Step Forward, Two Steps Back. Put roadblocks in the way. Car wrecks or other accidents or illnesses.
  - ~~Use Foreshadowing, memories, fears, or something in the setting, a premonition. Harbinger of bad
  - ~~Use Dialogue. Delay a response or fail to answer a question. Let someone interrupt them.
  - ~~Use Word Selection—choose words to set the mood. Don't overuse favorite words. Hard words interrupt the flow.
  - ~~Use Pacing. Short choppy sentences speed things up.
  - ~~Use Setting. Details set the tone, but too many details muddy the water. Weather can create atmosphere and tension. Leaves change color and blow into your face. Open windows, broken mirrors, overturned flower pots.
  - ~~You need a balance of dialog and narration.
  - ~~ALWAYS USE THE ACTIVE VOICE. Limit the "to" verbs. (Also limit these: is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been, has, have, had, do, does, did, shall, will, should, would, may, might, must, can, could)
  - ~~Start where the story needs to start. Feed the pre-history to your reader in little bits.



