
OKLAHOMA CITY WRITERS INC.

President's Message

by Traci Schafer

April Speaker:

Jennifer McMurrain

Topic: Indie Strong - How to be a successful Independent Author

Jennifer McMurrain is a full-time mother, wife, and writer. She has won numerous awards for her short stories and novels, including hitting #1 on the Amazon Best Seller list with her debut novel, *Quail Crossings*, being a 3rd place finalist in the Amazon Breakthrough Novel Awards for her paranormal romance novel, *Winter Song*, and winning the paranormal category of the 2017 IDAs for her romance, *Summer's End*. She has six full length novels and seven book collaboration published. She lives in Bartlesville, Oklahoma with her husband and daughter. You can find more information at www.jennifermcmurrain.com.

HELP NEEDED

President Traci needs a contest chair for the 2018 contest. The task not difficult and just about everybody will be willing to tell you how to do it. Some of them will even be helpful.

Remember—ask not what your writing club can do for you. Ask what you can do for your writing club.

If you want to follow the traditional path to publishing at one of the “big five” publishing houses—Hachette Book Group, HarperCollins, Macmillan Publishers, Penguin Random House (a fairly recent merger between Penguin and Random House), and Simon and Schuster—then put on your thick skin. Querying for a literary agent can be a long and arduous process. Even books that went on to be best-sellers had their share of rejections, so don't let that get you down. Here are examples of some best-sellers, along with the author and number of times they were rejected:

Harry Potter, J.K. Rowling, 12
A Time to Kill, John Grisham, 16
M*A*S*H, Richard Hooker, 21
Dune, Frank Herbert, 23
The Notebook, Nicholas Sparks, 24
The Time Traveler's Wife, Audrey Niffenegger, 25
A Wrinkle in Time, Madeline L'Engle, 26
Carrie, Stephen King, 30
The Thomas Berryman Number, James Patterson, 31
Gone With the Wind, Margaret Mitchell, 38
The Help, Kathryn Stockett, 60
The Eyre Affair, Jasper Fforde, 76
The Lost Get-Back Boogie, James Lee Burke, 111
Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, Robert Pirsig, 121
Chicken Soup for the Soul, Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen, 134
Roots, Alex Haley, 200

See what I mean? What if the authors of Chicken Soup for the Soul would have given up on their 134th rejection? Many people would have quit long before that. Rejection after rejection can really chip away at one's confidence in their abilities. But these days you have other options from small presses to taking matters completely into your own hands with self-publishing, also known as Indie Publishing. This month's speaker, Jennifer McMurrain, will tell us all about how to be Indie Strong! Hope to see you there!

Elected Officers

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Marcia Preston

“Books are the quietest and most constant of friends; they are the most accessible and wisest of counsellors, and the most patient of teachers.”

— Charles William Eliot

OWFI News

The 2018 Spring Conference is Thursday, May 3 through Saturday May 5. The cost is \$200. Depending upon pre-registrations, you may not be able to pay at the door. Registration is ongoing. The costs for extra meetings are:

- ~~\$125 per day
- ~~\$25 Thursday evening
- ~~\$25 for each lunch

If you have any questions when you get to the conference, ask the folks at the OWFI registration desk or anyone wearing an Officer or Volunteer badge. They'll be glad to help.

Conference Events

Buzz sessions are a popular event at every conference. They take place after the Friday night banquet and key-note speaker. These sessions are a great way to mingle with members and share information in a very relaxed, informal atmosphere.

The centerpieces will be on the tables at the conference for the Friday night banquet. You don't have to have a new book this year – or a book at all, we still welcome your centerpiece.

Costume Contest *50 Years of Characters* is the theme for Friday night. Contest winners will be announced Saturday night.

For our Friday "WhoDunt" Buffet luncheon, come dressed in your best sleuthing outfit. While enjoying the fantastic lunch buffet, you'll have the chance to solve some puzzles to be entered for chances at prizes before our speaker begins his presentation.

Please join us for the official OWFI 50th Birthday celebration luncheon. We'll have cake and balloons, but instead of the guests arriving with gifts, guests will have a chance to win donated prizes in a raffle, all while enjoying a delicious lunch buffet.

Member News

Maria Polson Veres's poetry book *Church People* was nominated for the Oklahoma Book Award for poetry.

William Bernhardt was nominated for the Oklahoma Book Award for Fiction for *Justice Returns*

Milton Smith

was pleasantly surprised to have placed third in poetry "Friendly Fire" in the Mid-Oklahoma writer's contest. He received Honorable Mentions for the short short story "A Donkey's Best Burden Ever" and a non-fiction piece about a dog named "Sonny".

March Meeting Notes

A panel discussion by Shelley Pagach, Traci Shafer, Linda Shelby, and Maria Veres moderated by Lorilei Sawtelle spoke on *Everything You Have Always Wanted to Know About Critique Groups but Were Afraid to Ask*.

The purpose of a critique group is to

- exchange manuscripts
- suggest changes for improvement
- meet and exchange ideas
- identify problems

Kinds of feedback—

- grammar
- spelling
- punctuation
- structural changes
- purpose and motivation

- Groups are formed by—
- invitation to an existing group
 - form out of a class
 - genre specific

Why a group can fail—

- personality conflicts
- people move away
- life interferes
- writing goes in different directions
- apathy

Why a group succeeds—

- right dynamics
- shared interests
- diversity can help your group grow
- mix of genres, styles, subjects

A critique group will help you—

- make your writing better
- with honest feedback

Dealing with someone who cannot handle criticism—

- always be constructive
- can ask them to leave
- they will usually fall away

Critique group rules—

- most useful when the group is fluid
- like-minded writers usually have unwritten rules such as:

- be kind
- write something
- show up
- be constructive

Robert Frost said:

~~No tears in the writer, no tears in the reader. No surprise in the writer, no surprise in the reader.

~~Poetry is when an emotion has found its thought and the thought has found words.

~~Modern poets talk against business, poor things, but all of us write for money. Beginners are subjected to trial by market.

April 2018

Inez Phillips
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Oklahoma City Writers, Inc.

Saturday, April 21, 2018

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.

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