
OKLAHOMA CITY WRITERS INC.

May Speaker:

Cecelia Wilson

Topic: **Back to Bremen**

Cecelia Wilson is a Bateville, Arkansas native and has been, for more than a decade, the feature writer for *Search Living* magazine. She has penned articles introducing readers to governors, senators, Grammy-Award-winning musicians, and individuals from all walks of life.

Joining her will be Cabot, Arkansas resident Edith Ropke Harris. Edith's childhood in Nazi Germany is the basis for the book. Cecelia tells the story through Edith's voice as a child. *Back to Bremen* depicts the true, World War II story of Marta Ropke, a common mother who risks everything to see that her children survive the war that has come to her doorstep. The story is a vivid reminder that war creates countless victims, but a mother's love can turn a common woman into a heroine.

Back to Bremen was published on Edith's 81st birthday.

President's Message

by Traci Schafer

The Sandwich Generation

You've heard of the sandwich generation—people sandwiched in between caring for their aging parents and their own children while trying to manage jobs and other responsibilities. They're sandwiched between multiple slices of life, pressing down on them from every direction. A triple decker (or more) life sandwich.

If I had to give the occupation of writing a moniker, it would be the *sandwich occupation*. Let's face it, this occupation, for most, does not afford us a life of luxury. And, even more realistically, often times, does not even pay the bills. Many aspiring writers have yet to make any money at all. But the call is still there, the drive, the passion. So we write. We don't do it because we expect it to provide a life of riches. We do it because we love it. We do it because we can't *not* do it. To *not* do it, would be like not breathing. Even though we don't get paid to do that either, it *must* be done. So, most of us continue to slog to our "paying jobs," squeezing in whatever precious time we can to devote to our true calling. Sandwiched in between all those other sandwich generation things, but adding one more layer, squeezing in the thing that calls to us most—Writing.

So, to all my fellow slices of ham, turkey, tomato, lettuce...may the thing calling to you like lungs call for air someday be the slice of life that pays your bills.

Happy Writing!

Member News

Maria Veres book *Church People* was a finalist in the Oklahoma Book Awards.

Maria has written two guest blog posts for *Writer's Reminder* (published by Carolyn Leonard): "How to Hire a Professional Editor" and "Getting the Most from Your Critique Group." Maria has been accepted as a writer for goals.com.

Elected Officers

President: Traci Ison
Schafer, 937-760-8446,
traci1@hotmail.com
1st VP, Programs: Paulette
Henderson, 274-9192,
paulette@hendersonhouse.net
2nd VP, Membership: Shelley
Pagach, 496-8749,
sepagach.ocwi@gmail.com
Treasurer: Nelda Paden,
833-2611,
neldapaden@aol.com
Secretary: Lorelei Sawtelle,
317-7845,
lsawtelle@cox.net

Appointed Officers
Newsletter: Inez Phillips,
620-7850,
inezbowman.cox.net
Publicity Chair: Peggy Farris,
203-0284, wwillows@pdi.net
Webmaster: Lorelei Sawtelle,
603-8856, lsawtelle@cox.net
Nominating Chair: TBA
Yearbook Chair: Shelley
Pagach, 496-8749,
sepagach.ocwi@gmail.com
Contest Chair: TBA
Historian: Office of the
President
OWFI Reporter: TBA
Workshop Chair: Paulette
Henderson,
274-9192,
paulette@hendersonhouse.net
Audio/Visual: TBA, if needed

OWFI Delegates

Traci Ison Schafer,
937-760-8446,
traci1@hotmail.com
Shelley Pagach, 496-8749,
sepagach.ocwi@gmail.com

OWFI Alternates:

Carolyn Leonard
Marcia Preston

"I have not failed. I've just found
10,000 ways that won't work."

— **Thomas A. Edison**

"I did not attend his funeral, but I sent
a nice letter saying I approved of

OWFI CONTEST WINNERS

CATEGORY 1 – POETRY, UNRHYMED-SHORT

2nd Honorable Mention: "Graveyard of the Blue and
Gray"- **Shelley Anne Richter**

5th Honorable Mention: "Dying Wish"-**Natasha Tinsley**

CATEGORY 2 – POETRY, UNRHYMED-LONG

FIRST PLACE: "Road Trip to the Panhandle" -**Michelle**
Hendry

SECOND PLACE: "Instructions to Reader: Herta Muller
Intertwined in Brain Space with White Space"-**Doris**
Beaton

CATEGORY 3 – POETRY, RHYMED-SHORT

THIRD PLACE: "Blest Be"-**Judith S. Rycroft**

CATEGORY 4 – POETRY, RHYMED-LONG

FIRST PLACE: "The Parting"-**Gail Mattingly**

3rd Honorable Mention: "The Revenge of the Leaves" -
Inez Phillips

CATEGORY 7 - FEATURE ARTICLE: NONFICTION (ANY SUBJECT)

1st Honorable Mention: "The Devil's Music"- **Inez**
Phillips

CATEGORY 8 - BLOG: NONFICTION

FIRST PLACE: "When Your Day Job Sucks You Dry" -
Maria Veres

THIRD PLACE: "A City Girl's Dream" -**Kristin Kaldahl**

CATEGORY 9 - INSPIRATIONAL ARTICLE

2nd Honorable Mention: "What Happened in Mount Ida
Before Zeus Was Born" -**Carolyn Wall**

CATEGORY 14 - YOUNG ADULT SHORT STORY

SECOND PLACE: "I Never Danced for Chairman Mao" -
Carolyn Wall

CATEGORY 18 - PROSE HUMOR: FICTION OR NONFICTION

SECOND PLACE: "The Living Dead" -**Marlys Gallagher**

2nd Honorable Mention: "Learning to Drive" by **Gail**
Mattingly

CATEGORY 20 - PICTURE BOOK

1st Honorable Mention: *Eunice and Kate* -**Mariana**
Llanos

CATEGORY 28 - HORROR NOVEL

THIRD PLACE: *Video Cops* -**Jenova Shelter**

CATEGORY 33

BEST BOOK OF POETRY

Church People -**Maria Veres**

CATEGORY 34

BEST BOOK OF FICTION AWARD

Shiners -**John T. Biggs**

April Minutes

by
Lorelei Sawtelle

V-President of Membership Shelley Pagach called the meeting to order and introduced our guests and new members.

Shelley Pagach introduced our speaker, Jennifer McMurrain.

Topic: Indie Strong: how to be a successful strong independent author.

In order to be Indie Strong, you have to put out a *quality* book.

1. Write the book! Finish the book. Keep putting your hinny in the chair until the book is done. DO IT EVERY DAY. Don't let writer's block get in your way. You can edit junk. You cannot edit a blank page.

2. Edit your book. Get a critique group to help you critique group to help you edit every chapter. Have them look for plot holes. (Develop a thick skin. but find a helpful group.) Read your book out loud. This will help with grammar and typos. Mark errors and correct them later.

3. Hire a professional cover designer. Nothing kills a book like a bad cover.

4. Hire a (reputable) copy editor. You cannot copy edit your own work

5. Format your novel for publication. Avoid all extra blank pages. Get proof copies. Send out beta copies and ARC (Advance Reader Copy) Keep a list of the people who get your ARC's so you can send gentle reminders for them to give you a review.

QUANTITY:

You have to publish four times per year! Short stories, novellas, and novels.

Anthologies sell better if they are partnered. Get it in writing as to expenses and profit splitting.

A novella is 20,000-50,000 words. This can be a sequel or a prequel to your novel.

Have at least 3 books ready to go when you publish your series so your readers don't get disillusioned with waiting.

Series are super-hot and sell really well.

MARKETING:

We are writers not marketers. You must be your own publicist.

a. A user-friendly website, a newsletter, and social media presence.

b. SOCIAL MEDIA—Facebook, Tumblr, Instagram,

~~Make people like you well enough that they'll follow you without cramming your novel down their throat.

~~Twitter is young adult time—Instagram is more for middle school.

~~Decide how much personal information you are willing to give out.

~~use novel excerpts teasers

~~cover reveal—if you aren't excited about your book, no one else will be.

Newsletters—Key to staying in touch with readers.

a. Almost everyone has an email even if they aren't on social media. ONE Page seems to work better. 75% is a high open rate. Most open rates are about 20%. This means that you've sent the email and they've opened it and read it.

Mail Chimp—free but up to 2000 email addresses.

sales, ads, give-aways, promotional give-aways KDP SELECT, Amazon Prime : Free Reads

Amazon is the biggest market for ebooks. Give your book away for free for a few days. 2. pair your give away with an ad. Ads vary in cost.

Newsletters are the new trend in ads.

a. *Fussy librarian, Book Gorilla, Book Bub*, Facebook Ads are good (*Help my Facebook Ads Suck*) Buy this book. Facebook freebies lead to other sales esp on series.

b. \$2.99 to \$3.99 for ebooks.

Book signings and book tours.

a. SWAG is good. Only do a give-away if it has your name on it.

b. The world of networking changes every day. Other writers are not your competition; we are colleagues. Pay it forward.

c. Keep writing,--Quality and Quantity—you never know when your career will take off
Read your five star reviews—DO NOT read the one star review. If someone doesn't like your book, remember: You didn't write it for them. Hang on to the positive comments

a. DON'T give up. You never know when your career is going to take off. Do not let your dream fade. Keep writing. At the end you will have books that you love.

Inez Phillips
6200 N. Quapah Avenue
Oklahoma City, OK 73112

Oklahoma City Writers, Inc.

Saturday, May 19, 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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