

Oklahoma City Writers, Inc.

January 2019

President's Message

Laci Liter

January Speaker

Lou Berney

Topic ~~ *The Writing Process*

Lou Berney is the best-selling author of the novels NOVEMBER ROAD (named one of the best books of 2018 by the Washington Post), THE LONG AND FARAWAY GONE (winner of the Edgar Award), WHIPLASH RIVER, and GUTSHOT STRAIGHT, all from William Morrow. His short fiction has appeared in publications such as THE NEW YORKER, PLOUGHSHARES, and the Pushcart Prize anthology. He teaches in the low-residency MFA program at Oklahoma City University.

About his earlier life, Berney explained on his webpage:

“My two older sisters liked to play school with me, whether I liked it or not, and so I learned to read, whether I liked it or not, at a very early age.

Between the ages of 12 and 19, I was fired from approximately nine different jobs. A representative sampling: newspaper delivery boy (dereliction of duty), grill cook (lying about my age to get the job), apartment complex maintenance man (general incompetence), photo darkroom attendant (dereliction of duty, general incompetence, inappropriate use of darkroom).

Since the age of 19, I have not been fired from a job.”



I am excited to begin 2019 with OCWI! Oklahoma City has taken a hold of my heart through its strongly bound and authentic community. My vision is to carry on that sentiment by bringing our small group of writers and thinkers even closer together. Through new and exciting speakers, collaborative workshops, and other sharing opportunities, I expect 2019 will be a year that continues the OCWI's creative and community growth.

Although I am not native to Oklahoma City, I was born not too far from here along the Red River, but mostly grew up in the Pacific Northwest. There I spent many dark, cold winters on my dad's typewriter where I fell in love with the written word. When I wasn't writing, I was reading. In college, I met my future husband and after some adventures we rooted ourselves in Enid, America.

Our family has since relocated to Oklahoma City, where I am a proud mother of two with one on the way. I spend my free time reading, enjoying the works of my family, friends, colleagues, and inspiring and leading authors. And once again, as always, when I am not reading, or tending to my family, I am still writing.

Thank you for trusting me with the honor of being the 2019 OCWI President. I'm excited to continue the legacy of Traci Schaffer. She has set a high standard for all future leaders.

The New Year begins a new chapter for Oklahoma City Writers, Inc. Collaborations and workshops are in the making that will bring our community closer together, as well as new speakers with fresh voices. Stay tuned to the club's Facebook page for more information.

No matter what you're working on now, I wish you unfettered inspiration for this new page.

Cheers to 2019!

OWFI Conference Scholarships

Wishing you could attend the Oklahoma Writers Federation Inc. 2018 Conference in May? Worried that your budget is busted and it will be impossible for you to go?

Even though this conference is one of the best bargains to be found for writers, we do have help available.

Full (two-day) and partial (one-day) conference scholarships are available for qualifying applicants. Lodging and extra tickets, lunches, or workshops are not included. Membership in OWFI is not required, but suggested. Application for scholarships must be received no later than **March 1**, with notification of selection by March 15.

Famous Authors' Banquet

We want to celebrate you at our Famous Authors Banquet on Friday night. All books published, traditionally or independently, between May 2018 and May 2019 are eligible to be featured if you are an OWFI member. Fill out the form you can find the OWFI website.

April 21st is a hard deadline, so get that information in today!! If you have any questions feel free to e-mail Jennifer McMurray.

The 2019 OWFI Writing Contest is open!

The 2019 OWFI writing contest opened for submissions on December 1, 2018. **Entry fees, online entry forms, and individual manuscripts must be either sent or uploaded on or before February 1, 2019, at 11:59 p.m.**

The annual OWFI contest is only open to paid OWFI members and full-time

students. For information on joining OWFI, visit our [Become a Member page](#).

The contest offers cash prizes in twenty-nine (29) unpublished manuscript categories and trophies in five (5) published book categories. Unpublished manuscript prizes are \$50 for first place, \$35 for second place, and \$20 for third place in each of the twenty-nine (29) categories.

John Biggs to Speak at OWFI

John describes himself as a regional writer whose region is somewhere west of the Twilight Zone. His work blends speculative fiction with a literary style and frequently includes Native American mysticism.

Sixty of John's short stories have been published in magazines and anthologies that vary from literary to young adult speculative fiction and everything in between.

John has published four novels: *Owl Dreams*, *Popsicle Styx*, *Cherokee Ice* and *Shiners* as well as a linked short story collection, *Sacred Alarm Clock*, which includes the OWFI Crème de la Crème winning story, "Twenty Percent Off". His series post-apocalyptic novellas, *Clementine a song for the end of the world* was released in mid 2018.

John will be leading workshop, **Let Magic Realism Work its Spell on Your Fiction**, at the OWFI Spring Conference. The workshop description is:

Human beings are hard wired to believe in the supernatural. Many of us check our daily horoscopes. Some of us have paid money for psychic readings. Most of us have had a lucky charm at one time or another or a ritual we went through before a big event. Even if we don't believe in any of those things 100%, we still let them influence our lives. Hard core realists feel a chill if they hear footsteps where no one is supposed to be. Atheists don't tell friends not to pray for them while wait for the results of a biopsy.

(cont. on page 3)

Elected Officers

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Sandra Soli/ Judith Rycroft

Historian: Office of the President

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Shelley Pagach, 496-8749,

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OWFI Alternates:

Carolyn Leonard

Marcia Preston



Member News

Audrey Streetman's new poetry collection TIME is now available. She said, "I crack open my past looking for heirlooms...." She will have a book signing Thursday, January 17 from 6 to 8 p.m. at 3113 Thorn Ridge Road.

Biggs *(cont. from page 2)*

Everyone has had a life altering event—a missed connection, a chance encounter, a disaster avoided by a matter of seconds—something that seemed more a product of fate than coincidence.

Incorporating a bit of magic into your narrative will make your characters more memorable, especially if you are writing stories that include diverse individuals with cultural norms different from your target audience. Whether you are writing literary fiction like Gabriel Garcia Marquez, science fiction like Robert Heinlein, or westerns like Craig Johnson, your readers will love you for it.



Lou Berney Quotations

"It was two o'clock in the afternoon, or what residents of the French Quarter called the crack of dawn."

"The past was a riptide. That's why, if you had a brain in your head, you didn't go in the water."

"Julianna wondered about that for a moment, how a relationship could be so broken that not even a daughter's cancer couldn't mend it."

Inez Phillips
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Oklahoma City Writers, Inc.

Saturday, January 19, 2019

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.

November Speaker: *Lou Berney*

Topic: *THE WRITING PROCESS*

