



# THE OWL'S HOOT

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Official Newsletter of  
The Ozarks Writers League 501(c)(3)

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***Have you paid  
your 2025  
dues yet?***

***For only \$30.00, you can enjoy  
all that OWL has to offer this  
year!***

**THE OWL 2025 SPRING CONFERENCE WILL BE IN JOPLIN, MISSOURI  
APRIL 25TH AND 26TH!**

**FRIDAY NIGHT FUN BEGINS WITH OPEN MIC AT THE CANDLEWOOD  
SUITES CONFERENCE ROOM**

**SATURDAY CONFERENCE AT JOPLIN PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**Joplin Public Library is located at  
1901 East 20th Street, Joplin, MO 64804**



**OWL is excited to welcome you to  
Joplin, Missouri where we have a  
great conference planned.**

**DOOR PRIZE DONATIONS ARE WELCOME!  
If you have something that you think would  
make a good door prize, please feel free to  
bring it.**



If you would like half a book table, please contact  
Margarite Stever at [margarite95@yahoo.com](mailto:margarite95@yahoo.com) to reserve  
your spot. Book tables may be set up on Friday, April 25th  
from 4:00 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. in the Community Room at the  
Joplin Public Library or Saturday beginning at 9:00 a.m.

Candlewood Suites, located at 3512  
South Rangeline Rd, Joplin, MO 64804, is  
a short drive from the library. See map  
on page 5. Coming from Rangeline, the  
hotel is hiding behind the Econo Lodge.  
To make reservations, call the local  
number: **417-623-9595.**

OWL Room Rate is **\$104.00** a night.

**Be sure to tell them you're with  
Ozarks Writer League (OWL)!**



## OUR SPEAKERS



### Clarissa Willis: Treating Your Writing as a Business.

Treating your writing as a business is essential in today's competitive literary landscape. Many authors approach writing as a passion project, but to succeed, whether in indie publishing or traditional publishing, it is crucial to adopt a professional mindset. This means understanding that writing is not just about creativity; it also involves strategy, marketing, and financial management. By viewing your writing as a business, you can better navigate the complexities of a rapidly evolving industry and position yourself for long-term success.

Clarissa (Chrissy ) Willis is the product of a minister and a drama teacher. She has always had an active imagination and enjoys speaking and writing. She lived in nine states. She was a major corporation's senior vice president of publishing and has been an educator for over 40 years. As a child growing up in Little Rock, Arkansas, she wrote stories and got into trouble for a variety of mishaps, from the attempted murder of her brother, a crime she swears wasn't her fault, to robbing the collection plate at church.

She earned a PhD in early childhood special education from the University of Southern Mississippi. In her professional life, Dr. Willis has provided workshops and keynote addresses in all 50 states and three foreign countries. She is a professor Emeritus from the University of Southern Indiana. Clarissa has written curricula for Frog Street Press, Kaplan Early Learning Company, and Scholastic. She is the author of nineteen teacher resource books, including the award-winning Teaching Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. In addition, she has written four children's books and is working on a memoir. She owns Solander Press, a service company that helps independent authors publish professionally. In her spare time, she serves on the board for Ozark Creative Writers, Between the Pages Writer's Conference, and the Missouri Writer's Guild. She lives with her dogs, George Maurice and Sophie Grace, in the Ozark Mountains of Northwest Arkansas.



### Mary Coley: Building Suspense in Fiction

At the bottom of every story ever told, whether romance, mystery, adventure, horror, humor, dystopian, science fiction, fantasy or any other, is a mystery, and suspense is what carries every mystery. Suspense keeps your reader reading. In this session, Mary will provide tips that will help you build suspense throughout your novel.

Mary Coley believes every story contains an element of mystery - that's what keeps us reading. In her books, expect a body to turn up and suspense to be rampant.

A devoted reader and nature lover, Mary began writing at age 7. Over twenty years ago, after working for years in the communications/education field, she focused on learning the craft of writing fiction. Since then, she has written nine mystery suspense novels, mostly set in Oklahoma and featuring women amateur sleuths, as well as numerous short stories. She has been nominated for the Oklahoma Book Award for Fiction three times, and won the award in 2024. She won the Tony Hillerman Award from New Mexico/Arizona Books in 2018. Coley now lives in Edmond, OK with her husband, Daryl, and the 14th dog in her lifelong list of canine companions, Trixie.

You can find her at [www.marycoley.com](http://www.marycoley.com)





### Max McCoy: Follow the Wild Trail.

Award-winning author Max McCoy will show you how to find your own way to your true writing self as you explore the natural world. Writing about nature isn't just about capturing in words beautiful landscapes; done mindfully, it's a journey of self-discovery in which you can weave a cultural and personal history together to create something uniquely yours. McCoy is the author of more than 20 books, including *Elevations: A Personal Exploration of the Arkansas River*, published by the University Press of Kansas.

Max McCoy is an award-winning author and journalist. A native Kansan, he started his career at the Pittsburg Morning Sun and was soon writing for national magazines. His investigative stories on unsolved murders, serial killers and hate groups have earned him first-place awards, mostly for his work as a writer for the Joplin (Missouri) Globe. His commentary has appeared in the Chicago Tribune, the Asahi Shimbun, the Kansas City Star, the Kansas City Pitch, the Kansas Reflector and other outlets. His novels include three original Indiana Jones adventures for Bantam/Lucasfilm and the novelization of the Steven Spielberg epic miniseries, *Into the West*. A nonfiction book, *Elevations: A Personal Exploration of the Arkansas River*, was named a Kansas Notable Book by the state library. *Elevations* also won the National Outdoor Book Award, in the history/biography category. His weekly opinion essays for the Kansas Reflector news site, [kansasreflector.com](http://kansasreflector.com), have gathered first-place awards from the National Society of Newspapers Editors and the Kansas Press Association. Max lives at Emporia, in east central Kansas.

His website: [maxmccoy.com](http://maxmccoy.com)



### Terry McDermid: What Does Writing Success Look Like to You?

An interactive talk about finding each person's writing path. While comparing to others has some value, we each need our own definition of success. We'll look at where we've been, where we are now, and where we might want to go.

According to her mom, Terry McDermid started telling stories before she could talk. She discovered the writing life in fourth grade when her teacher said she could one day have a book in the library and made her first submission of a short story at age 11. Since then, she's published books, which did end up in libraries; articles; lessons; and blogs. She enjoys teaching classes on writing skills and has created a "Writing Your Life Story" program. In another time, she imagines she would have been a patron of the arts, since she delights in encouraging others to follow their dreams and talents.

# OWL Spring 2025 Conference Schedule

## Friday, April 25th

Open Mic Friday, April 25 at Candlewood Suites conference room. Join us for fun and fellowship.

Friday 7:00 p.m. Open Mic in the hotel conference room.

Bring a sampling of your work that you'd like to read for 5 minutes.

Social hour and fun with other writers following Open Mic!

## Saturday, April 26th

**9:00 a.m.** Library opens. Book table set-up.

**9:15 a.m.** Registration begins. Mingling and socializing.

**9:55 a.m.** Welcome and announcements

**10:00 a.m.** Clarissa Willis: Treating Your Writing as a Business.

**10:55 a.m.** Ten-minute break

**11:05 a.m.** Mary Coley: Building Suspense in Fiction

**12:00 p.m.** Break for lunch

**1:30 p.m.** Max McCoy: Follow the Wild Trail

**2:25 p.m.** Ten-minute break

**2:35 p.m.** Terry McDermid: What Does Writing Success Look Like to You?

**3:30 p.m.** Farewell



*Thank  
you!*

**OWL is looking for a Social Media Chairperson and a Fundraising Chairperson.**

**If you're interested in one or both of these positions, please notify a board member.**

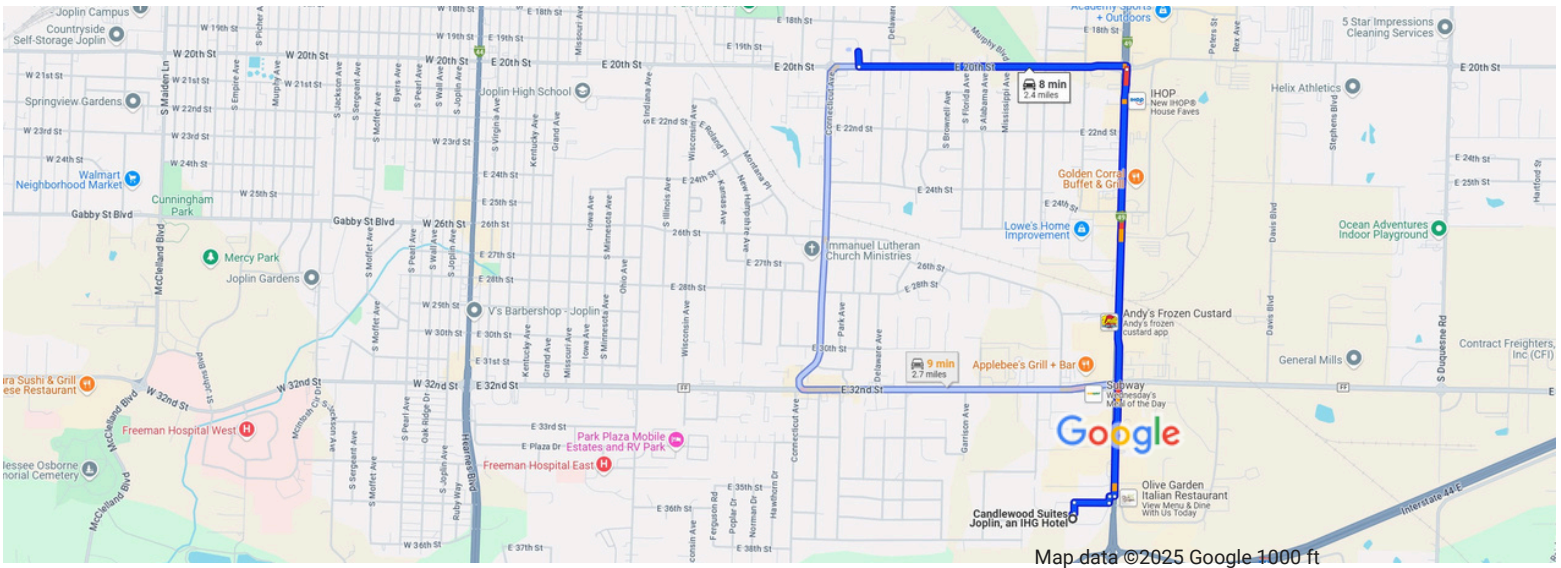
**We'd love to have you join us on the board for this rewarding work!**





## Need directions from the hotel to the library? Here's a handy map.

Candlewood Suites Joplin, an IHG Hotel, 3512 S Rangeline Rd, Joplin, MO 64804 to Joplin Public Library, 1901 E 20th St, Joplin, MO 64804



Candlewood Suites Joplin, an IHG Hotel  
3512 S Rangeline Rd, Joplin, MO 64804

Continue to I-49BL/S Rangeline Rd

- ↑ 1. Head northeast  
1 min(0.2 mi)
- ↩ 2. Turn left  
33 ft
- ↷ 3. Turn right toward E 36th St  
180 ft
- ↩ 4. Turn left onto E 36th St  
0.1 mi
- ↷ 5. Turn right to stay on E 36th St  
105 ft
- ↩ 6. Turn left onto I-49BL/S Rangeline Rd  
79 ft
- Pass by IHOP (on the right in 1.2 mi)
- 4 min(1.3 mi)

Follow E 20th St to your destination

- ↩ 7. Use the left 2 lanes to turn left onto E 20th St  
2 min(0.9 mi)





# 2024 OWL Youth Writing Contest Winners For grades 7-12



## FICTION

- 1st Place** "Fools 22" by Casey King
- 2nd Place** "The Soup" by Ryce Travis
- 3rd Place** "Chronal Catastrophe"  
by Isaac Torrence

### Honorable Mentions

- "Vial Short" by Maria Vang
- "Fame and Misfortune" by Kyler Sartin



## NON FICTION

- 1st Place** "I Remember" by Isaac Torrence
- 2nd Place** "Regrets Wiped Away"  
by Arianna Marie Henson
- 3rd Place** "Who is Your Family?" by Kathy Martinez

## POETRY

- 1st Place** "Yo extrano mi Papa" by Kathy Martinez
- 2nd Place** "Echoes" by Arianna Maria Henson
- 3rd Place** "The Sorrows of a Scarecrow" by Kyler Sartin

### Honorable Mention

- "I Open My Mouth; There Is No Sound" by Lizette Sanchez

