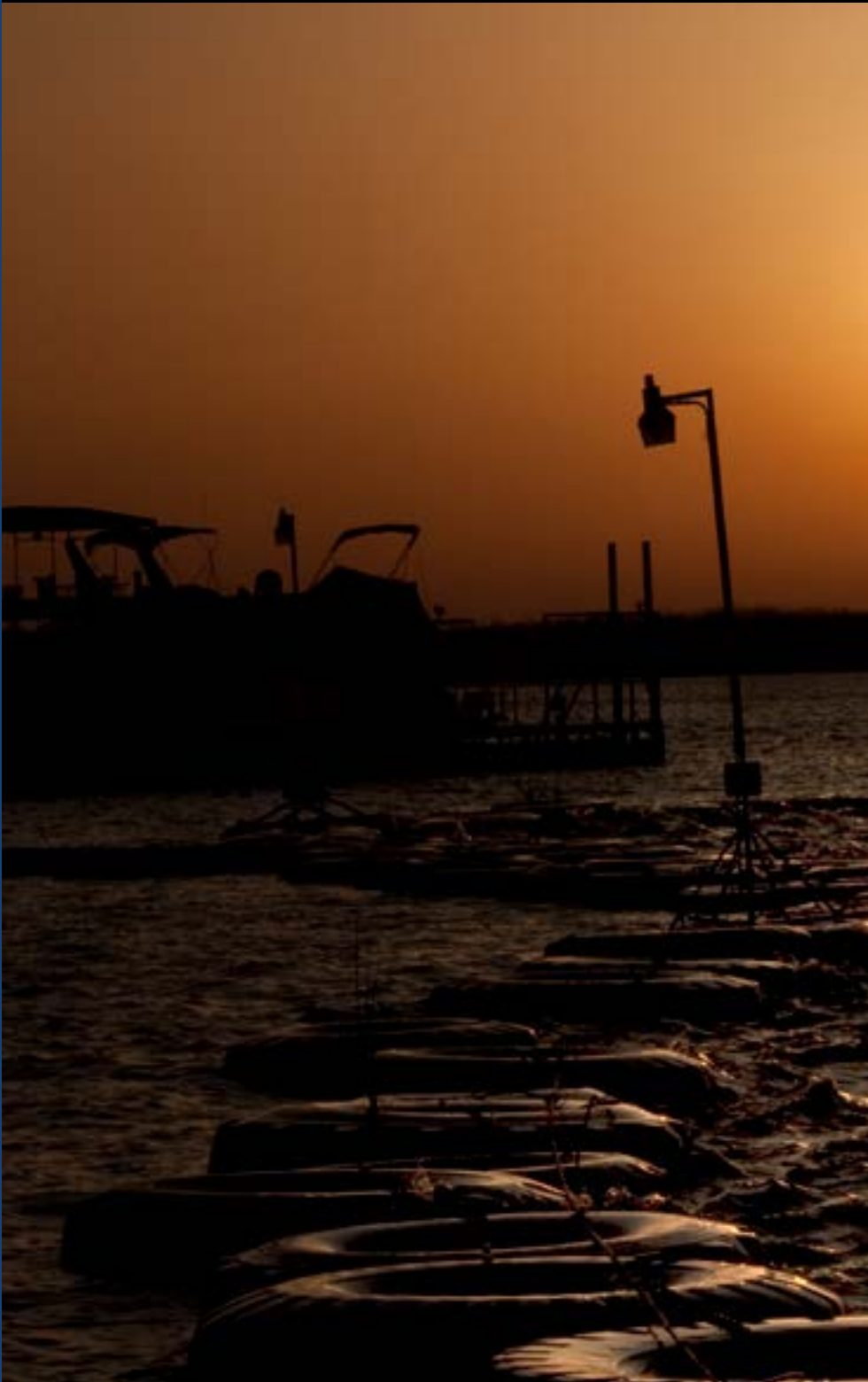


NightScripts



May 2023

Connie Palmer Dodson, Editor



In This Issue

Write On	2
The Write Touch	3
About Your Protagonist	4
April Speaker Followup	5
May Meeting Info	5
Welcome Wagon	5
Cover Prompt Winner	6
Bulletin Board	8
Submission Guidelines	9
Board Members	10
Meeting Info.	10

Writing Prompt:

Does this scene inspire a story for you?

Write a short story of 1000 words or less and get it to me by May 31st 2023. I'll print my favorite in the June issue.

You can also just use the image to spark a scene or a story.

If you submit it to me don't forget to title your story. Put Writing Prompt in the subject line and submit it to: editor@tulsanightwriters.org

WRITE ON

Thinking Like A Villain

Part 2

By our President, Merle Davenport



What motivates a person to commit a crime? This question has perplexed mankind since Cain killed Able. We are no closer to eradicating criminal thinking today than we were back then. The common misconception is that criminals

are simply misguided youth who are the product of a bad environment. “They join a gang to feel part of a family.” “They fall in with the wrong crowd.” “They became a drug dealer to feed the family.” Each of these scenarios has one thing in common. They see the criminal as a victim of society.

As you develop your villain, making him a victim might create more sympathy for him. On the other hand, you may want to consider that “behavior follows thinking.” Discovering how your villain thinks will give you insights on how to portray him or her in your book.

Chronic lying – In order to hide their criminal activities, it is vital that villains lead a double life. Even though they may reveal their crimes to a select few, they hide them from everyone else. Imagine the embezzler who casually discusses his activities. He would be foiled and arrested before the day was out.

Living one way in private and another way in public leads to a mountain of lies. In public, Ted Bundy, the serial killer, was a pleasant person who would do anything to help someone else. He had a positive self-image and was well liked in the community. In private, he was a brutal killer. His lies preserved the positive view that others had of him.

As you create your villain, remember that criminals seldom admit their crimes to others,

even when faced with evidence. They will try to explain away the crime, blame it on others, or

lie so convincingly, it will have the accuser doubting their own words. They have lied so often and so convincingly, that getting at the truth may be impossible.

Self-centeredness – One of the primary characteristics of criminal thinking is placing self-interests as the focal point for all decisions. Some may argue that everyone makes decisions based on their own self-interests. For criminals, everything revolves around them. They don’t need to adjust to the world, the world needs to adjust to them.

Because they are intent on fulfilling their own needs, criminals show an incredible lack of concern for other’s thoughts or feelings. They view others as pawns, as a way to achieve their goals. Some research indicates that those who have a criminal mind can simply switch off any feelings of remorse. On the contrary, most see themselves in a very positive light. “I may have done a few bad things, but I’m really a good person.”

Relationships are often defined by what’s in it for them. Romantic relationships often exist for the pleasure of the villain. In addition, friends and associates are cultivated on the basis of how they can profit from them. If any relationship ceases to fill their needs or desires, they move on to new and exciting connections.



THE WRITE TOUCH

Point of View: Part One

By our Vice President, Kathryn Helstrom



Have you ever heard the term, “head hopping?” If you haven’t, it means jumping from one character’s thoughts to another’s too fast for the reader to follow. The general rule is to stay in one character’s head (Point of View or POV) for the whole scene, or

at least during a definitive part of the scene, in order to keep the reader on track. There is nothing more frustrating for me than trying to figure out who is thinking this? I’m experiencing this right now with a book I’m reading. I am close to chucking the novel into the pile of unfinished books.

So, how do you keep your reader engaged with the story through Point of View?

First you need to understand the difference between the narrator and the POV character. As the author, you are the narrator. A First Person Point of View story reads like a diary or memoir. You and the POV character are one and the same. As Narrator, you don’t interpret what the POV character is thinking, you are the POV character. In the same vein, you don’t know what the other characters are thinking; you can guess by their reactions, but you are not a mind-reader.

First person is a favorite tool of the novice author, because there is only one interpretation of events—that of the POV character. It is also a favorite vehicle for the veteran novelist, as the depth of internal dialog is infinite. More about that later, when we discuss distance.

Second Person POV is what you are reading in this article. The author is addressing the reader directly. It is used almost exclusively for instruction. Using “you” expressly defines Second Person POV.

Third person POV is the most familiar in

fiction. The narrator tells the story through the eyes of the characters. A Third Person Narrator refers to the POV character in the third person: he saw this, she did that. Robert blinked. Sherry nodded.

When there are two or more people interacting with each other or some outside stimulus, you must stay with one character’s thoughts. Bouncing between two or more thought processes is what is known as “head hopping.” The second character’s thoughts can be revealed through dialog or by their physical reaction to what is happening, but you need to stay in the head of your POV character. Facial expressions, body language, and/or verbalization can show what someone is thinking, even if they deny it. Crime and thriller authors become adept at this. Read great stories in this genre to SEE how the characters are portrayed in crisis situations.

There are three basic subsets of the Third Person narrative. Limited Third Person means that the narrator is limited to the information available to the POV character (usually the protagonist). It is similar to First Person in that no other characters’ POVs are used.

In a Close Third Person you focus on the character’s perspective based on their experience, knowledge, and thoughts. This is a subjective interpretation of the developments in the story. You can tell the story through more than one POV character. However, avoid jumping from one character’s thoughts to another’s in the same scene. It confuses the reader unless done extremely well.

Objective Third Person narrative is limited to the external, observable facts and dialog, like a camera. The narrator does not know what any character is thinking about. Few writers use this form.

Next time, we will learn about Omniscient. Meanwhile, check your head hopping.

Happy Writing!

About Your Protagonist

By Rex Griffin

Most of the time, when a writer says they don't know what their story is about, it's because they don't know their protagonist well enough. Regardless of plot-driven or character-driven, your protagonist is the heart of your story. Knowing him/her will solve a lot of a writer's problems.

Who is the main character of the story, your protagonist? What drives him? What does she seek to accomplish? What does he look like? What things are most important to her? What are his standout qualities? Her major insecurities? What is he good at? Where does she suck? What does he lack? What does she need? What does he desire? How does she see the world? His past? Her future? His home? Her family? His country? Other people? Who are the people she relies on? What are they like? Who does he admire? Who does she despise? Who is his hero? Where does she go for solitude? For camaraderie? To celebrate? For solace? Who does he share these with?

People aren't born on Page One. To make your protagonist—and all your main characters—live, they need what's called “backstory.” In other words, they had families and childhoods and things they learned in that childhood, sometimes the wrong things. Lisa Cron, famous writing coach, recommends writing three complete scenes from your protagonist's childhood that gives them a “misbelief” they will struggle with throughout your story. At the very least, fiction writers should envision the protagonist's childhood, where they came from, what they learned, and how they grew up to become the person presented on Page One.

What exactly is this “misbelief?” It's something the protagonist grew to believe in childhood that is, essentially, wrong—and something they will spend the rest of the novel fighting against until they finally see the inescapable truth.

But why should they have a misbelief to struggle with? Because the best characters are conflicted, continually struggling within themselves.

Think of Spock from STAR TREK. Half-human, half-Vulcan, his competing sides of emotion and logic continually battled within him. Perpetual internal conflict is something readers can identify with, because we all are conflicted in some way.

Having your reader bond with your protagon-

ist is vital. Protagonists vary as widely as our imaginations can take us, so it's helpful to narrow them down to four different types.

First, there's the everyman or everywoman. If they're just like us readers, we bond with them immediately, right? No, not exactly. Do you bond with every regular Joe or Jenny you meet? No? But if there is something special about them, something admirable, you are attracted to that, aren't you? James Scott Bell talks of protagonists having, “Grit, Wit, and It,” meaning perseverance, a sense of humor, or an alluring charm—all admirable qualities. Are you more drawn to the guy who pops the button on his pants and says, “I've got to go home and change,” or to the one who says, “I knew I shouldn't have eaten that last donut!”? Show us the admirable quality in your everyman, give us something to look up to in your everywoman, something inviting, and your reader will bond with them.

The second kind of protagonist is the genuine hero, someone who has always done big things, carried high responsibilities, or faced great danger. People like that are hard for an average guy like me to connect with—unless there is something about him or her that makes him/her like everybody else. What's ordinary about your hero? Does your Superman step in a wad of chewing gum every time he lands? I knew a guy that moonlighted as one of these “professional” wrestlers. He was a huge guy, about 6'3” by 285, big around the middle but not really fat. Funny as he could be, he was one of those “bad guys”, the kind that wears a mask that the wrestling fans hiss and boo. But he was terrified of spiders. He'd scream and run away like a little girl when he saw one. Your reader can connect with a hero that has fears, gripes, and problems like everybody else.

The third kind of protagonist is the dark, or damaged protagonist; somebody—or even some Thing—that is burdened, wounded, or suffering in some way. S/he may be human, semi-human, or non-human, but there is some burden they carry. The trick with the dark protagonist is that they yearn to be “normal.” Fighting to overcome that kind of burden will have readers pouring out their hearts to help.

(Continued on page 7)

Welcome Wagon

James R. Sybrant, Tulsa?
Michelle Franchino, Tulsa

Give a big Howdy to our new members.



April Meeting Followup

By Connie Dodson



Mike Swain Writing Out of the Cave

Mike's discussion of "Writing Out of the Cave," inspired by Plato's "The Cave," discussed the idea that a writer should experience life, either personally or vicariously, so he/she can produce an honest, genuine, and interesting tale.

It was an engaging discussion that challenged perceptions based on what is visible in a scene versus what is going on behind the scenes. The unseen if realized can change our perception.

The discussion had many thinking about the impressions they have of their characters and considering the unscene influences that leave lasting impressions on their story and our characters.

May Meeting Information

By Connie Dodson

Tuesday **May 16, 2023**

Will be honoring our members that won recognition at the OWFI Conference early this month. Winners will have the opportunity to read from their work.

COVER PROMPT WINNER

URBAN DECAY

BY JAMES R SYBRANT

The faded door of the abandoned house was an invitation for exploration. However, the thick vines growing there barred the way, as if in warning to stay out. Still, it made him wonder what treasure might've been left behind, hidden away in secret places, or out in the open for all to see. Or perhaps the floors and wall were bare, with nothing to tell about the people who once lived there.

With his camera hanging around his neck, and camera bag from his shoulder, he walked around the outside of the house. He hoped there would be an easy ingress that would allow him passage into the dark interior. The windows were grimy with years of unwashed dirt and pollen; small vines crisscrossed the panes, concealing the interior as much as the door.

As he made his way around the house, he was forced away by fallen limbs, but it gave him a new perspective. He noticed how much taller it looked and wondered if there was a second story. There were many limbs on the roof, even a tree leaning on the shingles, but they seemed to be unbroken. He hoped that meant moisture hadn't invaded and ruined anything that might be inside.

Once he made it to the backyard he came to a large, enclosed porch. The flimsy screen-door hung askew, the hinges having rusted and losing their grip.

He took a picture, after all that was why he was there; urban decay. It wasn't his usual subject, but after seeing so many photos of abandoned buildings online, he thought it would be an interesting change.

Gingerly he pulled on the screen-door, hoping it wouldn't fall off and strike him, it opened and stayed attached to the frame. He gently tested the painted wooden floor, fearing it would give way under his weight. The boards held and he moved into the shadowy space. At one end pots grew nothing but dead plants, at the other end was a set of wicker furniture, covered in cobwebs like old lace. The chairs looked sturdy, but he knew they would crumble under any pressure. Still, he thought it would make a good photo, so he set up his tripod and focused on the scene. That was when he noticed a book laying

concealed on one of the chairs. That little thing gave him hope there would be more to see inside.

After the photo was taken, he went to the back door, hesitant to try the knob. If it was locked, he would've wasted the day for only a few photos of little note. Taking a deep breath, reaching out his hand, he clutched the knob and turned it; nothing happened. His heart sunk, but he turned it the other way, and with a squeal, it moved. The latch retracted, he pushed the door inward, hinges popping from misuse. He could see little in the dim light, but stepped in and found he was in the kitchen.

It was as if he'd been transported back to the 1950's. There was a pink Formica table in the middle, surrounded by cabinets, dark with age, a soft blue colored refrigerator and stove. Sitting on a burner was an old metal percolator, waiting to brew coffee. There was little on the counter, canisters of pale yellow and a pink toaster.

He set up his tripod and searched for a composition that would best encompass the feel of the old kitchen. Although there was a window at each end of the room it was dark, he had a flash, but thought a long exposer would convey the mood better. After the first shot, he decided to move around the room, taking a few more from different angles. He checked the display to see what he'd captured and was satisfied with what he saw.

Leaving the kitchen, he found he was in the dining-room. To his amazement, the table was set with plates and glasses; with candles in the middle waiting to be lit. A sideboard, a hutch and small bar in the corner waited for use. Everything was covered in dust and draped with cobwebs. He set about taking pictures, reviewing them until he was satisfied.

He walked over to a side door that was closed, grabbing the knob, he pulled the door open. It looked to be a den, or living-room, with a fireplace dominating the far wall. Setting around the room there was a sofa, plump chairs and a coffee table.

As he crossed the threshold everything changed. The lights came on, flames crackled in the fireplace, and he saw an old woman sitting in one of the chairs. (Continued on page 7)

Urban Decay (continued from pg 6)

“There you are. Be a dear and add more wood to the fire.”

He jumped back, fear speeding his heartbeat, eyes wide. The room was back to the way it was when he'd opened the door; dark and dusty. He took a few steps back, pointing his camera in the room, with the flash on, he took a photo. He reviewed the shot and found it to be as he saw it before he step through.

He steadied himself and stepped in once more.

“There you are. Be a dear and add more wood

to the fire,” she repeated.

‘Just an echo,’ he thought. He'd heard of residual hauntings, but never thought they were real.

He stepped out and back in to test this idea.

“There you are. Be a dear and add more wood to the fire.”

He pulled up his camera and aimed it at her, taking a shot. The preview was the same, an old dusty room, devoid of the old woman.

“Don't just stand there, I'm cold.”

That was enough for him, he ran from the house. ‘I'm sticking to wildlife and landscapes.’

About Your Protagonist (Continued from page 4)

Whether alcoholic or werewolf, readers will be side-by-side pulling for a dark protagonist that yearns to be better for themselves or for others, to overcome the burden, wound, or suffering that plagues them. If they have hope, so will your reader.

A fourth kind of protagonist is the shady protagonist, the person who pushes the edges, or even goes over the line, of what is legal or moral. How do you get an honest, law-abiding reader to empathize with someone who wrongs others? By making them aware what they do is wrong. A perfect example is Dexter, from the old TV series. He's a serial killer, but he knows he's a serial killer, and he knows it's wrong. So he only kills other serial killers. (You would think the pool of victims would dry up—I mean, how many serial killers can there be in one place? But it is Florida, so . . .) By being self-aware the Shady Protagonist becomes easier to sympathize with, especially if, like the Dark Protagonist, he yearns to change.

As people, we connect with others, and with protagonists, because we see something in them we see or want to see in ourselves, even if they're not like us at all. What readers and protagonist share is Heart. Link them together and readers will relish the experience.

Another thing to consider for your protagonist is “Layering.” That merely means layering one problem on top of another. A protagonist will have a Plot Problem, the problem that she has to solve to answer the story question. Add to that a secondary, Personal Problem for the protagonist, a problem any of us flawed human beings might have. Maybe he struggles with drug or alcohol addiction. Maybe she has physical limitations or liabilities. Maybe he can't handle his money. Maybe she's in the middle of a messy

divorce, or has a gambling problem, or just can't handle people. Finally, stick them with a Petty Problem, like being inept with electronics, or collecting parking tickets, or clothes that just don't fit right. If you can get other characters in the story to intensify these Plot, Personal, and/or Petty problems for your protagonist, it will add another layer of fascination and humanity to your protagonist.

It is vitally important to have a fully developed person as your protagonist. You should also flesh out your other major characters with a backstory, and even your important minor ones. You don't have to tell the reader what their backstories are, but you, the author, should know them to understand your characters.

Always bear in mind the more work you put in, the better your story will be.

The second most important character that drives your story is the person who stands in the way of the protagonist—the antagonist! What is his motivation? What problems does she create for the protagonist? How is he better, smarter, more capable, or more dangerous than the protagonist? How is she compelling, or likable? You can apply all the questions about the protagonist to the antagonist as well. And remember, antagonists are the heroes of their own story. Even if they're villainous, by their own set of morals they are doing the right thing. And some antagonists are not villains, merely people doing their job, even if that job is at cross-purposes with the protagonist.

Protagonist, antagonists, and all your characters are people. Each one has his/her own looks, attitudes, ideas, background, quirks, etc. They have ties to one another, and should be the first and most essential founding blocks of your story.

BULLETIN BOARD

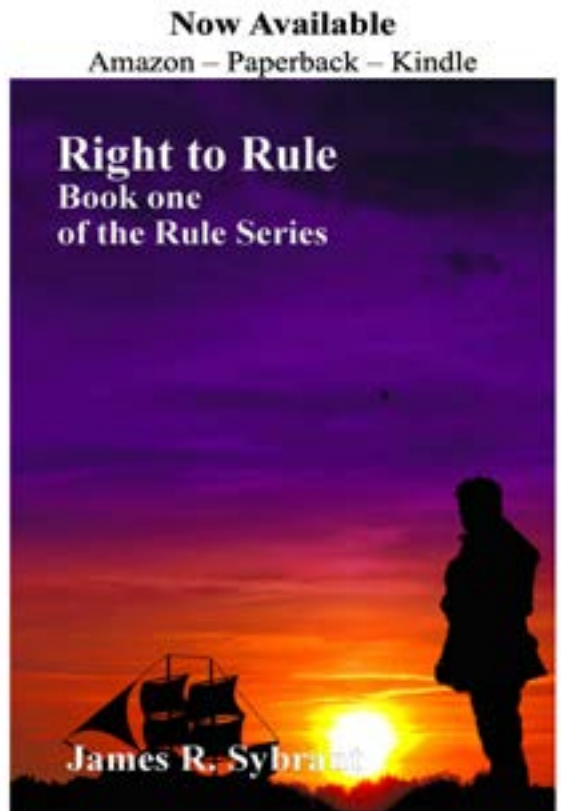


[Available Here on Amazon
https://a.co/d/7De1wBK](https://a.co/d/7De1wBK)

EDITING SERVICES

- * **Proofreading**
- * **Copy Editing**
- * **Developmental Editing**
- * **Summary**

Contact Julie Kimmel-Harbaugh
juliekh314@gmail.com
 918-720-4866 (cell)



Author of "My Universe: A Collection Of Short Stories"

History research specializing in people and personalities



Award-winning Journalist
 Speaker • Researcher • Author

Mary Lou Montgomery

www.maryloumontgomery.com

Email to begin the conversation:
montgomery.editor@yahoo.com

NightScripts Submission Guidelines and Wants

From Members: Currently accepting ads (for books and services), articles, short stories (100 - 200 words), poetry, and event information.

Submit To: editor@tulsanightwriters.org
 Deadline: 5th of the Month
 Specifications: Please format your text as follows:
 Times New Roman, 12 pt
 Single Spaced
 Attach as a doc or pages
 Attach graphics and / or photographs

From Non-Members: Paid Ad Space Available,
 contact editor@tulsanightwriters.org

“First forget inspiration.
 Habit is more dependable.
 Habit will sustain you whether
 you’re inspired or not.
 Habit will help you finish and
 polish your stories. Inspi-
 ration won’t. Habit is per-
 sistence in practice.”

Octavia Butler

Word Search

G	F	T	E	D	I	T	B	H	B
D	E	O	W	W	L	T	S	V	M
A	Y	L	R	X	F	I	H	O	Z
E	X	P	C	A	L	U	D	L	X
R	D	X	R	B	I	I	J	N	R
E	F	D	U	Y	F	H	C	O	E
H	P	P	S	Y	C	R	Y	G	W
E	L	A	B	O	R	A	T	E	I
E	S	O	P	M	O	C	M	P	T
T	P	I	R	C	S	F	J	G	E

COMPOSE
 DRAFT
 EDIT
 ELABORATE
 MODIFY

PLOT
 PUBLISH
 READ
 REWRITE
 SCRIPT



[Member Group](#)

[Community Page](#)

2023 TNW Board & Meeting Information

Merle Davenport
President
President@tulsanightwriters.org



Tulsa NightWriters will meet at 7 p.m. Tuesday, May 16, 2023,

location information below.

Kathryn Helstrom
Vice President
VicePresident@tulsanightwriters.org



May Speaker

There will be no speaker in May.
We will honor OWFI winners.
See Page 4 for more details.

Bill Wetterman
Treasurer
treasurer@tulsanightwriters.org



Directions

Take the I-244 to downtown Tulsa, and exit on Detroit. If you are coming from the west, the exit for the OSU campus is on the LEFT.

From Detroit Ave., turn right onto JH Franklin Road. You will see the Auditorium and Conference Center (North Hall) on the left. You can park in Lot E (first parking lot on left), or across the street in Lot D. We meet in Room 153. Look for signs posted at both entrances.

Parking is free and open to the public. It is a very short walk, and handicapped accessible. Campus security patrols the parking lots regularly.

Carolyn Steele
Hospitality Director
hospitality@tulsanightwriters.org



Ana Maddox
Communications Director
communications@tulsanightwriters.org



Connie Palmer Dodson
Newsletter editor
Newsletter Email:
editor@tulsanightwriters.org
Personal Email:
write.conniepalmer@gmail.com

