

Norman Galaxy of Writers

Formed in March, 1969

Affiliated with
Oklahoma Writers Federation, Inc.

WriteLine

NOVEMBER 10TH MEETING

Michael Mares “Would we be better off buying a Lottery Ticket?”

Saturday, November 10th, 2012; 10 am—noon
Norman Public Library, Room A-B

The chances of having a spec screenplay become a finished movie are near zero. Why do people write screenplays?



Michael A. Mares, PhD, is director of the Sam Noble Museum and professor of biology at the University of Oklahoma. He has a rodent, a bat, and a parasite named after him. He is a world authority on the natural history of desert rodents and desert rodent evolution, and is responsible for the discovery of many species new to science. And he is a screenwriter too.

In April 2011, Mares won the Beverly Hills Film Festival Golden Palm Award for Best Screenplay for his screenplay, *God's Architect*, selected from 802 feature-length scripts. In May 2011, his script, *Open Borders*, won first place at the Los Angeles Movie Awards competition. Both screenplays have won additional awards in competitions and *God's Architect* is currently under option in Hollywood.

Under Mares' leadership, and after raising more than \$45 million dollars, the Sam Noble Museum was built and opened in 2000. Mares was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and graduated from UNM in Biology. He received an MS in Biology from Fort Hays Kansas State University and a PhD in Zoology from the University of Texas at Austin. He is an evolutionary biologist, a systematist, an explorer for unknown species of mammals, and an expert in museums.

Mares has been a Fulbright Scholar, a Ford Foundation Fellow, and a National Chicano Fellow and has served on many national committees, as well as the Congressional Commission on the Future of the Smithsonian Institution. He has published 12 books and more than 200 scientific papers.

—Andrew Horton, VP-Program

SPEAKER NOTES BY KATE BROWN

William Bernhardt on “Seven Secrets”

Award winning author, William Bernhardt, has written over twenty-nine books thus far in his career, with another due to release in 2013. He is a national bestseller, and has sold over 10 million books world-wide.



In his “Seven Secrets to the Bestselling Books of All Time” presentation to the Norman Galaxy of Writers, Bernhardt gave practical advice to help stimulate writing by analyzing ten great works of fiction: *Gone with the Wind* (1936), *Peyton Place* (1956), *Valley of the Dolls* (1966), *The Godfather* (1969), *The Exorcist* (1981), *Jaws* (1974), *Hunt for Red October* (1984), *The Firm* (1991), *Bridges of Madison County* (1992), *The Da Vinci Code* (2003).

Bernhardt claimed that each one of these great works of literature contained seven elements, “seven secrets” that made them the best of their time. He outlined and explained each secret in detail, noting the following:

1. Extreme Readability. Does your work have that “can't put it down” factor? When a writer spends a lot of time writing, editing, and revising, it always shows. You want “smooth writing that's engaging.” Said Bernhardt.

2. Strange New Worlds. Strange new worlds doesn't necessarily mean fantasy. This also includes “introducing people to secret societies, or revealing things behind closed doors. Readers like feeling privileged to knowing ‘secrets’ and extreme things happening to keep the ‘secrets’ safe” said Bernhardt. A good example of a book with this element is *Da Vinci Code*, which is the most bestselling book on record, at 81 million copies.

3. Controversy. Don't be afraid of controversy. “If one person is protesting your book, you can bet five more people will be buying it just to see what the fuss is about. Characters and plot alike can both be controversial.” An example of this would be the character of Scarlett O'Hara from *Gone with the Wind*. She was not a likable person at first. She was spoiled and manipulative, but she evolves and readers relate to her hardships. “To keep readers engaged in your book, they have to relate to it somehow.

Bill Bernhardt, cont. on page 3

MARKETS BY ANN CHAMPEAU

WORLD HISTORY

Calliope Magazine is a publication covering world history (East/West) for 9 to 14 year olds. The editors want a lively, original approach to whatever subject you choose to write about, but be aware that each issue is **theme related**. Also, they work nearly a year ahead so to query for the issue for February, 2014, the query must be dated no later than January 30, 2013.

Writers may send as many queries for one issue as he or she wishes, but each query must have a separate cover letter, outline, bibliography, and self-addressed stamped envelope.

Feature articles are 700-800 words. Supplemental nonfiction articles are 300-600 words related directly and indirectly to the theme. Editors like little-known information but encourage writers not to overlook the obvious. Fiction can be up to 800 words which includes the authentic historical and biographical fiction, adventure, retold legends, relating to the theme. Activities must not be over 700 words. This includes crafts, recipes, woodworking, or any other interesting projects that can be done either by children alone or with adult supervision. Sketches and description of how activity relates to the theme should accompany queries. Puzzles and games include crossword and other word puzzles using the vocabulary of the issue's theme. Mazes and picture puzzles that relate to the theme are welcome. Photographs considered for publication must relate to a specific theme. Writers are encouraged to submit photos with their query or article. They buy one-time use.

Mail queries to: Editorial Department, Cobblestone Publishing, Attn: Rosalie Baker, 30 Grove Street, Suite C, Peterborough, NH 03458

—Ann Champeau, Markets

MINUTES OF OCT. 13, 2012—SHERRY BYNUM

October 13, 2012 Minutes

Norman Galaxy of Writers met on October 13, 2012 at the University Lutheran Church at 10:00 A. M.

President, Kathleen Park, called the meeting to order at approximately 10:02 A.M.

Galaxy welcomed our guests, including our speaker, William Bernhardt.

The **Minutes** and the **Treasurer's Report** were approved as printed in the *WriteLine*.

Friday Writers critique group meets each Friday morning at the Norman Senior Center, 329 S. Peters. The group provides suggestions for improvement on manuscript pages presented. Mary Payne is leader.

Marilyn Fleer reported that the November meeting location is TBA (Public Library, Room A-B).

WORKSHOP REVIEW BY MARY PAYNE

The NOSE Knows

Smells of mint, thyme, sage and other herbs delighted the noses of participants in a recent Galaxy workshop on using the five senses, held October 6, 2012. Instructor Sherry Bynum brought plastic bags of spices and other goodies from her collection for students to test their powers of description. In addition to the sense of smell (and taste), students used sight, hearing and touch to help describe a kerosene lantern, a tin lunchbox, an old canning jar, a yarn doll, as well as musical instruments. She also brought pairs of shoes to differentiate the sound each made on the floor.



Students were asked to analyze excerpts of two descriptive novels, picking out the adjectives and verbs that could be ascertained from using the five senses. The two books were *A Dog Called Kitty* by Bill Wallace and *Step on a Crack* by James Patterson. She also suggested *Winter Prey* by John Sandford and *Bodily Harm* by Robert Dugoni.

Wallace is a master using the five senses. Here are two sentences about a cat: “First thing you know, he shot under Mama’s dress and started climbing. Mama went to screaming and jumping up and down like frog legs fryin’ in a pan.” How descriptive is that!

Authors must know their audience. If readers are youthful, they may not know who June Cleaver is. Authors are to inform, educate and delight—using all five senses to place the reader in the scenes with the characters. Allow them to smell the mint and they’ll keep coming back for more.

Thanks to Sherry Bynum for a fantastic class!

—Mary Payne, Reviewer

Ruth Castillo, **Contest** Chair, reminded members that November 10th is the deadline for the **Norman Galaxy of Writers’ 2012 Contest**.

Old Business: Sherry Bynum reported on the results of the task force inquiry into the pros and cons of becoming a 501 (c) 3 organization. The committee’s findings indicate that the cost would be prohibitive for our NGW club.

New Business: None reported

Member Moments were postponed.

Speaker: Andrew Horton, Program Chair, introduced our guest speaker William Bernhardt, “10 Best Selling Novels of All Time.”

Meeting was adjourned.

Sherry Bynum, Secretary

BRAG SHEET**Sales, Publications and Acceptances**

ROBERT FERRIER: PUBLISHED: Front Page Feature Article, "There Were No Cheap Seats on that Day in '57," *Norman Transcript*, November 23, 2012.

PUBLISHED: Cover Photograph, "Diagnosis in Stasis," *Blood and Thunder Journal*, University of Oklahoma College of Medicine, (November, 2012).

Contests

JOCELYN PEDERSEN: WON: Award of Excellence for **Best Feature** with a Cooperative Principle from *Oklahoma Living Magazine*. First Annual OKIES Awards. **WON:** Award of Excellence for **Best Lead** from *Oklahoma Living Magazine*. First Annual OKIES Awards.

Professional Activities

STAN SOLLOWAY: PUBLISHED: COLUMNS: Talked about our "Silliman on Sports" 10th Anniversary on Triangle Radio Network (Georgia) with Brian Shirley. Did the same on Humor Outcast Radio from Pennsylvania with Donna Cavanaugh. Took 4th Place in Funniest Person in Okla. (10/3/12). Entertained at the Riverwind (Arbor House Employees) (10/9/12). Entertained at the Woodward Moose (10/20/12). Entertained at the Shawnee Lions Fundraiser (10/25/12). See our latest columns at www.sillimanonsports.com

Member News**Club News**

Galaxy has a Facebook "Group" and "Community Page." Post what you learned from speakers at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Norman-Galaxy-of-Writers/270487429638795>

NGW 2012 Writing Contest Deadline: Nov. 10**CATEGORIES**

Only one entry per Category per member:

Nonfiction Article: 1,500 words maximum

Short Story (Fiction): 2,000 words maximum

Rhymed Poetry: Any length

Unrhymed Poetry: Any length

Nostalgic Essay (Personal): 1,500 words maximum

Children's Fiction (for readers 8-12 years of age): 1,000 words maximum

Bernhardt, 7 Secrets, cont.

would be a mistake, because the trend could be over by the time you finish. When you care, others will care too," he emphasized.

Bernhardt is also offering \$100 off his five day seminar which starts November 12th. For the discount, he must be contacted directly at: (405) 683-2881. See his website page, http://www.williambernhardt.com/small_group_seminars.php

—Kate Brown, Speaker Notes

Bernhardt, 7 Secrets, cont.

You want readers to think 'I know how that feels' or 'that could happen to me.'" Explained Bernhardt.

4. Suspense: Keep readers turning pages. To do that, you need to put everything on the line with "high stakes and big consequences". Your readers have to understand and care about what is happening. "If they don't care, then nothing that happens really matters," said Bernhardt.

5. The Same but Different: "Agents and Editors always say this" claims Bernhardt. When you write a story, it can be "the same" in the form of genre, but it needs to have "a uniqueness, a different spin on the story or a character, something that's not been seen before," Bernhardt notes. An example of this was *The Firm*. "It's *LA Law* meets *Godfather*," said Bernhardt.

6. Think Big! You want larger than life situations. "Don't be afraid to push it to the extreme! Unique characters, high stakes against all odds, and everything is at risk!" Explained Bernhardt, excitedly.

7. Emotional Impact: Load up on emotional content. "Give readers reasons to care. Everyone loves an underdog, and we want them to win – we care about what happens." Said Bernhardt. "People talk about what they care about, and word of mouth is your greatest selling point."

In conclusion, Bernhardt said "always write about something you care about. Don't follow trends, that

TREASURER'S REPORT - LINDA BASINGER

PREVIOUS BALANCE: 9/17/2012 **\$ 837.21**

DEPOSITS:

Workshop by Sherry Bynum	\$ 50.00
Joan Smith 2013 Galaxy & OWFI dues	30.00
Helen Duchon 2013 Galaxy & OWFI dues	30.00
Neal Huffaker 2013 Galaxy & OWFI dues	30.00
Kathleen Park 2013 Galaxy & OWFI dues	30.00
Sherry Bynum 2013 Galaxy & OWFI dues	30.00
Tom Barczak 2013 Galaxy & OWFI dues	30.00
Cindy Noble 2013 Galaxy & OWFI dues	30.00
Barbara Nesbitt 2013 Galaxy & OWFI dues	30.00
Emilia Buchanan 2013 Galaxy & OWFI dues	30.00
Marilyn Fleeer 2013 Galaxy & OWFI dues	15.00
Robert Ferrier 2013 Galaxy & OWFI dues	30.00
Marsha Ferrier 2013 Galaxy	15.00
Dewey Coffman 2013 Galaxy & OWFI dues	35.00
+Total Deposits	\$ 450.00

EXPENSES:

SPEAKER: William Bernhardt (Ck #1031)	25.00
Cash refund: Coffman dues overpayment	5.00
WriteIne Expenses (Ck#1030)	14.39
OWFI @ \$15 ea for 12 members* (Ck #1032)	180.00
-Total Expenses	\$ 224.39

CURRENT BALANCE: 10/27/2012 **\$ 1,062.82**

*J. Smith, Duchon, Huffaker, Noble, Park, Sherry Bynum, Barczak, Nesbitt, Buchanan, Coffman, R. Ferrier, Fleeer @ \$15 each

MEMBER MOMENTS

Member Moments

Novelists Linda Basinger and Sherry Bynum will share their impressions of the Killer Nashville Conference they attended in August. We put off their report last month, but cannot wait any longer. These two suspense/thriller writers learned about deadly ways and means to bump off a character or two, make the reader wait for it . . . wait for it . . . wait for it—and practically die of the building suspense.

They said this conference was even better than last year's, which they talked about for weeks. You'll want to hear why.

—Kathleen Park, President



Linda Basinger



Sherry Bynum



TO:

Michael Mares
 "Chances of a Spec Screen-play becoming a movie?"
 November 10th, 2012; 10 am—noon
 University Lutheran Church,
 914 Elm Ave., Norman, OK



CHANGES IN ADDRESS REQUESTED

@ Norman Galaxy of Writers, 2012

2013 Dues for Galaxy are \$15
 2013 Dues for OWFI are \$15
 Mail to Linda Basinger, Treasurer
 P.O. Box 517
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