

## All About the Conference

We're glad your path has led you OWFI, and we can't wait to see you at our 48<sup>th</sup> annual conference in May.

We're bringing back some favorite speakers who inspired us at previous conferences, including bestselling author Steven James as keynote. We'll also have several first-time OWFI presenters and a few surprises. Whether you're a brand-new writer or an experienced professional, you'll find many opportunities to learn, network, and grow in your craft.

- **Conference Registration** begins Thursday at 5:00pm. The registration desk will also be open Friday and Saturday mornings. We accept walk-in registrations, but we recommend signing up in advance.
- **Thursday Evening Pre-Con.** Acclaimed author Christine Taylor-Butler returns to OWFI to lead our pre-con session, "The Writer's Journey: What's in Your Toolbox?" An extra charge applies. Full-time students may attend this session free as space allows.
- **Friday and Saturday: Breakout Sessions, Pitches, and More!** From marketing and legal issues to poetry, world building, and screenplays, we'll offer more than 35 sessions covering just about every aspect of writing. Some presentations are geared toward beginners and others target experienced writers, but you're welcome to attend any session you want. Our faculty members are experienced authors and publishing professionals who will be available throughout the conference to network with you.
- Got a manuscript that needs a home? Shop it to agents, publishers and editors during the **pitch sessions**. If your manuscript isn't quite there yet, get an expert critique from our **book doctor**, Mari Farthing. Between sessions, check out our **bookstore** or support OWFI scholarships by **bidding** on the gift baskets displayed in the atrium.
- **Have Lunch with Bestselling Authors.** Oklahoma author and teacher Bill Bernhardt will present our Friday lunch workshop, and keynoter Steven James will lead the Saturday lunch workshop. You must register for the box lunch workshops in advance. Grab your tickets early before they're gone.  
Lunch is also an ideal time to get to know our speakers. There are several restaurants within walking distance of the hotel. Find a speaker and a few friends, and enjoy the fellowship.
- **Got Book? Get Promoted.** Authors have several ways to promote their work at OWFI. Make and donate a table centerpiece that relates to your book, sell your work in our bookstore, sign copies for fans at the autograph party, and see your name in lights at our Famous Authors Banquet on Friday. Check our website or elsewhere in this newsletter for more details about these opportunities.

*By OWFI 2016 Conference Chair Maria Veres*

### What to Wear

- There's no dress code, but usually business casual clothing.
- The Friday night banquet features a costume contest. If you'd rather not enter, slacks, a dress, or even nice jeans are OK.
- Attire for the Saturday night banquet is usually fancier. If you aren't into formal wear, business casual clothing is fine, too.

### What to Bring

- Business cards, if you have them.
- Notebook and pen, for taking notes during the sessions. Laptops are welcome too, but many rooms don't have accessible outlets.
- A sweater or light jacket. The rooms can be chilly.
- Your ID, if you want to indulge during happy hour.

### Other Tips

- During sessions, people often need to come and go due to pitching appointments or volunteer assignments. Please make sure the doors close gently behind you.
- Please silence cell phones during the sessions.
- Water is available in seminar rooms. Coffee is not provided, but can be purchased in the hotel restaurant.
- If you have any questions, ask the folks at the OWFI registration desk or anyone wearing an Officer or Volunteer badge. We'll be glad to help.

- **Gongs, Costumes, Buzz, and Awards.** Brand new this year—the one and only OWFI gong show. We'll read manuscripts aloud (anonymously, of course) and our panel will strike the gong when they've heard enough.
- For the Friday night **Famous Author Banquet**, we're bringing back the popular costume contest. Dress as your favorite book character and compete for fabulous prizes. Steven James will present our keynote address on "The Untouched Moment." After the banquet, hang out with our faculty at the informal buzz sessions.
- As always, we'll wrap things up on Saturday night with our **contest awards**. Wear your glamorous best and bring your party horns.

**Want More from Your Conference?** The people who get the most out of OWFI are our conference volunteers. Contact any OWFI officer to find out how you can help, or check out the list of volunteer opportunities in this newsletter.

**Any Questions?** Check our website often at [owfi.org](http://owfi.org) to keep updated on conference news. We also have a very active Facebook group (search for "Oklahoma Writers' Federation"). If you have questions that aren't answered there, contact our president, Tony LoPresti ([hardlo@cox.net](mailto:hardlo@cox.net)) or conference coordinator Maria Veres ([mariapolsonveres@yahoo.com](mailto:mariapolsonveres@yahoo.com)).