

## Dedication

This book is dedicated to Helen Kelts and Mary Hammack, the women who founded the Oregon Association of Christian Writers in 1963, and to all those who have volunteered time and talent to keep the organization thriving through five decades.

*“Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing.”*

Ezekiel 47:12 NIV



Oregon Christian Writers  
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## Introduction

*Fifty years ago*, two creative Christian women decided to form a group to encourage writers who sought to glorify God through their written words.

After prayer and discussion, Helen Kelts, a tiny dynamo who wrote for *Christian Life Magazine*, and her friend, Mary Hammack, founded the Oregon Association of Christian Writers on March 23, 1963. They wrote bylaws and a doctrinal statement, then invited other writers to join their new group. The group was small enough at that time to meet in a high school classroom.

Since its inception, Oregon Christian Writers has seen 21 people serve as president, a handful of them holding several terms of office, but the organization never would have flourished and blessed so many without help from countless volunteers, including those who held offices and helped organize conferences.

“Leaders in the Oregon Christian Writers are a subgroup in the body of Christ,” Marion Duckworth, a longtime member and former president, wrote for a training meeting in 2008. “We are fingers and toes, each required to fulfill our particular responsibilities.

“Never, under any circumstances, is any of us the head. That is not an elected office; Christ Himself fills that role. We are to pray that Christ, our Head, will give us wisdom and unity.”

Under the guidance of God-loving leaders who answered

the call of Christ, OCW has never stopped growing in professionalism, Christian values, new technologies, and encouraging people to writing ministries.

Deborah Hedstrom-Page, who served as OCW president from 1997 through 2002, described the “incredible value” of OCW.

“OCW was a big part of my life for more than 20 years. I served as every officer except treasurer. As I look back, it helped nurture in me two life values I use every day. When I wanted to write for publication, it was easy to just ‘take’ from what OCW offered—teaching, critique, fellow writer support. But, after a while, I realized the officers and teachers were just like me, balancing a home and family with their desire to write. Their volunteer example made me see that I needed to give back, to help others, to not just ‘take.’ Every job I’ve held in OCW, every workshop I’ve taught, has meant as much as all the training I received—and it carries on what Helen Kelts did when she started the organization.

“OCW’s value in my life didn’t stop at give and take, serve and be served. It also broadened my ‘God world.’ I met Christian people from every denomination whether I was in the audience or up front. At first, I felt a little uncomfortable with the differences. But as I interacted in OCW classes, critique groups, and conferences, I found my comfort—we all love Jesus Christ. He is our Lord.

“I’m the wife of a Baptist preacher, yet the Bible study I lead at the local restaurant includes women from liturgical and charismatic denominations. I know they are comfortable at the study because OCW broadened my ‘God world.’”

We hope you enjoy reading about how OCW has influenced Christian writing during the past half-century.

**The OCW 50th Anniversary Committee:**

*Gail Denham ~ Marion Duckworth ~ Mary Hake*

*Jennifer Anne F. Messing ~ Billie Reynolds ~ Julie McDonald Zander*

*“Every good gift and perfect  
gift is from . . . the Father.”*

James 1:17 NIV





## Chapter One

### The First Decade: 1963-1972

*From its* inauspicious beginnings with a handful of writers, Oregon Christian Writers has grown to nearly 300 members, many of whom have influenced Christian publishing and touched the lives of millions through their work.

But it never would have happened without the inspiration of Helen Georgia Wilcox Kelts, a Wisconsin native who moved to Oregon as a teenager, graduated from Ashland High School in 1932, and married Donald Kelts a year later. They had two sons and two daughters.

From 1958 until 1961, the family lived in Chicago, where Helen wrote magazine articles and served as chairman of the Christian Business and Professional Women in Chicago. In the early 1960s, the Kelts family returned to Oregon and settled in Eugene.

“When I came to Oregon, there were no organizations to encourage Christian writers,” Helen recalled. “That’s when I began to pray.”

She discussed her desires with Mary Hammack, a friend, and together they created the Oregon Association of



Helen Kelts

Christian Writers. They received strong encouragement in their efforts from the Rev. Stanley Baldwin, who served as pastor of the Berean Baptist Church of Corvallis at that time. Many of the group's early members recall being invited by Helen.

Founding documents established three annual one-day conferences: the fall meeting would take place in Portland, the winter gathering in Salem, and the spring conference in Eugene. With such a small group, early meetings were held in churches or school classrooms.

During OCW's first decade, Helen Kelts and Mary Hammack each served two terms as president, first one-year terms and later two-year stints. Other presidents who served a one-year term during the early years were Stan Baldwin, La Verna Dick Hohnbaum, and Jan Overholser.

Helen, who worked as a church librarian and later as a receptionist/cashier for the City of Eugene for 13 years before retiring, belonged to the First Baptist Church in Eugene and served as a director of Child Evangelism Fellowship. In the late 1980s to honor its founder, OCW established the Helen Kelts Scholarship and the Helen Kelts Award "to encourage high craftsmanship in Christian writing and foster a spiritual responsibility in Christian writers."

Helen died November 12, 2003, of congestive heart failure at the

age of 89, but her legacy continues with the inspiration and encouragement provided to writers, young and old, through Oregon Christian Writers.



Debbie Hedstrom-Page with Helen Kelts

# Memories



Stanley Baldwin, Milwaukie, Ore.  
OCW president 1965–1966,  
1976–1978, 1988–1990,  
lifetime member

*In 1963* while serving as pastor of Berean Baptist Church of Corvallis, I heard that two Eugene women had started a Christian writers' group. I met with those women, Helen Kelts and Mary Hammack, to support their efforts as an active participant in Oregon Association of Christian Writers. I became president of OACW while still in Corvallis, which I left for Burns in the spring of 1966.

As president and program chairman in those Corvallis years, I arranged for one of our regular OACW meetings to be held on the Oregon State University campus (at no cost) and enlisted a couple of OSU writing instructors to participate. One was Dr. Preston Onstad, a Roman Catholic professor.

Dr. Onstad graciously spoke to us free of charge. I was embarrassed when one attendee “witnessed” to Dr. Onstad in a confrontational manner during the session. Thankfully, the other attendees did not reflect the same hostility, and the organization supported an inclusive policy going forward.



Marion Duckworth,  
Vancouver, Wash.  
OCW president 1984-1988,  
OCW prayer team member,  
lifetime member

*The first* Oregon Christian  
Writers meeting I attended was held in

a school classroom and there were empty seats. Helen Kelts, who worked for *Christian Life Magazine*, was the organizer and spark plug. Tiny and dynamic, her energy and enthusiasm were contagious. As a beginning writer, I sopped up every bit of information at those meetings.

Stan Baldwin was one of my early heroes. A published writer, he became editor of *Power for Living*—a Sunday school paper that my son John later edited.

I agreed to serve as treasurer of the organization, a position for which I was not particularly equipped since math had never been my best subject. But since the organization was small, the nominating committee had to tap whomever was available and willing to serve. In later years, I served as president, a job that sent me to *Roberts Rules of Order*.

OCW has been the most influential writers' organization in my working life. Keynote speakers, workshop leaders, and conversations around the lunch tables helped in more ways than I can possibly recount. Sixteen books and many articles, stories, and poems later, this is my way of throwing my arms around this group of artists and saying thanks.



Debbie Hedstrom-Page  
with Helen Kelts

Gail Denham, Sunriver, Ore.  
OCW president in 1992,  
lifetime member



*Always* I was a storyteller—I used to scare my little brother and sister “big-eyed” with ghost stories. However, my first encouragement to publish came from an honors English professor at OSU in the late 1960s. “You should send this in,” he said. Amazing! Yet, it wasn’t until the Warner Pacific College Christian Writers’ Conference was in full bloom that the most encouragement came. Out of Warner sprang our first writers’ critique group, led by the world’s best writing “prodger,” Gloria Chisholm (later Kempton). Our critique group came “en masse” to OACW meetings. We began to see our works in print—thanks, in part, to some of the helpful editors who attended OACW conferences. Many of us began to lead workshops.

At one point, while I served in another OACW office, Joe Ryan (president 1992–93) became ill, so I filled in as president for six months—another learning curve. So many great critique groups and networking circles came from our organization during the last 40-plus years. I’ve had the privilege of leading writing and photography workshops at several conferences, including Mount Hermon; however, OCW remains “home base” and one of the friendliest, most helpful, encouraging groups of writers. We’ve had tremendous fun at summer conferences—learning, discussing our craft, and floating in the river.

Elsie Larson was one of my great friends. She served OCW in many ways, including the presidency. For many years, she attended Mary Warren’s critique group and credited that with many of her successes. Two years in a row, I was

privileged to travel with Elsie to England, France, and Wales as she researched her World War II historically accurate novels. She was one of my best encouragers in writing and photography—and in my life.

When I think back to my OCW experiences, I realize that most of my writing buddies, such as Birdie Etchison, Marion Duckworth, Pat Rushford, and so many others, came from the OCW cadre of good writers and “brain-stormers.” I thank God on every remembrance for all the ideas, training, opportunities, and fellowship that the OCW organization has brought to me—to us all.

Deborah Hedstrom-Page, Springfield, Ore.  
OCW president 1997–2002

*A relative's* encouragement about my letter writing made me think of writing for publication, but I had four children under the age of six and no idea where to begin. When I mentioned it to a lady in my church, she told me I needed to meet Helen Kelts. This professional writer and petite, gracious lady set aside time for me. Though I hardly knew the difference between a letter and a manuscript, Helen encouraged me. “The world needs your insights. You can learn. There is a group called the Oregon Association of Christian Writers that can help you.”

It took courage to go to my first OCW Saturday meeting, but I've never regretted asking my husband to watch the kids while I went.

Bobbie Christensen, Harrisburg, Ore.

*One of* the founders of OCW, Helen Kelts, told me about OACW and she told me that it would meet in our own church in May. I attended and was absolutely delighted to

find a group of people who talked about writing as if it were normal. This was so fantastic; I was hooked and have enjoyed it ever since.

Among my favorite memories are listening to other writers share their writing experiences and meeting Sally Stuart—and counting her as one of my friends!

Eva Gibson, Wilsonville, Ore.

OCW prayer team

*What is* my earliest memory of OCW? Sitting at a long table in the library at Multnomah School of the Bible listening to Agnes Ranney share how to write for Sunday school papers. That was in 1966, and it was my first time ever to attend an OCW meeting. When I signed up to become a member at the end of the day, the woman at the desk asked me if I had been published. Yes, I had submitted a “kids say the funniest things” incident to a teaching magazine that they accepted and published. It was only about three or four sentences long, but she said that didn’t matter. Regardless of length, I was a published writer!



Dick Bohrer, West Linn, Ore.

OCW president 1974–1976

*I first* became involved in OCW when I was teaching journalism at what was then Multnomah School of the Bible (1963–1979). Subsequently, Jerry Jenkins, who was on the staff of *Moody Monthly* magazine, invited me to move to Chicago and serve as senior editor. When Jerry moved to Moody Press, I became the magazine’s managing editor. I readily accepted invitations to represent Moody at OCW

conferences. Four years later, Liberty University granted me a full professorship, and I taught journalism there for nine years. Following radical surgery, I retired and returned to my home in West Linn. I continue to maintain my membership in OCW. I have written *Four and Twenty Ways to Write Stories for Christian Kids*, *Four and Twenty Ways to Write What YOU Think*, and *Four and Twenty Ways to Write Features Like a Pro*, all available free of charge on my website: DickBohrerbooks.com.



Birdie Etchison, Ocean Park, Wash.  
OCW president 1981–1984,  
lifetime member

*I left* San Antonio in 1971 and returned to Portland. I had been writing for eight years and selling, but it wasn't enough to live on. I heard about OACW, as it was called then. I attended the

October meeting that year. I was hooked with meeting beautiful people who loved the Lord and loved writing. So here I am, 43 years later. My, how OCW has grown. Beginning writers, professionals, many who struggle with getting their hearts on paper. So much encouragement. Enthusiasm.

One specific memory is when I was asked to speak at the May meeting back in the early '70s. I was thrilled, but hesitant. How could I talk without shaking? Speaking was not part of my repertoire. I decided to tape my talk and then play it back. My toddler son was at the table with me, and I didn't realize he was listening, but every time I asked a question of my would-be writer audience, Matt would say, "Yes."

There were 17 members at that meeting. We have Helen Kelts to thank for starting this writing group and for all of those who have carried it on.





Debbie Hedstrom-Page and Helen Kelts speak to a woman at an OCW gathering.

Sally Stuart with the second edition of her Christian writers' market guide



Tom Luther's daughter, Debbie Luther, and Treasurer Deanna Hershiser help a registrant





## Chapter Two 1973-1982

*During its early years,* the Oregon Association of Christian Writers encouraged Christian writers to put pen to paper, but few imagined they could make a full-time living as writers.

The state of Christian writing in the early 1970s was “just hopeless,” with more than 80 percent of its adherents “housewives looking for a little diversion,” Stan Baldwin told Eugene *Register-Guard* reporter Bob Keefer in 1984. “It’s much better now.”

Bob described Stan, at that time a 53-year-old pastor from Oregon City, as one of only a handful of Christian writers nationwide who earned a living as writers. Stan had written or co-authored more than a dozen books and estimated he earned between \$14,000 and \$15,000 from writing in 1983. “I make about half a living at it,” he told the reporter. “I just live humbly.”

In his article, Bob described Christian writing as suffering “from an overall lack of quality.”

Then, Warner Pacific College in Portland launched an annual Christian Writers’ Conference, which it held on campus every March. By 1984, the 11<sup>th</sup> annual four-day conference directed by Dale W. Mark, a professor of fine arts at Warner Pacific, featured more than 200 seminars,



Conferees enjoying lunch.

lectures, workshops, and panel discussions. About 500 people attended, including 20 or so editors and publishers.

Many of the sessions covered the basics of writing, such as eliminating “ing” words, using active voice instead of passive, and opting for strong nouns and verbs rather than adjectives and adverbs. Others focused on writing query letters, polishing prose, and writing upbeat endings. Additional sessions pinpointed self-appraisal, asking participants to discover why they write.

Most Christian writing proponents say they’re Christians first, writers second, according to Bob Keefer. He quoted David Hazard, a successful children’s book author and editorial director at Chosen Books, describing “sort of this artificial separation between the evangelical markets and the rest of the world. The world isn’t like that. I don’t see fences down the middle of the road, one side for evangelicals only, the other side is the fast lane. I’m looking for the day when publishers will kick down the fences.”

Roy Carlisle, who represented Harper & Row at the 1984 conference, dismissed the term “Christian fiction” and noted that Christians often try evangelizing in their fiction writing.

“There isn’t any such thing as Christian fiction,” Roy said. “Fiction is fiction. Some of it may have been written by Christians. And fiction written by Christians is often disguised tracts.”

Even though he had acquired only one manuscript there in seven years, Roy Carlisle, a Christian himself, continued attending the Warner Pacific College



Mary and Lindsey Warren

Christian Writers' Conference hoping to find a new literary voice, "a writer with a moral vision of the world."

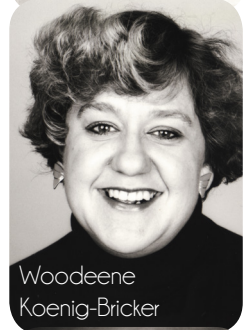
Well-known author Randy Alcorn, keynote speaker at the fall 1998 OCW conference, attended his first Christian writers' conference at Warner Pacific in 1978. The following year *Moody Monthly* published an article he wrote, according to his blog. After selling additional articles, he started writing his first book in 1982, and three years later it was published.

In a September 18, 2010, post on Wendy Lawton's Books & Such Literary Agency blog, prolific writer Lauraine Snelling, an OCW keynoter several times who has more than two million books in print, wrote about her first writers' conference. She has been associated with OCW since those early years and has also shared this story at conferences.

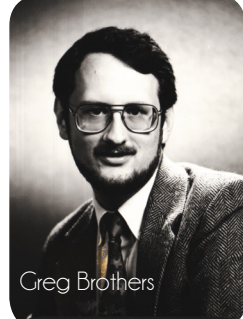
"In 1980 God put his foot in the middle of my back and said 'go.' Thanks to my mother's offer to pay my way and a county clerk's permission to skip jury duty, I attended a four-day writers' conference at Warner Pacific College in Portland. Talk about an eye-opening four days, but I came away from that knowing even more surely that I wanted to write horse books for girls. I am absolutely convinced conferences are the best training we can get and *the* place to meet editors and agents and other writers who can become mentors."



Dan Haman



Woodeene  
Koenig-Bricker



Greg Brothers



Gloria Chisholm

Her first book, *Tragedy on the Toutle*, was published in 1982, and since then she's had more than 70 books published.

Many of OACW's members attended Warner Pacific conferences to enhance their writing skills, and the organization drew new members from among writers there. As its membership grew, OACW partnered with Christian colleges to host its conferences in exchange for their students attending free.

Gloria Chisholm (Kempton), who earned the 1986 Writer of the Year honors at the Warner Pacific College Christian Writers' Conference, went on to win the 1988 Pacesetter Award at the Mount Hermon Writers' Conference, published 10 books, and worked as a magazine and book editor. She's also a writing coach and Writer's Digest instructor.

Eva Gibson began writing seriously after taking an advanced writing class at Multnomah School of the Bible in 1979. Since then she has sold fiction, personal experience, and teaching articles to more than 35 publications. Bethany House released her first teen novel, *Melissa*, in 1982, followed by five more novels, three of which were translated into Norwegian and one into Polish. Eva received the 1986 Fiction Writer of the Year Award at Warner Pacific College Writers' Conference for *Colleen*.

Stan Baldwin toured the entire United States by Greyhound in 1968, interviewing story subjects. He also traveled abroad, starting Christian writing groups in India and later founding and serving as director of International Christian Writers. He served his second term as OCW president from 1976 to 1978, while others leading the organization were Raymond Cox (1972–1974), Richard Bohrer (1974–1976), Sally Stuart (1978–1981), and Birdie Etchison (1981–1984).

The decade saw the organization grow so much that by 1978 it began publishing a mimeographed newsletter for its members. Sally Stuart began typing them and making copies until 1989, when the newsletters were sent to printers.

Among the keynoters at one-day conferences were Barbara Scott (winter 1979), Matilda Nordtved (spring 1979), Colleen Reece (fall 1981), Elaine Wright Colvin (winter 1981), and Wrightman Weese (winter 1982).

Patricia Lee remembers the October 4, 1980, OACW conference, when she met keynoter Lee Roddy, who worked as a staff writer for television and radio networks and sold his novel, *The Life and Times of Grizzly Adams*, to NBC. The prolific *New York Times* best-selling author of countless books seemed approachable to writers attending the fall conference.

“If Christians don’t write for TV, someone else will,” Lee Roddy warned. “If Christians don’t tell the message of Christianity, someone else will tell it wrong.”

As Christians we believe in sending missionaries out into the world . . . while as writers too often we submit only to Christian publications. Should we be trying to write for the secular or general marketplace?

Afterward, Patricia Lee wrote a letter to Lee Roddy, asking questions about a career in writing. On February 22, 1982, he responded to each of her questions in an encouraging letter that she has kept for more than three decades. He urged her to be creative in her thinking and noted that many people mix writing with other money-making pursuits.

“Paul made tents and preached the gospel,” he wrote. “For most of us, that’s the model. I’ve been fortunate in not being limited to that; yet I’ve not escaped some ‘tent-making’ work, even today.”

He described writing as “a hard, hard taskmaster.” Lee Roddy said he asked two former Mount Hermon students who continued their writing careers what they thought of his teaching that “You take care of the ministry, and God will take care of the money.”

“They both said, ‘That’s still true, but you’ve got to think creatively.’”

# Memories

Tom Luther, Portland, Ore.

*About 1976* I received a flier about a writers' conference at Warner Pacific College. I was working as a technical writer, but something in the flier spoke to me. And it has ever since. I attended that conference and immediately felt at home in a new world.

Not long after, I taught a session at a subsequent conference titled "Is Computerized Word Processing for You?" My premise was: Yes, it is, but when? Today, no one would even think of writing without a computer, but I feel good about having been on the leading edge.

My favorite memory of OCW is probably rubbing shoulders with so many well-known writers and learning they are just ordinary people with a bee in their bonnet that led to their success.

Karan Gleason, Clackamas, Ore.

*Before* I even knew that OACW or even writers' critique groups existed, I had thought about writing a children's activity book to help with family finances while my husband was out of work in the early '80s.

I figured I could put together an activity book since I was a teacher. A friend at church came up to me one day and



asked if I'd like to join her new writers' critique group. That was a God-send for me because I had no idea how to become published. This friend was Gloria Chisholm, who became my writing mentor and encourager.

In that first writers' group, I learned the basics of writing and made several lifetime friendships. Most of us in that group attended our first OACW meeting at Warner Pacific College in Portland in 1982. I met many other writers and editors for the first time. It was inspiring and so exciting for me to realize I might one day be a writer too!

I went on to publish three children's activity books and many nonfiction articles with the advice and guidance from writing mentors in OACW, as well as making new friendships with other writers. It's been 31 years since my first efforts in writing, and I've enjoyed the adventures and challenges of this journey and the new and exciting opportunities it created for my future.



Chip MacGregor,  
MacGregor Literary Agency

*My earliest* memory of OCW is sitting in the very last row (what we Presbyterians called “the doubter’s pew”) in the hall at Warner Pacific College about 1979 or 1980. I knew nobody. I went, listened, and tried to not get noticed. (Later, I would get over my shyness.)

Stanley Baldwin, Milwaukie, Ore.  
OCW president 1965–1966, 1976–  
1978, 1988–1990, lifetime member



*Though out* of touch and living in the Chicago area during my years as editor of *Power for Living* and later of Victor Books, I immediately reconnected with OCW on my return to Oregon in 1975. By then I had coauthored my first major book, *The Kink and I, A Psychiatrist's Guide to Untwisted Living*. It made the *Christianity Today* list of best books of the year and became the first of my four bestsellers of more than 250,000 copies each. After my reconnect with OCW, I traveled the nation and much of the world teaching writers, all of it enriched by my OCW experiences.

Les Stobbe, Stobbe Literary Agency

*My earliest* memory of OCW is interacting with the first president in the 1970s, when I was the editor at Moody Press, thinking what a great idea it was to have a writers' association.

Elsie Libby Moore Caldwell, Florence, Ore.

*In the '70s* I was secretary or treasurer and at that time my name was Elsie Libby. When I remarried I was Elsie Moore. We had some great seminars. I remember meeting in Salem and Eugene and at Multnomah School of the Bible in Portland. I was happy to be a part of OCW's beginning in Oregon.

## Nancey West, Lebanon, Ore.

*The first* time I attended an OCW meeting in the early '80s, I was driving alone to Salem and forgot the directions to the church where it was being held. I was nervous about attending and considered just going home. But I noticed I had been following the same car on the freeway and it turned off at the Market Street exit. The only part of the instructions I remembered was that exit. So I decided to follow that car on the off-chance that it was also going to the OCW meeting. When it turned, I turned. Suddenly, I saw the OCW sign in the front of a church. I pulled into the parking lot as my lead car kept on driving.



## Patricia Rushford, Vancouver, Wash.

*My earliest* memory of Oregon Christian Writers is getting a brochure in the mail and wondering, *What in the world is this?* How I got on the mailing list I'll never know, but I am sure God arranged it.

There are many memories, but perhaps the first is going to my first writers' conference in 1980 at Warner Pacific and meeting Lauraine Snelling and Ruby MacDonald. We committed to a critique group and, within a year, we all had books contracted or close to it.

OCW helped to launch my career as a writer. At that first conference I met and spoke with a number of editors. One discouraged me, saying I needed to be someone before I could get my story published. Another encouraged me greatly, inviting me to write a devotional book for the company. The third wanted a proposal, and I said "Yes." Then I had to attend another conference to learn how to write a proposal.

Having been an OCW member for more years than I care to count, I find it is one of the best writers' organizations. I served as the summer conference director many times and recommend the organization to all new writers I meet. OCW has been and continues to be an organization of encouragers and mentors, teachers and editors, and I am blessed to be part of it.



## Chapter Three 1983-1992

*The 1980s saw* the establishment of Oregon Christian Writers as an official organization in the eyes of the government. On July 1, 1985, the Oregon Association of Christian Writers filed Articles of Incorporation with the Corporation Division of the State of Oregon's Department of Commerce.

As president of OACW at the time, Marion Duckworth of Salem submitted the request for incorporation as a not-for-profit corporation with the purpose of "promoting higher standards of craftsmanship in the field of Christian journalism."

The board of directors listed on the paperwork also included Helen G. Kelts of Eugene, Karan Gleason of Clackamas, and Lodece Hill and Maria Anne Tolar, both of Portland. If the organization is ever dissolved, any assets will be given to the Salvation Army. Signing the papers were Marion Duckworth, Helen Kelts, and Maria Anne Tolar.

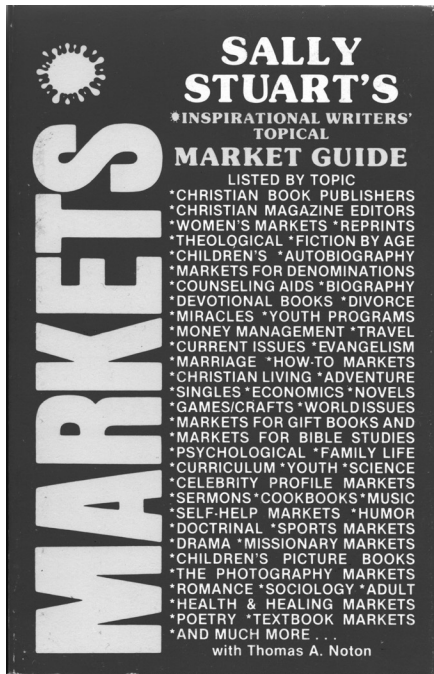
In January 1986, the OACW adopted its constitution. The preamble stated: "We, the members of the Oregon Association of Christian Writers, in order to win others to Christ and to build up that faith and knowledge of Christ through our writing, have formed this Association to promote higher standards of craftsmanship in the field of

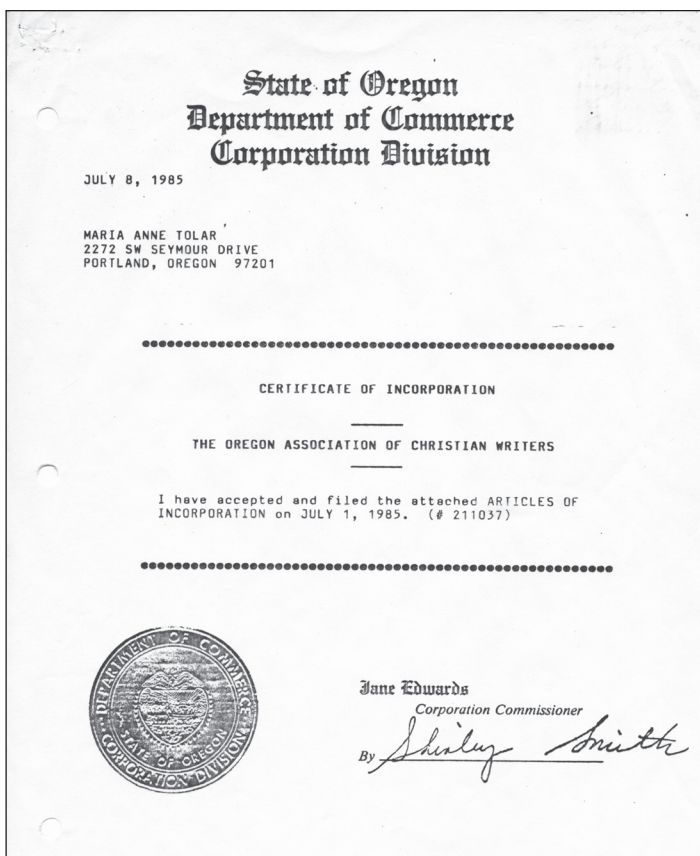
Christian journalism; and to encourage a greater sense of spiritual responsibility in the Christian writer; do establish this constitution for this Association of which we, as members thereof, agree and voluntarily submit ourselves.”

The constitution outlined the organization’s name, doctrine, membership requirements, and listed dues of \$5 a year or \$13.50 for three years. It also outlined registration costs for the one-day meetings: \$5 for members, \$10 for nonmembers, and \$1.50 for senior citizens 62 and older, while full-time high school, undergraduate, or graduate students could attend for free. So could speakers, workshop leaders, and the association’s five officers—president, vice president, recording secretary, corresponding secretary, and treasurer. Terms of office were one year, renewable four times.

Sally Stuart, who had served three years as president, put Oregon on the Christian publishing map by producing

her first edition of *Sally Stuart’s Inspirational Writers’ Topical Market Guide* in 1985. Already well-established as a marketing expert in Christian writing, Sally published a market guide that was referenced for quick and easy use with more than 100 topics to help writers find the right publisher. The back cover of her book stated, “Sally gets paid for what she does because she keeps abreast of the markets. Now, she’s willing to help





other writers do the same with her *topical* market guide.” She continued producing the annual market guide for Christian writers for two dozen years.

Toward the end of the 1980s, Warner Pacific College decided to discontinue hosting its annual Christian Writers’ Conference, but many people in OACW had come to rely on the education provided at the conference and the opportunity to pitch articles and books to editors.

Stan Baldwin, serving as OACW president for a third time from 1988 to 1990, refused to let Christian writers languish without the opportunity for continued learning.

“Because they were ceasing operations, as OCW president at the time, I thought OCW might have its own conference,” Stan recalled. “I consulted about the idea with then-immediate past president Marion Duckworth. She said, ‘Go for it,’ even though it meant breaking new ground since OCW only had the three quarterly one-day conferences until that time. I did not want to replicate Warner, but to replace it with a new model, namely a ‘coaching conference’ designed to do more than just have classes and lectures. I recruited coaches, arranged a venue, and we were in business and never looked back.”

Stan Baldwin and Sally Stuart birthed the idea of “building and training writing professionals to serve in God’s Kingdom” by holding a summer conference where “you can actually write and not just talk about it.”

That first coaching conference, which took place at Aldersgate Conference Center in Turner during August of 1989, featured 14 coaching classes each morning as well as



OACW conferees in August 1995

afternoon workshops teaching many critical writing skills. The first keynote speaker, Pastor Peter Lord of Titusville, Florida, set a high tone, which has continued for 25 years. Unique to this first conference was the

fact that only members were able to attend.

“What is going on out there that we receive so many good manuscripts?” wrote an editor from a publishing house after the second Oregon Association of Christian Writers’ summer conference.

Coordinated by Kristen Ingram and Debbie Hedstrom, the conference was described as “A Different Kind of Conference . . . Where Beginning, Intermediate and



Professional Writers Come to Write and Get Coaching and Marketing Advice.” Les Stobbe, president of Here’s Life Publishers (a division of Campus Crusade), was keynote speaker. Before the conference, Stan Baldwin spent time in India helping found the Christian Writers’ Association of India and reported on this work at the conference.



Writers touring Multnomah Press in Portland, Ore.: Karan Gleason, Marion Tilton, Linda Highman, Jean Gessner, and Joy Jossi

Kristen Ingram organized the 1991 conference—“The Only Hands-On Coaching Conference in the Northwest”—with keynoter Charette Barta. Russ Pierson and Patricia Rushford coordinated the conference in 1992, when Gary Randall, well-known Christian TV talk-show host, served as keynoter and the conference theme was “A Symphony of Words: Reaching Out—Reaching Beyond—Reaching the World.”

*Have You Hugged Your Teenager Today?* Patricia Rushford’s first book, was published in 1982, and by the end of the decade she had six books in print. Geneva Iijima had articles published in *Christian Parenting Today* and *Decision*, while Toni Macenrath saw publication of her book, *Lord, I’m Trying*.



August 1990 OACW Conference

OACW members made headlines nationwide for their excellent writing as well as for their perseverance, as seen in May 1988 when 77-year-old Ruth Rose Flickinger flew—wheelchair and all—to Lynchburg, Virginia, where she was the oldest person to graduate from



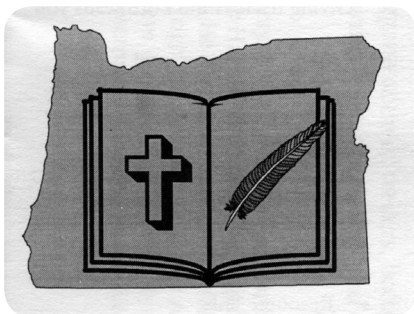
A thank-you to Gloria Chisholm of patriotism, family, and faith.

the Liberty Home Bible Institute. Ruth, who noted that she had read the Bible cover to cover 30 times in the past half-century, and her husband heard the Rev. Jerry Falwell's message at the Thomas Road Baptist Church and listened to Sen. Jesse Helms give the evening baccalaureate address, while Lt. Col. Oliver North addressed the 1,000 graduates and 11,000 spectators during the commencement ceremony, speaking

The 1980s also saw establishment of writing contests to recognize exemplary work among OACW members, with categories for fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and juvenile work. First-place winners received recognition with certificates and their names in the newsletters.

The organization also started the Helen Kelts Award for Writer of the Year "to encourage high craftsmanship in Christian writing and foster a spiritual responsibility in Christian writers." Among the winners were Lucibel Van Atta, Michael D. Henderson, Marion Duckworth, Joseph Ryan, Emma Moore Weston, Elsie J. Larson, and Sally Stuart. Five finalists were announced each year, with four of them receiving honorable mention.

Others who served as president during the decade were Birdie Etchison (1981–1984), Elsie Larson (1990–1992), Joe Ryan (1992-1993), and Gail Denham, who filled in for six months after Joe became ill.



One of OCW's first logos

# Memories

Karan Gleason, Clackamas, Ore.

*Many fond memories* come to mind when I peruse memories of my duration with OCW. I especially enjoyed being in many critique groups through the years and making lifetime friendships. I particularly remember the critique group I started in 1985 since we all became exceptionally close to one another as new writers. We not only encouraged one another in our writing, we also had prayer partners and spent time praying for each other. This was certainly a heartfelt group of writers.

Our group also broadened its knowledge of writing and friendships by taking short field trips. Once we toured Multnomah Press in Portland and ascertained the extensive path a book takes to become published. Little did I realize then, but several years later, I would accept an editorial assistant position with MP and I would be leading tour groups.

Later that year, this same group planned a weekend retreat at the Christian Renewal Center in Silverton. Different ladies in our group took part by leading writing classes and devotionals. We took time to relax, learn, share, and pray together. That was one of my fondest memories.

After the group disbanded several years later, we would get together each Christmas for a reunion dinner and

exchange of gifts. It was always so delightful to renew old friendships from OCW.

## Nick Harrison, Harvest House Publishers

*My first memory* of OCW goes back to about 1982 or '83.

I was living in North Bend, managing a Christian bookstore, and trying my hand at writing articles in my spare time. One of my customers, Jean Whitaker, was already a longtime member of OACW and invited me to go with her on the long trip over to Eugene for some workshops hosted by OACW. I can't remember where the meeting was held, but I remember that after the meeting we went to the Berean Christian Bookstore on Eleventh Street. I joined OCW at that time and benefited greatly until we moved to California a couple of years later. These past dozen years I've been so glad to be back in Oregon and in touch with OCW.

I have a few prized memories. A couple of them are related to the summer conferences. And to be honest, I'm not sure if it was an OCW conference or the Warner Pacific conference, but I have a distinct memory of the time Gloria Kempton (who was then Gloria Chisholm) was asked to pray over our common meal and she concluded her prayer by rebuking all the calories.

I also remember sitting spellbound in a fiction workshop taught by Birdie Etchison, wondering if I could ever be in front of a group of people leading a workshop at a writers' conference. Amazingly, that dream has come true.

And it was at the OCW summer conference in Salem about a dozen years ago when I ran into Dan Penwell, whom I hadn't seen in years. We had both been Zondervan Family Bookstore managers back in the 1970s and were now both



editors. He was with Hendrickson Publishers then, and I was, of course, with Harvest House.

A more recent favorite memory is that of Karen Ball and a couple of her cohorts (whom I'm temporarily forgetting) singing, "Going to the conference and we're gonna get published" to the tune of the Dixie Cups' "Chapel of Love."

### Melody Carlson, Sisters, Ore.

*I thought it* was about 1990, but Lonnie Hull DuPont always tells me it was earlier and one shouldn't argue (too much) with one's editor. But I remember being really nervous about being part of this "elite group of real writers" at an OACW summer conference in Salem. I felt like a fraud because although I'd been published in newspapers, etc., I hadn't really contracted/sold anything yet. I was with my critique friends (Heather Harpham, Linda Clare, and Linda Shands), and Lonnie invited us to "kidnap" her for a while—she needed a break.



So we took her to a nearby restaurant and just sat around yakking and drinking coffee. That experience helped me relax as well as realize that editors are just normal people. As it turned out, Lonnie was the first editor who really believed in me and the first editor with whom I contracted and published a book. To this date I've probably done close to 30 books with Lonnie—with more to come. And to think it all started at OCW.

### Linda Shands, Cottage Grove, Ore.

*I first learned* of the Oregon Association of Christian Writers in the early 1990s from friends

who worked at Harvest House Publishers. These friends had encouraged me to keep learning and writing, not just for my own pleasure, but to someday write well enough to actually have my stories published.

The first meeting I attended was held in Eugene and included a tour of Harvest House. The speaker that day was a young woman named Debbie Hedstrom. Impressed by her testimony and encouraged in the company of other writers, I knew this organization was a must for me.

A couple of decades, nine books, and a multitude of articles later, I could not dream of life without this group, which took the assumed business name of Oregon Christian Writers, or the friendships established with other writers. OCW was certainly a huge part of God's plan for my life. It has been the foundation of my writing career. God used the professional instructors, editors, agents, workshops, and conferences as well as other individual writers to help me become an author and freelance writer. The conferences resulted in friendships that have been maintained over the course of 25 years.

Now, though I am retired from writing, I look back and realize the way OCW helped to shape my life and writing career. I can't possibly convey my thankfulness in words. The list of people who have blessed my life continues to grow, but God knows because He put me there.

On that thought, I believe it is time to pay my dues!



Maxine Marsolini, Portland, Ore.  
OCW president 2012 - present

*My earliest* memory of OCW was at the summer conference in July 1996 at the Village Green in Cottage Grove. It was then that I felt God prompting me to write a book for

others like us who were part of a blended family (stepfamily) life. The problem was I didn't understand how to take my thoughts from journaling style to a polished book manuscript.

One afternoon KDOV, the Christian radio station I listened to each day, had aired an announcement about an upcoming writers' conference in Eugene. I heard Sandy Cathcart and another writer talk about signing up for this conference and how beneficial it could be to a not-yet-published writer. It didn't take long for me to make that phone call and get signed up. Along with the conference came an invite to be part of a critique group right in my hometown. I was able to learn so much from those who were a part of OCW and willing to help me learn the ropes.

Every conference offered me the opportunity to fine-tune the craft of writing. Networking is huge. The ability to connect with other writers and those who work in the publishing world is invaluable. Great relationships have been built.

That first summer Sherri Langton chose a poem of mine for publication in *Bible Advocate* and encouraged me to believe out loud, "I really am a writer with a message to tell." Marion Duckworth, my first coaching class instructor, taught a class on "Writing the Memoir." She's delightful and so chock-full of writing smarts.

Over the years, I've had the privilege of serving on the OCW board in three positions: recording secretary, program coordinator, and now president. I stand in awe of those who give time, energy, and servant-leadership skills to this organization. The teamwork is phenomenal!

Yes, I was offered a contract in 1998. My first book found its way into the bookstores. *Blended Families* was published by Moody Press in 2000. I am happy to say that 13 years later it is still selling. Getting involved with OCW was a smart choice. Workshops moved me from an amateur writer to one who could produce a polished product.

Marcia Mitchell Nootenboom, Golden Valley, Ariz.  
OCW president 1993-1995

*As soon as I* learned to read as a child, I read book after book. At the age of 11, I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior. However, it wasn't until I read *Little Women* at this same time that I realized people actually wrote what I read. Almost immediately after I became a Christian, the Lord placed it on my heart that I should become a writer. However, when I submitted a story as a teenager, it was rejected. I thought it meant I couldn't write. For years I wrote and put my stories in a drawer. I wanted to learn to write properly, but I had no idea how.

However, the Lord wasn't done yet with my writing. Many years later, in 1985, my husband became disabled and wanted to move from California to Salem to be near his sister. As I unpacked all my belongings, including the *Writer's Digest* magazines, I sat on the floor and began to leaf through one of the issues. On one of the pages was a list of writers' groups, including Oregon Association of Christian Writers. The president was Marion Duckworth, and she lived in Salem. I called her, and she told me about a meeting in Eugene the following Saturday. I went, got lost in Eugene, but finally found the church where the meeting took place.

The classes I attended at various meetings over the years helped my writing grow stronger and stronger. Because of OCW, I've sold more than 375 articles and short stories. I've also had one book published and am now working on another book. Thank you, OCW, for being such a great part of my life.



Mary Hake, Falls City, Ore.  
OCW president 2007–2012

*I learned about*  
OACW (as it was called then) from a friend at church—a woman who taught college English and had been published. I was a young mom at the time and had always loved to write. The first conference I attended was in Eugene, May 1986. Marion Duckworth was president and I had read her first book, so I knew of her. I met her and others I consider pillars of OCW: Elsie Larson, Stan Baldwin, Kris Ingram, Sally Stuart, and Debbie Hedstrom. Everyone was friendly and encouraging, so I kept coming.



When I homeschooled, I often brought my girls along to one-day conferences. They sometimes helped cut up fruit for snacks. That was back when OCW met at churches and we put on the breakfast feast ourselves. My older daughter, who is a teacher, has also attended one-days with me a few times as an adult.

I was excited when OCW decided to hold summer conferences for more intense training. The first summer conference I attended was the second annual one, held at Aldersgate. It began the afternoon the day of my husband's grandad's funeral. I had a scholarship and helped with registration, setting and cleaning tables, etc. I sat at dinner the first evening with a couple of editors and didn't realize who they were. When I learned their identities, I felt a bit overwhelmed but they told me not to be.

The first story I presented to an editor at a summer conference, the magazine editor told me to send it in when it was ready. She later declined to publish it, but eventually the true story was published in a book and in periodicals.

At one of my first summer conferences, Helen Haidle

was my roommate. This was before she had published any books. I remember she shared her idea about a picture book based on Psalm 23. We have been friends ever since, and I have edited and written for her Seed Faith Books.

One year I took my college-age younger daughter to a summer conference at Western Baptist College after she'd been in a car accident and couldn't work. She has an aptitude for writing and had been published as a child—before I ever sold anything. It was fun to spend time with her at the conference and learn together.

I remember meeting Helen Kelts, OCW's founder, when she attended a conference in her advanced years. She still sparkled with life.

Because of contacts from OCW, I have sold and published material in many periodicals and books. I have also been privileged to serve on the board a total of 12 years with wonderful fellow officers and have taught at conferences and assisted with summer conferences. I cannot recommend this organization highly enough. Every conference inspires me and motivates me to keep on. I treasure all the friendships I've formed through OCW and am so thankful for all the prayer support too. Thank God for OCW!

Helen Haidle, Nashville, Tenn.

*Feeling anxious* and inadequate, I arrived at my first OCW summer conference more than 20 years ago. Watching other writers arrive and greet each other, sharing good news of their writing accomplishments, I wondered if it had been a mistake to come.



But, as I attended various workshops, I learned from writers who were willing to share from their own experiences,

to teach and train those of us seeking skills to sharpen our craft.

At the end of the conference, I was overjoyed. Others understood the incredible challenges of writing. And I had learned from and been blessed by every workshop leader. I'll never forget listening to Lauraine Snelling's talk at the closing banquet. She urged us to see ourselves as "authors" with an assignment from God. I received a new mind-set. I was an author. I had an assignment. My challenge was to do everything I could to accomplish that goal.

I'm thankful for the many writers who shared their expertise during the past 20 years. Without all the instruction and encouragement of OCW leaders and teachers, I would not have 45 books published (and another dozen self-published).

A highlight of all our OCW meetings is the worship. There is nothing quite like praising God with a group of writers/illustrators. We have a unique calling and our OCW group continues to facilitate each of us in fulfilling God's assignment(s).

**Kathy Young, Vancouver, Wash.**

*My earliest memory* of hearing about Oregon Christian Writers was the enthusiastic endorsement of my Bible college teacher. She recommended the professional organization with quality membership, yet her personal stories of encouragement and productive manuscripts most impressed me. I was not disappointed when I attended the first meeting. My husband's enthusiastic involvement led me into further steps of commitment that evolved into our area of Christian service for more than 10 years.

My favorite memories are certainly the deep friendships forged as a working team member—either as appointed

historian or conference worker or as “a mouse in the corner” during executive board meetings or summer conference planning sessions. I *felt* the innovations my creative husband instigated (like the backing of an informed but hidden prayer army or the drawing out of team leaders with the responsive commitment to his leadership), but I’m most proud of his leadership of three summer conferences, which centered on our team members’ contributions and ideas. I appreciated the hard work performed by a team of passionate, creative, responsible people who were quick to fly in the directions their gifting led, under the delegated, yet appropriately communicated, guidance of a gifted leader.

I believe the longevity of this company of writers who are Christians is a testament to the direction and underpinning of God’s hand. May it continue till He comes again, as long as He is in the midst of the gatherings.

Sandy Cathcart, Prospect, Ore.

*I have been* involved with OCW for many years. I started out back in the ’80s at Stan Baldwin’s conference at Aldersgate. I was a volunteer at that first summer conference and for many years after, working alongside the summer conference directors until I was asked to take leadership following Kristen Johnson Ingram. I led the conference for the next three or four years and then taught workshops and coaching classes after that. I was also a worship leader for morning devotions and evening meetings. Because of my years coaching and teaching at Colorado Christian Writers, I was able to gain the attention of many editors and teachers for our conferences, and we grew considerably. I also brought in a team to record our classes, which was something I had dreamed of for many years. I am very privileged and happy to have had these opportunities because I love the people of OCW and believe in the vision.

I took our conference from Cottage Grove back to the Salem area, and then when we outgrew Salem, I moved it to Canby. The rest you know.

The early years of our summer conferences were invaluable to me. I took Debbie Hedstrom's article-writing class three years in a row! The third time she asked, "Sandy, why are you here again?" I said, "I just about have it, Debbie." And I did. I've been a published article writer ever since, with a long-standing column in *Oregon Fish and Wildlife Journal* and as a regular writer for *Southern Oregon Magazine* as well as many others.

My first nonfiction book, *Wild Woman: A Daughter's Search for a Father's Love*, placed in the finals of the Women of Faith/Westbow contest and was published at the end of 2011. I owe my success to the friends and teachers at OCW, who came alongside and encouraged me.

One great memory that makes me laugh is of Stan Baldwin leading that first conference at Aldersgate. We had a loooooong line of conferees stretched out to the street while we placed them in rooms. We had absolutely no rooms assigned ahead of time! But it worked! Stan kept telling me, "Keep it simple, Sandy." Everyone was patient and gracious.

Today, all of those assignments are arranged way ahead of time and take many hours of planning. Sometimes in the midst of that planning I would think of Stan and wonder how it all worked that first time around.

Dave Faber, Stanwood, Wash.

OCW president 1996-1997

*An earliest memory* of Oregon Christian Writers is of an afternoon workshop on computer use in writing during one of my first OCW conferences. The conference was at Aldersgate Conference Center at Turner in the late 1980s. The class was led by a Chemeketa

Community College professor. The workshop was so helpful and interesting that I took a course in basic computer skills from her at Chemeketa Community College. It was so full of new information—and, being a slow learner, I took the course twice.

A favorite OCW memory was participating in an OCW writing contest in 1993. I received the second-place certificate in poetry for a Shakespearian-form sonnet. (More sonnets were written after this first one, “Ripplings.”)

I have many other special memories of serving and participating in poetry workshops and other sessions and events at OCW conferences.

### **Bobbie Christensen, Harrisburg, Ore.**

*I attended the* very first OCW summer conference as a conferee, and it will forever be in my brain because I stayed in an A-Frame and discovered many things:

The woman who shared my A-Frame with me had a husband who drilled wells for a living, just like my own husband did.

The computer and printer I brought worked for about a day that year, and I used paper and pen after that.

My roommate and I discovered we were supposed to be up at the top of the hill the whole week and not in the A-Frame—but we had a great time.

When Valerie Brooks and I started overseeing the book table years ago, we started with fanny packs around our middles and made change out of those. We only accepted checks and cash—oh my! When we had our first summer of bringing in over \$1,000 we were very excited.

Deborah Hedstrom-Page, Springfield, Ore.  
OCW President 1997–2002

*I'm not very good* at maintaining more than one life. I only seem able to focus on the life I'm living and rarely go back to the past except via Christmas cards. But OCW has given me some good memories and good friends. How could I forget being locked out on the roof of the Warner Pacific College auditorium with Helen Kelts? I still don't know how her four-foot-ten-inch body made it over the railing. Oh, how we laughed.

Then there was the time the bottle of wine appeared in the sink of a dorm room at Aldersgate Conference Center. When I walked in, everyone held their breath to see what straight-laced Debbie was going to do. I took a sip of the crummy stuff, joined the gathering, and was soon praying with a gal who shared a hurt in her life.

And then there are the OCW critique groups. They have brought a wealth of gifted, godly people into my life—Marion Duckworth, Patty Duncan, Linda Clare, Bobbie Christensen, Kathy Ruckman, Kris Ingram, and Virginia Johnson, to name a few. I may not see them often, but each time I write a Bible study, work on my web page, or even answer questions for a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, I hear them: “Too many was’s.” “You just changed tenses.” “That’s not you. Be honest.”

Les Stobbe, Stobbe Literary Agency

*My favorite* memory of OCW is being on the pay phone with our son and daughter-in-law while at Aldersgate and getting the news our daughter-in-law was pregnant. That



child is now my assistant while living with us for three months—after completing coursework for a double major in communications and intercultural studies.

## Stan Baldwin: A Tribute to Joe Ryan, OCW past president

(**Joe Ryan** went to be with the Lord in the fall of 2006. This is the tribute that **Stan Baldwin** wrote in the *International Christian Writers Newsletter*.)



*My observance* of November 15, 2006, as International Christian Writers Day included attending the memorial service of longtime friend and member Joe Ryan, who died at age 85.

To me, Joe was a model for people who late in life aspire to be published writers. He was willing to pay his dues and did not expect his wide experience and many accomplishments to make writing a slam dunk for him.

Joe had a distinguished career. A graduate of Pepperdine, with advanced degrees from the University of Southern California and from Fuller Theological Seminary, Joe served as pastor at several Southern California churches before becoming Southwest Regional Director of the National Association of Evangelicals. He later served as West Coast director of World Vision. His 18 years of service with World Vision took him all over the world.

As a member of my critique group, Joe once told me that a secret of successful retirement was to retire *to* something, not just *from* something. For Joe, “to something” was to writing. As a comparative novice, Joe was humble enough to



sit at the feet of successful writers although they could not hold a candle to his own achievements in other fields.

As a result of being willing to learn how to do it right, Joe achieved publication by Zondervan in 1991 of his book, *Loving Again: Advice on Dating and Remarriage for the Widowed*, as well as various other writings.

To Joe: Well done, Brother. And keep writing. Stan.

Duane “DJ” Young, Vancouver, Wash.  
OCW president 2006–2007

*My first and most*

blessed memory would have to be the first time I attended any function of OCW. It was a summer conference in the late 1980s. Kathy and I had been prayed over at our church, and the visiting pastors had told us we were to be “scribes in the house of the Lord.” We were excited and saw OCW as a pathway to that adventure. We couldn’t both afford to attend the conference, so I went alone. I was shocked when I arrived to find more than 100 women and only nine men.



## Daughter of the Lord by Duane “DJ” Young

*To my surprise* I was one of only nine men among 100 women. I had just arrived and registered to attend my first writers’ conference. My uneasiness showed up the next day as I attended my first small-group teaching on writing personal stories.

I made a comment to the teacher about all the women. Her response was, “Just get to know them. They are only writers.” With that verbal admonition, I walked out to the parking lot and saw one of my fellow group members getting into her car to drive down the hill to the dining room for lunch.

I walked over and asked if I could ride down the hill with her. She said, “Okay,” and I got in.

As she slowly drove down the narrow road, she said to me, “I noticed you yesterday when you registered, and the Lord told me you had a word for me.”

I didn’t know what to say, so I simply said I would pray. Later that night, I found a quiet place to be alone and I began to pray for her. I knew some things about her because of her sharing in our morning class together: She was in her fifties, had been raised in an alcoholic family, had become an alcoholic, was now a recovered alcoholic, and was born again.

I began to pray. I prayed the same prayer over and over again. “Lord, what do you want to say to her?” I was concerned that my background in social work would keep me from hearing the Lord. My tendency would be to counsel her from my intellect and not hear the Lord and what He would like to say.

Finally, I “sensed” the Lord saying to me: “Say this to her: ‘Daughter of the Lord! Daughter of the Lord! Daughter of the Lord!’” Could that really be the Lord? Would a phrase like

that, seemingly out of the blue, make any sense to anyone? I had nothing else, so I went to bed.

The next day after lunch, the conference was over and I looked around for my writer friend. I found her packing her things into the trunk of her car. I went up to her and said, “You said to me yesterday that the Lord had a word for you.”

“Yes!” she replied.

“I prayed last night and the Lord told me to say this to you: ‘Daughter of the Lord!’” As I said those words, she began to cry. (I knew I had to say those same words two more times.) I continued, “Daughter of the Lord! Daughter of the Lord!” She was crying even more by now.

I asked her what “Daughter of the Lord!” meant to her. This was what she said:

“Last night I stayed up and talked with the other writers in my room. I told them about my life and how when I was a little girl I would ask my dad if I was his daughter and he would say, ‘Go ask your mother.’ I would ask my mother and she would say, ‘Go ask your father.’ It was always an issue. When I was 21, my father died and he left a will. In his will it said that I was not his daughter.”

Quietly, I asked her, “So what does, ‘Daughter of the Lord!’ mean to you today?”

She replied through her tears, “Finally, a father has claimed me as his own.”

This is the story of the first OCW summer conference DJ Young attended.

OCW owes a debt of gratitude to the following people who directed these summer conferences:

Stanley Baldwin and Sally Stuart ~ 1989

Kristen Ingram and Deborah Hedstrom ~ 1990-1991

Russell Pierson and Patricia Rushford ~ 1992-1993

Patricia Rushford and Birdie Etchison ~ 1994

Kristen Ingram ~ 1995-1996

Sandy Cathcart ~ 1997-1998, 2002, 2004

DJ Young ~ 1999-2001

Patricia Rushford ~ 2005-2010

Lindy Jacobs ~ 2011-2013



## Chapter Four 1993-2002

*By its fourth decade,* volunteers in the Oregon Association of Christian Writers had established a solid foundation for the organization. Three times a year, OACW held one-day conferences featuring a keynote speaker and afternoon workshops. For many years the meetings were free or very low cost because the not-for-profit volunteer organization had little overhead expenses. Often each seasonal conference had a theme, such as encouraging writers to make a difference through quality, integrity, and witness. Other themes focused on persistence, faith, trust, overcoming discouragement, writing to heal, using the gifts God gave, and dreaming the impossible dream and sharing it with the world.

After providing encouragement and training to writers for more than 30 years, OACW saw the fruits of that labor fulfilled as many of its members became published writers. Patricia Rushford, who coordinated summer conferences and taught workshops, keynoted the fall 1995 conference, teaching writers “How to Make a Living Writing.”

Newsletters reported the good news of publishing successes so other OACW members could share in the celebration with their colleagues. Many saw their devotionals, poems, articles, columns, short stories, and photos published. While some authors saw their debut novels in print, prolific



A group of conferees

writers signed copies of their fourth, eighth, or 18th published books.

For example, Linda Shands published her fourth novel in 1995, and the 1990s brought

Lois Erickson's historical novels about women of the Bible, *Leah*, *Zipporah*, and *Hannah*, to readers. Elsie Larson, who was selected as Mount Hermon's Writer of the Year in 2001, had her *Bombus the Bumblebee* books for children and her World War II historical novels published, including *Dawn's Early Light*.

Harvest House published Helen Haidle's children's book, *Sleepy-Time Rhymes*, co-illustrated by her husband, David, and daughter, Elizabeth, and her book, *What Would Jesus Do?* was on the Christian best-seller list for three months. Linda J. Sattgast's books, *When Stars Come Out* and *Teach Me about Jesus*, landed among the top 100 best-selling children's books, according to *Bookstore Journal*, and she signed a contract with Multnomah Publishers for a toddler's version of *The Rhyme Bible*.

Birdie Etchison's eighth novel, *The Sea Beckons*, was released by Heartsong Presents, and Bethany House published a new book by Poppy Smith, *Keep Growing: Turn the Ho-Hum into a Life-Changing Spiritual Journey*, and a new novel by Bette Nordberg, *Pacific Hope*. Multnomah Publishers released Kristen Johnson Ingram's novel, *Angel in the Senate*, and Loyola Press published her 18<sup>th</sup> book—one on the spirituality of aging.

In fact, the success of OACW members prompted



Julie Johnson and Petey Prater

changes at the book table.

“I remember when the OCW book table filled one end of one table,” Sally Stuart wrote in 1995.

“Now, with so many members having books

published, we’re lucky if we can fit them all on three tables. With so much expansion, we’re also ready for some changes. Up until now we haven’t charged a fee to the writers for selling their books, but this service is beginning to cost the organization, so starting with the February conference we will charge authors a small percentage of their sales.”

For her part, Sally Stuart continued producing her *Christian Writers’ Market Guide* each year and teaching at writers’ conferences throughout the United States.

OCW also produced a poetry chapbook entitled *Wordsongs* in 2000, an effort spearheaded by Gail Denham and Elsie Larson that featured many OCW writers.

OACW members often served as keynoters at the one-day conferences to save money and tap into talent within the organization.

Typically the group flew in a keynoter once a year, usually for the fall conference in Portland since it was closest to the airport.



A gathering of OCW members

Keynote speaker at the winter 1996 conference was another OCW success story, Melody Carlson, who worked as editorial project manager for Questar Publishers and had published more than 30 books, including *How to Start a Quality Childcare Business in Your Home* and a young adult novel, *Jessica*. She gave keynote addresses on “Writing from What You Know” and “Putting What You Know into a How-to Book.”

Birdie Etchison, an early OACW member who had served as recording secretary, vice president, treasurer, and president, spoke about “Five Rules of Writing” at the spring 1997 one-day conference. In the early 1990s, she and Pat Rushford began coordinating a popular Writers Weekend at the Beach, which is still held every year near Ocean Shores in Washington.

During the winter of 1998, program coordinator Elsie Larson lined up well-known marketing experts to teach members about “Selling Our Writing in the Changing Marketplace,” including Judith White, Northwest sales and marketing director for Thomas Nelson Publishers, who spoke about “How Books Reach the Readers,” and Sally Stuart, who discussed “The Latest Changes and Directions in Christian Publishing.” Pat Rushford talked about “Changing with the

#### BRINGING OCW ONLINE

When Angella Foret Diehl joined OCW in 1997, she was, in her own words, “wet behind the ears.” A published author in computer, journalism, and trade publications, Angella found out about OCW through her church’s distribution of the local Christian monthly newspaper, *Christian News Northwest*. “I was a bundle of nerves at the first conference,” Angella remembers, “but left with a song in my heart.”

Angella joined OCW not long after, working with OCW newsletter editor (and fellow critique group member) Tom Luther as the newsletter’s layout director.  
(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)



Tom and Angella enjoyed a wonderful working relationship for several years before his retirement, and they continue to cherish their longtime friendship.

In late 1999, the OCW board mentioned the possibility of a website for the organization. By then, Angella had left the corporate world for life as a freelancer, working at home with an adorable toddler. With the newsletter duties transferred to a new team, Angella volunteered to take over the organization's website.

The first official OCW website was established in the fall of 1999, with a basic website and contact form. Since then, the website has gone through many changes—as have Angella's duties. In addition to serving as OCW's webmaster, Angella also functions as the technical coordinator for conferences as well as serving the association as advisor on technical matters behind the scenes. Angella's favorite OCW memory is Sue Miholer, OCW's business manager, during one frantic session, saying, "You and I are like ducks; we're calm on the surface and paddling furiously underneath."

"The best part of OCW," Angella says, "is the people." She considers working with the staff, faculty, editors, agents, conferees, on-site staff, business partners—sharing the Lord as a servant—a blessing.

### Changing Market."

Other one-day conference keynoters during OACW's fourth decade included Stan Baldwin, Rick Booye, Elsie Larson, Kristen Ingram, Sandy Harding, and Mona Gansberg Hodgson, an award-winning author and director of the Glorietta Christian Writers Conference. The winter 1993 conference had to be canceled because of poor weather, so the planned program was moved to that fall.

Presidents during the fourth decade included Marcia A. Mitchell (Nootenboom) (1993–1995), Kristen Johnson



One of OCW's first logos

Ingram (1995–1996), David A. Faber (1996–1997), and Deborah Hedstrom, who finished Faber's term and served through 2002.

Karan Gleason served as OCW's historian, gathering stories, photos, brochures, and clippings about the organization's first 30 years. OCW set up memorial scholarship funds to honor writers Janice Hermansen, Lodece Hill, and Geri Mitch and to help writers attend conferences.

While Karan captured the past, Angella Foret Diehl took OCW into the future by developing its first website. She worked with Kristen Ingram to transfer the domain name to the association and developed the website, which went live in the summer of 2001.

Just as the one-day conferences grew, so did the annual summer conference, which took place at Aldersgate Conference Center the first five years. It moved to the Village Green in Cottage Grove for one year, and then to Western Baptist College in Salem (later known as Corban University). After taking a year off in 2003, OCW leaders moved the 2004 conference to the Canby Grove Conference Center, where it was held until the center was sold seven years later. In 2011 and 2012, OCW held the summer conference at Aldersgate, and in 2013, during its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, the summer conference will be held at Portland's Jantzen Beach Red Lion Hotel on the Columbia River. Conference tuition has increased from \$125 to \$415 over the past quarter century to keep up with costs.

One year, in conjunction with the summer conference, Stan Baldwin organized a special track for pastors to learn

more about writing. Another year, David Sanford provided special training prior to the main conference.

Every summer conference has drawn editors from major Christian publishers and now includes agents too. Best-selling authors have been summer conference speakers, including Francine Rivers, Melody Carlson, Angela Hunt, Lisa Samson, Lonnie Hull DuPont, Susan May Warren, Cec Murphey, and Bill Myers. OCW strives to bring members top-quality teachers and publishing VIPs to assist writers in their craft and ministry. Many return year after year such as Sherri Langton of *Bible Advocate* and Paul Smith of *LIVE*.

The themes change each year, always encouraging writers to reach out, strive for excellence, let their light shine, write from the heart, and focus on the Lord for inspiration, courage, strength, and perseverance.

Each day at OCW's summer conferences begins and ends with worship, reaffirming the entire reason for the conference.

Marilyn Rhoads and Gail Denham



Sharon James floating the river at Canby Grove



### OCW'S SAFETY NET COMES WITH A SERVANT'S HEART

Each of OCW's three one-day conferences and the summer conference serve well over 100 to 150 people each year. Several hundred members of OCW pay dues annually and pay to attend each conference. Arriving attendees and newcomers are welcomed by registrar Sue Miholer with their name tag or an enrollment form and payment instructions. She is OCW's business manager, who expertly maintains the membership database and attends to business details.

The OCW board approves conference venues for which Sue negotiates terms, menus, and meeting-room locations. She coordinates appointed staff, who set up signs and place notices on doors listing each workshop. Sue and the treasurer count income, which Sue deposits so the treasurer can pay the bills.

Sue was introduced to OCW by former president Marcia Mitchell (Nootenboom), who led a writing group Sue attended in 1995-1996. Sue's first summer conference was at Western Baptist College in Salem in 1997, but she was present only part of the time as her first grandchild was born that week in Salem.

In 2000, when Debbie Hedstrom was president, Sue served as treasurer, a position she held for four years. Sue also worked on the 2002 and 2004 summer conferences with Sandy Cathcart. As membership secretary for OCW, Sue served as conference registrar and gradually began taking on the load as OCW's first business manager. The board authorized a small stipend in appreciation of her service in this appointed position, which, unlike elected officers, has no term limit. Her performance is evaluated annually by the OCW board.

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Sue also regularly writes and sells devotionals, and she reviews practically every piece published by OCW. She operates Picky, Picky Ink, her freelance writing and editing business. Many OCW writers have used her editing services, and Sue estimates she has edited 50 books for individuals and publishers. She also teaches workshops on writing devotionals and on editing.

In addition to writing, Sue worked with special education students in the Salem-Keizer School District for almost 20 years—seven of those as a school bus driver. At the beginning of 2013 she retired from subbing as a classroom assistant.

Just about everyone in OCW who has attended a conference this century knows Sue, since she welcomes and interacts with most at registration. When problems arise, Sue is the go-to person. Nothing seems to ruffle her feathers!

# Memories

Marcia Mitchell Nootenboom, Golden Valley, Ariz.  
OCW president 1993–1995

*My favorite memory* is my time as president of OCW. (By the way, my name then was Marcia A. Mitchell. I remarried several years after my husband died, and now live in Arizona.) Whenever possible, I go to Oregon for the conferences in the summer.

Dave Faber, Stanwood, Wash.,  
OCW president 1996–1997

*My most stunning* OCW memory is from the 2001 summer conference in Salem. At the end of the conference, Geneva Iijima said to me, “Dave, I have to tell you something. . . . My friend will kill me . . . but I have to tell you. You shouldn’t have to be alone anymore.” (My wife of almost 40 years had passed on Home in 1996, after a long time with lymphoma.) “Would you like to meet my friend?” Geneva asked. I replied, hesitantly, something like, “Well . . . uhh . . . okay . . . I guess.” (What else could a guy say?)

Fast forward to the 2002 summer conference, again in Salem at Western Baptist College. I am there with Geneva’s longtime friend since Simpson College days, Febe Berglund,

who is now my precious wife, Febe Faber (“has a nice ring to it,” some folks say). We had met on July 2, about two weeks after the 2001 conference. In three days we knew our Savior had brought us together through Febe’s longtime friend and my recent friend, Geneva. We were engaged July 14 and married November 3, 2001. (For more of the story, ask Geneva, Febe, or me.)

Ellen Poole, Brush Prairie, Wash.

*My earliest memory* of OCW was in 1997, when I finally mustered the courage to show up at a one-day conference. I’d often heard OCW mentioned at my writers’ critique group at church, but I resisted, fearing I’d feel out of place among all those “famous authors.” I expected big egos and self-promotion, but instead discovered writers who welcomed and encouraged me . . . writers who were serious about their craft, but even more serious about honoring the Lord with their gift. Instead of a competitive spirit, I noticed a heart for mentoring, and I will forever be grateful for the tools and knowledge gained from attending conferences through the years.

It’s hard to choose a favorite OCW memory, as there are so many wonderful ones to choose from, but I’m especially fond of summer conferences (summer camp for grownups). After attending my first coaching conference in the summer of ’98, I became hooked! I discovered that not only do OCW folks know their writing profession, they also know how to fellowship and have fun! And they know how to pray and worship. I am thankful that OCW has allowed me to serve in leading worship and entertainment capacities during conferences. I will always treasure the memory of performing several episodes of the musical soap opera “Wrighter on the Loose” during the 2005 summer conference. I played the role of “Wanda Bea Wrighter” and Pat Rushford played the

wise “Fairy God-Mentor” who took novice writer Wanda and launched her to publishing success.

Helen Haidle, Nashville, Tenn.

*Thank You,* Lord, for prayer partners!

We’d just finished lunch during the second day of the 1994 OCW summer conference. I phoned my husband to find out if he had heard any news about our current book project with a Christian publisher. The news was devastating. Tears ran uncontrolled down my face. How could I go to the next workshop session in this condition? How could I even stay at the conference?

Then I remembered. The summer conference included a prayer ministry. Finding Eva Gibson in the dining area, I explained our situation to her. David and I were under contract with a publisher for a major 256-page children’s book. But, two months after handing in the final manuscript (which was approved), a new editor and a new publishing committee had decided on a new direction for the book. They asked me to write a new manuscript. But the two months David had already spent illustrating the first book were now wasted. He had to start over also.

After we spent two more months rewriting and re-illustrating, the publisher had phoned David with the news that they were canceling the contract. Worst of all, they told David that *all* the advance payments were to be returned—from both of us. But that money had already been used to pay living expenses for the past five months of our writing and illustrating full time.

Eva listened as I insisted I could not—would not—write any more. I was devastated. I couldn’t even pray. Eva hugged me and spent time in prayer for me. Her loving concern and her confidence in the Lord’s ability to redeem the whole situation made all the difference. Eva’s prayers revived me and



enabled me to catch the end of the next session . . . and to continue to write for the Lord for only one reason—because *He* had given me the assignment to write.

Later, other authors taught me to make sure every publishing contract included a clause that the first half of any advance would be nonrefundable.

Tracie Heskett, Vancouver, Wash.

*My earliest memory* is at Aldersgate sometime around the 1995 summer conference. My favorite memory is summer conferences at Canby, worship/devotions with Tom Fuller, and floating/swimming in the river.

Ann Shorey, Sutherlin, Ore.

*Before I signed* up for my first conference in 2000 (I think that was the year), I called the contact person and asked if it was okay for me to come since I wasn't published. He assured me that I'd be most welcome—and I was. The conference that year was held at what is now Corban University in Salem.



My favorite memory, and still my favorite part of the conferences, is meeting new people and making friends. I have some *very* dear friends today whom I first met at OCW summer conferences.

Carolyn Bolz, Riverside, Calif.

*I attended* my first OACW—as it was called back then—summer conference at Aldersgate in 1994. My mother was very worried because I was flying more than

1,000 miles from Southern California to Portland to go to a conference where I didn't know anyone! But after having dinner the first evening with Sally Stuart, her husband, and other friendly folks, I felt sure that everything was going to be fine.

Birdie Etchison was the leader of the coaching class I was assigned to during the conference. For my class project, I wrote a humorous article about all the things that had gone wrong on my trip to Oregon. I ended up reading my story at the closing brunch and was thrilled by the positive comments I received. When I returned home to Southern California, I submitted my story to *Christian Communicator*. "How NOT to Look Your Best at a Writers' Conference" was published in the March 1995 issue.

### Betty Chapman Plude, Independence, Ore.

*Moving To* Independence 20 years ago, the first thing I did was check in with Oregon Christian Writers. Wow! In one week there was going to be a conference in Turner at Aldersgate Conference Center.

I called to sign up for yet another beginners' workshop. Full! The only coaching class opening left: "Write Your Life Story" with Joe Ryan. I didn't care about writing my life story, let alone spending three days at it. Joe Ryan and OCW changed my life forever.

For 20 years I have taught a life-story writing class, "Write It Before You Lose It," at the San Diego Christian Writers Conference, in New Mexico, and three times at OCW conferences; and along with all of those classes I taught "How to Capture a Great Interview." I have taught life-story writing at the Independence Public Library for eight years. (Officials awarded five grants and chose my class to teach at their libraries.)

Because of Joe Ryan and the encouragement of OCW,

I have written two cover-page author interviews and a how-to article for *Christian Communicator*. Focus on the Family published one of my childhood experiences. There were newspaper and magazine articles, five compilation book contributions, and more.

All the years along the way, OCW has helped me improve on what I do through its conferences and the newsletter.

Now, I have started my first novel. So many members of OCW I look up to started writing novels less than 20 years ago and have anywhere from one to many novels published. Guess what—they started at an OCW conference.

Thank you OCW and Joe Ryan for the memories. (Joe, we miss you.)



Charlotte Kardokus, Salem, Ore.  
OCW newsletter editor 2005-2008

*I'll never forget* the day, back in the mid-1990s, when I read a tiny article in the Salem *Statesman Journal* announcing an upcoming meeting for a group called Oregon Christian Writers.

Finally! I'd found a group to help me. They'd tell me exactly what to do. I'd become an excellent writer. Get published. Get rich. Everyone would know my name. I'd be famous.

A week or so later, I went to that meeting. It was exactly what I'd expected. And more. I happily filled out a membership application and continued to attend conferences. I listened intently to the special speakers and workshop teachers. I wrote. And rewrote. My confidence grew. I even entered an OCW writing contest and I placed. Shortly afterward, I had a publishing first. What an epic event! Family. Friends. I didn't fail to tell anyone about my success.

I'd finally reached my goal to be published, but where was the happiness I'd expected? Something seemed off balance.

I began to take a closer look at OCW members Elsie Larson, Sally Stuart, Birdie Etchison, and others. All well-recognized and accomplished writers. It was then I realized how they'd all played a huge part in my growth as a writer. They'd encouraged me. Gave me tidbits of wisdom here and there. Writing tips. Shouldn't I do the same for others coming along on this writing journey?

The moment I began to serve others, I found the joy that had eluded me. I have served twice as the OCW newsletter managing editor and also on the committee for several summer conferences. I have taught workshops, and I have presented the morning devotional for a conference.

I would encourage every OCW member to find a way to serve and encourage others. We're on this journey together and the rewards are amazing. This is what OCW is about—to freely serve and help others while we work to accomplish our own goals.

Today, almost 20 years after I wrote my name on the OCW membership application, my ride continues—a journey that brings more to life than writing. My memories are the best!

Geni White, Eugene, Ore.

*I first visited* OCW about 13 years ago in Eugene and sat next to Zena Caulley, who invited me to Writer's Dozen critique group, which probably was formed about the same time as OCW, 50 years ago, and which I still attend.

My next visit was to the 2001 summer conference. I'd been writing for a year and was sure I'd penned a great American mystery novel. An editor from Multnomah Publishers graciously encouraged me, although she could tell my writing was *not* good. If she hadn't I might have quit because of a *very* bad time at another critique group in Eugene (not Writer's Dozen).

Since that first conference, thanks to OCW and everything I studied on good writing, I have been published multiple times. But I often forget to tell the newsletter editor about those publications—I've maybe done so once in all these years. Sigh.

Every time I attend another OCW conference, I learn and grow. I've learned from one-on-one conferences with Paul Smith, Karen Ball, Sandy Cathcart, Linda Clare, Nick Harrison, Debbie Hedstrom-Page, Marion Duckworth, and dozens of others, all willingly helpful, encouraging and knowledgeable. Paul Smith accepted my "first-ever paid" article (for *LIVE*) during an OCW conference—the article that helped me believe I was a real writer, although I'd been published first at age 21.

I'd "accidentally" met Francine Rivers at the San Francisco Airport one summer when we both flew to Baltimore, and I told her about how good OCW conferences were. I was thrilled to build on a relationship with Francine a year later when she keynoted at OCW, the first time shy me had the courage to spend extended time chatting with a *famous* author. That was an unforgettable OCW time for me.

OCW also allowed me the opportunity for a very favorite activity—to teach (the niche of book reviewing was my latest workshop).

Nora Peacock, Newberg, Ore.

*How To I* say thank you to Oregon Christian Writers? Let me count the ways . . . or maybe, in the interest of time and space, I would do better to share just a few specifics.

About 15 years ago (time flies when you're having fun), I jumped off the



high dive and attended my first-ever OCW conference—a summer coaching conference, no less. Feeling like I'd landed in the deep end, I came up for air between workshops, coaching classes, and keynote addresses, just long enough to catch my breath and jump headlong into the next amazing learning experience. At week's end, I arrived home feeling overwhelmed with new writing knowledge and treasured friendships that continue to this day. Even more astounding, I knew that I had met with Holy God—the Author and Finisher of my faith.

Numerous conferences later, I float on waters of sweet memories:

Of sitting in on Debbie Hedstrom-Page's coaching class on article writing. Her passion for this genre sparked a fire in me that time has not extinguished.

Of learning about devotional writing from Marcia Mitchell (now Marcie Nootenboom). A small, ceramic shoe still sits beside my computer, a gift from her that says, "I believe in you. You'll get that book done!"

Of feeling safe to be a newbie as, time and again, I overheard encouraging words from seasoned writers, editors, and agents to those who, like me, were the new kids on the block.

Of getting paid for the first time for my writing. Thank you, Paul Smith. A framed copy of the \$100 check from *LIVE* picks me up on the days I wonder if I'm really meant to pursue this wonderful craft.

Of not one word of criticism or anger when *moi*, while being introduced to teach for the first time at a conference, bumped the sound board causing it to fall over with a reverberating BANG! The bloopers didn't end there . . . and neither did the words of comfort and encouragement.

Thank you, OCW, for being there for people like me who flinch when faced with the common question referring

to employment, “And what do you do?” Because of God’s hand working through the many who lead and serve with excellence, I dare to respond, “I am a writer!”



Sue Miholer, Keizer, Ore.  
OCW business manager

*My funniest* summer conference memory was at Western Baptist right around the turn of the century. Debbie Hedstrom was president and DJ Young was the conference director. Chip MacGregor was either already at the conference and had to leave or he sent word that he wasn’t going to make it to the conference at all. His son had been injured and Chip was needed at home. It was time for Debbie to offer a prayer either to end the session or over the next meal. She asked DJ if he knew Chip’s son’s name. Jokingly, he said, “Block” (without adding his allusion to “chip off the old block”). Debbie proceeded to pray that God would watch over Block. Talk about a “milk through the nose” moment. Those of us who had heard the exchange could hardly contain ourselves.

Jeannie St. John Taylor, Portland, Ore.

*I determined* in the spring of the year I met my editor Dan Penwell at the OCW summer conference that I would not waste any more money on conferences. Would *not!*

I had cried buckets of tears about my writing over the preceding year and, even before the crocuses lifted purple heads though my garden, accepted the fact that no one would ever want to publish anything of mine.

No one. Ever. Anything.

No one wanted my stories. No one wanted my illustrations. No one wanted *me!* I was selfishly spending money my family needed. I tossed the conference brochure in the trash and sank into my recliner with a novel, strangely calm for a woman who'd just given up the dream she'd pursued for nearly 20 years.

That's when God nudged me. I can't tell you how I knew He was speaking, but I clearly understood His instructions. "Pay the money and go." I'd like to say I went cheerfully, but I was still a little angry about obeying by paying when I walked onto the conference grounds.

I met Dan Penwell the first night a few minutes into the first meeting of the week. When the gathering broke into small groups to get acquainted, Dan was in my group of eight. We took an immediate liking to one another.

Within three months he sent me a contract for my first adult-level book, *How to Be a Praying Mom*. The book is still in print, and Dan's wife, Gloria, whom I met the next summer, is still one of my best friends.

I cherish the friendship with the Penwells even more than the five books published with Dan as my editor. After vacationing with Dan and Gloria every summer for years, Ray and I cried with Gloria at Dan's funeral in Michigan. OCW gave me more than publishing credits; OCW gave me a friendship that will resume someday in heaven.

Thank you OCW.

## Steve Barcliff, Kregel Publications

*I represented* Kregel Publications at OCW for the first time in 2002. The conference was held on the campus of a Christian college in the Salem area, as I recall. Those attending the conference stayed in the college's dorm, and to take a shower was a communal affair. Being a private



person, I most likely snuck in for my first shower quite late in the evening or early in the morning. I remember hoping few men would be using the showers at the time. My plan was to take care of business and vacate the room with little or no conversation—there would be plenty of opportunities for meetings and conversations later, and in more appropriate surroundings. However, my effort to keep a low profile was thwarted when I found myself sharing the showers with Cec Murphey.

Has Cec ever met anyone who didn't become a fast friend? We talked about our families, my writing (I was finishing a children's devotional that I would publish with Kregel), and his writing (a book that Cec cowrote with Don Piper, *90 Minutes in Heaven*, was gaining traction at the time). We had a good conversation. I'm probably not at my socializing best in a community shower, but Cec and I became friends, and we later became publishing partners. Cec published *When a Man You Love Was Abused* with Kregel in 2010; his sequel to that book, *Not Quite Healed*, released this year.

There have been a lot of great memories. I'll mention a couple of them and let someone decide which one to use (there is no rule that says an editor's writing can't be edited).

I have met many Kregel authors at OCW. I won't try to list them here because I would inadvertently leave out someone. I had been doing the conference circuit for a few years before attending OCW for the first time, and as we were in the process of building a children's line at Kregel, many authors had picture books to show me. Publishing a picture book is an expensive proposition—and a significant gamble—for a publisher. I know to be wary when talking to an author about his or her picture book, particularly if the author is also the illustrator (because there aren't many people who have both high-level art and writing skills).

I was wearing my skeptical-editor hat when Jeannie St.

John Taylor sat down to meet with me. Jeannie was confident as she made her pitch about a manuscript she'd written. It was Scripture-based, read well, and contained a strong element of humor, a plus for a children's book. OK, she could write. But she also called herself an artist/illustrator. When she showed me some sample illustrations, I was hooked. Jeannie was the complete package. I think the first picture book Jeannie published with us was *Am I Praying?*, which has been very successful. She went on to publish many more children's titles with Kregel. And the best part of having met Jeannie? She and her husband have become close friends of mine and my wife over the years. In my opinion, good relationships trump even good books. You can quote me on that.

I probably shouldn't admit this (my apologies in particular to then conference director Sandy Cathcart, who will sadly swing her head from side to side when she reads this), but one of my favorite memories is of skipping an evening keynote address and sneaking off with Marita Littauer and several other people (I think Chip MacGregor may have been a partner in crime) and getting ice cream in a nearby town. I'm sure we talked about books, adding a small measure of legitimacy to our unauthorized field trip. It was great fun.

## Chapter Five 2003–2012

*OCW's fifth decade* started with a celebration of the organization's first four decades during the fall 2003 conference, which took place at the Ramada Inn near the Portland airport and featured best-selling author Lauraine Snelling. That year OCW offered a unique contest, which allowed winning authors to meet with Lauraine to discuss their manuscripts.

In keeping with the conference theme, “Memories: Remembering What God Has Done and Pressing on in Faith,” Program Coordinator Mary Hake tapped into the rich experiences of early OCW members by asking them to teach workshops. Among these were Birdie Etchison, Stan Baldwin, Patricia Rushford, Debbie Hedstrom-Page, Elsie Larson, Sally Stuart, Eva Gibson, and Elaine Wright Colvin.



(Left to right): New OCW Board following elections at the OCW 40th Anniversary celebration, at the Portland Airport Ramada Hotel, October 2003, Sue Miholer, treasurer; Maxine Marsolini, recording secretary; Jennifer Anne F. Messing, president; Pamala J. Vincent, corresponding secretary; Mary Hampton, program coordinator.

“We can rejoice, knowing that our creative writing has been a witness to the truth of our faith, our Christian values and worldview,” said President Jennifer Anne F. Messing.

“I’d like to encourage you to keep looking upward and keep listening to God’s voice as you continue to pursue your publishing dreams.”

Eva Gibson shared a Writers doxology:


- Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.
- Praise Him all writers here below.
- Praise Him above, ye heavenly host.
- Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

On May 30, 2003, OCW submitted paperwork to the Oregon Secretary of State’s Corporation Division to officially adopt the assumed business name of Oregon Christian Writers (a change that had been informally adopted several years earlier). The official name of the corporation remains The Oregon Association of Christian Writers.

During this decade, membership fees rose to \$36 a year for an individual, \$48 for a couple, and \$24 for seniors and students. But increasing costs prompted the OCW leadership to propose a dues increase this anniversary year, which members approved at the winter 2013 conference. Membership fees now are \$60 a year for individuals under 62, \$35 for seniors and full-time students, and \$75 for a couple, which includes two people in the same family.

Every organization experiences growing pains at times as leaders change or volunteers wear out. Marion Duckworth offered leadership training in early 2008 to keep the organization she and others had helped build functioning

*Submitted 5/30/03*



Phone: (503) 898-2200  
Fax: (503) 378-3361

**Assumed Business Name—New Registration**

Secretary of State  
Corporation Division  
250 Capital St. NE, Suite 151  
Salem, OR 97310-3227  
Filings@oregon.com

REGISTRY NUMBER: 153467-94

In keeping with Oregon Statute 192.410-192.595, the information on the application is public record. We must release this information to all parties upon request and it may be posted on our website. For office use only.

Please Type or Print Legibly in Black Ink. Attach Additional Sheet if Necessary.

1) ASSUMED BUSINESS NAME (To be registered): OREGON CHRISTIAN WRITERS

2) DESCRIPTION OF BUSINESS (Primary business activity): STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION OF CHRISTIAN WRITERS

3) PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS (Street address, city, state, zip): 1075 WILLOW LAKE RD N KEIZER OR 97303

4) AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE (One name only): SUZANNE MINHOLE

5) MAILING ADDRESS FOR AUTHORIZED REP (Address, city, state, zip): Box 20147 KEIZER OR 97307-0147

6) REGISTRANTS/OWNERS (List name and street address of each person who will conduct or transact business under the assumed business name.)

Logo designed by Nancy Mink and in use from the late 1990s until 2012



well. She noted that “officers throughout the decades have worked hard to preserve the quality of the organization.” She quoted former presidents Elsie Larson and Birdie Etchison.

“We need to analyze where OCW is now in its development and consider what it may need to meet the change from small to large,” Elsie said. “The nature of the organization has been stretched in that we don’t have a chance to know so many new people well. Responsibilities do need to be spelled out more clearly and in more detail in the job description.”

Marion also recommended cultivating and mentoring newcomers to take leadership roles.



Mary Hake, Craig Soderquist, and Lindy Jacobs at 2004 Summer Conference in Canby

“A good leader is one who directs gently and is open to suggestion,” Birdie said. “He or she is to be firm and let the others know what is expected.”

“We serve because God calls us and we desire to help our writing peers,” Marion said. “As a past president, I readily admit that I thought that title would look good on my résumé. While that may also be a valid reason to invest your



Paul Young and Ginni Kennedy

time, recognition can bring with it a growing sense of self-importance. For those who feel completely inadequate the way I did, that may not be a problem. However, the more experienced we become, the more we are tempted with self-importance and a ‘my way or the highway’ attitude. Let’s evaluate ourselves periodically.”

She went on to note that “at regular intervals, leaders should read Philippians 2:1–11 and Ephesians 4:23–32, list the qualities of a good leader, and apply them personally.”

Noting that Jesus is the example for leaders, she said, “Every ability that any of us has came originally from God. May we respond with humility and gratitude.”

The one-day conferences continued, featuring well-known writers such William Paul Young, author of *The Shack*, whose presentation at the Salem Red Lion Hotel drew the largest one-day conference attendance, around 200. Other keynoters have included Luci Shaw, Jane Kirkpatrick, Bob Welch, Randy Ingermanson, Gail Sattler, Bill and Nancie Carmichael, Daniel E. Kline and Kay Marshall Strom, Cindy Martinusen



DJ Young and Angie Hunt, 2007

Coloma, Eva Marie Everson, Robin Jones Gunn, Poppy Smith, James L. Rubart, Clint Kelly, Karen Ball, Colleen Coble, Davis Bunn, Melody Carlson, and Stephen Bly.

The one-day



Logo redesigned  
by Nicole Miller  
in 2012

conference fee for members was only \$8, plus another \$8 for lunch. As costs increased, OCW leaders discovered they were losing money on the one-day conferences, so in 2010 the cost to attend increased to \$25 for members, plus lunch.

After a one-year hiatus in 2003, the OCW summer conference resumed in the summer of 2004 with best-selling author Francine Rivers as keynote. Director Sandy Cathcart was thrilled to hold it at Canby Grove Conference Center, with main sessions in the tabernacle where A.W. Tozer had once preached. A Sunday evening keynote was added that year and open to the public. Other summer conference keynoters during this past decade include James Scott Bell, Denny Boultinghouse and Karen Ball, Angela E. Hunt, Stephen Bly and Melody Carlson, Lisa Samson, Bill Myers and Jeff Gerke, Mindy Starns Clark and Susan May Warren, James L. Rubart and Cecil Murphey, with Liz Curtis Higgs and Georgene Rice speaking in 2013.

These four-day coaching conferences continued at Canby Grove through 2010, then OCW moved them to Aldersgate Conference Center in Turner. A dozen or so genre-specific three-day coaching classes and



Susan May Warren and  
Chip MacGregor



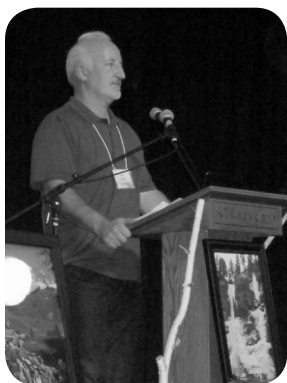


Randy Ingermanson

around 35 one-hour workshops offer hands-on instruction in all areas of the writing business. Courses focus on fiction, the largest market genre of Christian books at this time, as well as nonfiction books, articles, writing for children, devotions, blogging, poetry, and even photography.

At the last few summer conferences, attendees have been able to submit proposals in advance to editors and publishers who are on the cutting edge of the publishing world. An amazing number of writers have been asked to submit entire manuscripts. Professional photo shoots have also been available to authors.

In this day of great change, publishing houses that accept agented-only manuscripts are also accepting work from writers who regularly attend worthwhile conferences such as OCW. It indicates the writers are continually learning and growing their skills and can be depended on to meet deadlines. OCW writers don't waste years of effort with past methods because they are in touch with what is needed and desired today, and they're familiar with the modern technology required to fulfill those expectations.



James L. Rubart

“It’s always special coming to OCW summer conferences,” said Paul Smith, managing editor for the Assemblies of God publishing arm. “I get ministered to as much or more than those I speak with.”

Sherri Langton, associate editor of *Bible Advocate*, said about 2012, “OCW is always the highlight of my year, and this year didn’t disappoint. Had another meaningful coaching





Sherri Langton and Maxine Marsolini

time with my class. What a blessing!”

OCW summer conferences continue to achieve the initial goal of “building and training writing professionals to serve in God’s Kingdom.”

“OCW summer conference is more evidently focused on the spiritual element of excellent writing and our true source of inspiration than any other conference I’ve taught at . . . and everyone on staff I spoke with seemed fully engaged in honoring Christ and driven to live out their call in their work and own writing,” said Mick Silva, an author and editor.

Author and 2012 keynoter James L. Rubart stated, “There’s something about OCW that makes it a standout among writing conferences. It’s a tangible sense of the Spirit moving, inspiring and drawing people deeper into Jesus as they journey along the path of publishing. It’s always one of my favorite weeks of the year.”



Louise Lankford-Dunlap and Sonia G. Duraturo

Sonia G. Duraturo of London, England, said this about the 2012 summer conference: “The coaching classes, the teachings, and the speaking with professionals completely changed my whole perspective on my writings. I went to the conference to learn, not to pitch, and I came out with a clear and strong vision of exactly what I want to write. I learned more in three days than I had learned in the eight years I had been writing.”

OCW continues teaching writers, both new and experienced, through its three one-day conferences and its popular four-day summer conference.

## *A Writer's Psalm*

by Jennifer Anne F. Messing

Lord, let my writing light shine  
in this dark world.  
May my words radiate  
Your warmth and love.  
May my insights illuminate  
the deep truths of Your Word.  
May my poems glow  
with divine beauty and  
grace.

May my tales and vignettes  
sparkle with godly wisdom  
and clearly enlighten  
unbelieving or unregenerate minds  
and draw—yes, even beckon them  
in time, to You—  
the True Light of the World,  
the One and Only most worthy  
of all honor and praise,  
Precious Savior,  
Bright and Morning Star,  
now and forever.

*"A Writer's Psalm" was first published in the  
winter 2006 OCW newsletter.*

# Memories

Chip MacGregor, MacGregor Literary Agency

*My favorite memory* is having this young woman talk with me about how I'd rejected her proposal, but she remained friendly and said that she wanted to talk about the industry. We did. I was impressed with her knowledge and hard work, and we would go on to become business partners. Sandra Bishop was running a freelance writing and editorial company at the time (this was about 2005), and since I had done that same thing, we struck up a conversation. Sandra started working with me, just helping with mail and packages while I was on the road, then with proposals and authors, and eventually she became an agent in her own right. We've been working together for seven years now. She is vice president of one of the 10 busiest literary agencies in the United States, and I couldn't ask for a better partner. I'll always be a fan of OCW because it gave me an opportunity to work with one of the best agents in the industry.

Nancey West, Lebanon, Ore.

*My favorite memory* of OCW is summer conference 2011. I enjoyed the camp setting and

discovered that God had certain people He wanted me to meet. I felt led by the Holy Spirit even though I didn't sell my book. I knew what I was doing was bringing God glory.

Duane "DJ" Young,  
OCW president from 2006 to 2007

*Kathy and I* loved serving the membership throughout the years we were with OCW. Most of the serving was as treasurer, three years as summer conference director, and one year as president. It didn't matter; we enjoyed being part of OCW. We loved each one-day conference. It was intense trying to get everyone registered, name tags, and lunch counts.

I was especially pleased when Sam Hall agreed to be our photographer. We had gone so many years without photos, and I wanted to change that.

The summer conference was extra special. From the treasurer's perspective, it was wonderful to come out financially in the black. Meeting with our writer friends was the highlight after registration. I must admit it took a long time for me to find my writing niche—wisdom4dads—but the Lord was faithful and in time we did find it.

Our greatest sadness was when the Lord had me step aside from being president. As a writers' organization we had been given much over the years from the Lord, and I felt the Lord would have us give to other writers throughout the world.

One of the Lord's blessings for OCW is that the organization has always had godly leadership—always putting the heart of God above personal desires. That is what has helped make OCW so long-lasting and such a blessing to its members.

Carolyn Bolz, Riverside, Calif.

*Five or six years ago* at an OCW summer conference, I attended Paul Smith's afternoon workshop on writing devotionals. Paul began the class by reading from a few articles that had been submitted to him by conference participants. I gasped in surprise when I heard the beginning of my story "Why Are You So Afraid?" that described what happened after I lost my teaching job. Following the workshop, Paul told me he wanted to publish my story in *LIVE*, the Sunday take-home paper from the Assemblies of God. Since that summer conference, six more of my articles and one of my poems have also appeared in *LIVE*.

Debbie Rempel, Dallas, Ore.

*Singing and leading* music with Sandy Cathcart at summer conference was my favorite part of OCW.

Louise Lankford-Dunlap, McMinnville, Ore.

*Bill Myers was our* keynote speaker at Canby Grove. On the last night of his presentation, he incorporated very loud and unusual music and noises at the conclusion of his address. I felt it down to my toes. It seemed to penetrate my whole being. At that moment I felt a strange tingling sensation on the outside of my right thigh. Wow! What an effect it was having on me! I reached my hand to the spot and discovered that I was getting a call on my cell phone in my pocket. I had programmed it to vibrate.

## Wendy Lawton, Books & Such Literary Agency

*My earliest memory* of OCW is July 1, 2006. Receiving a beautiful card in the mail from the OCW prayer team took my breath away with its specificity. I still have that card, signed by Eva Gibson and Petey Prater, tucked in my 2006 prayer journal. That prayer goes on—to this day I'm still receiving those things prayed for me.

My favorite memory of OCW is sitting with Lonnie Hull DuPont outside the coffee shop when, out of the blue, she said to me, "I'm thinking of looking for some biblical fiction." After I picked my chin off the table, I told her about Jill Eileen Smith's *Wives of David* series, which I'd been unable to sell. All I kept hearing was, "Biblical fiction doesn't sell." It turned out Lonnie had seen Jill's manuscript 20 years before (yes, Jill had faithfully been writing and submitting for 20 years), and Lonnie had helped Jill shape that first book.

Lonnie ended up buying the series, and it went on to be a bestseller and to open the door for biblical fiction again in the CBA. Now, with more than 13 books in the works, Jill continues to write what she always knew God called her to write. All of this came about because of a casual conversation over coffee at OCW.

## Ernie and Gloria Ediger, who recorded OCW sessions for several years, Kennewick, Wash.

*All of the people* at OCW are great, but they exceeded everything we could think. Summer conference 2008 started just five days after our son committed suicide. We were both in the worst of ways, asking all the "why" questions and "What did we miss seeing?" We got so many hugs and understanding remarks! Most of the people took time to pray with us, and we received so many cards, one of

which I still carry in my Bible and reread again and again. The group also gave us a gift of money that was needed for the expenses. I remember that as a highlight of a sharing of love. We would not have made it through without that love.

### Terry Burns, Hartline Literary Agency

*I attend quite* a few conferences each year, and OCW is one of my favorites. I have been invited to return several times and have enjoyed the peaceful setting, the quality of the attendees, the networking, and the caliber of the pitches I received in the one-on-one sessions. I have clients whom I acquired from these connections in my client group now. It's a good conference.

### Shirley Dechaine, Tualatin, Ore.

*My family retired* to Oregon in 2001, and I discovered Oregon Christian Writers about 2005. I remember the first one-day conference I attended. *So many Christians, and all of them writers? That means I'm not alone in this interest I have. They must feel as I do about writing. I doubt most of them are "published," but they sure are serious about their writing. And they're so friendly and accepting of me. I feel very comfortable here.*

I felt like I had found an organization where I fit, where others had the same questions I did. From the first conference on I have enjoyed being a part of OCW, and I have learned so many practical things about the writing craft. Because of family responsibilities with an adult special-needs son, I am not able to devote as much time to writing as I would like. My friends in OCW and my writing critique group have encouraged me not to give up but just to be as creative as I can in finding a time and place to write.

My all-time favorite conference was the summer conference I was able to attend. I discovered an abundance of opportunities there to ask questions, have personal writing projects looked at by editors and publishers, and learn from the morning coaching classes. Most impressive of all has been the members' sincere love for our Lord Jesus Christ and for each other that I have consistently experienced in OCW.

Sharon James, Beaverton, Ore.

*My earliest memory* of OCW is sitting next to a guy who was reading a book called *Werewolves in Their Youths* while waiting for Bette Nordberg to speak at fall conference 2005.

My favorite memory of OCW is inner-tubing in the creek with Gail Denham and friends at the summer conference at Canby Grove.



Petey Prater, Dallas, Ore.

OCW prayer team

*My earliest* memory of OCW is of Kristen Ingram directing an OCW conference in her bare feet and her shorts at Aldersgate.

My favorite memory of OCW is of Julie Zander jumping up and down in the dark one evening at Canby Grove Conference Center after two hours of intense conversation as I tried to convince her that Jesus loved her enough to die for even her. Fiiiiiiiiiiiiinally she got it and yelled, "I'm saved, I really am saved!" (High privilege!)



Julie McDonald Zander,  
Toledo, Wash.,  
OCW newsletter editor from  
2009 to 2012



*I was raised* Catholic and learned to love God and His Son, Jesus, who sacrificed Himself on the cross to save “us” from our sins, but poor self-esteem kept me from believing that He would have died for me.

I remember once telling a priest that I knew, without a doubt, when Jesus returned and saw two women working that I would be the one left behind. I told a Baptist pastor that I knew Jesus died on the cross to save us, but not me. He said, “So Jesus died on the cross to save everyone except for Julie Zander?” Put that way, it sounded rather stupid.

After joining OCW in 2002, I attended conferences only sporadically—when I saw a keynoter whose work I enjoyed, such as Francine Rivers, Lauraine Snelling, or Angela Hunt. I knew I needed to attend the 2007 summer conference, but wasn’t quite sure why. I didn’t do Christian writing per se, but felt I should use whatever talent I possess to glorify God.

I dreaded having a roommate I didn’t know, but found a beautiful blessing in Karen Dorsey. We talked about shame, poverty, and God’s will for our lives. She prayed with me two nights, and then Wednesday suggested we ask Petey Prater, an OCW prayer warrior, to pray with us.

Petey met us outside the Mount Hood Pavilion after the worship service and keynote and led us to a bench beneath a huge tree. She said God had told her this conference would be a time of healing for wounded people—those wounded spiritually, physically, mentally, and emotionally.

She asked what I was feeling, and I told her I knew Jesus

had died on the cross, but I had a hard time believing that the Lord accepted me. I didn't feel worthy or deserving. She said none of us comes before the Lord blameless; we are all sinners. She proceeded to share truths with me, which she wrote on a piece of paper, and walked me through Bible verses, which I read aloud. She asked each time if I believed that and accepted it. I did. I had a hard time, though, saying that I was saved—and believing it.

After she and Karen prayed, Petey said that Jesus would have suffered and died on that cross if I was the only person on earth. Wow. That was so powerful. I stood at the foot of the cross and Jesus washed away my sin. I felt cleansed, bathed in God's love, and so blessed. Petey asked me, "Are you saved?" I said, "Yes, I'm saved." She said, "I'm going to ask you tomorrow, 'Are you saved?' and what are you going to say?" I responded, "I'm saved."

During the closing ceremony, Pat Rushford asked if anyone had anything significant happen during the conference. I raised my hand, then walked to the podium.

"I've been a Christian for 40-plus years up here," I said, pointing to my head. "I knew Jesus suffered and died on the cross for you, and you, and you." I pointed to people in the audience. "But because of shame I felt from long ago, I could not accept that Jesus died for me. But God blessed me with a wonderful roommate in Karen, and she prayed for me. Then she and Petey prayed for me last night, and . . . I'm saved."



Jennifer Anne F. Messing, Portland, Ore.  
OCW president from 2002 to 2006

*My earliest* memory of OCW was at the fall conference in 1993 in Portland, the first writers' conference I ever attended. I'd been invited by a friend from church, OCW member Linda Sattgast. I was seven months pregnant with our second child and felt a bit apprehensive when I arrived. I was greeted by the registrar, Linda Shands, whose warm smile instantly made me feel welcome!

At lunchtime a friendly lady named Debbie Hedstrom sat by me and introduced herself. She asked me what I wrote. I told her I wrote articles, short stories, and poetry. I mentioned I'd had seven articles published in *Aglow* magazine in the Philippines, my country of birth and where I'd lived while single—before I moved to Portland after getting married.

Then, shyly and hesitantly, I added, "I've just had my first three poems accepted for publication here in the US."

Debbie smiled. Then I asked her what kind of writing she did. Debbie answered, "I've had over 200 articles published in numerous magazines." I was awed.

Four years later, in October 1997, after attending countless OCW workshops and garnering many more publication credits, I was elected to serve as OCW's recording secretary. I felt privileged to serve on the board with Debbie Hedstrom as president and work alongside several other gifted Christian authors. I learned so many valuable lessons about Christian leadership by merely observing Debbie's fine example.

I served as recording secretary for four years. In May 2002, while carpooling home from the OCW spring conference in Eugene, Stan Baldwin, the chairman of the

nominating committee that year, asked me, “Jennifer Anne, would you be willing to serve as OCW’s president?”

I felt nervous. *Why me, Lord?* I thought. And yet, while the task of serving as OCW president seemed daunting, I somehow sensed deep inside that this was something the Lord would have me do. After a month of praying and seeking the Lord, I told Stan, “Yes, I’m willing.”

From October 2002 until October 2006, I served as OCW president. These years of service were fruitful. The Lord blessed OCW with much growth in membership as well as in professional recognition in the Christian writing industry via exceptionally produced one-day conferences and an annual four-day summer conference too. The polished OCW newsletter, consistent website presence, and numerous author success stories also contributed to OCW’s growing reputation as a top-notch Christian writing organization.

How I thank the Lord for blessing my own writing career as well during the 20 years I’ve been a member of OCW. Today I have authored more than 200 articles and poems, (published in 60 different magazines) and two poetry gift books.



Lindy Jacobs, Bend, Ore.

OCW summer conference director  
2011 to present

*I heard about* OCW when I went to a Heart to Heart conference at Western Seminary where Robin Jones Gunn was the speaker. Through a series of referrals, I ended up on the phone with then summer conference director Sandy Cathcart, who spent at least half an hour answering my questions, and then she invited me to come to a conference at Trail Christian Fellowship in Eagle

Point the following September. Karen Ball was the speaker.

In 2003, I went to my very first OCW one-day fall conference, where I received encouragement from Lauraine Snelling about my first novel. I had entered the pre-conference contest for the opportunity to meet with Lauraine, and the day before the contest I heard that I had tied with another writer—actually an adorable writing team, Christina Berry and Sherrie Ashcraft, who encouraged me as I sat nervously waiting for my turn to go in and talk to Lauraine. That’s one of the best things about Oregon Christian Writers, writers encouraging writers.

It was so much fun to run into Christina and Sherrie at OCW conferences and at American Christian Fiction Writers conference in the years that followed. I was thrilled when Christina received her Carol Award (American Christian Fiction Writers Book of the Year) and now enjoy working with her on the summer conference team. Friendship with other writers and mutual encouragement are some of the biggest benefits of OCW.

I will never forget the spirit-filled worship at my first OCW summer conference in 2004. That was the year Francine Rivers keynoted, and my sister Holly (also a writer and a huge fan of Francine Rivers’ books) came from Kansas to attend. By then, Mary Hake had moved to Central Oregon and we were critique partners. We met in Sisters to carpool, and I remember praying as we drove over Santiam Pass toward the conference. I got into Bonnie Leon’s fiction critique, and Holly went to Eva Marie Everson’s class. Mostly I remember that final night Francine saying she spent an hour in Scripture and prayer with the Lord each morning before writing a single word. I looked around and there wasn’t a sound in the audience. Everyone was keyed into what she was saying, and I remember feeling thankful I’d discovered this group of Christian writers.

I also remember Susan May Warren before her first OCW

summer conference agreeing to the idea of mentoring but saying she only wanted three mentoring appointments, no more. And then at the conference, after her first mentoring appointments, she came up to me and said, “Please, give me more. This is fantastic!”



Marilyn Rhoads, Pleasant Hill, Ore.  
OCW program coordinator 2008  
to present

*I attended my* first OCW conference in Eugene in 2008 because of an article my husband saw in the local newspaper. I asked a writer friend about it, and she recommended going. My first impression was that this was a sweet, little organization, run by delightful volunteers: one a lovely Mennonite lady in a cute, white cap, and the other a mature woman who functioned as treasurer.

When they discussed the money flowing in and out of their coffers and the projects they promoted, I sat up straighter in my seat. I had landed in a professional organization that meant business.

I hadn't attended a year before someone in my critique group recommended me for the position of program officer. I am still trying to forgive her.

I didn't meet the bylaws qualifications for length of membership for officers and was passed over, but the Lord had other ideas. As a last-minute fill-in, I received a call from the nominating committee asking me to allow my name to run for office. At first I laughed and said, “No!” I'd had enough of being a professional volunteer and thought a rest sounded nice. I made the mistake of discussing the matter with my Bible study leader, and she asked if I had prayed

about it or if I had discussed it with my husband. “No” on both counts.

When asked, my husband said, “Sure, why not? No one with any sense will vote for you anyway.”

Offended, I challenged his comment. He backpedaled by saying, “No one knows you.”

That was true enough. They didn’t know me, and I didn’t know them or much about their fine organization. I came to learn the craft of writing. I allowed my name to run for office, and I received an email from another critique group member congratulating me on the newsletter article and for becoming the next vice president. I said, “Oh, no, I only allowed my name to run. No one will vote for me.” What no one explained was that there was only one candidate for that office. I was the sole option. Short of nuclear disaster, there was no way I could lose.

I came in as a new officer and novice fiction writer, green as an unripe gourd. I needed help and fast. I prayed and researched how the biggest and best writers’ organizations operated. I found the top authors attending major conferences and invited them to speak at OCW one-day conferences. After prayer, much cajoling, and even blackmail, they came! And we as OCW members have been blessed to learn from them.

At the 2012 summer conference, James L. Rubart delivered a keynote message and challenged us to ask the Lord what His name for us was. I did, and God immediately answered. I had my heavenly name, and it has changed my life. I am forever grateful to Lindy Jacobs, her hard-working staff, James Rubart, and, most of all, our Lord, for telling me how He values me. What an honor to serve Him.

Kristen Johnson,  
Vancouver, Wash.

*I first* attended a summer conference when Francine Rivers keynoted. I was overwhelmed by all these famous writers, and I had not a clue who any of the editors were. I learned hard lessons, like how I should do my research and not pitch Nick Harrison a young adult historical novel when Harvest House doesn't take YA. I remember feeling scared, but also like I was home. These people, these other people who call themselves writers, get me, and I'm not a weirdo!



I wouldn't be where I am in my writing journey without OCW. But my favorite memories are with people who not only shared writing with me, but life. We shared hard life things that we walked through together, pointing each other toward God—and then remembering that we better take notes because this would make a great devotional or novel plot point. Relationships are my favorite part of OCW.



Angella Foret Diehl, Hillsboro, Ore.  
OCW webmaster

*I was so nervous* at my very first OCW meeting, but everyone was warm and welcoming. I remember driving home singing and smiling.

There are so many memories! I think my favorite was when James Scott Bell called my cell phone and later thanked me—in front of everyone—for helping with



his class. He's one of my writing heroes, so that was a special compliment.

**M. Jamie West, Pelican Ventures Book Group**

*I heard about* the OCW conference for years and was so pleased to be invited to do a presentation. My favorite memory is of meeting authors, agents, and other editors in real life whom I only knew through online forums and correspondence. I met authors who wanted to talk of their writing, the joys, the pitfalls, the search for someone who understood what they were trying to say. I met agents who brought promising authors to my attention. And I met editors who do the same work I do, compared differences in what we sought, and talked industry news. Editing, reading, and writing are occupations that require much alone time, and to meet others who delight in my line of work at the OCW conference was a gift from God.

**Jan Pierce, Vancouver, Wash.**

*My earliest memory* of OCW is of my first summer class with Sherri Langton on preparing articles for publication, ways to give editors what they need and want. Loved the class—love Sherri.

My favorite memory of OCW is meeting the people, realizing writers are people “kind of like me,” and thinking, *Maybe I can really do this.*

**Jeff Gerke, Marcher Lord Press**

*One of my best* memories is of the two ladies from the prayer team praying with me before I went on to do my keynote speech in 2010.

Jessica Johnson, Myrtle Creek, Ore.

*My earliest memory* of OCW was a spring conference in Eugene several years ago. Some ladies at my church (Tracy Snyder and Debby Lowery) had gotten me into their critique group to encourage and develop my writing. They went to a different conference on that day, but encouraged me to go to OCW. I loved it! I learned so much from seasoned authors and was inspired to write more. I went to every OCW conference from then on until I got busy with grad school.

My favorite memory of OCW was the first summer conference I went to. The ladies from my critique group went to the Willamette Writers conference that year, so I went by myself. There I met Caitlin Muir and Nicole Miller, and we were dubbed “The Diamond Girls” by a lady at the conference who gave us little plastic diamonds. I still have mine. That summer was the hottest I remember, and we stayed cool by floating in the creek at night and taking cold showers. It was a blast!

The conferences are all so encouraging, inspiring, and empowering. And the people in OCW are the heart of it. OCW and my critique group in Salem were my only two tangible and close-by constants in my life during my separation and divorce, and I know that God ministered to me during that time through my Christian writer friends. Special thanks to Mary Hake and Christina Tarabochia, as well as the Diamond Girls and my critique group, for their support during that period of my life. Where would we be without Facebook to keep us connected between conferences!

James L. Rubart, Woodinville, Wash.

*I was just* dipping my toe in the water of publishing back in 2006 when I heard of a great conference down in Oregon. A few years later I met Pat Rushford (past conference director) at a marketing retreat and I thought, *I would love to go to that conference some day . . . maybe I could even teach a workshop.*



I wasn't sure it could happen, but I could dream, right? Just a few years later I was teaching at OCW, and then in the summer of 2012 I pinched myself because I was asked to be the keynote speaker. Amazing!

Favorite memory? I have to pick just one? Then I'll have to go with Petey coming up to me just before I delivered my first keynote talk and asking if she could pray for me. Petey is such a gift to OCW and believers everywhere.

Another fun memory was watching Randy Ingermanson and Jeff Gerke playing Ping-Pong while talking to their wives on their cell phones. That game had to be played, right?

Kimberly Shumate, Living Word Literary

*I've always enjoyed* the enthusiasm of OCW students: writers—both published and those still striving for their first book deal—who embody the passion that leaves me feeling rejuvenated after every OCW conference I attend.

The staff of OCW consists of some of the kindest people I've ever met. Their hearts are committed to providing the best experience for both students and instructors. It's always a win-win affair.

Jill Williamson,  
John Day, Ore.

*My earliest* memory of OCW was when Mary Hake told me about the organization before I moved up to Oregon. I lived in California at the time, and we were about to move north. Mary was one of my online critique partners, and she told me that I needed to come to a conference. Then she asked me to come and teach a workshop that first summer I lived in Oregon. I was hooked!



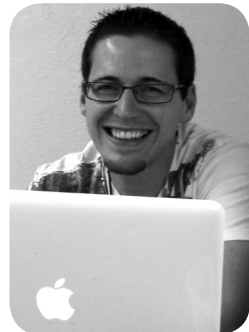
You know, I always love OCW worship time. But that doesn't really pinpoint an actual moment. I remember Stephen Bly giving his 10 things to do when you have writer's block. And the first one was to shoot somebody. The entire auditorium was laughing through that top 10. It was a great presentation. I'll always remember it.

I'll also always remember the summer of the 2010 conference. The moment I arrived, Jeff Gerke told me that the Zondervan editor was looking for me. I'd been rejected enough times to know that when an editor is seeking you out, it's probably a good thing. I floated on air that entire conference.

Caleb Jennings Breakey,  
Bellingham, Wash.

*Earliest:* Meeting our first teen-track attendee: Kayla Ousley, who came all the way from Alaska! She was full of life, talented, and just so ready to use her pen to glorify God—it was awesome!

Favorite: The book giveaways are



always fun, but I'm going to have to go with Jim Rubart's keynotes in 2012—they were so amazing!

**Billie Reynolds, King City, Ore.**

**OCW treasurer from 2008 to 2012**

*I attended a* National Christian Writers' workshop in Washington state where Stan Baldwin filled in for a speaker who was ill. He spoke on writers' critique groups. I learned he was from Oregon. He said if I came to Oregon to call him. When I moved to Oregon, he gave me the name of Chris Ortmann in my town of King City. From there I began our group, which has been going since 2004. I met and liked OCW people and their spirituality along with the great base of knowledge offered. Next thing you know, I became treasurer. OCW members' kindness, generosity, and politeness are wonderful to share.

My favorite event was meeting and talking with Cecil Murphey at the 2012 summer conference. He cowrote *90 Minutes in Heaven* with Don Piper, a grand book to share with people going through severe illnesses or whose family members are dealing with this, especially those who are not strong Christians. It takes away the fear of death and puts people at ease. I told Cecil that if he were not already spoken for, I would take him home with me. He smiled and gave me a hug.

**Nick Harrison, Harvest House Publishers**

*One of my favorite* memories is that of an informal debate James Scott Bell and I had at the 2010 summer conference. Several years earlier, Jim and I had discovered we both think we're right about what drives good fiction. He thinks it's the plot (though good characters

are necessary). I think the characters drive the story (though a good plot is necessary). The debate turned out to be both fun and, I think, useful. In the end, I'm not sure either of us "won," but I know each of us came away more convinced than ever that our position was the correct one.



Mary Hake, Falls City, Ore.  
OCW president from 2007 to  
2012

*I began serving*  
as president October 20, 2007, after being asked by the members to fill the second year of the previous president's term. Previously, I had served as program coordinator for a total of seven years and helped with summer conferences. I was elected to two additional presidential terms and managed to fulfill my duties despite health challenges.

I worked to publicize OCW in news media and online. The OCW site had a "members only" section for a number of years, but this was eventually dropped when the website was updated. OCW began accepting credit cards at conferences and purchased an LCD projector for conference teachers' use.

Petey Prater and Eva Gibson began composing monthly prayers for OCW at my request. These are posted on the website and emailed to members. Later Marion Duckworth joined the prayer team and took her turn writing OCW prayers.

I conducted a survey and found the membership overwhelmingly wanted a printed newsletter, so OCW returned to that format in addition to an online version.

OCW purchased 1,000 blue tote bags with the OCW logo

in gold to give away to attendees at summer conferences and to teachers at one-days. We also sold some. The supply lasted for several years, and I still see people using them.

The winter conference was moved from Corban University to the Salem Red Lion Hotel in 2009 (through 2012) to better accommodate conferees.

For several years, OCW invited members to bring a friend for free to the spring conference in Eugene to boost attendance there. OCW also had to increase meeting fees to keep up with the rising costs since most venues began charging to use their facilities.

Char Kardokus stepped down as newsletter editor in 2009, then Julie Zander served in that role for three years. OCW purchased permanent name tags for officers to use at conferences.

Rather than having a conference coordinator for each one-day conference site, this responsibility was transferred to the new position of business manager, which Sue Miholer agreed to fill. The former elected office of membership and corresponding secretary was incorporated into this appointed position, with the recording secretary adding the correspondence duties. The bylaws were updated in 2010 to keep current with the changes and practices of OCW.

When Jill Williamson attended her first summer conference, she wanted to be my roommate since she didn't know anyone. I said that was fine but she'd probably have more fun with someone younger so I wouldn't feel bad if she changed her mind. She laughed and said, "You're so funny." She wanted to share a room, and we did the next year too, along with late-night chats and sharing confidences. OCW is truly a great place to build relationships with writing friends.

Serving OCW has been a blessing. Thanks for all the encouragement and prayers over the years.







## Chapter Six 2014 and beyond

*During* its next half-century, Oregon Christian Writers will continue to nurture writers in an ever-changing world of publishing. More writers will publish articles, stories, and books themselves. They will be sharing more writing electronically, although paper books will probably never disappear.

“As long as the Bible endures (and history proves it’s here to stay), there will be Christians who write and either need to hone their writing skills or connect with those who publish,” said Maxine Marsolini, OCW president. “I see OCW growing an ever stronger base within the literary world over the next 10 years, 25 years, 50 years. The foundation already laid is strong enough for me to believe OCW’s best years are yet to come.”

“The changes in writing and publishing will doubtless change almost beyond our ability to imagine in the next 50 years,” said Stan Baldwin, a lifetime member and former president. “Today, I can just talk to my computer and see the result display on the printed page—one of my lifelong dreams. That’s what technology has achieved.

“But whatever changes come next, one constant will remain: the power to communicate through the medium of print. Just think, what the apostle Paul put in writing 2,000

years ago dramatically changes people, and therefore the world, today. What Moses wrote 3,500 years ago still shapes civilization. And even if our own writings disappear from the world scene along with us tomorrow, the changed lives we have informed will continue forever.”

“OCW will continue to grow in numbers,” predicted Birdie Etchison, former president and lifetime member. “The friendships one makes are priceless. The inspiration gives one the needed boost to keep on.”

“I think the future will hold much more in the form of self-publishing, so classes on how to put our writing online or create ebooks would be welcome,” said Gail Denham, a lifetime member and former president. “However, there needs to be a continuing emphasis on speakers who teach the skills of writing—not simply authors who’ve made it and want to bloviate on how well they have done. We need teaching and practice in the classes.”

“OCW from its inception has been a writing ministry for bringing the gospel to readers everywhere,” said Billie Reynolds, former OCW treasurer. “That mission has never been compromised through the 50 years as OCW floats on the hard work of many volunteers and a sea of prayer.

“If Christians cannot speak out in the future, OCW will still find ways to tell people the old, old story, whether it is in fiction, nonfiction, or poetry. I see OCW as one of God’s best public relations offices.”

“Oregon Christian Writers is an organization of faith-filled, talented writers whose future is very bright,” said Jennifer Anne F. Messing, a former president. “I believe that advanced technology will play a significant role in bringing OCW’s resources to its members and to writers worldwide in the future. I foresee advanced webinars and even short-term online writing courses offered by many of OCW’s authors via its website. Perhaps there will also be both print and ebooks about all aspects of writing for publication, written by OCW’s

authors, and available for sale on OCW's website. These webinars, online writing courses, and print and ebooks will be added sources of revenue for OCW. I also believe that the Lord will send many of OCW's accomplished authors to teach about writing for publication, and writing for God's glory to many different countries."

"Oregon Christian Writers is making a difference in the works of our own writing community because of the organization's emphasis on honoring Jesus Christ and loving His people," said Marilyn Rhoads, program coordinator for the one-day conferences. "We offer 'A' class speakers and authors to train our people and influence them to achieve the highest and best in their writing.

"The next 50 years will establish Oregon Christian Writers as an organization that produces award-winning authors in every genre. We will attract attention all over the world, and top editors and authors will continue to ask to be included in our events."

*"If we remember the past, and embrace a future of faithful service, there is no limit to what we can achieve in partnership with God."*

- Marilyn Rhoads

A decorative flourish consisting of several overlapping, light-colored swirls and curved lines, some ending in small circles, positioned below the quote and signature.

*“May Oregon Christian Writers continue to strive for excellence in the decades ahead, upholding God’s morals and ethics in their prose and poetry. When tested by the culture, may they come forth as gold. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”*

- Marion Duckworth

*“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete.”*

1 John 1:1-4 NIV



A decorative flourish consisting of a large, light gray swirl that curves across the top of the page. It features several smaller circles and dots of varying sizes, some of which are connected by thin lines, giving it a sense of movement and elegance.

## Lifetime Members

Stanley Baldwin  
Ed Demaree  
Gail Denham  
Marion Duckworth  
Birdie Etchison  
Karan Gleason  
Kristen Johnson Ingram  
Sally Stuart



## OCW Presidents

Helen Kelts	1963–1964*
Mary Hammack	1964–1965*
Stanley C. Baldwin	1965–1966*
La Verna Dick Hohnbaum	1966–1967
Mary Hammack	1967–1969*
Helen Kelts	1969–1971*
Jan Overholser	1971–1972
Raymond Cox	1972–1974
Richard Bohrer	1974–1976
Stanley C. Baldwin	1976–1978*
Sally E. Stuart	1978–1981
Birdie Etchison	1981–1984
Marion Duckworth	1984–1988
Stanley C. Baldwin	1988–1990*
Elsie Larson	1990–1992
Joe Ryan	1992–1993
Gail Denham filled in when Joe got ill	
Marcia A. Mitchell	1993–1995
Kristen Johnson Ingram	1995–1996
David A. Faber	1996–1997
Deborah Hedstrom (Page)	1997–2002
Jennifer Anne F. Messing	2002–2006
Duane “DJ” Young	2006–2007
Mary A. Hake	2007–2012
Maxine Marsolini	2012–

*\*indicates a person who served more than once as OCW president—not consecutive terms, but presidential terms at different times.*



## OCW One-Day Conferences

### **Setting and Achieving Your Goals**

Al Janssen

Winter 1984

### **Writing to Make a Difference in Our Troubled World**

Dave Adams, Stan Baldwin, Lee Ann Zanon Winter 1985

### **Writing for *Virtue* Magazine**

June Curtis

Spring 1985

### **Weep . . . Pray . . . Think . . . Work . . . God's Formula for Successful Writing**

Ethel Herr

Fall 1985

### **The Impassioned Christian Writer: Moving into the Heart of Your Editor/Reader/World**

Gloria Chisholm

Spring 1986

### **Back to Basics**

Sally Stuart

Fall 1986

### **In Pursuit of Excellence**

Larry Libby

Winter 1987

### **What Writers Need to Know About Today's Publishing World**

Dan Benson, Harvest House Tour

Spring 1987

### **The Bible and the Christian Writer**

John Kohlenberger

Fall 1987



**Reaching Higher**

Lissa Halls Johnson

Winter 1988

**25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**

Panel of OACW presidents

Spring 1988

**Until He Comes**

Larry Libby, David Kopp

Fall 1988

**Be Persistent**

Glenn Arnold

Winter 1989

**With God All Things Are Possible**

Sandy Dengler

Spring 1989

**Overcoming Discouragement**

Al Janssen

Fall 1989

**Refining and Improving Our Writing Skills**

John and Liz Duckworth

Winter 1990

**Writing to the Needs of Others**

Gail Denham

Spring 1990

**Writers Reaching Out**

Marcia L. Mitchell

Fall 1990

**Equipped to Write**

Becky Durost Fish

Winter 1991

**Expect God to Do Mighty Things**

Sally Stuart

Spring 1991

**Be Faithful in Our Writing**

Patricia Rushford

Fall 1991

**Writing for Crossover Markets**

Lonnie Hull

Winter 1992

**Super Saints**

Jim McClellan

Spring 1992

**Persistence and Perseverance**

Lauraine Snelling

Fall 1992

Cancelled because of ice storm

Winter 1993

**Writing to Heal**

Doris Sanford

Spring 1993

**Write Smarter, Not Harder**

Colleen Reece

Fall 1993

**Telling Stories with a Message**

Bob Welch

Winter 1994

**Writing to Meet Needs**

Ethel Herr

Spring 1994

Title not available

Elizabeth Sherrill

Fall 1994

**Why Should You Write?**

Dan Harmon

Winter 1995

**Christian Fiction: How It Can Change Lives**

Neva Coyle

Spring 1995

**How to Make a Living Writing**

Patricia Rushford

Fall 1995

**Writing from What You Know**

Melody Carlson

Winter 1996

**Starting and Surviving as a Freelance Writer**

Bill Dodds

Spring 1996

Title not available

Steve Laube

Fall 1996

**Writing to Heal and Encourage**

Marion Duckworth

Winter 1997

**Five Rules of Writing**

Birdie Etchison

Spring 1997

**Turning Difficulty into Print**

Laurel Lee Thaler

Fall 1997

**Selling Our Writing in the Changing Marketplace**

Judith White

Winter 1998

**Our Christian Heritage**

Terry Glaspey

Spring 1998

**Making a Difference with Our Integrity**

Randy Alcorn

Fall 1998

**Making a Difference with Our Witness**

Kristen Johnson Ingram

Winter 1999

**Write This . . . as Something to Be Remembered**

Clint Kelly

Spring 1999

**Using the Gifts God Has Given**

Robin Jones Gunn

Fall 1999

**Striving for Excellence**

Jim Hills

Winter 2000

**Write from the Heart**

Melody Carlson

Spring 2000

**Dreaming the Impossible Dream**

Jack Cavanaugh

Fall 2000

**Bringing Your Dream to Life**

David Sanford

Winter 2001

**Sharing Your Dream with the World**

Woodeene Koenig-Bricker

Spring 2001

**WRITE IT!**

Mona Gansberg Hodgson

Fall 2001

**Well Done, Good and Faithful Writer**

Stan Baldwin

Winter 2002

**Trusting God with Your Writing**

Jeanetta Chrystie

Spring 2002

**Write the Vision**

Bill Myers

Fall 2002

**Watch Thou in All Things**

Dick Bohrer

Winter 2003

**Luke 21:15a**

Luci Shaw

Spring 2003

**Remembering What God Has Done  
and Pressing On in Faith /OCW 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Celebration**

Lauraine Snelling Fall 2003

**The “Write” Foundation**

Petey Prater Winter 2004

**Write for a Change**

David Kopp Spring 2004

**Just Write**

Laura Jensen Walker Fall 2004

**The “Write” Call**

Elaine Wright Colvin Winter 2005

**The “Write” Hope**

Judy Gordon Morrow Spring 2005

**The “Write” Vision**

Bette Nordberg Fall 2005

**The Heart Behind Your Writing**

Debbie Hedstrom-Page Winter 2006

**Writing in Wilderness Places**

Jane Kirkpatrick Spring 2006

**Finding Your Way as a Writer**

Stephen Bly Fall 2006

**Searching for Success on the Writing Road**

Sally Stuart Winter 2007

**Writing with Purpose**

Bob Welch

Spring 2007

**Write with All Your Might**

Randy Ingermanson

Fall 2007

**Bring Forth the Words of a Serious Writer**

Gail Sattler

Winter 2008

**Cultivate the Words of an Excellent Writer**

Bill and Nancie Carmichael

Spring 2008

**Tap into Immeasurable Potential**

Daniel E. Kline and Kay Marshall Strom

Fall 2008

**Good Writing Outlives the Writer**

William Paul Young

Winter 2009

**Springtime Energizes a Writer's Soul**

Cindy Martinusen Coloma

Spring 2009

**Writers as Busters and Builders of Walls**

Eva Marie Everson

Fall 2009

**Fulfilling the Dreams God Has for Us**

Robin Jones Gunn

Winter 2010

**Discovering the Abundant Life**

Rick Johnson

Spring 2010

**God's Growing Places**

Poppy Smith

Fall 2010

**Writing for the Prize**

David W. Pierce

Winter 2011

**Stepping Out of the Shadows**

James L. Rubart

Spring 2011

**Excited by Creation**

Clint Kelly

Fall 2011

**What Is Real?**

Lauraine Snelling

Winter 2012

**We Are Streams in the Desert**

Karen Ball

Spring 2012

**Encourage One Another**

Colleen Coble

Fall 2012

**The Word of God**

Davis Bunn

Winter 2013

**Remembering the Past, Embracing the Future**

Sally Stuart and Melody Carlson

Spring 2013

Upcoming

Brandilyn Collins

Fall 2013



## OACW/ OCW Summer Conferences

*first*

Theme: **A Working Conference Where You Can Actually Write and Not Just Talk about It**

August 28–31, 1989

Aldersgate Conference Center at Turner, Oregon

President: Stanley Baldwin

Keynoter: Peter Lord, pastor and author from Titusville, Fla.

Conference directors: Stanley Baldwin and officers

Cost: \$125

*second*

Theme: **A Different Kind of Conference . . . Where Beginning, Intermediate, and Professional Writers Come to Write and Get Coaching and Marketing Advice**

August 27–31, 1990

Aldersgate Conference Center at Turner, Oregon

President: Elsie Larson

Keynoter: Les Stobbe

Conference directors: Kristen Ingram and Deborah

Hedstrom

Cost: \$150–\$225 (Room selection affected price)

*third*

Theme: **The Only Hands-On Coaching Conference in the Northwest**

August 21–24, 1991

Aldersgate Conference Center at Turner, Oregon

President: Elsie Larson



Keynoter: Charette Barta  
Conference director: Kristen Ingram  
Cost: \$205

*fourth*

Theme: **A Symphony of Words: Reaching Out—  
Reaching Beyond—Reaching the World**

July 20–23, 1992

Aldersgate Conference Center at Turner, Oregon

President: Elsie Larson

Keynoter: Gary Randall

Music: Steve Bourne

Conference directors: Russ Pierson and Patricia Rushford

Cost: \$290–\$320

*fifth*

Theme: **A More Excellent Way**

July 19–22, 1993

Aldersgate Conference Center at Turner, Oregon

President: Marcia Mitchell

Keynoter: Harold Ivan Smith

Conference directors: Russell Pierson and Patricia Rushford

Cost: \$290–\$320

*sixth*

Theme: **Lighting the Way**

August 1–4, 1994

Aldersgate Conference Center at Turner, Oregon

President: Marcia Mitchell

Keynoter: Maxine Hancock

Conference directors: Patricia Rushford and Birdie Etchison

Cost: \$300–\$350

*seventh*

Theme: No theme listed

July 31–August 3, 1995

Aldersgate Conference Center at Turner, Oregon

President: Marcia Mitchell

Keynoter: Ron King

Conference director: Kristen Ingram

Cost: \$315–\$365

*eighth*

Theme: **Set Your Creativity on Fire**

July 22–25, 1996

Village Green at Cottage Grove, Oregon

President: Kristen Ingram

Conference director: Kristen Ingram

Keynoter: Al Janssen, Focus on the Family

Cost: \$360–\$470

*ninth*

Theme: **Strengthening the Heart of the Christian Writer  
and the Christian Publishing Industry**

July 21–24, 1997

Western Baptist College at Salem, Oregon

President: David Faber

Keynoter: Lonnie Hull DuPont

Worship leader: Kerry Shroy

Conference director: Sandy Cathcart

Cost: \$ 275–\$325

## *Tenth*

Theme: **Write from the Heart**

July 20–23, 1998

Western Baptist College at Salem, Oregon

President: Deborah Hedstrom

Keynoter: Gayle Erwin

Conference director: Sandy Cathcart

Cost: \$210 to \$310

## *eleventh*

Theme: **The Write Way**

June 28–July 1, 1999

Western Baptist College at Salem, Oregon

President: Deborah Hedstrom

Keynoters: Andrea Boeshaar, Julie-Allyson Ieron,  
and Sally Laity

Conference directors: DJ and Kathy Young

Cost: \$285–\$350

## *Twelfth*

Theme: **A Fountain of Resources**

June 23–26, 2000

Western Baptist College at Salem, Oregon

President: Deborah Hedstrom

Keynoter: No one featured

Conference director: DJ Young

Cost: \$285–\$360

## *thirteenth*

Theme: **The Writer's Path—Taking the Next Step**

June 8–11, 2001

Western Baptist College at Salem, Oregon

President: Deborah Hedstrom

Keynoter: No one featured

Conference director: DJ Young

Cost: \$285–\$350

## *fourteenth*

Theme: **The Writer's Toolbox**

June 17–20, 2002

Western Baptist College at Salem, Oregon

President: Deborah Hedstrom

Keynoters: Marita Littauer, Mark Littleton, and Cec Murphey

Conference director: Sandy Cathcart

Cost: \$315–\$400

No summer conference was held in 2003.

## *fifteenth*

Theme: **Look to the Rock from Which You Were Cut and to the Quarry from Which You Were Hewn**

August 1–5, 2004

Canby Grove Conference Center at Canby, Oregon

President: Jennifer Anne F. Messing

Keynoter: Francine Rivers

Conference director: Sandy Cathcart

Cost: \$325, plus lodging

*sixteenth*

Theme: **Gifted Artisans—Master Craftsmen**

August 1–4, 2005

Canby Grove Conference Center at Canby, Oregon

President: Jennifer Anne F. Messing

Keynoter: James Scott Bell

Conference director: Patricia Rushford

Cost: \$235–\$315 plus lodging

*seventeenth*

Theme: **The Write Heart**

July 31–August 3, 2006

Canby Grove Conference Center at Canby, Oregon

President: Jennifer Anne F. Messing

Keynoters: Denny Boultinghouse and Karen Ball

Conference director: Patricia Rushford

Cost: \$240–\$320 plus lodging

*eighteenth*

Theme: **Let Your Light Shine**

July 30–August 2, 2007

Canby Grove Conference Center at Canby, Oregon

President: Duane Young

Keynoter: Angela E. Hunt

Conference director: Patricia Rushford

Cost: \$300–\$330 plus lodging

## *nineteenth*

Theme: **Spur One Another on Toward Love and Good Deeds**

July 28–31, 2008

Canby Grove Conference Center at Canby, Oregon

President: Mary Hake

Keynoters: Stephen Bly and Melody Carlson

Conference director: Patricia Rushford

Worship: Tom Fuller

Cost: \$310–\$360 plus lodging

## *twentieth*

Theme: **Treasures in Jars of Clay**

July 27–30, 2009

Canby Grove Conference Center at Canby, Oregon

President: Mary Hake

Keynoter: Lisa Samson

Worship: Tom Fuller

Conference director: Patricia Rushford

Cost: \$325–\$375 plus lodging

## *twenty-first*

Theme: **Journey in the Write Direction**

August 2–5, 2010

Canby Grove Conference Center at Canby, Oregon

President: Mary Hake

Keynoters: Bill Myers and Jeff Gerke

Worship: Tom Fuller and Julie Hoy

Conference directors: Patricia Rushford and Lindy Jacobs

Cost: \$340–\$390 plus lodging

## *Twenty-second*

Theme: **Writing to Prepare the Way**

August 15–18, 2011

Aldersgate Conference Center at Turner, Oregon

President: Mary Hake

Keynoters: Mindy Starns Clark and Susan May Warren

Conference director: Lindy Jacobs

Worship: Tom Fuller and Julie Hoy

Cost: \$340–\$390 plus lodging

## *Twenty-third*

Theme: **Speak of His Wonders**

August 13–16, 2012

Aldersgate Conference Center at Turner, Oregon

President: Mary Hake

Keynoters: James Rubart and Cecil Murphey

Conference director: Lindy Jacobs

Worship: Tom Fuller and Julie Hoy

Cost: \$365–\$425 plus lodging (\$325 young writer rate)

## *Twenty-fourth*

Theme: **Guard the Treasure**

August 12–15, 2013

Red Lion on the River at Jantzen Beach in Portland, Oregon

President: Maxine Marsolini

Keynoters: Liz Curtis Higgs and Georgene Rice

Conference director: Lindy Jacobs

Cost: \$415–\$450 for tuition and meals, plus lodging





## Acknowledgments

*Thank you* to all the people associated with Oregon Christian Writers who shared memories and photos to help us compile this history.

Gail Denham sent dozens of photos and slides that she had taken along with photos shot by the late Elsie Larson. Karan Gleason also provided two dozen photos for this book. Others providing photos were Louise Lankford-Dunlap, Samuel Hall, Charlotte Kardokus, Patricia Lee, Jennifer Anne F. Messing, Ann Shorey, Sally Stuart, and Julie McDonald Zander.

Billie Reynolds, Mary Hake, Maxine Marsolini, and Jennifer Anne diligently sifted through old newsletters and files to compile the lists of OCW one-day and summer conferences, including the keynote speakers and themes, when appropriate.

Julie solicited memories, scanned and organized photos, and wrote the chapter summaries. Mary and Sue Miholer edited the text, and Nicole Miller designed the book.

We hope you enjoy reading about the history of Oregon Christian Writers and the memories shared by so many of how this organization has influenced their writing and their lives. May it continue to bless others for at least another half-century.





OREGON CHRISTIAN WRITERS

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