

# The *Ozarks Writers League*



*This page is devoted to our members. It will be changed periodically to showcase individuals from Ozarks Writers League that not only inspire other members, but the entire writing community.*

## *Member Spotlight*

Star Tip Hat

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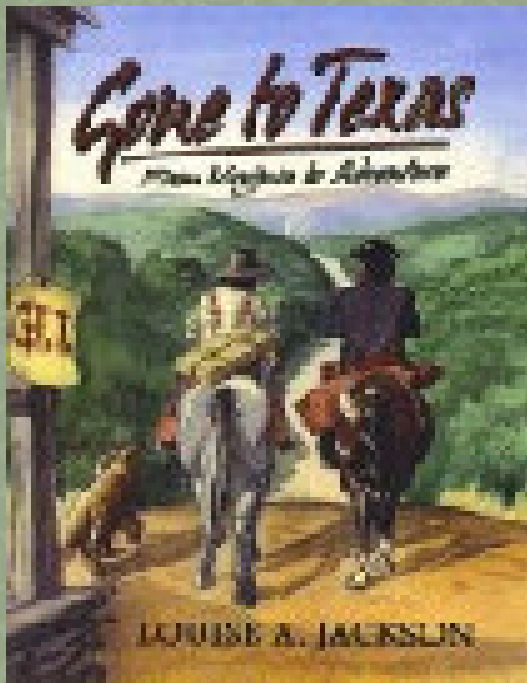
*For the rest of March, let's throw the spotlight on OWL member, Louise A. Jackson.*



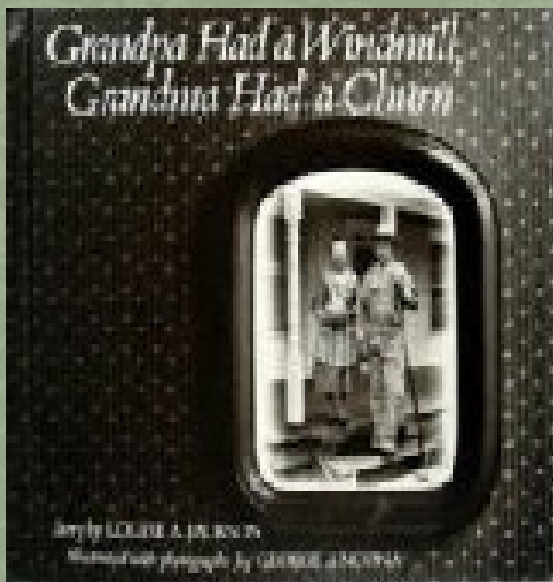
Louise A. Jackson is the author of three novels: *Gone to Texas: From Virginia to Adventure*, *Grandpa Had a Windmill*, *Grandma Had a Churn* and *Over on the River*. Louise published articles in *The Reading Teacher*, *Language Arts*, and *Journal of the West*. In addition to being recognized for her writing, Jackson is much in demand as a speaker. Her spirited presentations to children and youth in schools and libraries and her practical inservice sessions with teachers and librarians are highly praised.

A fifth-generation Texan, Jackson grew up on the family ranch in Central Texas, where she and her younger brother climbed trees, rode horses, and raised orphan goats and calves. She attended a one-teacher school and a three-teacher school during her elementary years and graduated from a small rural high school. Her career in teaching included stints in both Texas and Wyoming. She was an elementary classroom teacher, a special reading teacher, and a university professor of reading and language arts.

Jackson now lives in Springfield, Missouri with her husband, Don. She likes to read, write, garden, hike and travel. She has been to most of the U.S. and to parts of Canada, Mexico, Western Europe and Argentina.

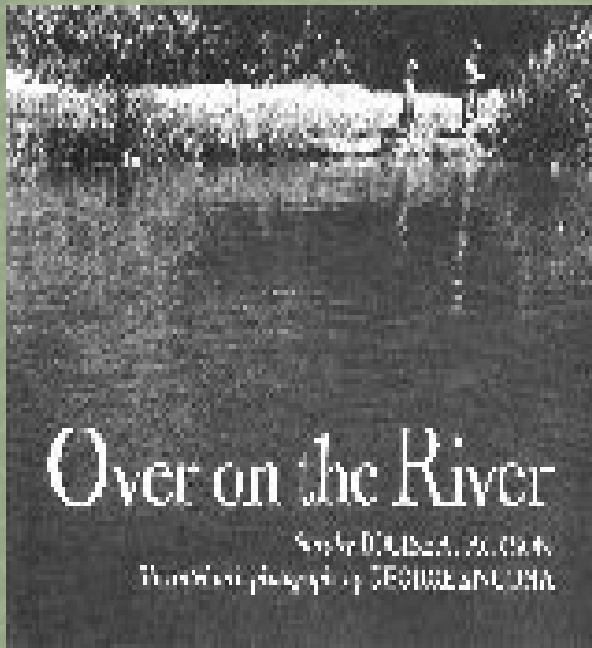


Gone to Texas is a historical adventure novel set in 1850 and tells about a boy named Ephraim Darter who got very tired of working on the family farm and left home to travel to the new state of Texas. He had all sorts of exciting adventures along the way and made some life-changing decisions in the midst of the most exciting adventure of all.



This was Louise's first book. She wanted to write about a farm because lots of first grades at that time had units on farms. I asked herself, "What do I know about a farm?" The answer was that she had spent a lot of time on her grandparents' farm when she was little. So, she wrote about her own memories.





This was Louise's second book. She moved her grandparents back a generation and made them "Mama & Papa" and wrote the stories her mother told me about her early life "over on the Colorado River of Texas."

*All of Louise Jackson's book can be purchased from OWL's Bookstore.*



Louise at age 3 in front of the capitol building in Austin, TX. Louise says this is the same year her mother taught her to read.



Louise's 8th grade photo, when she was twelve and a half.



Louise says she is second from the right in this photo taken of her with her cousins and her Grandma Darter when she was eleven.

*Louise Jackson's father was a rancher and businessman, owning several different businesses while Louise was a child. She says "when he got tired of one or it stopped making money, he began something else...cafe owner, a broiler chicken plant, a cedar post yard, and a limestone quarry...to name just a few. She says for a while he tried raising oranges in South Texas, and grapes in Argentina. "But no matter what else he did, the ranch was always there." They called it the "home place".*

*Louise's mother was a schoolteacher. She would teach when times got hard and they needed extra money, as well as doing ranch chores, working with the local*

*Baptist Church, and teaching Louise and her brother anything important that they weren't being taught in school.*

*Louise says she came from a family of storytellers and that's why she thinks it's so natural for her to speak in front of groups. Early on, when Louise complained about being expected to "take part", in church presentations or school contests, he grandma would remind her..."Louise, the women in our family have always known hot to get up in front of people." So Louise has never been stage shy.*

*When asked what her goals for the future are...Louise answers that she plans on continuing to write, and, as books come out, to travel to schools, bookstores, and conventions as a visiting author. "It is an exciting prospect", Louise says. "Life is good."*

**For a schedule of Louise's speaking events and book signings check her web page at <http://www.louiseajackson.net>**

*Who is Radine Trees Nehring?*

*She's an OWL member.*





"I can't think of a thing I'd rather be doing." That's what prolific Ozarks author and journalist, Radine Trees Nehring, says about a writing career she didn't take seriously until she was old enough for AARP. . . .

This amazing sentence comes straight from an interview that Radine recently sat for. Who asked the questions? Radine did. The previous sentence and what follows are part of a somewhat unorthodox interview that Radine conducted herself for a mystery fan conference in Muncie, Indiana, called "Magna cum Murder". It's a rather interesting concept--interviewing yourself . . .read on.

. . . Nehring's first book about the Ozarks, the non-fiction *DEAR EARTH, A Love Letter from Spring Hollow*," was published by Brett Books, Inc. in 1995. Her award-winning mystery series, "*Something to Die For*," began with Macavity Award nominee, *A VALLEY TO DIE FOR*, in 2002. The valley in question is part of the rural Ozarks of Northwest Arkansas. This first novel featuring Carrie Culpeper McCrite and Henry King was soon followed by a second Carrie-Henry adventure, *MUSIC TO DIE FOR*, set at Ozark Folk Center State Park, Mountain View, Arkansas.

Radine's publisher, St Kitts Press, will soon release *A TREASURE TO DIE FOR* (yes, same folks, new troubles) which takes place at an Elderhostel in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Nehring points out that all her Ozarks settings are real places, good destinations for tourists, and the action can be followed at the locations themselves. Nehring hands out location maps at her book signings and talks.

A short story featuring Carrie and Henry is now available as part of the anthology, "*Mysteries of the Ozarks, Vol. I*" edited by Ellen Gray Massey and released by Skyward Publishing August, 2004.

I asked Radine if she has any ideas about why mysteries are so popular today. (In fact, they've now passed romance as the most popular genre.) She says: "The type of traditional mystery I enjoy reading as well as writing--including my short stories--are really morality tales. Though terrible things happen and people die, good triumphs in the end. In today's troubled world, as never before, I believe people are looking for this kind of satisfying reading experience."

"So," I said, "For those who haven't read them yet, tell us a little about your stories."

"My main characters, widow Carrie McCrite and her best friend, Henry King, a retired Kansas City police major, come together in my first novel, "*A VALLEY TO DIE FOR*" to solve the murder of a mutual friend. This killing happens in their Ozarks neighborhood, the beautiful and very real Blackberry Hollow. In the second series story, "*MUSIC TO DIE FOR*", they travel to Ozark Folk Center State Park, and are soon working together to locate the kidnapped child of Branson musicians and solve the murder of one of her kidnappers. The third series novel, "*A TREASURE TO DIE FOR*", finds them in hot water in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

Nehring's Ozarks tales have won the "Arkansas Governor's Award for Best Writing about the State of Arkansas" and the Dan Sauls award from Ozarks Writers League, in addition to the Macavity nomination and a long list of other awards. She is now at work on the fourth Carrie-Henry adventure novel as well as more short stories featuring this popular and dynamic senior duo.





# Radine Trees Nehring

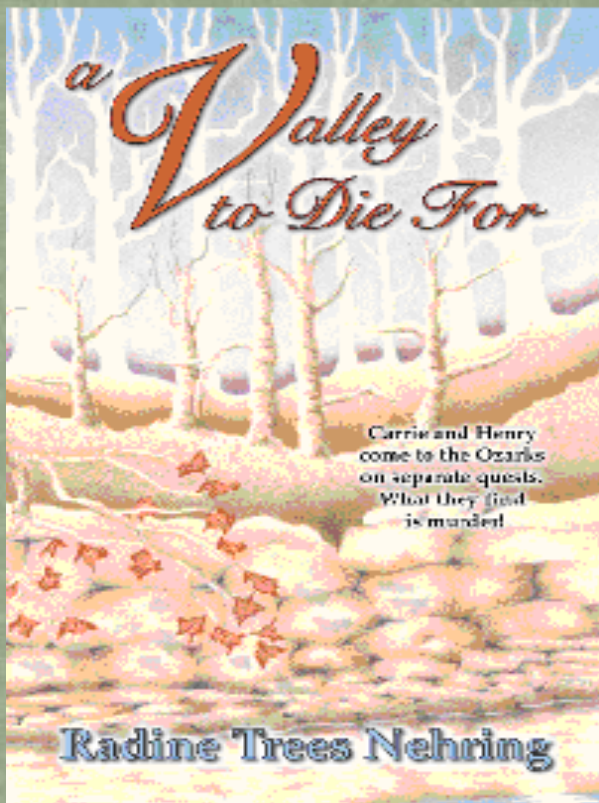
For more than fifteen years, Radine Trees Nehring's magazine features, essays, newspaper articles, and radio broadcasts have been sharing colorful stories about the people, places, events, and natural world near her Arkansas home. She's also the author of a book of essays set in the Ozarks. "Dear Earth: A Love Letter from Spring Hollow" was published in 1995.

"Until I began to write about Carrie McCrite, I'd dealt only in facts," Radine says. "What fun it is to take those facts and the settings I love, add people entangled in problems and seeking answers to important life questions, and come up with mystery fiction that shares my world with readers everywhere."

Nehring's research takes her to the places her characters go. She's visited Arkansas tourist destinations, hiked hills and hollows, crawled through caves, spent time in jail (while training for the jail ministry) and as a news reporter, interviewed officials in every branch of law enforcement. She and her husband, John, live in the Arkansas Ozarks.

Nehring's major at Principia College in Illinois was in Fine Arts. She's done post-graduate work in English and creative writing at the University of Tulsa, and in the University of Iowa Summer Writing Program.

### 2003 Macavity Award Nominee



**Carrie Culpeper McCrite, star of "Something to Die For" mystery series, is an employee of the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism, so she's familiar with Arkansas' adventure places. And, she can't seem to keep her nose away from humans in distress - or murder.**

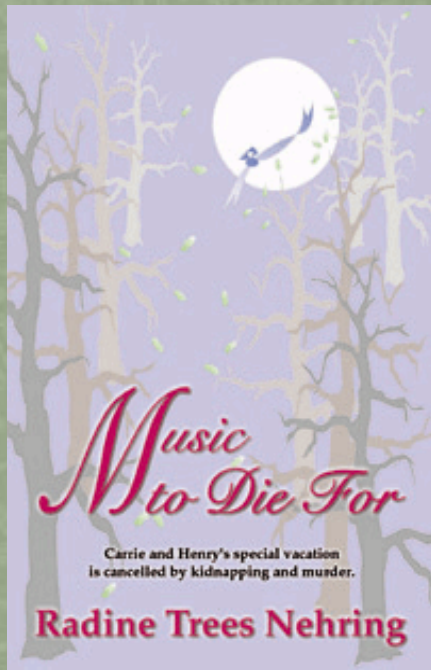
Radine is an avid reader, and her love for words is what made her try her hand at writing.

The event that finally kicked her into a career as a writer was her move to the Ozarks . . . a beautiful, exciting, inspiring place. She began to paint pictures of the Ozarks with her words--poetry, essays, nature writing.

Then Radine asked herself, "What do I read for fun?" Mysteries was her answer. So she decided it would be fun to write a mystery. "Since only a handful of writers become



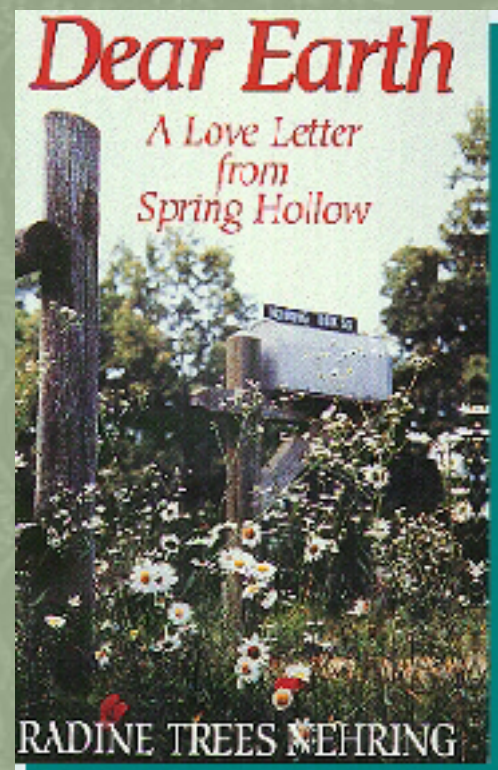
wealthy practicing their art, it had better be fun," Radine says.



"MUSIC TO DIE FOR is set at Ozark Folk Center State Park in remote Stone County, AR. Carrie and several friends have planned a weekend vacation at the Folk Center, where they're signed up for craft classes. Crafts take a back seat to a kidnapping, arson, and murder after Dulcey Mason, four-year old daughter of famous country musicians Chase Mason and Tracy Teal, disappears, and her abductor is found stabbed, his house burned. Romance blossoms again between Carrie and her best friend, Henry King, as they rush to save a child, solve a murder, and repair tragically broken lives. Can they do it before they, too, become victims of MUSIC TO DIE FOR?"

I did believe what Grandpa told me. He said it was important to love the land. To prove it, he bought a farm.

Most people in the city would have said Grandpa was poor, at least if you were counting money. I noticed, though that his chickens had a bigger yard to run in than his city grandchildren did. On Grandpa's farm there were pastures, woods, and a creek. Playing at the farm on weekends, I began to think like Grandpa: "The land is wealth."



Radine's website, at <http://www.radinesbooks.com> is a wonderful place to visit. You can learn more about Radine and even pick up a few good recipes. Visit her there. Radine is also gracious enough to give out her home address for anyone wanting to get in touch with her that way. I suspect she wouldn't mind if you just dropped by for a cup of coffee and a story . . . maybe on her porch where you could enjoy the beauty of the Ozarks.



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