

The Mid-Michigan Mirror

...A Reflection of Romance

Winner of the 1999 RWA® Mid-size Chapter Newsletter Contest

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MISSION STATEMENT

THE PURPOSE OF THE MID-MICHIGAN CHAPTER OF ROMANCE WRITERS OF AMERICA® IS TO PROMOTE EXCELLENCE IN ROMANTIC FICTION, TO HELP WRITERS PUBLISH AND ESTABLISH CAREERS, AND TO PROVIDE CONTINUING SUPPORT FOR WRITERS WITHIN THE ROMANCE PUBLISHING INDUSTRY.



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—THE BOARD ROOM—

The President's Corner

By Lucy Kubash

If you started writing back in the last century (like moi!), you remember what it was like to write a story or novel using a manual typewriter. You remember changing ribbons and having blackened fingertips; keys stuck together, carbon paper, and white-out, and hearing that little "ding" when you reached the end of the margin. With the check from my first short story sale, I bought a new electronic typewriter and thought I was in seventh heaven. No more messy ribbons and hitting the return lever. I could even correct mistakes without taking the paper out. A few years later, we bought our first computer and the writing experience entered a whole new realm, one filled with floppy disks, MS DOS and word processing programs. What a learning curve that was!



Now, countless computers later, I find myself wandering through the wonderland that is Windows 7 and sometimes thinking to myself, what on earth can be next? Having gone from sending a story back and forth by snail mail half a dozen times to an editor to doing queries, submissions and revisions by email, it's been a constant challenge to stay on top of the newest technology. But stay on top of it we must if we are to keep in step with the world of publishing. Things are changing rapidly, and the advent of the eReader will have far reaching effects on that world. Publishers can no longer afford to ignore the demand for electronic books, and writers must be wise if we are to protect the rights to our works. We must learn all we can to keep our rights from being undermined and yet to keep in time to the music that every day is playing in a different key.

Are we up to the challenge? I have to believe we are.

Happy Writing! Hope to see you at retreat.

Lucy

MMRWA 2010 MEETING SCHEDULE

- January** – No chapter meeting.
- February 20**
Grand Rapids – Member critique
- March 20**
Lansing – Tax Strategies for Writers
Speaker: Bruce Meyers
Hantz Financial Group
- April 16 – 18**
Kalamazoo – Retreat from Harsh Reality will be held at Yarrow Golf and Conference Resort in Augusta, MI. Speaker will be Jo Ann Ferguson.
- May 15**
Jackson – Positivity
- June 19**
Grand Rapids – Member critique
- August 21**
Lansing – Query Letter Idol
- September 18**
Kalamazoo – How to Access the Internet
- October 16**
Jackson – Rebounding Panel
- November 20**
Grand Rapids – Member critique
- December 11**
Lansing – Christmas Party

MARCH MEETING RECAP Tax Strategies for Writers

*By Alyssa Marble
Editor, Mid-Michigan Mirror*

The March 2010 program, *Tax Strategies for Writers*, was presented by Bruce Meyers, Certified Public Accountant with the Hantz Financial Group.

Mr. Meyers included information regarding the definition of a writer under IRS regulations. This included a writer's profit motive and the amount of profit over a multiple year period. Mr. Meyer also discussed the difference between a hobby and a business and the criteria the IRS considers when making this designation. Some of the facts reviewed by the IRS include the percentage of time a writer spends writing, any training the writer attends to further her craft, whether the writer seeks professional advice, whether the writer engages in marketing and how much of the writer's overall income is derived from writing.

A question and answer session occurred in which members were able to ask questions specific to their current business and tax situation.

Finally, Mr. Meyers made a presentation pertaining to the history and future of tax rates as well as tax and retirement planning.

Bruce Meyers is a graduate of Michigan State University with both a Bachelor of Arts in Accounting and a Master of Business Administration. Bruce began his career in 1995 as a tax consultant with Ernst & Young LLP and became a Certified Public Accountant in 1997. Bruce's professional experience also includes time as a management consultant helping Fortune 500 companies install and/or upgrade their accounting systems.



Retreat from Harsh Reality

FRIDAY NIGHT “DESSERT, ANYONE?”!!

What's better than a weekend spent with a group of writers who share your common dreams, celebrate your successes, and commiserate when your characters act like ill-behaved children and go off and do their own thing? Only one thing – a weekend spent with like-minded writers AND CHOCOLATE!!!



After the Friday night pizza buffet, we will spend the next hour indulging in chocolate bliss -- chocolate cookies drizzled with chocolate icing; heart-shaped chocolate candy laced with rum; chocolate cake infused with creamy fudge filling . . . plenty of rich, creamy chocolate to feed your writing muse for the entire weekend. . . or possibly the entire month!!

Anne Stone is the lovely lady in charge of this much anticipated event at Retreat. (Thanks, Anne!) Please email her at annestone61@yahoo.com, with the dessert you plan to bring. While this is entirely voluntary, we all know that without your participation, the Chocolate Feast would not be the same!

2010 Officers

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info@midmichiganrwa.org

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I Will Write a Book/Write for the Money
Diane Burton/Laurie Kuna

Library
Lucy Kubash and Maris Soule

Member Recognition
Florence Price

MMRWA Angel Award
Laurie Kuna

Mystery Gifts
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10... 9... 8... 7... 6... 5... 4... 3... 2... 1

THE COUNTDOWN TO THE MID-MICHIGAN RETREAT FROM HARSH REALITY CONTINUES...

*By Julie McMullen
Retreat Chair*

**APRIL 16-18, 2010
At the beautiful Yarrow Golf &
Conference Resort in Augusta, Michigan**



Featuring the lovely best-selling author Jo Ann Ferguson

Programs include “I Second That Emotion” and “Taming the *&^% Synopsis and Query Letter”

Only a few short days remain before our annual Retreat From Harsh Reality is slated to begin. If you missed the registration deadline, don't despair! There are still slots available for the Saturday only program (and if you twist my arm, there may be some overnight accommodations available at a slightly higher price than the pre-deadline pricing). In fact, we will be able to accept late registrations up until 8:30 am on Saturday, April 17. For late registrations, you may pay by check, money order or cash if you are a MMRWA member. For non-MMRWA members, we will accept cash or money orders only (made out to MMRWA) and will provide you with a receipt for your records. Please contact me directly at eyedoc29@gmail.com if you have any questions.

The Friday night “Dessert, Anyone?” is in need of volunteers to bring goodies. Please contact Anne Stone at annestone61@yahoo.com to let her know what tasty treat you can bring! Even though I often refer to this event as the Chocolate Feast, by no means does that limit you to bringing only chocolate dessert items. Bring your favorite treat!

If you are able to come early on Friday to Retreat, please join us in assembling the Book Baskets for the Auction and Raffle! We will begin organizing the donations at approximately 1:00 pm. If you are donating items but will not arrive until later, please let me know so we can save room for your goodies! If you plan to bring a completed basket and have NOT contacted me, please email me at eyedoc29@gmail.com to let me know.

I want to extend a heartfelt THANK YOU to all of you who answered the plea for donations to help our 2010 Retreat be a successful event. Many of you donated items for Retreat – reams of paper, plastic bags, books, candy, picture frames, journals, curling ribbon, personal items for the auction baskets. Some donated cash to purchase the much-needed remaining items. All of this is greatly appreciated!! Thanks also to those of you who passed along our plea for author donations to other loops and writers – we have a small but top-notch collection of books and promotional materials for our Book Basket Auction and Raffle and goodie bags. And thanks to those of you who are putting together baskets for the auction. You are an AMAZING group and I'm very humbled to be surrounded by such generous people!! THANK YOU!!

Julie McMullen

Retreat From Harsh Reality Chair

OUR GUEST SPEAKER: JO ANN FERGUSON!

Award-winning author **Jo Ann Ferguson** has a split writing personality, each with its own pseudonym. She is the author of numerous best-selling historical novels, traditional and mystery Regency stories, paranormal novels, and contemporary mystery novels. Her most recent and upcoming releases include *Gentleman's*



Master (Jo Ann Ferguson/ ImaJinn), *Dreamseeker* (J.A. Ferguson/ImaJinn), *Sea Wraith* (Jocelyn Kelly/ImaJinn), and *Time to Share* (Jo Ann Brown/Guidepost Books). Over 80 of her titles have been published by Tudor, Ballantine, Zebra, Harper, Warner and Thorndike. Her books have been translated into almost a dozen languages and are sold on every continent except Antarctica.

The Sessions:

TAMING THE *%&^ SYNOPSIS AND QUERY LETTER: Do you hate writing synopses and wonder if they're a torture invented to test writers on their way to publication? Learn ways to make your synopsis work for you. It can be a road map to writing your manuscript. But first you need to devise a high concept and a pitch for your manuscript . . . which you can then use for both your synopsis and an intriguing query letter.

I SECOND THAT EMOTION: Write what you know is the basic advice all writers receive. We'll focus on *how* to write what you know about your own emotions and how to use them to add life and emotional depth to your characters. You'll participate in developing words that perfectly describe the emotions that will make a reader laugh or cry.

RETREAT SCHEDULE

FRIDAY:

6-7:30 p.m. Registration
6:30-7:30 Dinner
7:30-8:00 Dessert - Chocolate Anyone?
8:00-9:00 Official Welcome & Ice Breaker
9:00 - ? Bed, relaxation, private critiques...

SATURDAY:

7-9:00 a.m. Breakfast
8:00-8:45 Registration
8:45-9:00 Welcome
9:00-10:45 **Jo Ann Ferguson - "Taming the *%&^ Synopsis and Query Letter"**
11:00-11:15 MMRWA Angel Award
11:15-11:30 Twenty-five Years of Retreat: A Look Back at all the memories
11:30-12:00 PAN Meeting for published authors; Free Time for all others
12:00-1:00 Lunch
1:00-2:00 Book Sale & Autographing
2:00-3:30 **Jo Ann Ferguson - "I Second That Emotion"**
4:00-4:30 PRO Pin Recognition, Toot Your Own Horn, Champagne Celebration for First Sales
4:30-6:00 Book Basket Raffle, Silent & Live Auctions (proceeds go to YWCA Domestic Assault Program)
6:00-7:00 Dinner
7:00-9:00 Special Presentation: **Jo Ann Ferguson: Novelization of Thomas Kinkadee's The Christmas Cottage;** Muse Sessions; or Time on your own

SUNDAY:

7-9:00 a.m. Breakfast
9:00-9:30 Chapter Meeting
9:30-11:00 Romance/Biz Round Table with **Jo Ann Ferguson**
11:00-12:00 Retreat Wrap-Up
12:00 Adjournment

***All activities are slated to be held in the Main Lodge in the Dogwood Room. Meals will be held in the Evergreen Dining Room, also at the Main Lodge.

Yarrow Golf & Conference Resort
10499 N 48th St
Augusta MI 49012
800-563-4397

Kalamazoo:

East on M-43(Gull Road) to Richland. In Richland, continue straight through the first traffic light and the road becomes M-89. Follow M-89 east 8.5 miles to 48th street. Turn left (north) on 48th street 3.5 miles to Yarrow Golf & Conference Resort.

From Chicago..(I-94 East)

Exit #85 (35th street). Turn left (North) and go to the third traffic light (M-96). Turn right on M-96 and continue to the first traffic light. Turn left at the light and continue 6.5 miles on M-96 to the Village of Augusta. Turn left onto Augusta Drive and proceed 3.5 miles to 48th street. Turn left onto 48th street and proceed 3.5 miles to Yarrow Golf & Conference Resort.

From Detroit..(I-94 West)

Follow I-94 to Exit #92. Travel north off the exit ramp on business loop I-94. At the first traffic light, veer left and continue approximately 3 miles to the junction of business loop I-94 east and M-96. Follow the signs for M-96 west and proceed approximately 2.5 miles to Clark Road. Turn right on Clark Road and follow Clark Road approximately 2 miles to M-89/West Michigan Ave. Turn left on M-89/West Michigan Ave. and proceed 1.5 miles to 48th street. Turn right on 48th street and continue north 3.5 miles to Yarrow Golf & Conference Resort. (Note: If you are returning to I-94 this same route, please take note that Clark Road is Custer Road on the return trip.)

From Lansing...(I-69 South)

HIGHWAY ROUTE

Follow I-69 South to the I-94 Interchange follow I-94 to Exit #92. Travel north off the exit ramp on business loop I-94. At the first traffic light, veer left and continue approximately 3 miles to the junction of business loop I-94 east and M-96. Follow the signs for M-96 west and proceed approximately 2.5 miles to Clark road. Follow Clark approximately 2 miles to M-89/West Michigan Ave. Turn left on M-89/West Michigan Ave. and proceed 1.5 miles to 48th street. Turn right on 48th street and continue north 3.5 miles to Yarrow Golf & Conference Resort. (Note: If you are returning to I-94 this same route, please take note that Clark Road is Custer Road on the return trip.)

SCENIC ROUTE

Proceed south on I69 to Charlotte. Exit at Lansing Road, Exit 61, and proceed through Charlotte on Lawrence Road. Continue through Charlotte. Upon leaving town the route becomes M-79. Continue west on M-79 for approximately 13 miles to M-66. Turn left on M-66 and travel south about 4 miles to Dowling Road. Turn right on Dowling and proceed west approximately 6 miles to M-37. Turn left onto M-37 and continue 8 mile to V Drive North (Hamilton Road). Turn right onto V Drive North (Hamilton Road) and go 3 miles to 48th Street. Turn right onto 48th Street and drive ½ mile to Yarrow.

From Battle Creek...

Travel west on M-89 (West Michigan Avenue) towards Kalamazoo to 48th Street. Turn right (North) on 48th Street and continue 3.5 miles to Yarrow Golf & Conference Resort.

From Grand Rapids..(Via US-131)

South on US-131 to exit #49A (Plainwell/M-89 East). East on M-89 12 miles to junction M-89/M-43. Right on M-89/M-43 to Richland (1 Mile). At traffic light, turn left (east) on M-89 and go 8.5 miles to 48th street. Turn left (north) on 48th Street and continue 3.5 miles to Yarrow Golf & Conference Resort.

From Grand Rapids..(Via M-37)

South on M-37. Proceed 1 mile past the intersection of Banfield Road to V Drive North (Hamilton Road). Turn right onto V Drive North (Hamilton Road) and go 3 miles to 48th street. Turn right onto 48th Street and drive 1/2 mile to Yarrow Golf & Conference Resort.



RETREAT FROM HARSH REALITY 2010 REGISTRATION

Circle the package you want, write amount in Subtotal column, add critique if desired & fill in Grand Total amount. Package Choice (Weekend includes room & board)	Total for MMRWA Member	Total for non-MMRWA Member	Subtotal
Weekend - Double Occupancy (2 persons per room)	\$180.00	\$190.00	
Weekend - Single Occupancy	\$265.00	\$275.00	
Sat. only with breakfast & lunch	\$65.00	\$75.00	
Sat. only with breakfast, lunch & dinner	\$85.00	\$95.00	
Want a Critique by a published author? \$15.00 per critique			
Other/Custom Package: (contact Julie for pricing at retreat@midmichiganrwa.org)			
GRAND TOTAL			

Each Standard Room has two double beds and a bath for either a Single or Double occupancy. Friday night dinner and Saturday breakfast, lunch & dinner and Sunday breakfast are included with the full weekend package.

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone (_____) _____
 Email: _____

(Email will be used only to confirm receipt of your registration and for 2010 Retreat-related information.)

Please print your name as you wish it to appear on your name badge:

If sharing a room, you **MUST** list your roommate (limit two people per room please):

(If you do not know who your roommate will be, assume you'll be in a single when you make your payment - or pay the deposit minimum of \$50 until you determine your room arrangements. If you pay a higher rate, we'll refund the difference if you end up with a roommate. We have a block of 25 rooms reserved until the March 31st deadline. All payments must be received in full before Retreat or your room will not be held at our lower rates. Sorry if this inconveniences anyone.)

Do you have any special room needs or food allergies we should know about?

Make checks payable to MMRWA and send this form & your payment to:

MMRWA Retreat
 P.O. Box 2725
 Kalamazoo, MI 49003-2725

Late registrations accepted until 8:30 am on Saturday, April 17

Questions? Contact Julie at retreat@midmichiganrwa.org

The following article first appeared in the March issue of Magic Moments, newsletter of Southern Magic, Birmingham, AL. Permission granted to use with proper credit to author and chapter.

The Drunken Squirrel

By M. V. Freeman

The first draft is the easiest to write. You charge forward and for those who plot, you have a well defined path (Plotters), for those who wing it (Pantsers) you just go with the flow, knowing instinctively where to go with your story. I am neither a complete Plotter or Pantser, some call them Plotsers (a mix between the two). For me, I call what I am: The Drunken Squirrel.

What? A drunken squirrel you say? It's true, I see your smirk.

Let me explain. I start writing, I think I know where I am going and I have my synopsis. Then, for some inexplicable reason, I get side tracked. It may mean that I write an in depth dissertation on tire thread or even why Cousin Pearl got that particular tattoo and piercing at the same time.

So, I stop, redirect myself and start forward again. Ah! I have the heroine where I want her, all of a sudden she wants her nails done. Next is a comparison shopping list on what is the best type of nails to get and where. That's not going to work. So, I address the hero, oh no! Suddenly, I'm writing about why someones sister's brother, great uncle became a CIA agent. Why? Because I have an attention span of a squirrel, a drunk one, that gets confused and meanders off the path. Worse, if I see something shiny---oooh look! I've just created a really cool secondary character who dyes her hair three different colors and thinks thigh high boots are business wear.

Dang it!

What can I do?

First, I take a deep breath and push away the glass of wine...err...coffee. Then I reorient myself by asking these questions:

1. What am I writing about?
2. Who is talking? (and why?)
3. What IS the purpose of this scene or chapter?
4. Do I really need to go into all this back-story? (I ask that a lot)
5. Where am I headed?

Asking these questions help immensely, I can usually move forward again. The number one thing about the whole first draft, in spite of my meanderings is : TO GET IT DONE. Afterwards I can go back and fix what my drunken squirrel self has done. Sometimes, in my unexpected twists and turns, I find a piece of information, description, or character that really will help me in my revision. Usually, I get to cut out a whole bunch of useless bits and pieces. You can tell that I look forward to revisions. (no)

They say the first step is recognizing the problem, then next step is to address it. I suppose I better enroll my Drunken Squirrel into a twelve step program for writers.

M.V. Freeman is a member of the Southern Magic, Heart of Dixie and Georgia Romance Writers, and a regular contributor to the Romance Magicians Blog.

The following article ran in the April 2010 issue of Tide Lines, the newsletter of the Vancouver Island Chapter. Permission granted to sister chapters to forward or reprint with proper credit given to author and chapter.

The Power of Cheerios®

by Lisa McManus Lange

By the end of the Olympics, I was drained of all emotion and sanity. My physical strength and endurance depleted, I swore I would never do it again.

I was a bobsledder/luger/skier/figure-skater/curler; I knew it all, and I could most definitely DO it all.

From the confines of my big comfy couch, I sledded, skated, skied and snowboarded my way to my own podium—my coffee table. My embarrassingly unattractive comfy pyjamas wrapped securely around me repelled the vicarious chill from the ice and snow. I was the armchair athlete extraordinaire, and nothing was going to stop me from giving it my all.

For every flip/turn/swoosh/spin, I had well-educated comments that would make sportscasters weep in envy. While the speed-skaters raced/hunched their way around the track, I bounced in excitement; Cheerios® sprang up from between the couch cushions in unison. I am still convinced those skeleton sliders must give themselves severe stomach aches. As for curling? I could show them a thing or two with a broom. No matter what the sport or nationality, I cheered for them all. I was proud to be a polite/diplomatic/politically correct Canadian.

There were the sports where placement depended on every one one-hundredth of a second. Those time clocks drove me crazy. Why couldn't the clock go slower? Couldn't they give the poor athlete a chance already? Between the clock-watching and waiting for judges' marks, it was all too much for me and my fellow athletes. The physical, mental and emotional exhaustion weakened me into a state of near delirium. Good thing I always had a supply of Cheerios on hand for replenishment—dust off the cat hairs, good as new.

The scores would come, then the rankings. What?! 8th place? That guy/girl did way better than 8th place! Hurling unladylike words at the television screen, along with a few Cheerios for added emphasis, I flopped back on the couch and crunched on another "O" in frustration. Wait till those officials receive my letter!

Catching myself before choking, I stopped. I watched in amazement as the athlete in question shed tears of joy, cheered and raised their arms in victory over their 8th place ranking. What? Why isn't he/she crying hysterically, flinging their exhausted bodies down on the ice or snow, swearing to give up the sport forever?

As the 8th place athlete cheered at the scores, the announcer kept chanting one phrase: personal best. “She just surpassed her personal best!” “That’s another personal best for so-and-so!” Beaming radiantly while their coaches/mentors/mothers hugged them, they blew kisses at the camera, and chattered greetings to family and friends in languages I didn’t understand (Okay, okay, I didn’t know everything during the Olympics—sheesh!).

They landed in Vancouver dragging their skis/skates/sleds behind them, but sadly were not classed as a “medal contender.” Sure they still had hope, as everyone did, of winning a big shiny medal of any colour. Where they did not have a few Cheerios commercials under their belt, nor enough previously won medals to re-pave The Great Wall of China, they made up for it by having the drive to give it their all, and the desire to improve upon their “personal best.”

And when they had achieved that—surpassing what they thought they could do, exceeding all their past scores—then they knew they had truly won. There would be a next time, to beat their own expectations, and to go for gold again. And they had made it that far—the Olympics. Who could beat that?

We all can strive for our personal best. Yes, “gold,” or that publishing contract will come, but like taking baby steps, we have to outdo our personal best every step of the way. Whether it’s jogging farther than the last 20 mornings you had done so around the track, or whether it’s writing 600 words instead of your usual daily goal of 500, you pushed through, did a little bit better, a little bit more than last time. You exceeded your personal best. After you hit save, imagine yourself waiting for your scores, the announcer shouting excitedly in your ear, “And it’s a personal best for (insert your name here)!” (Also insert crowd cheering, flags waving, signs bearing your name bobbing in the crowd.)

Compete with yourself; out-write your personal best. Each time you break your own personal record, you will be that much closer to your dream, whatever it might be. Just push a bit farther each time; write a bit more, edit a bit more, submit to just one more publisher even after you have received your 80th rejection. Some might say 80 might be a sign to change projects. But what if your 81st submission is the one?

What is your personal best? Go for the gold, one step at a time, beating your “personal best” one word at a time.

And always snack on Cheerios; dust-covered, cat-hair covered, or otherwise. They’re good for you.

Lisa McManus Lange eats Cheerios, the fresh ones, from Victoria, BC, while finding time to write romance. She would love to hear from you at lisamc2010@yahoo.ca

This article was first published in the March 2010 Desert Rose RWA Chapter newsletter. Permission to forward is granted with proper credit given the author.

American Idol vs. Your Writing Career

By Julie Ellis

I know what you're thinking. There's no comparison. American Idol contestants are skyrocketed to fame. If only there was such a thing for aspiring writers. When I was watching American Idol the other day though, I couldn't help but notice the similarities between the feedback the contestants got from the notorious judges and the feedback I got from the agent I tried to pitch my manuscript to. Turns out the music industry and the publishing industry are more similar than I thought.

Put a little 'you' into your work. On Idol, judges want to see contestants take a song and make it theirs. They want to see creativity and originality. Likewise, agents and editors look for a 'hook', something that makes your book unique from all the other books out there. You can write a classic formula, but you better make it different in some aspect if you expect it to sell.

Find your brand. On American Idol, the judges routinely tell contestants that they have to figure out who they are as an artist. Are they a Whitney Houston or a Lady Gaga? (Google Lady Gaga if you're not familiar). It's all about branding in the writing industry too. Editors and agents will ask you whose books do you see yours sitting next to at the bookstore. They want to know if you're a sassy contemporary romance author like Susan Elizabeth Phillips or the paranormal romance queen, Sherrilyn Kenyon. If they don't know how to market you, chances are they won't want you. Or, like on Idol, they'll tell you to hone your skill and come back when you're ready.

Practice, practice, practice. In order to succeed, come in as polished as you can. Like singers learn their craft, writers also have a learning curve. There's the plot arc; the point of view; goals, motivation and conflict; creating believable characters. Very few walk in to the arena knowing exactly what to do.

In the end, the audience has to like you. I've seen many talented singers get voted off American Idol because they didn't click with the viewers. The same is true for books. I've read many books that have moved me yet never lived on to become best sellers. Which brings me to my final point.

It's all about marketing. In both crafts, you or someone working for you has to be able to sell your work. If you can't sell, you're not going to be successful.

Singers do have one advantage though, if they can't write their own music, they can hire someone else do it for them. The only writers who can get away with that are celebrity 'authors'. Then again, would you really want to take credit for someone else's blood, sweat and tears?



—CHAPTER CHATTER—



MEMBER NEWS

Nancy Gideon: Finally got contracts! New website up at: nancygideon.com. Heading to New Orleans for research.

Laurie Kuna: RETIRED after 29 years of teaching and will be done in June. I plan to write as close to full time as I can. Oh, and catch up on my spring of '02 cleaning! Entered the Hearts Through History contest in the Georgian/Regency/Victorian category.

Nancy Gideon, Elizabeth Fortin and Laurie Kuna are researching their way through New Orleans. Took in the Gospel Brunch at House of Blues, shopped our wallets dry in the Quarter and will be doing an airboat swamp tour and cemetery tours through the Garden District and St. Louis #1 to visit Marie Laveau. Laissez les bon temps rouler! Plenty of pictures on Facebook.

Lucy Kubash: Will have an author blurb in the Kalamazoo Gazette Generation magazine in the March 26 edition. Was mentioned in last year's A & E Gazette magazine and didn't know it, but looked it up in their archives. Working on revising some of my older short stories for Wild Rose Press.

Florence Price: I've been working on my WIP sporadically in between my day job and all those other little speed bumps life puts in the road to publication. I'm also eagerly anticipating the fellowship and fun of Retreat!

Lana Miersen: Getting everything put back in my office. Working on getting well again. Worked on taxes after March meeting--speaker very helpful. Traveled to North Carolina to visit family for a few weeks. Will be back just in time to attend Retreat and get those writing juices flowing again. ☺

Margo Hoornstra: Starting next WIP with an enthusiastic editor behind me, which is nice.

Alyssa Marble: Met my personal deadline and finished the first draft of my WIP by March 1. I took 2 online courses in March, one on editing and the other on emotion. Both were extremely helpful. I'm now revising my draft so it's polished and ready when I go to National in July. I entered the Hearts Through History contest in the Georgian/Regency/Victorian category (EDITOR'S NOTE: Sorry Laurie! ☺)

Ami Weaver: Writing. Revising. Waiting for spring and flowers!

Dawn Bartley: Wrote a couple thousand words in a couple weeks (for the curling newsletter); now editing a lot (for grad students).

Donna Garrison: Promises to put the book down long enough to write something in April. Enjoying the reading time.

Julie McMullen: Organizing Retreat; working on querying agents. Writing everyday (or almost every day) on my new laptop.

Anne Marie King-Jakubiak: Recovering from major surgery. Writing and publishing religious articles every month.

Cynthia Arends: Signed the contract and mailed it out. Print books arrived. Starting second book in the series.

Tracy Roper: Finalist in Connecticut RWA Write Stuff contest. Winners announced in April. Researching second manuscript, historical fiction set in 1537 Scotland.

Annette Briggs: Looking forward to learning a lot at Retreat. Working on my Christmas story. Just finished an online class about crash revisions and I'm getting my ms ready for a critique at retreat.

Members' Current and Upcoming Releases Spring/Summer 2010

Jackie Braun: *A Dinner, A Date and a Desert Sheikh*, Harlequin Romance, June 2010, and *Inconveniently Wed*, the third book in the *Girls Weekend in Vegas* continuity, Harlequin, August 2010. www.jackiebraun.com

Arianna Skye: *Wings of Desire* available in e-book and at Amazon.com February 7, 2010 through Eternal Press. www.ariannaskye.com

Nancy Gideon: The first three books in a shape shifter series from Pocket Books: *Masked by Moonlight*, June 2010, *Chased by Moonlight*, July 2010 *Captured by Moonlight*, August 2010. nancy.gideon.com

Melissa Ford Lucken w/a Isabelle Drake: *Roughneck by Request*, from Ellora's Cave (Quickie), available January 19, 2010 www.isabelledrake.com

Alison Hart/Jennifer Greene: New releases by Jennifer Greene from Silhouette Romantic Suspense: *Secretive Stranger*, April 2010, *Mesmerizing Stranger*, September 2010, *Irresistible Stranger*, December 2010.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!
April

30 Lori Nelson Spielman

**WELCOME TO OUR
NEW MEMBERS!**

Welcome back to Katharine DuBois,
and welcome to our newest member,
Beverly Betz.





—THE FINAL REFLECTION—

Spring has Sprung!

By Alyssa Marble
Editor, Mid-Michigan Mirror

Spring is a time for renewal and rebirth. From the ancient celebrations of the spring equinox to my personal spring celebration, Oberon Day, when my favorite summer beer becomes available, people look forward to the coming of spring and all its budding glory.

It's exciting to see fresh shoots spearing up from the ground and tiny buds sprouting in the trees. The first spring blossoms will peek their faces out soon, if they haven't already, and a veil of green will spread over the ground and trees. And finally, after months of cold, gray clouds, the sun comes out to play.

Spring always fills me full of hope and energy. I find an extra bounce in my step and instead of dragging myself to the coffee pot in the morning, I leap out of bed, ready to start my day...well, perhaps leap is a bit of an overstatement, since my day starts at 4:45 am, and I don't think anyone leaps that early in the morning! But I do find this energy spilling over to my writing. I can't wait to sit down at my computer every day and get started.

I hope that spring fills each of you with energy and renews your writing.

Alyssa Marble -
Editor



Submission Guidelines

Topics: writing-related—business/marketing, craft, how-to, interviews with industry professionals, book reviews, member news, member bios, members' latest releases, and program recaps, etc.

Manuscripts: single-spaced, readable 12 pt. black font, no special formatting or colors, one-inch margins, saved in rich text format.

Deadline: the 2nd Saturday of the month, unless otherwise stated. Member News deadline is the 3rd Saturday (meeting day).

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Chapter Information

Non-members seeking information about Mid-Michigan RWA, our meetings, and joining our chapter, may email our membership chair at members@midmichiganrwa.org, write to MMRWA, P.O. Box 2725, Kalamazoo, MI 49003-2725, or visit our chapter online at www.midmichiganrwa.org to learn all about us.