

♥ Winner of the 1999 RWA® Mid-Sized Chapter Newsletter Contest ♥

## *The Mid-Michigan Mirror*



### *A Reflection of Romance*

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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 become published and establish careers in their writing field, and to provide continuing support for writers within the romance publishing industry.

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The August 16 Mid-Michigan Meeting is at **Damon's in Grand Rapids** with **FBI Expert, Patrick Merrill** as speaker. Please see page 9 for directions.



### ***The Write Stuff . . .***

I'm in the process of getting ready for the 2003 RWA® National Conference in New York (which will be over when you read this), and that brings back memories of past national conferences. Who among those who went to New Orleans in 2001 will ever forget Lucky Cheng's? Some of us can't because there are incriminating photos. ☺ It's at such times that you learn who your friends really are.

One conference memory in particular stays with me to this day. My conference roommate ran into an editor who had one of her proposals under consideration. She mentioned it, and the editor said she planned to write and tell my roommate she wanted to see the complete manuscript--and to send it as soon as she got home. My roommate smiled and thanked her, and then--gulp--it was "Oh, boy!" time. The rest of the manuscript did not exist.

What followed impressed the socks off me. My roommate didn't have a laptop or a notebook with her, but that didn't stop her. She wrote on a tiny memo pad in writing so small, she would probably need a magnifying glass to read it and transcribe it. She wrote in the room, in the airport, and on the plane ride home. Once home, of course, she went at it day and night, finished, and sent it off in three weeks.

I was in awe of her resolve. Her use of every moment of writing time and down time made an indelible impression on me. I used to feel that I had to have huge, uninterrupted blocks of time in order to write, and that I could only write in the peace and privacy of my home office. Now I know better.

As I write this message, I'm sitting in a noisy, crowded beauty salon with hair dye glopped on my roots. (Whoops! Now my hairdresser isn't the only one who knows for sure. ☺) It will take forty-five minutes to get rid of the gray--and forty-five minutes is a lot of writing time--so my little AlphaSmart goes to the salon with me. It goes with me to the doctor's office, the dentist's office, and anywhere else I might have to sit and wait. It also gets a workout on the four-hour drive when my husband and I visit our sons and their families in Ohio.

Before I got the little two-pound AlphaSmart, I lugged my ancient thirteen-pound laptop around. Whew! I also kept a little notebook with me at all times, and I still do, especially when it's not practical to cart the electronic equipment along. One never knows when inspiration will strike, and I don't know about the rest of you, but I really can't trust my memory. I feel a lot safer writing it down, and I haven't wasted potential writing time.

The lesson I learned from my conference roommate, a.k.a. *Switched* author Diane Burton, is that there is no such thing as too small a block of time in which to write and no such thing as the perfect environment in which to write. Anytime and anyplace will do -- with some obvious exceptions. ☺ Even if you only have time to write one sentence while waiting in the grocery checkout lane, it puts you another step closer to finishing that work in progress. Every minute of writing time, or potential writing time, is precious. Don't let it slip away.

***Lana Miersen, President***





**By Nancy Fraser**

With over 2100 members and guests in attendance, RWA's® 23rd annual conference was a huge success. Despite the aggravation of constant room reassignments and a few moments of confusion over editor/agent appointments, for the most part everything ran smoothly. The Awards Ceremony went off without a hitch and yours truly even managed to read my teleprompter correctly and make it across the stage without tripping. At the Awards Gala, they even had Hagan Daaz ice cream bars -- what more could a girl ask for!

There was lots of buzz about the quality and quantity of the workshop -- including a plea from Harlequin in the UK for authors to write medical romance. The formal announcement of Harlequin's new single title line was made on Saturday. For those who were able to attend the array of parties, the publishers pulled out NO stops this year. AND ... just how great are those fabulous tote bags !!!!

The AGM was long and sometimes boring (just ask the one who's got to type those darned minutes). However, our illustrious president comported herself beautifully and stayed to the bitter end! The 500 author literacy signing raised in excess of \$48,000 this year. And, our ten seconds of fame on Wednesday's Today Show actually drew in readers from as far away as western Pennsylvania.

If there was one drawback to this year's festivities it was that there didn't seem to be enough time to fit it all in. For those of you who couldn't make it this year, start saving those pennies and plan on Dallas next year. We promise you another great time for your money!

Nancy Fraser, RWA® Secretary/MMRWA Member

### **Creating Real Emotions** **By Gail Gaymer Martin**



Compelling characters, plot, and setting are necessary for a good romance, but believable emotions make the difference between a good and a great novel. What draws the reader into the story; what causes the reader to care about the hero and heroine; are the rich blend of realistic feelings that brings the reader to laughter and to tears.

The author's first step is to devise a credible past or back story for the hero and heroine. Then the task is to draw the character's emotions from his personal background — his motivation, conflicts and goals. Knowing the character's experiences, hurts, success, and failures, an author can develop genuine reactions to stimulus by using the flaws, fears, and drives of the individual.

### **Emotions are Complex**

No reaction is pure and distinctive. Emotions are complex, usually a blend of feelings. Consider, for example, the emotions of the heroine going out for the first time with the man of her dreams. She might feel a mixture of excitement, anxiety, happiness, adventure, or inadequacy. A hero who asks a woman to join him for dinner and is refused may feel a combination of frustration, irritation, defeat, depression, embarrassment, and determination.

### **Emotions must be Felt**

If the reader is to feel emotion, the author must borrow reactions and sensations from her own personal experiences. All people have felt alienated or unloved for a variety of reasons. Each has been lonely, frightened, worried, or anxious. The author looks back into his or her own life to recall a time that triggered such emotions and, then, recreate them.

Imagine the feelings of a teenager girl whose friends are asked to the prom and she sits home alone. What physical manifestations might be aroused? Tears, constricted breathing, dull ache in the chest, a knot in the throat, icy tendrils snaking down the spine, or twisting spasms in the stomach -- any or all of these sensations could express the feeling of rejection and longing.

### **Revealing Emotion to Reader**

But physical reactions are not the only way emotions are revealed. The reader uncovers emotion through visible signs in body movement, posture, facial expression, and actions; through dialogue; and through internal monologue. Broaden the teenager's physical reactions by adding her inner thoughts using a similes and metaphors.

\*She felt like a telephone number tossed thoughtlessly into a trash can.

\*She was a frayed teddy bear entombed and forgotten in a child's toy box.

\*She was a fresh, dewy rose that had slipped to the floor, wilted and forgotten.

These images bring the character to life and arouse the reader more than telling the reader, "She felt abandoned" or "Feeling abandoned, her heart ache."

### **Showing arouses Feeling**

Showing, rather than telling, is the most effective method to reveal emotions. To say someone is sad or lonely does not tug at the heartstrings. To show loneliness arouses feelings from the reader's own life experiences.

**Telling:** She was lonely and discontent. or Loneliness filled her.

**Showing:** She sank into the chair surrounded by an empty silence that pressed against her heart. Outside the window, a lone white cloud floated against the blue sky. Why couldn't she be like that?

In the example, words like "sank," "empty silence," and "pressed" trigger a sense of loneliness, while discontent is illustrated in the cloud analogy

An example from *Upon A Midnight Clear*, my award-winning Love Inspired release from October, 2000, shows the hero's love for his child through internal monologue and action.

*A soft night light glowed a warm pink. Natalie's slender frame lay curled under a quilt, and the rise and fall of the delicate floral-print marked her deep sleep. He moved lightly across the pink carpeting and stood, looking at her buttercup hair and her flushed, rosy cheeks. His heart lurched at the sight of his child — their child, fulfilling their hopes and completing their lives.*

Along with love, this narration arouses tenderness and awe, giving the hero a much deeper characterization.

### **Contrasting the Hero and Heroine's First Meeting**

In my June 2002 release, *Loving Treasures*, Jemma Dupre a widow meets her widowed mother-in-law's wealthy cousin. She finds him attractive but he is older and wealthy—way out of her league. Look at the emotion involved in their first meeting.

*A summer pinwheel whirled in Jemma's chest, taking her breath away. No one gave her that much kind attention, not even Lyle. She murmured her thanks and sat nailed to her seat while Claire followed him toward the side door. His rich, genial voice drifted from the hallway.*

*Drawn to follow, Jemma rose and hovered behind them. Before he disappeared through the door, Philip gave her a summer-breeze smile, sending her internal pinwheel on another merry spin.*

Philips' first reaction of Jemma shows his disbelief that she's aroused his interest so early and discomfort in finding a younger woman so appealing.

*Philip pulled open his car door and slid inside, his attention locked to the large boutique window. The petite outline of the charming young woman he'd just met shimmered behind the pane and through him like a flutter of fine silk. He closed the car door, turned the key, and rolled down the window to enjoy the warm spring air. He wished he could recapture the alluring scent that filled him when he rescued Jemma from the ladder. Leaning back in his seat, he focused through the windshield on Jemma in the shop's interior.*

*Yet, much more than glass and space separated them. While he watched her, Jemma leaned into the large display window and adjusted the drape of a black shawl around a faceless, gold-painted manikin's shoulders. When Jemma straightened her back, her trim, delicate figure looked fragile like spring grass...fresh and new. Lovely.*

*He shook his gray head. "You old geezer," he muttered aloud, "she's probably two decades younger than you. You ought to be ashamed." Still, she'd rustled feelings in him that he hadn't felt in years—even before Susan died. He wondered if she enjoyed his hands around her waist as much as he had.*

### **Using Life Experiences and Original Language**

Look into your own life experiences and recall how true emotion affects your inner thoughts and outer behavior. Find a unique way to show this to the reader. By showing emotions based on real life experiences, the reader will laugh, cry, and cheer as they follow the romantic ups and downs of the hero and heroine.

Gail Gaymer Martin won her second Holt Medallion this year with her miniseries novel, *Loving Treasure*. Look for her Love Inspired novels in October and December 2003 and her first single title women's fiction, *The Christmas Kite*, in November 2003.

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### **Opportunity for Mid-Michigan Members**

Just a reminder that Mid-Michigan Mirror welcomes your contributions. Whether you are book-length published or working toward that dream, your experiences and lessons have potential to help and encourage us.

**Some links available to RWA® members who have achieved official Pro status:**

[PRO\\_craft-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:PRO_craft-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)  
[PRO\\_industry-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:PRO_industry-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)  
[PRO\\_link-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:PRO_link-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)  
[PRO\\_news-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:PRO_news-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

**Workshop**

Please feel free to forward the following workshop announcement. Workshop participants need not be RWA® members. Thanks, Susan D. Lanier-Graham Newsletter Editor, From The Heart Romance Writers, RWA® Chapter #177  
[newsletter@fthrw.com](mailto:newsletter@fthrw.com) <<http://www.fthrw.com/>> [www.fthrw.com](http://www.fthrw.com)

**Fast & Easy Conflict Workshop**

Dates: August 11-17, 2003  
Instructor: Mia Zachary  
Moderator: Nan Strebeck

Course Description: Let's talk about conflict. What's the first thing that comes to most minds? The evening news headline story about the latest insurrection in some foreign country. You think conflict, you think war and fighting and battle. Closer to home, you think shouting, anger and arguing. So the first thing we need to do is go outside of conventional thinking.

What editors refer to as 'conflict' is the belief or perception, event or circumstance which builds obstacles between characters in a story. Start thinking of conflict as 'opposition' and it will make your job as an author much clearer.

About the Instructor, Mia Zachary (<http://www.miazachary.com/>) is the author of *Red Shoes & A Diary*, released by Harlequin Blaze in April 2003. *Red Shoes* won the Harlequin Books 2000 Summer Blaze Contest for bold, brash love scenes. It also took first place in the 2001 TARA First Impressions contest. Zachary is also Contest Committee Chair for the RWA® Hearts through History Chapter.

How to register:

Fee: FTHR W Members: FREE; FTHR W Non-Members: \$5

All workshop attendees must be subscribed to the FTHR W Workshops listserv on Yahoo! to participate in the current workshop. To sign up for a workshop currently enrolling, send an email to [FTHR W\\_Workshops-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:FTHR W_Workshops-subscribe@yahoogroups.com). For payment options and further information, see the website or email [workshops@fthrw.com](mailto:workshops@fthrw.com).

### **2003 Meeting and Speaker Schedule**

August 16 Damon's, Grand Rapids, FBI Expert, Patrick Merrill

September 20 Gilbert's, Jackson, TBA

October 11 Gallagher's, Kalamazoo, N. Gideon, L. Kuna: "Passion, Prose & the Paranormal"

November 15 Golden Rose, Mason, Gail Martin

December Christmas Party, TBA, Santa Claus

### **Directions to our August 16 Meeting at Damon's**

4515 28th St., S.E., Kentwood, MI 49512

**Phone:** 616-956-1211

#### **From East**

Take I-196 (NE) to exit 70A Merge onto SR-11 (Wilson Ave SW which turns into 28th St.) go east for approximately 10.5 miles. Damon's will be on your left after Acquest Ave.

#### **From North**

Take 131 South to exit 81. Go east on 28th St. (SR-11) for just over 5 miles. Just past Acquest Ave., find Damon's on the left.

#### **From Southwest**

North on 131 bear right on 28th St exit (exit 81). East on 28th St. (SR-11) for just over 5 miles.

Just past Acquest Ave. find Damon's on the left.

#### **From East**

Take I-96 W to exit 43A. Go West (right) on 28th St. SE (SR-11) for about one mile to Damon's which will be on your right.

#### **From South:**

Take I-94 to US-127 (I-496) Merge onto I-96 (SW) to Exit 43A, right onto 28th St. SE About

one mile to Damon's on right.

**THE FOLLOWING SITE ADDRESS WILL TAKE YOU TO A MAP IF YOU NEED ONE:**

<http://damons.know-where.com/damons/cgi/site?site=DAM034&address=>

### **2003 Mid-Michigan Romance Writers of America Officers**

President: Lana Miersen [j.l.miersen@cablespeed.com](mailto:j.l.miersen@cablespeed.com)

Vice-president: Pat Lazarus [LazArt2000@cs.com](mailto:LazArt2000@cs.com)

Secretary: Rohn Federbush [rohn@comcast.net](mailto:rohn@comcast.net)

Treasurer: Diane Burton [Dburton72@aol.com](mailto:Dburton72@aol.com)

### **2003 Mid-Michigan Romance Writers of America Committee Chairs**

I Will Write a Book/Write For the Money: Michele Hickerty [chelery1@yahoo.com](mailto:chelery1@yahoo.com)

Happily Ever After Contest: Michele Hickerty [chelery1@yahoo.com](mailto:chelery1@yahoo.com)

Library: Maris Soule [SOULEM@aol.com](mailto:SOULEM@aol.com) and Lucy Kubash [lucykubash@parrett.net](mailto:lucykubash@parrett.net)

Membership/Historian: Dawn Bartley [bartleyd@chartermi.net](mailto:bartleyd@chartermi.net)

Member Recognition: Jodi Lynn Copeland [jodi.copeland@ttmps.com](mailto:jodi.copeland@ttmps.com)

and Cheryl Steimel [wiseprez@yahoo.com](mailto:wiseprez@yahoo.com)

MMRWA Angel Award: Maris Soule [SOULEM@aol.com](mailto:SOULEM@aol.com)

Mystery Gifts: Chris Allen-Riley [matt@wmis.net](mailto:matt@wmis.net)

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PAN Liaison: Dana Nussio [nussio@earthlink.net](mailto:nussio@earthlink.net)

Perseverance Fund: Diane Burton [Dburton72@aol.com](mailto:Dburton72@aol.com)

Policy: Nancy Fraser [nfraser2@cogeco.ca](mailto:nfraser2@cogeco.ca)

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Publicity: Juli Schuitema [jl\\_schuitema@yahoo.com](mailto:jl_schuitema@yahoo.com)

Retreat: Pam Trombley [ptrombley@voyager.net](mailto:ptrombley@voyager.net)

RWA® Pro Liaison: Tammy Kearly [tammyk@voyager.net](mailto:tammyk@voyager.net)

Web mistress: Michelle Crean [mecrean@parrett.net](mailto:mecrean@parrett.net)

**Deadline for September submissions to Mid-Michigan Mirror is August 15. Your submissions are welcomed and valued.**

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