

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

The Mid-Michigan Mirror

... A Reflection of Romance

A publication of the Mid-Michigan Chapter (#12) of Romance Writers of America®

Volume IV, Issue VII

August 2006

Annette Briggs, Editor

mirror@midmichiganrwa.org



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.

Inside This Issue:

- ♥ Page 2 - *President's Message / Preview of program*
- ♥ Page 3 - *Member News*
- ♥ Page 4 - *August / September Birthdays*
- ♥ Page 6 - *Member Article: MORE ABOUT SEX*
- ♥ Page 8 - *THE HOLY TRINITY OF JUDGING*
- ♥ Page 9 - *5 MINUTE WORKSHOP on CONFLICT*
- ♥ Page 10 - *MAKING "SENSE" OF IT ALL*
- ♥ Page 11 - *VIRUSES, WORMS, and OTHER NASTIES*
- ♥ Page 12 - *Contest Website*
- ♥ Page 13 - *Meeting Schedule / Directions*
- ♥ Page 14 - *Officers / Chairs / Submission Guidelines / Deadline*
- ♥ Page 15 - *Contact info / Policy / Reprint info*



Jackie Braun

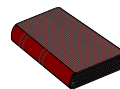
The August meeting is at La Senorita Mexican Restaurant in Lansing, MI with prize winning novelist Jackie Braun revealing her tricks of the trade in her program, "Research for Dummies."

Preview on page 2.
Directions to La Senorita on page 13.



The online Mid-Michigan Mirror is offered for the enjoyment of the general public, private meeting information, minutes and treasurer's reports are available to members at:

MMRWABUSINESS@yahoo.com.



Many thanks to the August Mid-Michigan Mirror contributors!



From the Desk of:

Wil Emerson, President

Back from RWA® National and playing catch up! This was not my first conference but in many ways, it felt like a first time. The RWA® chose 'A New Chapter Begins' as the theme for the four day event. I stretched four days into seven with an early arrival for the Kiss of Death Tour and ended the week with a publisher's appointment. From firearms to begging for a sale....I'm loaded with information and have recharged my writing battery.

But, why did I feel like a 'first timer'? Honestly? ---Because I attended fewer workshops. The PAN arm had several informative sessions on copyright laws, business expenses and marketing tips. The general sessions offered a span of subjects so wide you couldn't help but be confused over what to choose. "50 Ways to (Nearly) Kill Your Lover" or "60 Minutes to Your Marketing Strategy?" Of course, I took the "Nearly Kill" route ---the information might come in handy if my spouse keeps shouting at the door, "Wil, when's dinner gonna' be ready."

Fewer workshops? Yes, I did say that. I put my notebook aside on Thursday, left my watch on the bedside and missed several sessions that were guaranteed to make my career skyrocket. Instead, I gravitated toward a circle of familiar faces-- MMRWA friends and fellow writers. We talked about agents, editors, publishing houses, works in progress and several other unmentionables. Yes, we strayed occasionally from the subject at hand but I didn't care. Not for a minute. The magic of camaraderie proved to be a wise investment.

As I talked with Sue, Cathy, Tammie, Laurie, Lana, Lorelee, Dana, Kate...and other writers who make MMRWA wonderful, I realized the absence of camaraderie can be worse than writer's block. Sure, it's helpful to learn how to create more chilling villains or revisit the basic structure of a query but a speaker could never capture the wit, charm, intelligence and inspiration of this collective group.

Foolish me to have missed so much in the past. Writers need fuel to keep their juices flowing. Fuel: ---enthusiasm, determination, passion, excitement. The best way to get it is to be with successful writers. Exactly what we have in our chapter!

A new chapter for National RWA® and also for me...a revitalized writer who mailed a requested ms to an agent and another to a publisher. Oh---The CDs on the sessions will arrive in a few weeks. I'll put my name on the list to review the sessions I missed. Thanks, fellow members for making the Atlanta conference the best!

Cheers, **Wil**

August Program

Aren't in tune with designer fashions? Don't have a clue about gourmet cooking or which wine would go best with your characters meal? Maybe you need a quick primer on Jazz. **Jackie Braun** will clue us in on surprising, easy and cheap places to find the details that help set your manuscript scenes. As Jackie puts it, "the program is more like story Details for Dummies." Don't miss this one on **August 19** at **La Senorita Mexican Restaurant in Lansing**.

Learn more about Mid-Michigan author Jackie Braun at: <http://www.jackiebraun.com>

There was no July meeting, so there will be no July program recap.

MEMBER NEWS

Congratulations to **Michelle Celmer** for recently winning **Booksellers Best Award**.

Sue Charnley: My manuscript, Hannah's Heart, placed second in the paranormal category of the Valley Forge Romance Writers' "Sheila" competition. For more information on the judges, winners or the contest visit <http://www.vfrw.com/contest.htm>

Congratulations to **Rohn Federbush** for placing third in the **Marlene** with her entry, *Forsaking Maui Time*.

Gail Gaymer Martin: I'm thrilled to announce that I won the **Booksellers Best Award** again this year for an Inspirational Romantic Suspense, *Finding Christmas*. I was certain I wouldn't receive the award two years in a row – but there I was. My workshop went so well -- full capacity so they had to put a sign on the door and I received so many wonderful comments for the rest of the conference. My workshop was Thursday at 11 AM. - The Sagging Middle and What To Do About It. It was great to see some of you there and I even had dinner with a few of you. Nice to be home though.

Catherine McClain: Just got a call from Texas. My story is a finalist in the **Lone Star Contest!**

Maris Soule: Sold my romantic suspense mystery, *The Crows*, to **Five Star Mysteries** and sold "The Barbecue" a mini-mystery to **Woman's World**. (Will be in August 29th issue.) after having had a ms returned (rejected) after being held 3 1/2 years by an editor. (That's a record in my book.)

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Renee Hand: My love for reading and writing started when I was a child. I remember frequently wearing out the stone steps of the local library. When in a bookstore I would sit in the middle of an aisle perusing a novel that I was eagerly going to purchase but couldn't wait to read. Often when I had extra time I locked myself in my room for hours to write stories that would pop into my head. Now that I am older, my love for reading and writing has not diminished but, in fact, it has become a bigger part of me. It is because of this that I chose to share my interests with other readers who love books as much as I do.

My goal in writing is to entertain but, more importantly, it is to build a connection with my readers. If I make another person feel some kind of emotion while they read my novel, whether it be lust, love, anger, or compassion, then I did my job as a writer and that makes me feel good about what I write.

I grew up in a little bit of everywhere in Lower Michigan. I graduated from Goodrich High School and I still substitute teach and am a varsity girls tennis coach there. I have been coaching there for seven years. Last year I was nominated coach of the year in my region which I think was quite an honor.

I graduated from Northern Michigan University with a bachelor's degree in science. After I graduated I got a job as a chemist for a year and then I worked for general motors for 2 ½ years. When I was laid off it was then that I started to substitute teach and we started a family. It was also that time that I started with my writing career.

Member News (Renee Hand) continued on page 4

Member News (Renee Hand) continued from page 3

I love to paint and draw. I am also crafty and make quilts and other items. I have wonderful supportive parents and a brother and sister. I have been married to my husband Cary for seven years and we have two boys, Gabriel who is three and Sheldon who is one.

My family has encouraged my talents and creativity and I couldn't have gotten this far without their support and love. Having *Magic Hearts* published really is a dream come true and I am thankful to God for all of the blessings in my life. I love being an author!

Margo Hoornstra: Like many aspiring writers, it's hard to determine exactly when my writing career began. I knew I always had the desire to write, but the business of living life—going to school, getting married, then raising a family—always seemed to interfere with that desire. I was lucky. My father actually made his living by writing. I knew it could be done, I just wasn't sure how. I loved reading romance. Then one day, I just took the plunge and began writing a book. I wrote a total of three books, all eventually rejected.

Then in 1983, at the coaxing of a girlfriend, I attended a few meetings of the Greater Detroit Chapter of Romance Writers of America.® Living in the Lansing area, it was sometimes difficult to travel all the way to Detroit for meetings. So, in 1984, I helped found the Mid-Michigan Chapter of Romance Writers of America.®

With minimal publicity, eager potential members seemed to, as they say, come out of the woodwork. Your current members: Leila Davis, Lorelee Lillibridge, and Maris Soule were among those who attended that first meeting. Published authors Marianne Willman, Ruth Ryan Langan and Jill Gregory were our guest speakers.

1984 was also the year that the National RWA®Conference was held in Detroit, so our chapter was immediately front and center at that level. Leila Davis and others became driving forces of the organization and we held monthly meetings—running the circuit around Mid Michigan—and began the annual Retreat From Harsh Reality (Leila's title).

Unfortunately for me, I was soon promoted in my day job at a professional association from secretary to director. For the next twenty years I left the romance field and went "corporate" producing a monthly magazine for the group and handling all their public relations needs. That position ended for me three years ago.

I again have turned to romance writing. I have had a romance short story published in *Country Woman* and a mystery short story published in *Woman's World*, along with some inspirational pieces and some poems published.

My heart's desire is still to write a romance and get it published. But I know I need help. As I cruised the internet one evening I happened on your website and was thrilled with what I found. I have corresponded with Maris and Leila over the years, but I had no idea that MMRWA was such a thriving and successful organization. And that so many of the original activities are alive and well.

It's good to be back.

Member News continued on page 5

Member News continued from page 4

Kate Rizor: I began writing books when I was 12, fifty to sixty page mysteries that I still pull out for a good chuckle. Raised in Richland, Michigan and the youngest of seven, I attended Gull Lake Community Schools.

During High School, I was accepted at the Summer Institute of the Arts, a state funded creative arts program of which only 100 a year were chosen. I attended the two-week program at Olivet College and started taking writing more seriously.

After graduation, I attended Kalamazoo Valley Community College to pursue journalism. Then I attended a motivational seminar that fall about pursuing your dreams and left the seminar determined to get a head start on my writing career. The next day I called the Kalamazoo Gazette, learned that a part time job was opening up in the newsroom, and was hired to edit press releases for publication.

While working and attending school, I wrote novels during nights and weekends and submitted work to literary agents and publishing houses. Rejections poured in and work piled up, so I put my writing on hold after transferring to Western Michigan University.

For four years I worked my way up at the Gazette as a reporter and copy editor. At 21, one local story I covered made me even more determined to get published [book length]. A member of the Richland community called the newsroom one afternoon asking me to cover a local fund-raiser she was hosting for a young man suffering from a rare form of cancer. He turned out to be someone I had graduated from high school with. I reported on how the community was trying to raise funds to send him for experimental treatment.

I reported on the story for four months, but by the time the money was raised, it was too late. The young man's death made me realize that life is too short. I couldn't give up on getting [my book] published. I set personal goals to acquire more credentials. I began freelancing for national magazines and smaller markets like *Writer Online*, *The Writer's Gazette*, and *Novel Advice*.

During this time I married my husband Steve and worked as a technical writer, but I was bored writing about machinery and processes. I transferred to a different department where I worked as a trainer and used this experience to conduct writing seminars. I started my own writing and editorial business and began leading writing workshops. And nearly a year later my first acceptance letter came in [for my published work, *The Governor's Wife*].

I am now working on my next novel and continue to conduct writing seminars and workshops in my spare time.

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Jodi Lozon 1 Dorien Kelly 11 Anne Marie King-Jakubiak 15 Renee Hand 26
Gail Martin 28 Tamyra Kearly 29

Approaching
SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS
Wil Emerson 15



Our June program on Sex and Sensuality has aroused some additional enlightening thought on the subject from one of the program panel members, mega-published MMRWA member Rosanne Bittner.



MORE ABOUT SEX AND SENSUALITY FOR THE AUTHOR

By Rosanne Bittner

Obviously, how much sex you put into your story, and how explicit it is, depends first on the publisher for whom you are writing and what they expect from a book. From that point on, I believe you need to always remember to be true to your characters and to remember basic human nature. For the most part, women, and yes, even men, are looking for more than a "feel good" time. Because we write romance, the RELATIONSHIP is so much more important than how your characters consummate that relationship. And when they DO consummate the relationship, you have to consider so many things, especially in that first love scene.

For instance: Is your heroine a virgin? Was she raised to be a basically decent human being? If so, her "first time" may not be terribly fulfilling. Let's face it – that first time is not always enjoyable. She doesn't know what she's doing or how it will feel, and a virgin in an historical will know far less about sex than one in a contemporary. You have to design your love scene with these things in mind.

Just because she's madly in love and truly desires the hero doesn't mean that first consummation will be a wild romp in bed. That's just not realistic. It's best to stick to the basic act and not have the heroine performing or receiving anything beyond that. You can use her lack of knowledge or her combination of fear and curiosity to set up a titillating love scene using a hero who is experienced and knows how to make that first time as good for her as possible without scaring her to death. If it's an "arranged" marriage and if you can make it fit the story line, that first time should be when she is ready. And until then, you always have the build up to the moment when "it" happens, which keeps readers turning pages.

Is your heroine experienced – maybe divorced or a widow or has already had a relationship with someone else? In that case she won't be as inhibited as a virgin would be. She is naturally going to enjoy that first time with the hero, if she's truly in love and is passionate about him. Your sex scene can be more explicit, and the hero and heroine might "experiment" with more sex acts than basic intercourse.

Is your book historical or contemporary? Throughout history the basics of sex and love and desire and human nature have always been the same. However, you still have to allow for the protocol of the era in which your book takes place. Facts are facts, and there was a time when it was shameful for a woman to show her ankles, and a time when "grandpa" never saw "grandma" naked. Things happened under the covers and in the dark. Naturally, that doesn't make for a hot romance. I am only pointing out that it's important to remember your time period and adjust your love scene accordingly, again taking into consideration the hero and heroine, who they are, where they come from, how they were raised. What would they REALISTICALLY do and not do?

MORE ABOUT SEX continued on page 7

MORE ABOUT SEX continued from page 6

In the end this is all simply common sense. I just felt a need to remind our members who are new writers that as they develop their stories, it's important to remember that it's not all about sex. It's all about LOVE and RELATIONSHIPS.

Remember that most of our readers are female and that females care more about relationships and a "good man" than about sex. Sex is just a natural result of being in love, and unless you have a really good reason to throw in sex WITHOUT love, your readers are going to be very disappointed – and so might your editor. Sex without love has to be handled very carefully and very cleverly in order to pull it off realistically and in a fashion that won't repulse your readers, even if you're writing for Ellora's Cave. You still need to keep the relationship in mind and not just write sex for the sake of sex.

And that's my last word of advice. Just because your book is a romance, and even if it's for a steamier line, don't think you *must* throw in a sex scene. Don't ever, ever make it gratuitous. The sex should always fit in with the flow of your story, with your characters and their relationship. To write sex for the sake of sex is an insult to you as a writer, an insult to your readers, and an insult to your characters.

I don't know how much help this article has been, but I just felt that more needed to be said on the subject. The old-time romances, especially the historicals, tended to "victimize" the heroines or make them a bit weak and too dependent on the hero. In today's stories readers want heroines who truly stand up for themselves and who know what they want in a man, even if it's a historical. In that respect she should handle her sex life in the same way – stand up for herself and know what she wants in a man – and let HIM know it – maybe not blatantly, but cleverly, slyly, and through her actions and RE-actions. And a loveable hero, as much as possible in your story, should show compassion and respect for the heroine in all ways. He might be a beer-drinking, gambling, gun-toting, rugged man with a past, but he still should know how to handle a woman the right way – or perhaps she can TEACH him the right way. That can make for great sexual tension.

As far as there being only so many ways to describe the "act," I think if you truly get "into" your characters and are realistic about their love scenes, staying true to the times and to their backgrounds / personalities, the "way" they make love will simply fall into place as you write the scene. Let it happen naturally, and the description will take care of itself.

I want to congratulate the many members who've won writing contests and/or sold their first books over the past year. The success among our group is phenomenal, which only goes to show you how helpful we can all be to each other. Here's to love and romance, and the sex AND successful sales that follow!

Rosanne Bittner is the author of 57 titles published and approximately 8 million books sold worldwide. Learn more about this prolific Mid-Michigan author from her website at: www.rosannebittner.com



The following article was originally published in the July 2006 issue of Inklings newsletter, a publication of the Romance Writers Ink, of Tulsa, OK.

THE HOLY TRINITY OF JUDGING by Jackie Kramer

Recently several of my entries into a local writing contest were returned to me. One submission had only one comment while another practically dripped red ink. As I read through all five entries, I realized that to be an effective judge, one has three roles to perform. If you only chose one function, you defraud the entry because your comments are automatically biased to that position. I call this "The Holy Trinity of Judging"...Writer, Editor, and Reader.

First, and least important, is to judge as a writer. "What!?!?" you say. "Least important? Not share all I've learned, all I know?" Sounds like blasphemy, doesn't it? But hear me out. I'm not saying don't judge as a writer; just use care. When you judge as a writer, what you are looking for is GMC (Goal, Motivation, and Conflict, for those of you who don't know the meaning and why don't you know?), characterization, plot development, pacing, etc. Some of us lucky enough to feel comfortable doing so, even do some line editing.

But if you're seeing a lot of red ink on the page, are you really judging the entry or are you re-writing the piece...to one that matches your voice? I've read many "suggestions" for word, phrase, or plot changes that are viable, but don't say what I want the story to say. That means the judge is "seeing" the story as they would write it, not as the author is writing it. This is why I claim the Writer part of judging as the least significant.

The second most important part of the trinity is the Editor mode. "Now I know you're crazy, lady! Editors are the most important because they buy manuscripts." Yeah, I hear you. But consider this...how many times have you read on your marked up entry "Editors don't like..."? Unless you're an editor, how do you know what an editor likes? First, there are a lot of editors and they're each looking for different things. Some themes, styles, or genres that appeal to one editor won't appeal to another.

Second, the editor's main job is not to find The Next Great American Novel; their job is to find books that will make the company money. Therefore, a good judge is one that puts on their editor's hat and judges a book for its marketability. And not just to themselves, but their critique partner, their mother, and the lady in grocery line ahead of her. In other words, when judging the piece, think like an editor. Put aside your personal preferences. Whether it appeals to your buying habits or not, is this a story that has the potential to sell to the public or not? And if not, tell the author why you don't think it'll match present markets. But remember to also tell them that markets change and that in the long run, the story's value is in their eyes, no one else's.

One thing to keep in mind about markets is the changing face of publishing. While many people refused to believe that e-Books are more than a fad, the truth is that we are on the crux of a major technical/societal change with computers. E-publishers still want the same things in characters, plot, and GMC that print publishers want, but many of them are willing to take a chance on stories that are edgier than New York publishers will risk. So don't automatically discount a story's marketability based on what a print editor might buy. Remember, there was a time when erotica and paranormal could mostly sell only to e-publishers and now are showing up on bookstore shelves.

Now we reach judging as a Reader. It's not important because it's last, but because it is readers who make a book. They are the final judges. They are the ones who read the book and tell their friends. They're the ones who have book clubs, haunt the library until the book is available for them to check out, and nag the bookstores until the book comes in. Remember, before you were a writer, you were a reader, so draw on those skills when judging.

THE HOLY TRINITY OF JUDGING continued on page 9

THE HOLY TRINITY OF JUDGING continued from page 8

A reader may not know if the POV is uneven. They may not care if there are typos, an occasional misspelling, or the word "yellow" appears twice on a page. What they care about is that the characters are someone they love, the story has them hooked in, or the relationship is hot, hot, hot. When you get to the end of the entry, are you relieved it's over or are you wishing you had more to read? Are there unanswered questions that should have been answered or those that lure you to read more? That's the kind of things that matter to a reader and should to you as a Reader-judge.

That's the Holy Trinity. As a judge or even as a critique partner, view the piece as Writer, Editor, and Reader. But there is one final consideration. Newbie vs. Pro. Being a new author doesn't mean you can't judge contests; just don't try to judge beyond your skills.

Don't parrot "truths" you've heard other authors spout. Point out things that you "know" to be problem areas based on your personal knowledge.

Don't feel compelled to correct "every" grammar, punctuation, and spelling error you find. If you see a trend in certain technical areas, mention it. It's each author's responsibility to learn language skills. It's not the judge's duty to line edit a lazy author.

And most important, don't try to change a writer's voice. It may not be "told" the way you would tell the story, but then it's not your story, is it?

In conclusion, when judging a contest or being an effective critique partner, keep in mind the Holy Trinity. First, read the section as a Reader and judge it based on how much you did or did not enjoy it.

Then judge it as an Editor. Does it make you want to read more? Is it fresh? Emotional? Does it excite you? Do you like the author's voice? Can you see it selling at your local book store?

And last, but not least, judge it as a writer. Help your fellow author with POV, GMC, dialogue, or whatever they need to succeed. Give them praise where they did well and gently point out the problems you see.

Judge them as you would want them to judge you.

*You can read more about Jackie Kramer at www.jackiekramer.com <http://www.jackiekramer.com>. Be sure to visit her new blog! Her current release, a hardcover called *WARRIOR'S HEART* has taken 1st Place in the Short Contemporary category of the 2006 HOLT Medallion contest and 1st Place in the Short Contemporary category of the 2006 More Than Magic contest. USED WITH PERMISSION*



The following article first appeared in the April 2006 issue of the Writer's Saddle, the Calgary Association of RWA (CaRWA) newsletter, Kellie Finley, Editor. USED WITH PERMISSION

5 Minute Workshop -- 4 Ways to Write Better "Conflict" by Julie Rowe

Conflict is what drives a story. It's the internal and external problems that your characters must resolve before they can have their emotionally satisfying ending. Conflict is also one of the toughest things to get right.

5 Minute Workshop continued on page 10

5 Minute Workshop continued from page 9

Here are 4 techniques to apply to your writing today to that will help you write great conflict.

1. Remember that conflict must engage the reader's emotions (and yours too!). To ramp up the emotional impact brainstorm with this simple exercise:

Write your conflict down in the center of a blank page. Draw a circle around it. Now, looking at the conflict, think of what you could do to make it worse, more difficult to solve or torture your characters. Write each item down on spokes around your circle. Use the ones that appeal to you most to raise the level of conflict in your story.

Conflict can also be elevated by using setting, plot and character development.

2. Setting - isolation, disaster, war or crime can make simple conflicts like a fear of loud noises into a meaty problem.

3. Plot - by continually adding bad news to your story you can make your conflict much harder to solve, and far more interesting.

4. Character development - Your character's profession or past actions can serve to increase the conflict. Use backstory to its full potential.

Julie Rowe is a stay-at-home mom and writer. She's completed thirteen romance novels, with two of them currently under consideration by Harlequin Mills & Boon. She is also a double Golden Heart finalist. While she awaits the sale of her first novel, Julie has pursued publication in other arenas. Her work has been published in the Fort McMurray Today newspaper, Today's Parent magazine, Reader's Digest (Canada), The Canadian Writer's Journal, Writer's Digest, Canadian Living, What's Up Kids Magazine, the Romance Writer's Report and various RWA chapter newsletters.



The following article first appeared in the April 2006 issue of the Writer's Saddle, the Calgary Association of RWA (CaRWA) newsletter, Kellie Finley, Editor. USED WITH PERMISSION

Making "Sense" Of It All by Florence Cardinal

We all have five senses. Writers, I believe, sometimes forget that. How much more vivid a scene becomes when we include more than sights and perhaps, sounds.

To illustrate: A forest scene. Green spruce trees reaching up to the sun. A sandy beach and a lake reflecting the blue of the sky. Wild strawberries entwining their vines among the trees. A pretty scene, right?

Let's bring it to life. Listen to the waves lapping the shore. A gentle breeze rattles the leaves of the maple trees and a whippoorwill sings a cheery song. The frogs hiding in the mud blend their voices in a joyful quartet, while across the lake drifts the eerie voice of a loon.

The aroma of rich soil blends with the pungent scent of pine needles you crush beneath your feet. New mown hay from a neighboring farm adds a rich fragrance to the blend.

Making "Sense" Of It All continued on page 11

Making "Sense" Of It All continued from page 10

You walk down to the beach, remove your shoes and feel the warm, soft sand beneath your feet. Walking down to the verge of the lake, you stick a toe into the cool water and perhaps shiver a bit at the contrast.

Back among the trees, you pick a wild strawberry and savor the sharp tang of the juice on your tongue. What a glorious day in Nature's cathedral.

Don't short-change your readers. Give them all there is to see, hear, smell, touch and taste. Add the scent of cinnamon to the kitchen, the taste of the toothpaste on your tongue in the bathroom. Hear distant church bells ring. Feel that silk negligee against your body.

And never forget the sensual effect of his after-shave as he lowers his head to steal a kiss.

The five senses can bring a scene to life and transport your reader into a whole new world of experience. When you write, close your eyes and picture the scene. What do you see? What sounds disrupt the silence? Does a special aroma permeate the air? Is there anything you can touch or taste? Remember, if you're afraid, even fear has a special taste on the tongue. Bring that scene to life. Make "sense" of it.

Florence Cardinal is a member of the Calgary Association of the RWA (CaRWA).

*Kellie Finley (Marchak) website - <<http://www.kelliefinley.com>> www.kelliefinley.com
CaRWA website - <<http://www.calgaryrwa.com>> www.calgaryrwa.com KOD website -*



The following article originally appeared in the July issue of MARA Matters, the newsletter for Mid-America Romance Authors. . USED WITH PERMISSION

VIRUSES, WORMS, and OTHER NASTIES by Wilburta Arrowood

When you use a computer there are all sorts of nasties out to get you. Viruses, worms, and just plain cranky software or hardware can quickly reduce a perfectly sane, intelligent person to a weeping, knee-jerking ball of nerves. So what is that intelligent person to do, short of spending half her life savings on protective software?

According to PC Magazine there are some very good free downloads for personal use to help computer owners. ZoneAlarm offers a free firewall that I used for several years before I upgraded to the pro version. In effect, both versions make your computer "invisible" to the creepy crawlers searching the web to breach your computer. The paid version also has a great spam control for your email programs.

Unfortunately, when you surf the web, you are likely to pick up a bit of spyware that may be capable of recording your keystrokes. That means it could possibly glean your credit card numbers and/or site passwords as you surf and shop. AdAware and SpyBot both offer free downloads to search out and destroy them. It is recommended you use both, since neither catches everything, but together they offer very good protection. Both do require manual updates and manual runs. They should be used at least weekly, and after any online transactions.

VIRUSES, WORMS, and OTHER NASTIES continued on page 12

VIRUSES, WORMS, and OTHER NASTIES continued from page 11

What about virus protection? Commercially, McAfee and Norton both offer good programs, but in most cases will not run together, and they can be costly. Some versions require the user to manually update. I've found a couple of free programs that run together seamlessly, and both update automatically daily, sometimes more than once. AVG has run on my machine for four years and Avast for the last two years. I have not had a single infection go undetected since I installed them.

Even so, I am not so foolish as to believe there is no need to back up my files. At one time or another, most computer users have experienced that sinking feeling immediately after discovering your data is lost forever. Power failure, lightning strikes, or simple computer old age can wipe out months of work in mere seconds.

There are numerous backup options including rewritable CDs or DVDs, a friend's computer via email, and flash drives. There are also numerous free online storage sites you can locate via a Google search. You should be very careful to read the terms of use on those sites, since some claim copyright on anything stored on their servers. What a horrible way to lose control of your creative work. Personally, my flash drive is my best friend. They come with various storage sizes, are quite small in physical size, and are economical. Even a 128mg will hold more than one book manuscript. I just paid \$45 on EBay for a 2gb flash drive to fill with my work and family pictures to be stored in my bank safe deposit box.

Phishing is rampant, and you need to be very careful about releasing any personal information on the web. Legitimate companies such as PayPal, your banks, or credit card companies will never ask for "verification" information via email. Never click a link in an email to verify information. If you are truly concerned about an account, check by going through a Google search, or by typing in a URL from a statement or other documentation you own. Better yet, telephone. Even a long distance call is less costly than identification recovery.

If you own your own domain, you may be subject to yet another scam. Many domain owners are receiving what appears to be a bill, usually for approximately sixty dollars, with a tear off form for payment. In small letters it may mention "automatic submission" to various search engines included with your "service." Many unsuspecting customers have sent a check, never got listed in any of the search engines, and later discovered they still owe for their domain name and/or hosting service. Check all such mail to be certain it comes from your providers. In most cases this particular legitimate bill actually will arrive via email.

By being alert and diligent, you can be safe from the nasties. All you need is good software and to "be careful out there."

Wilburta is editor for Mara Matters, the Mid-America Romance Authors' newsletter. Her first book is an inspirational, For the Love of a Child. Visit her at <http://www.wilburtaarrowood.com>



HELPFUL WEBSITES

WRITING CONTESTS

Check out Contest Alert-for news on upcoming contests, plus Finalist & Winner listings, questions, etc. ContestAlert-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Compiled by Donna Caubarreaux a member of Coeur de Louisiane, Scriptscene Chapter, NOLA Stars, Heart of Louisiana, Kiss of Death, and ChickLitWriters of RWA. She received a RWA Service Award in 1997. USED WITH PERMISSION

MMRWA Meetings

Unless otherwise noted, meetings are held the third Saturday of each month on a rotating basis at area restaurants and meeting centers in Mid-Michigan. The usual meeting agenda is as follows: 11:30 a.m., lunch (optional) ♥1:00 p.m. (approximate time), program/speaker ♥2:00 p.m. (approximate time), business meeting.

2006 Meeting Schedule

August 19 in Lansing—“Research for Dummies” presented by Jackie Braun

September 16 in Grand Rapids –“Family Planning/Birth Control Through the Ages” presented by Jennifer Green

October 21 at Portage Library--A Panel on Romance (Open to fans and book-buying Public)

November 18 in Jackson

December Holiday Party in Lansing area



**La Senorita Mexican Restaurant in Lansing, MI
2706 Lake Lansing Road, Lansing, MI
Phone: 517.485.0166**

Directions:

From the North (Mt. Pleasant): Take US-127 S to the Lake Lansing Road Exit. Turn RIGHT onto Lake Lansing Road. Go 0.1 miles to La Senorita.

From the South (Jackson): Take US-127 N to the Lake Lansing Road Exit. Turn LEFT onto W. Lake Lansing Road. Go 0.3 miles to La Senorita.

From the West (Grand Rapids): Take I-96 East to merge onto I-69 North via Exit #89 toward Flint/Clare. Go 10 miles. Merge onto US-127 S via Exit #89A toward E. Lansing. Go 3.2 miles. Take the Lake Lansing Road Exit. Turn RIGHT onto Lake Lansing Road. Go 0.1 miles to La Senorita.

From the East (Brighton): Take I-96 West to merge onto US-127 N via Exit #106B toward Downtown Lansing. Go 6 miles. Take the Lake Lansing Road Exit. Turn LEFT onto W. Lake Lansing Road. Go 0.3 miles to La Senorita.



2006 Mid-Michigan Romance Writers of America Officers

President: Wil Emerson
Vice-president: Laurie Kuna
Secretary: Cathy McClain, info@midmichiganrwa.org
Treasurer: Lisa Childs Theeuwes, treasurer@midmichiganrwa.org

2006 Mid-Michigan Romance Writers of America Committee Chairs

Cover-to-Cover: Nancy Gideon, covertocover@midmichiganrwa.org
I Will Write a Book/Write For the Money: Flavia Crowner
Happily Ever After Contest: Jodi Lozon, contest@midmichiganrwa.org
Library: Maris Soule and Lucy Kubash
Membership/Historian: Dawn Bartley, members@midmichiganrwa.org
Member Recognition: Julie Lea
MMRWA Angel Award: Dawn Bartley
Mystery Gifts: Shar Koenig
Newsletter Editor: Annette Briggs, mirror@midmichiganrwa.org
Newsletter Editorial Consultant: Lana Miersen
PAN Liaisons: Sue Charnley, Lana Miersen
Perseverance Fund: Lisa Childs Theeuwes, treasurer@midmichiganrwa.org
Policy: Cathy McClain and appointed committee
Programs/Meetings: Laurie Kuna, meetings@midmichiganrwa.org
Publicity: Jackie Braun
Retreat Chair: Pam Trombley, retreat@midmichiganrwa.org
Retreat Speaker Chair: Laurie Kuna
RWA® Pro Liaison: Tammy Kearly
Website Liaison: Lana Miersen, info@midmichiganrwa.org
Webmistress: Michelle Crean, design@crean.com



GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING TO *THE MID-MICHIGAN MIRROR*

Thank you for your interest in submitting an article to *The Mid-Michigan Mirror*. The *Mirror* can use articles that help us on our journey to be and stay published, to improve our skills as writers and business people, and keep us up to date in the writing field.

The Mirror needs “how to” articles, reviews of current writing books and writing related websites, member bios and photographs, current book news and activities from chapter members. Please send all contributions for the *Mirror* to: mirror@midmichiganrwa.org. DEADLINE TO BE INCLUDED IN THE MIRROR is 5 days after the meeting prior to the issue in which you wish to appear.

The best font to use for the *Mirror* is Times New Roman 12, single spaced, one inch margins, with no special colors, spacing, etc. without prior approval. WORD works best.

Please submit queries and manuscripts to: mirror@midmichiganrwa.org

Looking forward to your submissions--*Annette Briggs, Editor.*

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

***The Mid-Michigan Mirror's* policy is to offer our original MMRWA articles to other RWA chapters and lood to use with all credits given unless restrictions are noted on the article.**

The *Mirror* staff reserves the right to edit submissions for such things as typos, punctuation, grammar, size requirements, and content with author's approval, etc.

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of RWA®, or of the MMRWA and its individual members. Market information contained herein does not constitute an endorsement by RWA® or MMRWA. Readers are urged to determine for themselves the reliability and integrity of those with whom they deal. RWA® sister chapters may reprint any information in this newsletter providing credit is given to MMRWA, *The Mid-Michigan Mirror*, and the article's author. Non-RWA® groups must secure permission from the author. Writers are encouraged to check market report accuracy through the RWA® Hotline, (281) 440-6885, press 8.

***The Mid-Michigan Mirror* is a publication of Mid-Michigan Chapter # 12 of Romance Writers of America® Copyright © 2006 by the Mid-Michigan Romance Writers of America. All rights reserved, unless otherwise stated.**

