

The Mid-Michigan Mirror

... A Reflection of Romance

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

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Meeting Information
- 2 New President's Message
Chapter/Contact Info
- 3 Wil's Farewell Message
- 4 November Program Recap
- 5 Christmas Party
- 6 I Will Write a Book
February Birthdays
Upcoming Releases
- 7 Member News
- 8 The Daily Files by
Diana Stout
- 11 MMRWA Angel Award
2007 HEA Contest
- 12 Retreat From Harsh
Reality 2007
- 13 MMRWA Gear
- 14 Meeting Directions
- 15 The Last Word
Meeting Schedule
- 16 Guidelines and Policy

Old Board/New Board Meet in January

No January Chapter Meeting; February Meeting in Grand Rapids

The outgoing 2006 MMRWA Board of Directors and the incoming 2007 Board held a transition of office meeting (an officers' retreat) in January.

Our next full chapter meeting takes place at the Elks Lodge in Grand Rapids on February 17th. Lt. Mark Ostapowicz will speak about his experiences in the Grand Rapids Police Department. He has worked in the Vice Unit and in the SRT (SWAT). He is currently Watch Commander and is in charge of the Grand Rapids Citizens Police Academy training. Directions are on page 14. For updated information, go to <http://www.midmichiganrwa.org/meetings.html>.

The chapter extends its thanks to last year's Board: Wil Emerson, president; Laurie Kuna, vice-president; Catherine McClain, secretary; Lisa Childs Theeuwes, treasurer. Super job, Ladies!

Our newly-elected Board members (pictured below, left to right) are: Julie Lea, co-secretary; Annette Briggs, president; Lisa Childs Theeuwes, vice-president; and Catherine McClain, treasurer. (Not pictured: Linda Cossel, co-secretary) **MMM**



—HAIL AND FAREWELL—

2007 OFFICERS

President

Annette Briggs
info@midmichiganrwa.org

Vice-president

Lisa Childs Theeuwes
meetings@midmichiganrwa.org

Co-Secretaries

Linda Cossel and
 Julie Lea
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Treasurer

Catherine McClain
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2007 COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Historian/Membership

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I Will Write a Book/Write for the Money

Flavia Crowner

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Lucy Kubash and Maris Soule

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Member Recognition

Julie Lea

MMRWA Angel Award

Dawn Bartley

Mystery Gifts

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Sue Charnley, Lana Miersen

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Policy

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Retreat Chair

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Retreat Speaker Chair

Laurie Kuna

RWA® Pro Liaison

Tammy Kearly

Website Liaison

Lana Miersen
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The President's Two Cents Worth

By 2007 President Annette Briggs



Dear fellow Mid-Michigan members,

Happy 2007! Thank you for entrusting me with the Mid-Michigan presidency.

As my husband will quickly tell you, I don't let go of things easily--especially anything having to do with writing. I've loved every minute of being *Mirror* editor. The learning curve was steep, but what a thrill! Through my work on the *Mirror*, I've had the pleasure of getting to know you and I've experienced the joy of celebrating your accomplishments. And now Lana Miersen has many good things planned as she takes the post of new editor of the *Mirror*. Many thanks, Lana.

Over the holidays, my role as Grandma reacquainted me with the delightful fable of Stone Soup. As you probably remember, no one in the village had food to spare for the hungry travelers, so the travelers took their empty kettle, filled it with water and added a stone to make soup. One villager had only an onion to give, another had just a single cabbage to add, someone else tossed in a carrot, and so on. As the story goes, by the time everyone in the village gave a tiny bit of their scarce supply, nourishing soup was produced for them all.

What a good recipe for producing nourishing results for our chapter in 2007. Our time is genuinely scarce and most of us lead double lives, but MMRWA has some pots boiling to feed us. We have a contest, critique groups, a newsletter, meetings, offices and chairs, and a retreat to name a few. The effort and talent that has been given in the past is greatly valued and has had spectacular results. If you've never taken the plunge and volunteered, starting out in small parcels is just fine. Write an article or book review or interview for the *Mirror*. Take a few pictures. Judge a few contest entries, do a critique. We've had good results with sharing offices and tasks. If each of us contributes the most we can, we all benefit richly and we all move closer to our writing goals.

Have an inspired 2007,

Annette

From Wil's Desk: A Farewell Message

By 2005-2006 President Wil Emerson

January provides another transition for our chapter: new leaders, new ideas, new opportunities for growth and prosperity. I'm pleased to turn over the reins to Annette Briggs and her energetic new/seasoned board members.

It was my extreme pleasure to serve as your chapter president and work with board members who feel like sisters. With their help and that of many members, the chapter's finances were secured; we improved our focus on professional standards, ran a tremendously successful first contest and participated in a money maker Moonlight Madness at National Conference. Although at the beginning of 2005 our attendance rate had dropped dramatically, sometimes with only 6 or 8 members at a meeting, we persevered and have grown to a respectable, energetic 18 to 20 plus members at meetings. We're a gathering of real professionals with a desire to support those who are published or soon to be. I'm positive the new board will continue this progress, and Annette, with a heart of gold, has the determination and wit to lead the chapter through the tasks ahead.

Transitions: Yes, we'll not have our inspirational first-of-the-year meeting. The 2006 board decided to drop the January of 2007 meeting for a variety of reasons: weather, post holiday blues and little time to prepare for a solid, satisfying agenda for the New Year. In that vein, we—old and new board—have chosen to meet on the weekend of January 19th, 'retreat' style, to turn over the books and set the pace for a smooth, successful year of chapter meetings. This special time together will allow the new board to learn the ropes, prepare for the future and formulate an agenda that should make our chapter stronger than ever. This year, I am hosting the first 'January Board Retreat' at my home in Canadian Lakes. Yes, it will be a working weekend. Okay; we'll find an hour or two for fun--critique a couple of movies, break open a bottle of 'sweet' wine, go over our works-in-progress and breathe clean, country air. But I promise your new board will be prepared to serve. I hope to see you all at the February 2007 meeting to cheer them on. It's going to be a great year!

Thanks for your support and, more so, for caring about this remarkable RWA chapter. My best to all in 2007.

Cheers,

Wil



"It was my extreme pleasure to serve as your chapter president and work with board members who feel like sisters."

*Wil Emerson writes with a view of beautiful Canadian Lakes to offer peaceful inspiration. Extensive travel throughout the U.S. and Europe provide scenic backgrounds for her novels. After twenty years in the health care profession, Wil decided to pursue a long held dream. Wil writes romance, mysteries, poetry and children's stories for a creative outlet. She is the author of **Taking Rosie's Arm**.*

—CHAPTER CHATTER—

November 2006 Program Recap: “A Funny Little Thing Called Love . . .”

By Diane Burton



“Like beauty, humor is in the eye (or ear) of the beholder. Some people get it...some don’t.”

*Diane Burton believes in fairy tales, the Easter Bunny, and happy-ever-after, which is why she loves reading and writing romance. She met her own hero on a blind date and it was love at first sight--for her. It took her a little longer to convince him. They have two grown children. After following her husband's job from Detroit to Missouri, Detroit again, SW Michigan, and Chicagoland, Diane and her husband currently live north of Lansing, MI. Diane's love of romantic comedy and **Star Trek** led to the writing of her first futuristic, **Switched**, which was released by [ImaJinn Books](#) in August 2001. For an excerpt from **Switched**, check out Diane's [website!](#)*

At the November meeting in Jackson, the Dynamic Duo (or are they that Terrible Two-some?) of Lana Miersen and Diane Burton presented a workshop titled “A Funny Little Thing Called Love: Writing the Romantic Comedy.” Like beauty, humor is in the eye (or ear) of the beholder. Some people get it...some don’t. Comedy is often dismissed as fluff. “Anybody can do it.” But, as the quote attributed to many playwrights from Shakespeare to George Bernard Shaw proclaims, “Dying is easy, comedy is hard.” For those with a comic bent, Lana and Diane presented ways to develop and sharpen that particular form of creativity.

According to Billy Merit’s *Writing the Romantic Comedy*, the central plot of a romantic comedy is embodied in a romantic relationship. The couple is at the core of the story. Although there are many similarities, the plot structure of romantic comedy does differ from classic plot structure. In the classic, the main question is “will the hero obtain his/her goal?” In romantic comedy, the reader/movie watcher wants to know “will these two individuals become a couple?”

John Vorhaus, author of *The Comic Toolbox: How to Be Funny Even If You’re Not*, lists seven types of comic stories: Center & Eccentrics, Fish out of Water, Character Comedy, Magical Powers, Ensemble Comedy, Slapstick/Screwball Comedy, Satire & Parody. In the workshop, participants used movie and television shows to illustrate each type. Participants were cautioned not to get too hung up on lists. There are probably as many lists of comic story types as there are books on the subject. Besides, the best comic stories cross boundaries. For example, *Romancing the Stone* could be a fish out of water, screwball, and a parody.

Romancing the Stone was also used in the workshop to illustrate the basic structure of romantic comedy: Meet, Lose, Get. The workshop attendees then participated in an interactive segment where they wrote their version of the “cute meet”, the moment when all is lost, or the resolution when the hero and heroine get their heart’s desire.

The workshop concluded with Michael Hauge’s List of Top Ten Components of Romantic Comedies (found on his website: www.screenplaymastery.com). **MMM**

“Flat Trevor” Guests at Christmas Party in December

By Lana Miersen

I took “Flat Trevor” to the chapter’s December meeting and Christmas party at La Senorita Restaurant in Lansing on December 9 as my special guest. During member news, I introduced him to the charming, intelligent and talented—and understanding—MMRWA members. Since the chapter supports projects that promote literacy and the love of reading, the writers present at the meeting welcomed “Flat Trevor” with open arms, and some posed for a group photo with him [at right]. Katie Dubois even let “Flat Trevor” wear her Santa hat. Judging from his smile, “Flat Trevor” enjoyed the party, the company and the attention.

My grandson (the real Trevor) sent “Flat Trevor” to visit me as part of a class project. The children in Mrs. Clark’s second grade class at Middle Creek Elementary School in Apex, NC read *Flat Stanley* by Jeff Brown, a book about a boy who was flattened to ½ inch thick in his sleep when a bulletin board fell on him. *Flat Stanley* traveled by mail to visit his friend in California since he was thin enough to fit in an envelope. The children then created flat versions of themselves and mailed them to relatives and friends who were asked to keep a journal of the flat person’s visit. Flat Stanley went to California by snail mail, but by appearing in the January/February 2007 issue of *The Mid-Michigan Mirror*, “Flat Trevor” is traveling the world—in cyberspace!

After the shortest business meeting on record, Wil Emerson asked all of us what we planned to do for ourselves in the new year—not for others, *for ourselves*. As women, we’re so used to putting everyone else first, we had to think about it. Some of the responses and resolutions:

Diane Burton: Dinner and a movie with my husband once a month.

Linda Cossel: I am going to do something very scary. I am planning on walking in the three-day 60-mile breast cancer walk in September. So my big thing is to get healthier so that I can do that. I



“Flat Trevor” and his MMRWA admirers.

am also trying to unload some of the responsibilities that I have in my life.

Wil Emerson: I will have fewer responsibilities in 2007... sooo.... I am definitely going to spend more time on exercise and enjoying my Heart Smart Room, where we have our exercise equipment and pictures of all the kids pinned on the wall. They are the reason I want to stay healthy. I’m definitely going to be more spontaneous about fun activities with friends. And, then I’m definitely going to write, write, write...I have to do that for me! It will be a great year!

Rohn Federbush: I am planning only to write four days a week; ten pages after breakfast then the world can own me. I finished a nine-week course of *The Artists’ Way* and hope to keep a balanced life to sustain my writing endeavors. My newest mystery is called *Death in Recess*. I began it during the National Novel Writing Month. Rohn of Federbush

Margo Hoornstra: I pledge time devoted to writing and permission to say no to others. Children—grown; job—history; husband—cheering me on. Life is good. PS Planned to send this before, but: Future son-in-law came to lunch; helped son with resume; picked up daughter whose car wouldn’t start. Life is still good. Here’s to a great year for all of us!

2006 "I Will Write a Book Challenge" Winner Announced

By *Flavia Crowner*



I want to thank everyone who participated in the I Will Write a Book Challenge. This was an exciting challenge and all worked hard to complete their goals. The following writers finished their books and sent in their last pages:

Rosanne Bittner (The Letter), Michelle Celmer (One Hot Week), Susan C. Charnley (Hannah's Heart and Harriet's Little Problem), Linda Cossel (Deadly Waters), Flavia Crowner (Herbal Garden), Wil Emerson (Bedside Manners), Jennifer Kamptner (Sweet Deception), Cathy McClain (The Engineer's Encore), and Alice Weidner (Saving Grace).

We are all winners but only one could be drawn. I had my personal care assistant draw from the entries, and the winner is Alice Weidner! Congratulations, Alice!

I am looking forward to 2007's I Will Write a Book Challenge. Keep those ideas flowing, those fingers flying on the keyboard and write another book for 2007. **MMM**



*Flavia Crowner is a natural when it comes to writing from the viewpoint of her wheelchair-bound series character, Sunny Farnum, who you'll meet in her new book **Pie Pantry** from [Koenisha Publications](#)! Flavia's writing career suffered a setback when she was involved in a near-fatal car accident that left her paraplegic five years ago. Writing her first book was a struggle to overcome the many obstacles that plague most writers, but Flavia also had to overcome the unique problems faced by handicapped writers. Flavia lives in a small town in Michigan, which serves as the setting for her Hometown Cozy Series. She loves to fish, tend her small garden and care for her pet parakeets and goldfish.*



February Birthdays

4th – Lana Miersen

6th – Cathy McClain



Members' Upcoming Releases

Dana Corbit has two titles coming out in 2007:

Flower Girl Bride, Steeple Hill Love Inspired, April '07

Little Miss Matchmaker, Steeple Hill Love Inspired,

Oct. '07 **MMM**

Member News

Dawn Bartley: Trying to decipher all my WIP paperwork but still feeling good about it.

Annette Briggs: I'm leaving *The Mirror* in Lana's capable hands. I'll miss being editor. I feel naked without it.

Lisa Childs-Theeuwes: Working like crazy on deadlines; met the Nocturne one, just the Next to go. So excited about our Christmas party, got a speeding ticket on the way here.

Katie Dubois: No writing news.

Wil Emerson: "Temporarily Detained" in Dec. issue of *Crime and Suspense*. Little writing but two submissions and one rejection. Life is good!

Sarah Grimm: Got a June 2007 release date for *After Midnight*; got my ISBN for *Not Without Risk*; working on WIP.

Margo Hoorstra: Still going strong on WIP. After a few years away from it, I'd forgotten how difficult the rewrites are to do—especially when the characters change on you! Have a great New Year!

Anne-Marie King-Jakubiak: Finished getting my Golden Heart entry in; back to working on present book.

Lucy Kubash: I found out on Christmas Eve that *Chance's Return* is nominated for a CAPA (Cupid and Psyche Award) from *The Romance Studio* (theromancestudio.com)! The nominees are chosen from all books (both e-books and print) reviewed by *TRS* in 2006. My book received a five heart review from them. I'm very excited about it being nominated, as it is up against some very notable books. The winners will be announced on February 14.

Laurie Kuna: Plugging away on the WIP, but the most "writing" I did was assembling the program for the all-school play I co-directed.

Julie Lea: No writing news.

Wendy Lebel: Working on revisions for *Sex, Murder and the PTA*—need get manuscript out to Appleseed Management who requested it a month ago.

Cathy McClain: All is well; Katie coming home for New Year's and we're excited about seeing her—ten months is a long time! Got my story finished, revised and off to the Golden Heart! Happy holidays to everyone!

Lana Miersen: Brainstormed new scenes and ending for futuristic; family Christmas letter and journal for "Flat Trevor" were the non-romance writing activities this past month; judging in the Golden Heart Contest; volunteering as a "Wolfpack Reader" in Laingsburg Early Childhood Center reading program; mentoring teenage nephew's writing endeavors; editing newsletter while Annette reigns as president.

Diana Stout: A little writing on WIP, but working on Virginia Woolf "A Room of Her Own" grant, miscellaneous essays.



—THE WRITING LIFE: JUMP-START YOUR WRITING IN 2007—



The Daily Files: An essay a Day Keeps Procrastination at Bay

by *Diana Stout*

I had a problem: I needed to get into the daily habit of writing. While I'm able to get to the computer fairly soon upon rising, unless I had reset the alarm and rolled over, I found that I was not creatively writing; instead, I was checking email, reading electronic newsletters, playing with my online organizer.

Sometimes, I only had fifteen minutes or maybe half an hour to "write," and this time was never enough to do any work on big projects where I needed bigger blocks of time. So how to prime the writing pump, and keep it lubricated while I went about my work day as a professor and Department Coordinator where I was still working within my writing element, but by the time I got home found that my energy was gone?

The answer to my problem was to create small projects. Creative nonfiction. Essays. Didn't I have a file somewhere, chuck full of scraps of papers, clippings, paper napkins, all that had sparked my interest in one topic or another? I did and put it at the forefront of all piles. The goal: each morning, I would spend a minimum of fifteen minutes writing an essay.

I created a file folder called The Daily File and created a shortcut on my toolbar and desktop, for easy clicking. Lo and behold, the idea worked. Day by day my collection of essays grew, a continuous flow of ideas, opinions, observations, and where I could experiment with voice and perspective. I envisioned that one day I might be able to snag the best of these into a thematic book. Ironically, my first essay was one that I share with you now.

Procrastination

I like procrastination. Most people I know like procrastination just as much as I do or even more; yet, people tell me that I am a motivator, an over-achiever. Because I've written books, magazines and newspapers articles, screenplays, and stage plays? Because I returned to school in my late forties, start with my Associate's, then Bachelor's degrees, then receiving my M.F.A. degree in my mid-fifties? If only I could regain all those hours I played solitaire, played couch potato, or went to the bookstore to research but read everything in sight instead.

In my files, I found a file folder labeled *Doer or Procrastinator*, and loaded with articles. For instance, "The 25-hour Woman," an article by Sybil Stanton, states that "discipline is habit-forming. A little leads to more, because the benefits prove increasingly desirable. When you finally overcome inertia, you



will feel better all around. We are at our best—physically and mentally—when we are disciplined.” Okay, I can’t argue with that. When I am disciplined, I weigh less and I write more. Right now I’m the heaviest I’ve ever been non-pregnant, and we all know now why I’m writing this. I find it interesting that I chose “Procrastination” as my first essay.

So why do we warmly embrace this procrastination habit? A Snoopy cartoon, shows Snoopy sitting on a bicycle and the statement of “Life is like a 10 speed bicycle. Most of us have gears we never use.” I like that statement; it’s true. It mimics the idea that we use only a small portion of our brain cells. My question becomes: if we’re not using these idle brain cells, then who is? Are these unused brain cells part of our Universal Mind, our Collective Memory? Or do we just think we don’t use them and haven’t discovered them yet through science? Are these unused cells responsible for our procrastination?

Shirley Sloan Fader’s article “How to Kick the Procrastination Habit” promised that she would cure my life-long habit of procrastination. The article was written in 1979. I ought to write to her and tell her that she failed, but then that means several days of research to find her.

“Using Time Effectively” is a pithy bullet-list of to-do actions, but starts with the rich advice of “Discover and protect your most creative/productive time of the day.” Didn’t I tell you? Hasn’t that been my problem all along? Wasn’t that the reason for this very exercise, to get me writing first thing in the morning?

When it comes down to it, procrastination like everything else in life is a choice consciously made by millions of us. So, really, how *did* I stop procrastination in the past? How in the world did I manage to get through seven years of full-time school, working full-time most of that time, where I was writing response papers, evaluations, research and ultimately mini dissertations every day and every week and teaching three or four classes a semester in those last three years?

- I set deadlines and established priorities.
- I separated large, specific tasks into smaller tasks that only required a day of work or even half an hour.
- I carried small chunks of my work with me, using all spare moments.
- I learned to make lists, to prioritize the list, chopping away at the tasks day by day.
- I delegated, consolidated, or delayed certain chores or errands.
- I removed the disturbances: I turned off the TV, I let the voicemail pick up telephone calls, and allowed myself email



MORE MEMBER TIPS

Here's a gimmick I've used occasionally when suffering from "writer's block" or just plain brain inertia. Write a story using only song titles. The same could apply to book, movie, or TV titles:

*Some Enchanted Evening
Strangers in Paradise
Take a Chance on Me
Shall We Dance
Kiss of Fire
Anything Goes
Fly Me to the Moon
Past the Point of No Return
Unforgettable
Macho Man
Love Changes Everything
Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend
Get Me to the Church on Time
My Happiness*

--Leila Davis

They make great book titles, too. Has anyone heard a title or one-liner from a movie or a book and thought that in and of itself could be a great premise for a book? Give it a try.

--Wil Emerson



privileges *after* my writing for the day was done.

- I stopped listening to negativity and negative people. I surrounded myself with positive people, with doers.
- I got down to the bare bones of the project, cutting away the fluff.
- I told myself to just “do it,” putting up motivational signs.
- I learned to think consciously about the ultimate goal: a finished paper and a deadline no longer looming over my head.
- I learned to say no to other chores or activities, or at least to say not right now.

Procrastination isn't a disease; procrastination is simply a symptom of our being human and having a highly intelligent brain; and surprisingly, have you noticed that while we have the more intelligent brain, we also are the laziest of creatures?

One article that stands out among all of the others in this file folder is “The Dynamics of Drive,” written by Madeline Prober, where she states that “a woman must first have a strong sense of self.” Prober's idea is that if you are aware of yourself, through autonomy you will become a doer. Another suggestion she makes is that “success isn't all single-minded purpose” but rather that success comes from hard work, from drive. Drive is the needed fuel for the task-oriented engine, which moves the vehicle of success down the road, which only then can be steered toward a particular goal.

The true bottom line of procrastination is reflected in the hand-written note I found at the bottom of the file, a note I had written to myself: *If you can't manage your time, you can't manage your life.*

Actually, I think I am curing the procrastination monster; after all, this essay, the first I injected into my task-oriented engine, was created back in June 2006. That vehicle of success has been tooling down the road and I didn't even notice; I was too busy admiring the scenery. It's time to get back on the highway and steer towards my particular goal again. **MMM**



Diana Stout is the author of three books, an optioned screenplay, two published and produced New York plays, author of numerous magazines articles and short stories, former newspaper and RWR columnist. She recently rejoined RWA and MMRWA after a lengthy hiatus that entailed obtaining a MFA degree in creative writing, with an emphasis in medieval studies. She teaches English at Davenport University, where she is also the Department Coordinator of English, Communications, and Foreign Languages, covering Holland, Battle Creek, and Kalamazoo, where she lives in a cozy one-bedroom apartment with 17 bookcases. Currently she is working on a medieval book based on a classical often-ignored female character.

—Gearing Up For 2007—

Calling All MMRWA Angels!

By Dawn Bartley, 2005 Angel

It's that time of year again—time to send in your nominations for the MMRWA 2006 Angel Award for Service.

Who do you think has served the chapter unselfishly? Who has given her time, or talent, or service, etc., to MMRWA? Nominations are due in January and February and should be sent to the co-secretaries Linda Cossel otterpublishing@yahoo.com or Julie Lea geeklite@yahoo.com, or the Angel Award committee chair, Dawn Bartley bartleyd@chartermi.net. Nominations should include a description of why this particular person deserves the award.

Let us know whom you think is deserving. For a full description of eligibilities, stay tuned to posts to the loop. **MMM**



2005 Angel Dawn Bartley (left) receiving her award from 2004 Angel Lorelee Lillibridge.

Live "Happily Ever After" in 2007

By Jodi Lynn Copeland, Contest Coordinator

The Happily Ever After (HEA) Contest Committee is gearing up for the 2007 HEA Contest, which will run from early June through the middle of October. The HEA is a last chapter contest that was inaugurated in 2006. Its purpose is to challenge and inspire authors of romance and to garner feedback on the all-important last chapter and "HEA" before submitting work to an editor or agent.

Both published and unpublished authors are eligible to enter the HEA contest. Fees for entry are based on RWA® association. This year, we will use agents and editors for final round judging—check the MMRWA website in late January for a complete list.

Categories for entry and the category coordinators, are as follows:

- Inspirational Romance – Margo Hoornstra, Coordinator
- Short/Long Series Romance – Annette Briggs, Coordinator
- Romantic Suspense – Sarah Grimm, Coordinator
- Erotic Romance – Margo Hoornstra, Coordinator
- Historical Romance – Catherine McClain, Coordinator
- Paranormal Romance – Teresa Bellew, Coordinator
- Mainstream/Single Title – Coordinator TBA
- All Genre E-entries – Jodi Lynn Copeland, Coordinator

Information for the 2007 contest has been posted to the MMRWA chapter website contest page www.midmichiganrwa.org/contest.html. The page will be updated as new information becomes available.

Should you have questions, or wish to volunteer your services, please do not hesitate to contact me at: contest@midmichiganrwa.org

We look forward to a great 2007 contest year!! **MMM**



Jodi Lynn Copeland lives with her husband and two children minutes from Michigan's state capital. She learned early on that family, friends, love and laughter are the most important ingredients for happiness. While attending Central Michigan University, she discovered a love for writing and that those same ingredients blend for the perfect romance. Jodi is a member of Romance Writers of America® (RWA®), Mid-Michigan Romance Writers of America, and From The Heart Romance Writer's Online Chapter. You can visit Jodi online at: www.jodilynncopeland.com.



SOUND THE RETREAT!!!

By Pam Trombley, Retreat Chair

Retreat From Harsh Reality 2007 is right around the corner! Save April 20-22 for a full weekend of inspiration, information and fun as we gather once again at St. Ives Resort in Stanwood, Michigan.

This year's speaker is Julie Kistler, best-selling author of over 30 novels. She prefers interactive sessions when she speaks so she's going to make us work a bit as she discusses two of her favorite topics - plotting and dialogue:

Plotapalooza: How to Spin a Story Like a Pro and Sell It Like You Mean It. Julie will discuss what's tangling up your plot, brainstorm how to fix it, storyboard to success, and have some fun boiling down your idea into a fizzy, fabulous, irresistible sales pitch.

Talking the Talk: Writing Dialogue That Snaps, Crackles and Pops. Having trouble coming up with dialogue that fits your characters, propels your story and sounds real to the reader? Julie can help!

Brochures containing registration forms were mailed out to all members in early January. If you didn't receive a brochure, please contact Pam Trombley for another copy or just go to our chapter website and download the registration form. Members-only registration is open until Friday, Feb. 5, then we'll open it up for non-members so make sure to reserve one of our 50 spots now! You can send in a deposit of at least \$50 to hold a place but the balance (and your roommate listing) must be received by the close of registration which is March 23. Please try to work out your roommate assignments prior to sending in registration.

Dawn Bartley is organizing the Published Author Critiques for this year for writers who want an experienced author's review of their work. For only \$15, you can have your first 50 pages plus your synopsis reviewed by a chapter published author of your choice! You must send in payment for your critique before you will be matched up with an author. Then you and your author will get together at Retreat - or at a different time if either of you is not able to attend Retreat - and go over your work. Questions? Contact Dawn Bartley.

The Retreat committee is pretty well staffed but if anyone wants to help, either ahead of time or during Retreat, please let me know. We can always use more helping hands!

Retreat time is also time for ordering your MMRWA "Gear": T-shirts, sweatshirts, polo shirts, etc. Order forms are included in this issue of the *Mirror*; just print out the form and mail it in with your payment. Deadline for Gear orders is also Friday, March 23. **MMM**



Julie Kistler



MMRWA "GEAR" ORDERS

Once again, we're offering MMRWA logo gear! Prices are the same as last year so if you missed out or want more, here's your chance. And there are a few new items including turtlenecks & mock turtlenecks. You can also have the logo added to anything you already own - call Pam for how to do it. And if there's anything else you want that's not listed below, contact Pam for pricing.

All orders will be delivered at Retreat - April 20-22, 2007. Any orders not picked up at Retreat will be taken to the next meeting for pick up, or you can contact Pam to make shipping arrangements. Questions? Contact Pam Trombley, (231) 526-2153 or pamtrombley@charter.net.

Short-Sleeved T-Shirts: White or Ash Grey T-Shirts, **MMRWA** logo over left chest.

Long-Sleeved T-Shirts: Ash Grey T-Shirts, **MMRWA** logo over left chest.

Sweatshirts: Ash Grey sweatshirts, hooded or hoodless, **MMRWA** logo over left chest.

Polo shirts: Short-sleeved white polo shirts, **MMRWA** logo over left chest.

Turtlenecks or Mock Turtlenecks: White shirts with letters "MMRWA" and a small rose embroidered on the collar.

Vinyl Car Decal: White **MMRWA** decal for your car window, one size.

ITEMS	PRICING (ADULT SIZES)		
	MED, LG, XLG	XXL	XXXL
Sweatshirts	\$15.90	\$16.90	\$17.90
Short-sleeved T's	\$7.42	\$8.42	\$9.42
Long-sleeved-T's	\$10.60	\$11.60	12.60
Turtlenecks	\$14.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
Mock Turtlenecks	\$12.00	\$13.00	\$14.00
Polo Shirts	\$19.08	\$20.08	20.08
Car Decal	\$5.30		
Add logo	\$4.00		

Mail orders to: Pam Trombley, 6845 Forest Way, Harbor Springs, MI 49740. Orders & payment must be received no later than Friday, March 23. You can mail your order in with your Retreat registration but must write a separate check for "gear" payment. Fill in the order form below and return it with your payment.

MMRWA GEAR ORDER FORM

Name: _____

Please make sure to indicate color choice for shirts and hooded or hoodless for the sweatshirts.

Item	Color	Size	Quantity	Subtotal
TOTAL				
ADD MI TAX (6%)				
AMOUNT DUE				

Please make checks payable to: **North Coast Imagewear.**

Christmas Party, continued from page 5

Lucy Kubash: In 2007, I hope to read more, walk my dog more, and try to stress out less over things I have no control over!

Laurie Kuna: Since I have no children or spouse, my entire life is pretty much all about me. To that end, I intend to go to the PASIC conference at the end of March, and on a cruise through Celtic lands in August. Loralee's going on both those trips, so it will be fun, enlightening, and good research.

Loralee Lillibridge: I'm going to the PASIC conference in March—Nancy G. and I will be going a day ahead of Laurie to do some shopping :o)—and on a Celtic cruise with Laurie.

Lana Miersen: I will give myself the gift of more writing time in 2007—something I was stingy with this past year, focusing on everyone else's needs—and commit to sending out more submissions to editors and agents. It will take some doing, I fear, because my dh plans to retire sometime in the next month or so. He says he wants to spend more time with me and wants us to do a lot more together. I suspect I will eat huge amounts of chocolate in 2007 and perhaps spend time in therapy.

Dana Corbit Nussio: My New Year's Resolution is to attend more meetings than I attended last year. (Note: that means more GDRWA and more MMRWA since I'm this far away.) I let deadlines and soccer/swim practice and games/meets keep me away too many times this year. I know family is important, but I'm like so many other moms who put my own needs last. And I NEED to be with other writers for the inspiration and the support we can all provide each other.

Diana Stout: First and foremost, I'm going to find the perfect blow-up doll. Then, this summer I'm going to spend a week or two away from home that will act as vista eye candy and inspire my writing and where I can leave my job and teaching behind: Mackinac Island, a cottage somewhere on Lake Michigan, or even on Lake Superior. **MMM**

Directions to February 17th Meeting in Grand Rapids

Directions to the Elks Lodge, 2715 Leonard St NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504

From Kalamazoo, MI:

1. Start out going NORTH on N PARK ST/US-131 BR N. Continue to follow US-131 BR N. (5.57 miles)
 2. Merge onto US-131 N. (45.26 miles)
 3. Merge onto I-196 W via EXIT 86B on the LEFT toward HOLLAND. (1.66 miles)
 4. Take the LAKE MICH DR exit- EXIT 75- toward M-45 W. (0.27 miles)
 5. Stay STRAIGHT to go onto LAKE MICHIGAN DR NW. (1.59 miles)
 6. Turn RIGHT onto COLLINDALE AVE NW. (1.01 miles)
 7. Turn RIGHT onto LEONARD ST NW. (0.10 miles)
 8. End at Elks Lodge 2715 Leonard St NW Grand Rapids, MI 49504 US
- Total Estimated Time: 57 minutes; Total Distance: 55.45 miles

From Lansing, MI:

1. Start out going SOUTH on TOWNSEND ST toward W WASHTENAW ST. (0.42 miles)
 2. Turn RIGHT onto W ST JOSEPH ST. (0.30 miles)
 3. Merge onto I-496 W via the ramp on the LEFT. (4.91 miles)
 4. Merge onto I-69 N/I-96 W toward FLINT/GD RAPIDS. (4.09 miles)
 5. Keep LEFT to take I-96 W toward GD RAPIDS. (53.66 miles)
 6. Keep LEFT to take I-196 W toward DOWNTOWN GD RAPIDS/HOLLAND. (5.51 miles)
 7. Take the LAKE MICH DR exit- EXIT 75- toward M-45 W. (0.27 miles)
 8. Stay STRAIGHT to go onto LAKE MICHIGAN DR NW. (1.59 miles)
 9. Turn RIGHT onto COLLINDALE AVE NW. (1.01 miles)
 10. Turn RIGHT onto LEONARD ST NW. (0.10 miles)
 11. End at Elks Lodge 2715 Leonard St NW Grand Rapids, MI 49504 US
- Total Estimated Time: 1 hour, 10 minutes; Total Distance: 71.85 miles **MMM**

—The Last Word—

Looking Back, Looking Forward, and Looking for Romance

The beginning of a new year is a busy time for the ancient gods. January, named for Janus, the god with two faces, is traditionally a time for looking back and looking forward. Cupid, the god of love, sharpens his arrows in romantic February.

It's "Hail and Farewell" time for the MMRWA Board of Directors. We bid farewell to Wil and thank her for her leadership, and we welcome her successor, Annette.

Wil Emerson stepped into office after a year in which little seemed to go right for the chapter. During the two years (2005-2006) she served as president, with dedication, hard work and the help of a solid group of officers on her Board, Wil restored MMRWA to its former glory and vitality. The chapter owes you a huge debt of gratitude, Wil. Thanks for everything.

Annette Briggs has edited the *Mid-Michigan Mirror* for the past three years. In 2003, she succeeded chapter legend Nancy Gideon (previously dubbed "Editor-for-Life") in the year the chapter decided to take the *Mirror* online. I was president that year, so I know how hard Annette worked to make our new electronic newsletter a publication that the chapter could take pride in. She dedicated herself to that task, and she succeeded. In 2004, when our website went offline for nearly three months, Annette was undaunted. She still got the newsletter online. She enlisted the aid of her son, the computer guru, and published the *Mirror* on her personal web space. She will bring that dedication and determination to her term as president, and the chapter will be the better for it.

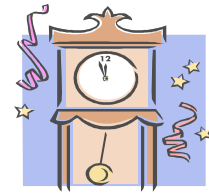
Annette is on leave from the *Mirror* while she serves as president of the 2007 MMRWA Board of Directors, and this is my first issue as editor. I thank Annette for trusting me with "her baby" while she runs the chapter, and for giving me her blessing to experiment with the *Mirror's* format.

I also want to thank this issue's many contributors for helping us to kick off the New Year. Diana Stout jump-starts our writing year with her article "An Essay a Day." Members pitch in with tips of their own and tell us how they will be good to themselves in 2007. Pam Trombley fills us in on what we can look forward to at this year's Retreat From Harsh Reality.

Diane Burton looks for romance with her recap of the November program, "A Funny Little Thing Called Love," and Jodi Copeland sends a writer's valentine with her report on the 2007 "Happily Ever After Contest."

2006 was a very good writing year for several of our chapter members. Let's make 2007 a good year for even more of us.

--LM



2007 MEETING SCHEDULE

- February 17:** Elks Lodge in Grand Rapids; Grand Rapids Police Lt. Mark Ostapowicz will speak about his experiences in the Grand Rapids Police Department.
- March 17:** Brewster's Kalamazoo; Nancy Gideon reveals "Pacing doesn't just apply to Chapters 1 through 16; it also relates to those years between flash in the pan to Barbara Cartland."
- April 20-22:** St. Ives Resort, Stanwood, Retreat From Harsh Reality; Julie Kistler, guest author.
- May 19:** Jackson, tentatively scheduled at Daryl's Downtown. Gail Gaymer Martin speaks on "How to Write an Inspirational Romance and Get a How-to Book Published with *Writer's Digest*."
- June 16:** La Senorita, Lansing; Jodi Lozon-Copeland discusses the erotica market.
- July:** No meeting
- August 18:** Grand Rapids; tentative location, Famous Dave's new location on Northland Drive; tentative speaker, an assistant prosecutor for the City of Grand Rapids,.
- September 15:** Brewster's, Kalamazoo; Jennifer Greene discusses "Trends: How to Balance an Author's Creative Needs and Still Address What it Takes to be Commercial."
- October 20:** Tentative—Jackson Library, multi-author panel discussion.
- November 17:** La Senorita, Lansing; Maris Soule on writing mystery and romance.
- December:** Grand Rapids -- either Famous Dave's or Elks -- Christmas Party

—Guidelines and Policy—

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 4th Saturday of the month, unless otherwise stated.

CHAPTER CONTACT INFORMATION

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.

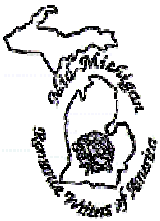
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