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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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Non-members seeking information about Mid-Michigan meetings and joining our group may contact:

Dawn Bartley bartleyd@chartermi.net

MMRWA will welcome Silhouette editor, Shannon Godwin in an extended format, members only meeting in Grand Rapids on January 15, 2005. More details will be posted on the MMRWAROM@yahoo.com or MMRWABUSINESS@yahoo.com loops as they become available. Please see page 16 for meeting directions.



Joan Noble

The reigning sentiment on Earth, the combination of prevailing chemicals, or the very essence of God?

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January Birthdays

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A note from the office

By *Wil Emerson, President*



A New Year's greeting usually starts with 'Have A Great Year' then moves to the proverbial question 'Are you going to make a New Year's resolution?' Like many, I ponder how much weight to lose, how to make better use of my time, spend money more wisely, exercise more, pay attention to important issues or will I ever become the person my dog thinks I am? By the time January 7th rolls around, I'm back to my old routine.

Good habits don't need re-tooling Mac would say if he could talk. Alas, I know more than my cute dog when it comes to habits. Yes, I've managed to cultivate a few that keep me sane in the public eye, but harbor a pocket full of naggers that should be retooled, revised, restrung, retired. Retired...yes, that's the word I'm looking for.

As writers, aren't we're always looking for the right word? This is the perfect time to reflect on the year ahead and find the right word that helps meet our writing goals. Whether or not we need to retire old habits doesn't matter. What we need is a PLAN.

That is indeed the right word. A well defined plan can help us reach those goals. So you say you have a shelf full of books that bear your name? No, you're still considered a novice? Whatever. Anyone who gets to the top of the heap--- hoop fame, name on Broadway, book space on the front table of Barnes & Noble, has done so with a clear plan on how to get there. A Plan...and then that plan is worked to the max.

How about devising a plan instead of making a New Year's resolution?

Here's mine--I'm making appointments with myself in 2005. I'm going to block off time on MY calendar and not miss those appointments. There are several checks on the page already that will gobble up my precious time. Julie, the hair dresser. Yes, a good one. The dentist, a play at middle-school...okay. But, where am I? So, here goes: Tues, January 11th, appt. with Wil, 1-5 p.m. Circled in red. That appointment can not be changed. It's as important to me as the hair cut or the dentist. And so it goes...If I don't fill in the spaces for me, other people, yes, even people I love, will worm there way on my calendar, cover it like a wet blanket and leave me disappointed that the chapter I intended to write will have to wait until....when...next week?

So, that's my Plan, folks. It's got success written all over it. How about your Plan? Share it January 15th. at our first meeting of the New Year. I'm very excited about our guest speaker, Shannon Godwin from Silhouette. What a great way to start a New Year for this enthusiastic group of writers who will meet their goals in 2005 with or without a New Year's resolution.

Wishing you the best all year long!

Cheers, *Wil A. Emerson*

Recap of November MMRWA Meeting in Grand Rapids with Aaron Chusid the speaker, speaking on the use of swords, types of swords and sword demonstrations.
By Dawn Bartley

Aaron began the program by passing out a handout with two articles from the website www.tasteslikephoenix.com. The first article contained The Hints and Myths of Martial Arts. Myths covered in the handout were:

1. Taking a Martial art is the same as knowing how to fight.
2. Self-defense is the same thing as fighting.
3. There's no difference between 'fighting' or 'kicking butt' and killing or maiming people.
4. Fights last ten minutes or more, at which time the hero can make an impressive comeback.
5. A fight only concerns the combatants.
6. Martial artists don't need or use weapons.
7. Fighting with two weapons is difficult and confusing.
8. Weapons are heavy.
9. You can mash someone's nose into their brain and kill them with a single mighty palm strike.
10. All martial arts look like Tae Kwon Do.
11. A style is a style.

The handout also contained the article Fighting with Style. The article included tips on developing a style and techniques used in a style.

Aaron then gave us all an anatomy lesson of a sword beginning at the tip and working back to the 'handle'. Aaron also passed around two books for us to look at that he recommended.

Weapons – An International Encyclopedia from 5000 B.C. to 2000 A.D.
The Duel – A history by Robert Baldrick

Jen Armintrout was a gracious test subject for demonstration of some of the sword fighting techniques. Several people questioned Aaron about which movies had the best and worst sword fighting scenes. Good – The Count of Monte Cristo, Zorro, Rob Roy and a favorite of his By the Sword. Bad – The original Star Wars Trilogy (Aaron assured us he still loved the movies, just not the light-saber scenes) and The Princess Bride. He was sure to point out that there are four different styles of sword fighting: historical, theatrical, classical, and sport. A major element of sword fighting across cultures – what is victory? There are differences in the definition of victory between cultures. His biggest hint to all of us: describe the intent of certain moves, not a step-by-excruciating-step how-to of the move.

I spoke with Aaron briefly after his talk and found out he could have shared a ride with us from Kalamazoo. All of us riding together that day agreed that we would have loved to pick his brain for ideas.

NOVEMBER MEMBER NEWS

Chris Allen Riley: Revising IM for Silhouette; finalizing plans to bring Shannon Godwin to MMRWA's January meeting.

Jen Armintrout: Did not write all week and I don't feel at all bad about it; called SG at Silhouette, she hasn't read my book yet.

Dawn Bartley: Making a lot of progress on my WIP, unfortunately, I won't finish it by the end of the year.

Annette Briggs: Helping with the Michigan basket for editor Shannon Godwin.

Lisa Childs-Theeuwes: Excited to see August 05 next cover in Harlequin ad in Publishers Weekly; Just finished AA's for March 05 Harlequin Intrigue Eclipse.

Jodi Lynn Copeland (Lozon): Working on women's fiction for agent and sci-fi novella for a 2005 Ellora's Cave anthology; entered the Rita.

Flavia Crowner: Finishing rough draft of *Herbal Garden*, second in Sunny Farnum cosy mysteries.

Wil Emerson: On Five Stars waiting list, book, with the editor; finishing novel for "I Will Write."

Peggy Hanchar: Nearly finished with vampire book; talking to agents.

Michele Hickerty: Focusing on living.

Anne Marie King-Jakubiak: Got my Golden Heart entry back, they were full up; finished revisions on my one book, trying to finish my other.

Tammy Kearly: Getting GH entry ready.

Shar Koenig: Preparing for release of stand alone mystery, *Ink On Her Nose*, as well as submitting screenplay.

Loralee Lillibridge: Waiting for release date for Special Edition, getting website for possible December launch, working on fourth proposal for SSE.

Kate McAuliffe: Finished chapter 2 on contemporary book. I entered the writing a-book-in-a-month program. With that, I've started a new medieval romance.

Catherine McClain: Halfway finished with second draft of my very first novel. Almost ready to have someone critique -- any advice? Very excited about this new phase of my life and am having a great time with my writing.

Anne Marie Sanders: Finished first draft on first novel. This month I will be revising, revising, revising. Entered Texas chapter's first chapter contest.

Juli Schuitema: Working on two fantasies, researching contemporary, working film scripts.

Maris Soule: Judging the Gotcha contest, working on my WIP, doing research.

Cheryl Steimel: Gearing up on promotion for *Naked Elf*; almost done with sequel; sent out a proposal to an agent.

Sincere condolences to Laurie Kuna on the recent loss of her mother



Mid-Michigan Looks Toward 2005

I'm looking forward to a productive writing year -- I hope, I hope, I hope! **Wil Emerson**

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I will serve MMRWA in a manner befitting the manner of the position of historian (in other words, I'm going to get my act together). I will also finish my WIP and query an editor. Best wishes for everyone in the new year! **Dawn Bartley**

©

My wish is for all people to live together in harmony and my 2005; my resolution is to take the time to do more on a personal level to promote harmony in my family, my church, my groups (e-mail and real-time) and community. **Marsha Ransom**

©

My biggest hope is that I spend more quality time with my husband who, as most of you know, does 100% for me - and I don't want to be totally self-centered (Just a little bit.). Next, I'd love to find a home for some of my longer women's fiction and suspense.

Gail Martin - (Invisible member much of the time - but still loves you all.)

©

I will remember that writing is a joy as well as a job -- even on those days when I can't string two sentences together. **Jackie Braun**

©

Do a better job of prioritizing my time. **Rosanne Bittner.**

©

Get back in shape. Have a baby. Get back in shape. :0) **Jodi Lozon**

©

Here are my resolutions for 2005:

1. Count my blessings every day
2. Remember that though I might not agree with someone's opinion, I can always learn something if I listen with an open mind.
3. Remember that wrinkles from smiles are prettier than wrinkles from frowns.
4. Use "please" and "thank-you" in my vocabulary more often.
5. Write/submit, write/submit, write/submit

Have a wonderful holiday season, **Loralee Lillibridge**

©

Wow, Lorelee, those are fantastic resolutions. I'm going to adopt them as my own and add another. I resolve to be nicer to everyone and have faith in the basic goodness of my fellow man. I also resolve to leave some of the problems to God because He can do a better job than I can. **Peggy Hanchar**

©

I resolve to make more efficient use of my time and be more productive in 2005--in the hope that it will help to make my wish come true for that first sale. **Lana Miersen**

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I will accept that there are things over which I have no control, and I'll focus on those things that I do. **Melissa Ford**

©

My resolve for the new year is to get proposals sent out. I love writing; it's just the sending it out that I put off. **Dickee Six**

©

Of course, my resolution is to make writing a priority next year-it's about time!-I will try hard. **Joan Noble**

©

I will share quality and quantity time with friends and family. I will live life with joy so I can find more joy in my writing craft. **Dana Corbit Nussio**

©

My motto is: Follow your Bliss. Go forth each day with an open heart and a curious mind, be ready for the unexpected, and NEVER, EVER give up. Blessings to all this Christmas Season, **Connie Smith**

©

Hope to make a sale, survive my husband's idea of a "fun cruise," and still be sane. **Maris Soule**

©

I will enjoy the journey -- not worry about the outcome. I hope to have a sale in the first quarter. **Diane Burton**

©

I will get organized, and I will make better use of my time. I will be more involved in MMRWA. And maybe I'll find time to sleep too. **Lisa Childs**

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To lose weight and to enjoy my family. **Anne Marie King Jakubiak**

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My goals, dreams and aspirations for the next year:
Enjoy my children even when they interrupt a flowing writing expedition.
Appreciate my husband for the wonderful, giving man that he is.
Be thankful that my parents are still here.
Figure out how to write in those small moments of time.
Give myself permission to skip a chore so I can write.
Thank God every day for finding such a wonderful group of women to hang with.
Kate McAuliffe

©

My resolution for 2005 is to try to bring balance to the activities in my life and to not feel guilty about the choices I have to make. I can't spend all my time doing one thing and there are many rewarding activities that deserve my attention, the most precious being my family. **Pam Trombley**

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Here are a few ideas I review daily:

Be a channel for peaceful thoughts: holding onto the spirit of forgiveness, creating harmony instead of discord, bringing faithfulness when doubt occurs in relationships at work and home, hope for a new day when despair appears, bringing truth when errors occur, lighting the darkness, finding joy when sadness threatens. Seek to love, rather than to be loved, to understand rather than to be understood, to comfort rather than to be comforted.

I cannot accomplish much of the above outside of my skin. I do know I cannot tolerate anger or resentment for long without damage to the person I want to be.

Francis of Assisi is the author of the thoughts above, **Rohn Federbush**

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I predict that the members of Mid-Michigan will touch many lives in a positive way in 2005. All the best, **Annette Briggs**

©

Approaching February Birthdays

Lana Miersen 4 Catherine McClain 6

The Truth About Love by Joan Noble

The reigning sentiment on Earth, the combination of prevailing chemicals, or the very essence of God? Love is all three. It's passion, it's addiction, and it's a devotional path. As we experience love in our own life, we tend to say, "Well, if that's all there is to it, I can write about it -- piece of cake."

Of course, it's not that simplistic and may be naive. Love is not a virtue or a theory. Rather, it's a biological phenomenon, a combination of lust, attraction and attachment.

The Three Stages of Love

1. Lust- This first stage is driven by hormones that make us feel elated.
2. Attraction- This is characterized by neurotransmitters relaying the brain's signals.
3. Attachment- Pheromones are especially active in this stage.

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These are only the ingredients; love is the product. The chemicals are natural. Lust is the combination of testosterone and oestrogen (sic) in both men and women. Attraction is the "falling" part and uses both brains, where a group of neurotransmitters, known as monoamines do their thing: they are dopamine, norepenepine (also known as adrenaline), and serotonin, which may drive us temporarily insane, so to speak.

Attachment calls up the body's vasopressin and oxytocin. The latter is the same bonding chemical that mother's and their newborns sense. Add ingredients like pheromones and appearance, which includes body language to finish the soup. When we joke about bubbling, raging hormones we aren't exaggerating.

Love at First Sight

To experience love at first sight is preposterous. In love with someone you know nothing about? Stupid. As you've heard before, it's lust at first sight. A bodily function. To have a deep and lasting love you must know a person intimately. Love is not enough to do this. Love uses us wholly. That's why when we feel we are falling in love we cannot eat or sleep, and concentration goes out the window. But we don't care.

Love is Not a Gift

Love is procedure, a custom of action; it's cultivating an attitude, and learning gentle kindness and acceptance. Not an easy task. In method here are the stages of any relationship: attraction, infatuation, communion, intimacy, surrender (my favorite part), passion, and ecstasy. For another character it may be the steps from hate toward love, a common theme in romance. Hate, dislike, mild dislike, indifference, understanding, grudging admiration, like Wallah, Love!

A Little Mind-Bending

In the 1970s Cort Pedersen, professor of psychiatry, said, "When we're falling in love passions are very strong, but they seem to fade over time. It may be that we're experiencing a shift from the initiation to the maintenance mechanism. He believed(s) that's why a shared song can make us so melancholy. Our body -- more likely our mind for the brain is flooded with these chemicals -- is primed and anticipating love. The brain uses more than one area when it's weighing intimacy, but, for the most part, it's the prefrontal cortex -- also known to react to euphoria-inducing drugs and our gut feelings. The lights just go off.

On the other hand, this area is over-active in depressed people. Love can actually make them sorrowful. Low levels of serotonin are associated with blue feelings and anxiety, such as obsessive compulsive disorder or OCD. Some men with low levels are usually having a lot of sex, not to be confused with affection, which seems an oxymoron to me.

The Truth About Love continued on page 9

The Truth About Love continued from page 8**All You Need is Love**

As humans, we need love, security, and cooperation to get by. And, too often, we as authors put our current feelings into our writing. We may be having a hard day, we may be tired, or we may just be ambivalent. Think about where you are in your love life, and then promptly forget it. Close your eyes and try to experience the emotions between your main characters. We should not write about our feelings of love for our children, grandchildren, family and friends, and pets as if it were the same.

Although those can be grand loves, we are, for the most part, focusing on the man/woman relationship. Women instinctively seek men whom smell and act as their fathers did. Men tend to want a woman like mom. (You know all the reasons.) These faces from childhood, pheromones and characteristics, are preferred even though we don't realize it. The bonds of affection between a man and woman are deeper and stronger than blood ties. This may seem cold but whom do you love more, your father or your husband/boyfriend? We may not be comfortable thinking about it because it makes us feel wicked or immoral, as if we were primordial and had no wisdom. It's entirely innate.

Our experience with others also changes the way we love. Our reading, interacting at work or with friends and neighbors, we become minutely changed spiritually with each encounter. How do these new perspectives change your own relationship?

The Pain

Some people fear love because attachment leads to eventual suffering, for example: if a mate dies. Searching for, then working at love, shows how much we're willing to suffer to have an amorous relationship. But somewhere along the line our love will change, end, or just disappoint. The pain and suffering love causes is not what we romance writers should delve into, but your characters should be aware of it. What they have to remember is it's the love that lives on and on.

How Do They Stay in Love -- or is it just Sex?

1. It's easy to replace a sex object, but it's difficult to replace the object of your affection.
2. Are they feeling possessed, or sensing a feeling of belonging?
3. Are they looking for and finding pleasure for pleasure's sake, or finding joyous communion with another person?
4. Sex is not discriminating; love chooses.
5. A character may feel concern for another, although love is always concerned and caring.

If our characters are falling in love or already there, they should be seeing what the other is seeing, making eye contact frequently. Acting loving is the first step toward feeling loving. All the while, they should be patient with each other, paying close attention to every detail of the other's existence.

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Dean Koontz and a Priest

Koontz narrates in his novel, *One Door Away From Heaven*, "and she often said that from time to time someone so special comes along that upon meeting him or her the direction of your life shifts unexpectedly, and you are therewith changed forever and for the better." I just love that description.

Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S. J., once said, "What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything." Everything. And paraphrasing, "be completely and shamelessly in love, false dignity has no place when one is in love. Fall as in love, stay in love; it will decide everything."

The Truth About Love

People change. Love grows and wanes alternately over the years, but we're only dealing with a short time span in a novel. We're on well-trodden territory here as authors of love and romance, and it's difficult to find something new to give each other to contemplate.

How does an intangible, something one can't even see, smell or touch, be so critical for our survival?

Is romantic love different from the love of God or spiritual love? I think it grows from our first funny stirrings and melds into a spiritual love, something akin to love and gratitude for the entire universe. Writers are not known for shying away from the truth about sex and love, but you already know that. You have a head start if you're in love right now. Write your own truths and your writing will be believable and your characters remembered.

Joan Noble has been studying love with the same man for 45 years and writing for 26 with the same brain. She's published in nonfiction, an RWA PRO, and also belongs to Outreach International Romance Writers. She hopes your love life is thriving, fictional or otherwise. © 2004 by Joan Noble

RETREAT REGISTRATION STARTS JANUARY 1ST!

Brochures for our Retreat From Harsh Reality 2005 will be in the mail just after Christmas for our chapter members. It's "Members Only" registration through *February 7, 2005* and you can make a payment of only \$50 to hold your spot. (Note that in the past, any size deposit would do it but there's a minimum amount this year.) If, for some reason, you do not receive a brochure by Jan. 10, please contact Pam Trombley to get another one. (pamtrombley@charter.net or (231) 526-2153) Attendance limitation has returned to 50 so don't delay if you want to come.

Please discuss room arrangements with your potential roommates BEFORE you send in your registration & room requests as there are a limited number of suites for this year's Retreat. We would like to avoid the "musical rooms" swaperoo we had last year if at all possible - thanks!

This year's Retreat promises to be wonderful! Elizabeth Grayson is really excited about coming and has some great talks in store to share with us. We'll have our book basket raffle and auctions, the public book sale and author signing and much more.

If you have any questions or want to help, please contact Pam Trombley. We can always use more helping hands!

This article first appeared in the November 2004 issue of Love Notes, the newsletter of Music City Romance Writers.

The Trouble with Titles by Tanya Michaels

Back when my editor and I were brainstorming alternate titles for my November release (and again for my January one, and again for . . .), I told her that writing the darn stories is easier than naming them. Especially when, as often happens to me, the publisher nixes your original title and you have to start over. We all aspire to eventual name recognition, possibly even of the one word variety like “Nora” or “Evanovich,” but until readers know who we are and actively seek out our work, external elements (cover art, title, etc.) are important. I was at a book-signing recently where a patron hurried by the participating authors, claiming not to read romances, but then chuckled at the displayed *Leave It To Cleavage* by Wendy Wax and stopped to read the book’s back cover copy.

Some people are surprised to learn how often publishers change the author’s original title. There are many reasons this can happen, even if your title was good. For instance, there could be a book scheduled a month before yours with the same name, or they might want you to clarify a defining story element. I advise not only coming up with the best title you can, but brainstorming a few alternatives before they’re actually needed. That way, if your editor calls at 4:30 one day to say marketing needs a new title by 5:00, you can send immediate possibilities. If they’re happy with your title and don’t need alternatives — or they use one of their own ideas and disregard your list entirely — think of the time spent brainstorming as mental exercise for your creative muscles.

What makes a good title? First, it should appeal to its target audience. If you write humor, a title that makes people laugh is great. I remember sitting in the audience during the 2002 Golden Heart Awards when finalists were being announced. When they got to Chris Fletcher’s short contemporary, *Don’t Trust a Man with Your Bra in His Hand*, laughter broke out all around me — very appropriate, since Fletcher was targeting a romantic comedy line.

When recalling how she came up with the title, Fletcher says, “I was trying to find a title that cut right to the underlying theme, which was all about trust, but nothing had that lighthearted feel that I wanted.” Judging by audience reaction, she struck exactly the right lighthearted chord.

Your audience is key. While wisecracks are sometimes made about titles mentioning “cowboys” or “brides”, these proven marketing hooks help interested readers identify the product. So if you’ve used a theme that’s already popular, it doesn’t hurt to throw “Texan” in the title or use a wedding buzzword, especially if you can twist it in a unique way, as I attempted to do with my first book, *The Maid of Dishonor* (one of the titles I did get to keep).

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The trouble with Titles continued from page 11

But never use a marketing hook for its own sake. Readers resent being misled. No fair putting “sheik” in the title because the heroine’s best friend happens to see a movie about sheiks in chapter four. Additionally, make sure you follow through on whatever tone you set, be it humorous, chillingly suspenseful or sensual. An ultrasexy title may inspire readers to pick up the book, but if you don’t deliver the heat they were “promised,” they won’t be buying your next one.

The trick to titles is giving as much information as possible in as few words — information about tone, plot hook, setting, etc. — or conversely, a title that makes you wonder, such as Stephanie Bond’s *Our Husband*. Those two words alone raise potential conflicts to snag a reader’s attention. (Keep in mind that shorter titles fit well on books, while longer titles are sometimes reduced to tiny font.) Even people who don’t read Scott Turow (*Presumed Innocent*, *The Burden of Proof*, *Personal Injuries*) can guess he writes legal thrillers. As well as genre, themes can be imparted, as with “trust” in the above funny but functional Bra example — especially themes that share roots with an already well-known tale, like Judith Ivory’s *Beast with the classic Beauty and the Beast*.

Titles also can make it clear the book is part of a continuing series (J.D. Robb’s *Naked in Death*, *Conspiracy in Death*, *Divided in Death*). The familiar wording becomes a marketing hook all its own as the series continues to attract new fans looking for “In Death” books. Other kinds of familiar wording — borrowing from or transforming movie and song titles — are useful, too. It’s easier to gain word-of-mouth sales when your title sticks in a reader’s mind (all the better for recommending your book, my dear). Temptation author Kathleen O’Reilly recently had a miniseries of adapted but familiar titles, including *Breakfast at Bethany’s* and *It Should Happen To You*.

You may wonder, if the publisher is likely to change the title — and, in some cases, even assign one without consulting you — why invest so much energy in one? Because your first audience is the publisher. A query letter featuring a title that makes an editor laugh, intrigues her or demonstrates you understand what that house produces (such as sassy chick lit or teen-friendly YA), is a great first impression. You also can make your fabulous title work for you by printing it on business cards to be distributed at conferences. Let people know at a glance that your writing is going to be original, memorable, eerie, sexy or witty. This will help you build that name recognition even before your first title hits the shelf — whatever your first title ends up being.

Tanya Michaels’ upcoming titles include *Not Quite as Advertised* (Harlequin Flipside, 11/04) and *Going All the Way* (Harlequin Temptation HEAT, 01/05). PRINTED WITH PERMISSION

The following article appears in the December issue of Smoke Signals, newsletter of the Smoky Mountain Romance Writers.

Save Time, Research Online by Heather René Reed

If you're like me you have a limited amount of time for everything you do these days. That's why I do about 75% or more of the research for my books online. From my setting to that certain poison my killer uses, there isn't much you can't find out there on the information super highway. In this article, I'll focus on the main search engines to use and the ones that you should avoid while doing internet research.

First, if you're new to the net, you need to be sure you know the main 'search' engines. Here's a brief list:

Google-<http://www.google.com>
Yahoo!-<http://www.yahoo.com>
Alta Vista-<http://www.altavista.com>
Ask Jeeves-<http://www.askjeeves.com>
WhatUSeek-<http://whatuseek.com>
MSN-<http://www.msn.com>
Lycos-<http://www.lycos.com>
Excite-<http://www.excite.com>
CNN Search-<http://search.com>
TekCenter-<http://www.tekcenter.com>

You can always use the search provided by your internet provider, as well. Providers such as Bellsouth.net and Charter.net have a search box on their home pages. These are your best options for more accurate searches. They also purport that they have "worms" that slither across the web to make sure sites listed in their directories are up-to-date.

However, places like DogPile (<http://www.dogpile.com>) which are termed multi-search engine searchers--should probably be avoided. These sites utilize a theory that they will link to and search the best known engines (like Google.com and WhatUSeek.com). Be wary of these. Recent studies show that these are not the most accurate way to gather needed information. They often say they're searching multiple sites, but when tested they don't retrieve hits on even basic words that are known to bring up a ton of hits if you searched using the search sites individually.

Then you have places like NorthernLight.com that provide separate engines for searching different types of things. For instance, Northern has a Business Research Engine, News Engine, Enterprise Search Engine, and the like. These help to narrow the results of your research and make sure you're able to find what you're looking for. From what I've found, these aren't necessarily any better than using Google.com.

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Save Time, Research Online continued from page 13

If you're still having trouble sifting through the many engines available to you, there are places out there like Search Engine Showdown (<http://www.searchengineshowdown.com>) that will aid you in knowing which of the "major" engines are best and how to use them.

Now, next time you need that bit of information to make your story more believable, go out there and don't let the massive web wear you down!

Heather Reneé Reed is an award-winning author still awaiting publication. She has been writing short contemporary and single title novels for the past four years. She is also a co-founder of the romance author community, WeWriteRomance.com. Visit her website (<http://www.heatherreeneered.com>) and check out the links she's gathered while researching items for her books.

USED WITH PERMISSION

MMRWA 2005 MEETING SCHEDULE

Month	Location	Speaker/Program
January	Grand Rapids	Shannon Godwin, Silhouette Editor
February	Lansing	Vance Briceland/Naomi Nash (The Young Adult Novel)
March	Kalamazoo	Maris Soule (Romantic Suspense)
April	Annual retreat	Elizabeth Grayson, Bestselling Historical Author
May	Jackson	(Tentative) Some Like It Hot (Trend toward erotica and the more sensual romance)
June	Grand Rapids	Roseanne Bittner/Staying The Course (Staying on top during industry turmoil and change)
July	TBD	TBD (will vote on having meeting this month due to RWA Nationals)
August	Lansing	TBD
September	Kalamazoo	TBD
October	Jackson	TBD
November	Grand Rapids	TBD
December	Lansing	TBD

Request for Submissions

In 2005, the Mirror needs a minimum of 10 features written by our chapter members. Please let me schedule you for one of our issues. Please include a brief bio (author's photo is appreciated) to include with your article and permission to offer your article to other RWA groups to use with full attribution.

Please send all contributions for the February (and all other issues) Mirror to: brainchilde@websurfers.biz
DEADLINE TO BE INCLUDED IN THE FEBRUARY 2005 MIRROR IS JANUARY 17.

Don't forget "The Grind," a feature especially for members who are not yet published in book length fiction. Everyone can learn from your discoveries.

Many thanks to the members who have made photographs available to be used in the Mirror. The goal is to have a photo of each member on hand. It doesn't have to be a studio print.

To request Mirror guidelines, please use same addresses as above.

Thank you to all the contributors to the January Mid-Michigan Mirror.

2005 Mid-Michigan Romance Writers of America Officers

President: Wil Emerson Wilwriter@yahoo.com

Vice-president: Jodi Lozon Jodi.lozon@ttmps.com

Secretary: Shar: Koenig: koenisha@Macatawa.org

Treasurer: Lisa Childs: ltheeuwes@msn.com

2004 Mid-Michigan Romance Writers of America Committee Chairs

I Will Write a Book/Write For the Money: Michele Hickerty chelery1@yahoo.com

Happily Ever After Contest: Michele Hickerty chelery1@yahoo.com

Library: Maris Soule SOULEM@aol.com and Lucy Kubash lucykubash@parrett.net

Membership/Historian: Dawn Bartley bartleyd@chartermi.net

Member Recognition: Jodi Lynn Copeland jodi.copeland@ttmps.com

and Cheryl Steimel wiseprez@yahoo.com

MMRWA Angel Award: Maris Soule SOULEM@aol.com

Mystery Gifts: Chris Allen-Riley matt@wmis.net

Newsletter Editor; online distribution: Annette Briggs brainchilde@websurfers.biz

Newsletter printing & distribution: Laurie Kuna lauriecarroll55@worldnet.att.net

PAN Liaison: Sue Crouse crouse@btc-bci.com

Perseverance Fund: Jennifer Armintrout WhoTom@aol.com

Policy: currently unfilled

Chris Allen-Riley matt@wmis.net

Publicity: Juli Schuitema jl_schuitema@yahoo.com

Retreat: Pam Trombley ptrombley@voyager.net

RWA® Pro Liaison: Tammy Kearly tammyk@voyager.net

Web mistress: Michelle Crean mecrean@crean.com

Mid-Michigan Mirror's policy is to offer our original MMRWA articles to other RWA chapters and loops to use with all credits given unless the author specifies restrictions prior to publication. The Mirror staff reserves the right to edit submissions for such things as typos, punctuation, grammar, size requirements, content with author's approval, etc. in the rare case that it is needed.

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of RWA®, of the MMRWA, or 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 the deal. RWA® sister chapters may reprint any information in this newsletter, providing credit is given to MMRWA, the 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.

Directions to the January Meeting

**# 3 Community Center (lower level)
1470 3 Mile Road NW
Walker, MI 49504**

From points SOUTH: Go NORTH on US-131

Merge onto I-96 W via EXIT 89 on the LEFT toward ALPINE AVE/ NEWAGO/ MUSKEGON.
0.9 miles

Take the ALPINE AVE SOUTH exit- EXIT 30A. 0.3 miles

Merge onto ALPINE AVE NW. 0.2 miles

Turn RIGHT onto 3 MILE RD NW. 0.8 miles

End at 1470 3 Mile Rd NW, Walker, MI 49544-1615 US

From points WEST: Take I-196 NORTH

Merge onto US-131 N via EXIT 77A on the LEFT toward CADILLAC. 2.6 miles

Merge onto I-96 W via EXIT 89 on the LEFT toward ALPINE AVE/ NEWAGO/ MUSKEGON.
0.9 miles

Take the ALPINE AVE SOUTH exit- EXIT 30A. 0.3 miles

Merge onto ALPINE AVE NW. 0.2 miles

Turn RIGHT onto 3 MILE RD NW. 0.8 miles

End at 1470 3 Mile Rd NW, Walker, MI 49544-1615 US

Directions continued on page 17

Directions continued from page 16

From points EAST: Take the I-69 W ramp. 0.2 miles

Merge onto I-69 S. 16.8 miles

Merge onto I-96 W via EXIT 81 toward GD RAPIDS. 60.6 miles

Take the ALPINE AVE SOUTH exit- EXIT 30A. 0.3 miles

Merge onto ALPINE AVE NW. 0.2 miles

Turn RIGHT onto 3 MILE RD NW. 0.8 miles

End at 1470 3 Mile Rd NW, Walker, MI 49544-1615 US

Useful Websites

Keep those pages turning: TERRIFIC TRANSITIONS by Barbara Dawson Smith
<http://www.barbaradawsonsmith.com/writingtrans.htm>

Contests

Compiled by Donna Caubarreaux

Winter Rose – Unpublished, Yellow Rose RWA

Postmarked by January 15, 2005

First 25 pages.

<http://www.yellowroserwa.com/pages/4/index.htm>

2005 Annual Award of Excellence, Sponsor: Colorado Romance Writers

Fee: \$15

Receipt Deadline: January 7, 2005

Enter: books published in 2004. Categories: short contemporary, long contemporary, romantic suspense, single title contemporary, historical, Regency, P/TT/F, inspirational. FMI, entry form, and rules, send SASE to:

Jessica Dennis

7129 W. 84th Way #1624

Arvada, CO 80003, 303-463-0636,

<jdennis4797@a...> or Danica Favorite-McDonald, PO Box 27383,

Denver, CO 80227, 303-988-4743, <mailto:danica@d...>> Web site:

<www.ecentral.com/members/crw>

Contests continued on page 18

Contests continued from page 17

2005 Heart of the Rockies, Sponsor: Colorado Romance Writers

Fee: \$25 CRW members

Receipt Deadline: January 31, 2005

Eligibility: not published/contracted in romance fiction Enter: Synopsis (12 pages max), first two chapters (40 pages max).

Categories: short contemporary, long contemporary, romantic suspense, single title contemporary, historical, P/TT/F, inspirational.

Final judges: agent/editor

Top Prize: plaque.

FMI, entry form and rules, send SASE to Cher Gorman, 1875 Mountain Laurel Circle, Highlands Ranch, Colorado 80126

Phone: 303-470-0217, e-mail CherLamour@a..., or Theresa Rizzo, 7071 Quiet Retreat Ct, Niwot, Colorado 80503, 303-652-2509, e-mail Theresa@t... Web site: www.ecentral.com/members/crw.

Indiana Romance Writers of America announces the dates for its 2005 **Indiana Golden Opportunity Contest**.

1 July 2005 Entries must be received by the division coordinators. Please note, as always, this is a received by date NOT a postmark date.

15 September 2005 Finalists notified.

20 October 2005 Winners notified

30 November 2005 Best of the Best notified.

Second and third round judges will be announced after the holiday season. Contest information is posted on the chapter's website: www.indianarwa.com

Judith Bastin, 2005 IGO Chair jpbastin@m...

Donna Caubarreaux is 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. She sponsors several writing lists. <http://www.geocities.com/donnacaubarreaux/Main.html> Used with Permission