

The Mid-Michigan Mirror

... A Reflection of Romance

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

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MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Mid-Michigan Chapter of Romance Writers of America® is to promote excellence in romantic fiction, to help writers publish and establish careers, and to provide continuing support for writers within the romance publishing industry.



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subscribers only]

—THE BOARD ROOM—

June Chapter Meeting and Program

Nice girls do . . . so, you want to write erotic romance?

On Saturday, June 16, 2007, join our featured speaker and Mid-Michigan RWA member Jodi Lynn Copeland at La Señorita Mexican Restaurant in Lansing for a comprehensive look at the erotic romance and erotica marketplace. What's hot, what's not, and where do you fit in the genre anyway?

We will meet in the banquet room for an optional lunch at 11:30 a.m. The program will begin at approximately 1:00 p.m. Our monthly chapter business meeting will follow the program after a short break.

Directions to La Señorita are on page 2.

NOTE: There will **not** be a chapter meeting in July. Join us again on August 18 when we meet in Grand Rapids, program details to be announced.

Our June speaker, Jodi Lynn Copeland



Jodi Lynn Copeland lives with her husband and two children minutes from Michigan's state capital. She learned early on that family and friends and love and laughter are the most important ingredients in happiness. While attending Central Michigan University, she discovered her love for writing and that those same ingredients blend for the perfect romance. Over the years and across the genres, Jodi has found that one thing remains the same...a dash of heat and humor and a heaping spoonful of love make for the best recipe of all.

2007 MMRWA Meeting Schedule

MMRWA holds monthly meetings on a rotating basis in the areas of Grand Rapids, Jackson, Kalamazoo, and Lansing. The Saturday luncheon meetings are held from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in local restaurants and are open to the public. Meetings begin with lunch (optional) and the programs start at approximately 1:30 p.m. There is no charge for the meeting and program; luncheon charges are the responsibility of the individual attendees.

January: No meeting.

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 compares "The Tortoise and the Hare approach to your writing."

April 20-22: St. Ives Resort, Stanwood, Retreat From Harsh Reality 2007; 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 Señorita, Lansing; Jodi Lynn 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 Señorita, Lansing; Maris Soule on writing mystery and romance.

December: Grand Rapids -- either Famous Dave's or Elks -- Christmas Party.

Calendar / Reminders

June 6: Receipt deadline for *Happily Ever After* Contest entries.

June 30: Deadline to enter the "I Will Write a Book" Challenge.

July: No chapter meeting.

July 10 - 14: RWA® National Conference in Dallas.

August 18: Chapter meeting in Grand Rapids.

June Meeting Directions

Directions to: La Señorita Mexican Restaurant
2706 Lake Lansing Road, Lansing, MI
Phone: 517-485-0166

From the North (Mt. Pleasant): Take US-127 S to the Lake Lansing Road Exit. Turn RIGHT onto Lake Lansing Road. Turn LEFT at the first traffic light onto Kerry St. (a Mobil Service Station will be on your left). Take the first LEFT off Kerry (just past the Mobil station) and turn LEFT again into La Señorita's parking lot.

From the South (Ann Arbor, Jackson, Kalamazoo): Take I-94 to US-127 N to the Lake Lansing Road Exit. Turn LEFT at the traffic light onto W. Lake Lansing Road. Turn LEFT at the second traffic light onto Kerry St. (a Mobil Service Station will be on your left). Take the first LEFT off Kerry (just past the Mobil station) and turn LEFT again into La Señorita's parking lot.

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. Turn LEFT at the first traffic light onto Kerry St. (a Mobil Service Station will be on your left). Take the first LEFT off Kerry (just past the Mobil station) and turn LEFT again into La Señorita's parking lot.

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 at the traffic light onto W. Lake Lansing Road. Turn LEFT at the second traffic light onto Kerry St. (a Mobil Service Station will be on your left). Take the first LEFT off Kerry (just past the Mobil station) and turn LEFT again into La Señorita's parking lot.





The President's Two Cents Worth

By Annette Briggs

The deadline for our 2007 "Happily Ever After" Contest is approaching, and I'd like to pass along some tips I learned from being a judge last year.

Last chapter contests are special. Instead of pricking your reader's curiosity, posing questions, stirring unease and anticipation, you, the author, must leave the reader gratified, glad of the time spent, and hopefully hungering for your next book.

More than with contests judging any other part of the novel, success in a last chapter contest depends on a strong synopsis. It is your set-up. In the HEA contest, three of the questions, worth ten points each, directly refer to your synopsis.

For judges to fully appreciate those last pages of your story, clue them in on:

- ♥ what it was that kept the heroine and hero apart for so long
- ♥ how they managed to fall in love in spite of it all
- ♥ what they went through and sacrificed
- ♥ why it's so right and wonderful that they're finally together.

Check out the score sheets. They're available to everyone. You'll find them at: <http://midmichiganrwa.org> when you click the Happily Ever After Contest. Compare the standards on the score sheets to your entry. If you have a trusted critique partner, have her/ him do it for you. It's not too late to make sure the reader experiences those qualities in your story.

Make me laugh.

Make me cry.

Make me wish I'd read every word of your story leading up to that magnificent ending.

I'll be looking forward to your entry.

All the best,

Annette

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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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Lucy Kubash

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—CHAPTER CHATTER—

May Program Recap**By Gail Gaymer Martin**

*[At our May chapter meeting, Gail Gaymer Martin spoke on selling **Writing the Christian Romance to Writers Digest Books**, to be released in December of 2007, and on the peculiarities of writing Christian romance. This month, she provides us with a brief summary of that presentation. --Ed.]*



Gail Gaymer Martin

“Since readers and publishers vary from conservative to more liberal, authors should read the books in the genre and consult each publishers’ guidelines.”

What does it take to sell a “how-to write” book? It takes having expertise in your subject area and submitting an excellent proposal. In preparing a proposal, provide the premise (the reason for writing the book); the marketing information (who needs this book and how to sell it); and the author’s credentials, which should include: background, expertise, previous writing/published titles, and finally the author’s personal marketing activities, such as the author’s contacts, websites, blog sites, marketing organization, established readership, book signings, and engagements as a speaker or workshop presenter. I also distributed copies of the proposal I submitted to Writers Digest Books to provide tips on creating a proposal, which could be helpful when authors are trying to sell in a new genre or writing for a new publisher.

To describe the ways in which Christian romance differs from secular romance, I focused on four main points.

1) **Christian Worldview**— How the characters’ live their daily lives. Cursing, including euphemisms, and graphic violence are normally avoided.

2) **Internal Conflicts**—which are often the story’s spiritual issue— involving behavior against the characters’ faith that affects relationships.

3) **Sexuality**—attributes are stressed rather than physical appearance, and there is a slower journey through the romantic physical action, with no explicit sexual content.

4) **Spirituality**—is woven into the tapestry of the story as faith grows and the story progresses to a happily-ever-after ending with God’s blessing for a forever commitment. The spirituality provides a hero and a heroine facing real life issues, stumbling and picking themselves up, as they discover God’s importance in their lives. Overcoming the struggle becomes the takeaway message for the readers.

Other issues vary depending on the publisher, such as: drinking, dancing, playing games of chance that use cards or dice, and divorced heroes and heroines. Since readers and publishers vary from conservative to more liberal, authors should read the books in the genre and consult each publishers’ guidelines. **MMM**

The Chapter publishes its business meeting minutes, treasurer’s reports, and other legal documents online in the files section of MMRWABUSINESS, the chapter’s members-only listserv. See Policy, page 12.

*Award-winning author and MMRWA member Gail Gaymer Martin writes romance, romantic suspense, and women’s fiction for Steeple Hill and Barbour Publishing. She began writing fiction in 1997 and sold her first novel in 1998. Today she has signed forty fiction contracts, with over a million books in print. Gail’s books have been honored with seven national awards, including the Romantic Times Reviewers Choice for Best Love Inspired 2002. Gail’s book, **Writing the Christian Romance**, will be released by Writers Digest in December 2007. Visit her web site at www.gailmartin.com and look on her For Writers pages for information on writing Christian romance.*

May Member News

Dawn Bartley: Need to sit down and incorporate comments from retreat critique.

Annette Briggs: Learning many things about how our chapter works.

Lila Chandler: Working on Happily Ever After submission and numerous assignments for the local paper, the *Herald-Palladian*.

Sue Charnley: The "Personal Writers Seminar Cruise," leaves Port Canaveral for the Bahamas July 22-26, 2007, featuring Lori Avocato, Nancy Brandt, Terri Blaine and me. The URL is www.writerscruise.com.

Lisa Childs-Theeuwes: Thrilled that *Learning to Hula* finaled in the National Reader's Choice Awards and took third place in the Lories mainstream category. *Haunted* also finaled in the Golden Quill paranormal category.

Jodi Lynn Copeland: new two-book contract with Kensington's Aphrodisia line, contract with Ellora's Cave Cerridwen imprint, tied myself for third in the novella category of The Lories Best Published contest with *Somebody's Hero* and a story from *After Hours*, working on a Blaze proposal, coordinating the Happily Ever After contest and category coordinating From The Heart RWA's Golden Gateway contest.

Katie Dubois: Submitted to my first contests ever! Rewrote some queries and synopsis, sent out a query (and got a rejection for it, reworking a ms, got a great critique from Lucy Kubash--THANKS, LUCY!

Margo Hoornstra: Will complete and submit WIP by next week, then start next one or two. Whatever comes up!

Anne Marie King-Jakubiak: Writing a lot; been down sick part of the month.

Gail Martin: Completed the book for Writer's Digest, *Writing the Christian Romance*. Signed contract for 2nd series book for Barbour, *Garlic and Roses. In His Dreams*, August 2007 for Steeple Hill LI.

Kate McAuliffe: I am working on putting together several queries for articles to several different magazines. That is temporarily on hold due to our moving. My husband has been out of work for almost two years, so we are packing up and moving close to my parents. We are hoping to sell our place quickly and then buy a smaller place outright by them. We are farming and so are trying to find a small farm or at least a place with a barn. I will do my best to remain a member of this chapter but I probably won't be making meetings anytime soon. The kids get out June 8th and we'll be making the move soon after that.

Lana Miersen: Working on improving the *Mid-Michigan Mirror* and created a no-frills email chapter newsletter. Editing homeowners' association newsletter. Remodeling kitchen. Not much writing on WIP the past few weeks.

Cindy Spencer Pape: I have an interview in June's Cerridwen Press newsletter; hyperlink, http://www.cerridwenpress.com/newsletter/newsletter_0607.asp. My cover is on the "upcoming releases" page there as well!

Mary Todas: OK, finally after almost a year I'll get this in.... I joined MMRWA back in September, 2006 and have managed to drop into a couple of meetings. Each time, I wished I was able to be there for the entire meeting. My husband and I have two sons, ages 4 and 5. I'm able to write in the evenings after the boys are asleep, but taking time away from family during the weekend is difficult. I live in Kalamazoo and work fulltime for Pfizer. I've worked there for 24 years, and the last 4 years have been stressful with all the layoffs. Writing has been an outlet for me, and I'm grateful to have joined this supportive group, with so many talented writers. **MMM**

Upcoming Releases

Gail Gaymer Martin: *In His Dreams*, August 2007, for Steeple Hill LI.



June Birthdays

3rd Chris Allen-Riley
17th Annette Briggs
19th Maris Soule

July Birthdays

2nd Patty Gordon
17th Jennifer Kemptner



—THE WRITING LIFE—

[June is the all-time favorite month for weddings, naturally, because a June bride is a bride forever. In this issue, we salute a very special bride and her zany bridesmaids--the infamous Lazarus Connection: Lisa Cardle, Pat Lazarus and Laurie Kuna. Join us for a look back into the creation of the Bride of Lazarus . . .]



The Lazarus Connection in concert at MMRWA's Retreat From Harsh Reality.

Left to right: Pat Lazarus, Laurie Kuna (standing), and Lisa Cardle.

The Making of a Parody: "The Secret Baby's Cowboy Daddy's Amnesiac Bride"

By Lisa Cardle and Pat Lazarus, with Laurie Kuna

Lisa: Writers are often asked, "where do your ideas come from?" Sometimes we have a concrete answer for that. A specific news item. A TV storyline gone awry. A true-to-life experience. A slice of conversation.

Such was the case with this oft-requested song from our parody band. Formed at the Region II conference in 1997 in response to RT's erroneous report of Martha Powers death (which sure surprised Martha, I must say), The Lazarus Connection debuted with "Ghost Writer in the Sky."

By conference end, we had been asked to pen a few more songs for an encore presentation at Autumn Author's Affaire the following year. Never ones to turn down a challenge, we readily agreed. The fact that we lived on opposite sides of the state, 2-3 hours apart didn't cause a moment's hesitation, though it probably should have. :-)

Pat: We decided that each of us should be able to come up with a few songs on our own. We were intelligent women, right? Silly us. What came so easily with a room full of bright minds working together was not quite so easy when alone in a room faced with an empty screen and a faltering connection between the brain and the keyboard. What the heck was I going to write about?

Thankfully, one of our MMRWA meetings provided fodder. Laurie, Lisa and I were sitting together, which is always a recipe for sidebar banter. A mini-discussion was going on about the contemporary titles the large publishing houses were putting out each month. A bit contemptuously, we derided the fact that the titles belabored the obvious, and were predominantly westerns involving cowboys, brides, amnesia, or secret babies. Someone commented, "Geez, we shouldn't have to send in proposals any more. Just make up a good title, and it pretty well says what's in the book."

"Hmmm..." I thought. It would become the battle of the titles, rather than the competition between manuscripts. I decided the title that would win the contract would be, "The Secret Baby's Cowboy Daddy's, Amnesiac Bride." It covered all the popular themes, and would immediately win favor. The rhymes just seemed to flow after that and when we got together the next month, I shared the song with my partners in crime.

Lisa: Pat handed me a copy of the lyrics saying, "I have no idea what tune to use. I was thinking something corn-pony." I glanced at the first verse. "It's Wabash Cannonball." With that I quietly began to sing. Pat's words fell into rhythm perfectly. I don't think one syllable had to be altered. Pat and Laurie caught the rhythm and quickly joined in. Voices around us stilled as the folks at our table sneaked a listen. Their raucous laughter was all we needed to know that Pat had hit the jackpot with this one.

"What came so easily with a room full of bright minds working together was not quite so easy when alone in a room faced with an empty screen and a faltering connection between the brain and the keyboard."



Laurie: My main contribution to Laz Con has always pretty much been attempts to make my colleagues laugh while they're eating or drinking--preferably when they weren't sitting across from me. My creative contribution to this particular song was exactly zero. Lisa and Pat just wanted me to put some stuff in here because I'm a group member. I love this song, although I couldn't for some reason figure out how to sing "amnesiac." I kept singing "am-knee-zee-at-ic," which isn't even a word. However, it scans correctly.

Lisa: For all those June brides out there... this one's for you.

THE BABY FORMULA

(aka: **The Secret Baby's, Cowboy Daddy's, Amnesiac Bride**)

Performed by The Lazarus Connection: Lisa Cardle, Pat Lazarus, and Laurie Kuna; sung to the melody of **The Wabash Cannonball**)

Well, I'm a romance writer, but I haven't sold a book
I worried and I fretted that I didn't have what it took
So I studied and I researched to see how a book should look
Found you've got to have a formula. You've got to have a hook

When I checked out categories, the books that were my dream
There was romance after romance that had a common theme
The hero is a cowboy with eyes and teeth that gleam. And...
The heroine can't remember since she got hit by that beam...OW!

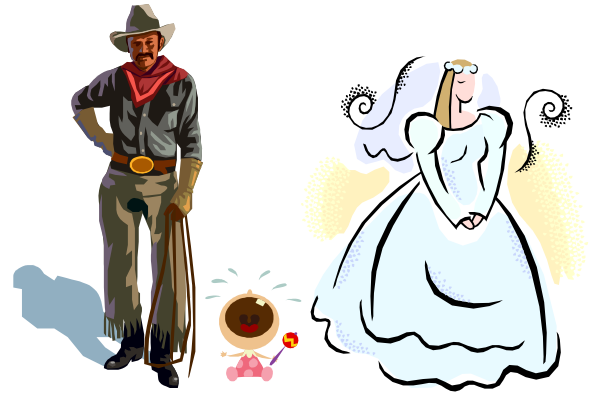
Then, there's that sweet, sweet baby, that's waiting on the side
Seems the cowboy doesn't know about the child she had to hide
(Spoken: Oh, no, Honey. I just ate a few too many chocolates)
So I came up with a title that I know won't be denied
It's "The Secret Baby's Cowboy Daddy's Amnesiac Bride."

Well, I haven't got it plotted, though the subjects cut-and-dried
I haven't formed my characters tho' I think they both should ride
But I'm sure I've got a title that can be displayed with pride
It's "The Secret Baby's Cowboy Daddy's Amnesiac Bride."

She'll be pretty. He'll be rugged.
And they'll both have lost their mothers
And let us not forget about his three good-looking brothers
(spoken: After all if I do this right, Series, here I come)
He'll help her save her ranch and he'll romance her on the side
In "The Secret Baby's Cowboy Daddy's Amnesiac Bride."

Well, I'll send it to the editor, you know she won't refuse
'Cuz my research says that that's the kind of novel they can use
They won't even need a manuscript, the market's open wide
For "The Secret Baby's Cowboy Daddy's Amnesiac Bride."

Oh, I'll have a celebration and the folks that I'll invite
Will gaze in awe and wonder at that admirable title
They won't even have to read it, 'cause it says just what's inside
It's "The Secret Baby's Cowboy Daddy's Amnesiac Bride."
It's "The Secret Baby's Cowboy Daddy's Amnesiac Bride." **MMM**



Lisa Cardle is a nurse in Newborn Intensive Care in her non-writing life. As yet unpublished, she is hard at work rescuing every stray animal for miles around as well as working on a paranormal and two contemporaries (only one involving cowboys).

Pat Lazarus is an award-nominated cover artist for ImaJinn, and is currently working on a paranormal. She works with grade school children in southwest Michigan.

Laurie Kuna is finishing her 26th year teaching high school English and likely will only terrorize teenagers for four more. She writes paranormal romance for ImaJinn Books, penning historicals as Laurie Carroll and contemporaries as Laurie C. Kuna. Her fourth book, another historical, should be out in the fall.

The Baby Formula, lyrics Copyright © by Patricia Lazarus.

[With the 2007 RWA® National Conference approaching in July, the Mirror asked some of our published members to share their conference expectations and experiences. Maris Soule gives us an overview and comparison of the types of conferences, followed by the intrepid trio of Nancy Gideon, Laurie Kuna and Lorelee Lillibridge who take on the PASIC conference. --Ed.]



*Maris Soule at MMRWA's
Retreat From Harsh Reality*

What a Difference!

By Maris Soule

I've been attending retreats, conferences and conventions for years and have learned the purpose of the event makes a big difference in how I dress, act and what I accomplish. The purpose also makes a difference on what I attend and when.

The MMRWA Retreat From Harsh Reality is a great time to relax, stimulate the muse, learn from the guest speaker, and get to know chapter members. I pack casual clothes, know I'll eat way too much chocolate, and plan on laughing a lot.

A one day seminar, such as GDRWA often puts on, is an entirely different experience. For that, I'll dress more professionally (pantsuit, skirt and blouse or dress), will be there to learn from the writer(s)/agent(s)/editor(s) being featured, and will only have time to truly relax and socialize at the end of the session.

Chapter conferences vary in nature from small and casual (100-150 attendees) to larger and more structured (several hundred attending). The presence of editors and/or agents always means I'll take a more professional approach to my attire and attitude, but the organizers often set the tone. Some groups (like Love Designers) just make you relax.

The National RWA Conference is a three (or more) day bombardment of writing tips, masses of people, too little sleep and too much stimulation. It's a time to be surrounded by agents, editors, famous (and not so famous) writers, librarians and booksellers. It's exhausting and exhilarating. Fun and nerve wracking. For the published, it's a time to schmooze and party, to connect with writer friends who live in other states (or countries) and talk with editors and agents. For the unpublished, it's a time to pitch to agents or editors, to learn from the speakers and get a feel for new trends in publishing. National is a business meeting. (Everyone should go to at least one National conference.)

Fan conventions or conferences have a totally different slant. I've never been to a Romantic Times Conference, but Kathryn Falk has been putting them on for years. These are primarily for fans. (RWA doesn't seem to have as many Fan Conferences or Conventions as Mystery Writers of America. MWA's largest one is Bouchercon which is most like RWA's National conference in size and attendance of agents, editors and big name authors.) The focus of a fan conference is on the reader and book collector. Authors attend for a chance to be on a panel and to promote their books. For the most part, panel topics are slanted for the reader. (MWA has started running sessions that pertain to forensics and police procedures.)

So how do I choose what to attend?

I've always based my decisions on what I hope to gain and what best fits my budget. If I want to connect with agents and editors, I go where they'll be. Reach new, potential readers? I pick a conference (writer or fan oriented) that I've never attended before and get on a panel. Relax and rekindle the writing spark? I go to a small conference, where I know the atmosphere will be relaxed, and that definitely includes the MMRWA retreat. **MMM**

"Chapter conferences vary in nature from small and casual (100-150 attendees) to larger and more structured (several hundred attending)."

Maris Soule is one of the founding members of MMRWA. Her first romance (of 25) was published in 1983. She's a two-time RITA finalist and has won or placed in several other contests. Her first mystery, THE CROWS, (a Five Star Mystery) will be released December 2007. To learn more, visit www.MarisSoule.com.

Laurie, Lorelee and Nancy's Big Apple Adventures at the 2007 PASIC Power Conference

By Nancy Gideon

Every two years, PASIC (Published Author Special Interest Chapter #143 of RWA) takes on the bright lights, big city to go where the action is in publishing for what is aptly titled its Power Conference. Lured by the idea of an Industry Reception with captive agents editors from almost every house under one roof, workshops by Power Promotions, WebCrafters and Susan Grimshaw, the romance buyer for Border and Waldenbooks, editor panels on An Author's Career from an Editor's Perspective, Harlequin/Silhouette and Covers to Die For, and agents speaking on Negotiating for Fun and Profit, Contract Coups and Pitfalls, and We Can't All be New York Times Bestselling Authors . . . Or Can We?, MMRWA authors and NYC roomies, Nancy Gideon, Laurie Kuna, and Lorelee Lillibridge headed for the Millennium Broadway Hotel at the end of March for a three-day education and edification. Here's a Q&A insider glimpse at what we discovered:

1) What made you decide to go to the PASIC Power conference?

Laurie: I had heard such great things about the conference from Lorelee, and also from my old friend Sandy Steffen, that I figured I should check it out.

Lorelee: I decided to go to PASIC again because it has so much to offer for the published author. Many of the topics in the workshops aren't addressed in other conferences. There is more access to industry people. Editors and agents are eager for the opportunity to meet with authors and look forward to the conference as much as the authors do. I felt more connected to what was going on in the industry.

Nancy: New York City. Nuff said. From what I'd heard and read, it offered everything I was looking for as a published author---the chance to speak in a less pressured atmosphere with editors and agents, the opportunity to reconnect with author friends who have grown up in the business with me professionally, workshops directed to my specific needs. And, hey, it's NEW YORK CITY!

2) What were you expecting to get out of it? Were those expectations met?

Laurie: I was expecting to make contacts with the more mainstream publishers and get industry information. And that happened!

Lorelee: I knew what to expect as I'd attended in 2005. Also, the PASIC loop kept everyone informed of the workshops and attendees. It more than met my expectations for the second time. Meeting so many published authors and talking with them was great.

Nancy: I was guardedly expecting great things. Everything was offered that I was looking for but I had no idea how assessable all of it was going to be. The opportunities to mingle were plentiful with the more relaxed venue. Unfortunately, editors and agents weren't just wandering about free range, as I'd hoped. They attended the Industry Reception, were at their workshops and available for 7 minute appointments. But



Nancy, Laurie and Lorelee tour Central Park in style.

"I decided to go to PASIC again because it has so much to offer for the published author. Many of the topics in the workshops aren't addressed in other conferences."

What is PASIC? Formed to address the unique needs and interest of our organization's published writers, PASIC is open to RWA members in good standing who are eligible for PAN. Perks of membership include a dynamic loop, website, and chat room, databases for booksellers, speakers, author/agents, Borders and Waldenbooks stores, informative quarterly newsletter, Book of Your Heart Contest and one dyn-o-mite conference. Check it out at www.pasic.net.



the one on one face time was invaluable. The appointments were easy to get. I signed up for three, expecting one and ended up with all three. You get out of it what you put into it. If you don't take something home with you, guess who's to blame? All three of us came away revitalized, personally and professionally. We made great contacts, got focused on our individual projects and goals and actually got them accomplished after we got home!



3) How did it compare to other conference?

Laurie: I'm pretty disillusioned with RWA®, and National has become for me more of a "catch up with friends from across the country" social time than anything that advances my career. Since Autumn Authors is pretty much out of business, I also don't have a good regional conference to go to (and speak at), so I thought I'd give PASIC a try.

Loralee: It is difficult to compare other conferences since it is unique in that only published authors are members. The problems and questions of pubbed authors are very different from those who are just beginning to write and submit. Topics of discussion are varied.

Nancy: I always get overwhelmed at National and tend to avoid the big squish of crowds where the roar of voices has your head throbbing. With the number of attendees limited to 50-75, the atmosphere at PASIC is so user friendly. Everyone was approachable. We had rolling office chairs to sit in at the workshops instead of those butt-numbing hard as rock things that have you squirming in minutes. The organizers did a terrific job putting things together (though I'm sure there was plenty of paddling like mad under the surface). There were plenty of breaks with free pop, juice and water and varied nibbles available in a community mix and mingle area where you could chat with friends and meet new people. Meals were on your own which was a good thing since we quickly latched onto our favorite spots for Guinness pints and pulled pork barbecue. And the entertainment value of Lisa Childs wearing coleslaw very attractively was . . . priceless. Loralee's correct in that you can't compare apples and oranges. Each conference has a purpose and a targeted attendance. I never attend workshops at National but rather use it as springboard to network and do offsite research. I love RT for the opportunity to meet fans and go to fabulous industry panels. Our Retreat is for relaxation and revitalization. And PASIC is for the author in me that needs that needs to connect with peers and targeted industry people.

4) What made it worth the price?

Laurie: Seeing Christopher Plummer and Brian Dennehy on stage in *Inherit the Wind*. Loved *The Pirate Queen*, and Liev Schreiber (*Talk Radio*) can eat crackers in my bed any time.

Loralee: For me, the round-table session where only the authors get together informally to discuss their problems and air their concerns with each other made the conference worth the price. The opportunity to meet with my editor and agent was also another major reason the trip was worthwhile and productive.

Nancy: One touch shopping. Everything you need under one elegant roof. Editors, agents, professional peers, Times Square, shopping, did I mention the Guinness and the cute little waiter at O'Lunney's Pub with the 'lovely' accent who actually called me 'dearie' and had Loralee drooling in her fish and chips? And Liev Schreiber, Christopher Plummer and Brian Dennehy close enough to reach out and grab (but then we probably would have been arrested so I wouldn't let Laurie embarrass us!) And those guys with the 300 abs doing River Dancing weren't hard on the eyes either (if Loralee could have quit crying long enough to see them!)

5) What would you do next time that you didn't do this time around (assuming you'd go again)?

Laurie: Probably attend more sessions. I'm getting to where I don't like to sit and listen to people talk, which makes me wonder why I go to these things at all . . . I'd also take more appointments, if they have them.

Loralee: I will definitely go again, since the conference is held every two years, making it a major goal to reach for. Next time, I would probably do much as I did this time, since I went early. I'd definitely try to remember to take my camera out of my purse and use it. And, maybe I'd try to stay over an extra day after the conference.

"I had to refrain from decking the chick who interrupted Nancy and her editor, then wouldn't leave the editor alone."



Nancy: Next time, and there will be a next time, I'll make more contacts BEFORE I go so I have time to get some one on one with the people I need or want to see. And I won't spend half the cocktail party hiding at the bar behind my diet pop. And I'll make sure Lorelee has comfortable shoes!

6) Any disappointments?

Laurie: Just that I haven't had any word from either of the editors or the agent I pitched to. However, knowing what a huge volume of work they have, six weeks of waiting probably isn't a long time.

Loralee: No disappointments---just needed more hours in the day.

Nancy: Missing out on the group dinners. But hey, it was Liev Schrieber, Christopher Plummer and Brian Dennehy! Not getting a chance to talk to my editor for more than just a couple of minutes (she was only at the Industry Reception). The surprising rudeness of a few of my peers was a shock as they went through a professional gathering like it was Filene's Basement on a blue light special, practically yanking editors and agents out from under you in mid-sentence. And desk clerks aren't always able to solve every problem and end world hunger. Despite quite a bit of complaining from some, we found the accommodations top notch, as good or better than many of our other conference experiences, despite the minor inconveniences and would happily go there again.

7) What was the most difficult thing you had to do?

Laurie: I had to refrain from decking the chick who interrupted Nancy and her editor, then wouldn't leave the editor alone. Then denied that she'd done anything like that when I said something about it at lunch, not knowing she was the culprit.

Loralee: Most difficult thing? Besides stepping out of my comfort zone at the Industry Reception and introducing myself to editors and publishers, having to buy new shoes for walking as I didn't bring mine. Whatever you do, bring comfortable walking shoes!!!

Nancy: Not getting to see Laurie deck the chick who interrupted me . . . Actually, the toughest thing for me is getting out of lurk mode to make the most of my opportunities, especially at the Industry Reception. Things like that quite frankly terrify me. But once I started introducing editors I knew to friends looking for editors, I relaxed enough to do some stalking of my own (politely, of course). Going to editor/agent appointments was a major palm sweater. In 20 years, I'd only gone to one and that memory was not pleasant. I felt like a brand new writer all over again. Not getting to go home with Liev Schrieber (sorry Laurie and Lorelee but I would have tossed you over in a second!)

8) Your best New York City story . . .

Laurie: I loved Bruce, the guy at the hotel theater desk who got us the tickets for *Inherit the Wind* and *Talk Radio*. Great person.

Loralee: Seeing the Naked Cowboy in person in Times Square had to be a unique story! And I loved the Hershey store and the M&M store. Yummy!

Nancy: The groping story with Mikki Nudding at the Industry Reception was pretty good. And Laurie going on about that rude writer at lunch without realizing she was the same person sitting across the table from her. Walking the NYC streets (not to be confused with street walking!) after the theater at night. Wow, that was great. Such energy in that place. Seeing a paper airplane float by the window when you're on the 24th floor. Finally getting your lost luggage delivered from the airport at 11:00 p.m. **MMM**

"Whatever you do, bring comfortable walking shoes!!!"



"Actually, the toughest thing for me is getting out of lurk mode to make the most of my opportunities, especially at the Industry Reception."

*Nancy Gideon is the author of 48 romances from series and historical to paranormal. Her latest title, **Warrior for One Night**, is an April 2007 release from Silhouette Romantic Suspense. Laurie Kuna writes historical and contemporary paranormals under her own name and as Laurie Carroll for ImaJinn Books and is currently working on a sequel to **War of Hearts**. Lorelee Lillibridge's debut novel **Accidental Hero** was a Silhouette Special Edition.*

—THE LAST WORD—

June/July: Weddings and Writer's Conferences

A very big thank you to the June/July 2007 issue's contributors:

- ♥ Gail Gaymer Martin, for providing a concise recap of her informative presentation at our May chapter meeting in Jackson. Unfortunately for those who missed the program, our chapter's micro-cassette recorder was missing in action, so we do not have a tape of the talk for our library. Fear not: Gail provided detailed handouts and those are available. You can also visit her website at www.gailmartin.com and view her "For Writers" pages for information on writing Christian romance.
- ♥ The Lazarus Connection, for providing our guilty pleasure for the month of June. (It is almost impossible for me to sit through a wedding ceremony without that "amnesiac bride" ditty running through my mind.)
- ♥ Maris Soule, for explaining the ins and outs of different types of conferences.
- ♥ Nancy Gideon, Laurie Kuna and Lorelee Lillibridge, for their insider's view of the 2007 PASIC Power Conference.

For those gearing up to attend the 2007 RWA® National Conference in July, a helpful resource is the National Conference Yahoo!Groups listserv hosted by Donna Caubarreaux. She provides conference tips of the day and a database of helpful lists and links to aid in conference planning and preparation, such as the following:

Room Mate Request, Packing List and Contact List at:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NationalConference/database>

Check out the Conference Links...
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NationalConference/links/>

Order tapes from:
<https://www.billspro.com>

To join the National Conference group, send an email message to:
NationalConference-subscribe@yahoo.com.

The next issue of the Mirror will appear in August. Join us then for Alison Hart/Jennifer Greene's take on writing the beach read in the midst of a blizzard! Until then, happy writing and have a wonderful summer.

Lana Miersen, Editor

Submission Guidelines

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

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

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

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