

The Mid-Michigan Mirror

... A Reflection of Romance



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

March 2008
Volume VI Issue 3

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—THE BOARD ROOM—

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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Looking beyond that first sale at our March meeting

By Lynette Curtis, vice-president & program chair

Join us and our guest speaker MMRWA member Lorelee Lillibridge for her talk, "So You're Published, Now What?" Lorelee will present an overview of how to deal with what comes next after making that first sale – revisions, copy edits, deadlines and learning to promote your book - while continuing to write fresh, new stories that will grab an editor's interest. If you have subjects or issues you would like Lorelee to address, email her at lilli530@yahoo.com and she'll try to incorporate them in her talk.

We'll meet on Saturday, March 15, at Famous Dave's in Grand Rapids at 11:30 a.m. Please RSVP to me as soon as possible at lynnettemichelle@yahoo.com so that I may have an accurate head count.

Directions to the meeting are on page 2. **MMM**

After many years of writing, Lorelee Lillibridge saw her first contemporary romance novel, *Accidental Hero*, published in December 2005 as a *Silhouette Special Edition*. In NEORWA's *Romancing the Novel* contest, this manuscript won First Place and was requested by the final editor judge. From there, a contract was offered and the journey to publication began. A second novel has yet to find its way to publication, but Lorelee continues to write and submit.



Lorelee Lillibridge

2008 MMRWA Meeting and Program 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 19** (Lansing): Taxes and the Writer – H&R Block Speaker
- February 16** (Kalamazoo): A Soldiers Story – Two Marine Reservists who spent time in Iraq
- March 15** (Grand Rapids): So You're Published, Now What – Lorelee Lillibridge, speaker.
- April 18-20** (St. Ives Resort, Stanwood, MI) Retreat From Harsh Reality; Cindy Dees, 2008 keynote speaker.
- May 17** (Location TBA): Agent Michelle Grajkowski of 3 Seas Literacy Agency. Members only; not open to the public.
- June 21** (Kalamazoo): Psychic from Michigan Paranormal Encounters. (Tentative—to be confirmed.)
- July:** No meeting.
- August 16** (Lansing): Borders Romance Buyer Sue Grimshaw.
- September 20** (Grand Rapids): Subplotting to Success – Lisa Childs, speaker.
- October 18** (Jackson): Write What You Love or Love What You Write – Nancy Gideon, speaker.
- November 15** (Kalamazoo): Civil War Dress Presentation – tentative.
- December** (Date and Location TBA): End of Year Business Meeting and Christmas Party.



Calendar & Reminders

MARCH

- 26: Retreat From Harsh Reality** Reservations close. Final room arrangements and full registration fee due.

APRIL

- 05: A Rally of Writers** at the Lansing Community College West Campus. Additional information is on the News & Announcements page at <http://www.arallyofwriters.com>.
- 18-20: Retreat From Harsh Reality**, St. Ives Inn & Golf Resort, Stanwood, MI. Complete information at <http://www.midmichiganrwa.org/retreat.html>.

MAY

- 17:** Members-only meeting with special guest speaker Michelle Grajkowski of 3 Seas Literary Agency.

March Meeting Directions

Famous Dave's BBQ
1501 East Beltline NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525
616-301-8300

Directions from Kalamazoo:

Merge on US-131 North. (Approx. 45.2 miles)
 Merge onto I-196 E via Exit 86A toward Lansing. (4.2 miles)
 I-196 E becomes I-96 E / MI-37 S. (.1 miles)
 Take the M-37 / E BELT LINE AVE exit- EXIT 38- toward M-44. (.3 miles)
 Turn LEFT onto MI-37 / E BELTLINE AVE NE. Continue to follow E BELTLINE AVE NE (1.4 miles)
 Make a U-TURN onto E BELTLINE AVE NE / MI-44 S. (.2 miles)
 End at Famous Dave's: 1501 E Beltline Ave NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525

Directions from Lansing/Detroit/Ann Arbor:

Take I-96 W toward GD RAPIDS (approx. 52.8 miles from Lansing)
 Take the M-44 / E BELT LINE AVE exit- EXIT 38- toward M-37 S / M-21. (.3)
 Turn RIGHT onto E BELTLINE AVE NE / MI-44 N. (1.2 miles)
 Make a U-TURN onto E BELTLINE AVE NE / MI-44 S. (.2)
 End at Famous Dave's: 1501 E Beltline Ave NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525

Directions from Grand Rapids:

I-196 E to the M-37 / E BELT LINE AVE exit- EXIT 38- toward M-44.
 Turn LEFT onto MI-37 / E BELTLINE AVE NE. Continue to follow E BELTLINE AVE NE.
 Make a U-TURN onto E BELTLINE AVE NE / MI-44 S.
 End at Famous Dave's: 1501 E Beltline Ave NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525



2008 OFFICERS**President**

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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

Chair Needed

MMRWA Angel Award

Lucy Kubash

Mystery Gifts

Roger Nelson

Newsletter Editor

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PAN Liaisons

Nancy Gideon & Lorelee Lillibridge

Perseverance Fund

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Publicity

Chair Needed

Retreat Chair

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Retreat Speaker Chair

Laurie Kuna

RWA® Pro Liaison

Tammy Kearly

Website Liaison

Lana Miersen
info@midmichiganrwa.org

The President's Two Cents Worth

By Annette Briggs



Are you feeling lucky?

That line did a lot for Clint Eastwood. As writers, we often wish each other luck or say luck figured in our own success. Yet in our hearts, we know the old chestnut "Luck is when preparation meets opportunity" is all too true.

I like that axiom. It implies we control our fortune. Our next two scheduled speakers will provide us with tools of the trade to use in this process.

For the March program, our own Lorelee Lillibridge will prep us for the "afterlife" of being an author following that first sale. To those of us, like me, who have not yet made our book length sale, this seems like hallowed ground.

Our April Retreat From Harsh Reality speaker is Cindy Dees. Yes, THE Cindy Dees who attended the Air Force Academy and graduated with honors from The University of Michigan, while still a teenager. You know, THAT Cindy Dees, the youngest pilot in United States military history and the first female to graduate Top Stick (the equivalent to the Navy's Top Gun) in her pilots' class. We're sure to pick up some exciting information and inspiration from a woman who's been to 42 countries, was detained by guards in East Berlin; was held at gunpoint by Russians, and is a survivor of a mid-air collision. Cindy has partnered in a Medieval Reenactment business, is an accomplished horsewoman, and is a professional belly dancer, as well as a wife, and mother. And somewhere in that exciting life she won the Golden Heart and managed to get 15 novels published. Bring pen and paper to retreat because Cindy will prepare us with her "Master Class in Writing" which includes her advanced tools for plotting, characterization, conflict, thematic development, settings, research, and editing.

All that preparation is going to meet a very special opportunity at our Mid-Michigan members-only extended program in May with dynamite agent Michelle Grajkowski. If you'd care to check her out, this a good site complete with submission guidelines:

<http://www.threeseaslit.com/>

Go ahead. Make your own day.

All the best,

Annette

[Note: The February program recap was unavailable at press time. It will appear in the April issue. -Ed.]

The Chapter publishes its business meeting minutes, treasurer's reports, and other legal documents online in the files section of the members-only MMRWABUSINESS list. See Policy, page 11.

It's not too late to register for Retreat 2008—spaces are still available! Join us in welcoming Guest Author Cindy Dees!

RETREAT FROM HARSH REALITY 2008 REGISTRATION

Circle the package you want, write amount in Subtotal column, add critique if desired & fill in Grand Total amount.

Package Choice (Weekend includes room & board)	Total for MMRWA Member		Total for non-MMRWA Member		Subtotal
	Standard Rm	Suite	Standard Rm	Suite	
Weekend - Single Room	\$264.00	NA	\$274.00	NA	
Weekend - Double Room (2 in a room)	\$183.00	\$210.00	\$193.00	\$220.00	
Weekend - Triple Room (3 in a room)	\$156.00	\$174.00	\$166.00	\$184.00	
Weekend - Quad Room (4 in a room)	\$144.00	\$156.00	\$154.00	\$166.00	
Sat. only with lunch	\$49.00		\$59.00		
Sat. only with lunch & dinner	\$69.00		\$79.00		
Want a Critique by a published author? (\$15.00 per critique)					
Other/Custom Package: (contact Pam for pricing)					
Golf/Additional night lodging: (contact Pam for pricing)					
GRAND TOTAL					

Select a Standard Room with two queen beds and a bath for Single through Quad occupancy. Or choose a Suite with two queens, a couch/pull-out queen, a Murphy bed, a bath, a sitting area, table & chairs and a fridge for Double through Quad occupancy. Number of suites is limited. Continental breakfast is included only when you stay at the Inn; Friday night dinner and Saturday lunch & dinner are included with the full weekend package.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone (_____) _____ Email: _____@_____

(Email to be used only as confirmation receipt of your registration and to coordinate our Desserts & Goodies)

Please print your name as you wish it to appear on your name badge:

If sharing a room, you **MUST** list your roommates:

(If you do not know who your roommates will be, assume you'll be in a single when you make your payment - or pay the deposit minimum of \$50 until you determine your room arrangements. If you pay a higher rate, we'll refund the difference if you end up with roommate(s). All payment must be received in full before Retreat or your room will not be held at our lower rates. Sorry if this inconveniences anyone.)

Do you have any special room needs or food allergies we should know about?

Make checks payable to MMRWA and send this form & your payment to:

Pam Trombley
MMRWA Retreat
6845 Forest Way
Harbor Springs, MI 49740

You may pay a minimum deposit of \$50 to hold your spot at Retreat; all registration must be paid in full by:

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, 2008

Questions? Contact Pam Trombley, (231) 526-2153, pamtrombley@charter.net or www.midmichiganrwa.org

—CHAPTER CHATTER—

February's Member News

Cynthia Arends: *Wings of Desire* is a finalist in Great Expectations.

Dawn Bartley: Currently judging a published author contest.

Tereasa Bellew: Sent a children's story to an agent. Had a full requested and an offer to revise and resubmit. Thinking of new story.

Annette Briggs: Just working like crazy on president's messages.

Nancy Gideon: Full manuscripts for 3 book paranormal requested by Pocket, proposal at Dorchester, and working on romantic suspense series.

Anne Marie King-Jakubiak: Both my husband and I are recovering from surgery, but I did get one chapter revamped.

Lucy Kubash: Wild Rose Press requested full ms for book orphaned by Triskelion's bankruptcy. Hope to hear soon. Working on revising a short story to submit to them.

Laurie Kuna: Still working on book # 4 for ImaJinn & down to the last three chapters.

Loralee Lillibridge: busy with WIP contemporary and working on PASIC 2009 conference.

Melissa Lucken: Brava Novella Finalist.

Brandy Lanaé Martindale: I have booked myself, and two other authors' book signings all the way through May at Barnes & Noble throughout Michigan. I have been asked by the B&N in Birmingham AL to come down for the Southern Writers' Festival, and so I travel in Feb. for that. I have made it into three newspapers down there, and one called to ask me to lunch while I am there. On March 14, 2008, Renee Hand, Julie McGowen and I head out to the Respite group for the United Way to do an auction with our books.

Lana Miersen: On vacation. Editing newsletter on the road.

Dana Corbit Nussio: Submitted proposal for new trilogy; fingers crossed.

Maris Soule: I've been busy promoting *The Crows*. I did two library talks in January, then participated in a Reception of Authors put on by Battle Creek's Willard Library February 12. Rotten weather kept people at home that afternoon, but the next night, at Fireside Books in Marshall, I had a nice turnout for a signing. *The Crows* will be discussed by the Soup & Suspense group at Kazoo Books on Thursday, 2/21, and I'll be bringing the stew featured in *The Crows*. In March I'll again be at Kazoo books, giving a talk on Characterization with another local writer. I also attended the Love is Murder Conference in Chicago the first weekend of February and had a great time visiting with Tess Gerritsen. (How can someone that sweet write such scary medical thrillers?) Best news is *The Crows* is in its second printing and I've been asked to submit a sequel to Five Star. Still working on my Skagway story.

Ami Weaver: My current ms *The Nanny's Secret* is a finalist in NTRWA's Great Expectations Contest in the Contemporary Series category. **MMM**



March

07 Jackie Braun Fridline,
12 Lynette Michelle Curtis
14 Cynthia Irish
22 Pam Trombley
28 Cindy Spencer-Pape

April

30 Lori Nelson Spielman

Welcome to our New Members!

The following writers joined MMRWA in January:



Meredith Cassing comes to us from Owosso. Not yet published or agented, she writes sweet, contemporary romance.

Lori Nelson Spielman resides in East Lansing. She works as a homebound teacher for the Lansing School District, and she writes contemporary romance. Lori says, "Though I've always enjoyed writing, I became more serious about it after taking a writing class eight years ago from Linda Peckham [Lansing Community College]. Since then, I wrote a YA novel, a thriller screenplay and just finished my first contemporary women's (romance?) novel. All are unpublished. ☺ I look forward to being part of MMRWA."

Kathleen Ann Tyson is a Battle Creek resident who writes paranormal romance, science fiction, adventure and thrillers. In Kathleen's words, "I have been writing since the mid-eighties, but I became serious in the last five years or so. I love reading and writing and know that it helps me stay sane. I taught one creative writing class in the fall, will teach two more this spring for the Lifelong Learning Center of Kellogg Community College, and am happy that I can help other beginning writers to get going. I found writing when I needed an activity I could engage in while I recuperated from surgeries—I've had twenty-eight and counting—and I was grateful I had a talent for it. I finished one book and I will be doing more work on the second while I shop for agents. I also have a verbal contract with Dr. Joe Burkhardt to write a book with him and a nutritionist. I am really looking forward to meetings and talking with other writers!" **MMM**



2007 I Will Write a Book Challenge

The 2007 I Will Write a Book Challenge results are in at last.

Congratulations to our 2007 winner **Margo Hoonstra**! Congratulations also go to those who entered and completed a manuscript—winners all!

Members, you have until June 30 to enter the 2008 challenge. Send the title of your WIP to Flavia Crowner and the \$5.00 entry fee to MMRWA treasurer Cathy McClain. **MMM**



—THE WRITING LIFE—

[What could be more fitting for our March issue than an account of a Celtic Adventure?]

Celtic Cruise – August 10-21, 2007

By Lorelee Lillibridge (and Laurie Kuna)



Thank heaven for AlphaSmarts, notes and photos, because our eleven-day adventure in the Celtic Lands was so crammed with such exciting experiences, remembering each one would be impossible. That's why Laurie will add her comments to this overview and, hopefully, we'll pique your interest enough to try an adventure of your own.

We flew from Atlanta to Edinburgh, Scotland, then were bussed to a downtown hotel to wait until time to board the *M.S. Andrea* for our cruise. With time to kill, we joined forces with a couple from Illinois to see Edinburgh Castle. The walk in the rain was an experience in itself, since I opted to wait at the bottom of the climb instead. With no raingear and the heavens unleashing every cloudburst possible, I looked so much like a soggy street-beggar, one dear passer-by offered me her shopping bag for my head.

When finally we were transferred to the dock, there in all its glory was our ship with the Michigan State University flag flying proudly from the mast. Go Green!

Our first port of call was Kirkwall, Orkney Islands where we visited the Ring of Brodgar. The stone monoliths there were raised more than 3,500 years ago and the Standing Stones of Stenness have been there for 3,100 years. More amazing history to experience as we walked through the 5,000 year-old-settlement of Skara Brae. And yes, it rained there, too.

We docked the next day at the Isle of Skye, but the captain decided against tendering us ashore in the Zodiacs since lots of rain and high winds made the feat too dangerous. We attended a lecture on Celtic music on board the ship and had the rest of the day to spend in the lounge writing.

The Isle of Mull and Tobermory were next, and Laurie amused herself by singing "It's a Long Way to Tobermory" as she hiked up the dock to the bus. The bus took us to a ferry that crossed over to Iona, the birthplace of Scottish Christianity and later the burial place of Duncan and Macbeth. The Abbey and the grounds were a bit of a walk from the ferry landing, but our guide, Allen, gave us an excellent commentary. And he sang beautifully, too.

With changed schedules due to the weather, our stop in Holyhead, Wales, was brief and viewing the castle was done on the run. I did manage to have my photo taken with one of the castle residents. After a traditional Welsh noon meal, we walked to St. Mary's Church for an entertaining concert by a male Welsh Choir. Laurie found it interesting that the choir performed a Spiritual and likened it to listening to the Mormon Tabernacle Choir sing the Japanese National Anthem in Japanese. All the notes were precisely rendered, but it lost something in the translation.

A ride through the lush, green Welsh countryside gave me a new concept of Wales. I hadn't expected it to be so picturesque, and I've labeled it as a place I'd like to revisit. Especially the castles, Laurie



*Sharing a pint in Dublin, Ireland
(Laurie, 2nd from left, Lorelee far right)*



*Laurie at the Standing Stones of Stenne
in Kirkwall*





Loralee at Blarney Castle, Cork, Ireland



Laurie and friends in Fowey, Cornwall, England



Loralee at the D-Day Monument Normandy, France

adds.

After a night at sea that gave a whole new meaning to rock and roll, we docked in Dublin, Ireland's capital. Our little cabin was bombarded during the night with our personal items flying off the dresser and a humidifier sliding across the floor. Rock-a-bye-baby had nothing on Laurie and me as we tried to stay in our bunks. We were extremely glad to set foot on Irish soil. So happy, in fact, that I shed real tears when I got off the bus. To visit Ireland was a dream come true for me. Our time there was much too short. We visited St. Patrick's Cathedral, saw the wondrous *Book of Kells* at Trinity College, visited the library, then later lunched and shopped on Dawson Street. And it actually cleared up enough that we didn't have to run from shop to shop (very much) to stay dry. On our shopping trip, Loralee found humorous Irish postcards that had, of all things, a Michigan license plate in the lower corner. I bought several to send home to friends. For the record, it was the 1976 plate, the one that resembles the American flag. Just the top of the plate, where "Michigan" is visible, is in the picture. Loralee has a sharp eye.

Cork was an interesting city where we visited the University College and admired the Honan Chapel, built in 1915. After lunch, a short drive took us to Blarney to view the 15th-century castle. The most adventurous of our group climbed to the top to kiss the legendary Blarney Stone. I stood at the bottom and watched.

We arrived in Fowey, England on the craggy coastline of Cornwall. Due to excessive high winds, we were tendered to Albert's Quay in the rain. Laurie and I opted to skip the guided excursion and explore on our own. Another couple, Jay and Jean, joined us and after I purchased a rain hat, we spent a delightful day popping in and out of tiny shops, having a wonderful lunch with locals at the Ship's Inn – one of the two oldest buildings on the waterfront-built in 1570. The original owner was a member of the English group that plotted to defeat the Spanish Armada.

High winds were determined to control our schedule, but we finally docked in St-Malo, France, the next day. The spectacular medieval abbey of Mont-St-Michel was the attraction for the day. Narrow lanes of the village lead up to the abbey where the Archangel Michael appeared in a vision in the eighth century. We had free time to explore St-Malo on our own and with four other women from various universities, we rambled, explored, and enjoyed drinks at an outdoor café. Laurie climbed the 300+ steps up to the abbey, and they were worth every sore muscle. The place beggars description. So, Laurie took lots of pictures.

Nothing on our trip was more emotional than our visit to Honfleur, France, and the Normandy Beaches, where Allied forces landed on D-Day, June 6, 1944 and began the liberation of Western Europe. Later, walking through the American Military Cemetery of St-Lauren, France, and among the sea of white marble crosses honoring all who gave their lives, some of us were finally able to say a silent "thank-you." Two gentlemen on our tour, both World War II veterans, laid a wreath at the marker of those unnamed fallen heroes as "Taps" played and people stood quietly with their own thoughts and memories.

The bus trip from Honfleur to Paris the next morning was the final leg of our adventure. We were exhilarated from all we had experienced, exhausted from the many steps we had walked, and excited that we'd made so many new friends. The trip was too short, but isn't every journey of our dreams? Would we go back again? Absolutely, but next time, I'm packing more rain gear. **MMM**

[If you're still debating whether or not to go to Retreat or to RWA® National, read on. -Ed.]

To Go or Not to Go

By *Melissa Ford Lucken*

It's that time of year again, time to think about whether or not to go to which conferences for what reason. Sometimes the decision is easy, sometimes not.

I've been to lots of conferences. Maybe more than I want to admit. But over the years I've learned a few things.

Know what to expect. Some excitement, some disappointment. No big deal. Rome wasn't built in a day. Ditto a writing career.

Know what not to expect. See above.

Know what you'll remember. Having an awesome time catching up with friends, meeting new people all over the place, and generally have a fast-forward good time.

Know what you won't. When someone gives you a business card, write something on the back to remind yourself who/what/when/why. You think you'll remember what you were talking about with Ms. Lunch Companion, but...

Know something about the place before you arrive. That way you'll be able to do at least one non-writing related thing, something you wouldn't be able to do at home. Go to a museum, walk through a historic neighborhood, and visit a park. You get the idea.

Last thing; let other people know you're going.

I know that doesn't help much with the ultimate decision – to go or not to go – but it does give you something to think about once you get there. If you go, that is. **MMM**

In addition to being an author, MMRWA member Melissa Ford Lucken is a wife and mother of two boys, a master level writing tutor at Lansing Community College, and a frequent workshop presenter. A member of Romance Writers of America® since 1991, Ford is a former RWA® Golden Heart nominee. She also writes under the pen name Isabelle Drake. For information on her latest releases, visit her online at www.isabelledrake.com.



Melissa Ford Lucken

Know something about the place before you arrive. That way you'll be able to do at least one non-writing related thing, something you wouldn't be able to do at home.



—THE LAST WORD—



Letter to the Editor

Re: January Program Recap "Taxes and the Writer"

I didn't attend the January meeting, and I'm not a CPA (though the heroine in my book *THE CROWS* is), but in the February issue of the *Mirror*, there was one statement in the recap of that meeting that I've learned is not true. The statement: that the IRS rule ["the hobby rule"] is that you have to make a profit three out of the five years to be considered a legitimate business. If that were true, GM, Ford and many companies would have been deemed illegitimate businesses years ago.

What a writer must show, if she or he wishes to file a Schedule C and claim business losses, is that writing, for that person, is a business not a hobby and that the writer is striving, at all times, to make a profit.

To do this, the writer must keep good records. This is one time when rejection letters are beneficial. They prove you are trying to sell your stories. Also make copies of all letters sent to agents and editors. (More proof.) If the writer plans on deducting meals, keep those bills and write on them exactly what was going on (i.e., MMRWA meeting with 18 writers present and two Marine speakers, or took CPA to lunch to pick his brain, etc.). If you want to deduct mileage, either log in your starting odometer reading and final (after the trip) or look up the mileage on MapQuest and use that. Either way, you need to have a record of where you went and why, and you can't include side trips to go clothes shopping (unless maybe you're a Golden Heart finalist and are buying a dress/tux for the RWA® Award ceremony).

If you do claim expenses for more than the "IRS-allowed" two years of losses, you must believe (yourself) that your writing is a business and not a hobby. Your attitude is the most important aspect of declaring a loss because there is the possibility you could be audited. And if you are, go to the audit with records in hand and that attitude wrapped around you. Show them you've been trying your best to make a profit: that you've joined the professional groups that will help you, attended meetings where you can gain expertise, entered contests, submitted proposals (or queries) and taken classes.

When I have a year where I haven't made money (and there have been many, and more than 2 out of 5) I don't deduct all of the expenses that I could. I always have some as backup in case I am audited and certain expenses are thrown out. Also, I think that shows the IRS that you're trying to be reasonable. You aren't trying to get away with anything; you're simply a business person, trying to make a profit.

Maris Soule
Via Email

[Many thanks to Maris for clarifying the exception to the "hobby rule" for authors. –Ed.]

What a writer must show, if she or he wishes to file a Schedule C and claim business losses, is that writing, for that person, is a business not a hobby and that the writer is striving, at all times, to make a profit.



The Peripatetic Editor Returns



I'm on my way home from Florida as I write this note on my "bouncing" Neo. The interstate highways are such a mess of cracks, bumps and potholes that they make touch-typing a major challenge. We could have stayed down south longer and returned in warmer weather, but we promised our granddaughter that we would come home for her little brother's first birthday party on March 8. We'll arrive in Michigan in time for the party and for the nasty winter cold. Oh, the sacrifices one makes for family. ☺

Speaking of sacrifices one makes for family, I believe there ought to be a rule in force to the effect that writers should always vacation with other writers. I felt a twinge (make that a deep, wrenching stab) of envy when I read Lorelee's (and Laurie's) account of their Celtic adventure. It was in sharp contrast to the trip I took to Ireland in 2005 with my dh and another couple—all three of them are avid golfers and were determined to golf on the Emerald Isle. All three are non-writers.

Here is a taste of how "we" chose the places to visit. In Dublin, I suggested we go to see The Book of Kells. My dh and his buddy wanted to tour the Guinness brewery. To be democratic, we took a vote. The result was three to one in favor of—now, this is going to shock you—touring the Guinness brewery. For an avowed wino such as I am, the tour was a bore and the brew was bitter. I took one swallow, shuddered from my scalp to my toenails, and I passed my pint to my dh—no doubt the way he planned it. I never did get to see The Book of Kells.

Getting to do what interests me instead of pretending to enjoy what interests others is one of the reasons I look forward to our spring retreat and to RWA®'s annual national conference. Writers (who are wise enough to leave the dh or significant other at home) travel with other writers, room with other writers, and can stay out with other writers as late as they want—or are able. <g> We sample the local cuisine, like Lucky Chang's in New Orleans, instead of playing it safe by dining in a predictable chain restaurant. Writers understand other writers; we speak the same language, and we think other writers are all perfectly sane. We think nothing of piling into a rental car and driving from Reno to Tahoe to Virginia City so another writer can do research for a contracted book. We couldn't very well let her go alone, could we? What are friends for, if not to lend support? (An unexpected bonus: I found an absolutely kick-butt cowgirl hat in Virginia City!)

I am so looking forward to San Francisco! Before I go, I'll be sure to keep Melissa's conference advice in mind. Thanks for sharing, Melissa.

Thanks also to Lorelee and Laurie for the travelogue and photos, and to Annette for her always inspiring message.

I hope to see many of you at the March meeting in Grand Rapids, and I'm keeping my fingers crossed for good driving weather.

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

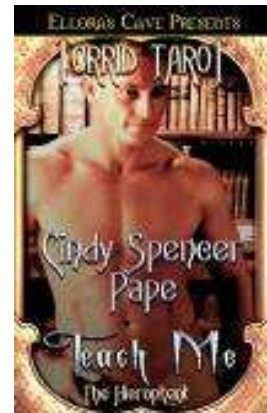
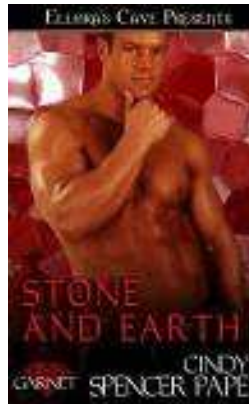


Members' Current and Upcoming Releases – Spring 2008

Jackie Braun, *Expecting a Miracle*, Harlequin Romance, April 2008.

Isabelle Drake, *Cowboy for Hire*, Cerridwen Press, TBA; *Hard Fall*, Ellora's Cave, TBA

Cindy Spencer Pape, *Stone and Earth* (Garnet), Ellora's Cave, TBA; *Teach Me* (Torrid Tarot Novel), [Ellora's Cave](#), March 2008.



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