

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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—THE BOARD ROOM—

Tax Strategies for Writers

March 20, 2010
MMRWA Meeting Topic

by Margo Hoornstra
Vice President/Publicity Chair

Tax Strategies for Writers, presented by Bruce Meyers, Certified Public Accountant with the Hantz Financial Group, is the topic for the March 20, 2010 MMRWA meeting which will be held at La Seniorita's Restaurant in Lansing.

Completing and filing individual income tax forms is one item all of us need to cross off our personal to do lists by April 15th of each year. For authors and artists, allowable deductions and rules, particularly as they pertain to the IRS hobby versus business regulations, can be different and confusing.

Taking part in the March 20 meeting will help make this task somewhat easier for MMRWA members and guests.

The program itself will be brief in order to allow plenty of time for a question and answer session.

Bring your income tax questions and plan to join us on Saturday, March 20 at La Seniorita's Restaurant, 2706 Lake Lansing Road, Lansing, Michigan beginning at 11:30 AM.

Bruce Meyers is a graduate of Michigan State University with both a Bachelor of Arts in Accounting and a Master of Business Administration. Bruce began his career in 1995 as a tax consultant with Ernst & Young LLP and became a Certified Public Accountant in 1997. Bruce's professional experience also includes time as a management consultant helping Fortune 500 companies install and/or upgrade their accounting systems.

MMRWA 2010 MEETING SCHEDULE

January No chapter meeting. The Board will meet on January 9, with a snow date of January 16.

February 20

Grand Rapids – Member critique

March 20

Lansing – Tax Strategies for Writers
Speaker: Bruce Meyers
Hantz Financial Group

April 16th – 18th

Kalamazoo – Retreat From Harsh Reality will be held at Yarrow Golf and Conference Resort in Augusta, MI. Speaker will be Jo Ann Ferguson.

May 15

Jackson – Positivity

June 19

Grand Rapids – Member critique

July

– **No Meeting**

August 21

Lansing – Query Letter Idol

September 18

Kalamazoo – How to Access the Internet

October 16

Jackson – Rebounding Panel

November 20

Grand Rapids – Member critique

December 11

Lansing – End-of-Year Business Meeting and Christmas Party

March Meeting Directions

Directions to:

**La Señorita
Mexican Restaurant
2706 Lake Lansing Rd.
Lansing, Michigan
Phone: 517-485-0166**



From the North (Mt. Pleasant): Take US-127S to Lake Lansing Road Exit #79 and get into the exit ramp's middle turn lane. At the traffic light at the end of the exit ramp, turn RIGHT onto Lake Lansing Road. Get into the left turn lane immediately and turn LEFT at the Kerry Street traffic light (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-127N / I-496N. Take Exit 8, 127N toward Flint/Clare to Lake Lansing Road Exit #79. From the exit ramp, 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-96E to merge onto I-69E via Exit #89 toward Flint/Clare. Go 10 miles. Merge onto US-127S via Exit #89A toward E. Lansing. Go 3.2 miles to Lake Lansing Road Exit #79 and get into the exit ramp's middle turn lane. At the traffic light at the end of the exit ramp, turn RIGHT onto Lake Lansing Road. Get into the left turn lane immediately and turn LEFT at the Kerry Street traffic light (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-127N / I-496N via Exit #106B toward Downtown Lansing. Take Exit 8, 127N toward Flint/Clare to the Lake Lansing Road Exit #79. From the exit ramp, 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.

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I Will Write a Book/Write for the Money
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Florence Price

MMRWA Angel Award
Laurie Kuna

Mystery Gifts
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The President's Corner

By Lucy Kubash

Imagine it's the middle of May. It's springtime-warm on the campus of Western Michigan University, and you've just arrived for the weekend. You find the dorm where you'll be staying and haul your bags (including your own towels and some bedding) up several flights of stairs. The room is spare, the bed hard, and



there is no air-conditioning. There is a single fan, although it's impossible to direct it toward the bed, but you really don't mind because you don't plan on spending much time in your room. Breakfast is donuts brought in by someone's early run to Dunkin', and you must go out for meals, but it isn't about the food (you'll probably consume way too many carbs and chocolate this weekend). You've come for the camaraderie and the opportunity to hang out with other writers. For the chance to just do nothing but think and talk about writing for an entire weekend. No need to try and impress anyone. Heck, you can even wear your sweats the whole time. It's heaven.

Those were the early years of Retreat from Harsh Reality, and anyone who attended Retreat back then remembers the pop cans we cashed in to have extra money in the chapter account. Now here we are ready to celebrate 25 years, and how far we've come. We've moved our location a few times, and the beds have gotten a lot better. Meals are provided on site and we've tried to reduce those carbs. But thank goodness what makes Retreat the special weekend it is has not changed. It's still an opportunity to relax, hang out with other writers, talk writing and write and simply have a great time. And you can still find plenty of chocolate!

I hope many of us will be able to attend retreat this year. Please bring your memories of past retreats to share and be ready to have a fantastic weekend.

Happy Writing!

Lucy

February Meeting Recap Member Critique Sessions

By Alyssa Marble

At the February meeting, the Chapter held organized group critique sessions in which pre-published authors were paired with published authors. Members were asked to submit a maximum of ten (10) pages to be critiqued. The chapter's published authors brought a wealth of tips, tricks and how-to's to the table. More importantly, they brought encouragement and experience. Writing is a solitary endeavor, but every writer needs a support system to tell them when a scene is brilliant and when it needs work. "Can't see the forest for the trees" is a well-used cliché—for good reason, as it's often true. A solitary writer becomes immersed in their story. Sometimes a writer needs a critique partner to tell them what their strengths and weaknesses are. A writer can benefit from a fresh view, objectivity and advice. Here is what some of our members gained from their critique experiences at the February meeting:

Karen Holthorp: I had a very positive experience from Barb and Margo's critique. I was pleased that they liked my first ten pages so well that they said they'd definitely buy the book and wondered why I wasn't published yet. Long process. Anyway what I became more aware of was I used too many "names" instead of he/she and needed to be more specific with words and not vague. Also, I became aware of wordiness and to use more dialogue instead of description. All in all it was a great learning experience and has helped me focus on those things so I can catch them as I write now instead of having to go back through and reread and revise so much.

Florence Price: Although I was extremely nervous, my "critique" experience during the February meeting was a good one. I was assigned to Maris Soule, and Diane Burton sat in also. Both ladies were very helpful and encouraging. They were able to pinpoint some of the problems I've been having with POV, pacing, dialogue and outlining. I received a plethora of advice and we had some time to do a brainstorming session as well. This helped me to unravel the direction my story was going in, and opened up some new "what ifs" for my characters. When I asked Maris, "But don't you think some of it's too weird?" She replied, smiling wisely, "Well...weird is good, right?" Now that's what I'm talkin' about. ☺



Donna Garrison: I have been struggling because my WIP resides in no man's land. I cross too many lines in the Christian/Inspirational guidelines, yet the faith and faith struggles of the hero/heroine are an integral part of the story. I received commiseration and encouragement that I should write my story my way and let things work themselves out later in terms of who might publish it.

Conflict, or the lack there of, was another area of concern for me. After talking through some other sections of the WIP, Lucy helped me see that there is plenty of opportunity for conflict. Now I need to take the momentum from the critique and use it to push ahead. I have learned many skills and techniques from MMRWA critiques and my awesome critique group, but what I find most useful is always the surge of energy that helps me refocus and make the time to write.

Alyssa Marble: The ten pages I chose were difficult to critique as it was the final climax scene and involved a lot of characters. As I read it aloud, I realized there were so many "he/she's" it was difficult to determine who was speaking—even for me, and I wrote it! Laurie Kuna and Lorelee Lillibridge also helped me to see that I'm spatially challenged—that is to say, my description of the setting and where each character was in relation to each other was not detailed enough. Finally, Laurie and Lorelee helped me brainstorm some plot/character motivation problems. I couldn't figure out why my characters were/weren't doing certain things. Ultimately, their suggestions caused me to take a closer look at my characters and their GMC's. Overall, a wonderful experience I can't wait to repeat!

Annette Briggs: I really liked the Mid-Michigan February program. Talented Nancy Gideon, author of a gazillion sold books was my critique partner. Elizabeth Fortin, creator of the Mid-Michigan logo, was also on hand to add her advice. Their suggestions made sense and I've already used them to improve my manuscript. Let's do it again.

DON'T DELAY!!!

IT'S TIME TO SIGN UP FOR THE RETREAT FROM HARSH REALITY 2010!!!!

*By Julie McMullen
Retreat Chair*

APRIL 16-18, 2010

At the beautiful Yarrow Golf & Conference Resort in Augusta, Michigan

By the time this issue of the Mid-Michigan Mirror is published, only four short weeks will remain before our annual Retreat From Harsh Reality. This weekend getaway is where we writers can rejuvenate our spirits and enjoy the camaraderie of other like-minded people who can't stop the inexorable drive to put pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard in this computer age!). Spending time with individuals who have that same desire to see their name splashed across the cover of a best-selling novel is one way to re-establish our goals and gain new knowledge to help us on our writing journey. Not to mention we'll gain reaffirmation that we're not crazy just because we feel we must channel those voices and characters running around inside our heads while contorting their lives all in the name of telling a good story.

This year, our speaker is **Jo Ann Ferguson**, prolific author and writer extraordinaire. She lives the life I aspire to have – author of over 80 published novels that have been sold on all continents except Antarctica (and I have to believe that at least some of her books has been read on that frozen tundra -- how else can we explain global warming?). She writes in multiple genres and goes by several aliases, I mean pseudonyms.

Not only are her books a delight to read, Jo Ann is an enchanting person herself. I truly believe her sessions "I Second That Emotion" and "Taming the *&^% Query and Synopsis" will contain pearls of wisdom for writers in all stages of their writing journey. And to boot, her entertaining speaking style will keep us in good spirits as well. We are truly fortunate to have such an author of Jo Ann's caliber and experience to speak at our Retreat From Harsh Reality.

As a reminder, registration for Retreat From Harsh Reality is now open to the public as well as our chapter members. Registration closes March 31st. You may send in a deposit of \$50 to hold your space, with the balance due at the end of March. Brochures and registration forms are included with this newsletter and may also be downloaded from our website at www.midmichiganrwa.org. Just click on the Retreat links.

We have an assortment of packages to fit all budgets and time schedules, ranging from the full weekend to Saturday only programs. Custom packages can also be arranged by contacting me for details. This year package features an improved hot breakfast for all Retreat attendees and a mid-morning snack on Saturday.

We'll have our ever-popular customary events – Muse Sessions, the Author Signing and Book Sale, the Book Raffle, the Book Basket Auctions, Toot Your Own Horn – along with some new ones – the Garage Sale and a special presentation by our guest speaker on the novelization of the *Thomas Kinkadee's The Christmas Cottage*.

AUTHOR SIGNING AND BOOK SALE: Kazoo Books is our new bookseller this year and we are very fortunate to have a local business handling our Book Sale and Author Signing. If you are a published author and plan to sign at Retreat, please send me your information as soon as possible. Kazoo Books also resells used books, so if you have an interest in a particular subject or time period in history, let me know. If there are specific writing reference books that you cannot live without, please send me your requests.

GARAGE SALE: It's time to dust off those writing reference books that you found useful at one time but no longer use and bring them to the Garage Sale. Tereasa Bellew came up with this great idea and has graciously offered to organize this new event. Ten percent of the sales proceeds will go to the Kalamazoo YWCA Assault Shelter, and the rest will go to the person selling their books. So this is a great opportunity to clear your bookshelves and earn some pin money as well.

TOOT YOUR OWN HORN: What writing achievements can you claim over the past year? No matter how big or how small, we'd love to celebrate them! Please send your information to Florence Price. If you have a First Sale, please send details to Florence.

I look forward to seeing all of you at Retreat! If you have any questions, please email me at retreat@midmichiganrwa.org.

MID-MICHIGAN'S RETREAT FROM HARSH REALITY!

Yarrow Golf & Conference Resort
10499 North 48th St.
Augusta, MI 49012
1-800-563-4397



TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF WRITING MAGIC!

The Retreat

An annual event since 1985, the Retreat begins Friday evening and ends Sunday at noon. Who can resist a weekend in a beautiful setting, away from spouses, kids, traffic, and the rigors of day-to-day life in the "Real World," coupled with the chance to talk "shop" with other authors and aspiring authors? Attire is sweatshirts-and-jeans casual, and one-on-one conversation with the featured speaker is not only allowed, it's encouraged! Attendees welcome this rare opportunity to relax and talk writing, to learn and to share.

The Site - A fabulous place to relax and be inspired!

This year's Retreat From Harsh Reality is at the Yarrow Golf & Conference Resort in Augusta, Michigan. Yarrow is the perfect setting to kick back, open your mind, and reconnect with your muse. Magnificent scenery and unparalleled hospitality make Yarrow the place to rest, relax and renew your creativity.

OUR GUEST SPEAKER: JO ANN FERGUSON!

Award-winning author **Jo Ann Ferguson** has a split writing personality, each with its own pseudonym. She is the author of numerous best-selling historical novels, traditional and mystery Regency stories, paranormal novels, and contemporary mystery novels. Her most recent and upcoming releases include *Gentleman's Master* (Jo Ann Ferguson/ ImaJinn), *Dreamseeker* (J.A. Ferguson/ImaJinn), *Sea Wraith* (Jocelyn Kelly/ImaJinn), and *Time to Share* (Jo Ann Brown/Guidepost Books). Over 80 of her titles have been published by Tudor, Ballantine, Zebra, Harper, Warner and Thorndike. Her books have been translated into almost a dozen languages and are sold on every continent except Antarctica.



The Sessions:

TAMING THE *&^% SYNOPSIS AND QUERY LETTER: Do you hate writing synopses and wonder if they're a torture invented to test writers on their way to publication? Learn ways to make your synopsis work for you. It can be a road map to writing your manuscript. But first you need to devise a high concept and a pitch for your manuscript . . . which you can then use for both your synopsis and an intriguing query letter.

I SECOND THAT EMOTION: Write what you know is the basic advice all writers receive. We'll focus on *how* to write what you know about your own emotions and how to use them to add life and emotional depth to your characters. You'll participate in developing words that perfectly describe the emotions that will make a reader laugh or cry.

RETREAT SCHEDULE

FRIDAY:

6-7:30 p.m.	Registration
6:30-7:30	Dinner
7:30-8:00	Dessert - Chocolate Anyone?
8:00-9:00	Official Welcome & Ice Breaker
9:00 - ?	Bed, relaxation, private critiques...

SATURDAY:

7-9:00 a.m.	Breakfast
8:00-8:45	Registration
8:45-9:00	Welcome
9:00-10:45	Jo Ann Ferguson - "Taming the *&^% Synopsis and Query Letter"
11:00-11:15	MMRWA Angel Award
11:15-11:30	Twenty-five Years of Retreat: A Look Back at all the memories
11:30-12:00	PAN Meeting for published authors; Free Time for all others
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-2:00	Book Sale & Autographing
2:00-3:30	Jo Ann Ferguson - "I Second That Emotion"
4:00-4:30	PRO Pin Recognition, Toot Your Own Horn, Champagne Celebration for First Sales
4:30-6:00	Book Basket Raffle, Silent & Live Auctions (proceeds go to YWCA Domestic Assault Program)
6:00-7:00	Dinner
7:00-9:00	Special Presentation: Jo Ann Ferguson: Novelization of Thomas Kinkade's The Christmas Cottage ; Muse Sessions; or Time on your own

SUNDAY:

7-9:00 a.m.	Breakfast
9:00-9:30	Chapter Meeting
9:30-11:00	Romance/Biz Round Table with Jo Ann Ferguson
11:00-12:00	Retreat Wrap-Up
12:00	Adjournment

***All activities are slated to be held in the Main Lodge in the Dogwood Room. Meals will be held in the Evergreen Dining Room, also at the Main Lodge.

Things to Remember:

- **Registration will be open through March 31, 2010. You may make a minimum deposit of \$50 to hold your spot with the balance due by March 31.** Registrations may be accepted after March 31st if spaces remain. Please contact Julie at retreat@midmichiganrwa.org to verify availability and pricing. **Registration closes on Wednesday, March 31, 2010** - No refunds can be made after that date. Final room arrangements are due by March 31st.
- **Published Author Critiques:** MMRWA's published writers are again offering one-on-one critiques for only \$15.00. For this amount, you will receive an in-depth critique of your first fifty pages and your synopsis, either in person at the Retreat, by phone or by mail. Questions? Contact **Dawn Bartley** at (269) 381-4084 or members@midmichiganrwa.org or see our website.
- **Optional Saturday Muse Sessions:** Bring your own work in progress to share with other writers and get great feedback and suggestions for improvement. We suggest you focus on your main characters, your plot/timeline or your 5-pages synopsis and/or query letter for a small group brainstorming session. Detailed information will be mailed out with your pre-Retreat packet.
- **Desserts and goodies:** Bring your favorite dessert to share Friday night!
- **Want to relax an extra day or play golf on a championship course?** Contact Julie at retreat@midmichiganrwa.org for course and additional lodging pricing. These reservations must be paid in full by the Retreat deadline.

Confirmation via email will be sent immediately upon receipt of your registration form. Directions and additional pre-Retreat information will be sent two weeks before Retreat. To reserve a space, you may send a *partial payment* but **full payment must be received by 3/31**. One night stays can be arranged. **Please notify me if you require special room arrangements or have special dietary needs.** Questions? Contact Julie at retreat@midmichiganrwa.org or visit our website at www.midmichiganrwa.org.

RETREAT FROM HARSH REALITY 2010 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
Weekend - Double Occupancy (2 persons per room)	\$180.00	\$190.00	
Weekend - Single Occupancy	\$265.00	\$275.00	
Sat. only with breakfast & lunch	\$65.00	\$75.00	
Sat. only with breakfast, lunch & dinner	\$85.00	\$95.00	
Want a Critique by a published author? \$15.00 per critique			
Other/Custom Package: (contact Julie for pricing at retreat@midmichiganrwa.org)			
GRAND TOTAL			

Each Standard Room has two double beds and a bath for either a Single or Double occupancy. Friday night dinner and Saturday breakfast, lunch & dinner and Sunday breakfast are included with the full weekend package.

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone (_____) _____
 Email: _____

(Email will be used only to confirm receipt of your registration and for 2010 Retreat-related information.)

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

If sharing a room, you **MUST** list your roommate (limit two people per room please):

(If you do not know who your roommate 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 a roommate. We have a block of 25 rooms reserved until the March 31st deadline. All payments 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:

**MMRWA Retreat
 P.O. Box 2725
 Kalamazoo, MI 49003-2725**

You may pay a minimum deposit of \$50 to hold your spot at Retreat.

All registration must be paid in full by:

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31, 2010

Questions? Contact Julie at retreat@midmichiganrwa.org

RETREAT DONATIONS NEEDED

As many of our members know, chapter funds are limited for 2010. This includes funds for our annual Retreat From Harsh Reality. In order to provide the best program we can for our members, we are asking that chapter members donate items for use at Retreat. Please bring your donations to the March chapter meeting in Lansing. Suggested items include:

- Name badge wallets from previous years
**These are particularly needed!
- Plastic bags for distributing promotional items
- Baskets / Bins to hold items for auction
- Pens / Pencils
- Candy / Snacks for tables

Items are needed to fill baskets for the silent and live auction. This may also include items such as candles, notebooks, bookmarks, chocolate or items for a theme basket. As a reminder, all silent and live auction proceeds will be donated to the YWCA Domestic Assault Program.

Please bring your favorite dessert or goodie for Friday night. Chocolate is always a favorite!

Additionally, as in past years, volunteers are needed to ensure the Retreat runs smoothly. If you would like to assist with planning and directing programs at Retreat, please contact Julie McMullen at retreat@midmichiganrwa.org.

RETREAT GARAGE SALE

Spring clean your bookshelves and make room for more books!

Retreat is only weeks away and this year along with our fabulous book sale; we're having a Garage Sale table. We thought retreat would be a great opportunity for anyone with reference books, how-to's, or any other writing related book(s) you no longer use or want to be sold in garage sale fashion.

You bring the books, you keep the cash!

No doubt many of us have purchased books for one reason or another we no longer need or use. Perhaps the books are taking up space in your office.

If you have any books you'd like to sell, bring them to retreat and check in with Teresa Bellew. You decide the selling price, you keep the cash. All that's required is for 10% to be donated to our Domestic shelter fund.

*We do not keep any inventory – what doesn't sell, owner takes home. This is a cash-only sale.



The Fictive Dream

by *Melissa Ford Lucken*

The Draw of Fiction: Emotional Human Connection

“Literature offers feeling for which we do not have to pay. It allows us to love, condemn, condone, hope, dread, and hate without any of the risks those feelings ordinarily involve, for even good feelings—intimacy, power, speed, drunkenness, passion—have consequences, and powerful feelings may risk powerful consequences.”ⁱ For many readers this is the draw of fiction—the vicarious emotional experience. Not only does fiction offer the reader the opportunity to select, via book selection, which emotion to feel—love, hate, fear, courage, jealousy—as Burroway points out fiction offers the reader the opportunity to feel intensely without doing any more than turning a page. Yet fiction does more than allow a reader to feel; it allows the reader to connect, to search for an understanding or meaning from life and life’s events. “...the value of great fiction ...is not just that it broadens our knowledge of people and places, but also that it helps us to know what we believe, reinforces those qualities that are noblest in us, leads us to feel uneasy about our faults and limitations.”ⁱⁱ The key to filling the human need to explore life and connect with others is by tapping into reader intellect and emotion.



The Importance of Details on Reader Response: Intellect vs. Emotion

As any magician knows, details draw attention. Details aid in the illusion. And as a magician controls the audience’s attention by way of carefully placed details, the writer can also use detail to direct reader attention and control reader response. The audience member, as does the reader, goes along with the illusion knowingly, asking in return the delivery of a promise. The magician uses sleight of hand to deliver that promise; the writer uses description.

Description is accomplished by providing details; however, to be effective details must be carefully selected and effectively placed. The writer must focus on the goal of the detail and determine the best details accordingly. Intellectuality is one concern. A detail is “...significant if it also conveys an idea or a judgment or both.”ⁱⁱⁱ This is not to say that the writer should use details to insert their own judgment but to offer details in such a way as to allow the reader the opportunity to make a judgment. Burroway clarifies for writers how to effectively weave intellect and emotion. “Much of what you (the writer) mean will be an abstraction or a judgment—*love requires trust, children can be cruel*. But if you write in abstractions or judgments, you are writing an essay, whereas if you let us use our senses and form our own interpretations, we will be involved as participants in a real way.” Emotionality is another concern when selecting and placing details. “A detail is ‘definite’ and ‘concrete’ when it appeals to the senses. It should be seen, heard, smelled, tasted, or touched.”^{iv} Consequently, if the writer wants the reader to be engaged both intellectually and emotionally, sensory details are essential.

ⁱ Burroway, Janet. *Writing Fiction*. New York: Longman, 2003, p 74.

ⁱⁱ Gardener, John. *The Art of Fiction*. New York: Vintage Books, 1983, p 31.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, p 76.

^{iv} *Ibid.*, p 76.

The Fictive Dream: More Than Descriptive Detail

“Fiction does its work by creating a dream in the reader’s mind.”^v Detail is the basis of that dream. “...in good fiction, it’s physical detail that pulls us into the story, makes us believe or forget not to believe or accept the lie even as we laugh at it.”^{vi} This total immersion is the result of a response that takes place within the reader as a result of effective detail “that...creates for us a kind of dream, a rich and vivid play in the mind...In great fiction, the dream engages us heart and soul; we not only respond to imaginary things—sights, sounds, smells—as though they were real, we respond to fictional problems as though they were real.”^{vii} Details alone are not enough to accomplish this; James Frey takes the concept of the fictive dream a step further than a singular focus on details. “As a fiction writer, you’re expected to *transport* a reader. Readers are said to be transported when, while they are reading, they feel that they are actually living in the story world and the real world around them evaporates.”^{viii} When in this transported state the reader’s subconscious—the area where sensory input is processed and decoded—has been engaged and is the primary source of response. Tapping into the reader’s subconscious requires more than carefully placed details; it requires a delicate linking of details to story components.

Frey noted three stages that enable the writer to reach the subconscious and thus fully transport the reader into the fiction dream:

Sympathy: “Sympathy it is the doorway through which the reader gains emotional access to a story.”^{ix} It requires that a character be placed in a situation which will evoke an emotion so intense—loneliness, repression, danger, embarrassment—that the reader will feel sympathy for the character.

Identification: “Identification occurs when the reader is not only in sympathy with the character’s plight, but also supports his or her goals and aspirations and has a strong desire that the character achieve them.”^x In order for the reader to support those goals and aspirations the writer must make clear what the character does or does not want to happen.

Empathy: A writer can “...win empathy for a character by detailing the sensuous details in the environment: the sights, sounds, pains, smells, and so on that the character is feeling—the feelings that trigger emotion.”^{xi} Empathy is a much stronger emotion than sympathy, and it is through empathy that the reader will feel what the character is feeling. This is achieved by using sensuous and emotion-provoking details that suggest to the reader what it is like to be the character and to experience what the character is experiencing.

For more information on the fictive dream and how to invoke it, read James Frey’s *How to Write a Damn Good Novel II: Advanced Techniques for Dramatic Storytelling*. New York: St. Martin’s, 1994.

^v Gardener, John. *The Art of Fiction*. New York: Vintage Books, 1983, p32.

^{vi} Ibid., p30.

^{vii} Ibid., pp30, 31.

^{viii} Frey, James. *How to Write a Damn Good Novel II: Advanced Techniques for Dramatic Storytelling*. New York: St. Martin’s, 1994, p6.

^{ix} Ibid., p8.

^x Ibid., p10.

^{xi} Ibid., p13.



—CHAPTER CHATTER—

MEMBER NEWS



Donna Garrison: Made goal for words completed for January and February.

Loralee Lillibridge: Outlines for 4-book contemporary Western series finished. Registered for Retreat.

Elizabeth Fortin: Currently working on book 2 of a 3-book urban paranormal series, revising book 1 and a YA paranormal. Entered 2 contests.

Diane Burton: Finished first draft of YA space adventure.

Margo Hoornstra: Full finished and in!!

Cindy Arends: Wings of Desire released February 7 – 2 good reviews. Now available in print at Amazon. Got an agent – Melissa Jeglinski at Knight Agency. Sold a 4-book series to Deb Werksman at Sourcebooks Casablanca. Will be signing copies of print book at Chicago spring fling and RT.

Karen Holthof: Have most of my revising done. Working on synopsis and query letter.

Annette Briggs: Taking still another class; Christmas WP is on the front burner.

Maris Soule: Working on WIP.

Dawn Bartley: Working with grad students; working on curling newsletter.

Cathy McClain: Rediscovering my WIPs and making progress, spending lots of time with my folks. Big news is Katie is moving back to Michigan!

Florence Price: Working on my WIP with the goal of having something to talk about (or maybe show) at National. AND...Counting the days to National!

Nancy Gideon: SOLD 3 more books to Pocket in my shape-shifter series! Website almost ready to launch.

Laurie Kuna: Fourth ImaJinn book—Fate's Fortune—is out and I had a very successful signing in Lowell; working on a non-paranormal historical romance and have a request for the completed manuscript from an agent. My big news is that on February 25, I RETIRED from teaching! After 29 years at Lowell High School, I'm finally heading out the door for good.

Lucy Kubash: Writing my Pet Corner column, hope to submit something to either Wild Rose or White Rose soon!

Rosanne Bittner: Will be home from Vegas by March 5th and looking forward to seeing everyone at the March meeting! Glad to announce my new western romance, PARADISE VALLEY, is with my agent - and have recently learned that Tor/Forge is finally issuing the paperback version of the third book of my Wilderness trilogy - INTO THE PRAIRIE - in March!

Tracy Roper: I am pleased to say I've been chosen as a finalist in The Write Stuff contest through the Connecticut chapter of RWA for my single title, contemporary romance (TOTALLY DODY). Winners will be announced at Fiction Fest in April. Wish me luck! I've missed several meetings since joining last fall so I'm really looking forward to attending the MMRWA retreat in Augusta.

Wil Emerson: Hello from the breezy south. Writing and glad to be out of the cold. Recent writing news: two requests for manuscripts, reviews on publications from Oceanview Publishing, lots of work...looking forward to I Will Write a Book again. Great incentive.

Julie McMullen: I'm busy organizing Retreat and collecting donations for the Book Raffle and Basket Auction. I've polished my query letter and synopsis for my Manistee time travel novel and plan to send out my query to several agents this month. I'm reading through my novel and polishing up the rough spots so it's ready to go should the request come in. I'm also rewriting the first in a series high fantasy novel that has garnered several rejections in the past in the hopes that I can resurrect it for publishing.

Alyssa Marble: I met my personal goal of finishing the first draft of my WIP by March 1. I'm now working to meet my goal of finishing the editing by July 1 so I can pitch a finished MS at National. To further that goal, I'm taking two online courses.

Members' Current and Upcoming Releases Spring/Summer 2010

Jackie Braun: *A Dinner, A Date and a Desert Sheikh*, Harlequin Romance, June 2010, and *Inconveniently Wed*, the third book in the *Girls Weekend in Vegas* continuity, Harlequin, August 2010. www.jackiebraun.com

Arianna Skye: *Wings of Desire* available in e-book and at Amazon.com February 7, 2010 through Eternal Press. www.ariannaskye.com

Nancy Gideon: The first three books in a shape shifter series from Pocket Books: *Masked by Moonlight*, June 2010, *Chased by Moonlight*, July 2010 *Captured by Moonlight*, August 2010.

Melissa Ford Lucken w/a Isabelle Drake: *Roughneck by Request*, from Ellora's Cave (Quickie), available January 19, 2010 www.isabelledrake.com

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

March

07 Jackie Braun
12 Lynette Curtis
14 Cynthia Irish



—THE FINAL REFLECTION—

Baby Steps



At the beginning of the year, I made a goal to finish the first draft of my WIP by March 1 and to complete all editing by July 1. First, I'm proud to say that I met my March goal. The first draft is finished.

Now what the heck do I do?

Editing that first draft is so much more than word choice and active verbs. I have major plot points that are missing, undefined goals and motivations, and my heroine is completely flat. There are whole chapters that put me to sleep, and I wrote them! Yet where do I begin the editing process? The task is so monumental that I can't wrap my mind around it.

To help facilitate the editing process, I'm taking two online courses. One of those courses is about editing. We're only at lesson two—and still I'm overwhelmed—yet one particular statement struck me as important. Break the manuscript down into manageable chunks. To me, that means baby steps. One paragraph, one scene, one chapter at a time.

Baby steps applies not only to the editing process, but to writing as a whole. One baby step at a time will turn a page into chapter, a chapter into a book, one book into two and two—with time, luck and hard work—into a career.

Alyssa Marble - 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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Chapter Information

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.