

♥ Winner of the 1999 RWA® Mid-Sized Chapter Newsletter Contest ♥

## *The Mid-Michigan Mirror* *Reflection of Romance*

♥ A publication of the Mid-Michigan Chapter (#12) of Romance Writers of America® ♥

Volume II Issue 5

SPECIAL POST-RETREAT ISSUE

MAY 2004



### Mission Statement

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

### In This Issue:

- ♥ Front page Contents/Meeting Information/Birthdays/  
April Program Recap
- ♥ Page 2 Recap of Retreat From Harsh Reality/Reflections
- ♥ Page 3 Angel to Angel
- ♥ Page 4 Toot Your Horn
- ♥ Page 6 Recap: Developing a Critique Group
- ♥ Page 12 Member News
- ♥ Page 13 Contests
- ♥ Page 14 Market News
- ♥ Page 15 Schedule Chapter Meetings/Officers
- ♥ Page 16 Officers/Chairs/Policy

Please refer to: [MMRWABUSINESS@yahoo.com](mailto:MMRWABUSINESS@yahoo.com)  
for MMRWA meeting minutes and chapter business information

### Happy May Birthday To:

Alice Weidner 1  
Leila Davis 21  
Kathleen Nance 21  
Rohn Fedrebush 27  
Nancy Gideon 27  
Susan Crouse 28  
Loralee Lillibridge 30

**Spunky Elizabeth Bevarly challenged our thinking with her morning program: "I'm Better Than Anyone! Ask Me How."**

**In the afternoon, she showed us how well-developed characters come to life and take over with: "Who Are These People, and Why Won't They Shut Up and Let Me Write?"**

**For more on Elizabeth Bevarly check out these websites:**

<http://www.elizabethbevarly.com>

<http://www.romantictimes.com/index.html?/data/authors/4254.html>



Elizabeth Bevarly

Our June speaker will be Dr. Sandra Portko who will be speaking to us about Stress Reduction, Relaxation Techniques and Using Them to Improve Writing Productivity. We will be meeting in Plainwell.

Chris Allen-Riley, Vice president

Directions and date to follow .

### Developing and Maintaining a Critique Group – Or Am I Insane? April Meeting Recap:

Critique groups exist for one purpose; to help writers write better. We learn from one another and spark each other's creativity.

**Please see page 6 to read the full article.**

The president's message will not appear in our special Post-Retreat From Harsh Reality Issue.

## **The 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Retreat From Harsh Reality**

(April 30 to May 2, 2004)



Photo courtesy of Patty Gordon

### **Reflections of a Retreat Newbie**

By Patty Gordon

For the past seven years, I've taken great pleasure in my MMRWA membership. Although I'm not able to attend all the meetings, I'm always welcomed and absorbed into a close-knit, supportive sisterhood. Family schedules always prevented me from attending national conventions and the famous "Retreat From Harsh Reality," but this year I finally managed to make the trek to St. Ives.

I wasn't sure what to expect from the weekend. I knew that we'd have a great speaker, good food (Alice Weidner's frequent reminders kept us informed of the huge variety), and lots of baskets on which to bid lots of money. I knew that the setting was

pretty, and that our illustrious authors would be on hand to sign their books. But I didn't know what would be expected of me. Would I be given writing exercises and sent "to my corner" to polish my prose? Would I be made to "stand in the corner" for NOT having written anything in the last year to further my writing career? Would I have to "look in the corner" for my muse? Would I learn that writing success is "just around the corner"? (Can you tell that my pre-first graders are learning about shapes this week?)

Continued on page 3

Reflections of a Retreat Newbie continued from page 2

I was wrong on all accounts. While the setting was as idyllic as the advertisements, and the baskets were every bit as wonderful as their descriptions, the rest of the weekend was more of an experience to be absorbed, digested, and cherished. My own goals were affirmed, and those who made strides toward their goals were applauded. I was prodded to go home and write, but not made to feel ashamed for my lack of progress. I had the pleasure of meeting another fascinating woman who may be labeled a SUCCESS, yet remains firmly grounded in the every day experiences we all face. And now, as I read The Ring on her Finger, I can actually hear Elizabeth Bevarly's rapid-fire speech delivering the heroine's rambling dialogue!

What I found was that the magic I experience at our meetings is extended into a wonderful three-day celebration. We may come from a variety of backgrounds and life styles, but our common goal as writers is some of the strongest glue that I've ever encountered.

\* \* \*



### ANGEL TO ANGEL

Back in 1984, Leila Davis was one of our founding members. When, after a monthly meeting, others said they wished we had more time to get together and just talk -- about writing, husbands, kids and life in general - - Leila spearheaded and organized our first Retreat From Harsh Reality. She saw it as a pajama party and that's how it started. She found the original location (the dorms at Western Michigan University) and did all of the leg work involved, even going out before we woke on Saturday morning to bring fresh doughnuts and sweet rolls. In those days, our retreat wasn't so much "from" harsh reality as "to" the reality of dorm life. Scratchy blankets, mildew covered showers and meetings rooms that were either too hot or too cold made our lives at home not seem quite as bad as we thought. Our present location at The St. Ives Resort is a true Retreat From Harsh Reality.

ANGEL TO ANGEL continued on page 4



Photo courtesy of Patty Gordon

Founding member and 2002 MMRWA ANGEL, Maris Soule, on the phone presenting the 2004 the MMRWA ANGEL AWARD FOR SERVICE to Leila Davis. Leila could not be at retreat to accept her award in person.

ANGEL TO ANGEL continued from page 3

Leila ran the retreat pretty much on her own for five years. During that time, she also held the MMRWA offices of treasurer, secretary and president. And before she moved to Seattle, she did a short stint as public relations chair and as an informal (but always diligent) parliamentarian.

Leila also encouraged new writers to keep trying (as she did for the many years before she had her young adult romance published) and has always been willing to lend her expertise as an English teacher to a manuscript critique. Even now, though she's almost 2,000 miles away, she helps new writers by judging various contests.

Leila Davis is a person who sees the humor in life, even when life is very bleak, and encourages others to keep trying no matter how often success seems impossible. She is an angel.

MMRWA Angel Award Committee Chair, Maris Soule



## Our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Retreat From Harsh Reality

### Toot Your Horn List

**Chris Allen Riley:** My essay, *Confessions of a Seatbelt Zealot*, was chosen to be in the anthology, *They Lied, True Tales of Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Breastfeeding*, available now from Viva Voce Press.

**Rosanne Bittner:** Multi-published Rosanne recently realized the popularity of her book, *WHERE HEAVEN BEGINS*, when fans bought forty books in one day at a recent book signing. Roseanne is a true inspiration to our members.

**Jackie Braun:** First freelance check arrived; finalist in RITA Contest; submitted a three book proposal to HR and a single-title book proposal to my editor at Harlequin/Silhouette.

**Annette Briggs:** Celebrating the news that Mid-Michigan Mirror is a finalist in the National RWA® Chapter Newsletter Contest.

**Jodi Copeland:** One of my Desire targeted manuscripts finaled in the Lories Pubbed Proposal category and is now with Stephanie Maurer for placement. My November 03 historical release, *A Gift of Myrrh*, is a finalist in the Scarlett Letter Published Author contest. My September 03 contemporary release, *Uncharted Waters*, is a finalist in the Best First Book category of the National Reader's Choice Awards.

**Lisa Childs:** 2003 Blue Boa Award for Excellence in Romantic Fiction 1st place Romantic Suspense; 2003 Write Touch Readers Award, 2nd place Romantic Suspense; 2003 More Than Magic, 3rd Place Best First Book

**Sue Crouse:** acknowledgement in Roxanne Rustand's Super Romance.

Continued on page 5

Toot Your Horn continued from page 4

**Flavia Crowner:** Good review of her novel, *Pie Pantry*, in Disabilities Resources online.

**Jean Drew:** My book, *Beats A Wild Heart*, won the Treble Hearts Book Award.

**Nancy Gideon:** *Midnight Crusader*, is a paranormal finalist for the Booksellers Best Award; sold 2 books to Silhouette.

**Alison Hart:** Signed a seven book contract that turned into 8 this year for Harlequin/Silhouette: 3 HQN's, 4 Desires, and one launch book for new Silhouette line coming out JJA or '05.

**Arlene Hodapp:** *The Ranger* was a finalist in the 2003 Texas Gold Contest for published authors.

**Sharolett Koenig:** Good review of *Is This Really Good Or Am I Just Starved?* in The Midwest Book Review and is being included in a couple of camping catalogs.

**Laurie Kuna:** Second book, *Some Practical Magic*, coming out in June.

**Loralee Lillibridge:** *Ramsey's Return* took first place in the long contemporary category of the 2003 Romancing the Novel Contest and is currently being considered by Silhouette; *All That Matters* took second place in single title in the Melody of Love Contest.

**Gail Martin:** Sales: 3 book proposal for the last of the Loving series to Steeple Hill Love Inspired, sold second single title to Steeple Hill; sold first hardcover--a Christmas two-in-one--*That Christmas Feeling*; sold a 4 book anthology set in Michigan to Barbour.

Contests: Winner of Holt Medallion 2003 for *Loving Treasures*, first place in the 2003 Winter Rose for short inspirational, *A Love for Safekeeping*; finalist for Holt Medallion for long inspirational for *The Christmas Kite*. 2004 finalist for the Golden Quill for inspirational, *Loving Ways*. Recognition: Selected to teach at the following conferences: Mt. Laurel, Knoxville, TN; RWA®, New York; ACRW Houston Glorieta Conference, Santa Fe; feature in the Oakland Press in November 2003; interviewed by Dog-Eared Press; TV spot during book signing at Southfield Public Library; accepted the invitation to speak at a 7-church conference in April 2004, and invited to teach a paid on-line month long class for LRWA in South Carolina.

**Lana Miersen:** Pro Pin status and book on Chris Keesler's desk; placed first in two contests (First Impressions and The Suzannah) and finished in a third (the 2004 Daphne).

**Kathleen Nance:** has sold two books since last retreat: *Day of Fire*, an action/thriller/romance and the second book in the 2176 series from Dorchester to be out in May. Just sold a romantic suspense titled *Jigsaw*. *Spellbound* and *Day of Fire* received 4 1/2 stars from Romantic Times; both were reviewed by Publishers Weekly. *Spellbound* finished in the More Than Magic Contest, the Colorado Award of Excellence, and the Prism Contest.

**Dana Nussio:** Sold 3 books—*A New Life*, Steeple Hill Love Inspired October 2004, "Child in a Manger" in *A Family For Christmas*, Steeple Hill Love Inspired November 2004, *On the Doorstep*, part of Steeple Hill's TINY BLESSINGS continuity series September 2005

Continued on page 6

Toot Your Horn continued from page 5

**Cheryl Steiemesel:** The comedy paranormal manuscript Chris Keesler just bought, *What Do You Say to a Naked Elf?*, is scheduled to be out in January 2005 in Dorchester's LoveSpell line

**DeAnna Talcott:** Won a Holt Medallion for *Her Last Chance*; took third in the Laurel Wreath for *The Nanny and Her Scrooge*; currently a finalist another time in the Holt Medallion and the Colorado Award of Excellence for *Cupid Jones Gets Married*. Plus I sold a book and had my first ever hardcover book (*The Nanny and Her Scrooge*) go on the shelves as a library edition in Great Britain.

**Vici Straub:** Got her degree!

**Alice Weidner:** Sold a 10,000 short story to True Love Magazine.

Also see April MEMBER NEWS on page 12 for more member accomplishments.

April Meeting Recap continued from front page:

### **Developing and Maintaining a Critique Group – Or Am I Insane?**

By Chris Allen-Riley, Vice president

Critique groups exist for one purpose; to help writers write better. We learn from one another and spark each other's creativity. We also come together for community, connection and feedback. Critique groups nurture our self esteem as writers. We are taken seriously. Our work is treated with respect. It gets us used to the editorial process as well as a subjective audience. And it helps us develop a thicker skin.

The group process forces us to work with accountability and deadlines. We begin to see our own errors by seeing others and learn to edit them out ahead of time. For example: learning to spot double prepositions, split verbs, comma placement, POV jumps, unnecessary words and passive writing.

Members of critique groups meet regularly to read our manuscripts. Define regularly for your group, i.e. once a week, twice a month, once a month. Our group, *The Friday Night Mudslingers*, meets every Friday night to give and receive *honest* feedback. Don't let things slide because you're afraid to give feedback. As writers, we need to know if something in our story isn't working. Honest feedback is constructive and careful, but not so careful that it fails to be truthful.

When giving feedback, always give encouragement and let the author know what you appreciate about their writing or when you see improvement. Offer ideas for revisions. TIP: Pose your points as questions. For example, "Have you considered that an audience might be more receptive of Buffy-Anne if she were less caustic?" rather than, "*What were you thinking?*"

Continued on page 7

Developing and Maintaining a Critique Group continued from page 6

### **Tips for Critiquing**

1. Offer input then back away. Never tell another person that they need to rewrite their work.
2. Pose your points as questions.
3. For every criticism, offer an idea to help the group member achieve their goal within the context of the story.
4. Never force your opinion on your partners. It's their work. It is their decision on how to proceed.
5. Consider style. Don't rewrite other people's manuscripts. Your voice isn't necessarily the recipient's voice.
6. Give each member equal treatment. No one should ever be picked on. No one should be treated as a star. However, be cautious with newer writers. At first, they may not be able to take the same level of critique as a more seasoned, thicker-skinned writer. You don't want to discourage their budding enthusiasm.
7. Don't over-focus. Don't be like a dog with a bone. Know when to let go. Over focusing can wear down other writers and be generally detrimental.
8. Know your own strengths and weaknesses when giving and receiving critiques. Group members must be kind and considerate toward one another, yet be willing to offer constructive advice. Do not say, "This sucks!" Even if it does. Even if you find you have mostly negative things to say, make an effort to seek out the positive and express that as well. Finding out what we do well is equally important as finding out what we need help with. Knowing our strengths and weaknesses makes for stronger manuscripts.
9. When you are receiving critiques, don't argue. You asked for input. Listen. Even if you don't agree, all input should be considered. Readers and editors might get stuck at the same point in your manuscript. If you have to explain, there's a possibility that the writing has an error or an omission. After all, books aren't equipped with author commentary. You may need to rewrite or clarify. And always, if you don't understand another's comment, politely ask for clarification.
10. Don't let hurt feelings simmer. Don't let professional differences become personal. However, be cautious. Critique group is sacred ground. Don't let it become a war zone. If trouble arises, set aside a special time to work through it. Something that works well for our group is having a special meeting outside our regular meeting time. Nothing is allowed to foul critique time.
11. Finally, if you don't feel you are getting what you need from the group, don't be afraid to state your concerns to the others. In the end, you might decide to graciously resign, but don't burn your bridges. Never criticize former partners or talk about their writing.

Continued on page 8

### Developing and Maintaining a Critique Group continued from page 7

The FNMS have a set of rules that are posted to all members once every quarter. We've found that having a written guideline for behavior can be helpful at times. Feel free to adopt and/or modify these rules or use them as a basis for creating your own guidelines.

1. Don't interrupt the reader – not even for fill-in-the-blanks. It disrupts the flow and there is plenty of time for that afterward.
2. Regarding fill-in-the-blanks, if you write a silly one, you must also provide a serious suggestion. For example, I had the phrase, 'images scrolled/marched, \_\_\_\_\_ through her mind.' One person suggested 'duck-walked,' but also offered 'assaulted.'
3. Please give everyone a complete critique. Don't hand back empty pages. Give everyone his or her fair share of time. If, for some reason, you have trouble with a piece of writing, "Sorry, critique not available," is not an appropriate response. But, neither is, "It's wonderful as usual." It doesn't matter how good a chapter is, there is always room for improvement. How many times have you wanted to edit a book because of clunky writing? A good critique group could have eliminated it.
4. In the interest of time, we would like to move through each manuscript page by page rather than the jumping around method. Page by page is quicker and more productive.
5. The main core of the FNMS is romance writers. While we welcome writers of all genres, we ask that the conventions of the romance genre are kept in mind during those critiques. Romance writers, please be aware that there are conventions in place for the other genres as well.
6. Please keep the silliness between stories – not about stories. We know it's all in fun, however, it undermines confidence and makes it far more difficult to keep the story moving forward.
7. While critiques are being offered, side conversations will not be allowed. Those having the side conversations will be asked to stop until the critique is over. Again, there is plenty of time between critiques for silliness and conversation.
8. If you are ill, do not attend group. Your fellow authors don't want to share the plague with you.
9. Please sign and date the pages you critique. This is our safeguard against plagiarism. Even though critique group is sacred ground, this can happen. It happened in our group.

### Some Considerations

Size – Does it matter?

Some say a critique group should have 3-5 people. On any given Friday night, the FNMS has 3-12. The average is 7. We give equal time to each person. On the nights when we have many people we are very time conscious. Coincidentally, we usually end near the same time whether we have 3 or 12. It's always stupid o'clock.

Continued on page 9

## Developing and Maintaining a Critique Group continued from page 9

### Format

Informal, informal, informal. Critique group for the FNMS is work, food, fun, therapy and support. Anything else is strongly discouraged.

Each member brings copies of their chapter for other members to critique. This allows members to mark their comments for later discussion. Some people work visually rather than aurally. Some groups demand that all members will bring something to read in order to participate in the meeting. Other groups prefer to focus on one person per session. Other groups realize that although a member might not have a piece ready for public consumption, that individual can still offer valuable feedback to others.

Chapters are read aloud. This makes it easier to hear stilted writing, grammar mistakes, clunky sentence structures and to find missing words and typos. This is the best way to check for plain old flow. Sometimes you can hear logistical problems that might otherwise be missed. For example, your hero is wearing black fatigues when he's shoved into the trunk of a car and wearing desert camo when he comes out.

### Itinerary:

Some people like to set out the order of the people reading ahead of time. The FNMS usually decides what to eat ahead of time.

### Diversity

Some groups feel all of the participating writers should be at the same level. However, we've found that more experienced writers can help younger writers polish their skill while newer writers can help more seasoned writers find renewed enthusiasm or see a fresh perspective.

### Genres

The market you are choosing is a factor. Some say that you should work with a group who writes the same sort of stories -- E.G. Historical writers with other historical writers. However, we've found this not to be the case. Writers outside our given genre can shed light on aspects of the writing that someone inside the genre might take for granted. Like working with newer authors, working with people outside the romance genre is wonderful for gaining fresh perspective. In our group, we have (or have had since some of our writers work in multiple genres) true crime, horror, poetry, children's fiction, mystery, paranormal, vampire, historical, contemporary Christian, long and short contemporary, romantic suspense and erotica.

### Gender

Some people say it's embarrassing to read love/romantic/sex scenes in mixed company. And yes, sometimes it can be uncomfortable, but it's amazingly helpful to have access to a guy's POV -- especially another writer.

Continued on page 10

Developing and Maintaining a Critique Group continued from page 9

### Personalities

Some say the best way to find compatible personalities is through a professional writer's organization like Romance Writers of America or Mystery Writers of America. This is true to a certain extent. Our core members are also members of the RWA. However, our other members are equal contributors and without them our group would be somewhat limited. Not to mention homogenous.

We get to know the writer before inviting him or her to join the group. Also, invitations to the group are approved by a majority. In the same way, if someone must be asked to leave the group, there is also a vote (as was the case when we were forced to deal with the plagiarism issue.)

### When Shall We Do This?

Place. Some recommend choosing a place where you are unlikely to be interrupted, such as a library, restaurant or bookstore. The best solution for our group is to meet at one of the member's home every week. This allows for participation of members who might have to bring a child(ren) with them. Of course, the racier pieces are read later in the evening after small ears have gone to sleep. Bringing children only works if there is a place for them to play and activities to keep them safely amused.

Day. Pick a day and be consistent. It's particularly helpful for setting goals for the week. Consideration should be given to the following day's activities. You don't want to critique until 1:30 AM and then go to work the next morning. During the summer and winter holiday season, it's good to set a schedule in advance for a couple of months to take into account outside activities that would interfere with critique group.

Time. Be consistent and realistic. Almost everyone knows someone who is constantly late for everything. In the FNMS, that person is me. I try to convince myself that everything starts a half an hour earlier than it actually does.

Some groups have a "closed end." They start at a certain time and end at a certain time, decided on ahead of time. Our group is done when we're done. This way we can give adequate time to each participant without feeling rushed and pressured.

### Some Special Features of the Friday Night Mudslingers

1. Database of research books – our library. This pools our writing resources. However, certain books must be used in the owner's home.
2. Learning together. We share tips, articles and good books.

Continued on page 11

### Developing and Maintaining a Critique Group continued from page 10

3. FNMS internet loop. We found that we were losing notes and it was easier to have them archived on Yahoo for future reference. Our loop is used for posting the rules, schedules, goals, tips, planning group outings or our summer retreat, plain old communication, encouragement, daily accountability and daily writing exercises. Our loop is very active. We have between 250 and 450 notes a month.
4. Group outings. We go on outings together like Autumn Authors Affair, RWA National convention, Camping (get back to nature but not too far, we need somewhere to plug in the laptops) movies, booksignings and plays.
5. Writing exercises. We start off nearly every critique night with a writing exercise. This helps us to develop our talents together. Books that we use are, *Fiction Writer's Brainstormer*, *What If*, *Discovering the Writer Within* and *A Writer's Workbook*.

### **Critique Groups are Important Because:**

1. You can never "hear" your work the first time. You don't really hear it when you're writing. It rumbles around in your head before it gets on paper. By the time it's on the page, it may have had several incarnations.
2. You can never be totally objective. It's your baby.
3. You can lose perspective after a while.
4. You can never know how your work will affect your readers.
5. Reading your work to an audience changes it for you. And what you thought was profound might well turn out to be corny. Better to find out from your friends than from an editor.
6. Different readers/listeners have different reactions to the same words. Every reader brings his or her own experiences to color what you've written.
7. You can learn from other writers' reactions as well as their comments.
8. It can bring up questions you never thought to ask.
9. It can help you pinpoint problems you can sense but can't identify.
10. Your intuition will be confirmed, and you'll learn to trust yourself more.
11. I can help you to separate yourself from your work. Writing is an extension of ourselves. We pour our hearts and souls into it, but it's not *us*. It doesn't define us as people. It's becomes less personal once you share it.
12. It helps you to develop your own critical sense. It helps you to find your voice while finding your mistakes. You evolve, becoming a better writer, and that's what we're all striving toward.

Hopefully, this article will help you, should you decide to form or join a critique group. May your writing journey be filled with joy and success.

\* \* \*

**Thanks to the contributors for the April issue of Mid-Michigan Mirror. The next issue of the Mirror has room for news and contributions by our June issue deadline of May 25. Please query or submit at: [brainchilde@websurfers.biz](mailto:brainchilde@websurfers.biz)**

### **April Member News**

**Chris Allen-Riley:** Finished revisions for SIM; sent in. Shannon Godwin says she'll be passing it up to Leslie Wainger; working on next SIM.

**Jen Armintrout:** Waiting; sic of writing; waiting on member news. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. Blocked.

**Holli Bertram:** Finaled in Golden Heart - Romantic Suspense; finaled in Fab Five. GH final was with Denise O'Sullivan at Harlequin.

**Jodi Copeland:** Finalist in The Lories Pubbed Proposal Contest with Silhouette targeted manuscript, *Baby By Chance*; February Ellora's Cave release, *Sons of Solaris: Aries*, selected as a Recommended Read by The Road to Romance; new manuscript just shipped off to Kensington Brava. Currently writing another Silhouette Desire following an almost sale where I learned the senior of Desire loves my voice and thinks I am perfect for the line and wants a new manuscript from me soon. I think this is called a 'glowing rejection' on a buy request from another editor. Sold my 5th and 6th books to Ellora's Cave. The second in the Sons of Solaris series, *Taurus*, and a romantica comedy, the first in a three book series, *Wild Hearts: One Wild Weekend*.

**Michele Hickerty:** Still waiting to receive revisions; started new book; still actively working on other three.

**Ailene Hyne:** Getting auction baskets ready for Retreat; researching English (Yorkshire) country side.

**Tammy Kearley:** Close to completing second ST contemporary. Continuing submissions to agents.

**Loralee – Lillibridge:** Finished Daphne judging; agent at 3 Seas declined representation. Editor at Silhouette is considering ms and is passing it up to Sr. Editor of Special Editions; working on amateur sleuth mystery.

**Melissa Lucken:** Working and waiting.

**Maris Soule:** Agent turned down ms so I shipped it off to editor who requested it; now trying to find an agent. Judged Daphne; am Judging two other contests; working on a short story and trying to sell a non-fiction article.

**Cheryl Steimel:** Started chapter 8 of new fantasy; outlined to chapter 11; steadily writing.

### **Great websites with lots of suggestions:**

Self Promotion for Writers by Robert J. Sawyer

<http://www.sfwriter.com/promote.htm>

Designing Eye-Catching Promotional Materials by Tracy Cozzens

<http://home.comcast.net/~tracycozzens/Working/design.htm>

## Contests

Windy City Choice Award (Published)

Windy City

Deadline for Receipt: June 1, 2004

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<http://scribesworld.com/windycityrwa/wcchoice.html>

Indiana's Golden Opportunity Contest

Indiana Romance Writers

Received By July 1, 2004

Size of Entry: 55 pages (manuscript and synopsis)

<http://home.insightbb.com/~irwa/contest/contest.htm>

Labor of Love Contest

Heart of Louisiana

Deadline May 31, 2004

Synopsis, prologue and/or first chapter(s) - not to exceed fifty (50) pages

<http://www.heartla.com/Contest.htm>

The Maggie (Unpublished)

Georgia Romance Writers

Received by June 1, 2004

Synopsis and manuscript not to exceed 35 pages.

<http://www.georgiaromancewriters.org/>

The 2004 Touch of Magic Contest

Central Florida Romance Writers

Received Deadline: June 1, 2004

Prologue/first chapter (25 page max); synopsis (3-5 pg-unjudged)

<http://cfrwa.org/contest.htm>

Donna Caubarreaux is a member of Coeur de Louisiane, NOLA Stars, Heart of Louisiana, Kiss of Death, and Scriptscene Chapters of RWA. She received an RWA Service Award in 1997 and sponsors several writing lists...

<http://www.geocities.com/donnacaubarreaux/Main.html>

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Colorado Gold

Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers

Postmarked by June 1, 2004

First 20 pages. Synopsis (8 pg max.)

[http://www.rmfw.org/rmfw\\_contest.php](http://www.rmfw.org/rmfw_contest.php)

Book of Your Heart Contest

Published Authors Special Interest Chapter

Postmark Deadline: June 1, 2004 must

arrive by June 5, 2004

First Chapter (25 pg max); Synopsis (10 page max).

<http://www.pasic.net/contest.html>

Lone Star Writing Competition

Northwest Houston RWA

Deadline: Postmarked by June 7, 2004

First chapter/prologue not to exceed 25 pages.

<http://nwhrwa.freesevers.com/contest04.htm>

2004 Golden Gateway Contest

From the Heart Romance Writers

Deadline: June 1, 2004

Beginning of manuscript and 10 page max synopsis (55 pages total max.) In RTF format only.

<http://www.fthrw.com/contest/goldengateway/>

Heart to Heart Contest

San Francisco Area

Received by June 7, 2004

A complete scene, maximum 15 pages, in which the

hero and heroine meet for the first time, or for the

first time in the book if they are previously acquainted

[http://www.sfarwa.com/h2h\\_info.html](http://www.sfarwa.com/h2h_info.html)

**Market News** by Julie Moffett

NovelBooks Inc., an e-publisher, is looking for submissions in the following romance categories: futuristic, fantasy, science fiction, vampires, shape-shifters, ghosts and time-travel. They are also seeking good historicals, suspense and horror. They are NOT looking for erotica or romantica, mainstream or contemporary romance, pornography, abuse in any of its permutations, or anything that belittles or condemns any segment of society in any shape or form. NBI also is NOT seeking short story collections, young adult or children's books, or poetry. For more information on the company's submission guidelines, check out the website at: <http://www.novelbooksinc.com/>.

Harlequin has reported a "difficult" first quarter in 2004 with reduced revenues and profits. Harlequin's sales and profits were both down for the quarter. (Publisher's Lunch/5-05-04)

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Award-winning author Julie Moffett is the author of seven historical and time-travel novels and one novella. For more information on Julie's books, visit her website at: [www.tlt.com/authors/jmoffett.htm](http://www.tlt.com/authors/jmoffett.htm).

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**From Cindi Myers:**

Several people asked about **Harlequin's new Signature program:**

Slated to launch in January 2005, Signature is a new imprint of single titles, novellas, reissues and other books under five sub-brands. The idea is to offer readers bonus features in the books, such as author interviews, sample chapters of upcoming books, and other extra-value features. The five sub-brands are Signature Spotlight -- original novels (and where my book, *Dangerous Curves*, will be published); Signature Collections -- three-in-one novellas; Signature Select -- reprints; Signature Saga -- big family sagas; and Signature Mini Series -- reprints of connected stories. Marsha Zinberg is the executive editor in charge of the program, is quoted in the May issue of *Romance Writer's Report*: "By creating this hybrid, a branded promotional title, we can offer our readers one of our best writing talents in exciting, varied formats, with dynamite packaging, and at the same time have the assurance of guaranteed distribution for our authors, so that when they plunge out of the security of series publishing, they will still find themselves in a 'shelf presence' comfort zone!"

Market News continued on page 15

Market news continued from page 14

Editor Russell Davis is leaving Five Star Books and Tekno Books, a well-established book packager, will take over the editorial duties for Five Star Expressions. Five Star Expressions publishes romance and women's fiction in hardcover for the library market, with limited trade paper and large print releases on some titles. The grant of rights to Five Star is very limited. They buy only hardcover, English language rights for each title, with a limited option to publish the work in trade paperback and/or large print. All other rights are retained by the author. Their term of license for the hardcover edition is typically five years, and eighteen months on the trade paperback and large print editions. They pay \$1,000 per title, plus an 80 percent share of royalties (Tekno gets the other 20 percent.). Five Star pays hardcover royalties of 10, 12 and a half, and 15 percent of list price. They're looking for manuscripts of 75,000 to 85,000 words in all romantic sub-genres: American Romance, Historical, Romantic Suspense, Contemporary, Inspirational, Sweet, Romantic Comedy, Time Travel, Fantasy, Paranormal, Multi-Cultural, Gothic, or Regency. They're also interested in Chick Lit and 'quality women's fiction.' Contact: John Helfers, Tekno Books, 1524 University Avenue, Green Bay, WI 54302. (920) 437-6711; Fax (920) 437-6721; e-mail [tekno@new.rr.com](mailto:tekno@new.rr.com)

Cindi Myers

What Phoebe Wants, HQ Flipside, July 2004

Taking It All Off, HQ Blaze, September 2004

Good to Be Bad, HQ Blaze, January 2005

<http://www.CindiMyers.com>

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### **Schedule of 2004 Chapter Meetings**

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| June 19      | Plainwell-Sandra Portko/Stress Reduction-Increasing Productivity |
| July 10      | Lansing-Kevin Brink/ Naval Intelligence (tentative)              |
| August 21    | Jackson-Jennifer Armintrout, Building a Better Vampire           |
| September 18 | Plainwell-Golden Heart Preparation                               |
| October 16   | Lansing-Merry Zylstra, Psychic                                   |
| November 20  | Grand Rapids-Bounty Hunter/Private Investigator                  |
| December 11  | Laurie Kuna's-MMRWA Holiday Party                                |

### **2004 Mid-Michigan Romance Writers of America Officers**

President: Michele Hickerty [chelery1@yahoo.com](mailto:chelery1@yahoo.com)

Vice-president: Chris Allen-Riley [matt@wmis.net](mailto:matt@wmis.net)

Secretary: Tammy Kearly [tammyk@voyager.net](mailto:tammyk@voyager.net)

Treasurer: Jennifer Armintrout [WhoTom@aol.com](mailto:WhoTom@aol.com)

**2004 Mid-Michigan Romance Writers of America Committee Chairs**

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

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

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

Membership/Historian: Dawn Bartley bartleyd@chartermi.net

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

and Cheryl Steimel wiseprez@yahoo.com

MMRWA Angel Award: Maris Soule SOULEM@aol.com

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

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