

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

The Mid-Michigan Mirror

A Reflection of Romance



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Annette Briggs, Editor

brainchilde@websurfers.biz



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.

POST-RETREAT ISSUE



Attendees of the 2005 Retreat From Harsh Reality. *Photo courtesy of Pattv Gordon*

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Saturday, May 21, our meeting is at Sayfee's in Grand Rapids, MI, 11:30 - 3:30. Our speakers will be Officer Patrick Merrill and Julie Merrill speaking on law enforcement in the field and the life of a cop. Julie will speak on being the wife of a jaded cop.

Directions on page 14

Many thanks to the contributors to this May issue of Mid-Michigan Mirror. Deadline for contributions to the June Mirror is May 20.



May Birthdays

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

Non-members seeking information about Mid-Michigan, meetings, and joining our group may contact:
Dawn Bartley bartleyd@chartermi.net

Note from Wil's desk....*By Wil Emerson, President*

As lovely lady 'Spring' changes the temperature like she's playing Bocce Ball with our senses, it's time for us to take a deep breath, steady our nerves and consider our good fortune.

April winds brought Karyn Witmer/Elizabeth Grayson to Retreat at beautiful St. Ives---a nice setting for a historical romance writer. Although forty-plus attendees tucked coat lapels high around their chins, trudged through gale winds to listen to a message of inspiration and wisdom, they were warmed by Karyn's congenial nature and good humor. The Sun came out when Loralee Lillibridge received a well deserved Angel Award. Hurrah! The temperature rose when Connie Smith, Theresa Bellew and Julie McMullen were applauded for attaining PRO status. Hurrah! When a handsome white-shirted, black-tied wait staff carried in champagne flutes for the 'First Sale' toast, we sighed as though a tropical breeze had warmed our smiling faces. And when the renewed group of writers edged toward the exit door on Sunday morning, they again faced snowy road conditions. Yet their friendly chatter and lighthearted laughter sounded as delicious as a summer day.

So now it is May and Lady Spring is still practicing her daunting game. But I know it will soon be warm and sunny nearly everyday. It will. It will. As the most pleasant month of the year unfolds, we'll celebrate Mother's Day, confirmation and graduations. And the time we set aside for writing will be challenged as though we are targets for Bocce players. Don't be dis-May-ed. Don't let the month slip by without attaining your goal. Whether (weather) it is with one paragraph a day, a chapter a week, or a book in thirty-days, fill your heart, your senses with writer's sunshine. Write a springtime story if you will. Write. Just Write.

Cheers, *Wil*

**RETREAT FROM HARSH REALITY 2005*****A Report from Pam Trombley, Chairperson***

Retreat From Harsh Reality 2005 was our twenty-first annual Retreat and it was another wonderful weekend for all who could attend. St. Ives was fabulous again as well and we were treated like the queens we are. And as always, it was a textbook lesson in team work as several members went above and beyond to ensure the success of the weekend. The smiles and the laughter, as well as the serious concentration during both the speaker talks and Romance Jeopardy, are all the testimony we need to know if everyone had a great time. We did. And I thank you all for helping to make it that way.

Friday was a day of organization. A day of assembly. A day of scrambling to figure out how to group all the cool stuff and excellent books we gathered into baskets that everyone would covet. With the help of many early-birds, we finished up the baskets for the auction and stuffing goody bags just as all the attendees were arriving. Which was just in time for a scrumptious pizza buffet dinner, followed by another feast of goodies. Thanks to the Food Committee of Alice Weidner and Dawn Bartley for organizing all the goodies and keeping them out for us to graze on. And many thanks to Melissa Lucken for her help with the goody bags and all the great stuffings!

A Report continued on page 3

A Report continued from page 2

The highlight of Friday evening was our ever-popular Ice Breaker Activity, run by Julie McMullen and Laurie Kuna. This year's game was Romance Jeopardy and there was of course, since our "Grammar Queen" was one of the connivers, a Grammar Category with stumpers that nobody could figure out. Each team had a special hat with "hair they could pull out" as they missed questions. See what we make you do at Retreat?

Saturday dawned bright and early with the threat of nasty weather - snow, actually. And it lived up to its promise as the darn white stuff fell and stuck to the ground. But that didn't faze our fabulous speaker, Elizabeth Grayson, known to us as Karyn Witmer-Gow. She spent most of the morning talking with us about how to come up with our book ideas, how to do our pre-writing and then how to jump into Chapter One. Her former life as a teacher showed through as she wove the lessons through her own experiences and taught us how to avoid mistakes she'd made herself. Some of the key points she made were:

- Look to your own life for your ideas and, when you find them, WRITE THEM DOWN.
- It usually takes about three books to find your "niche."
- Books are published in their own time. You might write a wonderful book but, if the market is glutted with books of that type right now, put your book away and keep writing. Your book's "time" will come around again.
- Titles really are important.
- Characters are the heart of your novel so design your characters well before you start your book. What are they afraid of? How can they overcome it?
- A romance novel is not about falling in love; it's about the emotional journey the two characters take that allows them to fall in love.
- Start your story at the crisis moment, the place where something has just happened. Start with something dramatic, action, something intriguing or contradictory. Or with attitude. Make sure to start it in the POV of the character who has the most at stake. Do NOT start with the weather or transportation to a location. And make sure that the opening reveals the tone of your book.

Following Karyn was the MMRWA Angel Award Presentation, made by Nancy Gideon. As usual, the winner's name wasn't mentioned at the beginning, keeping us all on the edge of our seats trying to figure out who it was. But when she mentioned that the winner said she bought green bananas because she never knew if she'd be around long enough to wait for them to ripen, we all knew it was Loralee Lillibridge. Nancy was choked up, talking about the many accomplishments of her friend, not the least of which is that Loralee sold her first book which will be coming out in December 2005. Our congratulations to you, Loralee! You're an Angel!

After a do-it-yourself lunch of "sandwich fixin's," salads and cookies, the public Book Sale opened for an hour and thirteen authors were on hand to sign their books for their fans. The weather put a little bit of a damper on outside attendees but the sale flourished just the same. Julie McMullen worked closely with WaldenBooks this year and every author present had books available to sign. The selection of research books, writing books, inspirational books and fiction was one of the best we've ever had. The authors' table decorations and the basket which was raffled off to those attending the sale were classy and festive. Hats off to Julie for, once again, making the Book Sale a smashing success and raising \$300 for the chapter! And kudos to Lana Miersen for her Retreat and Book Sale Publicity - we're finally getting articles published in local papers about our authors at Retreat!

A Report continued from page 3

Karyn spoke again in the afternoon about rewriting and revising our manuscripts, opening her talk with her own words of wisdom: “A good writer rewrites.” Some of the highlights she taught us include:

- Rewriting is the process of adding in details and deleting unnecessary words, scenes and information. It’s layering in whatever raises the emotional ante.
- Use all the senses!
- Keep or increase amount of dialog.
- Focus on scene objectives - each scene should have a hook and leave you wanting to turn the page to read the next.
- Everything in your story must be meaningful and relevant. It must serve the purpose of moving the story forward.
- Don’t overwork your manuscript!
-

Thanks to Dana Nussio for our speaker selection and arrangements. Karyn was one of the best speakers we’ve ever had! Thanks to Laurie Kuna, Pat Lazarus and Lorelee Lillibridge for playing chauffeur for Karyn too!

Pat Lazarus and Lorelee Lillibridge took the stage for our Member Recognition and First Sales Celebration at 4pm. They presented flowers to Pro Pin recipients and Pat presented Lorelee with her First Sale Champagne glass and rose. Member accomplishments were read - and there were a lot! - and the Retreat attendees blew their horns in salute. With two Rita finalists in attendance, “Marga-Rita” statuettes were presented to our very own Jackie Braun and our speaker. Raising glasses of champagne, the year’s achievements were toasted - and tooted - by all.

Many thanks to Lana Miersen and Michelle Celmer for hawking raffle tickets Friday night and Saturday! You gals have inherited this job forever since you managed to raise a record \$255. Over thirty baskets had been prepared for our Live and Silent Auction which our attendees had been perusing and drooling over all day long. The Silent Auction bidding closed at 4pm with an incredible \$506 raised for the shelter. The Live Auction and Book Raffle drawings began in earnest after everyone finished off their champagne from the toast. (You don’t think this timing is an accident, do you?) Our own world famous auctioneerette, Laurie Kuna, was in top form, asking, begging and cajoling bids on everything to the tune of \$980! Thanks to Aileen Hyne, Melissa Lucken, and Lana Miersen - our Basket Committee queens.

Once we’d all spent our wallets, we relaxed with a three entrée buffet prepared by the resort’s new chef, followed by another grazing past - or through - the goodies brought by attendees. Anne Marie King-Jakubiak organized the Saturday night Muse Session for Retreat and there were several writers who participated, some with their own stories and some just to help brainstorm. It was reported to be very helpful by everyone there. Thanks, Anne Marie!

Sunday morning arrived with snow on the ground and flakes in the air once again. But everyone made it up the Clubhouse for the Round Table discussion around 9am. Having so much brainpower sitting around one table was awesome and the information & experiences shared were fantastic. It was a great way to wrap up another wonderful weekend and give us things to think about on the drive home.

There were seven published author critiques purchased through Retreat. Many thanks to Holli Bertram for organizing our writers and published authors! Holli wasn’t able to be at Retreat but she’s a Golden Heart finalist so wish her luck!

A Report continued from page 4

A very special thank you goes out to Rohn Federbush who organized our Artisan/Non-Writing Craft Display in a dedicated room at the Inn. Paintings and crafts proved how multi-talented our writers are! Thanks, Rohn.

One last thank you has to go to Wil Emerson who had been snipping and cutting her houseplants since last Retreat. She saved, nurtured and babied cuttings for us all, repotted them and then covered them in spring colors so we'd each have something to take home that "flourished and grew like our writing." Thanks, Wil!

Funds raised for the chapter include the \$300 from the Book Sale, \$1 Retreat refund donation from Julie McMullen, \$1 Retreat refund donation from Kate McMullen and \$105 for PAN from the Published Author Critiques for a total of \$407.

The total donation to shelter includes \$255 for the book basket raffle, \$506 for the Silent Auction, \$980 for the Live Auction, \$14 donation from Rosanne Bittner from the author sales, \$5 Retreat refund donation from Rohn Federbush and \$1 Retreat refund donation from Marsha Ransom for a grand total of \$1761 going to the Kalamazoo YWCA's Domestic Violence Program!

Retreat 2006 is scheduled for April 28-30 back at St. Ives so mark your calendars now! Our keynote speaker will be Merline Lovelace. We need volunteers for the 2006 Retreat Committees so be watching the loops for the posting so you can volunteer!

Please see page 8 for an outline of Elizabeth Grayson's Saturday lessons.



Picture courtesy of Patty Gordon Left to right: Julie McMullen, Connie Smith, and Tereasa Bellew. Pat Lazarus presenting

Retreat wouldn't be as sweet as it is without celebrating the accomplishments of three fellow writers who have achieved PRO status. Julie McMullen, Connie Smith, and Tereasa Bellew are stepping along the merry path toward publication. They completed a manuscript, submitted it to an agent or editor and provided the results to their peers for review. Hats off to these hard working women who have every reason to smile broadly about their accomplishments. Cheers, Wil

MEMBER NEWS

In April, instead of an official meeting, we hold our **Retreat From Harsh Reality**, a more than two decade old tradition. The member news that would normally appear here is scattered throughout this joyous issue as we celebrate who we are and what we do.



For her grit, her talent, her perseverance, inspirational success and volunteer spirit, we welcome our newest MMRWA Angel: ♥ Lorelee Lillibridge. ♥

Our 2004 MMRWA Angel gets her Wings!



By 2003 MMRWA Angel, Nancy Gideon

Each year, by making a nomination for the MMRWA Angel Award, our chapter members have the opportunity to recognize an individual they feel best exemplifies what it means to be writer, mentor, and role model. Past recipients include Maris Soule, me, and Leila Davis.

I was thrilled when nominations came in, not just because it showed how eager our members were to praise and thank someone who'd been an encouragement to them, but because our votes were so focused on one individual. Certain descriptions kept reappearing: Warm and professional, an extraordinary source of advice, a calm and moderate voice during stressful situations, compassionate to a fault, always does her part and more. All mentioned her constant support of others. And then there's perseverance—the make or break point. This terrific lady is a newly published author who once told me she hopes she hurries up and sells because at her age, she doesn't even buy green bananas.

Angel gets her Wings continued on page 7

Angel gets her Wings continued from page 6

This year's Angel has been a chapter guardian since its inception, has served as President and as an example to writers both new and multi-published with her determination, support, generosity, humor and dedication to the craft of writing. Over the years, she's overcome personal and physical obstacles, rejections, discouragements, the so-close-but-not-quites, only to continue to pursue her dream of publication—a dream that came true at the age of 69! *Accidental Hero* will be a December 2005 release from Silhouette Special Edition. She's been a tireless chapter advocate serving in office, as membership recognition chair and PRO status promoter, is a steadfast producer of excellent romance fiction, is an insightful and encouraging critique partner, is, as one nomination stated, funnier than a stitch, and is a just plain all around good ole Texas gal.

**Hook, Line or Sinker -- How do you rate these openings?**

An exercise presented by Wil Emerson, President

Rate these anonymous contributions:

1. The signed divorce papers delivered in the morning mail didn't bother me as much as I anticipated. The night before had been a practice run by placing our one and only wedding picture in a dark corner of the closet. The fact was Matt was never coming back. What made my stomach do a flip flop and then another was the two separate sample packages of age-defying, regenerating beauty serum guaranteed to keep nasty little crow's feet from turning into gigantic craters. A cruel and mindless joke? Or had the mailman delivered a wake-up call? Worn out and too old. Love would never knock at my door again.
2. I stood on the crumbling sidewalk in front of the old house and looked around with a wry sense of deja vu. Another whorehouse. I was developing a reputation: Thea Barlow, Whorehouse Connoisseur. I lifted my heavy hair off my neck to let the hot breeze dry the perspiration clinging to my skin. I should have worn shorts on the plane, rather than slacks.
3. "She's your baby."
I beg your pardon?" Maybe he hadn't heard right. It was the end of a long day and Dr. Nate Ethan was thinking of the night to come. This woman was his last patient and then he was free.

Hook- You've got me for at least the chapter

Good Line--shows promise but needs some tweaking

Sinker-- A rewrite is definitely necessary but the chapter will be glad to help.

Send your comments to The Mirror for June's edition at afbriggs@hotmail.com or discuss these lines with us at the May meeting.

**Approaching June Birthdays:**

Chris Allen-Riley 3 Joan Noble 9 Elizabeth Trembley 11 Jean Drew 12

Annette Briggs 17 Maris Soule 19





Photo (and captions) courtesy of Pam Trombley

Team captains for the popular Friday night Ice Breaker Activity, run by Julie McMullen and Laurie Kuna. This year's game was Romance Jeopardy



Folks wanted the recipe for PMS Pie, (a favorite at all our gatherings) so here it is from Pat Lazarus:

Spread one regular bag of Fritos over waxed paper on a baking pan approximately 10" X 16" (can go smaller). Mix one cup of sugar with one cup of white Karo Syrup in a saucepan. Heat on Medium until the mixture boils and clarifies. Remove from heat, and mix in one cup of Peanut Butter. Pour over Fritos and let cool. Easiest to cut with a pizza cutter.

Variation: Use Jiff Chocolate Silk peanut butter instead of regular. Or, add chocolate chips to the regular mixture at the last minute before you pour, so that the chips don't melt down entirely. Yum!



Retreat From Harsh Reality Workshops: *An outline of our Saturday sessions presented by guest speaker Karyn Witmer-Gow/Elizabeth Grayson, recapped by Patty Gordon*

Session One: In the Beginning: From Idea Through Chapter One

Ideas

- Come from experiences
- From news files
- Photographs
- A place that speaks to you
- Activities in which you are involved
- Life experiences: adoption, etc. These can often become recurring themes in your work
- From group settings: clubs, classes, critique groups

Wherever an idea surfaces, WRITE IT DOWN!!

Lesson Outline continued on page 9

Lesson Outline continued from page 8

Strategies

Deciding “Which story do I write now?”

Suggestions from agent or from editor

From critique partner or group

Changing gears: plan on writing three books in a new genre before finding your niche or making your name known

Writing “the book of your heart”

Will bring passion to your writing, but the timing needs to be right. You need to have the right skills and be ready to write it.

Keep track of trends in the market. They are constantly changing.

Classics -- tried and true: amnesia, romantic triangle: find a way to make it better a different type of character or a new twist

Selling your book

Make your book accessible

Find a way to deal with tough subjects in a way that it is still marketable

Example: the hero is illiterate (bad), but he’s a cowboy (good)

Give it a title that automatically conveys tension

Example: “Desperate Housewives,” “Three Men and a Baby,” or “Love, Honor and Betray”

Give it a salacious title; “Love in the Afternoon,” “Greek God in a Ladies Club”

Prewriting and planning

Research

Set a time frame or “trellis” for the plot

Example: the nine months of a pregnancy, the length of a trip

Base your story on real people, but they shouldn’t be obviously recognizable!

Learn the vocabulary of our character

Collect maps, images, and artifacts related to your characters

Talk to people in the fields your characters inhabit. Kids’ information books can give you the Basic knowledge of a field without too much confusing detail.

Interviews

Set up through cold calls or networking. Go to these interviews prepared with some knowledge.

Characters “Romance is not about falling in love, but about the emotional journey the characters take that allows them to fall in love.” Make the journey as perilous as possible

Who are they? What are their personalities? What are they afraid of?

Physical characteristics: keep a picture file. Get pictures from catalogs

Set up a GMC chart. Establish who they are, what they want and why

Put the character “on the couch”

Act as a psychologist and ask questions such as

“Why did you do this?” “Tell me about yourself.”

Make the characters face their fears

Character traits: positive character traits can also have a negative effect, and vice versa; thus his strength can also be his weakness

Lesson Outline continued from page 9

Example: amiability can translate to gullibility, status-seeking, social preoccupation, spinelessness (We got a handout outlining these!)

Give your characters a personality test

Example: Myers Briggs Test (what you see)

Eneagram (core personality; reveals personality under stress)

Birth order can affect a person's tendency toward nurturing or helplessness

Under stress, a person can regress to behaviors that have been repressed.

Heroism is about dealing with those repressed behaviors and emotions.

Note: info about these tests at www.myersbriggs.org, and www.enneagraminstitute.com. I found other websites that offer free "watered down" versions of one test or the other.

Casting -- Putting together a puzzle. Make the pieces fit. Your plot deals with this; problems need to be solved incrementally

Organizing the plot

Sid Field created the Three-Act Paradigm - Karyn uses a variation that she calls the Four-Act Paradigm:

Intro, Development, Midpoint (something new), and Ending

The midpoint is where the love scene or the moment of intimacy occurs. This can be the event that causes the complications or changes.

File cards or sticky notes (storyboarding)

Voice

First person POV can create immediate intimacy with the main character

How many points of view will you use?

How will you tell the story? Intimacy with characters can be achieved through letters, telegrams, diaries, vignettes

Synopsis

Handout: "Ten Tips for Writing a Synopsis, and Five Tips for Rewriting your Synopsis"

Opening

Begin with a crisis

Example: Indiana Jones, Romancing the Stone

Intriguing or contradictory situation

Attitude

Example: Bridget Jones, Stephanie Plum (Janet Evanovich)

Avoid trains, boats, planes, and weather reports!

Establish mood and tone right away

Reveal layers to your character

Example: an aggressive executive at work handles his infant gently at home

Main characters should have a secret. You need to peel away layers like an onion

To reveal the core of your character - this is the "Black Moment"

Prologue: separated from first chapter by time and space and/or POV

First sentence should be clear, concise, compelling - engage the reader immediately

Three types: establishing place, establishing character, or immediate action

Avoid starting with dialogue

Start at the moment of reaction to a situation

Lesson Outline continued on page 10

Handout: "First lines usually fall into one of these categories:"

Kiss off: last line in a chapter

Should lead into the hook of the next chapter

Example: "Perils of Pauline"

Quote (Mickey Spillane): "The first page sells your book. The last page sells the next book."

Session Two: "And Every Word a Pearl - Rewriting and Revising Your Manuscript"

"A writer writes." Karyn's corollary: "A good writer rewrites."

Rewriting allows you to:

Add "snappy dialogue"

Increase character motivation

Fill in the blanks

Three stages of rewriting

1. Adding things that were missing

Example: layering, raising the emotional ante, making the conflict visceral

2. Rewriting to make things work

Example: explain misinterpretations - a situation seen from one POV can be interpreted entirely differently from another one

3. Taking away extraneous "stuff"

Focus on the main ideas. Take out things that don't achieve the objectives

Make sure the scene begins in the right time and place

Details that have relevance: clothing, description of characters

Dialogue should move the plot along

Refining and polishing

Vocabulary: be true to your character!

Prepositional phrases - add bulk when used unnecessarily

Adverbs - do you really need each one?

Avoid "Swifties": "It's a wonderful day for kite flying," she said breezily.

Focus on active verbs - IF YOU NEED AN ADVERB, YOU'RE USING THE WRONG VERB!!

Use handout : "The Now Famous Self Editing Checklist of Barbara Dawson Smith"

Resources: Listening to America by Stuart Berg Flexner and I Hear America Talking by Stuart Berg Flexner



The Mirror is in need of "how to" articles, reviews of writing books and writing related websites, member bios and photographs, member book news and activities. Please send all contributions for the Mirror to: brainchilde@webservers.biz or afbriggs@hotmail.com. If you do not have access to e-mail, please send by regular mail to Annette Briggs, Box 374, Three Rivers, MI 49093. DEADLINE TO BE INCLUDED IN THE JUNE 2005 MIRROR is MAY 20. Guidelines are available at the above address or e-address. Looking forward to your contributions.

MANY THANKS
MANY THANKS

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MMRWA would like to thank the following authors, editors, bookstores and friends for their donations to the Mid-Michigan RWA Book Basket Raffle and Auction or for providing goodies for our attendees. All proceeds of the Raffle and Auction go to the Kalamazoo YWCA Domestic Assault Center.

Carrie Alexander
Lori Avocato
Michele Bardsley
Linda Barrett
Beverly Barton
Carole Bellacera
Donna Birdsell
Rosanne Bittner
Jackie Braun
Binnie Syril Braunstein,
PRESS KIT
COMMUNICATIONS
Juliet Burns
Mary Castillo
Michelle Celmer
Tanisha Christie, Warner
Book Group
Hope Clark
Kresley Cole
Beth Cornelison
Margaret Daley
Lori Devoti
Maria Dimitra
Laura Drewry
Judy Duarte
Wil Emerson
Lynn Emery
Flo Fitzpatrick
Wendy French
Barbara Gale
Melanie George

Lucy Gordon
Elizabeth Grayson
Deborah Hale
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Melissa James
Sherleen Johnson-Rhinock
Shirley Jump
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Sharolett Koenig
Laurie Kuna
Patricia Lazarus
Yvonne Lehman
Donna Liptrot,
Waldenbooks, Crossroads
Mall
Kimberly Logan
Melissa Ford Lucken
Julianne MacLean
Lisa Manuel
Gail Gaymer Martin
Sally MacKenzie
Julie McMullen
Susan Meier
Lana Miersen
Jess Michaels
Trista Ann Michaels
Liddy Midnight
Jenna Mindel
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Lisa Plumley
Jo-Ann Power, POWER
PROMOTIONS
Barbara Raffin
Marsha Ransom
Emilie Richards
Terri Ann Ridgell
Roxanne Rustand
Grace Anne Schaefer
Anna Schmidt
Fran Shaff
Leanne Shawler
Gena Showalter
Suzanne Simmons
Jennifer Skully
Diana Love Snell
Catherine Snodgrass/Caitlyn
Willows
Susan Stephens
Sloan St. James
Carol Voss
Pat Warren
Alice Weidner
J.C. Wilder/Dominique Adair
Justine Wittich
Laurin Wittig

MANY THANKS

This article first appeared in the April issue of Write from the Heart, the newsletter of Central Ohio Fiction Writers chapter. Use with proper credits, Victoria Batte, editor. USED WITH PERMISSION

The 5 Best Web sites for Romance Writers By Beth Morrow

Despite the vast (and growing) number of writing Web sites existing on the Web, as a romance writer I find myself drawn to a handful of exceptional sites on a repeat basis. Whether I need to understand characters, explore setting and history, research a writing-related tax issue or get motivated after a rejection, these sites have help and information free for the asking.

Alicia Rasley's Writers' Corner

<http://www.sff.net/people/alicia/>

Alicia Rasley's writing articles, booklets and tapes bring to mind an old potato chip advertising slogan: no one can eat (or, in this case, read) just one. I dare you to try. Rasley, a RITA-award-winning author and writing teacher, says on her site that she loves to explore writing issues and never really understands them until she writes about them. Lucky for us, her writing conveys the nuances of character behavior, goal/motivation/conflict, dialogue, synopsis, plot and many other components of writing fiction well enough for even the novice novelist to understand.

Romantic Times Bookclub Magazine Web site

www.romantictimes.com

I used to think the Romantic Times Bookclub (RT) Web site was just a collection of their book reviews and other miscellaneous works from their magazine. Imagine my surprise when discovered, by clicking on the 'writers' tab, a secret room containing a vast selection of advice from leading authors, research information and how-to advice.

Jaclyn Reding's "Useful Links for Romance Readers and Writers"

<http://www.jaclynreding.com/links/>

Romance author Jaclyn Reding has pulled together a huge variety of links to help readers and writers alike. From the main page, you'll use the pull-down menu to navigate through her site. Not to miss are the "Research and Reference" and "Historical" sections.

Charlotte Dillon's "Resources for Romance Writers"

www.charlottedillon.com

If there were ever a place you could get lost on the Web and never come out, it's Charlotte's site. From the main page, clicking on "Resources for Romance Writers" takes you to an innocent-looking page with red banners. Beware. After you choose the area that interests you most you'll be greeted with more useful, relevant links than you can cover in one sitting. "Articles on Writing" and "Research Links" are two of the best.

How Stuff Works Web site www.howstuffworks.com

Whether you're ready to goof off on the Internet or you need to know how a stun gun works, how stuff works is a great place where learning and playing go hand-in-hand. Encompassing thousands of topics from food to military to e-mail and everything you can possibly imagine between, articles on the site are easy to read and fascinating. Where else can you find how exploding manholes work? (Or that they even existed...).

If you're looking for information, inspiration or just an interesting place to waste time, the Web is the place to find it. Try these sites for yourself and discover your favorite places. You never know what you might find.

Beth Morrow is a published author and romance writer who enjoys waiting for her muse while surfing the 'net. USED WITH PERMISSION

May Meeting Information:**Sayfee's**

3555 Lake Eastbrook Boulevard SE
 Grand Rapids, MI 49546
 Phone number: 616-989-5750

Directions:

From the East (Lansing): Follow I-96 to the 28th Street Exit, Exit 43A (toward M-11/Kent County Airport). Merge onto 28th Street SE. Go 2 miles to turn Right onto Lake Eastbrook Boulevard. Sayfee's is a half mile down on the Right hand side.

From the South (Kalamazoo): Follow US-131 N toward Grand Rapids to the MI-11/28th Street exit, Exit #81 (toward Wyoming). Turn Right onto MI-11/28th Street SW and go 5 miles. Turn Left onto MI-37/E Beltline Avenue SE and go 0.1 miles. Turn Right and go 0.1 miles. Turn slight Left and go 0.2 miles. Turn Right onto Lake Eastbrook Boulevard SE. Sayfee's is 0.1 mile down on the Left hand side.

From the Southeast (Jackson): Follow US-127 N to the US-127/I-96 Merger (becomes I-96 W). Take I-96 W to the 28th Street Exit, Exit 43A (toward M-11/Kent County Airport). Merge onto 28th Street SE. Go 2 miles to turn Right onto Lake Eastbrook Boulevard. Sayfee's is a half mile down on the Right hand side.

MMRWA 2005 Meetings

Unless otherwise noted, meetings are held the third Saturday of each month on a rotating basis at area restaurants and meeting centers. The usual meeting agenda is as follows:

11:30 a.m., lunch (optional) ♥ 1:00 p.m. (approximate time), program/speaker ♥ 2:00 p.m. (approximate time), business meeting.

June 18: Grand Rapids; Roseanne Bittner, "Staying The Course," staying on top during industry turmoil/change.

July: No meeting due to RWA Nationals in Reno, Nevada.

August 20: Lansing; Gail Martin will speak on "Shoring Up The Sagging Middle."

♥September 17: TBA **♥October 15:** TBA **♥November 19:** TBA **♥December 10:** Location TBA; End of Year Recap and Holiday Party

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2005 Mid-Michigan Romance Writers of America Officers

President: Wil Emerson wilwriter@yahoo.com
 Vice-president: Jodi Lozon Jodi.Lozon@ttmps.com
 Secretary: Shar: Koenig koenisha@Macatawa.org
 Treasurer: Lisa Childs Theeuwes ltheeuwes@msn.com

Chairs on page 15

2005 Mid-Michigan Romance Writers of America Committee Chairs

I Will Write a Book/Write For the Money: Flavia Crowner flacro@datawise.net
 Happily Ever After Contest: Jodi Lozon Jodi.Lozon@ttmps.com
 Library: Maris Soule SOULEM@aol.com and Lucy Kubash lucykubash@parrett.net
 Membership/Historian: Dawn Bartley bartleyd@chartermi.net
 Member Recognition: Pat Lazarus LazWriter@myway.com and Lorelee Lillibridge loralee530@sbcglobal.net
 MMRWA Angel Award: Angel Award Nancy Gideon ncgideon@msn.com
 Mystery Gifts: Shar Koenig koenisha@Macatawa.org
 Newsletter Editor; online distribution: Annette Briggs brainchilde@websurfers.biz
 Newsletter printing & distribution: Laurie Kuna lauriecarroll55@worldnet.att.net
 PAN Liaison: Lana Miersen j.l.miersen@cablespeed.com
 Perseverance Fund: Lisa Childs Theeuwes: theeuwes@msn.com
 Policy: Shar: Koenig: koenisha@Macatawa.org and appointed committee
 Publicity: Jackie Braun jbquill77@aol.com
 Retreat Chair: Pam Trombley: pamtrombley@charter.net
 Retreat Speaker Chair: Laurie Kuna lauriecarroll55@worldnet.att.net
 RWA® Pro Liaison: Tammy Kearly tammyk@voyager.net
 Website Liaison: Lana Miersen j.l.miersen@cablespeed.com
 Web mistress: Michelle Crean mecrean@crean.com

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CONTESTS

Updated and all sites tested...Compiled by Donna Caubarreaux

2005 Molly Contest, Heart of Denver Romance Writers
 Receipt deadline: May 14, 2005
 First thirty pages and synopsis of no more than 5 pages.
www.hodrw.com

2005 Great Beginnings, Utah/Salt Lake Chapter RWA
 Postmark Deadline: May 15, 2005
 First three pages of your manuscript.
<http://www.utahrwa.com/>

Original Golden Opportunity Contest,
 Toronto Romance Writers
 Postmark Deadline: May 17th, 2005
 First chapter and synopsis up to 30 pages.
<http://www.torontoromancewriters.com/goldenop.html>

2005 Touch of Magic Contest,
 Central Florida Romance Writers
 Received by June 1, 2005
 Prologue and beginning of manuscript not to exceed
 25 pages, plus 3-5 page synopsis (unjudged)
<http://www.cfrwa.org/contest.htm>

Aspen Gold for Published Authors,
 The Heart of Denver Romance Writers
 Received by: May 14, 2005
 Original 2004 copyright date.
<http://www.hodrw.com>

Dixie Kane Memorial Contest,
 South Louisiana Chapter of RWA
 Deadline: May 16, 2005
 First five pages and a one page unjudged synopsis.
<http://www.solawriters.org/contestrules.htm>

Book of Your Heart (Published and Unpublished)
 PASIC Chapter
 Postmarked by June 1, 2005
 First chapter max. 25 pages; synopsis 3-10 pages
http://www.pasic.net/contest_2005.html

American Title II, Dorchester/Romantic Times Contest

Received Deadline: June 15, 2005

Book must be complete. Send in the first three chapters,
max of 50 pages, with a cover letter and a two - seven page synopsis:

http://www.romantictimes.com/indes.html?e_news/amtiterules.shtml

8th Annual Melody of Love, Music City Romance Writers

Deadline: Received by July 1, 2005

Prologue/first chapter (25 page max)

<http://www.mcrw.com/contest.htm>

7th Annual Picture This Contest, Inland Empire

Received by August 1, 2005

Send us the best scene from your book, 5-12 pages.

<http://geocities.com/SoHo/Studios/2936/contest.htm>

Check out all the contests on: <http://www.geocities.com/divaswithtiaras/Main.html>

Contest Alert-All the news on upcoming contests, plus Finalist & Winner listings, questions, etc. Sign up now!

ContestAlert-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Donna Caubarreaux is a member of Coeur de Louisiane, Scriptscene Chapter, NOLA Stars, Heart of Louisiana, Kiss of Death, and ChickLitWriters of RWA. She received a RWA Service Award in 1997. USED WITH PERMISSION

Lone Star Writing Competition

(open to published and unpublished)

Northwest Houston RWA

Postmarked by June 6, 2005, send first 25 pages.

<http://www.nwhrwa.freesevers.com/contest05.html>

Magic Moment, Heart and Scroll RWA

Deadline: Postmarked by August 15, 2005

First ten pages.

<http://www.heartandscroll.com>