

The Mid-Michigan Mirror

...A Reflection of Romance

November/December 2010

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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—

November Program: Member Critique & Extended Business Meeting

by Margo Hoornstra
Vice President/Publicity Chair

The business meeting in November will be extended for a discussion on strategic planning and MMRWA's long-term chapter goals. Incoming President Florence Price has information and ideas to share from National. Please see page 6 for a summary of the Chapter Leadership seminar Florence attended at Nationals in July.

The topic for the November 20, 2010 MMRWA program is Member Critique. As requested, Mid-Michigan RWA Members will be given the opportunity to bring portions of works in progress for evaluation by published members.

To help keep this program running smoothly, please respect the following rules of engagement.

1. Sign up through e-mail to me at mjhoornstra@sbcglobal.net with Member Critique in the subject line. Let me know your title and genre.
2. Limit the manuscript length to ten pages.
3. Bring three printed copies to the meeting with you. That way, you'll have any written comments or notations to take home.
4. Designate someone else to read for you if you'd rather not read yourself.

Attention published members, please e-mail me as well, again with Member Critique in the subject line, if you plan to attend the November meeting.

Please join us on Saturday, November 20, at Famous Dave's, 4505 Canal Avenue, Grandville, Michigan beginning at 11:30 AM.

The President's Corner

By Lucy Kubash

As I write my last president's column, I'm thinking of the many changes that have taken place in RWA and the publishing world in the last two years. Digital publishing is fairly exploding and turning the industry on its ear. Kindles, iPads, and Nooks are now common devices for many readers and giving them more choices than ever for reading books. That in turn affects us as writers as we learn the ropes for these brave new ventures. Rules for nonprofit groups had us changing our website and newsletter and having to rethink how we publicize our authors. Criteria for membership in PAN led us to pass a bylaws amendment, changing our published authors' group to PAGE, Published Authors' Group Exchange. We added the position of President-Elect to the board and we're anticipating some other bylaw amendments in the near future. While all these changes are challenging, we have to realize that in order to stay current and relevant we have to adapt.



In the last two years, MMRWA has celebrated some important events and milestones. We brought Deb Dixon back to put on a daylong workshop and welcomed some wonderful speakers at our retreats. The chapter and Retreat from Harsh Reality celebrated 25 year anniversaries, and we even had our own MMRWA Idol program. We hope to continue the tradition of excellence that has kept us such a vibrant chapter since 1984.

I would like to thank everyone who served on this year's board with me, Margo, Donna, Rosanne and Florence, to whom I will pass the gavel (or in our case, the bell) as she steps into the role of next year's president. I know she is going to be an awesome leader for the chapter, and I hope we will all give her the support she will need to take on the new changes that are sure to come our way. Thank you to those who have volunteered to be on next year's board. Special thanks go to Alyssa for putting out our very excellent newsletter, The Mirror, every month, and to Julie for her hard work as retreat chairperson. Thanks, too, to everyone who served on a committee or who pitched in to help in anyway large or small. Truly, the strength of our chapter lies in the willingness of our members to get involved.

With that thought in mind, I hope many of our members will attend the meeting this month when our focus will be on leadership and long-range planning for the chapter. We need ideas and input and hope you will set aside Saturday, November 20, to join us for this very important meeting.

Best Wishes and Happy Writing!

Lucy

2010 Officers

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Vice-President/Meetings & Programs
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2010 Committee Chairs

Cover to Cover Editor
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Historian/Membership/Policy
Dawn Bartley
members@midmichiganrwa.org

I Will Write a Book/Write for the Money
Diane Burton/Laurie Kuna

Library
Lucy Kubash and Maris Soule

Member Recognition
Florence Price

MMRWA Angel Award
Laurie Kuna

Mystery Gifts
Cathy McClain

Newsletter Editor
Alyssa Marble

PAGE Liaison
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Retreat Speaker Chair
Laurie Kuna

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Tammy Kearly

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MMRWA 2010 MEETING SCHEDULE

- January** – No chapter meeting.
- February 20**
Grand Rapids – Member critique
- March 20**
Lansing – Tax Strategies for Writers
Speaker: Bruce Meyers
Hantz Financial Group
- April 16 – 18**
Kalamazoo – Retreat from Harsh Reality
Speaker: Jo Ann Ferguson
- May 15**
Jackson – A Writer's 7 Steps to
Positivity
Speaker: Connie Smith
- 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/
Leadership Discussion
- December 11**
Lansing – Christmas Party

November Meeting Directions

Directions to:

Famous Dave's
4505 Canal Avenue
Grandville, MI 49418
(616) 301-7711

Directions from Kalamazoo and southwest:

Merge onto US-131 N. (35.5 mi)
Take the M-6 W exit, EXIT 77,
toward HOLLAND. (2.0 mi)
Merge onto MI-6 W. (6.8 mi)
Merge onto I-196 E toward GD RAPIDS. (2.6 mi)
Take the 44TH ST exit, EXIT 67,
toward RIVERTOWN PKWY. (0.4 mi)
Turn RIGHT onto 44TH ST SW. (0.1 mi)
Turn RIGHT onto CANAL AVE SW. (0.1 mi)
End at Famous Dave's, 4505 Canal Ave, Grandville, MI

Directions from Lansing and points east:

Take I-96 W toward GD RAPIDS. (44.4 mi)
Merge onto MI-6 W
via EXIT 46 toward M-6 W/HOLLAND. (19.3 mi)
Merge onto I-196 E toward GD RAPIDS. (2.6 mi)
Take the 44TH ST exit, EXIT 67,
toward RIVERTOWN PKWY. (0.4 mi)
Turn RIGHT onto 44TH ST SW. (0.1 mi)
Turn RIGHT onto CANAL AVE SW. (0.1 mi)
End at Famous Dave's, 4505 Canal Ave, Grandville, MI

Directions from Grand Rapids:

I-196 W toward HOLLAND. (5.5 mi)
Take the 44TH ST exit, EXIT 67,
toward RIVERTOWN PKWY. (0.4 mi)
Turn LEFT onto 44TH ST SW. (0.4 mi)
Turn RIGHT onto CANAL AVE SW. (0.1 mi)
End at Famous Dave's, 4505 Canal Ave, Grandville, MI



December Meeting Information

Join friends and fellow MMRWA members for a Holiday celebration on December 11, 2010!

The December meeting is our annual end of year business meeting and holiday party. Lunch will begin at 11:30 am at La Senorita in Lansing, Michigan. We will have a short business meeting followed by our annual Christmas party.

There is an optional gift exchange for the holiday party with a \$10 limit. Also, Dawn will be collecting items for the Kalamazoo YWCA. See page 5 for details.

Chapter dues are due by December 31 (grace period extends to Jan. 31) and may be paid at this time. Renewal forms are available online in the Business Files and will also be available at the November and December meetings. Even if your information has not changed, please fill out a renewal form along with your check, as it makes it much easier to keep track of renewals. We now have over 60 members and it will be very helpful to our treasurer Rosanne if we just fill out the form. Thanks!

December Meeting Directions

**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.

CHAPTER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Change in November Program

The November program is member critique. However, the business meeting will be extended to include a discussion regarding the Chapter's short-term and long-term goals, its mission, and how we see the Chapter in the future. This discussion is a product of the RWA National Leadership workshop. Florence Price, MMRWA President-Elect, attended the workshop. See page 6 for a synopsis of the workshop. Please keep the future of MMRWA in mind as we approach the November meeting and come prepared with your thoughts and ideas.

A Writer's 7 Steps to Positivity, by Constance Smith

MMRWA Member Constance Smith presented *A Writer's 7 Steps to Positivity* at the MMRWA May chapter meeting. She has generously agreed to allow each of the seven steps to be reprinted in the Mid-Michigan Mirror in a seven part series. *Step 3: Fill Your Cup* appeared in the September edition of the Mirror. The series will resume with Step 4 in the January/February 2011 newsletter. Thank you for being so generous with your time and information, Connie.

Christmas Donations

As in past years, donations will be collected for the Kalamazoo YWCA. Christmas donations and items on the in-kind needs list are requested. The in-kind needs list is located on the web at <http://www.ywca.org/site/pp.asp?c=bpLJJTOvHmE&b=471795>. Dawn Bartley will be collecting donations at the November meeting, although other arrangements can be made. Please donate to this worthy cause and make someone's Christmas a little brighter.

"I Will Write a Book"

Counting down the days to the deadline for "I Will Write a Book." Those who entered have until November 30th to turn in the last page of the book they finished. Remember, you just have to finish the book. First drafts are okay. Please send the last page to Diane Burton, dmburton@charter.net by midnight, November 30th.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY! November/December



11/01 Lisa Cardle
11/01 Ami Weaver
11/07 Alyssa Marble
12/03 Teresa Bellew
12/05 Lucy Kubash
12/07 Malea Powell
12/08 Amy Olle
12/09 Alison Hart

12/20 Flavia Crowner
12/21 Donna Garrison
12/22 Meredith Cassing
12/25 Laurie Kuna
12/25 Tracy Roper
12/31 Katherine McClain
12/31 Connie Smith

**Review of Leadership Seminar
2010 RWA® National Conference
Orlando, Florida**

*By Florence Price,
President-Elect*

There was quite a bit of discussion regarding the development of a vision or picture of our chapter at a future point in time and how strategic planning is necessary in achieving that vision.

Do we have a plan for where we want our chapter to be in, say, three years?

Should our chapter develop a Strategic Plan? I think if we want to be a healthy viable association, it's an issue that, at the very least, should be considered.

Some questions to consider when developing a Strategic Plan are:

What is the purpose or objectives of our Chapter?

Our Mission Statement reads:

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.

Looking at our chapter at this point in time, does our Chapter fulfill that Mission Statement for all of our members?

Does our chapter have clearly defined objectives?

Does our chapter have definitive strategies, prioritized programs, services, initiatives or other actions that will have the greatest impact in supporting the accomplishment of our objectives?

Questions we were asked to consider in regards to our chapters:

- 1) How do we keep our published authors engaged?
- 2) How do we keep our unpublished members engaged?
- 3) Who is responsible for following through with volunteers?
- 4) Do we have meaningful events for our chapter?
- 5) Do we offer networking and opportunities for member growth?
- 6) Are the programs provided relevant to our members?
- 7) Do we have relationships with local bookstores, libraries, schools, etc.?
- 8) Are our committees responsible for the goals that are assigned to them?
- 9) Do we Inform and Advocate?
- 10) Should we form a Membership Recruitment and Retention Committee?
- 11) Should we form a Board Development Committee?
- 12) Should we form a Comparative Research Committee?

October Program Recap: Rebounding Panel

By Alyssa Marble, Editor

At our October meeting, four members of MMRWA formed a panel to discuss their darkest writing moments and—more importantly—how they were able to rebound from those dark moments. They were interviewed by member Connie Smith, who did a wonderful job asking questions of the panelists. Each panelist also offered words of wisdom. A brief summary of each of their stories is below:

Lucy Kubash: Lucy wrote *Chance's Return* in 1984. In 1986, her publisher announced it was no longer publishing romances 3 months before the book was due to come out. Lucy continued to write and submit *Chance's Return* for 23 years, until it was finally published with the White Rose Press in 2009. Words of Wisdom: Believe in yourself and your story, and don't give up.

Margo Hoornstra: Margo had six completed manuscripts, a few rejections and even a lost submission when she gave up writing novels in the 1980's to work full time in public relations and raise her children. She continued to write short stories and human interest articles for *Woman's World* and *Country Woman*. In 2003, Margo lost her job and began writing novels again. In 2009, her first book came out with the Wild Rose Press. Words of Wisdom: Don't give up. It is possible, and it will happen.

Diane Burton: Diane's first book came out 2 weeks before 9/11/2001. Sales were slow at first but picked up thanks to the support of MMRWA and Windy City RWA members. But her editor went bankrupt and her agent wasn't sending out any submissions. Then, over the course of a year and a half, three women very important to Diane passed away—her mother, her mother-in-law and her aunt. Her job became more demanding and by 2008, she wasn't writing at all. Around that time, she quit her job and finally allowed herself to grieve the loss of the women she was so close to. She began to enjoy life again, started feeling better about herself, and the voices came back. Diane began writing again and is currently having fun writing a YA novel. Words of Wisdom: Enjoy the writing, enjoy life, and enjoy the journey.

Nancy Gideon: Nancy sold 35 books—11 in one year—during the 1980's through the mid-1990's. Then the mid-list died and it became harder and harder to sell a book. Needing a steady income, Nancy took a job as a legal secretary. After being inspired by a speech given by fellow MMRWA member Rosanne Bittner, Nancy took back her writing career by writing the book that she wanted to write and negotiating her own contracts. Words of Wisdom: Write the books that represent you. Writing is both a passion and a career.

Thank you to Lucy, Margo, Diane and Nancy for sharing the darkest moments of your writing careers and for giving us the hope to continue.



ACFW Indianapolis Conference

By Rohn Federbush

Two members of MMRWA attended the Conference in September, if not more. Gail Martin is one of the organization's founding members. My Brighton critique partner, Kathy Rouser, and I shared a room. Kathy has been a member of ACFW for many years and personally knows many of the groups published authors. Workshops are organized to serve different levels of writers.

Level A:

Writers who are starting out, who have attended 1-3 conferences, have completed 0-3 manuscripts, and are getting a handle on the publishing industry benefit most from these classes. Classes covered the basic elements of novel and proposal writing as well as how to submit finished manuscripts, and meet agents and editors.

Level B:

Writers who have been studying the craft for a while and have become strong writers, are receiving some requests for full manuscripts, but are getting rejected and haven't acquired an agent benefit from this track. Classes delve deeper into strengthening the elements of good manuscript and proposal as well as help identify the areas a writer needs to improve to help advance their career.

Level C:

Writers who have gotten requests for complete manuscripts with revisions from agents and editors, and have possibly made it to committee but are still receiving rejections benefit from these classes. Their writing is strong, they're ready for publication, editors and agents are watching them, but that elusive contract has not yet been offered. In these classes they learn the next step to publication as well as continue to strengthen their prose and publishing knowledge.

Level D:

Writers who are published or recently contracted get the most from these classes. Still struggling writers balancing their lives with new writing career demands and trying not to be stressed while meeting deadlines attend. Classes cover organization, marketing, public relations and speaking and the business side of writing.

Level E:

Published authors with several books enjoy the community of writers gathered in these classes. While the main goal is to learn about craft or marketing in a new or improved way, it was a gathering place for published writers to exchange ideas.

I signed up for classes without taking note of the different levels. As an RWAPRO I sought to improve my skills. I've completed fourteen unpublished novels and am a fourth of the way through my fifteenth, **Salome's Conversion**. I sauntered into a Level E workshop by Michael Hauge called the Six Stage Plot Outline and was promptly challenged. Participants needed to pre-apply with their novels' ISBN numbers. I explained I do have ISBN numbers for my published short stories, but was politely declined admission. Trying to realign my schedule, I sat down on a bench down the hall from the room. A man next to me noticed my chagrin. He asked me the cause and when I told him, he said to follow him. He was the speaker. Of course, I was graciously admitted by his say so and thoroughly enjoyed the class which lasted four hours of two days.

The tone of the conference might best be explained by the presence of a prayer room. Editors and Agents in the Christian market spoke at the daily main prayer meetings as well as before meals. Their message was the same. The written word can be used to inspire as well as entertain. The halls were filled with people who didn't pass you without speaking and were ready to offer encouragement and directions. The elevators held smiling faces, their purpose seemed to be a humble welcome to other writers trying to lighten the loads for God's people. It was truly amazing.

I'm not adverse to reality and there were people present whose tone seemed hypocritical; but mostly I believed in the sincerity of the majority of the people present. I certainly recommend the conference to everyone for its graciousness and style.

This article was first published in the 2010 November issue of The Heart Monitor, the Heart of Dixie's northern Alabama RWA chapter. Permission to forward is granted as long as proper credit is given the author. Thanks!

GET YOUR GROOVE ON: MOTIVATION COMES FROM WITHIN

By Christine Glover

I'm an unpublished writer. There's no pay, and no glory other than the occasional contest final or win. There's no one beating down the door to read my novels (except for my critique partners). But I write. I sit down in front of a computer screen and type away for hours with no end in sight. I write my stories, submit them to contests, query them to agents and editors, win or lose contests, get rejected. But I persist. I persist despite life happening all around me. I know other writers who persist as well despite the odds.

We are an exceptional breed.

Kelly Stone said that there are research studies performed on writers: we're motivated high achievers according to the researchers. I say we're delusional, masochistic, optimistic dreamers. And I believe we're not the only subset of people, the ones who write and FINISH books, and who persist despite the odds.

This article isn't just for writers. It is for anyone who wants to accomplish something and has to do so in a vacuum. Or a mini-vacuum. You can be a student, an artist, a decorator, a mother (last of the unsung heroes in my opinion), a cancer patient fighting to live and go on--the list goes on.

What makes you move? What wakes you up in the morning and gets you to do what it is you have to do despite the odds?

I'd like to know. Meanwhile, I'd like to share what is working for me as a writer because I think it can apply to any profession, any pursuit of excellence, and any situation that requires focus and stamina.

Once a week, I plan to share how I motivate myself in my blog DIGGING OUT OF DISTRACTION. Why? Because I grew up in a household where I wasn't encouraged to succeed. If anything, I was encouraged to fail (but that's a women's fiction story that I really think would bore most readers--who hasn't got some dysfunction in their lives, right?). But I managed to put myself through modeling school, get my GED/High school equivalency certificate, study for the SATs on my own and score over 1100 back in the day, go to college and graduate with a 4.0 and at the top of the Dean's List.

No one did this for me. No one cheered for me. Years later a mom of a friend said to me, "You really did accomplish a lot and you should be very proud." I appreciate her words so much because up until then I had really just had the attitude that the job had to be done so I did it.

Apparently I am an exception to the rule.

I want YOU to become an exception to the rule.

If you're a writer, a painter, a mother, a student, a (fill in the blank), then it's time to embrace your dream and go for it. Here's the first tip: make time to perform your duty/seek out your golden grail.

In other words, don't just talk about doing this wonderful thing you are about to do. I can't tell you how many people I have met who say to me they are also "going to write a book" when they learn I am an unpublished author. I can't tell you how many of them want me to write their love story of pain and loss, of victory, or of just loss. But they're just talking. They're not doing.

You can't do what you want to do if you are only talking about doing it.

You must sit down and do it.



You can't do what you want to do if you are only talking about doing it.

You must sit down and do it.

How? You say you don't have huge chunks of time to do this thing you want to do? I strike down this opposition. Do you have a half an hour? Yes? Great, then you have time.

You'd be amazed how much you can accomplish in just half an hour. Try it. Schedule half an hour a day at least five days a week to perform your thing that you want to do. Or to prepare to do that thing that you want to do. Half an hour. That's thirty minutes away from Facebook, surfing the Internet, or emailing videos to friends.

You want to go to medical school but haven't applied? Apply!! You want to paint a picture, but don't know how? Call a craft store and find out if they have classes. You want to learn to cook like the amazing Julia Child? Take a class, buy the book, and start cooking. You want to write? Close down the web server and turn on your word processor. Don't have a story? An idea? Start writing. You'd be amazed at how quickly the universe opens up for you and sends you a story.

There are no excuses allowed in my world. If I can write through a father-in-law dying of cancer, a husband having hip replacement surgery, health problems and more, then you can do what it is you have to do. When my husband had his hip replacement, I didn't even force myself to write a half an hour. I told myself to write "every day." Yes, there were days that I only wrote a sentence or a paragraph, but there were also days where I wrote pages and pages.

I wrote. I finished the book.

What do you want to do? Do you have half an hour to do it? Do you have more than half an hour? Go for it. What is the worst thing that can happen? You fail? You flop? Your writing never gets published? So what? At least you can say you gave it an effort. Your success is truly in the effort given to the project. All the rest of it? The As, the certificates, the money, the fame (yeah, let's dream about it), the careers--they're byproducts of our efforts.

My daughter's middle school principal told her eighth grade graduating class that their group was the first group he'd seen come through his doors in over seven years that had so much potential. They did. He wasn't just saying these words year after year. All the teachers, the counselors and the parents knew this group was special. Something was in the water that year. This group was by far one of the most empathetic, giving and supportive waves of students they had walking through the doors. I have my theories about why. They were in the 2nd grade during 9/11 in the DC area. They were in the 3rd grade during the sniper attacks and had to rely on adults to protect them. They had no recess for 6 weeks. They had to practice shelter in place in case of biological warfare attacks. They had to trust their teachers, each other and other parents. They developed a level of empathy in young people I have yet to witness again.

They are a unique group. I know I will see many of them become stellar adults in this crazy world we live in today.

But here is what else this principal said. He said "potential without perseverance and persistence is pointless." Now is the time when you must ask yourself what you are willing to do to get the job done. Develop your potential. Grow. Learn. Apply. Do. You cannot just be a lump of clay. You must become the vessel that can hold the water that nourishes the thirsty.

Work for it. Develop your talents. Strive to win.

This article was first posted on www.verandaview.blogspot.com on October 15, 2010 by Christine Glover. Christine is a 2010 Emerald City Opener Double Finalist, 2009 MAGGIE finalist, an RWA-PRO member and Heart of Dixie member. She writes fun, sexy, smart contemporary romances with emotional edge. Always an encourager, she hopes everyone she meets will reach their golden dream. You can contact her at cjglover63@gmail.com or visit her at her website: www.verandaview.blogspot.com.

This article first appeared in one of the October issues of MARA Matters. It may be re-used by sister RWA chapters with proper credit to chapter and author. Thanks!

Writing Sex Scenes How do you get those words on the page?

By Jackie Bannon

Do you use the word 'clitoris' or 'cock' when you write? Or do you still blush at the thought? When I first starting writing romance novels, I thought writing sex scenes would be easy.

I'd read romance novels for almost a decade...how hard could they be? When it came time to write my first sex scene, I stared at the computer screen for half a day without typing a single word and finally wrote "They had sex" before moving on, completely mortified I couldn't even start one.



Then, I hit the bookstores. That's when I found *The Joy of Writing Sex* by Elizabeth Benedict. This book opened my eyes and made me realize that writing sex scenes didn't have to be difficult.

In order to gain a reader's attention, writer's use goal, motivation, and conflict (GMC), point of view (POV), world building, character building...I could go on and on. Sex scenes are just another tool a writer uses to show, not tell, more about our character. Sex can be used to show a characters weakness, to show a characters internal conflict, and to show a relationship develop between a hero and heroine – and just like every other writer's tool, I had to learn how to use it.

First, you need to know what type of book you are writing, so you know what heat level you want to write. There are several different levels, there are even sub-levels within each heat level and everyone has a different definition. Below is a loose guideline of the current heat levels in the romance industry, which changes constantly. Review your target market before you make any decisions. Hot for one publishing line may not be the same for another, even if it is in the same publishing house.

Heat Levels

- **Porn** – The intent is to arouse the reader, not to focus on the relationship. This usually isn't included in the romance industry today.
- **Erotic** – Contains graphic sexual detail and usually a third party (which may be another person or an inanimate object such as toys or emotions such as pain). You'll find self-pleasure, BDSM, etc. This level also includes trigger words instead of euphemisms. Cock instead of penis, etc.
- **Hot** – Sex scenes maybe graphic, but are less graphic than erotic. You may find some self-pleasure here, but the focus is on the relationship, and though trigger words may still be used, they are not used to the same degree as in erotic scenes. Some publishers do not publish erotic, though they will take what others would consider erotic submissions and publish it under this level.
- **Spicy** – Even less graphic and focused on the more sensual side of sex. This includes a deeper exploration the relationship and feelings between a hero and heroine.
- **Sweet** – Usually shorter sex scenes focused on the relationship. The author focuses more about getting to the bedroom than being in it, though authors still can include the actual sex act.
- **Closed Door** – Sex is insinuated, not shown. The focus is on getting to bed without including the sexual act. Foreplay may or may not be discussed.



Now that you know the different heat levels, where do you think you write? Where do you want to write? When I first started, I thought I was writing Hot though I was actually writing Spicy. My natural inhibitions held me back and I had to find a way to overcome this. I would sit in front of the computer, my face beat red as I tried to push myself.

Here's the key though – practice, just as you practice every other tool of writing. Push yourself. Expand your boundaries. No one has to know what you read. No one has to know how bad your first few drafts were. Until you are comfortable with your writing, shoot above where you want to be. And if your writing turns you on, don't freak out. While the purpose was not to turn you on, at least you know someone finds it exciting.

Use it to your advantage - share it with your partner if you have one – he/she might appreciate it.

Still, how do you 'practice'? This is where Elizabeth Benedict's book comes in. There is no way to cover all the aspects she discusses; however, here are four organization principals she lists and how they helped me:

1. "A good sex scene is not always about good sex but it is always an example of good writing." – My translation: No matter how good the sex is, if the writing is poor, your reader won't get into the scene. You still need the basic principals of writing to pull your reader in. Why are we here? What is the purpose? I've seen people use sex to show how horrible their villain is, just as I've seen people use it show the relationship develop between the hero and heroine.

The memorable scenes show us aspects of the hero or heroine we wouldn't get a chance to see otherwise. Think about yourself during sex. It's a vulnerable and exciting experience. There are tons of things going through your mind. The key to writing these scenes is to balance the internal emotion with the external action without slowing the scene or alienating the reader.

2. "A good sex scene should always connect to the larger concerns of the work." – My translation: Is there a point to your sex scene? The sex should be about furthering the relationship between the hero and heroine – about furthering the plot, not just sex for the sake of sex, unless your heat level requires it.

3. "The needs, impulses, and histories of your character should drive the sex scene." – My translation: Use the sex scene as a tool to reveal more about your character. Show the reader what is going on inside your characters heads. Are they nervous? If so why? Do they want the lights off? If so, why?

4. "The relationship your characters have to each other – whether they are adulterers or strangers on a train – is critical to what happens in a sex scene." – My translation: The relationship will set the stage for more than just the sex. It will set the stage for internal conflict, mood, and emotions. Look at what is going on around them. Set the scene and use it.

Ok, so we know what we want, but how do we overcome our own hesitation? The truth is everyone writes sex scenes differently. Find a way that works for you. Even today, the first drafts of my sex scenes are very analytical. I have to go back and add emotion, thoughts, etc. I have to edit, edit, edit! If you need to, get a glass of wine, play some music, whatever it takes to put you in the mood. Here are some ways to add other tools to make you feel more comfortable.

Goal/Motivation/Conflict

Some authors will tell you that you have to have a GMC for every scene. Some will say you don't. When it comes to sex scenes, unless you're writing porn, you need a reason for the scene besides the sex. Without it, why does the reader care that they've gone to the bedroom? The goal and/or motivation could be physical satisfaction or an emotional connection. Either will work, as long as the reader understands why they are there. Even at the erotic level, readers want a happy ending – not necessarily marriage, but a happy ending. Show the conflict (internal doubts), show the development (shift from sex to making love)...use sex as a tool to move the hero/heroine toward their happy ending.

Character Building

You've got to build your characters so your reader wants to care about what happens to them. Sex can be used as very personal form of communication, revealing doubts, conflicts, and emotions sometimes better than



words. Once you've built your characters, stay in character (i.e. stay in their point of view) and explore their minds.

World Building

Where your characters are plays a part in your characters personalities. Why wouldn't this be part of the bedroom as well? I wouldn't talk about what they see around them during sex. I mean, come on...do you think of the shade of the bedspread when you have sex? But if they are having sex someplace else, say an airplane bathroom, the location of the sex tells you a lot about the characters. Use that. It usually doesn't take more than a couple lines scattered here or there. Also, some of the best sex scenes aren't about good sex. In Janet Chapman's *Seductive Impostor*, a third party hears a scream and walks in just as the hero orgasms. She knocks him out to save the heroine from an attacker. I still smile to this day when I see that book and reread it all the time. Why? Because the entire book was like that. The world they lived in was so colorful and amazing.

Point of View

You've spent all this time building your character – don't cheat the reader or your character now by being shy. Be honest with them. Are your characters fucking or making love? Men and women categorize sex differently at different times in a relationship. Use this to show the progression of the relationship, to show the reader how the feelings developed. Just because someone starts out 'fucking' at the beginning of the book doesn't mean he/she won't change switch to thinking of it as 'making love' by the end. Build the sexual tension between your characters, make the reader like them, and make the reader want to see their relationship progress to the bedroom. Often, sexual tension is more desired than the sexual act.

Timeline

If your characters aren't ready to hop into bed, it will show. If you're a plot driven writer – don't panic. This doesn't mean you have to redesign your entire outline. Look at where the relationship is – have you developed the romance enough to do what you want to do? If you're a character driven writer – again don't panic. You probably haven't built enough sexual tension, haven't developed the relationship, or are pushing things to fast.

Last but not least...As a single woman who is dating, I can usually tell within the first three chapters if the writer has been married for a while. I hate to say this, but several first meetings or relationship beginnings in romance books aren't realistic. I'm not talking about how they meet, but how they act. Often the characters focus on things single people wouldn't focus on during a first meeting. They are missing that initial self-doubt or self-awareness. Do some research. Go out with your single friends to a nightclub and listen to them. Listen to what they talk about as a guy goes by, or what they say to each other when he leaves to go to the bathroom or get a drink. You'd be surprised what they focus on. Clothes, scent, mannerisms, behavior, and speech – all of these can instantly spark interest or kill it.

These elements also can be missing the first time two people have sex with each other. Two people having sex for the first time will have a different sexual experience than two people who have known each other for years, or even two people who have had sex together for years. Remember your first time with your partner – was it comfortable? What were you thinking about? Were you thinking about your to do list or wondering he thought your thighs were fat? When your bodies rubbed against each other and caused a noise, did you wonder if he/she thought you farted? You don't need to add the question about farting into your book, but show what they are thinking. Have your character wonder if the other person likes what they are doing? Or what that moan means? They don't know each other well enough to understand the tones and this is one of the most exciting parts of a relationship. Use sex to show the closeness developing.

The number one thing to remember when writing a sex scene is that it is a lot like teaching your teenage son how to drive. You don't tell him to put the key in the ignition and turn it on. He knows that, just as your reader knows the mechanics of sex. Your job as a romance author is to use your writing tools to show the reader how the actions make the characters feel, what they are thinking, and why.

Jackie Bannon's mind works like a ping-pong ball, jumping from paranormal to science fiction and back to contemporary. Currently, she is working on a quirky women's fiction - which is a much safer way to express her spontaneity.

The following article first appeared in the October 2010 issue of In Print!, the monthly newsletter of Houston Bay Area RWA. Permission granted to reprint or forward to sister RWA chapters with proper credit to author and chapter.

The Joys of Editing

by Robin Haseltine

Editing can be fun! With a systematic approach, the process runs smoothly. Some writers prefer NaNoWriMo or Candy Haven's Fast Draft method of getting down the basic storyline, then returning to edit after the fact. Others edit as they write. I write new scenes, chapters, and passages (depending on my muse) for a day or two. The next session is spent in a quick edit of what I've written, then I'll add new material. After a few days, I'll run through all I've written in that chapter before moving on.

While your brain performs the mundane tasks of removing unnecessary verbiage, ensuring tenses agree, and actions have reactions, your muse scans the fleshed-out scene, and potential new subplots, conflicts, and tensions (or places to add foreshadowing) can pop up.

The two-steps forward, one-step back method helps eliminate repetition, ensures continuity and flow from one chapter to the next, and guarantees uniform characterization and description. By the time I reach the end of a manuscript, the work is largely edited, making subsequent passes easier to manage.

After typing "The End," my method is to work one chapter at a time using the following steps:

The First Full Pass

Try to do a first full pass through your manuscript in as few days as possible. With early chapters fresher in your mind, you'll remember inconsistencies, plot holes, loose ends, and unnecessary repetition. You'll likely find new places to tuck in a few words of foreshadowing, or ways to filter backstory later on.

Condense

*Minimize the number of ellipses, dashes, and semi-colons. Search and destroy: that, just, really, and other words cluttering sentences. Review how has, -ing words, was, and by are used and see if alternate word usage offers crisper, more concise meaning.

Strengthen

*Assess adverbs and delete as many as possible in favor of stronger verbs.

*Use more descriptive colors, especially if writing in a female POV (point-of-view).

*Theme. Of course you have one. If not, now's a great time to add it. Stay true to your theme and use this pass to add description, reflection, and dialogue to enrich your story.

Smooth

*Analyze character movement. Get them logically across the room. Ensure what they're doing is physically possible. Avoid actions without reactions, questions without answers, and scenes without sequels.

*Have the computer read aloud while you follow the text. To keep from interrupting your concentration, asterisk anything that needs fixing and return to it after the first narrated pass. (Easy to find later.) Potential trouble spots: Jarring changes in POV. Misplaced modifiers. Telling instead of showing. Passive instead of active sentences. Complex sentences lacking rhythm. Too many short or overly long sentences grouped together, except when done occasionally for literary effect. The "Margie Lawson" Second Pass I've taken a number of editing classes, from RWA online chapter workshops, to novel construction courses offered by Mary Buckham, Todd Stone, and Pat Kay. The classes and packets that have helped me most with balance are those offered by Margie Lawson. After printing a single-spaced copy of my edited book (on the back of used paper), I use colored markers to differentiate the writing elements: dialogue, description, internal monologue, and others according to Margie's suggestions. It's easy to see if I've got too much green, or the orange in one section doesn't quite mesh with the orange in the next section, etc. Even better, comparing the sections (now easier to spot in the same color) is yet another pass to ensure a lack of repetition.

This methodical approach works because instead of a simple edit in your mind, you're now employing other senses: sound via computer narration, and sight through vivid color. Taking short breaks to meditate, exercise, breathe, or have a cup of



coffee ensures you'll return to the editing process fresh. Stop reading the moment you find you've read through the same sentence or passage twice. Start repeating the mantra that editing can stimulate your muse, strengthen your writing, and deepen your story, to see if you can turn dread into excitement at finding just the right spots to add color, heighten conflict, and enrich with theme.

Resources:

Candy Haven's Fast Draft Writing Workshops -- <http://www.candacehavens.com/>
National Novel Writing Month -- <http://www.nanowrimo.org/>
Online Editing for pennies a day (try for free) -- <http://www.autocrit.com>
Pat Kay's Novel Writing Classes -- <http://www.patriciakay.com/classes/index.php>
Mary Buckham's Fiction Writing Classes -- <http://www.marybuckham.com/Workshops.html>
Todd Stone's Novelist Boot Camp -- <http://www.storytellerroad.com/>
Margie Lawson's Deep Editing System -- <http://www.margielawson.com/>

Robin Haseltine is an award-winning parenting columnist with articles appearing on Oxygen, Moms Online & Oprah.com. Robin has been writing fiction since 2006, finaling in several contests and working with an agent in pursuit of a book contract.

The following article first appeared in the October 2010 Edition of the Ruffled Sheets, the newsletter for the Missouri RWA chapter. Permission is granted for other RWA chapters to use when appropriate credit given to the author.

I write romance, wanna make something of it?

By Lynn Cahoon

I was reading John Gardner's craft book, *On Becoming a Novelist*, the other night as I was stirring the risotto for dinner.

The book was published in 1983, a year I went to work leaving my infant son home with his father. *Mr. Mom*, a movie about a stay at home dad came out the same year. The world was in flux.

Pouring in more chicken stock, I came across this bit of advice, read bad fiction so you can appreciate the good (read literary). And where did Mr. Gardner suggest we find the bad fiction? Woman's fiction, mostly. He goes on to tell us that we should underline passages that stream with triteness, cuteness and sentimentality. At this time, something was steaming. And it wasn't the risotto.

Why is romance, and any women's fiction, the stepsister of the publishing world? Why are cozy's looked down upon by the noir division of the mystery world? Tell me what's wrong with not having bloody body parts showing up page after page. And why do we as readers love the books we love? I've been struggling for a while to define and claim what I write. When I announced that I had sold a short story to people at work, they thought it was cute that I'd sold it to *True Love*. Selling three months in a row, my stories are claiming me. I am a romance writer. Romance with a touch of mystery and humor.

I kept reading as I was stirring. Mr. Gardner redeemed himself at the end of this chapter with this one idea --even though you can get advice from a lot of great writers, in the end, it's your story and you must face that blank page on your own. Trust your gut as my accountability partners tell me. I think readers are given that same advice. Read what you love, not what people tell you to read.

Stirring the last bit of broth into my risotto, I realized, writing is like food. Not everyone has the same tastes. And that's what makes this journey fun.

*Lynn writes contemporary romance and cozy mysteries. Lynn's short fiction has been published in *True Love*. Her latest story, *Addicted to Credit*, can be found in the winter edition of *True Experience*. Lynn's published several essays, including one to *Chicken Soup*. You can follow her journey at: www.lynncahoon.blogspot.com*

The following was re-published in the November issue of Midwest Muse, newsletter of Midwest Fiction Writers (MFW). It may be used or forwarded by RWA chapters with proper attribution to Elizabeth and MFW.

How to Create Living, Breathing Characters: The Elizabeth Elliott Method

By Elizabeth Elliott

1. Fill out imaginary employment, health history, family history and driver's license forms for each character.
2. Write the highlights of their diaries from birth to the point the story starts.
3. Figure out what means the most to them in life, then figure out how the other lead character will screw it up.
4. Write a synopsis that plays upon their strengths and weaknesses, and hope a plot takes shape by the time you reach page 20.
5. Write the first three chapters of the book and stop when you realize the characters are not really who you thought they were, that they have these weird relatives who popped out of the woodwork, or quirks that require a totally different slant, or they are experts in a field you know nothing about that will require six months of research, or any one of three billion scenarios that will make what you've written to-date fodder for the recycle pile.
6. Junk those chapters, except for the one perfect line on page 37, and start again at step one.
7. Repeat steps one through six until you get a letter from the Save the Spotted Owl committee citing you as a major threat to the species' survival. By this time, all those lines you saved from page 37 will add up to about 50 pages of good material, most of the forms you filled out in step one will be accurate, the diaries will be so sensational that you will be tempted to publish them anonymously, you know exactly what will happen in every major scene and you can rewrite version 1.57 of Chapters one through three and they will actually end up being the real Chapters one through three. Continue to step 8.
8. Write Chapters four through ten, sure in the knowledge that you will be one of the few authors in history to turn in press-ready copy for a first draft. Take a breather after you complete Chapter 10 and reread.
9. Unfortunately, you realize it will be better all around if you kill off the hero's parents in Chapter 1, and have the hero and heroine meet in the country rather than in London. This, of course, results in a rewrite, and the synopsis that you followed faithfully no longer makes any sense. Forget about steps one through seven. In fact, at this point, you wonder why you wasted so much effort on those steps when this was clearly the story that was meant to be told from the start. Who needs an outline? The plot will take care of itself.



10. You realize somewhere around Chapter 30 that the book has no actual end, and that you will still be writing this story when your first Social Security check arrives. Repeat steps one through four to figure out where things went wrong.
11. You find yourself reading the want-ads, and discover to your amazement that fast-food chains offer medical and retirement benefits-even paid vacations! Unfortunately, they also offer something called "breakfast" and you haven't been awake for this event for the last twenty years, which probably means a career in the fast-food industry isn't in your future after all.
12. You decide to rewrite the entire ms. "just one more time" before you start up the car in the closed garage. This whole process has made you so psychotic that you are starting to hear voices in your head. Then you realize they are the characters' voices, asking where you've been lately when they had all this great stuff to tell and no one to write it down. (By the way, this is the step where the characters come to life, but for me, they refuse to come to life if I try to skip ahead to this point-there are no shortcuts!)
13. You write as fast as you can until your forehead drops onto the keyboard, then drag yourself to bed for an hour until a sudden flash of insight makes you bolt upright and run back to your computer.
14. Repeat step thirteen for six to eight weeks until you are officially diagnosed with sleep deprivation disorder and the kids don't recognize you without a "HELLO, MY NAME IS" tag stuck to the pocket of the pajamas you wear around the house regardless of the time of day. At this point, you should have the near-final version of the ms. in hand. Send the ms. off to your editor before you do a final proof because you're sure it's absolutely perfect.
15. Correct the 400 typos that somehow managed to slip through the spell-checker, and realize in horror that you sent your editor the oldest versions of chapters 8 and 12, which make absolutely no sense in the current draft.
16. Sleep for three days. By this time, your critique partner has sent all sorts of comments pointing out the seams that still show from the previous versions. Stitch them up, then run the final draft by your mother the ex-school teacher to make sure it really is the final draft.
17. Send the final draft to your editor with profuse apologies for the draft that somehow escaped your wastebasket and made it onto her desk three weeks before.
18. Make mighty vows that you will never again waste so much time on steps one through six.
19. Start a new book and begin again at step one.

This article first appeared in the July 1996, Midwest Fiction Writers – The Midwest Muse Newsletter. 1996 Bio: Since joining our group earlier this year, Elizabeth Elliott (who also answers to the name 'Linda') has wasted no time jumping into the MFW fray. The same holds true for her writing career. Her first book, The Warlord, debuted at number 18 on Ingram's national mass-market list, was nominated by Romantic Times in the Best First Novel category, and is currently up for two (count 'em, two) RITAs. Nonetheless, she insists her husband and two sons keep her feet firmly planted in reality. Her third book, Betrothed, will be out in September of '96.



—CHAPTER CHATTER—



MEMBER NEWS

Nancy Gideon: Finished Book 5 in the By Moonlight series. Just got cover art for Book 4 BOUND BY MOONLIGHT and got to rewrite the back cover blurb. Will be writing an article for the RWR on Writing Through Divorce.

Lucy Kubash: Trying to finish book for "I Will Write A Book." Also, trying to resurrect my short-lived blog. Rosanne and I had a fun time at the Swallow's Nest bookstore in Quincy, MI on October 23rd. Signed books, met new readers, even the mayor of the town stopped in to say hi! Then there was a really neat consignment shop right across the street, and so of course we had to go browse.

Rosanne Bittner: Agent sent PARADISE VALLEY to Grand Central Press, who is looking for Westerns. Working on a paranormal set in Virginia City, NV. Took over job of Treasurer for local Coloma Lioness Club, a charity organization, so now am Treasurer for the family business, the Lioness Club and MMRWA. Enjoying my growing grandsons who are now into football and karate.

Anne Stone: Stuck with my 2 pages a day, and happy to report, more on some days. The story is developing nicely.

Margo Hoornstra: Working on more books for the Class of '85 series. My holiday book, GLAD TIDINGS, part of the Class of '85 Series from The Wild Rose Press will be released on December 1, 2010.

Annette Briggs: Research is a necessary evil, so I'm doing it.

Diane Burton: My futuristic, The Pilot, finaled in MARA's Fiction from the Heartland contest. Finishing first draft of P.I. story. Plugging away on detective story.

Laurie Kuna: Got deadline extension on novella. Did a book panel at Portage Library in September.

Rohn Federbush: Tied for third place, SOLA, for "North Parish," an 1812 historical romance. Attended ACFW Conference in Indianapolis. Critiquing with two groups in Ann Arbor and one in Brighton.

Tracy Roper: I am a finalist (in the top three) in both the Melody of Love Contest (Nashville RWA) and the Golden Rose Contest (Portland RWA) for my Single Title Contemporary, Totally Dody. I kissed my fifty-bucks buh-bye and entered the Golden Heart Contest. My manuscript is currently under review at several publishing houses and my agent feels confident it will sell before the end of the year (but she's an agent. It's her job to tell me that J. I just hope she's right.) I have officially changed my pen name to Tracy Brogan and now have a website at TracyBrogan.com. Please check it out and tell me what you think. My next book, Made in China is coming along sloooooowly. I'm trying to learn to write faster.

Aileen Hyne: I'm reading again...

Florence Price: Working on my WIP and gearing up for the holidays!

Connie Smith: Working on self-help book.

Alison Hart: Both MESMERIZING STRANGER and IRRESISTIBLE STRANGER were nominated by RT for best Silhouette Romantic Suspense!

**Welcome Back
To Members:**

Rohn Federbush
Sue Charnley

Members' Current and Upcoming Releases Fall/Winter 2010 and Spring 2011

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. Coming in October 2010 is *Star-Crossed Sweethearts*, the seventh book in the *Brides of Bella Rosa* continuity from Harlequin Romance. www.jackiebraun.com

Arianna Skye/Sidney Ayers: *Wings of Desire* is available in e-book and at Amazon.com through Eternal Press. www.ariannaskye.com *Beauty School Demon* will be available in June, 2011 from Sourcebooks Casablanca. www.sidneyayers.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. nancy.gideon.com

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

Alison Hart/Jennifer Greene: New releases by Jennifer Greene from Silhouette Romantic Suspense: *Secretive Stranger*, April 2010, *Mesmerizing Stranger*, September 2010, *Irresistible Stranger*, December 2010. Also coming in November, 2010 is a Special Edition, *The Billionaire's Handler*, by Jennifer Greene. www.jennifergreene.com

Maris Soule: *As The Crow Flies*, another P.J. Benson Mystery, published by Five Star, a subdivision of Cengage Learning, will be released in March 2011. www.MarisSoule.com

Katharine Ashe: *Swept Away by a Kiss*, Katharine's debut historical romance, became available on July 27, 2010 from Avon. *Captured by a Rogue Lord* will be available from Avon in April 2011. www.katharineashe.com

Margo Hoornstra: *Glad Tidings* - Part of the Class of '85 Series from The Wild Rose Press will be released on December 1, 2010. www.margohoornstra.com



—THE FINAL REFLECTION—

A Joyful Goodbye

By Alyssa Marble, Editor
Mid-Michigan Mirror

As I assemble the final newsletter of 2010 and my final edition as editor, I find myself both saddened and joyful that I'll be passing the Mirror on to another MMRWA member.

Our chapter is a vital and necessary part of being a romance writer. We need the support and help from fellow writers—who else understands those voices in our heads? But the chapter can't exist without the participation of each member. Like so many groups and organizations, MMRWA is a sum of its total parts.

I've enjoyed being the 2010 editor of the Mid-Michigan Mirror and hope to take on this role again in future. For now, I would like to welcome to our incoming editor, Tracy Roper, as well as say thank you to the 2010 Board members as they pass the torch to the 2011 Board.

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).

Policy

The Mid-Michigan Mirror's policy is to offer our original MMRWA articles to other RWA® chapters and loops to use with all credits given unless the author specifies restrictions in the article. The Mirror staff reserves the right to edit submissions for such things as spelling or typographical errors, punctuation, grammar, size requirements, etc., and content with author's approval.

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Mid-Michigan RWA is a not-for-profit professional writers' organization incorporated in the State of Michigan. The business meeting minutes, treasurer's reports, and other legal documents of the corporation are published online in the files section of the restricted, members-only MMRWABUSINESS list.

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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.