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# The Mid-Michigan Mirror

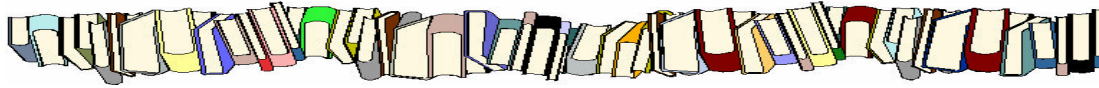
## A Reflection of Romance



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Our August 21 meeting featured MMRWA's own **Jennifer Armintrout** giving her interactive presentation entitled How To Build a Better Vampire. Please see page 2 for the recap.

**Please refer to:**  
**MMRWABUSINESS@yahoogroups.com**  
**for meeting minutes and chapter business information.**

**What's Mid-Michigan's  
Flavia Crowner up to  
now? Find out on page 10**



Flavia Crowner



### September Birthdays

Michele Hickerty 11  
Wil Emerson 15  
Marjorie Sandoval 16  
Patty Hall 28

**September's Meeting is at Sam's Joint in Plainwell on the 18th, at NOON.**

We will be offering a Golden Heart Preparation Workshop. Please contact me, if you would like the first chapter of your manuscript evaluated by one of the MMRWA's published authors and/or experienced judges. We will be going over the do(s) and don't(s) of GH submission as well as hearing from the MMRWA's very own **2004 Golden Heart Finalist, Holli Bertram!**

Please contact me ASAP so I can pair you up with one of our authors/judges at. [matt@wmis.net](mailto:matt@wmis.net) or you can call me at 616.456.8073.

Thanks! Chris Allen-Riley

**Non-members seeking information about Mid-Michigan meetings and joining our group may contact: Dawn Bartley [bartleyd@chartermi.net](mailto:bartleyd@chartermi.net)**

**Preparedness. . . Not just for Natural Disasters**

By **Michele Hickerty**, President

With this rash of hurricanes, it's easy for our minds to turn to disaster preparedness. I don't know that I remember ever hearing about so many of these storms one after another. My heart breaks for these people that can't get a breath to reconstruct their lives.

While this is going on, I wonder: what have I done in a writing related way to prepare myself for the unexpected. I have to admit, I'm paranoid. This is one place I'm ready. Here are a few tips:

1. Always have a back-up. I know more than one writer who has lost work because they have saved everything on their computer hard drive. In the same vein, I also know a few who have lost work because they saved only to floppy disk. My motto is "Save twice!" I save everything to Zip disk and to floppy disk.
2. Create a back-up location for your work. In many cases, it isn't feasible to save your writing to a place away from home, but I know many writers who will save to a web location.
3. Others, like myself will burn their current writing to CD every few weeks and give it to someone else for safe keeping.

Whatever you choose, give yourself peace of mind. Know that your work is safe so that you can worry about other important things – like the actual writing. Have a great month. . . and implement your own disaster preparedness plan!

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Recap of the August Program:

**How To Build a Better Vampire.** By Jennifer Armintrout

With a life-long interest in vampires, Jennifer Armintrout drew from different mythos as well as examining the sub-genre from a reader's perspective. Currently, her vampire series is under serious consideration at LUNA.

Building A Better Vampire: Writing Beyond the Stereotypes by Jennifer Armintrout  
Disclaimer: Though I am an author, I am not a published author. But I'm not covering this subject as a writer. I'm speaking to you today from a much more important soapbox. I'm here as a reader.

How To Build a Better Vampire continued on page 3

How To Build a Better Vampire continued from page 2

If credentials are needed, I have plenty. I don't know when I first heard of vampires, but my first blood-sucker-related memory came at age three, courtesy of a church-shaped candle holder in the bedroom my mother and I shared. With the cool, clear-headed logic of a toddler, I deduced that there must be a very tiny vampire living inside. Otherwise, how did the lights get turned on? I slept with my hands clamped firmly around my neck every night.

As I grew older, my interest in vampires never wavered. They remain my favorite subject, in books and on film, and I'm forever entertaining new and impossible scenarios in which an every-day-Jen like myself might come face to fangs with her favorite monster.

In the course of my obsession I've had plenty of time to refine my tastes. I am now the pickiest vampire reader/viewer on the planet. There are plenty like me out there, and today I'm going to share with you the secrets to gaining our hard earned dollars.

My esteemed chapter President (Michele Hickerty) and brutal critique mentor has a favorite saying. "It's all been done before." Never was there a genre where this has been more true than Paranormal Romance. There, everything has been over-done before.

Every culture on the planet has had vampire myths, from the Eastern Goddess Khali to Central America's Chupacabra, right back over the pond to Romania's fabled Count Dracula. Keeping this in mind, what are the chances you're going to sit down at your computer and reinvent the fanged wheel?

Too many of my trips to Barnes and Noble have ended in dramatic emotional displays in which I, eternally tortured reader that I am, fall to my knees in the romance aisle, a book in each hand, crying "When, Lord, when will someone write a vampire who doesn't whine all the time?" Ask anyone who knows me, and they will tell you this is why I'm no longer welcome at most bookstores in Michigan. But I'm not alone.

Readers of good vampire fiction don't want to read Interview With The Vampire. They've already read it. They've seen Dracula, and they watch Buffy reruns faithfully on FX.. Your job as an author is to know your roots, do the research, and then twist it around and bring your readers something fresh and exciting.

As any romance writer worth her salt knows, your story is only as good as your characters. You can have the most original plot with the most satisfying ending in the history of all fiction, but if your characters are flat, your story will be, too.

How To Build a Better Vampire continued on page 4

How To Build a Better Vampire continued from page 3

Rarely in fiction will you see a female ghoul rise from her grave to suck the tender neck of a pimple-faced sixteen-year-old boy. Nine times out of ten, the vampire is a man, and his victim is a defenseless and virginal young woman. The male vampire is all about sex, and he got that way from early myths that preyed on male fears of female sexuality as something evil and dangerous. The male vampire as a potent, sexual being is an image that has survived for centuries. Your reader is going to expect a hero she'd like to go home with despite his thirst for people juice, and your villain to ooze deadly charm. This has resulted in the formation of three vampire stereotypes."

The Tortured, Sensitive Vampire, or TSV, is an often used hero. Good, gloomy examples include Anne Rice's Louis, Angel from Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Angel: The Series, and Detective Nick Knight from Forever Knight. The Tortured, Sensitive Vampire is atoning for something. He's ashamed of his evil nature, or something he's done in the past.

The Sexy and Aggressive Vampire, or SAV, is my personal favorite. He's seen the beast within, and he wants your heroine to see it, too. The best examples of this character are Spike from Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Angel: The Series, Lestat, anti-hero of Anne Rice's The Vampire Chronicles, and Dracula as portrayed by Gerard Butler in Wes Craven's Dracula 2000. SAV can be hero or villain, but he's especially good at walking the line between the two. In any case, your heroine will have a hard time resisting him, and so will your readers. While the TSV might stray into beta-male territory, the SAV is all Alpha, all the time.

JPE, are Just Plain Evil. Unless you're into long scenes of intense therapy and possibly anti-psychotic drugs, these guys are going to be strictly villains. JPEs are found on television, like Lacroix in Forever Knight. You can also see them crawling out of random graves at the beginning of nearly every Buffy episode.

To be truly interesting, your vampire hero must include elements from all three archetypes to survive. Your vampire should have both a light side, and a dark side. Because no one is totally good or totally evil, your vampires shouldn't be, either.

Your plot will be influenced by the order in which he fits into these categories. Some of these attributes have taken place in his past, and have shaped who he is today. Some are yet to happen, and will be influenced by your plot.

A good thing to note, however, is that in almost all paranormal fiction, the vampire, whether hero or villain, has done a complete one-eighty from his past. The villain might have once been good, the hero may have a dark secret he's been atoning for. You might not even realize it when you begin writing the story.

How To Build a Better Vampire continued on page 5

How To Build a Better Vampire continued from page 4

I struggled to keep the “dark secret” element out of one of my projects, only to discover in the middle of the book that my hero had committed an unspeakable act upon being turned into a vampire. It came as quite a shock to me, but it explained a lot.

This element can be abused. Often, the author is unwilling to concede that her hero might be less than perfect. In these cases, the oft used “atoning for a sin he didn’t commit” gimmick is employed, where the character heaps guilt on himself for circumstances that were totally out of his control. Since this has become a staple of the genre, I recommend we lay this to rest, and let our vampire heroes, no matter how fantastically moral they might be, take responsibility for being a monster. Let him chomp on his wife/sister/girlfriend/etc. in his darkest hour, and let the situation be totally under his control. The angst will give a JPE reason for his depravity, a TSV a good excuse for punishing himself, and an SAV plenty of room to dabble in TSVdom.

In my rabid consumption of all things vampire, rarely have I come across a vampire as a heroine. In fact, most female vampires are caricatures instead of fully fleshed out characters. They fit into categories much in the way their male counter parts do, but the choices are a bit different.

Now we can talk about The Not-Quite-Turned-Yet Damsel in Distress, who we will refer to as damsel because NQTYDID is just too darn unwieldy. She can be found in movies like Blade, Dracula, and John Carpenter’s Vampires. They’ve been bitten, and they’re on the cusp of change. They don’t understand what’s happening to them, and they’re frightened. It’s up to the men folk of the story to save them from the evil that is about to claim their souls.

Our next type, the Seductress, is most commonly used as a secondary character or villain. The three brides of Dracula and Salma Hyek’s stripper vampire, Satanica Pandemonium, in From Dusk Til Dawn, are cookie cutter vampire Seductresses. They want blood and power, and they’ll use their bodies to get them. This almost always ends in their destruction, a punishment for their overt sexuality.

Kick ass, take no prisoners vampire babe is tough as nails. She doesn’t need anyone’s help, and only grudgingly accepts distant friendships. She often dresses in leather and carries enough gadgets to put Batman to shame. You’ve seen her in Underworld and Blade II, and though she wasn’t wearing black leather, Claudia in Interview With The Vampire is also a Kick-ass babe. Unfortunately, at the end of the story the Kick-ass babe always falls in love with a man who can protect her, as the lesson she learns on her hero’s journey is how to depend on others. Or she dies.

How To Build a Better Vampire continued on page 6

How To Build a Better Vampire continued from page 5

If my commentary sounds a little jaundiced, it's because I am madly in love with a genre where the rules were written by men. If a female vampire can take care of herself, it's because it hasn't yet occurred to her that she needs a man to help her out. If she's in touch with her sexuality, she is evil and must be destroyed. In fact, if they don't meet a grisly end, both the kick-ass babes and the seductresses both become Damsels by the end of the story, as occurs in Blade II. My own vampire series lapsed into this territory, until I was gently pushed back on track by an editor. As a vampire fan, I was conditioned to see the men win the day. As a vampire author, I'm learning that other readers are as tired of these stereotypes as I am! Check out Kindred: The Embraced. Sasha and Lily are perfect examples of well-rounded female vampire characters.

Although she is a supernatural being, the same care and consideration has to go into her characterization as you would a human character. Vampire is one aspect of her personality, but not the thing that defines her.

Vampire rules- part of the fun and challenge of writing a vampire is the fact that you have limitations. Everyone writes vampires differently. Some can walk around in the sunlight. Some, like Sherrilyn Kenyon's Darkhunters, don't even have to drink blood. But your vampires do have to have weaknesses, otherwise you're going to have to come up with a good reason that these super beings haven't wiped out humanity yet. That could be a good book, too, but it might not be the one you intended to write.

Almost every vampire story out there deals with secrecy. The vampire doesn't want anyone to know he or she is undead, and they try to hide it at all costs. Their identity is a weakness you can exploit. This is an often-used tactic, but you can easily make it fresh.

Most books deal with one of the big three of dead giveaways- the sun, blood consumption, or physical change in reaction to hunger. But what about the supernatural traits that have fallen by the wayside in paranormal fiction?

Reflection-how hard would it be to get around in the world these days if you didn't cast a reflection? Because I'm vampire obsessed, I often think about this when I'm out running errands. Mirrors are everywhere. Would the average person notice a missing reflection? How would you deal with the ones who did?

Food-Think of all the people you know well. You've probably seen all of them eat at one time or another. What if your vampire couldn't eat human food? What excuses could he or she make in social situations for refusing drinks or hors d'oeuvres? Would they have to defend themselves against allegations of an eating disorder? This can be a good comedy opportunity, too.

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How To Build a Better Vampire continued from page 6

Moving water- I've only ever seen this one used once, in L.J. Smith's The Vampire Diaries, and to be honest, it left the reader with a lot of unanswered questions. An old vampire myth holds that if you're being chased by a vampire, cross a river or stream. The vampire won't be able to follow you, as supernatural beings can't cross moving water. It's a logistics nightmare, but again, could provide you with some great challenges for your character. Imagine a vampire caught in a rainstorm. He can't step off the curb because of the moving water in the gutter. The possibilities are almost endless with this one, but again, you might write yourself into a corner, so be careful.

Fangs- Most vampires in fiction have retractable fangs. Like a cat's claws, these wicked teeth only come out when they're needed. But what if your vampire had to walk around with them all the time? She couldn't smile too big, and she'd probably have a slight speech difference from them. Someone is going to notice, eventually, that she has two teeth an inch longer than the others.

Don't feel bad if you make things a little difficult on your vampires. If they're TSV or a Damsel, they'll have something to whine about. If they're SAV or Kick-Ass, they'll gladly rise to the challenge, and probably throw around witty retorts as they do. And, if they're JPE or a Seductress, they'll more than likely get off on the pain. Just remember, the harder it is for your vampires to function in the normal world, the harder it is for you to write them.

If any of you are familiar with the character of Angel, you know that his weakness is happiness. If he experiences even a second of happiness, he loses his soul and becomes, well, a killing machine. If I had created that character, I would have reconsidered, because of how difficult it would be to write about someone like that.

As in all genres, in Paranormal fiction, research is king. I've included a recommended reading list of some of my personal favorites, but it's not an exhaustive list. It also doesn't include my hall of shame, vampire books that were so bad, one even got a steak knife through the cover. I definitely encourage anyone interested in writing vampire stories to start assembling their own hall of shame. If you've read the worst of the worst, you won't repeat those author's mistakes.

Always keep in mind the wisdom imparted to me. "Everything has been done before." Remember, it's just up to you to do it differently.

Please see Building a Better Vampire: Writing Beyond Stereotypes Recommended Research List one page 19.

### Member News

**Jen Armintrout:** revisions on my vampire novel for LUNA who said, “keep it open for a sequel.

**Rosanne Bittner:** INTO THE WILDERNESS (Forge Books) is a finalist in Affaire de Coeur's reader/writer voting contest. Finishing up her third inspirational, INGRID'S CHOICE. Received cover for WALK BY FAITH (January '05) - gorgeous! Working on proposal for her first contemporary story, rough title - SECRETS - to be auctioned by her agent. After years of effort, finally received the rights back from Kensington Books for most of the 26 books she wrote for Zebra, including all of her Savage Destiny series. Recently returned from "house hunting" in Vegas, where she and hubby Larry purchased a condo for winter living! Feels like she just returned from a second honeymoon!

**Dawn Bartley:** Learned more about my writing style while on vacation.

**Annette Briggs:** Plugging away on a new manuscript.

**Karen Duquette:** In Lansing opening Books Store, Primarily Romance – new, used, rare and Well Used ‘N’ Worn – Antiques, Art, & Writerly Things. In my store I plan to feature Michigan writers, MMRWA associates.

**Wil Emerson:** Attended two conferences; remorse over missing Dallas RWA; finished romance/suspense novel; one ms out to editor. Busy!

**Rohn Federbush:** Finished third Ann Arbor based historical romance; attended Bear River Conference; painting to stay fluid in jumping writers block.

**Peggy Hanchar:** Finished book; submitting to agents.

**Aileen Hyne:** Went to Dallas, will be submitting as a result.

**Anne Marie King-Jakubiak:** Sent a partial out; sent a newsletter to another organization I'm a member of; been sitting in a hospital by my mom's bed.

**Tammy Kearly:** Submitting to agents and working on WIP.

**Laurie Kuna:** Got three fantastic reviews on *Some Practical Magic*; sent another partial to Ima jinn and was told by my editor that I “might want to write” the story of a secondary character from *Some Practical Magic*. Latest book, *Some Practical Magic*, got a 4.5 star rating from Romantic Times this month.

**Loralee Lillibridge:** Sale to Special Edition; revisions in ahead of deadline; attended RWA National in Dallas.

**Terrilyn McManus:** I've spent the summer getting my daughter to college. We arrived in the middle of Hurricane Charlie.

**Lana Miersen:** Went to Dallas; won first place in the Daphne Paranormal Unpublished Division; Anna Genoese requested the full ms. of *Falcon's Way*; schmoozed with Jessica Faust and am sending her a partial. Got critique back of *Looking Glass Blues* from Melanie Murray – very helpful and worth the big bucks.

**Cheryl Steimel:** Met with Chris Keesler in Dallas and received my book cover flat; sent out the last revisions to him and am gearing up for January release! I'm trying to write every day but get distracted by college bound daughter.

## The Candidates For Mid-Michigan Chapter President Are:

### Anne Marie King - Jakubiak

I am Anne Marie King-Jakubiak and I am running for president. In the past I have been Secretary for two years, Vice President and served on various committees. Long ago when we had a Parliamentary Chairperson, I served in that capacity, I also long ago served for several years as Membership Chairperson, and on the Retreat Food Committee.

I have been a member of MMRWA since 1992. Before moving here I was a member of GDRWA and was the Newsletter Chairperson.

I believe my experiences have prepared me for being your President and am ready to serve you. I make all or almost all of the meetings every year. Thank you for considering me.

### Wil Emerson

Wil Emerson has been a member of Mid-Michigan RWA since 2000. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Science, practiced as a registered nurse for twenty years and crossed over into writing novels when her husband's employment required relocation throughout the U.S. After a two year stint in Europe, Wil came back home in 1999, to publish the work compiled during her travels. The task of getting published was an unexpected, daunting experience. With luck and persistence, *Taking Rosie's Arm* was acquired by Five Star Publishing and released in January, 2002. Five other novels line her desktop. A mix of romance, women's fiction and romantic/suspense divide her attention as she revises and submits to various publishers. Five Star is currently considering the prequel to *Rosie* and a romantic suspense *All in a Name* is also under consideration.

Her professional commitments include Pro status with RWA, Mystery Writers of America, Sisters in Crime, Western-Michigan Mystery Writers and, of course, Mid-Michigan RWA---the organization that has been most helpful in honing her skills and providing the enthusiasm to continue her quest for romance publication.

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**Thanks to the contributors of the JULY/AUGUST and September issues of Mid-Michigan Mirror.**

**The Mirror is accepting submissions via e-mail. Our deadline for the November/December issue is October 15. Please send to: [brainchilde@websurfers.biz](mailto:brainchilde@websurfers.biz) with a brief bio (author's photo is appreciated) to include with your article and permission to offer your article to other RWA groups to use with full attribution.**



### Approaching October Birthdays

**Diane Burton 2**  
**Holli Bertram 12**  
**Sara Reyers 9**  
**Julie McMullen 16**  
**Sharlolett Koenig 24**  
**Ann Susemihl 31**  
**Lisa Childs Theeuwes 31**

Wil Emerson continued from page 9

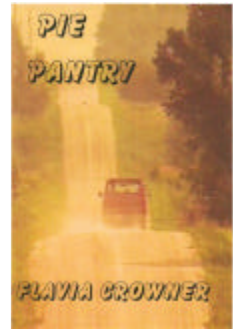
An active member of the Mid-Michigan chapter, Wil has served on the Retreat committee for two years, organized critiques with published authors, initiated Toot Your Horn and demonstrated her nagging, but consistent habit of proving that stepping up to the plate, assuming responsibility in the face of adversity is what keeps the energy flowing in a vital organization. Eager to continue the work of successful past presidents of Mid-Michigan RWA, Wil would like to serve as the next president. Her goal is to inspire members to finish their work-in-progress, submit to agents or publishers then promote those individuals who rejoice in that delightful call----“We’d like to buy your novel.”

Hectic---synonym for Home. An early-bird husband-ugh – the night owl has three sons, six grandchildren, one dog (Adorable Mac). An occasional tennis match, a round of golf, gardening, cooking (my hobby and a necessity) lighten the load. Personal goal----an immaculate office where the desk top can be seen. Professional goal--- One damn good romance—pure, unadulterated romance that makes a reader laugh and cry at the same time.

## Announcing: Pie Pantry

A Sunny Farnum Mystery by: Flavia Crowner

Romance-suspense novelist Sunny Farnum decides to relocate and get a new lease on life after her car accident which left her paraplegic. But the move brings about more changes in her life than she bargained for. She becomes the victim of a series of thefts that leads her to suspect one of the helpers she must depend on. She then becomes the not-so-reluctant sleuth, who helps to bring the culprit to justice. But not before she faces a part of her past life she thought was behind her for good.



### And an Interview with Pie Pantry’s Author and MMRWA Member Flavia Crowner

By Annette Briggs

**Q: When did you first realize you wanted to write fiction and what did you have to go through to get to the point of actually turning out manuscripts?**

A.I don't remember when I first realized I wanted to write fiction. What I do remember is I had always wanted to write. I decided to pursue this career in 1991 I started out writing short articles for a nursing home newsletter; opinion pieces in the our local newspaper. Then the church I attend offered a class on writing your life story. I took it to learn more about writing. This class was the turning point for me and I knew without a doubt that I wanted to write.

Flavia interview continued on page 11

Flavia interview continued from page 10

Once that class was over I took a course with Writer Digest on Novel writing. The background for Pie Pantry was created just before a devastating accident that left me and my late husband in wheelchairs. However, after our recovery I was encouraged to continue my writing. I wasn't sure where my heroine was going before our accident but it became clear to me afterward. The storyline was revised to reflect the challenges of an author who is a paraplegic, thus creating the Sunny Farnum Mysteries.

**Q: How long did it take to get your book published?**

A: I had signed a contract with Koenisha Publications in 2000. But due to another accident I had broken my legs and spend months in the hospital in recovery with casts up to my knees. So, Pie Pantry had to wait once more. When I finally came home I found out four days later that my left femur had been broken and I went back into the hospital once again. However, the publisher extended my contact date to allow me to finish the novel and it was published in 2003.

So, how long did it take to get Pie Pantry published? I'll let you do the math. All I know is that I felt a lot like Indiana Jones and I kept movin' forward.

**Q: What do you say when people compare your fictional amateur sleuth, Sunny Farnum, to you and what's happened in your life?**

A: Although Sunny is a fictitious character, her ability to face the challenges is based on how I had to learn to problem solve and achieve my goals, I had to learn how to use adaptive equipment and a different way of doing things than when I was ambulatory. Sunny and I believe in God and that He is our source of strength.

I would like to quote the contributing Editor of Disability Resources Online--Sally Rosenthal, MSLS, OTR/L: "...Fans of mystery "cozies" will recognize the care with which Crowner has begun to develop the genre's essential trademarks and cast of characters. Readers with an interest in disability issues will also enjoy seeing how the author incorporates ADL's and attendants into the plot. What makes Sunny Farnum so believable lies in the author's own experience. Crowner has transformed her own experience with paraplegia into detective fiction that should appeal to all mystery lovers but have a special draw for disabled readers."

It is my desire that a Sunny Farnum Mystery is entertaining as well as informative about homecare and other active daily living issues in a fictional setting.

**Q: How do you stay so upbeat and positive?**

A: I won't say all my days are cheery and bright. I do know my strength and inner peace comes from my faith in God. I surround myself with friendly faces and people with up lifting spirits. I also do the things I enjoy like fishing, reading and watching a sunset. I

Flavia interview continued on page 12

Flavia interview continued from page 11

believe God uses the things that happen in our lives to help me help others if I let Him. That's way the Sunny Farnum Mysteries are special to me. She makes me smile. We'll argue over something I want her to do and she tells me "It's out of her character."

Last, being a member in a group like MMRWA, that meets monthly and the ACRW, an on line group who has an active loop for daily chats concerning writing topics.

I have a favorite saying " a smile is contiguous spread it around."

**Q:Where can we buy *Pie Pantry*?**

A: You can purchase *Pie Pantry* from your local bookstore by order or the following places:

www.koenisha.com      www.Barnes&Nobles.com

www.amazon.com      www.walMart.com

Or buy *Pie Pantry* from Flavia or just ask or e-mail Flavia at: [flacro@datawise.net](mailto:flacro@datawise.net)

**Q. Now that *Pie Pantry* is available, what's ahead for Sunny Farnum and for you?**

Sunny: Hey, I'd like to answer this question.

Flavia: Sunny, this is my interview and not yours.

Sunny: Yea, but without me you wouldn't be having it.

Flavia: Yes, but I created you and I know what's next.

Sunny: And, here, I thought we were kindred spirits.

Flavia: Stop your pouting, and let me get on with Annette's question.

Sunny: If you insist.

Flavia: Thanks.

Sunny purchases an old farmhouse in the next Sunny Farnum Mystery, *Herbal Garden*. The people in town think the place is haunted and her family advised her not to buy the house. She doesn't believe in ghosts and believes that everything has an explanation. Sunny, a tenacious and inquisitive spirited individual seeks out the truth concerning the house.

Sunny: You forgot to tell 'um that I'm getting a service dog from PAWS with a Cause.

Flavia: Oh, your right, Sunny.

Sunny: And you thought you didn't need me!

Flavia interview continued on page 13

Flavia interview continued from page 12

(Author smiles)

Flavia: Then in the third book in this series, *Rose Garden Caper*, two elderly sisters, Sophia Thornberry and Maude Meriweather, own a flower shop named Rose Garden Caper. They need to hire employees to assist them to have orders out in a timely matter. Then the sisters began to find things missing and one thinks she has taken them or has misplaced them. They argue, "I might be old, but I'm not senile." When Sunny comes into the shop, they tell her their story. This piques Sunny's curiosity and she offers to help them solve the mystery and it unleashes her creativity at its best.

Sunny: Hey, what about Doug Ramtin?

Flavia: What about him?

Sunny: Do I finally find true love, get married and live happily ever after?

Flavia: We'll discuss that later--now is not the time.

Sunny: So, you're holding out on me, huh?

Flavia: Oh, stop it, Sunny! You know this isn't Cinderella we're talking about here. It's you. It would be anyone's guess what you will do.

Sunny: I knew we were kindred spirits. You are just as tenacious as I am.

(Author arches her eyebrows and stares into Sunny's brown eyes.)

Flavia: Now to the second part of this question. What's ahead for me after Pie Pantry? I'm looking forward to finishing the Sunny Farnum series. I have plans in progress, including *A Heart To Serve*, a Civil War historical, and *One more Dance*, stories which were created as tributes to my husband. I have ideas for a children's series called *Beaver Tales*.

I will continue to hone my writing skills and I will encourage others to never give up and pursue their goals.

Sunny: Hey, that's enough about you.

Flavia: Sunny!

Sunny: Yes.

Flavia: The interview is over.

The following article first appeared in The Heart Monitor, newsletter for RWA Chapter 51, Heart of Dixie, Cullman, AL, Kelley Zeringue, Editor

Did you know...

During the 1800s, teeth became a profitable business. Enterprising thieves invaded battlefields and extracted teeth from dead soldiers and sold them to dentists. The false teeth, also called "Waterloo teeth," were worn by many Regency dandies. Even during the American Civil War, barrels of teeth were shipped to Europe.

Carla Swafford is a member of Heart of Dixie and Southern Magic . Printed with permission.

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### **Directions to Sam's Joint**

675 N. 10th Street, Plainwell, MI 49080

Phone number: 269-685-8235

**From Southeast:** (Detroit/Jackson/Kalamazoo) or southwest (Benton Harbor/Coloma) take I-94 to Exit 74B onto US-131 N. (toward Grand Rapids) stay on for almost 15 miles to exit 49A onto M-89 E. toward Plainwell. SEE BELOW:

**From Northeast:** take US 131 S. to exit 49A onto M-89 E. toward Plainwell. SEE BELOW:

All points East and North should get to US 131 by the shortest route possible (MapQuest can help you, there ARE much shorter routes, but somewhat confusing), take exit 49A toward Plainwell and then SEE BELOW:

### **The rest of the directions:**

Head EAST on M-89 (Allegan Street) for just under a mile. The road narrows just after the first stoplight. You'll get to another stoplight just after a small park to your right. I believe it's the second light you'll get to. At the light, go LEFT onto N. Main ST (CR-A45) for about 1.87 miles. Just after a cross road, you'll see a small airfield to your left. Sam's joint is on the opposite side of the road, or to your RIGHT.

### **2004 Meeting Schedule**

Sept. 18th, Plainwell, Golden Heart Preparation

Oct. 1-3, Autumn Authors, Lisle, IL

Oct 16th, Lansing, Merry Zylstra/Psychic

November 20th, Grand Rapids, Bounty Hunter-Private Investigator

December 11th, Laurie Kuna's house, Holiday part

## Continued from page 7 -- Building a Better Vampire: Writing Beyond Stereotypes Recommended Research List:

### Television:

Angel (Seasons 1-4 on 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox DVD)  
Buffy The Vampire Slayer (Seasons 1-6 on 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox DVD)  
Dark Shadows  
Forever Knight  
Kindred: The Embraced (Complete Series Available on Artisan DVD)

### Books:

Night Pleasures, Sherrilyn Kenyon; St. Martin's Press 2002  
Night Embrace, Sherrilyn Kenyon; St. Martin's Press 2003  
Dance with the Devil, Sherrilyn Kenyon; St. Martin's Press 2003  
Single, White Vampire, Lindsay Sands; Dorchester Lovespell 2004  
The Vampire Lestat, Anne Rice; constantly reprinted  
The Queen of the Damned, Anne Rice; constantly reprinted  
Memnoch the Devil, Anne Rice; constantly reprinted  
Sacrament, Susan Squires; Dorchester Lovespell 2002  
Vampire: The Masquerade; White Wolf Game Studio  
Salem's Lot, Stephen King; Constantly reprinted

### Movies:

The Lost Boys  
From Dusk Til Dawn  
Blade  
Blade II  
Bram Stoker's Dracula  
Buffy The Vampire Slayer  
Wes Craven Presents: Dracula 2000  
Dracula  
Interview With The Vampire  
The Queen of the Damned

## Contests

### Duel on the Delta

River City Romance Writers  
 Open to any author unpublished in book length fiction within the last 5 years.  
 Deadline: Received by October 1, 2004  
 Send an industry standard 1st chapter (may include a prologue, not exceeding 30 pages).  
<http://www.rivercityrw.com/contest.html>

### The Emily, West Houston RWA

Received: October 1, 2004  
 First 35 pages  
<http://www.geocities.com/whrwa/TheEmily.html>

### The Suzannah, North Louisiana StoryTellers and Authors of Romance

Received by October 1, 2004  
 Opening of manuscript (30 pages max) one page unjudged synopsis.  
<http://www.shreve.net/~nola/page-contest.html>

### First Kiss

New England Chapter RWA  
 Received by November 1, 2004  
 Set-up page plus up to ten pages of First Kiss Scene.  
<http://www.booksite.net/necrwa/Brochure/firstkiss.htm>

### Heart of the West, Utah RWA

Deadline: October 15, 2004 postmark; received by Oct. 22nd.  
 First twenty pages.  
<http://www.utahrwa.com/howcontest.html>

### Dreaded Synopsis, First Coast Romance Writers

Deadline: November 1, 2004  
 Synopsis not to exceed ten pages.  
<http://www.geocities.com/fcrwrwa/dsynop.html>

**TICKET TO WRITE**, Red River Romance Writers

Must be unpublished since 1999.  
Postmark deadline October 4, 2004  
First 30 pages of your manuscript, 12 pt. Courier  
along with a two page, double-spaced synopsis (not to be judged.)  
<http://www.rrrw.org/>

**Valentine Over Vegas**, Cactus Rose Chapter - Las Vegas  
Entrant must be a member of Romance Writers of America®  
also known as RWA® and a member in good standing.  
RWA® Membership Number must be included on entry form.  
Entry Postmark Deadline: October 8, 2004 received by  
October 14, 2004.  
Synopsis, and the beginning of an unpublished manuscript  
not to exceed 25 pages.  
<http://cactusroserwa.home.att.net/contest.htm>

St. Martin's Press

**MALICE DOMESTIC CONTEST**

Received by October 15, 2004  
The complete manuscript...read the rules,  
winner gets a book contract with  
\$10,000 advance.  
<http://www.minotaurbooks.com/minotaur/malice.html>

**2005 Laurie Contest**, Smokey Mountain Romance Writers

Entrants must be members in good standing with RWA® and cannot be published in novel length romantic  
fiction (40,000 words or more) nor contracted at the contest deadline.  
Received by November 10, 2004  
the complete first chapter -- not to exceed twenty-five (25) pages and synopsis not to exceed five (5) pages.  
The total number of submitted pages for chapter and synopsis is not to exceed 30 pages.  
<http://www.smrw.org/contests/laurie/laurie.html>

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. She  
sponsors several writing lists <http://www.geocities.com/donnacaubarreaux/Main.html>

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

President: Michele Hickerty [chelery1@yahoo.com](mailto:chelery1@yahoo.com)  
Vice-president: Chris Allen-Riley [matt@wmis.net](mailto:matt@wmis.net)  
Secretary: Tammy Kearly [tammyk@voyager.net](mailto:tammyk@voyager.net)  
Treasurer: Jennifer Armintrout [WhoTom@aol.com](mailto:WhoTom@aol.com)

**Hook, Line & Sinker Contest**, Hudson Valley  
RWA

Deadline: Received by November 1, 2004  
First three pages of your novel.  
<http://www.hvrwa.com/hvrwacontest.htm>

**Gotcha Contest**, Silicon Valley

You are eligible to enter any category  
in which you are NOT PUBLISHED.  
Received by November 8, 2004  
First 15 pages of your manuscript.  
<http://home.earthlink.net/~svrwa/2004gotcha/2004gotcha.htm>

**Delacorte Press Contest for Young Adult Novels**

Postmark deadlines: After October 1, 2004 - Before  
December 31, 2004  
Submissions should consist of a book-length  
manuscript with a contemporary setting that will be  
suitable for readers ages 12 to 18.  
The prize is a book contract...  
<http://www.randomhouse.com/kids/games/delacorte.html>

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

I Will Write a Book/Write For the Money: Michele Hickerty [chelery1@yahoo.com](mailto:chelery1@yahoo.com)  
Happily Ever After Contest: Michele Hickerty [chelery1@yahoo.com](mailto:chelery1@yahoo.com)  
Library: Maris Soule [SOULEM@aol.com](mailto:SOULEM@aol.com) and Lucy Kubash [lucykubash@parrett.net](mailto:lucykubash@parrett.net)  
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