

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

# The Mid-Michigan Mirror

## A Reflection of Romance



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

**Volume III Issue 8**

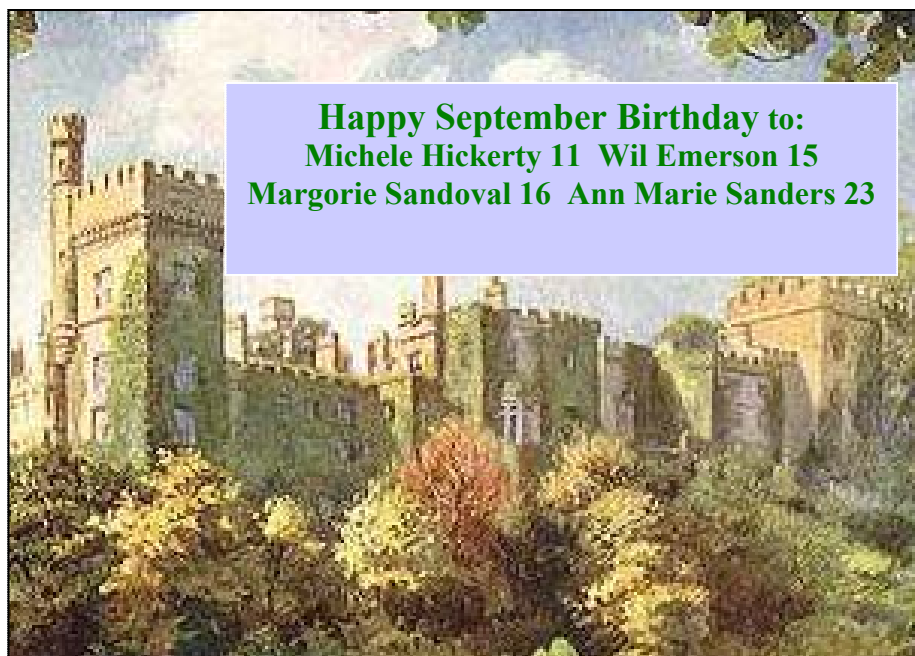
**September 2005**

Annette Briggs, Editor

brainchilde@websurfers.biz

### Mission Statement

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



**Happy September Birthday to:**  
**Michele Hickerty 11 Wil Emerson 15**  
**Margorie Sandoval 16 Ann Marie Sanders 23**

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To quote award winning author Gail Martin: "An author gets the spark of an idea. Then the story's black moment streaks the sky like lightning, and the poignant or exciting ending unfolds in the author's mind. But what happens in the "sagging" middle—the fifty or eighty thousand words between the beginning and the end? This is one of the most profound and disturbing questions for every fiction writer." Gail gives us answers in her August program. Please see page 2 for the recap of "Shoring up the Sagging Middle."

**Many thanks to  
contributors to the  
September  
Mid-Michigan Mirror**

The September 17 meeting is at Damon's in Grand Rapids. MMRWA past president Dawn Bartley will speak on "THE SKIMPY WRITER--how to skimp by and still afford to be a writer."

Please see page 11 for meeting directions.



Dawn Bartlev

## A NOTE FROM WIL'S DESK

By Wil Emerson, President



Dog days of summer behind us? I can't say I want the summer to end, but even I couldn't tolerate my PMS attitude when it was too steamy to breathe or enjoy the outdoors. A break from Michigan heat came with the trip to Reno for National Conference. Where, I might add, the temps were in the high 90's the entire week. It didn't seem to bother my spirits at all! No beds to make, no meals to cook, no one pulling at my elbow to solve another problem. Ummm, could get used to that kind of life.

However, I did go to represent our chapter. It was refreshing to attend President's Retreat, meet other chapter officers and discuss issues necessary to keep a chapter thriving. Leadership, By-Laws, and Contests dominated our discussions.

I came away feeling/knowing our chapter is on the right track:

**Leadership:** We thrive as a growing chapter based on the foundation provided by strong leaders in the past. What we need to focus on in the future is a solid leadership program whereby members are willing and able to assume responsibility without infringing on their writing and personal ambitions. The concept of a member shadowing an officer or committee chair was introduced. A member could learn about the chapter, a particular role or need and decide if they wanted to continue in a leadership role. Wouldn't every president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary like someone to function as an assistant? How about learning how retreat is run, or knowing the nuts and bolts of membership? We, as a chapter, offer a variety of opportunities to expand our working knowledge of chapter business. Who knows, the experience may inspire one of you to run for national office. While many chapters have expanded their board to more members, creating a larger pool of potential officers up the line, we have not looked into that possibility to date. But suggestions are always welcome.

**By-Laws...**what would we do without them? They guide us through a maze of problems; the bible of resolution for oversights and new agendas. And when we get them just right, something dictates that they must be revised yet again. A parliamentarian would serve us well. Any volunteers?

**Contests...**the life line for many chapters. We have been slow to get one going, but in some respects falling behind will push us ahead of the finish line. While many chapter officers talked about the revenue contests generate, few said it was an easy process. Jodi Lozon, though, has had a lot of experience with contests and in that respect we are fortunate to have her initiate our very first, unique "Happily-Ever-After Contest." There could not have been a better time or person to kick off our first contest. With the beginning of 2006, we'll be out front and visible with a well thought-out agenda, judges and score sheets. When someone wins our contest, agents and editors will take notice.

And so it goes...the work continues. As we face the colors of autumn, let's remember that an active chapter needs members who are willing to contribute their unique skills, talent and time. No Rhesus Monkey chapter here...we need to be nourished or we will not thrive.  
Cheers to all, Wil

Cheers, **Wil**



## A Recap of Gail Martin's August 20 program

By Annette Briggs

### Where Do I Go From Here? Shoring Up the Sagging Middle

An author gets the spark of an idea. Then the story's black moment streaks the sky like lightning, and the poignant or exciting ending unfolds in the author's mind. But what happens in the "sagging" middle—the fifty or eighty thousand words between the beginning and the end? This is one of the most profound and disturbing questions for every fiction writer.

To write meaningful exciting material that drives right through so the reader doesn't want to stop, so the reader wants to turn pages. Here are some techniques to bolster that sagging middle.

**Story Structure:** We need to think of our novel sort of as a three act play.

Act 1 - The opening of a play and of a novel is the same. We have the introduction of our characters. We have basic ideas of what their motivations are, what their conflicts are, what their goals are. We need to know that and we get that in the first few chapters. We need something that can really hook and grab the reader. One of the nice things I love to hear so often is "I couldn't put your book down." I love to hear that because it means I've done my job well when I wrote that book. We need to do that in the beginning of our book like the first act of a play.

Act 2. - The problems happen. We have the various conflicts that begin. In romance we have a heroine with a goal, a hero with a goal, and sometimes their goals clash and they're going in opposite directions. Or, for some reason, they might even be working on the same goal but there are things impinging on them that are creating conflicts. So the conflicts begin to build and to grow and to move them along. Eventually, we get to close to the end of the book and then we have the final act.

Act 3 - The final act is *not* pulling things together. The final act is adding that very last dire situation. That last conflict, that last problem where the reader says, how in the world is that ever going to be solved? Or that's it, now he really blew this. Or their locked in a building hanging off a cliff and the bulldozer's coming and the reader is thinking: how in the world are they going to get out of this situation? That should be close to the end of the final scene or act of your play or novel.

Then, finally, you have the wonderful conclusion to the romance, the happy ending. And, if it is a suspense story, the conclusion will involve solving the problems, pulling all the pieces together so you understand how things worked and went and so on.

So, we have this whole middle, forty to eighty thousand words that we have to take from introduction to this dramatic climax and we've got to fill it with something meaningful.

### The Perfect Middle

The perfect middle would be: progressing scenes, each showing character change or advancing the plot in some way. Every scene has to move that story forward in some way. You have this great scene where you want this romantic interlude and, although that might be setting up the romance and in certain types of books perhaps that would work, but in most cases you want at least a new piece of information, a new awareness, something meaningful that connects with your end to make that scene worth while.

**Where Do I Go** continued on page 4

**Where Do I Go** continued from page 3

You can't just have them sitting there kissing each other and him saying, "Oh, you're really beautiful." That's great, but you need something to advance the plot, like she says, "And by the way, I used to be a man." In Christian novels that doesn't work, but that would be a real twist.

The other thing we want to make sure of in the middle of the book is that you select the right character for each scene. The point-of-view character has to be the one with the most at stake in that scene. Sometimes, when a scene isn't working, give it to the other character and do it through their eyes. It will make all the difference in the world. I have done that numerous times.

I always try to balance heroine scene/ hero scenes because the story is about both of them usually. Once in a while I'm trying to force a character into a scene and it doesn't work because it's not their scene. You've got to give it to the character who owns that scene.

Each scene needs to be a little more dramatic as you approach the conclusion. Each conflict must be deeper, more dramatic, and more difficult as the scenes move along. In suspense that isn't hard. But in romance it is. What can you keep adding? Here are ten techniques:

### **Ten Techniques To Pump Up the Middle**

1. **Strategic plotting** – Has to do with making each new conflict greater and greater as the story moves along. As one conflict is solved a greater conflict is born.
2. **Subplots** connected to the original journey (use only in longer books) - Subplots in romance, category especially, is very limited. They don't want a lot of heavy-duty subplots running along with your story because in romance the focus should be on the hero and heroine. In any other kind of fiction, subplots are part of the story. Subplots are stories within your story that have an effect on the characters. You can weave these things into your story as you go.

For example: Say, this guy is a social drinker and her father is an alcoholic and she is just so opposed to his drinking and he can't comprehend why. Or it might be an old girlfriend/boyfriend. Or it could be a subplot from other people coming into their lives, a job offer in another state or country. These could be a subplots to make the story more interesting and add conflict.

3. **Keep secrets** or hold back information - like a prison sentence, former marriage, bankruptcy, victim of rape, kidnapping. Secrets raise the tension and hook the reader.
4. **Alternate scenes** through a different point-of-view – Keeps readers interested, anxious to find out what's going to happen, always leaves readers with a question: What does that mean? Why is that happening and so on. In romance, how we handle it is, especially in a stress situation between the hero and heroine, you move between one point of view and the other, especially if it is a strong conflict.
5. **Replace motivation** –turn the tide. Like the heroine being against unwed mothers until she finds herself in similar circumstances. When you make what's happening in the story more personal, it adds to the drama. It adds depth to your story. It changes the feel and it keeps the reader more involved and more interested.

**Where Do I Go** continued on page 5

**Where Do I Go** continued from page 4

- 6. Deepen the stakes** – to heighten tension. Something happens to change the rules, or to worsen the consequences. Example: When the heroine admits that her husband is abusing her, he threatens her life and disappears. Now you really add depth to the motivation. Now we have a life and death situation. So by changing the motivation factors in the story, then to deepen the stakes by making it so personal that the person who's on the outside looking in is now in. They're inside. They're involved. It affects them. That is really a very effective thing to keep your readers involved and to make your story easier to write because it adds excitement, and it adds new scenes.

Raise the stakes with:

A question of life or death

A trusted character becomes untrustworthy (leaking information, etc.)

Use the ticking clock, a time limit like a bomb, illness, etc.

- 7. Ask “what if...”** Make a list. Let it be stupid. There will be something in it you can use—unexpected twists when things don't go as expected. What if my character's home burns down? What if he misses the train and he loses the account? That's something always to keep in mind. Let them miss the bus occasionally. It will take them on adventures you hadn't even thought of.
- 8. Place a character in an impossible situation** – We all have things we'd never do. We have morals, phobias, etc. Make something happen in the story that puts them in that untenable position. Give up a child? Leave her husband? A sinking ship for non-swimmers? What would it take to make that happen?
- 9. Remove a suspect or character** – List your characters. Then take one out of the story. This puts more of a burden on the remaining characters to carry the story and can deepen the plot.
- 10. Twist the Premise** – A premise twist means that, in the first few chapters when we're reading a book, we make assumptions. We assume things about what's happening in that book. But if we (as writers) don't follow the assumed format and give it that twist, we create a really different and interesting book.

Example: A husband and wife are thrilled when they receive a telephone call from her doctor that she's pregnant. What are the logical assumptions? It's their child; it's a valid diagnosis, he's the father, they can raise the child, etc. What if she's a surrogate? What if she needs to be pregnant for sinister reasons? Remember Rosemary's Baby?

**Developing the Promise**

Each story presents a promise to the reader, a journey from beginning to end as characters reach their goals. An author owes the reader an exciting trip whether the story is a touching romance, a thrilling suspense, or a family saga. By keeping the middle filled with purposeful events that bring the main characters closer to the goal as they fight off the perils and conflicts that surround them, the author guarantees the reader an exciting ride and a memorable story.

*Award-winning author and MMRWA member Gail Gaymer Martin writes for Steeple Hill single title, Steeple Hill Love Inspired and Barbour Publishing. Gail's romantic suspense, Adam's Promise, received the Bookseller's Best Award and was a finalist for the Holt Medallion. See "Gail Martin" on page 6 in MEMBER NEWS for an update on Gail. Her short novel in Christmas Moon, That Christmas Feeling, (a two-in-one with Catherine Palmer) took third place in the 2005 Inspirational Reader's Choice Contest. Adam's Promise and another of Gail's books, Loving Care have been reprinted in large print by Thorndike.*

## MEMBER NEWS

**Rosanne Bittner:** My heart is still pounding! My book *WHERE HEAVEN BEGINS* was in the final three for the very prestigious WILLA AWARD, presented by Women Writing the West. It did not win, but I was told by WWW that it was a very close race, and to be in the final three is a real accomplishment. This is a very honorable award - along the lines of RWA's RITA, so I am THRILLED!! Just had to let everybody know. This is such a shot in the arm for me! Love from Rosanne, who is at the moment crying.

**Annette Briggs:** My new projects need research, research, research, so...

**Jodi Lozon/Lynn Copeland:** Two book contract with Kensington's new erotica line; remodeling house continues; two month countdown to Kayla's arrival! ☺

**Lynette Curtis:** Working on my third book, a single title multi-cultural romance.

**Wil Emerson:** Busy summer, wonderful conference in Reno, two submissions out: one with Epic line and one to agent for women's fiction.

**Rohn Federbush:** Finished a rewrite and am consulting a line editor, and sending work to contests. Wish me luck.

**Aileen Hyne:** Still working on the same book.

**Lucy Kubash:** Working on romantic suspense, agent looking at my inspirational romance.

**Gail Martin:** The two RWA workshops I did at Denver were well attended. The Writing Real for the Christian Marketplace workshop was taped by the CBS Morning Show and hopefully will be aired sometime in the future. The crew showed great interest in our work and told producers about our workshop and books. They've also expressed interest in the American Christian Fiction Writers conference in Nashville this September. I'm on the founding board of this organization and I'll be doing paid critiques and a workshop. I met for the first time with a promotional group which I've joined, Christian Authors Network (CAN). The group has opened numerous doors. I will be doing a book signing in Nashville while I'm at the conference and also have been invited to be interviewed on a Nashville radio station. I spoke at Gilda's House earlier on my book, *Loving Feelings*, about a breast cancer survivor and will be doing another book discussion there in November on my upcoming romantic suspense release, *Finding Christmas*, set in Grosse Point, MI. I have numerous book signings set up in November for this book and for the last of the Loving series, *Loving Tenderness*, which is also a romance with suspense. I have three more speaking events coming up in the next months, one at the Southfield Publis Library on the evening of November 9, when I'll be speaking on creating writing hooks and two Advent by candlelight events at two churches.

**Maris Soule:** Rewriting my suspense, going to Bouchercon over Labor Day weekend, attended Midwest Writers Workshop at the end of July, been judging contests.

**Lisa Childs Theeuwes:** Recovering from National, happy about August book, *TAKING BACK MARY ELLEN BLACK*, a Harlequin Next, and being an RT top pick with 4 ½ stars.

Congratulations to **Catherine McClain** for finaling in Maryland Romance Writer's 2005 Reveal Your Inner Vixen Contest with her series contemporary, *The Heart of Alys*.

## APPROACHING OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

**Diane Burton 2 Sara Reyers 9 Juli McMullen 10 Holli Bertram 12 Shar Koenig 24  
Karen Sontag-Holthof 20 Ann Susemihl 31 Lisa Childs Theeuwes 31**

**MORE MEMBER NEWS** continued from page 6



**A thank-you note from our very much missed member, Flavia Crowner:**

Dear MMRWA,

Hello, Flavia here. It's great to be home again and doing what I enjoy best—writing. It's hard to believe that in April I was near death, but God heard everyone's prayers and I m here today.

THANK YOU

It has been six month since I was ill. It was a long and tedious journey. I had double pneumonia which was complicated by my allergy to my pet birds. I had to be placed on a ventilator and everything else that happened after that I vaguely remember.

However, Shar Koenig and her husband were there with me throughout the whole experience. Things have changed physically for me, but I am not a stranger to physical changes. I need to wear a trac now to help me breathe. I fondly call it my necklace. I cannot sit around and feel sorry for myself. What a waste of time that would be.

I want to thank Shar Koenig and Gail Martin for keeping everyone updated on my progress. And I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who sent cards and letters of encouragement. They made my days brighter.

I'm gaining strength everyday and soon will be attending the meetings again. Just a minute my doorbell rang.

"Hi, it's Jenna here (Flavia's faithful service dog), my master is out of the room and I wanted to let you all know I didn't have it easy either. I missed my master a lot. My host family was great and they loved me and I loved them too, but no one can replace my master.

I remember when I got to visit her at the hospital four weeks later for the first time. Flavia had all those tubes attached to her. And she couldn't talk. However, I tried my best to let her know I loved and missed her. She was weak, but when she reached down and petted me, I felt loved. I wouldn't trade her for any other master. I'm glad we are home together now and I keep a close watch on her. I heard her tell a friend that she was going to start going to meetings again. I am very excited because I miss all the belly rubs you all gave. Can you see my tail wagging?

Oh, my master is on her way back. I'll see you all soon".

 "JENNA!"  Master shouted.

Black Lab exited office.



## A Trip to FYE and What I Learned About Writing

By Kathleen Nance

I like music. I listen to it at work, when I exercise, when I write. My tastes are eclectic. In browsing through the tottering piles of CD's littering my home desk, I discovered Toby Keith's Greatest Hits, The Pirates of the Caribbean soundtrack, Enya's A Day Without Rain, Whoa Nellie by Nellie Furtado, and Dvorak's Symphony No. 9 from The New World, as well as several mixes I've made myself and some artists you may not have heard of. (Any fan's of Brazilian Girls? Alice Gomez? Edvin Marton?)



Photo by Jennifer Berry/Studio 16

I like music, but, despite twelve years of piano lessons, and assorted stints in choirs and bands, I don't analyze music. I don't consider myself knowledgeable about music theories or find I have a talent for recognizing the nuances or picking out the skills necessary to create a coherent, textured CD. When a music reviewer comments that the driving, frantic guitar licks growl in counterpoint to the soaring vocals for a goth metal operatic cohesion, my usual reaction is: Really? I didn't know all that was going on! Yes, sometimes I do pick up motifs or appreciate the different experience of listening to an unplugged rendition versus a synthesizer-backed one, but mostly, I'm interested in is listening to music I enjoy or that fits my mood or the mood of the story I'm writing.

Sometimes, however, there is a CD that goes beyond "enjoy" to "put-it-on-repeat-and-thrill-to-it-adoration." Recently, my daughter gave me a CD called Once from Nightwish, a group I'd never heard of before (more on that later). This was one of those CDs I just mentioned, one that, simply put, hit every right note for me.

I went on Amazon and found other CDs by the same group, as well as some other new-to-me artists who were recommended as being similar by write-in reviewers. I listened to the samplers, and then listed ones that interested me. Since I had a gift certificate to FYE (For Your Entertainment, a CD and DVD mall store) burning in my purse, a trek was in order. I'd soon zeroed out my gift certificate with two new CDs.

Guess what happened? I liked these new CDs and yes they will be on my frequent play pile. Within the mix were songs that are rapidly becoming favorites. But, did the CD's reach that level of perfection, which Once had reached? No. Am I disappointed? No, because I didn't expect that and because I did get some great new music to listen to.

So, where is this all going? As I finished the last CD, it struck me that I could learn some writing lessons from myself and the way I approach music.

First, remember to give the reader something to "like": Tell a good story, create a fascinating experience and offer an interesting challenge. I suspect a lot of readers don't care about the craft or whether you alternated scene and sequel. They don't choose to analyze in-depth. They simply want to spend their time reading a story that appeals to them on some level.

Second, accept that not everyone will like what I write and even for readers who do like my writing, not every book will be their favorite. When I was making up my list of CDs, there were possibilities I listened to which didn't appeal to me. As I mentioned, I have eclectic music tastes, but there are still some genres poorly represented in my personal collection. I own every CD the Moody Blues have put out, but if asked for a favorite, I'll name The Other Side of Life and A Question of Balance.

A Trip to FYE continued on page 9

**A Trip to FYE** continued from page 8

Accepting not every book will be universally adored doesn't mean I can slack off on trying to write the best book I possibly can. What it means is accepting that any artistic endeavor will evoke a subjective response, and not all of it will be glowing. When someone writes on Amazon that I can't write my way out of a paper bag, yeah, that hurts, but I don't have to accept one anonymous opinion as the only valid one. Remember the people, instead, who have written me that for them, that book hit the chords right. For an unpublished writer seeking that elusive first sale or a published writer enduring a terrifying search for a new home, it can mean taking to heart what Paul Raymond Martin says in his book Getting Published: A letter of rejection is an opinion, not a judgment.

Third, realize that just as a lot of quality music isn't making the Top 40 or being overplayed on mainstream radio, so, too, quality books may not be making best seller lists. My daughter is forever giving me CDs and burning music mixes for me and 95% of the time the artist is someone I've never heard of. Thanks to her, I have found some fascinating new listens, like that Nightwish CD. I'm delighted that the Border's near me has headphones stations where I can scan the barcode of any CD and listen to snippets of the songs before I buy. I love exploring for fresh voices. Yet, when I go and look up these new-to-me singers, I'll find them already with their own fans (and occasionally detractors). Just because they are not household name successes or on my personal music radar doesn't make them any less valid as musicians in their own right.

No, I'm not ignoring the fact that a book has to sell for the publisher to be willing to extend another contract or that a manuscript must meet an editor's expectations before she'll buy. Nor am I denying that I would be thrilled to hit that best seller list or win that Rita. What I am trying to take from this is that I can't judge my quality and worth as a writer by another author's success, whether it be that she sold her first attempted manuscript, or has had 10 Rita or Golden Heart finalists, or counts 5000 names on her newsletter mailing list, or generates staggering buzz on chat boards.

So, maybe the next time I need to refill the writer's well, I'll head over to the music store. In the meantime, though, I'm back to my story and another play of Nightwish. And searching for new voices to hear. Any suggestions?

*MMRWA member and award winning author Kathleen Nance lives in Michigan, where she divides her time into writing, trying to lose 10 pounds, working as a pharmacist, and adjusting to the empty nest as the last of her chicks (now all taller than she is) fly off to their respective universities. Her first romantic suspense book, **Jigsaw**, is on the shelves now.*



**The following article appeared in the August 2005 issue of Smoke Signals, newsletter of the Smoky Mountain Romance Writers. USED WITH PERMISSION**

**Save Time--Research Online: Names**

by Heather Reneé Reed

Since I've had great feedback on my "Save Time Research Online" articles, I thought I'd do a few more. In this one, I'm focusing on names. As writers we know the importance of choosing the right name for our characters. A name often gives a reader a certain image, sometimes good, sometimes not so good.

**Save Time** continued on page 10

**Save Time** continued from page 9

For instance, when I read the name Biff I usually picture a guy who's very muscular and has a low IQ (no offense intended to anyone who reads this that is either named Biff or knows someone with that name...I admit it's stereotypical, but I can't help my imagination or the image projected by the original connotation found at the Behind The Name website listed below). Since I'm sure I'm not alone, I try to find unique or at least fairly unpopular, inoffensive names for my characters. This doesn't always work, but I try.

Something else I hope you'll keep in mind while reading my thoughts on this matter is that I know plenty of authors who've never had trouble finding the perfect name without research. Like these authors, many times my characters choose their own names and I have no choice in the matter. But sometimes I have a character take shape without a face. I then go to work trying to find the perfect fit among his or her name, values, and projected image.

Here's a brief listing (hey, you can't give away all your secrets!) of some places I go online to do my research:

Social Security Online: [www.ssa.gov/OACT/babynames/](http://www.ssa.gov/OACT/babynames/)

Baby Zone: [www.babyzone.com/babynames/](http://www.babyzone.com/babynames/)

Last Name Meaning: [www.lastnamemeaningorigin.com](http://www.lastnamemeaningorigin.com)

Baby Name Wizard: [www.babynamewizard.com/namevoyager/lnv0105.html](http://www.babynamewizard.com/namevoyager/lnv0105.html)

Behind The Name: [www.behindthename.com](http://www.behindthename.com)

There are tons of other sites out there that can help inspire you. But I caution everyone to keep in mind that not all sites are authorities on their subject matter. Anyone can upload anything to the web. So, for your own peace of mind, be sure to add your gut feeling, your own character inspiration, and your imagination into the mix when choosing that perfect name.

*Heather Reed is an award-winning author of short contemporary novels. She's also co-founder of the romance community, WeWriteRomance.com. She invites you to visit her website ([www.heatherreneereed.com](http://www.heatherreneereed.com)) and check out the links she's gathered while researching items for her books.*



### **Publisher's Weekly Newsletter**

If you are a Publisher's Weekly fan, you may want to sign up for a free daily (short and useful) newsletter at:

**<https://www.publishersweekly.com/subscribe.asp?screen=pi9&regopt=logout>**



**Non-members seeking information about Mid-Michigan Romance Writers of America, meetings, and joining our group may contact: MMRWA, P.O. Box 2725, Kalamazoo, MI 49003-2725 or <http://midmichiganrwa.org>**

## MMRWA ELECTION TIME

It's almost election time again. This is a reminder for everyone to be seriously considering running for the 2006 MMRWA Board. Nominations for President, V-President, Secretary and Treasurer must be sent to me or Laurie Kuna before the third Saturday in September - (the 17th.) If you nominate someone, remember you need their permission to do so.

I would like to see new members as well as long-time members on the ballot. (Notice I didn't say old members<g>) We have many well-qualified members in our chapter. Current board members may run again, also.

Remember, this chapter needs everyone's effort in order to make it a success. Let's have another great year!

Thanks, Lorelee Lillibridge - Nominating Committee Chair - lorelee530@sbcglobal.net  
Laurie Kuna - Assisting Committee member -lauriecarroll55@worldnet.att.net

**Please submit candidate bios and pitches (and photos if possible) by September 20 to appear in the October issue of the Mirror.**



## September 17 MMRWA Program:

Past MMRWA president **Dawn Bartley** has recently left her job. More time to write! But changing from a two income household to a one income household presents tricky financial realities that many writers face. Dawn tackles the financial gorilla at our September meeting when she presents: "The Skimpy Writer--how to skimp by and still afford to be a writer. "

### **Directions to the September 17 Meeting at Damon's**

4515 28th St., S.E., Kentwood, MI 49512

**Phone:** 616-956-1211

#### **From East**

Take I-196 (NE) to exit 70A Merge onto SR-11 (Wilson Ave SW which turns into 28th St.) go east for approximately 10.5 miles. Damon's will be on your left after Acquest Ave.

#### **From North**

Take 131 South to exit 81. Go east on 28th St. (SR-11) for just over 5 miles. Just past Acquest Ave., find Damon's on the left.

#### **From Southwest**

North on 131 bear right on 28th St exit (exit 81). East on 28th St. (SR-11) for just over 5 miles. Just past Acquest Ave. find Damon's on the left.

#### **From East**

Take I-96 W to exit 43A. Go West (right) on 28th St. SE (SR-11) for about one mile to Damon's which will be on your right.

#### **From South:**

Take I-94 to US-127 (I-496) Merge onto I-96 (SW) to Exit 43A, right onto 28th St. SE about one mile to Damon's on right.

**THE FOLLOWING SITE ADDRESS WILL TAKE YOU TO A MAP IF YOU NEED**

**ONE:** <http://damons.know-where.com/damons/cgi/site?site=DAM034&address=>

**CONTESTS**

Compiled by Donna Caubarreaux

**E = Electronic Format Available****EO = Electronic Only****U = Unpublished****P = Published****P/3 = Not published in three years****Pnr = Published, but not by RWA standards****PC = Not published in category selected**

Best Laurie for Published Authors (P)

Deadline: September 15, 2005

Any romance novel published between August 1, 2004 and July 31, 2005.

<http://www.smrw.org/contests/pubbedlaurie/publaurie.htm>

Suzannah (U - Pnr)

North Louisiana Storytellers

Received by Oct 1, 2005

First 30 pages + one pg synopsis, unjudged.

[www.shreve.net/~nola](http://www.shreve.net/~nola)

First Kiss (U) New England Chapter RWA

Received by Oct. 1, 2005

Ten pages + one page setup of first kiss.

<http://www.booksite.net/necrwa/Brochure/firstkiss.htm>

The Emily (U)

West Houston RWA

Received by October 1, 2005

First 35 pages.

<http://www.whrwa.com/whrwa/emily/TheEmily.shtml>

Get Your Stiletto In The Door (EO - U - P/5 - PNR)

Chick Lit Writers of the World

Received by October 1, 2005

First 35 pages + Synopsis (5 pg max)

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

Duel on the Delta (U - P/5)

River City Romance Writers

Postmarked Oct. 1, 2005

Prologue and/or 1st chapter, not to exceed 20 pages combined

[http://www.rivercityrw.com/2006\\_Contest.htm](http://www.rivercityrw.com/2006_Contest.htm)

Hold Me, Thrill Me

Southwest Florida Romance Writers

Postmarked Oct 1, 2005

First chapter (15 pg max) + optional one page synopsis

<http://swfrw.org/contest2004info.html>

Launching A Star (U)

SpaceCoast Authors of Romance

Received by October 3, 2005

Enter best chapter 20 pgs max. -2 pg. setup

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

Romancing the Tome (U - Pnr)

Coeur de Louisiane RWA

Received by October 8, 2005

First five pages + two page synopsis

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

Heart of the West (U - P)

Utah RWA

Received by October 15, 2005

First 20 pages

<http://www.utahrwa.com/howcontest.html>

Harlequin Epic Romance Line

Deadline: October 31, 2005

Send first chapter + detailed outline of their story (indicating, where appropriate, points of view you plan to use, the narrative structure and timelines), not to exceed 50 pages.

<http://www.geocities.com/divaswithtiaras/Epic.htm>

Hook, Line and Sinker (U - P - Pnr)

Hudson Valley Romance Writers

Received by November 1, 2005

First three pages

<http://www.hvrwa.com/hvrwacontest.htm>

Gotcha Contest (U - PC)  
Silicon Valley  
You are eligible to enter any category in which  
you are NOT PUBLISHED.  
Received by November 7, 2005  
First 15 pages of your manuscript  
<http://www.svrwa.com/gotcha.php>

Great Expectations (U - Pnr - PC)  
North Texas RWA  
Postmarked by December 27, 2005 (Electronic  
entry by 12/28/05)  
First Chapter 25 pg max. + Query letter  
<http://www.ntrwa.com/contest.html>

Delacorte Young Adult Contest (U - P)  
Postmark before 12/31/2005  
Complete book from 100 to 224 pages  
Prize of a book contract!  
<http://www.randomhouse.com/kids/writingcontests/#youngadult>

Check out all the contests on:

<http://www.geocities.com/divaswithtiaras/ContestDiva.index.html>

Contest Alert-All the news on upcoming contests, plus Finalist & Winner listings, questions, etc. [ContestAlert-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:ContestAlert-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

Announcement only list: [ContestDeadlines-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:ContestDeadlines-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

**For Published Authors [ContestAlertPublished-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:ContestAlertPublished-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)**

If you're a Contest Judge, join [ContestsJudges-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:ContestsJudges-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

*Check out Contest Alert-All the news on upcoming contests, plus Finalist & Winner listings, questions, etc. Sign up now! [ContestAlert-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:ContestAlert-subscribe@yahoogroups.com). Donna Caubarreaux is a member of Coeur de Louisiane, Scriptscene Chapter, NOLA Stars, Heart of Louisiana, Kiss of Death, and ChickLitWriters of RWA. She received a RWA Service Award in 1997. USED WITH PERMISSION*

## MMRWA 2005 Meetings

**Unless otherwise noted, meetings are held the third Saturday of each month on a rotating basis at area restaurants and meeting centers. The usual meeting agenda is as follows:  
11:30 a.m., lunch (optional) □ 1:00 p.m. (approximate time), program/speaker □ 2:00 p.m. (approximate time), business meeting.**

**September 17:** Grand Rapids; Damon's (tentative), Dawn Bartley will speak on "The Skimpy Writer," how to skimp by and still afford to be a writer.

**October 15:** Mason/Lansing; Hall (tentative), Don McGaffey will present a workshop on firearms.

**November 19:** Jackson; Damon's, The MMRWA Board will speak on "The Submission Process," what makes a good query, opening, etc.

**December 10:** Location TBA; End of Year Business Meeting, 2005 Year Recap and Christmas Party

### **2005 Mid-Michigan Romance Writers of America Officers**

President: Wil Emerson [Wilwriter@yahoo.com](mailto:Wilwriter@yahoo.com)  
 Vice-president: Jodi Lozon [Jodi.Lozon@ttmps.com](mailto:Jodi.Lozon@ttmps.com)  
 Secretary: Shar Koenig: [koenisha@Macatawa.org](mailto:koenisha@Macatawa.org)  
 Treasurer: Lisa Childs Theeuwes: [ltheeuwes@msn.com](mailto:ltheeuwes@msn.com)

### **2005 Mid-Michigan Romance Writers of America Committee Chairs**

I Will Write a Book/Write For the Money: Flavia Crowner [flacro@datawise.net](mailto:flacro@datawise.net)  
 Happily Ever After Contest: Jodi Lozon [Jodi.Lozon@ttmps.com](mailto:Jodi.Lozon@ttmps.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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 MMRWA Angel Award: Angel Award Nancy Gideon [ncgideon@msn.com](mailto:ncgideon@msn.com)  
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