



Volume 1 Issue 1 Let Freedom Ring! April/May 2009

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If anyone would like to volunteer to assist with the newsletter, please contact Anne at awalradt@aol.com

If you cannot read this newsletter, please try these alternatives:

LINK TO WEB VERSION:

<http://www.libertystatesfictionwriters.com/articles-workshops/newsletters/>

(requires login to Members Only area of Liberty States Fiction Writers Website)

LINK TO PDF VERSION in Files Section:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/LSFWritersAnnouncements/files/>

(requires login to Liberty Announcements Yahoogroups)

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President's Column:



Gail Freeman, President

Okay, I admit it. The bloody alarm clock went off at 6:00 am on a Saturday and I was very, very tempted to hit the button and go back to sleep. I mean, I worked hard all week. My day starts before the sun comes up and doesn't end until long after it has settled below the horizon. As I made my coffee and glared at the machine because it was trickling so slowly, the sun started to shine through

the kitchen windows and a stray beam landed on the agenda that I had printed out for the meeting.

[Read more . . .](#)

Next Month's Meeting:

June 13 Meeting: The next meeting of the Liberty States Fiction Writers is on June 13th at the Edison Public Library on Plainfield Avenue.

**The June workshop will be
Writing for the Short Story Market
by Patt Mihailoff and Jeanine McAdam**

About Patt Mihailoff: Patt Mihailoff, who was recently honored as Author of the Month by RWA/NYC, was raised and educated in New York City before moving to New Jersey over 15 years ago. Her first two short stories were published in THE STAR magazine, and she has had over 100 True Confession stories published. She is the author of Three E-novels, *Ring Dancer's Destiny*, a medieval fantasy loosely based on Guinevere as a child; *Baby Papers*, a contemporary comedy; and the western romance *Single Heart, Single Love*. She is also featured in *A Dream Deferred*, *A Joy Achieved*, a non-fiction novella about foster care. Patt is one half of the writing duo P.K. Eden (along with Kathy Quick) authors of *Firebrand*, a five star Affaire de Couer Reviewer's Choice Award. She will write until her fingers fall off.

About Jeanine McAdam: Jeanine McAdam has published fifteen romantic short stories with the Dorchester Media True Confession line of magazines this past year. Her latest being, *Romance in the Sky*, in the May 2009 issue of *True Romance*. Working as a reference librarian for seven years, Jeanine always loved books. In her profession as a technology trainer she wrote instructional manuals and contributed to technology newsletters. Jeanine currently lives in Washington Heights with her husband and two children and is working on her next "confession" story.

Our Roundtable Sessions will be on **Pitch Practice** and **Critiques**. For the Critique Roundtable Session, please bring 10 (ten) copies of the work you wish to discuss. If you are a published author and would like to assist with the pitch or critique sessions, please contact Lois Winston, our Program Chair.

Articles in this Issue:

THE PLOT THICKENS – Part 2

by Jenna Kernan

[Read more . . .](#)

Civilian Law Enforcement Academy Adventures

By N. L. Quatrano

[Read more . . .](#)

Where's My Voice? by Amy Nichols

[Read more . . .](#)

Make Writer's Block Your Building Block

by Margaret Hren

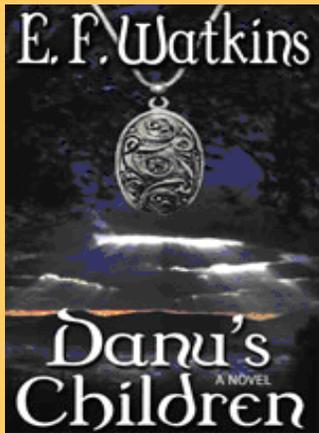
[Read more . . .](#)

He Said, She Said and Other Elements of Effective Dialogue, Part 1

By Caridad Pineiro

[Read more . . .](#)

Author Spotlight:



E. F. Watkins specializes in paranormal suspense, and has published five novels with Amber Quill Press. Her first, *DANCE WITH THE DRAGON*, received a 2004 EPPIE as Best Horror Novel. Her third, *BLACK FLOWERS*, was a Finalist for both the 2006 EPPIEs and the 2007 Indie Excellence Book Awards. Her other books include the romantic mystery *RIDE A DANCING HORSE* (as “Eileen Watkins”) and the paranormal thrillers *PARAGON* and *DANU’S CHILDREN*. She also is a member of the Garden State Horror Writers, Sisters in Crime, Mystery Writers of America and Broad Universe. For more background, visit www.efwatkins.com.

In *DANU’S CHILDREN*, a photojournalist returns to his hometown to investigate his cousin’s death and uncovers a war between activists and a corrupt developer. While the developer may be mobbed-up, the protesters believe they can defeat a new construction project with the help of an earth god who dwells in the town’s abandoned mines. Jonathan Maberry, multiple Bram Stoker Award winner, calls *DANU’S CHILDREN* “a tale of ancient evil and modern thrills that spirals through devious plot twists to leave the reader breathless!”



Kathye Quick has been writing since the sister’s of St. Casmir’s School in Shenandoah, PA gave her a #2 pencil, ruled paper and taught her what vowels and consonants were. Now she is the author of twelve books with a lot more stories still stuck inside her head. She has been an editor for a regional non-fiction publishing house, a newspaper columnist and pays the bills until she gets a Pulitzer as Deputy Clerk of the Board for Somerset County where she writes press releases, speeches and the boring minutes of every meeting.

Kathye writes contemporary and career romances for Avalon Books, romantic comedy and historicals for Wings ePress, historical romance for the Wild Rose Press and urban fantasy as P.K. Eden with writing partner Patt Mihailoff.

While Kathye writes fiction, the book of her heart, a non-fiction book entitled *Hi Mom, How Are Things in Heaven*, a personal account of coping with grief through humor, is just about done. She hopes to have it in print sometime early 2011.

Come visit Kathye at www.kathyequick.com

Facebook - <http://www.new.facebook.com/home.php?ref=home>

www.twitter.com/kathyeq

Meeting Review:



The April workshop was “SHOW UP NAKED: Writing the Male POV” by Chris Redding.

Chris Redding lives in New Jersey with her husband, two sons, and a dog. Since childhood Chris has managed to surround herself with men. As the only girl who could throw as well as the boys, they often rounded her up for pick up games of stickball. In

college she delivered pizza, a male-dominated profession. Then she went on to become an EMT and work for a local hospital in the Emergency Medical Services Department. Both of these jobs mean she is constantly in contact with her research subjects: men. Chris is a member of LSF, WRW and RWA. Her first book, *THE DRINKING GAME*, came out in 2004. Her second book, *CORPSE WHISPERER*, was a 2007 release. For more information on Chris, please visit the Chris Redding Blogspot.

Many thanks to Chris Redding for the meeting recap.

Several times a year I get an e-mail explaining how to romance a woman. You must do a laundry list of things including bring chocolates and flowers. The rest of the e-mail states how to romance a man:

Show up naked. Bring food.

Here are some basics about men. Not all men are this way all the time. Some men are this way all the time. Not all men are the same, but there are some basics.

- Boys learn the rules of male behavior on the playgrounds and the playing fields.
- Everything becomes a game to them. Not that they don't take things seriously.
- Girls learn about maintenance of relationships.
- Boys learn about dominance and competition.
- Sports is where boys really learn about relationships.
- Rules are important to men. Whereas women will get rid of a rule that isn't working, men will try to get around it.
- Rules are sacrosanct.
- Men will find loopholes in rules.
- The object of any game is to win.
- Men play the game while it's on, but not when it's over.
- Men feel that when the game is over they should be friends with their opponent.
- There are men they don't see everything they do as a game, but in some part of their lives they are competitive.
- Boys learn that only the best players get to play, so they act competently no matter what the situation.
- Part of acting competently is only asking for help when all else has failed.
- Men are more likely to brag about accomplishments.
- Men are less like than women to advertise mistakes.
- Men will act strong in most situations.
- Boys are taught to shrug things off.
- In our culture, strength is a considered a cornerstone of masculinity.
- Some men act strong by taking control. Some even micromanage.
- Whoever controls the game controls the rules.
- Another part of acting strong is not letting the other person know they got to you.

- Men will keep playing to win.
- Men will hang in a game, even after it isn't fun, just so they will win.
- Men rarely get emotionally involved in playing a game.
- Men pride themselves on being logical.
- Emotions and logic are incompatible
- Anger is only used when appropriate.
- Aggression is part of the game.
- Men are more likely to make themselves visible.
- Fighting (or conflict) is part of the game.
- Women are socialized to avoid conflict.
- A fight can bring the team together.
- The fight has rules.
- It is okay to exploit the opponent's weakness.
- Men know that when the cost of the fight is too high and they won't win, it's time to quit.
- Men are used to being part of a team.
- A man will help a team member even if he doesn't like him.
- A man will defend a team member even if he doesn't like him.
- Men are loyal to their team.
- The interests of the team are more important than the individual.
- Men feel shame when they cannot fix the situation.
- Men will do many things to feel shame over any other emotions because they have mechanisms to deal with shame. Sharing some past misdeed. Self-deprecating humor. Putting off things.
- Shame is usually a signal that there are underlying feelings.
- Men often feel shame about their performance at work.
- Men can be emotionally absent.
- A lot of men have not been given the tools for dealing with emotion.
- When a man is emotionally absent, he will think others have no emotions either.
- A man's sensitivity is what leads him to self-destructive behavior.
- Men who are self-destructive usually want their outer selves to reflect their inner selves.
- Men communicate differently from women.
- Men communicate to establish independence or dominance, whereas women communicate to create intimacy.
- Men always want to be a higher status.
- Men are always vying to be the leader.
- Men want to fix the situation, not commiserate about it.
- Men sometimes truly have nothing on their minds.
- For men, talk is about conveying information. For women it is about reinforcing intimacy.

Sources:

How Men Think. Adrienne Mendell, M.A.

He's Just Not That into You. Greg Behrendt and Liz Tuccillo

If Men Could Talk. Alon Gratch

The Manual. Steve Santagati.

You Just Don't Understand. Deborah Tannen

For the full explanation and more, Chris Redding will be doing the full workshop online for NorthEast Ohio RWA in July. www.neorwa.org



The May workshop was “Breaking into Print—and Hitting the Bestseller Lists” by Eloisa James.

New York Times bestselling author Eloisa James’s historical regencies have been published to great acclaim; *People Magazine* raved that “romance writing does not get much better than this.” Her fifteen novels have repeatedly received starred reviews from *Publishers’ Weekly*, and regularly appear on the best-seller lists, reaching #10 on the *New York Times* with *When the Duke Returns* in December 2008. Eloisa is also a professor of English literature, teaching Shakespeare at Fordham University. She’s the mother of two children and, in a particularly delicious irony for a romance writer, is married to a genuine Italian knight. For more information on Eloisa, please visit her website at www.eloisajames.com.

Many thanks to Whitney McKnight for the meeting recap.

Eloisa is my new heroine. She likes money and is very generous about teaching other writers how to like—and make—It, too.

Plan, plan, plan

Plan for what the reader wants (even if she doesn't know she wants it yet)

She began her electrifying discussion by quoting (perhaps ironically since it's romance fiction she's talking about, after all) from an interview with blues musician [Swamp Dogg](#): "Happy endings only happen if you plan for them."

Although Eloisa's planning does seem to have a magical quality (her first manuscript was plucked from a slush pile by an assistant to super agent, Kim Witherspoon; they've been together ever since) two of the several points she made about planning your way to success, stand out.

Be a tease

Before you can really begin to write anything beyond character sketches, you need to plan where your characters will "go" before they reach the end. Eloisa says it's key for a writer to finesse the convergence of the circumstances of the story, the audience's desire for a particular ending, and an element of surprise that causes the audience to worry that their desires won't be met.

"There has to be a moment when the reader, who knows what's going to happen because the cover already promises how the book ends, still worries things won't work out," says Eloisa.

"That will never work!" is music to your ears

When agents reject your manuscripts saying, "This will never work", says Eloisa, you know you're on to something. (According to Eloisa you *must* have an agent—for more on that part of the discussion, become a member of LSFWRriters and check out the [podcast](#).) Unless your plot is thoroughly preposterous and illogical, hearing that it will

"never" work means that, eventually, it will pique someone's curiosity—"How will this work out?"

If you can plan thoroughly for that "[black moment](#)" when all three elements collide, and for how your characters will emerge, much to the relief and dismay of your readers, you will stand out.

And here's a tidbit Eloisa tossed to the audience: if you're following the consumer publishing industry at all, you're probably aware that most of it is losing money, most of it that is, except for romance fiction—and in particular paranormal and historical. That means new romance writers are in demand, especially *good* ones.

Face the "This will never work!" moment in your own life

Eloisa is proof that putting your mojo to work can pay off big. "Plan what you want, and say it out loud," she recommends. At the beginning of her own writing career, Eloisa wanted both to pay off a student loan and have a child. She tells of how her husband was not keen on having both a child and a heavy debt load simultaneously. But in a classic, "This will never work!" moment, Eloisa not only sold her first manuscript, she calculated exactly what she'd need to sell it for in order to pay off her student loan, said so, and then not only sold her first work—received exactly what she needed to meet all her desires of being debt-free and on her way to motherhood. Problem solved. And, not to mention a mega-successful career launched.

Know what you don't know--and then learn it

Eloisa says that once questions of talent and perseverance are out of the way, success—especially big success—comes from being your own CIA. "Realize this business is very competitive. If you don't, then you're kidding yourself," she says. The antidote to this is to know everything you possibly can, while saying as *little* as you can. For example, Eloisa makes it her business (emphasis on the word *business*) to know what other authors in her genre are getting paid by picking up information from other writers and whatever other sources will provide it, (including the trades like [Literary Marketplace](#), [Publishers Marketplace](#), [Bookscan](#), [Publishers Weekly](#), etc.) . Then, she discusses how she is not shy about insisting she be paid at least the same as other top authors, or more: the market can obviously bear it--and her work has a clear track record of leading the market.

By the same token, she says to be aware that others will also be watching you, and maybe not with your best interests at heart. Anything potentially damaging you ever say or write about someone, she warns, has the potential to come back and hurt you--and possibly others whom you'd rather not see wounded. So, unless you are *positive* you can trust the ones you're kibbutzing with, simply keep yer trap shut.

These are two of ten secrets Eloisa shared.

New York Times bestselling author Eloisa James's upcoming [This Duchess of Mine](#) is due out from HarperCollins on May 26, 2009.

If you wish to volunteer to do the Meeting Review section, please contact Anne Walradt.

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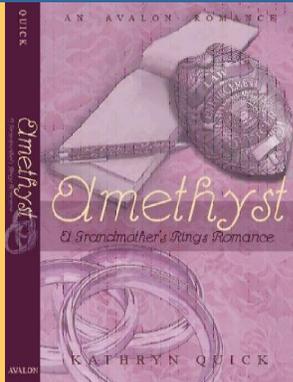
Member News:



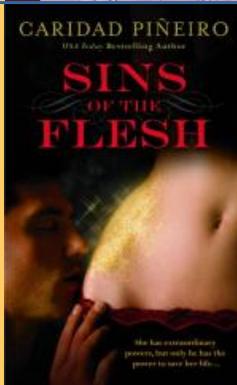
Chris Redding is pleased to announce that she has signed a contract for her romantic suspense **INCENDIARY** with LBF (Lachesis) Books. This a book of the heart for Chris since it involves a rescue squad



Wendy La Capra's historical suspense, **BEWARE, MY LOVE**, is a finalist in The Heart of the West's Great Beginnings contest. It is Wendy's first final so she's very excited about it.

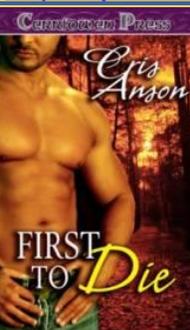


AMETHYST, the first book in **Kathye Quick's** contemporary series for Avalon Books entitled **Grandmother's Rings**, is already listed on Amazon.com for pre-order.



Caridad Pineiro has just received the cover for her November release from Grand Central Publishing, **SINS OF THE FLESH**. **SINS OF THE FLESH** is Caridad's first single title paranormal romantic suspense.

LSF Writers members **Eloisa James**, **Caridad Pineiro**, and **Lois Winston** were featured in this month's *NJ Monthly*. To read the article, please use this link: <http://njmonthly.com/articles/lifestyle/people/whole-lotta-love.html>



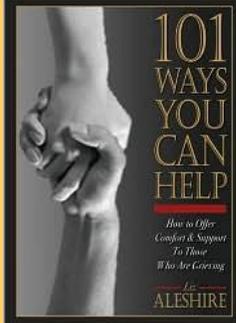
Cris Anson's FIRST TO DIE, which was released digitally last July, will shortly be on the Cerridwen website in print! If you'd like to read a blurb and an excerpt, please visit <http://crisanson.com/Firsttodie.html>



Elaine Charton's PANDORA'S JUSTICE was a Thrill Me Thursday Pick at Crave More Romance. For more, please visit this link: <http://cravemoreromance.blogspot.com/>

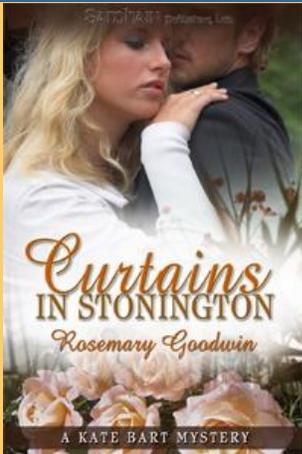
Carolyn Martin is a finalist in the Hearts Through History Contest. Hearts Through History is specialty chapter of RWA. Winners will be announced at the RWA National Conference in July.

Dianne Gerber has just signed another contract with The Wild Rose Press. Her novel, **WILDFIRE**, will be part of the Wayback series.



When the author of **101 Way You Can Help: How to Offer Comfort & Support to Those Who Are Grieving** grew too ill to finish writing it, six friends stepped in to complete it. Four are members of LSF Writers: Marsha Browne, Zita Christian, Paula Chaffee Scardamalia, and Anne Frazier Walradt. The book was released by Sourcebooks on May 8.

Upcoming Member Releases:



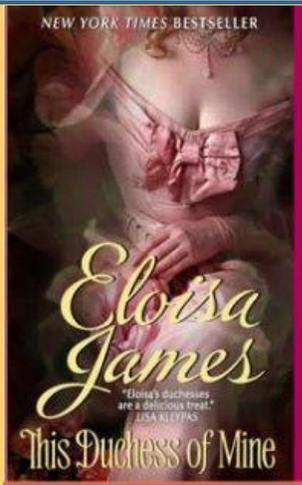
CURTAINS in STONINGTON

A Kate Bart Mystery
Samhain Publishing
ISBN# 1-60504-078-9

British-born Kate Bart, the interior decorator in this New Jersey town, helps her friend, Dutch, with his P.I. investigations. He's decided that he'd like to be more than just a pal, so things get hot when they're working together. She's been a widow for some time now, but although she's attracted to him, she still needs time to learn how to love again.

The arrival of the new sexy undertaker causes a ripple in the traditional-minded townspeople. She slinks around meeting Tom Yoast, the general store owner. What's she after? He's certainly no trophy husband-to-be.

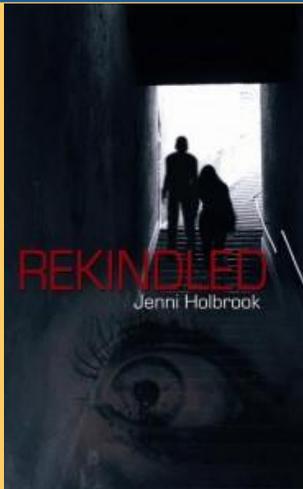
"You'll have ta deal with two dead people very soon," Carmella, an elderly Italian psychic, warns Kate. Just what she wanted, something more to scare her as she and Dutch search for clues to solve the mysterious deaths. They follow leads, some to dead ends, but in the end the perpetrators are brought to justice.



This Duchess of Mine by Eloisa James

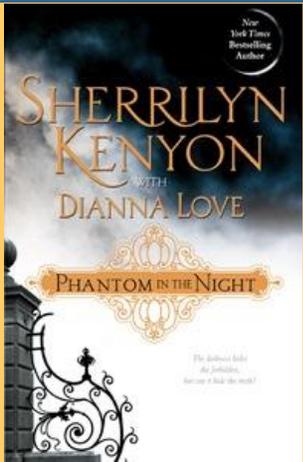
AVON
ISBN# 0061626821

After playing an incredibly important—and often scantily clad—role in the four previous Desperate Duchesses books, it is finally time for Jemma to get her own story. Scandalous Jemma Beaumont and proper politician Elijah Beaumont were always like oil and water. It came as no surprise to anyone when Jemma left to thrill all of France with her antics shortly after their wedding. But no one expected her return home ready to play the part of—dutiful—wife... least of all her husband.



Rekindled by Jenni Holbrook
The Wild Rose Press
Print version available May 8, 2009
ISBN# 1601544340

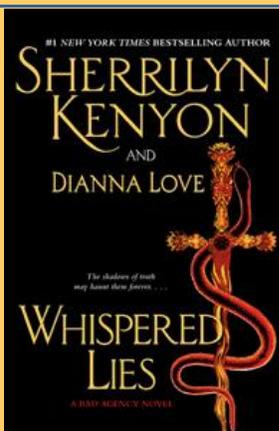
For the last nine years, Kaylee Mead has been running from her past. Now she's running for her life and from the mob. She decides her only chance to survive is to come home and patch things up with her father, but when she returns home to Thief Lake, Minnesota, she finds her father dead. And now she's the cops' best suspect.



Phantom in the Night by Dianna Love & Sherrilyn Kenyon
Pocket Books
Mass Market Release
May 2009
ISBN-10: 1416595643
ISBN-13: 978-1416595649

Terri Mitchell signed on with the Bureau of American Defense (BAD) to find an organize crime ring's link to a terrorist group and to covertly investigate a murder someone is trying to pin on her. She's running short on time when bizarre rumors begin to surface of a ghost terrorizing members of the drug ring she's investigating. Nathan Drake has spent his life protecting his family, the only thing that mattered to him...until the most feared drug lord in the southeast took all Nathan held dear. Now, he's a man on a mission who only needs to stay alive long enough to stop a dangerous group from taking innocent lives. He's got nothing to lose...until he meets Terri Mitchell.

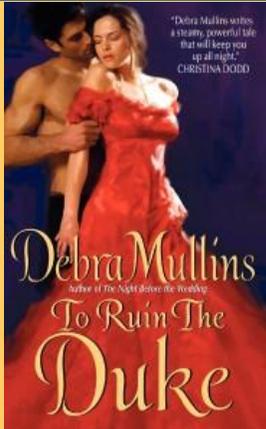
As Terri and Nathan seek similar goals by different means, they are drawn deep into an evil underbelly that cuts through all levels of society. Now two people on opposite sides of the law with no reason to trust each other must join forces or die. And if they die, a deadly attack will be unleashed on thousands of innocent people.



Whispered Lies by Dianna Love & Sherrilyn Kenyon
Pocket Books
May 2009
ISBN 1-4165-97425

After leaving South America, Bureau of American Defense operative Carlos Delgado has spent the past sixteen years watching over his shoulder, waiting for death to catch up to him. His luck runs out when BAD intercepts an unexpected tip on the number one threat to US security—the Fratelli de il Sovrano. Capturing a mysterious informant—Mirage—is their best hope of uncovering a deadly plan that threatens economic chaos within the US, all unfolding just days before the presidential election. When Carlos takes the Mirage into custody, she's nothing like what he expected and presents a

threat to secrets he's willing to die to protect. Gabrielle Saxe never intended to become Mirage when she started sending anonymous tips on international criminals to intelligence agencies over the past decade while hiding from a killer. When a postcard arrives from a friend who is supposed to be dead, Gabrielle is forced to take a risk that catapults her into the midst of dangerous operatives on a treacherous mission... and into the arms of a man whose duty is to hand her over to Interpol as an international felon. Carlos is the last person she should trust and the only one standing between her and death. But she unknowingly holds the key to his survival as well.



To Ruin The Duke by Debra Mullins

Avon Books

May 2009

ISBN 9780061577857

A disreputable duke: All of London is abuzz with the shocking exploits of Thornton Matherton, Duke of Wyldehaven, a man as sinful and wild as his name. He plays fast and loose with money, drink, and women. Or does he? An impostor has tarnished Thornton's good name, and the real duke will not rest until he has proven his virtue.

A righteous lady: Abandoned by her aristocratic father when she was a child, Miranda Fontaine despises the nobility. Despite her distrust, she visits the Duke of Wyldehaven on an urgent mission. Determined to keep a deathbed promise, Miranda will do whatever it takes to pin down the notorious duke . . . even if it means seducing him herself.

Passion's ruin: Desperate to escape the web of deceit and clear his name, Thomas cannot bear the distraction of Miranda's supple skin and alluring eyes. Her beauty will be his undoing . . . and her bed will be the site of his most wicked ruin . . .



Faking It by Pam McKenna

April 2009

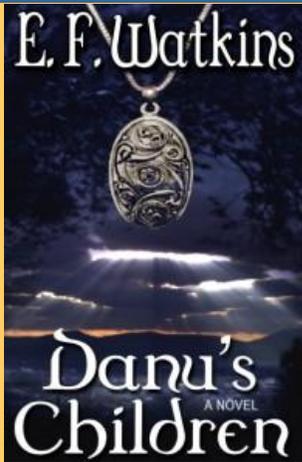
Ellora's Cave Publishing

ISBN: 9781419921957

Britt Munro faces seven days of sexual servitude at a swanky Hamptons beach house, being shared by the hottest two men she's ever met. It's either that or prison after she tries to sell millionaire art collector Garrett Harvey a fake nineteenth-century masterpiece she painted herself. Garrett's art-expert buddy Jack turns her weeklong punishment into a *ménage à trois*—his reward for spotting the forgery.

Both men are inventive, energetic lovers, but only one touches her heart. Only one makes her yearn for something...real, even after she discovers she's not the only one keeping secrets. When the week is up, she'll never see

him again. Months later, Britt's past returns with a vengeance, testing both her courage and the depth of her ex-lover's feelings.



Danu's Children by E. F. Watkins
Amber Quill Press LLC
April 5, 2009

ISBN-13: 978-1-60272-496-9 (Electronic)
ISBN-13: 978-1-60272-881-3 (Paperback)

In a small Pennsylvania coal town, modern greed confronts an even darker power—as old as the Earth, itself. Photojournalist Kevin O'Leary returns to his home town of Carbonville for the funeral of his newspaper-reporter cousin, Tom. Before he died in a car accident, Tom was looking into charges of corruption behind a huge new mall construction project, and Kevin suspects murder. On the pretext of doing a photography book on the town, he stays around to investigate.

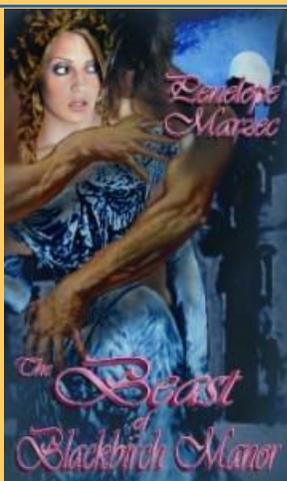
Kevin soon meets Megan Carey, who heads up the Citizens Against Valley Exploitation (CAVE), a local ecology group battling the mall project. Megan hates the developer, Sal Ricciardi, and fans Kevin's suspicions that Sal arranged Tom's "accident." But as the conflict between the two factions escalates, Kevin realizes both are capable of lethal violence. He also learns that Megan and her followers believe an ancient Celtic earth god protects the valley, and will help them prevent the mall's opening...one way or another...



The Company You Keep (Re-issue) by Penelope Marzec
April 2009
Crescent Moon Press

ISBN:

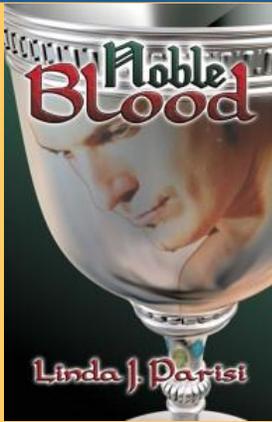
When billionaire Nathan McDugan seeks to build a theater in a small farm community, Jennifer Brant rallies the citizens of the town to oppose him. Within her farm lies a deadly gateway for lost souls, a secret that she will do anything to protect. But she doesn't realize that someone else knows the truth she so desperately tries to hide ... and they're willing to kill for it...



The Beast of Blackbirch Manor (Print Edition) by Penelope Marzec
April 2009

New Concepts Pulishing
Print ISBN: 1-60154-488-X

Cursed by a witch as a boy, Tadeusz suffers the torment of being a "beast" man. Unless he finds a woman who will love him, he will become a wolf on his thirty-third birthday. When he meets the woman he has married by proxy, he knows he is doomed. Victoria is beautiful—and horrified to discover she has married a monster.



Noble Blood by Linda J. Parisi

April 2009

The Wild Rose Press - Black Rose

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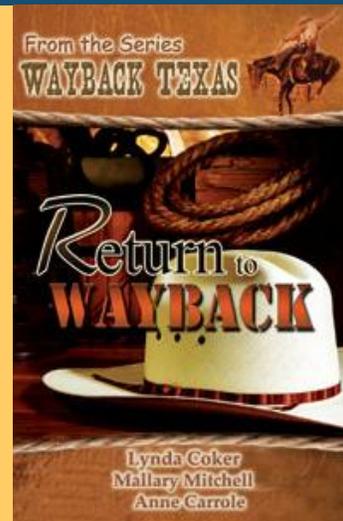
The Nobility: A race created by the effects of a meteorite. A dying race. A race without a True Noble birth in over a decade. The Water of Change: Water changed by the meteorite, able to turn a human into a Noble, an ability certain to cause death. Forbidden to be used by the Nobility's most sacred law. A Law Broken: Tamara Duncan has just been made into a True Noble and left with no memory of her former self. Nicholai Valentin accuses her of trying to kill his brother and destroy his House by using the Water. Is she part of a plot, or simply a pawn in something bigger than either of them can imagine? A Quest for Truth: Together, Nicholai and Tamara journey a dangerous path to seek the truth. Along the way they will be tested, and as they seek the truth, they find strength in each other; a strength that will lead to love and more than they ever bargained for.

To see additional upcoming Member Releases, [please click here!](#)

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Spotlight on:

Anne Carrole has been writing stories since she was in elementary school, but back then the hero was more likely to ride a bike, not a horse, and share a stick of gum rather than a kiss. A co-founder of the romance review site, www.lovestwesternromances.com, her muse usually comes wearing a cowboy hat or a uniform. Raised on a farm with horses, dogs, cats, chickens, rabbits, and whatever other animals she could convince her parents to shelter, she's married to her own hero and is the proud mother of a teenager. She also shares her home with a sleek black cat with too much attitude and a fluffy white dog with too much energy. Anne is a member of Liberty States Fiction Writers and Romance Writers of America including Hearts through History and New Jersey Romance Writers chapters. You can find Anne at www.annecarrole.com



Road Story:

My Road Story
By E. F. Watkins

As soon as I learned to print, I started trying to "write books." I would take my father's sheets of typing paper, fold them in half, draw a cover picture with a title and my name, and start writing the story. I usually got just a couple of pages of big, printed words done before I ran out of ideas. But that ambition has stayed with me my whole life.

I read constantly as a child, usually adventure stories and often those written on an

adult level. As a teenager, I looked back and finally understood some of the references that had confused me as a kid! I attended Catholic schools—all-girls in high school and college—but that didn't cause me to censor my subject matter much. My last year in high school, I wrote a strange short story about a bored, middle-aged, suburban wife and mother who fantasized about having a fling with the young, handsome man who drove the neighborhood ice cream truck. I was light-years ahead of *Desperate Housewives*! My first year in college, I decided to enter a version of this in a college-wide short story contest, and was stunned when I won the top prize. (Maybe because of the story line, as much as because I was only a freshman!) Anyhow, that was the first time anyone had actually “rewarded” me for writing a completely original piece of fiction, as opposed to a class assignment, and I guess it was a turning point.

My college years influenced me in many ways. Freshman year, a friend lent me a paperback of *Dracula*, which I had never before read all the way through. By the time I finished, I knew I wanted to write paranormal fiction. The following year, I and several of my friends began to watch *Dark Shadows* faithfully every weekday after class. I loved the idea that the vampires, werewolves and witches passed as regular people and lived among them, only to “hulk out” now and then when things didn't go their way. I vastly preferred that idea to stories that showed them as distant, evil, one-dimensional beings that did awful things and need to be destroyed, period. The first novel I attempted was *DS* “fan fiction,” with a plot of my own but using all of the show's 1897-period characters. I wrote it for my college friends and never seriously tried to publish it, but the seeds were sown.

Also, I went to college in Scranton, Pa., during a period when the area was seriously depressed, and marked with many eerie remnants of coal-mining days, such as slag heaps that smoldered like volcanoes and gave off a sulfurous stench, and gigantic potholes that made driving hazardous. More to come on that...

The first novel I wrote after graduation was a lake-monster story, *SUMMER OF THE SERPENT*, about an elasmosaurus eating people in and around Lake Champlain. I tried hard to get it published, and a small, local company in upstate New York was interested for a while, but nothing came of that. In moving from place to place over the years, I somehow lost the last half of that manuscript, so only the first half survives!

The next project was *NO SUCH THING*, a vampire story that would be the prequel to *DANCE WITH THE DRAGON*. In fact, I'm currently re-working it, but it is hugely different now from the version I wrote 25 years ago. Again, I shopped *NST* around to no avail. It was really “dark paranormal romance” at a time when no one wanted such a thing.

Over the next couple of decades, I wrote about ten more separate novels, and rewrote some of them three or four times. I had trouble getting published because I always seemed to cross genres, even if that wasn't my intention. They were paranormal and dark, but not quite “horror”—I have more of a thriller-writer's style, long on plot and not so heavy on atmosphere or gore. Also, for most of my life I have written for newspapers as my “day job,” and journalism teaches you to put the important information at the beginning of the story and avoid confusing the reader. To write suspense, you have to hold back a lot of important information and deliberately confuse your reader! It took me a while to learn to make the switch when I hit the

keyboard after hours.

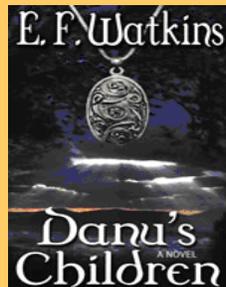
I helped found The Garden State Horror Writers in the early 1990s, and that finally led to my publication. In 2002, one of our speakers talked about a new POD, cyber-publishing company that was looking for vampire novels. I had just finished *DANCE WITH THE DRAGON* but was having no luck placing it with a traditional house. I discussed it with the speaker, then sent it to what would become Amber Quill Press. Fortunately, they loved it and put it out in 2003, as one of their first books. *DD* went on to win an EPPIE Award in 2004 as Best Horror Novel—that had almost the same effect on me as winning the short story contest in college. I certainly felt vindicated after years of struggling!

I followed that with a very different book, *RIDE A DANCING HORSE*, a non-paranormal, romantic mystery. Although I devoured every horse book I could find as a child, rode for much of my life and owned a horse briefly, so far this is the only book I've written on that subject. I got back into X-Files territory with *BLACK FLOWERS*, about a New Jersey biotech firm up to no good. *BF* was a finalist for two awards in the Thriller/Action category—a 2006 EPPIE and a 2007 Indie Excellence Award.

Then came *PARAGON*, which I describe as a “handsome-charming-talented-actor-boyfriend-from-Hell” story; it's also a Pygmalion tale in which a homely woman creates the man of her dreams...and it backfires. I love theater and have always been intrigued by the similarities between a novelist's process and an actor's, so it was great fun to write Eric's (suspiciously) meteoric rise to fame and fortune.

My latest publication, *DANU'S CHILDREN*, is my longest book so far and probably the one I rewrote the most over the years. It draws on my observations during my college days, and shortly afterward, in northeastern Pa. The town is fictional, but the tension between protecting its natural environment and promoting its economical survival is real, I think, for many small towns today. Let's just hope their residents don't go to the same extremes as my characters...

A few months before I found a publisher for *DANCE WITH THE DRAGON*, I remember thinking that maybe I should just stop writing. I was extremely discouraged with the “traditional” route, I had geared my whole life around this goal and I wondered if I could put my time to better use. I considered this option for about five minutes. Then I realized that even if I never got any of my books into print—and I definitely write for an audience, not just for myself—I would keep writing them. It has become the way I process life, and without it I just would not be myself.



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Contests and Online Courses:

Contests:

Third Annual Black Orchid Novella Contest

Deadline Postmarked by May 31

Each entry must be an original unpublished work of fiction that conforms to the tradition of the Nero Wolfe series. For more information, please visit www.nerowolfe.org.

WOW! Women On Writing Flash Fiction Contest

Deadline: MONTHLY

Entry Fee: \$5.00

Prize: Cash: \$200, \$150, \$100, Plus over \$2,000 in Prizes + publication + \$50 gift certificates

WOW! Women On Writing hosts a quarterly flash fiction contest open to English-speaking contestants across the globe. For more information, please visit www.wow-womenonwriting.com.

NEW! Simon & Schuster and Cheerios Cereal are sponsoring their third annual **New Author Contest** for previously unpublished authors of children's books. Entries are being accepted through **July 15, 2009**, and the winner will be announced in March 2010. There is no cost to enter. The Grand Prize is \$5000, with two first prizes of \$1000 each. . Submit an original story for children ages 3-8. The contest is open to any United States resident who is age 18 or older who has never received payment for a work of fiction in any format. Find the complete rules and enter online at [_http://www.spoonfulofstoriescontest.com_](http://www.spoonfulofstoriescontest.com) (<http://www.spoonfulofstoriescontest.com/>). *Courtesy Cynthia Sterling.*

Mainly Murder Press is an independent, Connecticut-based publisher whose niche is New England-based mystery novels. (Adult and juvenile mystery novels written by New England authors, even if set outside the region, will also be considered.) Publisher Judith K. Ivie plans to publish in both trade paperback and hardcover formats, with authors retaining e-publishing rights. "We offer strong discounts and other attractive terms to retailers and libraries," Ms. Ivie writes. "Authors will receive generous royalties—and of course, we charge no fees of any kind to authors." Complete information and a sample contract are available at <http://www.mainlymurderpress.com>. *Courtesy Cynthia Sterling.*

Sapphire Blue Publishing ([_http://www.sapphirebluepublishing.com_](http://www.sapphirebluepublishing.com) (<http://www.sapphirebluepublishing.com>)) is buying a number of new authors. This e-book publisher is particularly interested in erotica or erotic romance 10,000 - 25,000 words. The books must have "an engaging story line that happens in the now." They are also interested in all sub-genres of romance, including multi-cultural stories, and all types of paranormal romance, of all lengths. The editors are also interested in young adult books, mystery and suspense, fantasy, and even non-fiction. Royalty rates begin at 45%. All submission information is available at [_http://www.sapphirebluepublishing.com/info/index.php?id=5_](http://www.sapphirebluepublishing.com/info/index.php?id=5) *Courtesy Cynthia Sterling.*

Over My Dead Body ([_http://www.overmydeadbody.com_](http://www.overmydeadbody.com) (<http://www.overmydeadbody.com>)) is a mystery ezine that publishes mystery short stories "from cozies to hard-boiled and everything in between." Stories should be

750-4000 words. Payment is one cent a word for first North American Serial Rights. Find their writer's guidelines at <http://www.overmydeadbody.com/wguide09.htm>.

Courtesy Cynthia Sterling.

Please note that we do not endorse any of these contests and ask that you check the fine print regarding the contest rules and also confirm the deadlines in question. Thank you.

Online Courses:

MAY 29 - Online Workshop: Editor/Agent Appointments

Have you ever thought of scheduling an editor or agent appointment at one of the numerous regional RWA conferences or perhaps even at the RWA National Conference itself? Or maybe you've stumbled, stammered, fumbled, or floundered your way through one of these nerve-racking sessions already? Here's your chance to polish your public speaking and pitch skills and learn the In's and Out's of Editor and Agent Appointments, in a fun-filled, one-day upcoming online workshop hosted by Louisville Romance Writers!

Join literary agent Nephele Tempest as she covers the basics of how to not only survive an editor or agent appointment, but how to make a positive, lasting impressions, as well: how to dress, the right (and wrong!) things to say, what to bring with you, and more.

Nephele Tempest joined The Knight Agency in January, 2005, opening the Los Angeles office. As an agent, she works with a number of talented writers, assisting them to hone their skills and build their careers. In addition, she spends time developing the agency's Hollywood film and multi-media contacts.

This workshop will be held on FRIDAY, MAY 29, in the LRW online classroom, so mark your calendars now! The cost for this workshop is \$10. Enroll today by submitting payment through Paypal. Send payment to:
Lou_Romance_Writers@hotmail.com

Please note in Comment/Note section that payment is for the May online workshop. You can also mail in a check or money order for the course fee. Please contact our Treasurer, Sandy Lloyd (by email, available by link at web addresses below), for payment address. Upon verification of payment, you'll receive an email invitation to our online classroom, and closer to the class date, more specific instructions.

For more information, please visit www.louisvilleromancewriters.com

June 1-26, 2009 Standard Workshop

STORY AEROBICS: SHAPING UP SAGGING MIDDLES

Presented by Raquel Rodriguez

Registration Deadline: May 25th

After a brilliant start, does your story slow down and lose its sparkle? Do your characters run out of things to say? Too early in the story for a love scene and you don't have a dead body to throw in? Learn how to confront these stumbling blocks that cause your problem scenes with a few simple steps and exercises.

Learn to define the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the real situation. Recognize how your story choices can help strengthen motivation or change the direction for more realistic conflicts. Learn how not to get stuck on minor characters or problematic scenes, and put your time into pages that will move your plot forward. Get to the heart of the difficulty and extrapolate the answer to get your scene flowing

again to engage your reader in this 1-month workshop.

For more information please visit <http://www.carolinaromancewriters.com/june09.htm>

SPELLS OF UNSTICKING: Tackling Writers' Blocks with Creative Exercises. Not attending national because that WIP isn't finished or you are stymied? Join Emily in unlocking the path to finishing your manuscript.

Date: June 5, 2009, thru July 3, 2009

Instructor: Emily Alward

Blocked? Or just frustrated in your writing life? If the words won't come at all, or if you're writing but it feels like trying to swim through molasses, maybe this class can help. "Blocks" are real hazards in a writer's life, but they aren't all alike, nor do they all yield to the same solutions. In this class we take a look at the different kinds of roadblocks that may occur along a writer's path, and present some exercises for dealing with each type of problem. We'll discuss some non-standard ways to plot or structure your story (help for pantsters!) Finally, there will be a sample of actual Spells of Unsticking—freewriting exercises that can spark ideas, and serve as catalysts, or even as scenes to plug right into your work-in-progress.

Registration Information:

Cost for the Online class is \$15.00 for CAMEO members. For RWA members the cost is \$25.00.

For non-RWA members the cost is \$35.00..

Payments may be sent via Paypal to cameowriterstwo@yahoo.com.

If you have questions you may email them to Lpatrice9@aol.com. Subject line: CAMEO class.

Payments for Class: Must be sent by June 1, 2009

Classes will run from June 5, 2009 thru July 3, 2009

Title: Loglines—Just the facts, Ma'am

INSTRUCTOR: Cindy Carroll

June 15-28th Two-Week (Mini) Workshop

Registration Deadline: May 25th

A good logline can make people sit up and take notice. Whether you write books or scripts the logline is an essential part of your marketing material. And it can also help you stay on track. "Just the facts, Ma'am" covers what makes a good logline and how to use it to stay focused on the story.

For more information please visit <http://www.carolinaromancewriters.com/june09.htm>

Title: Running with Vampires: Surviving the Paranormal Investigation

Instructor: Katherine Ramsland

Class commences on June 1

Class Description: For two years Katherine Ramsland roamed the vampire subculture, and for most of her life she's investigated haunted places around the world. As a result, she has tested the many procedures and implements utilized for hunting down elusive entities. This course will cover both, encouraging participants to try things out and to then devise ways to utilize true-life methods and manifestations in their writing. Paranormal romance and suspense are popular genres and nothing adds to a nightstalker's allure like gritty details of how such investigations are done. This is not a psychic's toolkit, but rather the "I want to believe" approach of "X-Files" FBI agent Fox Mulder.

For more information please visit

<http://www.rwamysterysuspense.org/coffinClass.php?classdetail=m1.jun>

Title: 8 Steps to Murdering a Manuscript**Instructor: John Foxjohn****Class commences on June 1**

Class Description: John Foxjohn's eight steps of murdering a manuscript without a conviction encompasses eight major categories most writers do that contribute to rejections. Foxjohn covers where to start a manuscript, conflict, voice, editing, and other essential parts of writing.

For more information please visit

<http://www.rwamysterysuspense.org/coffinClass.php?classdetail=ki.jun>

Theme and Symbol 101**Presented by Professor Deborah Brownfield****Dates: June 4-25****Deadline: June 2**

Course description:

Learn more about including symbolism in your writing with this one-month online class that explores the nature and effectiveness of using symbolism, especially as it correlates to theme and tone. You will study several authors who effectively use symbolism in their writing, including one of the masters, Edgar Allen Poe. The class will consist of lecture notes to study, a weekly assignment, and active, lively class discussion!

For more information please visit <http://lowcountryrwa.com/online-workshops/#JUN>

Fishing In: Hooks that Grab the Reader**Presented by Kristin Hardy****Dates: June 4-25****Deadline: June 2**

Course description:

They're used in hit songs. They're used in movies. They're used in television. They're even used to catch fish.

Hooks. Whether you're talking about CD buyers, movie fans, romance readers or, yes, editors, the hook seals the deal. It gives the audience that one irresistible lure to make them want more.

In the romance market, we hear a lot of talk about "classic hooks," with the assumption that everybody knows what they are. What are these mythical hooks? How do you use them, why do you need them and what can they do to help you write books that sell? And how do you spin them to be uniquely your own?

For more information please visit <http://lowcountryrwa.com/online-workshops/#JUN>

How to Write it When You Can't Be There**Presented by Blythe Gifford****Dates: June 5-26****Deadline: June 3**

We've all heard the advice: You must visit the places you write about if you're going to create a believable setting. But most of us can't afford to jet across the country (or the world) every time we start a book. And for those who write historicals, a trip to the place would still not be a trip to the time.

In this short course, Blythe will give some practical tips and tricks for selecting, creating, and researching believable settings, no matter what your subgenre. She'll also discuss the thematic use of setting that can make your story richer.

Previous participant commented: "I could write a two page email on how much this class has helped me." "Fantastic." "Great class."

For more information please visit <http://lowcountryrwa.com/online-workshops/#JUN>

Please note that we do not endorse any of these online courses and ask that you check the fine print regarding the online course rules and also confirm the deadlines in question. Thank you.

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Conferences:

Backspace Writers Conference

May 28-30 • New York City

The 2009 Backspace Writers Conference brings together literary agents, acquisitions editors, best-selling authors, and publishing professionals for a two-day, two-track program of workshops, panels, and networking in the heart of the publishing world.

Attendance limited to 200. For more information, please visit

www.backspacewritersconference.com.

Long Island Romance Writers Luncheon

Friday, June 12, 2009

The Milleridge Inn

Jericho, Long Island, NY

The LIRW luncheon brings writers and industry professionals together in a friendly, relaxed environment unparalleled by any other. With two publishing pros at each table and ample time to wander the room before and after a marvelous meal, writers can pitch to as many people as they choose. In recent years, writer attendees have made that connection that led to signing an agency contract, signing a publishing contract, and even signing a three-book contract!

For more information please visit <http://www.lirw.org/luncheon.html>

Capital Region Romance Writers of America, Inc. 7th Annual Workshop

BUILDING A BETTER NOVEL: A WRITER'S TOOLKIT

Saturday, June 12-13, 2009

Desmond Hotel & Conference Facility

Albany, New York

Featuring: Annette Blair & Angela Knight

Annette Blair will be presenting "Story Mapping" and "Painting Colorful Characters".

Angela Knight will be presenting "Heating up the Romance in Your Novel" and

"Ready! Set! Go! Writing Action Scenes". These workshops are hands on and we

encourage folks to bring their WIP's so they can use what they learn during the

presentations. We will be holding a book-signing after Saturday's program with our

featured speakers as well as our chapter's published authors.

BONUS EVENT! Friday night we will be hosting an Editor/Agent Panel featuring Steve Axelrod of the Axelrod Agency, Miriam Kriss of the Irene Goodman Literary Agency and Heather Osborn from Tor Paranormal Romance. Stay tuned to our web site (www.cr-rwa.org) for more information as there may be additions to this line up.

Capital Region RWA Members—\$85.00 for Friday's event & Saturday's workshops

Non-chapter members (before 5/31/09)—\$95.00 for Friday's event & Saturday's workshops

Non-chapter members after 5/31—\$105.00, at the door—\$125.00 for Friday's event & Saturday

Refund Policy: Refunds prior to June 6, 2009, will be subject to a \$15 processing fee.

No refunds will be made after June 6, 2009.

IWWG's 32nd Conference Year

Remember the Magic Workshops

June 12-19; Post Conference Retreat June 20-21

May 28-30 • Saratoga Springs, New York

All 65 workshops take place every single day for the week-long period and are 75 minutes in length, unless otherwise noted. Special features of this conference:

Registrants do not register for individual workshops. You register for the conference as a whole and then you are free to go to any workshops you wish and make your own program. LSF members **Zita Christian, Paula Chaffee Scardamalia**, and **Anne Frazier Walradt** teach workshops. For more information, please visit www.iwwg.org.

Deadly Ink

June 27-28 • Parsippany, NJ

Featuring award-winning author Lincoln Child as Guest of Honor and authors Jeff Cohen as Toastmaster. Panelists include: Kate Gallison, Roberta Rogow, Jack Getze, E. J. Rand, Cheryl Solimini, Steve Rigolosi, Robin Hathaway, KB Inglee, Ilene Schneider, Dennis Tafoya, Liz Zelvin, Renee Gardner, Elena Santangelo.FMI:

<http://www.deadlyink.com/conference.html>

Thrillerfest

July 7-8 • NYC

Featured speakers include: authors Jon Land, Lisa Gardner, David Morrell, Hank Phillippi Ryan, James Scott Bell, William Bernhardt, Steve Berry, Gary Braver, Lee Child, Barry Eisler, Heather Graham, Andrew Gross, David Hewson, Joan Johnston, Eric Van Lustbader, Dr. D.P. Lyle, Steve Martini, James Rollins, Kathleen Sharp, R.L. Stine, and Gayle Lynds; examining forensic psychiatrist Dr. Michael Welner; and agents Peter Rubie and Donald Maas

FMI: <http://www.thrillerwriters.org/thrillerfest/>

RWA Annual Conference

July 15-18 • Washington, DC

Featured speakers include authors Linda Howard, **Eloisa James**, Anne Stuart, and Stella Cameron plus many more as well as agents, editors, and other publishing professionals.

FMI: http://www.rwanational.org/cs/conferences_and_events

Southampton Writers Conference

July 15-16 • Southampton, NY

Featuring Alan Alda, Melissa Bank, Jules Feiffer, Frank McCourt, Gary Trudeau, and many more. FMI: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/writers/>

16th Annual Book Passage Mystery Writers Conference

7/16 - 7/19/09 • Corte Madera, CA

Featuring authors Hallie Ephron, David Hewson, and more, including publishing professionals, editors, agents and crime fighting professionals.

FMI: <http://www.bookpassage.com/content.php?id=44>

Green Mountain Writers Conference

7/28 - 8/1/09 • Tinmouth, VT

Featuring Yvonne Daley, William Powers, Philip Baruth, Jim Schley, Ursula Smith,

Linda Peavy, Geof Hewitt, Verandah Porche, and Chuck Clarino. FMI:
<http://www.vermontwriters.com/>

The Pacific Northwest Writers Association Conference
7/30- 8/2/09 • Seattle, WA

Keynote speaker: Terry Brooks. Featuring editors Maria Gagliano, Penguin Putnam; Katie Gilligan, Thomas Dunne Books; Celia Johnson, Grand Central Publishing; Kate Kennedy, Crown Books; Brooke Warner, Seal Press; and Rose Hilliard, St. Martin's Press. Agents: Michelle Brower, Wendy Sherman Associates; Minju Chang, BookStop Literary Agency; Ginger Clark, Curtis Brown LTD; Verna Dreisbach, Dreisbach Literary Management; Sorche Elizabeth Fairbank, Fairbank Literary Representation; Paul Fedorko, Trident Media Group; Sally Harding, The Harding Agency; Alexandra H Machinist, Linda Chester & Associates Literary Agency; and Matthew Mahoney, Ralph M. Vicinanza, Ltd.

FMI: <http://www.pnwa.org/>

The Mississippi Writers Guild
August 14-15 • Vicksburg, MS
Riverwalk Casino Hotel and Conference Facility
Vicksburg, MS

Join Mississippi Writers Guild for its third annual writers conference. This conference facility overlooks the Mighty Mississippi and, as its name promises, has a breathtaking art riverwalk adorned with metal sculptures. For more information please [visit http://www.mississippiwritersguild.com/](http://www.mississippiwritersguild.com/).

Please note that we do not endorse any of these conferences and ask that you check the fine print regarding the conference and also confirm the deadlines in question. Thank you.

If you wish to volunteer to do the Contests, Conferences and Online Courses section, please contact Anne Walradt.

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Market News:

Editor News:

At Penguin, Emily Beth Rapoport has been promoted to associate editor for Berkley. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

At Little, Brown Children's, Lauren Hodge has been promoted to assistant editor. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

Kate Davis has been promoted to associate editor for Putnam and Marian Wood Books, where she has been "deeply involved in Marian's entire list." *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

At Kensington, Peter Senfleben has been promoted to assistant editor. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

Barbara Jones has been promoted to the newly-created role of editorial director of Hyperion and Voice. She "will work in partnership" with editor-in-chief Will Balliett, reporting to publisher Ellen Archer. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

Lorna Owen will join Other Press as senior editor on May 1, acquiring both literary

fiction and narrative non-fiction. Most recently she was senior editor at Nan A. Talese. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

Longtime Simon & Schuster editor Denise Roy starts at Penguin Putnam as senior editor. She will also acquire hardcovers for Dutton and Hudson Street Press. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

Laura Ford will move over to the Ballantine editorial team as Editor, reporting to publisher Libby McGuire. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

Agent News:

Liza Pulitzer Voges has opened the literary agency Eden Street representing authors and illustrators of children's books. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

At Dystel & Goderich Literary Management, Jim McCarthy, has been promoted to senior agent. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

Rebecca Gradinger, who recently left Janklow & Nesbit after six years to create Finchley Road Literary, is folding that agency into Fletcher & Company, where she is now working as an agent. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

Mark McVeigh, who had been an editor at Simon & Schuster Children's until last month, has opened his own literary agency, The McVeigh Agency. He is representing both children's and adult authors, illustrators, graphic novelists, and photographers. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

Angharad Kowal will run a small UK office for literary agency Writers House. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

Kirsten Neuhaus has started her own agency, Kirsten Neuhaus Literary. She was most recently an agent and foreign rights manager at Vigliano Associates. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

Michael Harriot has joined Sanford J. Greenburger Associates as an agent. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

Former Houghton Mifflin publisher **Janet Silver** is joining Zachary Shuster Harmsworth as an agent and literary director, in their Boston office. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

In the UK, Peter Robinson is formally merging his eponymous literary agency with Rogers, Coleridge & White. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

Publisher News:

Simon & Schuster says they are the first major US publisher to launch ebook titles in the new Blackberry App store. The publisher is working with Andy McNab's **GoSpoken**, the UK provider's first venture in the UK market. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

Lightning Source announced a pilot program with the Espresso Book Machine allowing publishers to make their titles available for in-store printing through the POD

machine. They says approximately 85,000 titles from publishers including Wiley, Hachette, McGraw-Hill, S&S, Macmillan and Norton will be available this way as of May (though there are very few machines in place in stores). "Upon the completion of a successful pilot, publishers that print and distribute books with Lightning Source will have the option to participate." In the UK, Blackwell's has just introduced the first Espresso machine in that market in their Charing Cross flagship store. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

If you wish to volunteer to do the Market News section, please contact Anne Walradt.

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New and Noteworthy Publishing News:

Please click on the text to access the link:

[Amazon introduces big screen Kindle](#)

[Borders says recovery in spending may take years](#)

[Ebook Piracy is Up Because Ebook Demand is Up](#)

[First Quarter Loss at Bertelsmann](#)

[Google Deadline Delayed Four Months as Steinbeck Motion Granted](#)

[Justice Dept. Opens Antitrust Inquiry Into Google Books Deal](#)

[Print Books Are Target of Pirates on the Web](#)

[Summer Books – Readers can turn the pages and escape](#)

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Current Bestsellers:

Please click on the text to access the link:

[Booksense Indie Bestsellers](#)

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President's Column by Gail Freeman



June 2009

Okay, I admit it. The bloody alarm clock went off at 6:00 am on a Saturday and I was very, very tempted to hit the button and go back to sleep. I mean, I worked hard all week. My day starts before the sun comes up and doesn't end until long after it has settled below the horizon. As I made my coffee and glared at the machine because it was trickling so slowly, the sun started to shine through the kitchen windows and a stray beam landed on the agenda that I had printed out for the meeting. It gave me a wakeup jolt greater than the caffeine perking on the counter. It reminded me that this was a meeting day. A day that was just for me to do something that I love. Maybe it's a bit selfish to have a day that is just mine when I spend so much time away from my family, but it nourishes a part of me that is intangible. Once that thought hit me, I tried to figure out exactly what it was that I received.

This month as I looked over the members gathered in the meeting room I realized something wonderful. I'm making a bunch of new friends, and I'm staying connected to special people who have been in my life for the past ten years. The room was filled with people who share my passion to create something with their minds and their words. Outside of the bedroom, I have a feeling that it's pretty hard to find this kind of passion in one room.

And the learning! Because I sit at the front table, I have the advantage of watching the reactions of all the people in the room when one of our speakers mentions something in their lecture that sets off an "aha" moment in someone's mind. It's really neat. First there is the quick look up from their notes and a slightly startled look on their face that is quickly followed by a huge grin. By George! I think they've got it. This is usually followed by the head going down again and the hand flying across the paper as they race to capture that thought so they can take it out and savor it later.

So to me, meeting day is about camaraderie, passion, and learning. It's why I and my fellow Board members work so hard to make Liberty States Fiction Writers an organization that will foster all of these intangibles. You can't put a price tag on these things. You can only give with your heart.

We've got the Makyé It Happen Challenge going this month. The goal is to write. As our May speaker, Eloisa James said, the editing can be done later. Get the story told. We're also working on our plans for the Mini Conference for March. The Policy and Procedures Manual is a work in progress. We're trying a number of things this year. Some of them will work, some of them won't. When we get a winner, we're getting the steps down on paper so we can repeat it again next year. Summer is just around the corner and with it, we'll start seeing the SPA activities pick up with the street fairs and book festivals.

The Board knows that we're not the only ones with ideas. This is our group and by that I mean each and every member. If you have an idea, let us know. Some of them will work, some won't, but we won't know unless you share them with us.

Let's all share the passion together.

Gail Freeman
President, LSF Writers

Gail Freeman, President

Gail has been writing for twelve years and is a yet to be published author. Ms. Freeman served as President of another writing organization for two years and has also served as Vice President, Treasurer, Special Events Chair, and Hospitality and Critique Chair in that organization. On a national level, Gail was one of the founding staff members of the Romance Writers of America's electronic newsletter, eNotes and served as editor of that publication for a number of years. In 2005, she was awarded the RWA's prestigious Service Award for her commitment and volunteer efforts. She also chaired the RWA's 2007 Chapter Newsletter Contest and the 2008 ad hoc committee for reform recommendations and changes to that contest. For the past eight years she has been a member of the RWA Communication Committee. After being out of high school for twenty years, Gail went back to college and obtained her associate degree in accounting. A lifelong resident of the Jersey Shore, Ms. Freeman believes in happy endings and working towards your goals, no matter how long it takes.

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by Jenna Kernan

Part II - Progressive Complications

In my last article, I took a look at the story setup and inciting incident from a screenwriter's perspective. This article will continue with the next element in a screenplay, including a series of escalating conflicts, small triumphs, and crushing setbacks known to screenwriters as progressive complications. These obstacles comprise Act II and include between two and four turning points, depending on how you choose to count them.

Develop Your Controlling Idea

All stories begin with an idea. Some stories come from a simple "What if..." question. What if a man was bitten by a radioactive spider and developed super spider powers? (*Spiderman*). What if a two fed up parents hired a woman to get their son to move out of their house? (*Failure to Launch*). What if a German factory owner creates a list of Jewish employees vital to the war effort and thereby saves them from the holocaust? (*Schindler's List*). What if a woman, trying to reconcile family differences between her fiancé and his brother, ends up falling in love with her fiancé's brother? (*Moonstruck*).

Exploring an idea is an excellent place to begin constructing a story. The best way is for the writer to choose a topic that intrigues and that has no obvious right or wrong answer. In order to explore the subject, writers must be impartial and present both sides. No audience wants to be subjected to a two-hour sermon, although *An Inconvenient Truth* did do well at the box office, so maybe I'm wrong. Still, in fiction, it is best to avoid soapboxes. When exploring a controlling idea, screenwriters include what happens and also why it happens. This demonstration of truth shows the audience why the story ended the way it did. For example, A servant boy falls in love with a princess and earns happiness because he is willing to face insurmountable odds, including death, to be with her (*The Princess Bride*).

The legal system cannot deliver justice because it moves on technicalities and the cleverness of unethical attorneys (...*And Justice for All*). There is reason to be hopeful even in the worst of circumstances because there is still good in the world (*Anne Frank: The Whole Story*). One person can change the world because she has the courage to act (*Norma Rae*).

Finding Your Story Question

After the Inciting Incident and New Situation, the protagonist must commit to something. She either wants something or wants to avoid something. This "something" becomes the story question. Audiences recognize instinctively that when they get the answer to this question, the movie is over. The story question evolves out of the inciting incident and new situation. It is a visible, tangible desire, not something ethereal like world peace, enlightenment or self-actualization. The question defines the story's course and creates a clearly finish line. Commitment to this goal is the first turning point. It changes the direction of the character's path from an ordinary world into a new situation with a new tangible goal. In movies this change usually involves a change of location.

Here are some examples of story questions.

Jaws

Question: Is Brody going to kill this shark or what?

My Cousin Vinny

Question: Will Vinny successfully defend his cousins against a false murder rap?

Pretty Woman

Question: Will Edward discard Vivian after their week-long contract is over?

Titanic

Question: Will Rose escape her stifling lifestyle and family obligations and earn her freedom?

Lord of the Rings

Question: Will Frodo destroy the ring?

Finding Nemo

Question: Will Norman find his son?

Beauty and the Beast

Question: Will Belle break the spell cast on the Beast?

The Patriot

Question: Will "The Ghost" succeed in defeating British Forces?

The Struggle to Reach the Goal

Complications should escalate logically, with the simplest coming first. This actually applies to two different issues.

1. Any reasonable person, when pursuing a goal will, quite naturally, take the most conservative steps first. For example, when the protagonist, Mitch, hears that *The Firm* he works for is run by the Mob, he doesn't agree to work with the Feds or flee the country. His first step is to seek a private detective to learn if it is true.

2. The suggestion "simplest first" can also apply to pacing. The plot fizzles and pacing slows if story conflicts do not escalate. In the film *Legally Blonde*, the challenges intensify in logical order. To win back her boyfriend, the protagonist must get into law school, survive being humiliated by a tough professor, embarrassed by the nasty preppy girls at a Halloween gathering that turns out not to be the costume party, exclusion from joining a study group, and so on. Challenges mount, she has some successes and some failures. Complications are progressive. The protagonist's troubles continue until her mentor makes a pass at her, expecting sexual favors in exchange for helping her with her career. Notice the screenwriters did not have the professor proposition her and next have another professor make fun of her in class. That would be anticlimactic. The progression is logical and mounts. This pattern repeats over and over in story and in film.

It is only as the protagonist's situation becomes grave that she becomes more desperate. As complications grow in magnitude, actions generate greater and greater risk.

A recent comedy called *Christmas with the Kranks* features two empty-nesters who decided to skip Christmas and go on a dream vacation. The plan causes increasingly bizarre behavior as peer pressure mounts for them to engage in the socially acceptable community activity and crescendos when their daughter decides last minute to bring her new boyfriend to the family Christmas. This is a funny example of two characters becoming increasingly desperate. The movie also does a nice job in spinning the story off in a new unexpected direction when their daughter calls home and throws a monkey wrench into their plans for fun in the sun.

This is the final turning point that changes the protagonists' goal, from going on vacation, to hosting Christmas for their only child. Another comedy that shows two characters spinning dangerously out of control and that is a great example of characters growing increasingly desperate is *The Out-of-Towners* starring Jack Lemmon. Rent it and look for the scene where Lemmon, trying to retrieve his wallet, mugs a man he wrongly thinks took it. He ends up assaulting an innocent, very young Sylvester Stallone. Very funny stuff and a beautiful example of escalating conflict, causing characters to grow desperate and so take actions they never would have dreamed possible at the story's start.

In movies, a protagonist's best efforts often backfire. Not all attempts are successful.

When John Dumbard, *Dances with Wolves*, tries to alert the Sioux tribe of the arrival of a large herd of buffalo, he accidentally interrupts a religious ceremony and nearly gets himself killed.

Mistakes are equally costly. When Peter Parker, *Spiderman*, tries to get a little justice from a boss who cheated him, he lets the man he witnesses robbing his boss get away. The robber then shoots Peter's beloved uncle in order to use his car to get away.

Screenwriters often have attempts by the character to move forward actually make matters worse. This increases the tension and pacing, makes the character more desperate, and allows the audience to root for the underdog. Audiences do not want the protagonists to have an easy ride. They want the hero to have to earn his victory.

In other words, your protagonist gains nothing without a struggle. There are no free lunches or easy wins, no coincidental blessings. If your character wants something, she has to fight for it, and she will not always win. Often her struggle to achieve her goal will backfire putting her in a worse position than she was in before she took action. This is the gap between what the character desires and what she gets.

Exploring Levels of Conflict

Story conflict can occur on three levels: with self, with another, with society. Let's look at them in more detail.

The most basic conflict is one in which the protagonist is in conflict with one's self.

Everyone is occasionally of two minds. This conflict may be the basis of a story or a dimension of it. The first movie that came to my mind when thinking of an example of

conflict with self is the film classic *Lost Weekend*, which involves a man's struggle with alcoholism. This is a full-out war with himself. A more recent version on the same theme would be Nicholas Cage in *Leaving Las Vegas*. Both movies also involve a conflict with a caring girlfriend, but the primary focus is the battle within.

A second level of conflict is when a character is in conflict with another person. This is the meat of any romance novel. In *First 50 Dates*, the protagonist is in conflict with the heroine who he loves and is trying to woo, but who, unfortunately, has the attention span of a fruit fly as the result of a brain injury, making it impossible for her to recall that she loves him, too.

The third level of conflict is where the protagonist is set into conflict with society at large. Action adventure stories operate mainly at this level. *National Treasure* is a good example of a protagonist in conflict with society. He is battling the National Archives' unwillingness to believe his crackpot theory that the Bill of Rights is in jeopardy because it has a treasure map on the back. He is also in conflict with the "Feds" who are chasing him after he steals the document to protect it from the nefarious bad guy and, of course, he is in conflict with the grave-robbing villains.

Each of Cage's three opponents represents some facet of society (conservators/preservationists, the Federal government, greedy black marketers).

The most engaging stories operate at all three levels simultaneously. The movie *The Departed* manages this. One of the two protagonists, played by Leonardo DiCaprio, is an undercover cop in conflict with himself because his family's connections with the mob. He is torn between honesty and corruption, and battles with his morality throughout the movie right up to his last scene when he struggles to bring in a corrupt cop instead of shooting him. He is simultaneously in conflict with his superiors, who have placed him undercover, and the mob kingpin, played by Jack Nicholson, who might discover that he is an undercover cop and kill him. Finally, he is at war with society at large, specifically the system that allows mobsters to buy judges, cops, and even the federal agents.

Turning Points vs. Complications

Complications include turning points, but it should be said that not all complications are turning points. Generally, there are two major turning points in a movie and many complications. Some screenwriters count as many as four turning points. The difference between turning points and complications is their placement and the result or aftermath. If you do not count the Opportunity/Inciting Incident as a turning point (many do), then the first turning point comes at the end of act one and proposes the story question. It also spins the story in a new direction, creating the new situation (often a new setting as well) for the opening of Act II.

Here are four examples of turning points vs. complications.

Jaws (Thriller, Happy Ending)

First Turning Point—Brody's child is threatened by the shark, bringing the problem to his doorstep. This launches Brody in a new direction. He now wants to kill the shark personally and is willing to leave land (new location) to do it.

Story Question Proposed—Will Brody kill the shark or will the shark kill Brody?

Complication—Quinn breaks the boat's radio, cutting off communication with shore. Though this is a setback and a complication for Brody, it does not spin the movie in a different direction or change the location. This occurs midway through the movie and is not a major turning point.

My Cousin Vinny (Comedy, Happy Ending)

First Turning Point—Vinny accepts the case and arrives in Alabama.

Story Question Proposed—Will he win this case?

Complication—About half way through the movie and in the midst of a series of complications, Vinny's clean suit falls in the mud. He now has no clothing for court, and the judge has made it clear that if he ventures again into court dressed inappropriately, he will be held in contempt. This is a complication. It increases tension, cause difficulties for Vinny, but does not spin the story in a new direction.

The Departed (Drama, Tragic Ending)

I really loved this movie, but have only seen it once, so here is a disclaimer: I might not have this one quite right.

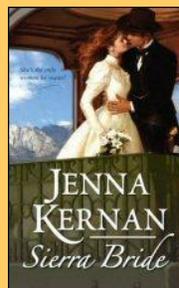
First Turning Point—Both Matt Damon's character (a career criminal who has infiltrated the police and is now a detective) and Leonardo DeCaprio's character (undercover cop who as infiltrated the Irish Mob in Boston) learn of each other's existence, triggering a new situation. Both men must discover the other's identity before they are discovered.

Story Question Proposed—Who will be discovered first?

Complication—Jack Nicholson's character (Mob Kingpin) shows DiCaprio the severed hand of a snitch. This is about midway through the picture. It causes DiCaprio to ditch his wire but does not significantly turn the story in a new direction. It does serve to scare the daylights out of DiCaprio, escalate his risk, and increase the audience's concern over his welfare.

A story needs complications as well as turning points in order to keep up the pacing. Complications multiply the protagonist's woes and add to his desperation. In movies, turning points are strategically placed and spin the story in a new direction. The final turning point is called the "Crisis" by Robert McKee and "Major Setback" by Michael Hague. But that, along with the "Climax" and "Resolution" are the topics of the final article in this series.

About the Author: Jenna Kernan writes fast-paced romantic adventures that will capture your heart. Romantic Times BookClub said her stories made "Tip-top reading." Her next release, SIERRA BRIDE, arrives in August 2009 and involves the young widow of a notorious man who is determined to keep her freedom, and a railroad baron set on making her his mistress. When she is implicated in a plot to destroy him, he must decide if he should listen to reason or follow his heart. Jenna keeps her website current with excerpts, articles, and monthly contests. Please visit her anytime at www.jennakernan.com.



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Civilian Law Enforcement Academy Adventures by N.L. Quatrano

Seat belted in the police cruiser, steering wheel loosely held in my hands, the Sargeant next to me barked, “Hit the brakes!”

I did, mainly because he scared the daylights out of me, which put the car into what they later called a “controlled” skid. The surface was wet, and I was driving at sixty miles an hour. It didn’t feel very controlled to me, but the two other academy civilians in the back seat told me that I really nailed it. Amazing what pure adrenaline-packed fear can do for your composure.

Once our “Dirty Dozen” were collected and accounted for, we hiked over to the sheriff’s office shooting range.

After a forty minute video and officer training program to teach us how to be safe on the gun range, we proceeded to our “stalls,” loaded our guns, and waited.

When the Lieutenant shouted, “Hot Range,” we were loaded and ready to fire: safeties off, hearing and eye protection on, feet apart, eyes focused on a target fifty feet away. It was a total and complete blast, pun intended. My target wasn’t a masterpiece, but the bad guy was good and dead, none the less. I resisted the urge to blow on the barrel of the Glock.

We learned about the mundane, bureaucratic, political, and financial workings of the department. We spent several hours in the jail—a billion dollar, state-of-the-art facility geared to house and provide medical care for the inmates, as well as provide education and job skills for those the Sheriff hopes will get straight and contribute to society in a positive manner.

On CSI night, the lab team set up a “crime scene” for us to process, from fingerprinting to footprint casting: we learned the best and worst surfaces for good prints, how to take apart a vehicle and document findings, and that there is no magic machine that will analyze and match fingerprints like on the TV shows. Oh, and there is no national DNA database, either.

Autopsy night was rough and several of our team sat outside the building, gathered around the concrete picnic benches where the techs take their breaks. It wasn’t the collection of brains, eyeballs, or other assorted body parts in carefully labeled glass jars that did it; it was the smell. There was no one to actually autopsy the first time I went through the Medical Examiner’s portion, so we walked through the routine and tools on a theoretical basis. The second time I attended, the ME was doing an autopsy on a young woman who’d been found dead in a downtown motel. Some of us sat in the small glass-enclosed observation booth where there are no smells, but only two made it to the end. The bone saw did it for me. I fled the booth like a woman on fire.

We rode along with officers on duty, which involved stopping in the rougher neighborhoods and having conversations with prostitutes, drug dealers, and single moms. We stopped cars with broken taillights, gave rides to kids out way too late and, in general, provided a presence in the community that unnerved the bad guys

and soothed the single moms.

I'll have to write about SWAT night and non-lethal responses another time. That's worth at least another five hundred words. For now, it will have to suffice to say that being tased really, really hurts. So does pepper spray in the face.

Of all the things I learned in my thirteen weeks in the Civilian Law Enforcement Academy, probably the one that impacted my writing the most is the human element: the six-foot-five SWAT captain who volunteers every month of the year to teach women self defense so they are never victims again, the officers who ride their motorcycles on their rare weekends off to raise money to build a softball field that will keep kids out of trouble, or the defensive driving certification instructor who donates his Sundays to teach kids at risk to drive responsibly.

The guns, helicopters, bombs, dogs, and, sometimes, fast boats, are all great props for an action-packed crime novel. But the connection that will bring your readers back to you time and time again is the human one. If you get the chance to participate in a Civilian Law Enforcement Academy in your area, I highly recommend you attend. Get to know the men and women behind the badges.

You, and your writing, will never be the same.

About the Author: Nancy's first short non-fiction story was published in 1999 in a hard cover collection titled Romance Recipes for the Soul published by Pisces Press. Since then she's published short romances and short mysteries in New Jersey-based books. A contributing writer to both romance and mystery professional newsletters for over eight years, she's currently working on a mystery series as well as other short stories that involve love, mysteries, and happy endings. She lives in Florida with her husband and a variety of four-legged friends on their homestead, The Double Q ranch. Visit Nancy at www.nlquatrano.com



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Where Is My Voice? by Amy Nichols

As beginning writers, we search for that elusive thing called "voice." What is it? Do I have it? How do I get it? If a critique group critiques it out of me, how do I get it back?

I've thought a lot about my voice as a writer, without understanding what exactly it meant. I write Regencies and the voice in my head when I write tends to have a proper British accent. Is that my voice or the character's?

I decided to turn to the web in search of meaning for voice. Wikipedia has the following:

"Writer's voice is a literary term used to describe the individual writing

style of an author. Voice is a combination of a writer's use of syntax, diction, punctuation, character development, dialogue, etc., within a given body of text (or across several works).

Voice can also be referred to as the specific fingerprint of an author, as every author has a different writing style."

If the definition above is true, does my writing reflect more of what I've learned of the craft from school rather than my own style? It mentions "across several works." I've not completed several works yet. Does that mean I have a voice? Or does it mean that like a boy in the throes of puberty, my voice is changing, cracking wildly at just the wrong moment?

The artist's journey is universal. When a painter first begins to learn his craft, he mimics the styles of the masters. This allows him to test the techniques and find his niche as an artist. He will try oils, watercolors, block prints, and other various art forms until he finds his medium.

As writers, we are no different. Our early writing may mimic those works we most admire and, as we grow, our voice grows stronger and we find our medium, our comfort zone. In writers, it is a subtle, almost subconscious process. With every book we read, every word we write, we are strengthening our voice.

At what point in the process, is our voice stronger than the voices of those authors we've studied? I'm not sure I'll ever know the answer to that question. Artists are continuous learners; never really sure they have reached "masters" status.

So I sit in front of my canvas, the computer screen, and ponder. Do I have literary laryngitis? Or am I at a crossroad where my voice is fighting to get above the cacophony of voices of other published authors?

The above article ran in the April 2009 issue of The Final Draft, the newsletter of Carolina Romance Writers in Charlotte, NC.

About the Author: Amy Nichols is an aspiring writer of Regency Period romances. She has spent many years studying the works of other writers, and hopes to one day count herself among their rank. If you'd like to learn more about Amy Nichols go to <http://www.amy nichols.com>.

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Make Writer's Block Your Building Block by Margaret Hren

Just to write is a challenge. Who hasn't done the happy dance in front of their computer after you finally figure out how to tackle a difficult opening sentence, or made a tricky turning point work after a love scene? I can identify with this intimately. It feels like you've just scaled a mountain, won a marathon, and doctors confirmed that chocolate should be its own food group all at the same time.

You feel the power—brain on high gear, cranking page after page of manuscript's words flying out your fingertips, line after line, scene by scene; the voices in your head brought to life. One minute it's the staccato click of the keyboard, then BAM! You hit the wall.

HELLO WRITER'S BLOCK!

A once writer's urban legend suddenly becomes a hard reality. Yet for those of us who suffered through it on a regular basis, it is a harsh reality, not a myth. Every writer at one time or another will face some type of writer's block during their career. It can appear when we least expect it, usually stemming from our fears of inadequacy, changes in our personal life, even the beginning and end of writing projects, can contribute to a phase of writer's block. As a writer, you need to remember that whatever brings it on, accept it and try to be as constructive during this down time. The faster you tackle your writer's block, the faster you can get back to doing what you love most, writing.

The onset of writer's block varies from person to person and in different manifestations. I actually had a phase that consisted of eight months of rewriting the first two chapters of my work in progress, over and over. I'd convinced myself that I had gone off the deep end and had lost my muse. When I finally stopped panicking and re-evaluated my life and surrounding, I realized I'd gone through a number of personal situations that had affected my writing focus. Once I stopped beating myself up and addressed these issues, I was able to ease myself back into my chair and touch a keyboard.

As a writer, you need to think of writing as a regular job; it's less of an art, despite the mystical connotations people who are non-writers try to label it. If we think of ourselves as laborers or craftsmen, it is easier to see ourselves sitting down in front of our computers, putting words on a page, one after another, and at the end of the day we have created something. When you think of writing in this aspect, it helps take the pressure off.

So how do you control or recover from writer's block? Everyone thinks they have a quick fix answer, but you need to look at your self and experiment with different techniques that will work the best for you. Now is the time to shake things up and break out of writer's block grip. Consider trying one or more of these twelve suggestions to help you find your missing writing mojo:

1. **Have a Schedule and Stick to It.** We've all heard it before. If you make yourself show up at your desk to the blank computer screen or page at the same time and place every day, eventually your mind (and your muse) will do the same. It takes twenty-one days to make a habit stick, so make writing your habit.
2. **Don't Be Hard on Yourself.** When you're writing, don't beat yourself if you can't get the right word or turn of phrase. Turn off your inner editing monster and just write. When you start to believe the stuff you are writing is terrible or not worth lining a bird cage with, then you lose heart, so leave the editing till later.
3. **Don't Panic.** When you start to panic from unrealistic deadlines, or grammatical challenges, it will make things worse. When you have a schedule, it helps eliminate some of the panic and anxiety you may feel about writing. The less you have to think about, the more focused you will become. Some people will leave their desk and walk around; others will leave the room and grab a drink. When you

remove yourself from the panic, you'll find when you return you are calm and can get a fresh look at what was giving you problems.

4. **Take Time Off.** If you've been writing steady and non-stop for a long period of time, make sure to give yourself some downtime from writing. Our minds need time to rejuvenate, and being idle is a key part to the creative process. Take time to read a book, see a movie, experience something new before you get back to the keyboard to finish or start your next manuscript.

5. **Set Deadlines and Keep Them.** All writers have trouble holding to this, and it helps to find a friend or writing partner to hold you to deadlines in an encouraging and non-critical way. When you know someone is expecting something from you, it's a good way to jump-start your writing.

6. **Carry a Pocket Notebook.** Writing hits us at the strangest times. Prepare yourself by keeping a pocket-size notebook with you to jot down ideas for writing, dialogue, and anything else that pops into your head. How many times have you been driving in a car and something comes to you? By the time you reach home to write it down, it's forgotten. Don't lose these ideas; be prepared at the next stop light to jot something down before it's too late.

7. **Examine Any Deep Personal Issues.** Is there something keeping you from writing? If it's the anxieties of the creativity process or something else that might be holding you back from writing, take the time to really think hard about them, and if these issues are really fears you can deal with. If not, then it can help to see a specialist who can help writers reconnect with their creative muse.

8. **Try a Writing Exercise.** It sounds corny, but it actually works. Take a picture, a phrase, or a movie clip with the sound off and write something about it for five minutes. Brainstorming can unlock ideas or directions you might not have thought of before.

9. **Work on More Than One Project at a Time.** Many writers find it helpful to switch back and forth between manuscripts at various stages. Having more than one project can give you a break when you are experiencing some form of writer's block. By changing your focus, you're allowing your mind to work out any problems you're stuck on.

10. **Get Away from Your Desk.** When you feel frustrated and can't seem to move forward with your writing, physically take a step back from your writing space and do something else. Even if it means making yourself lunch or eating the last brownie you were saving for your husband. When you remove yourself from the problem, you will gain a new perspective you might not have considered previously.

11. **Start in the Middle.** There is nothing written that you have to start your manuscript at the beginning and end it at the end. If you find you are having writer's block and can't move past it, jump ahead. Work on the part that interests you the most, and the rest will fall into place.

12. Remember Why You Started Writing in the First Place. It's easy to forget why you started writing for the pure fun of it. Ask yourself if you are writing what you love or what you think you should be writing. Write what you want to write, and you will find you are more productive.

Remember the joy you feel when writing. Your readers can feel the underlying emotion if you love or hate what you are doing. Remember to try to use writer's block as your own personal building block.

Take the time to learn how to make it work to your advantage. It takes time, but once you've hit the right combination of techniques to help you move beyond your block, you will not only become a stronger writer, but a happy traveler down the road to your own happy ending.

The above article first appeared in the March 2008 issue of The Writer's Pulse, newsletter of the Maryland Romance Writers.

About the Author: Margaret Hren is the President of RWA's Maryland Chapter, Maryland Romance Writers and a member of RWA special interest chapters, Passionate Ink and Kiss of Death. When not working on her second novel, Under a Piedmont Moon, or plotting her third novel, Red Carpet Romeo, she works as a marketing executive in the direct response industry.

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He Said, She Said and Other Effective Elements of Dialogue, Part 1 by Caridad Pineiro

You've started your book. You have the basic idea of what you plan to write (genre and length) and understand the conflict with which your characters will deal. But to be intriguing, your characters not only need that internal conflict to resolve, but dialogue that fits them and is effective. In addition, the dialogue that occurs between the characters has to convey necessary information. The key is—not too much information. You want the reader to intuit any secondary meaning in the words and, also, the emotions and intent behind the words.

So what is effective dialogue? Effective dialogue:

1. Advances the plot and adds to the story
2. Doesn't use unnecessary prompts or cues (like *er*, *hmm*, *oh*)
3. Doesn't use excessive tag lines (she kidded, teased, warned)
4. Keeps the flow going
5. Fits the characters

What kind of dialogue advances the plot and adds to the story? Consider the three following examples: *"I'm leaving," he said to the lieutenant.*

"I hate this place," he said and handed the lieutenant the paper.

"I can't wait to walk out that door." He handed the lieutenant his transfer request.

Of the three, the last one advances the plot and adds to the story by providing more information.

Effective dialogue doesn't use unnecessary prompts or excessive tag lines:

Try listening to everyday conversations. Be an eavesdropper (something which writers are allowed to some extent). Every day conversations may be realistic, but they are generally BORING! Every day conversations are generally filled with

needless prompts.

Prompts (or cues) are the things such as:

“How are you?”

“What’s new?”

A “Tag line” is the last line of a speech which is used to clarify or dramatize a point. For example, “he said” or “she said.” Tag lines should be simple and not “he muttered,” “she croaked,” “he groaned.”

Also try to avoid tag lines that contain unnecessary exposition. For example, in a scene where only two people are present, let’s assume a vampire and a woman, it is not necessary to say, “I want a bite,” the vampire said to the woman. We know it’s just two people in the room and therefore “to the woman” is unnecessary.

Plus remember Rule One about advancing the plot/adding info. If he’s a vampire, do you need to have him say, “I want to bite”?

More effective dialogue would be “You expect me to bite. What if you’re not biteable?”

This makes us wonder whether the vampire regularly bites and, also, why the woman isn’t biteable. In a romance, it would also make us wonder if the vampire “doth protest too much” about her biteability.

Effective dialogue should keep the flow going:

All writers do it at one time or another, namely: “I really hadn’t planned on that,” he said and walked across the room. He continued. “But then again, maybe I will.” Breaking the flow may damage a scene by pulling the reader out of the moment. In general, leave descriptions to the end of the dialogue. For that matter, if the description doesn’t set the tone/nature of the dialogue that is occurring, omit it entirely. Excess narration at this point can negatively impact on the exchange between the characters. For example:

“I didn’t mean--” she began, clenching her hands on the handle of her suitcase.

“For this to happen?” he said, cutting her off as he walked across the room, his stride hesitant.

Almost fearful.

Compare the above to this:



Her hands clenched on the handle of her suitcase. “I didn’t mean--”
“For this to happen?” He walked across the room, his stride
hesitant.

End Part One.

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